

Woodlawn Historic District

Potomac Heritage Trail
Fairfax County, Virginia



[A] most beautiful site for a Gentleman's Seat

George Washington describing the future site of Woodlawn Mansion

NPS / MONICA LARCOM

Woodlawn Mansion was designed by Dr. William Thornton, architect of the US Capitol. This grand residence is a mix of Georgian and Federal styles.

The Woodlawn Historic District preserves over a century of American history and offers a unique opportunity to compare architectural styles from different eras.

ASHER IRELAND

Woodlawn was a gift from George Washington to his step-granddaughter, Eleanor "Nelly" Custis, on her marriage to his nephew Lawrence Lewis. Washington selected the home site himself, carving nearly 2,000 acres from his Mount Vernon Estate. It included Washington's Gristmill & Distillery (below), the largest producer of whiskey in America at the time.

Completed in 1805, the Woodlawn Home soon became a cultural center. The Lewises hosted many notable guests, including John Adams, Robert E. Lee and the Marquis de Lafayette.

In 1846, a group of northern Quakers purchased the estate. Their aim was to create a farming community of free African Americans and white settlers to prove that small farms could succeed with free labor in this slave-holding state.

The Quakers lived and worshipped in the Woodlawn home until their more modest farmhouses and meetinghouse (below) were built. Over forty families from Quaker, Baptist, and Methodist faiths joined this diverse, "free-labor" settlement that flourished into the early 20th century.



The Gristmill, rebuilt in 1932 based on historical records and archeological research, houses a working reproduction of the original machinery.

COURTESY OF MOUNT VERNON LABELS ASSN.



The Woodlawn Quaker Meetinghouse remains an active place of worship. Its "Quaker Plain Style" architecture reflects the Society of Friends' value of simplicity.

COURTESY OF ALEXANDER FRIENDS MEETING AT WOODLAWN



Sites of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Woodlawn became the first property of The National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1951. This private non-profit is dedicated to working with communities to save historic places.

When construction of Route 66 threatened the nearby Pope-Leighey House (below), designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the National Trust relocated this historic home to Woodlawn.

Today, the Woodlawn property hosts another non-profit, The Arcadia Center Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture. In a collaboration that honors the site's agrarian heritage, the Center teaches sustainable farming, offers children's programs, and delivers fresh, affordable food to local communities.



Pope-Leighey House represents Wright's "Usonian" style—affordable architecture, that blends form and function, and fits the American landscape.

PAUL BURK

Visiting Woodlawn Historic District

The Woodlawn Historic District offers a step back in time to Northern Virginia's rural, agrarian roots, and a chance to explore historic homes and gardens. All sites are within walking distance and can be reached on foot and by bicycle from Fort Belvoir gates and from hotels on Route 1.

Getting Here The Woodlawn Historic District is approximately 15 miles south of Washington, DC and 8 miles south of Alexandria, VA near the junction of Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Route 1.

Parking is available from 11am-4pm at Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House and at the Gristmill during daylight hours.

Bus stops for Fairfax County DASH are on Route 1 and on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway across from the Gristmill. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association runs a bus between Mt. Vernon Estates & Gardens and the Gristmill.

Bicycling between Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens on and along the Memorial Highway is legal but constrained in some places, especially at the bridge over Dogue Creek. Please use extreme caution. Bicycles must observe all state traffic laws and yield to pedestrians.

Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House is open seasonally April-December, Fridays-Mondays 11am-4 pm. Visit woodlawnpopeleighey.org for more information including on-line ticketing and special events. **Arcadia Farm** may be visited by appointment only. For information visit arcadiafood.org.

George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill is open April-October 10am-5pm daily. The site is operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association as part of the Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens. Tickets available at mountvernon.org.

Woodlawn Quaker Meetinghouse is open to all for worship on Sundays, 11am-12pm. For information or to access, contact the faith community Alexandria Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends at (571) 409-1761 or visit woodlawnfriends.org.

Know before you go

The trail is open dawn to dusk weather permitting

- Carry out all trash.
- No climbing trees.
- Dogs are welcome on a leash.
- Please respect private property.

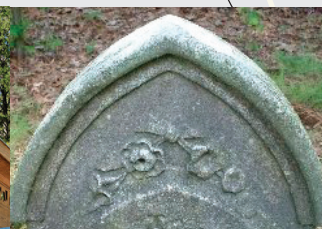
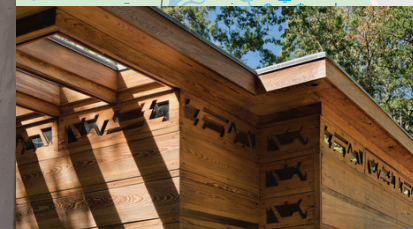
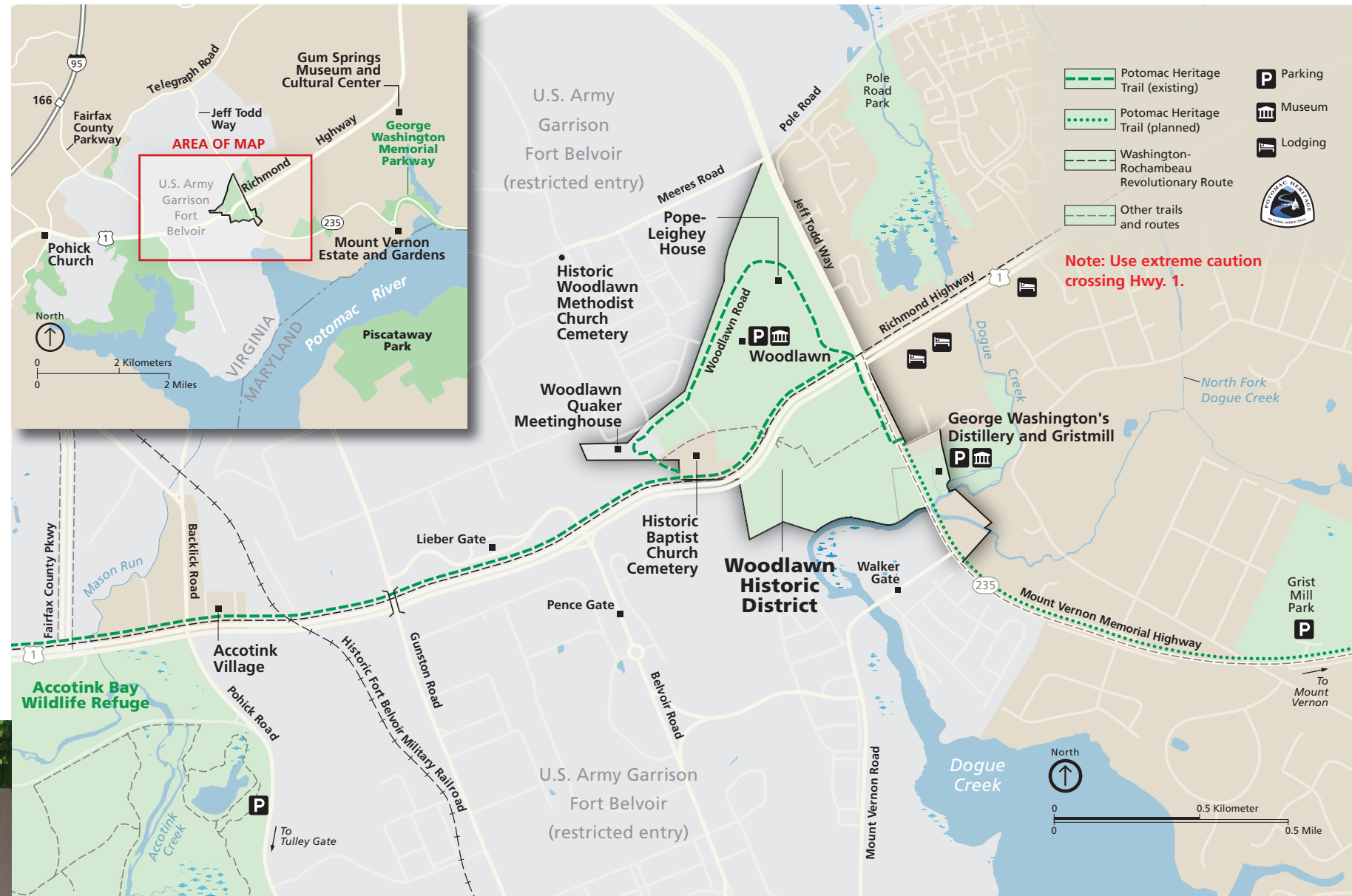
Explore at your own risk. Monitor weather conditions and be prepared to leave the loop trail in case of storms. In severe weather, there is a risk of lightning strikes and of falling branches and trees.

MORE INFORMATION

National Trust for Historic Preservation savingplaces.org/

Virginia Department of Historic Resources <http://dhr.virginia.gov/>

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
National Park Service www.nps.gov/pohe



The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a corridor of history and outdoor adventure, links the Potomac and upper Ohio river basins, following paths explored by George Washington.



NPS / MONICA LARCOM

PAUL BURK

GLENN ELVINGTON

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GORDON BEALL