



Experiencing Montpelier

Two-day Innovation Think-tank

July 7-8, 2016



Facilitated by
Twisted Preservation Cultural Consulting

III. Detailed Summary

One Minute Videos – Each participant was asked to produce a one-minute video that best expressed their personal and intimate habitation environment and behaviors. There were no parameters given, except that it needed to fit within a one-minute time frame. After reviewing all of the videos and commenting on situations and particular items that were unique to that video, a combined document was produced that listed all of these uniquely displayed elements.

In terms of the actual experiences displayed in the videos, almost every form of behavior and interaction was shown. Many, possibly without even thinking about it, included multi-sensory experiences as an aspect of their lives (sights, sounds, smells, and touch). This may seem like a silly observation, but when it comes to historic sites, things that engage all of the senses tend to be eradicated, and the experience becomes abstracted. The videos are clear indicators of habits these participants have internalized as simply “living”, but when we make the jump to an historic site, these things are lost.

It was also quite clear, that some cleaned up their homes prior to producing the videos, while others felt no need to “pretty up” or “curate” the spaces. Many environments had signs of occupation that hinted at a larger family system than just the think tank participant. For instance, children’s toys, dog dishes & toys, sports equipment, and animals all were seen in these videos as secondary elements of the habitation space. It was also important to notice all of the behavioral activities that were tacitly depicted, such as wood chopping, gardening, cooking, office work, animal maintenance, laundry lines, and playgrounds.

The usefulness of a list such as the one produced from the think-tank “One-Minute Videos” is so that elements of habitation that have been internalized by all of us can now be teased apart, isolated, and perhaps seen as possible markers of commonality for a visitor experience. The items in these categories begin to suggest non-abstract elements that can be added to an historic site such that they enfranchise visitors to “read” the site more intimately.

Distinct Activities Study – In this study, every participant was asked to draw the floor plan of their house or apartment. They were given specific instructions, to document on the floor plan how many “distinct activities” they had experienced in the first 2 hours of their morning. After graphically tracking this and documenting the numbers, the results for the entire group were tabulated in a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet averaged the group’s statistics into one number. The individual data and the aggregate totals are shown in the enclosed spreadsheet. Out of 22 raw data sets, there was an average of 12 “Distinct Activities” per every 194 square feet. This number

can be compared to results from other groups from around the country who have executed the same study.

Why is this obscure, and admittedly subjective, number valuable? The hypothesis is that if historic houses can incorporate more activities that are similar in nature to what we experience in our normal lives at home, then we might be able to engage our visitors in a manner that feels more welcoming and current. This number can provide a starting point to re-think the tour and visitor experience at Montpelier from the perspective of a tactile, active person. One of the critiques of tours at historic homes is that they feel removed and distant from real, live people. For instance, standing for 45 minutes and listening to someone speak as you move through a house museum only allows for one distinct activity. It is the suggestion of this study that we might re-think the fundamental building blocks of the visitor experience to include simple things like movement, activity, behavior, and tactile interaction. This information can lead to entirely new methods of creating tours – through human interactions, rather than historical narratives.

Anarchist’s Tag Workshop – The purpose of this portion of the think tank was to take the information learned and discussed in the two previous projects and put it into real-life action. The entire Montpelier House and South Yard was opened to exploration. During the 2+-hour workshop, participants were allowed to go anywhere, touch anything (with a few exceptions), and engage in the house in ways that would utilize the notion of “Distinct Activities” and the categories derived from the “One-Minute Video” projects.

This document presents the results of this workshop. The “Anarchist’s Tag” comments were transcribed, and each tag was numbered and marked with that number on the corresponding floor plan, in the location that the comment was left. In this way, a researcher can see what a person was thinking *where* they were thinking it, and compare that thought with others who left tags in the same location. There is a great deal of information that can be gained from the results of this workshop.

It is also important to take note of the types of comments that were left behind. For instance, were they about an object, the building, the experience, the interpretation, or an inquiry? In categorizing the comments, we can gain a new understanding of how others are actually experiencing the house museum beyond the guided tour and scripted narrative. **Paying attention to all of this information begins to suggest ways that a tour can move from the individual toward a collective experience, yet still maintain interest at an intimate, individual scale.**

“My Montpelier” Exercise – This group engagement asked each participant to bring in two items that expressed how they spend their time outside of work. Once all of the items were

placed on the floor, several requests were made. First, the participants were asked to arrange the items from “least interesting to most interesting.” After this organization was achieved, the group was asked to re-arrange the items, relative to the mission of Montpelier, into “least relevant to most relevant.” Intense debate and discussion suffused this entire exercise. The process was photographed and recorded on video.

Inherent in this process is the de-constructing of official staff hierarchy and a shift of attention to the object itself. An interesting component is that, even though the objects originate from uniquely individual value, the forced collective re-arrangement of the objects shifts the discussion from individual preference to collective agreement. **This is a fascinating process which can inform how museum professionals think of objects, and how those objects reflect not only the particular narrative of Montpelier and the value placed on its collection objects, but also how those objects can inform the larger contemporary narrative.**

“Front Page” Roundtable Discussion – In this discussion, each participant was asked to present one article from the current newspaper that had something to do with Montpelier and its narrative. As we listened, one by one, to those seated at the group table, it became excitingly clear how well suited Montpelier is to engaging the larger community with its narrative. Every story was salient, targeted, and absolutely compelling. The session was electrified by the ease with which the participants managed to locate and speak about a current event in a way that related directly to the historic site.

It is at this moment in the two-day process that the individual perspective begins to overlap with the larger collective story. **This exercise allows for everyone involved to see how a personal, intimate understanding of a narrative can be processed and be re-told for a larger audience – and not lose the power of the intimate perspective.**

Five Category Exercise - The culmination of the think tank was a collective session in which each participant was asked, using the previous two days’ experiences, to propose innovative ideas as to how Montpelier can better engage its visitors and fully integrate the new South Yard slavery narrative with the main house. Each person was asked to offer at least one new idea for each of the primary five categories that define approach of the “Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums” – *Community, Communication, Experience, Environment, and Shelter*.

The transcribed results of this exercise are included in this document, categorized alphabetically. It is at this point that the two days’ worth of exercises meshed, and overlapped. The individual perspective on habitation from day one can be seen informing the collective narratives (and vice versa). Forcing ideas to fall under one of the five stipulated categories focused participants into considering ideas in isolation. This has the benefit of un-tangling what would be an otherwise complicated mess of ideas, bringing these ideas closer to the possibility of implementation.



Think-tank Outline/Agenda/Participants

GOAL: To brainstorm and generate ideas that will help Montpelier rethink the visitor experience in terms of how people interact with the historical places that were once lived-in spaces. Ideas generated will help inform the Interpretive Plan in the future.

PROCESS: Through an understanding of our own personal habitation, we will discuss ways that we might be able to rethink a visitor experience at Montpelier that engages both the intellect as well as the body.

DAY ONE: Individual Narrative

July 7, 2016
1:00pm – 9:30pm
Lewis Hall Classroom {snacks and drinks available}

1:00-1:30	Welcome & Introductions, Welcome
1:30-2:30	“Anarchist’s Guide to Historic House Museums” presentation
2:30-2:45	Break
2:45- 3:30	“One-minute video” review and discussion
3:30-4:30	“Distinct Activities Study”
4:30-7:00	“Anarchist’s Tag”, Main house and slave quarters
7:00-7:30	Team Data collection of tags, reconvene on Portico
8:00-9:30	DINNER provided at Lewis Hall, discussion of Day One

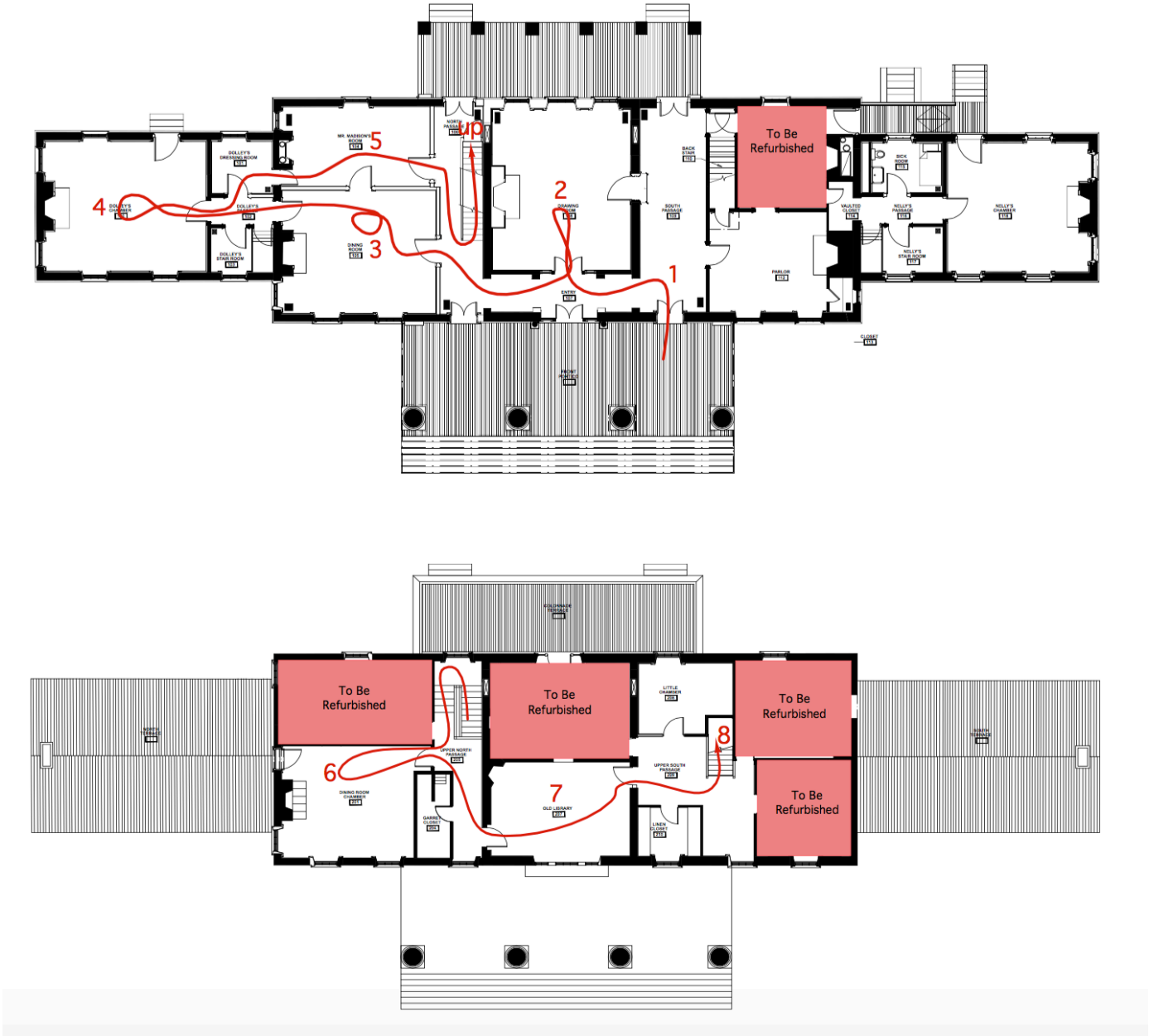
DAY TWO: Collective Narrative

July 8, 2016
8:45am - 5:30pm
Lewis Hall Classroom {snacks and drinks available}

8:45-9:30	BREAKFAST Provided
9:30-11:30	“My Montpelier” exercise
11:30-12:30	“Front Page” roundtable discussion
12:30-1:30	LUNCH provided
1:30-3:30	Five Categories Discussion
3:30-4:30	Closing Discussion with specific results
4:30-5:30	“One more for the road” Social Hour

Frank Vagnone	Twisted Preservation
Christian Cotz	Dir of Ed, JMM
Elizabeth Chew	VP, Museum Div, JMM
Justin Sarafin	Preservation Virginia
Max vanBalgoooy	Engaging Places, consultant
Joe McGill	Slave Dwelling Project
Chris Danemayer	Proun Design, lead on Slavery Exhibit
Ken Turino	Historic New England
Callie Hawkins	Lincoln Cottage
Iris Ford	Anthropology prof, St Mary's College, descendant
Madlynn Anglin	Descendant
Linnea Grim	Dir of Ed, Monticello
Kendall Madigan	Communications, JMM
Lucas Allamon	Interpreter, JMM
Teresa Teixeira	Curatorial, JMM
Jenn Glass	Preservation, JMM
Russell Halley	Interpreter, JMM
Rebecca Hagen	Collections, JMM
Laura Maddox	House Supervisor, JMM
Kyle Stetz	Mngr Student & Fam Prgrms, JMM
Darlene Crawford	Interpreter, JMM
Jen Howell	Dpty Dir, Center for the Const, JMM
Elizabeth Ladner	Research, JMM
Matt Reeves	Archaeology, JMM

Existing Tour Path



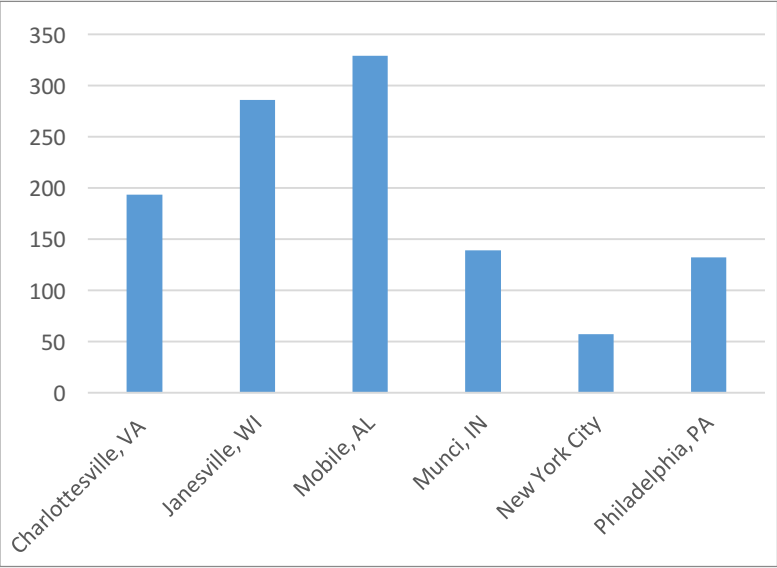
One-minute Video Items

COMMUNITY	COMMUNICATION	EXPERIENCE	ENVIRONMENT	SHELTER
Housing development	Signage	Sitting	Garden	Garden
Parking lot	Handwritten notes	Photos	Bird sounds	Dog house
Green landscape	Music	Dates on a calendar	Stuff on stairs	Tool area
Distant neighbors	Labels	Dog barking	Messy desk	Garage
Vast landscape	Fridge magnets	Petting pets	Stuff on floors	Playground
Wind chime	Family pictures	Using a pillow	Laundry line	Firewood piles
Walking up sidewalk	Music	Petting dog	Family photos	Front door entrance
Shared apartments	Kid's artwork	Kids sleeping	Closets	Holes in walls
Shared building stairs	Fridge notes	Gardening	Kids' toys	Dogs & cats
Pet community	Paintings	Using tools	TV	Workshop
Alleyway	Mail	Coffee smells/drinking	Radio	Outdoor play areas
Sidewalk	Books	Piano playing	Fridge	Additions to houses
Next door buildings	Advertisements	Sewing	Books	Basements
Manicured landscape	Clothing	Eating	Books	Messy closet
	Paint colors	Pizza smells	Books	Running water
	Collections	Music playing	Collections	Sidewalk/path
		Little kids playing	Workshop	Lights on/off
		Cat moving around	Kids' artwork	Decaying wood
		Records playing	Kids' toys	Construction debris
		Creaky floors	Fridge magnets	Restoring a house
		Sleeping kids	Wind chime	Stored items
		Growing food	Records	Paint colors
		Keys/opening door	Horse	
		Bare feet	Sculpture	
		Chopping wood	Multiple-eras	
		Painting	Computers	
		Playing with dogs	Sunshine	

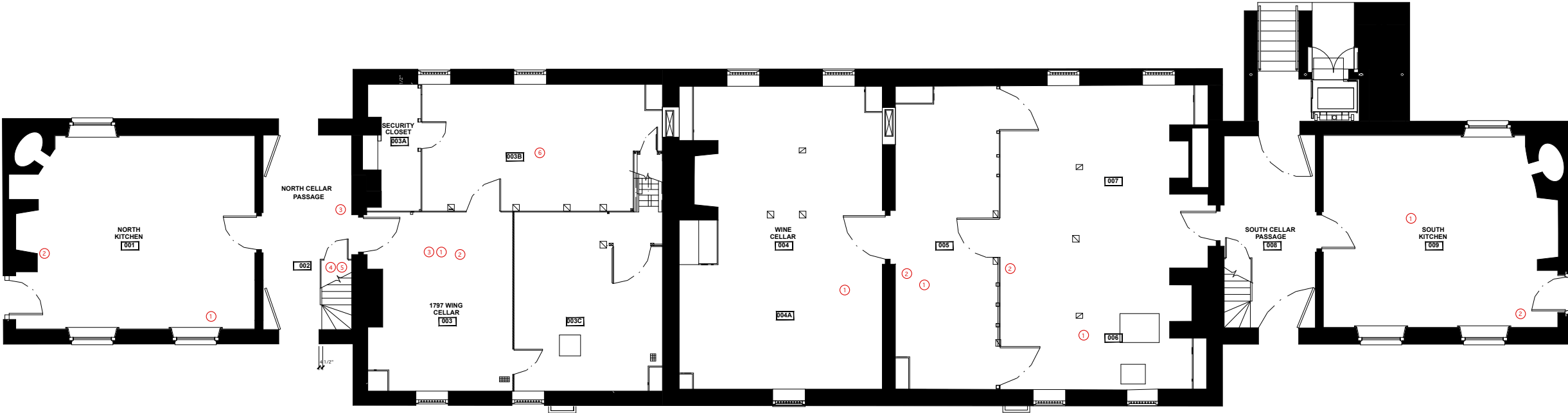
Distinct Activities Study

Montpelier Study Group	Age	Sq. footage of home	# Of distinct activities	Sq. ft. per DA
M	55	1650	18	91.66666667
M	24	1200	9	133.3333333
M	40	3600	21	171.4285714
M	48	1600	6	266.6666667
F	36	1400	8	175
F	27	2100	13	161.5384615
F	28	1000	11	90.90909091
F	32	1200	12	100
F	53	3000	8	375
F	33	1560	24	65
M	31	1300	14	92.85714286
F	36	2000	14	142.8571429
F	47	2400	10	240
F	65	2400	8	300
F	38	1400	21	66.66666667
M	64	4850	8	606.25
M	54	2400	8	300
F	67	2000	10	200
M	39	1250	8	156.25
F	28	1100	8	137.5
F	67	1800	13	138.4615385
M	55	3000	12	250
			12	193.699331

	Built	Square Ft.	DA per. Sq. Ft.
Montpelier	1817	12000	61.95168532



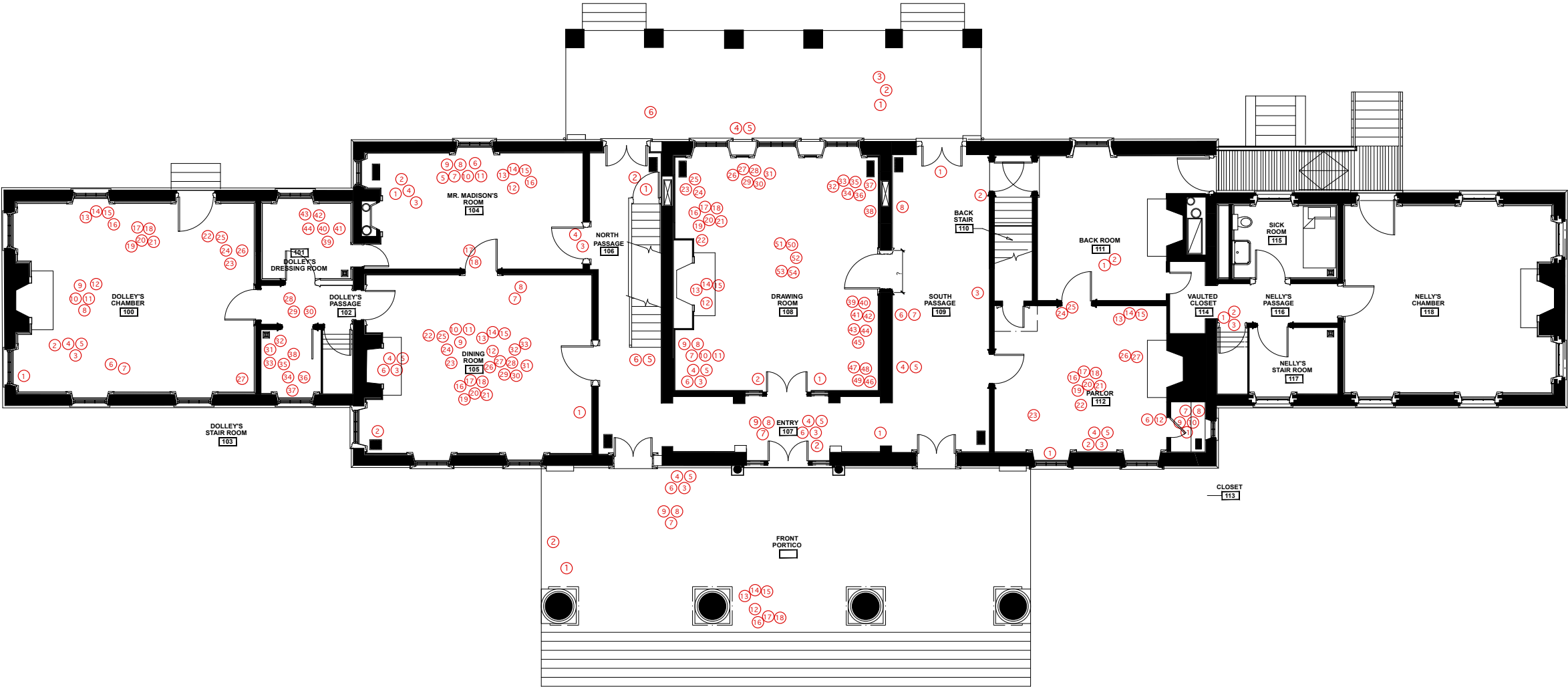
Anarchist's Tags: Basement Plan



BASEMENT FLOOR - Anarchist's Tag Comments

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
			001; 002; 003-B
I want to smell what's cooking	1		
do cooking demonstrations	2		
no comment	3		
use these stairs	4		
let people use these stairs	5		
interpret the hand hewn process	6		
			003:
let people come up and down these stairs	1		
interesting slavery interp. Possibility. Diff. route	2		
let people come up and down these stairs	3		
			004-A
can we have a taste?	1		
			005:
hope some of the exhibitions will be interactive	1		
think about how enslaved individuals would have heard everything going on upstairs.			
They are toiling away and serving while the Madison's are entertaining and going about daily life	2		
			006; 007
can we see the pit?	1		
liked the cellar stair	2		
			009:
this would have been a loud place - make some noise	1		
this door is really difficult to navigate to from south yard - cant imagine having to carry food inside from the kitchen	2		

Anarchist's Tags: First Floor Plan



FIRST FLOOR - Anarchist's Tag Comments

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
			100-A
have this lamp lit at night	1		
			100-B
fire via a flat screen TV in fireplace with sounds (embrace the cheesy!)	1		
			100
love the view of the Temple, wish the trees were smaller	1		
let others manipulate paper and change paper occasionally	2		
make a real library with books that you can really use	3		
use today's paper!	4		
you can't see the temple from this spot! The whole point!!	5		
let guests sit and handle the pocket globe, fossils and maps	6		
let people find sites	7		
let visitors play a game	8		
play the game	9		
room needs more light	10		
add pills and pills of papers	11		
room needs more - too choppy	12		
let people pin where they are from on a globe like this one (immigration etc.)	13		
let guests touch and spin the globes	14		
open the shutters	15		
let guests sit and write a memo	16		
feel the fire crackling on a cold winter's day as I write my correspondences	17		
show a letter in process	18		
write a letter	19		
LET ME WRITE SOMETHING!	21		
let people open this door	22		
potential tour exit point	23		
have the Jefferson map of VA out here where we can see it	24		
let people flip thru	25		
pull these maps up and down	26		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
spin the globe	27		104
pitch black with all the doors closed	28		
let people come up and down these stairs	29		
have guests carry trays and have them serve others on the tour	30		
have room open and explain how silver is cleaned	31		
stand in this space	32		
slave space not Madison place, normally not on tour	33		
interpret what is here with what is found in the south yard	34		
no comment	35		
let guests come in here and let some guests handle some of these	36		
no comment	37		
love being able to look at all the various service pieces and then look out to the vista. Picture getting ready for guests as I watch them approach the house	38		
let people read a letter	39		
put lamp on desk	40		
let guests take packets out of the cubbies to examine	41		
open the shutters to the new back area	42		
"pigeon hole" cabinet in this space	43		
buy a bunch of real old papers that are not valuable and let people handle	44		
I like sitting here with the papers	1		
sit, read letters, pic them up	2		
no comment	3		
let guests sit here read the paper and letters and write a memo	4		
it would be nice to watch an activity outside from this vantage point	5		
restore borders at back landscape	6		
have the smell of coffee coming from this setup	7		
nice view!	8		
nice to contemplate the vista here seated -interpretation of the landscape	9		
read the letters	10		
have folks open the letters	11		
have someone sit here	12		
would love to interpret mourning or death in here	13		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
sit on and feel the bed	14		Dining Room 105
have guide speak from the bed	15		
un make the bed	16		
give people time to stop and study this map	17		
neat to have chair pulled up to dining room for JM	18		
sit at table	1		
let people come into this alcove and look at temple memorial	2		
wonder about what else do you put on mantels?	3		
TAKE ME DOWN!!!	4		
art as education, not just decorative or celebratory IE: napoleon bust as educational of what not to do, contrasting figures as concepts	5		
was it always so clean? How about ash?	6		
I HATE these!	7		
look in the cabinet dwrs	8		
like sitting at the table	9		
perspective on room so different seated	10		
let people sit around the table	11		
have folks sit at the table	12		
love to have tour groups sit	13		
have folks walk around the table	14		
let people take photos!!	15		
open the shutters	16		
hear the sounds of dinner conversations	17		
let people smell the food	18		
I'm picturing stimulating conversation with JM, Dolly and Lafayette	19		
a place for great conversations w friends	20		
obviously the best seat in the house (view of temple)	21		
interpret who cooked the food	22		
get rid of FLAT PEOPLE!	23		
Faux food!	24		
James, why the long face?	25		
cutouts - DON'T LIKE THESE!	26		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
incredible how much the perspective changes when your sitting here	27		107
eat here	28		
keep curtains open	29		
from the usual perspective you cant read what the dishes are - show food	30		
keep the flat people, I find the guests have a very positive reaction; 2. more accurate reproductions, 3. stemware added	31		
allow people to sit, DM could see JM in bed from head of table	32		
remove cardboard figures	33		108
ask questions to reflect on some questions & write them on Chinese lanterns and have a special program to send them up	1		
want to smell food, wood, tobacco smoke etc.	2		
offer a "ropes down" tour after hours for repeat visitors	3		
I wish I could come thru this door	4		
let people tour at night	5		
preserve the vista (glass door??)	6		
give people the experience of coming in front center door	7		
feel the wood floor	8		
would like to be able to open this window	9		
watch a scene or a play	1		108
let the front doors be opened and closed	2		
I want to be able to look at myself in the mirror	3		
I want to play some Beethoven or Bach...so I wish the strings were actually attached (tuned)	4		
no comment	5		
have someone play the piano forte or maybe allow a guest to play>?	6		
change the sheet music that doesn't require a longer keyboard	7		
tune the piano	8		
take a selfi at the piano	9		
I want to hear whatever music would have been played in this room	10		
better lighting	11		
have people sit for tours	12		

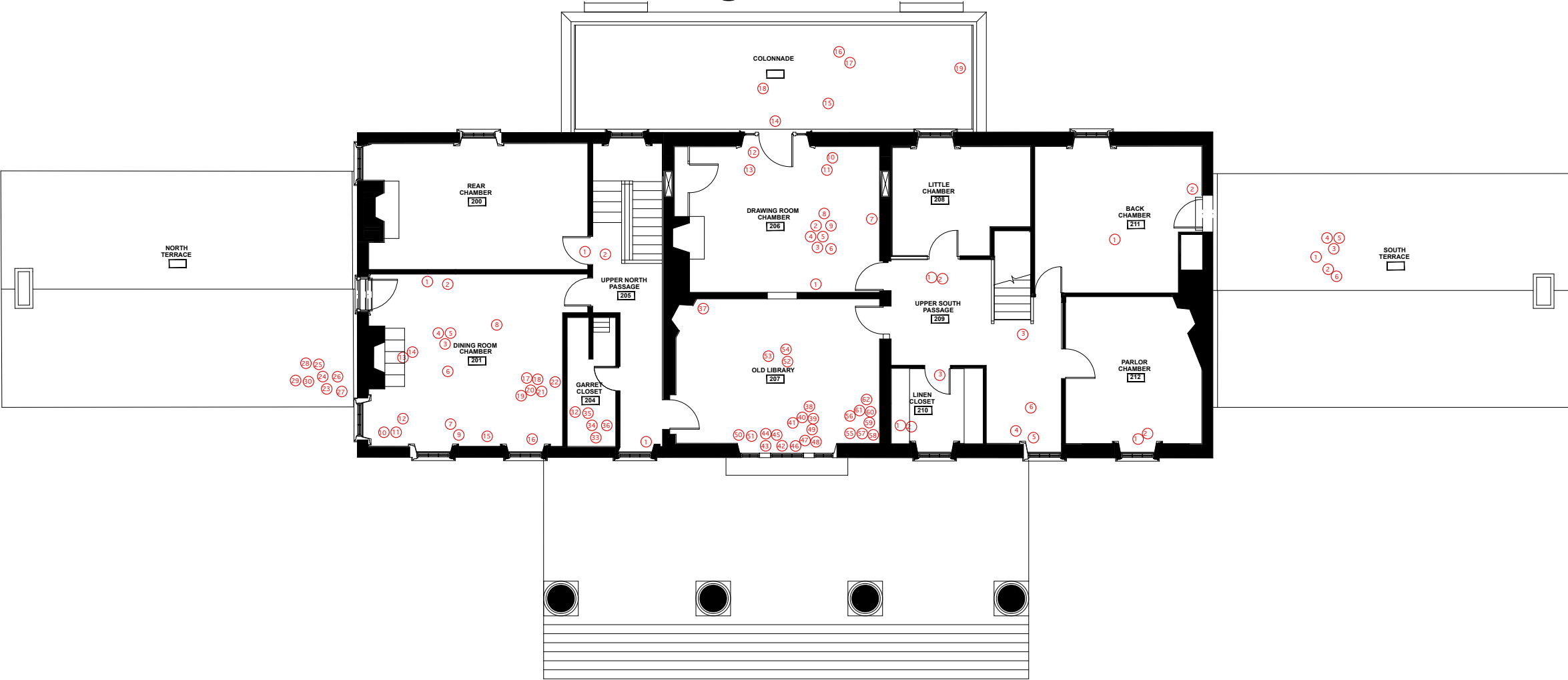
COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
For some of this room for which there is some documentation, do a design challenge where visitors can interpret things from the room	13		
have a fire in the fireplace	14		
look inside the clock	15		
demonstrate the working lamps	16		
there needs to be more things? Of napoleon's	17		
I want to lay back and listen to the grandfather clock and read a book - just like Nelly	18		
like to be able to touch chess pieces and sit down	19		
really important to mention to visitors the idea of experiencing the room sitting down	20		
historic candles that fit	21		
you get a really different perspectives on busts when sitting down	22		
this chess table needs to be bigger and we have cigars and a chess match	23		
let people see the view from this chair	24		
perspective on artwork and busts and arch are totally different when seated	25		
I want to walk through	26		
I would like to open this window and walk through to the colonnade	27		
let people walk through	28		
open windows and doors, feel the cross breeze	29		
let people walk through to the back yard	30		
experience the backyard too	31		
no comment	32		
I want to be able to play with this device	33		
static electric - do it! Duh!	34		
know what this is	35		
like being able to shock (but wont)	36		
take a selfi with this photo	37		
selfi	38		
NO!	39		
remove these lights	40		
interpret how many presidents owned slaves	41		
have someone playing and explain it to visitors and let them play as well	42		
not much of a view	43		
know more abt these medallion	44		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
no comment	45		109
be good to open and close	46		
wish visitors could open and close pocket windows or that e could	47		
be able to slide this	48		
open this window	49		
why should I care?	50		
for being like a private museum, this room isn't cluttered enough	51		
I wish we had reproduction chairs for visitors to sit in and imagine they are guests of the Mad.	52		
house needs better "artified" lighting	53		
this room needs music - some indication of more activity	54		
I love the natural light with the doors open	1		111
get rid of the yellow and black caution tape on the step	2		
make these pictures contemporary art installations related to lost paintings LOOK at Wilton House program for inspiration	3		
LOVES the quotes!	4		
for self guided tours - what are these frames??	5		
I like that these two pictures are a big deal but no Deal (?) definition(?)	6		
view of the clock from the drawing room	7		
change the lighting - too contemporary	8		
get behind the scenes info on the chairs	1		112
let folks sit here	2		
Def. let people open the windows or at least drapes	1		112
no time limit	2		
let people see the clocks insides	3		
what's in here? Open and expose	4		
no comment	5		
let visitors view Nell's room from this closet	6		
make out with my bf in here!	7		
watch people	8		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
interpret the wing and south yard from here	9		
can I touch the wavy glass?	10		
talk about this window	11		
let people feel that this is carved stone NOT wood	12		
I love sitting here, real candy would be nice but liability??	13		
no comment	14		
give away free candy	15		
I do resent the interp of leisure - do some work!	16		
I like the feminine space	17		
let people lie here sit	18		
open both curtains	19		
no comment	20		
interpret who made the furniture i.e.: slaves?	21		
angel the daybed so that it faces out	22		
get a pic of me in these specs!	23		
contrast modern AC with other ways to cool the house	24		
explain what's behind this door	25		
explain these plates??	26		
touch these plates	27		
			116 door to cellar
using key code access, guides could enter up thru this staircase allowing constitution			
room to be better and more fully utilized by the public	1		
want to explore downstairs	2		
let folks down these stairs	3		
			118
have folks write notes here	1		
make better use of this room or at least get rid of plastic chairs	2		
			Front Portico
allow people to sit here	1		
VISTA! On green bench	2		
find fingerprints in the bricks and point them out to guests	3		
Thumbs Up!	4		
I want to contemplate life, watch nature and read a book	5		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
cocktail	6		
was their porch furniture?	7		
no comment	8		
keep this chair	9		
redwood	10		
touch bricks	11		
ditch the maps	12		
get rid of these maps	13		
I want to roll down the hill!	14		
let the stains show and wear	15		
no comment	16		
go up in a balloon	17		
talk abt this landscape and what it looked like historically	18		
			back colonnade
this lawn would be the perfect spot for a Hamilton sing a long	1		
have a back yard Bar B q for visitors	2		
more shade benches for people to sit and think abt back yard	3		
id like to sit here and enjoy a cold beverage (or hot choc winter time)	4		
interpretation of the landscape	5		
THIS VIEW TO SLAVE QTRS. YARD IS VERY VERY IMPORTANT - move benches to make sure visitors don't ignore it	6		

Anarchist's Tags: Second Floor Plan

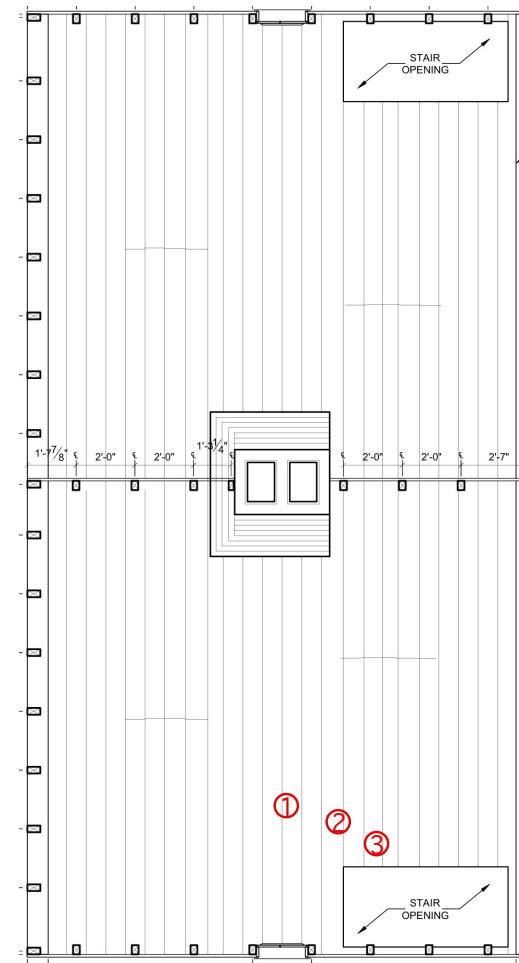
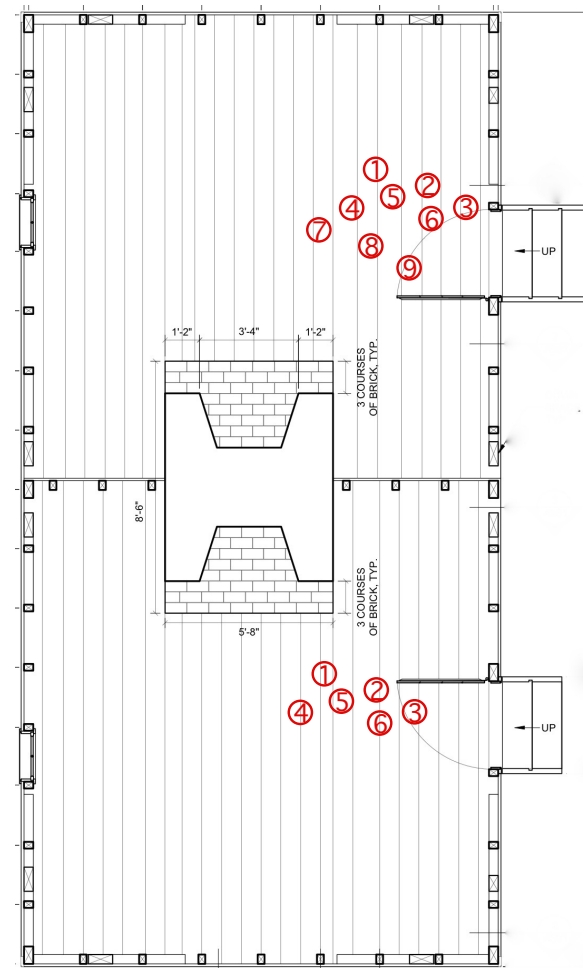


SECOND FLOOR - Anarchist's Tag Comments

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
			200
go in	1		
why closed? People LOVE seeing storage and in process stuff??	2		
			205
wish I could see the attic	1		
			206: Colonnade Roof
keep exposed architectural features forever!	1		
this room is the ONLY one that explains why the looks like it does today and tells a great story!	2		
have bricks in here for people to actually hold	3		
keep this room as is	4		
great potential in this room to interpret craftsmanship	5		
put these ideas in an app	6		
show a picture of these	7		
redo arch	8		
this space would be awesome if left as the restoration room but still furnished	9		
NOT turn this back into a period room	10		
room full of repros people can touch , maybe self0guided	11		
let us out onto terrace	12		
love this terrace	13		
so interesting that you cant see back inside	14		
Ill take access into any terraces - going outdoors is awesome	15		
have JM give a speech from up here	16		
a place of Observation and Control	17		
I would love to stand out here and watch lawn games	18		
this space has an awesome view of the south yard	19		
			209
what's behind this door?	1		

COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
tip jar! We will split it at the end of the month :)	2		210
LOVE THESE NAILS! (carpenters work, nail maker slavery story)	3		
Love to site here - constitution on here to see	4		
take up carpet and shine up	5		
great spot to sit and read	6		
Use this room for contemporary art installations interp. The Constitution	1		211
fill with stuff that guests can touch	2		
put something in this room	3		
interpret using this door as the method of observing what went on in the south yard.	1		212
no comment	2		
this space is very passive, maybe create a bedroom people can interact with?	1		South Terrace
let people move freely in these rooms	2		
interpret the brick making process	1		
incredible view/access to the south yard - tells a MAJOR story	2		
Love the shingles and chimney	3		
Feeling of superiority - over people in south yard from up here	4		
somehow people need to feel the pain of this view	5		
inter[ret the south yard from here	6		

Anarchist's Tags: Slave Quarters Plans



COMMENT	Tag #	Intended object/detail	Room number & Room name
			Slave Cabin loft
can picture whispering during the night between those sleeping up here	1		
It's fucking hot up here	2		
cant stand up easily & move around	3		
			Slave Cabin North
I hope we can burn fires in here	1		
no message	2		
have a fire in here	3		
love being in this structure	4		
encourage people to operate all of the hardware	5		
sleep overs	6		
"this doesn't look that bad"!	7		
assemble a "family unit"	8		
I want to go upstairs	9		
			Slave Cabin South
this is so hot & would have been so cold in the winter	1		
how many people lived & slept here	2		
what would a soundscape be like in here?	3		
please outfit so can compare to main house	4		
living history in the south yard	5		
a place for consideration	6		
			Granny Millie
interpret how these cabins were built	1		

5 Category Innovation Ideas

COMMUNITY

Appeal to African Americans

Ask the local communities what would bring them to Montpelier. We assume we know what visitors want - but do we?

Bring back MUD Camp/Nature Camp (better advertising could work)

Create a Diverse ADVISORY GROUP

Develop better relationship with JMU - get every Freshman here every year

Do an exhibit on Madison and Slavery in an empty store front on the C'ville Mall

Expand diversity of the staff

Free trolley rides from the town of Orange: to strengthen local ties and promote local business

Get conservative visitors to think critically

Have local artists make their own interpretations of the titles on the South Passage artwork

Incorporate Social Justice Issues into the interpretation

Invite Bird watching groups

Invite the recreational community to come onto the landscape - with site/walk/running paths & trails that circumnavigate the site and encourage repeat visitation

Keep doing what you are doing

Keep working to learn more about and engage our descendant community

More Community Events & Celebrations

Partner with academic institutions to bring in young scholars to spend a weekend off season staying in the housing

Partner with other groups to expand diversity relationships

Provide place on a website for the descendant community to connect with Montpelier and with each other

Reach out to all people between F-burg, C-ville, Culpepper, Farmville to remind them that they are the descendants of TJ, JM et al. How would they have been influenced by events and concepts at Montpelier?

Secure a location in C-ville of some grandeur to reach out to the community, whether transient or perm. To spark interest in JM and encourage visitation

Serve as a research resource for descendants

Use Focus Groups with members from the community

Visit with African American community people in immediate area and talk with them about tours/exhibits and ask what and how they can be involved

With the students above: having tours and most importantly discussions in the main house and slave quarters (like what we did today) current issues & the constitution

Young Hispters in Charlottesville

COMMUNICATION

ALLOW PHOTOGRAPHS!!!

App with location based object info (across the property) see FRICK app

Better communication of things to do and see across the site.

Build a visitor services department

Collect email addresses of visitors. Send emails RE: continued relevance of Madison, etc.

Communicate with outside diverse organizations

Conduct pre-tour assessments - why they came> What they know? What they want to know?

Constitution tour should be a discussion - it does not need to be in the house. Trying to accomplish two different things at one time - signature tours? Constitution tour

Directory stations throughout the site

Diversify the staffing of the communications effort

Have a designated #Hashtag for visitors that they can use to live tweet as they take a tour or walk through the grounds

Highlight the Center for the Constitution

Implement a wall where people can share reactions - COMMUNICATION must include listening.

Instead of docent-led tours, position one person in each room to answer questions

Kiosk at VC entrance with site map and activities of the day - MORE SIGNS!!

Let guests participate and sometimes take the podium

Make Center programs available to visitors (cost etc.)

Make sure that your public communication has a sensitive understanding of diverse audiences

Making collections objects available online

Market the site differently to appeal to the public IE: interpret the DuPont buildings and other post-Madison owners

Organize communication distribution specifically for a diverse audience

Photography in the house

Reproduce primary documents that illustrate why things look a certain way

Rigorous technique (as well s content) training for interpreters.

Self-guided tours with interpreters readily available

Series of Montpelier staff talks on weekends on a variety of topics

Set up a spot on the grounds where there can be debates between interpreters RE: issues of the era or of modern issues. Let these be somewhat scripted at first, but then evolve organically.

Sign out front entrance that says FREE

Taking interpreters to schools.

Taking voter registration and civic engagement programs to communities

Tell the world the story of our work with the descendent community

Use paper/news/websites on ipads to show relevance of JM's work

Welcome the sounds of children in the house - historically appropriate (possible slave conversations)

EXPERIENCE

2nd Floor: Keep renovation room and two bedrooms self-guided and tactile. Bed with covers turned down or unmade OR Dolly's bath tub in one - Chamber pot

Add taste, have a functioning kitchen (if health laws permit) allow people to taste what is being prepared

Allow visitors to sit on chairs in the house so they engage with the space (Tactile)

Change tour route to go through the South yard FIRST

CONSTANT connection between the South Yard and the Main House experience (Like Laura Plantation)

Do more "Slave Dwelling Project" nights - more often

Don't "ghetto-ize" the African-American Experience at Montpelier

Enter the house on all tours from the cellar

Fewer stanchions (in rooms where it makes sense)

Figure out a way to let visitors experience the house as a white person and as a black person would have

Fully integrate the slavery narrative INSIDE of the main house

Give visitors an (self-guided) experiential tour -- A list of activities to accomplish which demonstrates lived experience of all people at Montpelier

Hamilton Sing-along w/ songs where Madison is mentioned

Have a day or week just like last night - no tours, no stanchions- track visitation for satisfaction levels

I want to walk through on of the Drawing room windows

In the old library, have a designated cubby of letters that visitors could pull out and interact with. Research can provide the text for JM's correspondence

Let people sit in reproduction French furniture in the drawing room

Let tours wander through the house on their own terms - free flow - NOT LINEAR

Living historians/Self-guided tours/Interpreters on demand/Audio tours

Make sure that the objects in the house relate to the slavery narrative (Like Laura Plantation)

Music in the parlor

Offer a larger plantation hike outside of the core visitor area, to understand the magnitude of the Montpelier Plantation and enslaved community

Offer postcard @ end of tour for people to share ideas they learned with friends and family

Offer tours at night! The "Montpelier NO-ROPES Tour"

Open up the house at certain times of the day to let visitor's just roam through the house. For this 30 minute period you guide yourself with no pre-set route

Presence of tour guides to resent information, then step back and allow visitors to explore and view at their own pace

Shock people with the "electrical machine"

Start the tour in the South yard and move onto the Main House (Like Whitney Plantation)

To get younger students/hipsters here - try a winetasting event

Tours should include terraces

Unguided tours with sound scaping (sound mapping)

Use actors to portray JM & DM and allow visitors to shadow them ALA: "Sleep no more"

Use Arlington House and Slave quarters interpretively

Visitors sit in the drawing room and dining room

Way to "Vote" visually on the most meaningful amendment to the constitution

We haven't talked about the Visitors Center, where most guests first interact with the staff - that needs to set the stage for the experience and set expectations

ENVIRONMENT

A couple rooms full of reconstructions that everybody can touch

Allow as many items in the South yard to be antiques (not repro) to give coherence/main house environment

Allow looking back at the South Yard from the Terrace

Allow South yard and House to have peeling paint - NOT PERFECT

BE MESSY - these houses were lived in - IE: FAKE PEE in chamber pots

Better lighting and open doors and windows

Create a contemporary art piece in the study representing JM's book filled messy office

Determine how the physical experience between the slave and the Madison's can be FELT

DITCH THOSE WAL-MART TORCHIERES

Fix carpet in dining room to match the visitor accounts (Pull back edges from the wall)

Focus new purchases on the things that can be used and touched

Furnish slave quarters accurately IE: lots of bedding etc., which additional visuals of what the space would have been like

Have 1 or more people in vaguely period dress roam the hose while guests are here, playing pianoforte, or koo or turning on lamps. They may or may not engage the guests

Interpret the silver and china

Let a school group curate certain rooms in the Mansion - longer term project during winter months

Make collections (books, papers, table, settings) look more messy

Make rooms more messy; full, textured

Make the Slave Quarters feel real and used

More "messy" areas like closets upstairs or letter filing areas

More of JM's funny nerdy stuff

Much more clutter, smells, old papers and piles of stuff

Nellie's Parlor angle daybed to face visitors

Outfit the slave dwelling spaces with repro bedrolls and items of domestic life and invite visitors to lie in them and experience what it was like to live in the space

Provide more places to sit

Relate the decorative objects in the Main House to the Slave Narrative

Replace "ghost" frames w/ appropriate paintings

Replace some furnishings with reproes and allow visitors to sit, lay, experience home

Room or two made up entirely of touchable repros (Upstairs? Guided space?)

Seriously relate the pathway experience from the South Yard into the Main House (fully integrate)

Sit at the Dining table (need to rethink the installation of the JM original)

Specialty facilitated discussions in the rooms SITTING on the furniture with food perhaps

The main house should look more lived in - It makes it more believable and reinforces the idea of JM as a flawed man

They might be silent interpreters or perhaps talk only to each other, unless directly engaged by guest

Upstairs bed chamber turn sewing table to face visitors

SHELTER

A hands-on (kid oriented?) exploratory space as part of a museum at VC

Better paths to bathrooms and temple - wheelchairs?

Chairs for contemplation of South Terrace

Construct a student group arrival center - or anything better than nothing we have now!

Contemporary sculpture on the grounds

Create more spaces inside and outside for reflection and contemplation

Create new brochure that includes the big house and slave cabins in the same frame

Create paths to house that follow exactly how enslaved community would travel from the South Yard to the big house - where would they enter? Paths from field house to other places? With artwork

Cut pine alley trees so you can see temple

Determine the value of building materials to slave costs and living

Expose parts of the building and slave quarters to talk about slave forced labor

Fully restore the landscape including pine alley S. grove, back lawn and its boundaries

Greater accessibility - trans, shuttles, restroom accessibility

Houses! Wagons! Carriages! Show plantation activity - a field of tobacco - a hogs house

Integrate the stories from the South yard and the Main House structures

Keep the restoration room as is and add furniture and objects so it tells multiple stories

Make fires in slave quarters and smokehouses and kitchen to make them more tactile (smell)

Make front carriage road rubber path to simulate clay

Make paths more accessible to mobility challenged

Make sure that the slave quarters do not feel so perfect and curated - be honest

Make the South Yard surface real. Swept clay yards and weeds

More benches in the proximity of the slave quarters

Offer a shuttle bus to Gilmore

Open doors in South passage when weather permits

Open the front doors

Red-wash the outside of the big house

Relate building materials with slave labor and craftsmanship

Relate the main house furnishings back to the slave experience (value, labor, time to maintain etc.)

Repairs to sidewalks (tripping hazards)

Since this was a farm - make it into a FARM. Have vegetable gardens - make it a CSA - if appropriate. Let visitors see and experience the farm activity

Student classrooms and bathrooms!!!!

Visual displays which depicts and explains # of distinct Activates

When South yard structures are complete, get rid of grass/lawn and make the spaces around the buildings look like actual work space IE: trodden ground, paths etc.