

Comprehensive Garden Notes

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

February 9, 2024

These notes are written and periodically updated by Hillwood horticulture and interpretation staff. They have been used by garden docents for over a decade as an important source of information about the garden rooms at Hillwood. The room notes are organized into an interpretive framework of design, features, and the renovations/restorations that the museum undertakes in efforts to maintain the high standards set by Marjorie Post. This framework mirrors the interpretive framework docents use when discussing the gardens with visitors on tours.

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General Estate Information

Marjorie Merriweather Post & Hillwood's Gardens—Interpretive Messages

- Marjorie Post incorporated styles, elements, features, and aesthetics that she found pleasing from her previous estates into Hillwood's gardens.
- The design of each garden is influenced by historical gardens of Europe and Japan during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hillwood's gardens feature components from these garden traditions.
- Marjorie Post would customize a well-designed landscape to her desires.
- Marjorie Post insisted the landscaping complement the mansion's interior layout and extend her spaces for entertaining and enjoyment. Her philanthropic activities often incorporated her gardens, for instance hosting garden parties to benefit a cause.
- Marjorie Post continued to improve and make changes to the gardens at Hillwood until her death.
- Marjorie Post owned estates that were built during the American Country Place era (1880s-1930s): the Boulders in Greenwich, CT; Hillwood on Long Island, NY; Tregaron in Washington, DC; and Hillwood in Washington, DC (called Arbremont by the original owners). She adopted and retained this style of estate building, which was popular in the first half of her life, until her death.
- Marjorie Post used mature tree and shrub specimens to make the new garden look established.
- More emphasis was given to plants that were at their best during the spring and fall seasons – those times of the year in which Marjorie Post was in residence.
- Marjorie Post preferred plants that were representative of her time period and popular or new plants of her time. Many of these plants and/or cultivars are no longer available commercially.
- The work of 12-15 outside garden staff kept Marjorie Post's gardens in top shape. Most garden staff did not live at the estate, but there were occasional exceptions over the years. Earl Loy, who worked for Marjorie Post for 35 years and lived offsite, was her head gardener. His oral history interviews have provided invaluable information and shaped the museum's understanding of life and work at Hillwood (see *Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post and A Garden for All Seasons: Marjorie Post's Hillwood*). Today, the museum employs 14 full-time horticulture staff to care for the gardens and the greenhouses, and approximately 90 volunteers assist that staff.
- Today, Hillwood's spectacular gardens continue to reflect Marjorie Post's original vision for them. Contemporary use of the newest and best plants available honors Marjorie Post's own passion for what was novel and of the highest quality in her day. Moreover, today's garden "seasonality" offers visitors year-round interest rather than the two-season (spring and fall) focus associated with Post's residency.

Arbremont

- Marjorie Post purchased the estate in 1955 from Colonel and Mrs. Henry Parsons Erwin. The Erwins called the estate Arbremont. Arbremont was built in 1926; the architect was John Diebert.
- “The Rocks,” an estate across the Rock Creek valley from Arbremont, was built for Mrs. Erwin’s sister, Mrs. David St. Pierre Gaillard. The sisters’ maiden name was Blodgett; Helen is the sister who lived at Arbremont and Monica is the sister who lived at “The Rocks.”

Landscape Architects associated with Marjorie Post

- Marion Cruger Coffin designed the landscape of the original Hillwood on Long Island in the 1920s for Marjorie Post.
- Charles Platt and Ellen Biddle Shipman designed the landscape of Marjorie Post’s first estate in Washington, DC, Tregaron. Originally named The Causeway, the 1912 estate was built for James Parmelee in nearby Cleveland Park.
- Willard B. Gebhart designed the paths, terraces, steps, and most of the gardens of Arbremont in the mid-1920s.
- Rose Greely designed the reflecting pool garden with goldfish (now the site of the French parterre) of Arbremont for the Erwins.
- Marjorie Post hired Innocenti and Webel, a landscape architectural firm from Long Island, New York to help her with alterations she planned to make to the gardens at Hillwood. Umberto Innocenti and Richard Webel:
 - Developed a master plan for Hillwood;
 - Redesigned the roads to create a grander experience and smoother flow when entering or exiting the property. Included the addition of retaining walls along the lower drive and a second exit in the motor court.
 - Designed the French parterre garden.
- Marjorie Post hired Perry Wheeler, a local Washington landscape designer, to redesign several garden spaces and modify some of the Innocenti & Webel designs at Hillwood. Perry Wheeler was known for his work in Georgetown (DC), and for assisting in the design and planting of the White House Rose Garden in 1961, which occurred after his work with Post on Hillwood’s rose garden. Perry Wheeler’s work is associated with:
 - Motor court ellipse
 - Rose garden
 - Friendship Walk and Four Seasons Overlook- hired by Marjorie Post’s friends
 - The breakfast room fountain area
 - Dog cemetery
 - Placement of the lamps and marble sphinxes in the French parterre
- Shogo Myaida was hired by Marjorie Post to redesign an “oriental” inspired garden already existing on the property. Immigrating to the U.S. from Japan in 1922, Myaida had already established a solid career by the time he designed the Japanese-style garden. Myaida’s work blended American and Japanese gardening traditions.

Other properties related to Marjorie Post:

- The Boulders, Greenwich, Connecticut
- New York City penthouse
- Hillwood, Long Island, New York
- Mar-A-Lago, Palm Beach, Florida
- Camp Topridge, Adirondacks, New York
- Tregaron, Washington, DC

Many of these properties had similarities to Hillwood, DC:

- Long winding driveway- Hillwood, Long Island and Tregaron
- Porte cochere- Mar-A-Lago and the New York City penthouse building
- Putting green- Hillwood, Long Island; Mar-A-Lago; Camp Topridge; and Tregaron
- Dacha- Camp Topridge and Tregaron
- Greenhouses- Hillwood, Long Island and Tregaron

Other commonalities between Hillwood, DC and Hillwood, Long Island:

- A view of a formal parterre garden from Marjorie Post's bedroom window
- Rose pergola
- Variegated boxwoods

Other commonalities between Hillwood, DC and Tregaron:

- Street lamps and limestone curbing lining the drives
- Compass set into the pavers of the pavilion garden
- Motor court with circle of ivy, boxwood, and central sculpture
- Mass plantings of azaleas, dogwood, and other spring flowering trees, shrubs, and flowers
- Japanese-style garden

Current Status of Marjorie Post's Estates

- Hillwood, Long Island is now part of the Long Island University campus.
- The Tregaron Conservancy maintains walking paths on the former Tregaron estate. The Washington International School operates its middle and upper schools on 6 acres of the former estate, including the mansion and dacha.
- Mar-A-Lago is an exclusive club owned by Donald Trump.
- Camp Topridge is privately owned.

Porte Cochere and Motor Court

Design

- The brick walls enclosing the front courtyard provided a motor court in the Gebhart design with only one entrance and exit on the west side. Innocenti and Webel extended the north wall and made an opening to create an exit to the existing driveway, which became the service drive (the service drive is now known as the upper gate drive or upper drive). Additionally, they designed the main drive (now called the lower gate drive or lower drive) that enters the motor court on the west side.
- The porte cochere (pronounced: port co share) was added during Marjorie Post's renovations to the mansion in 1955-57. (A porte cochere is a roofed structure extending from the entrance of a building over an adjacent driveway and sheltering those getting in or out of vehicles.) The ramps were built in 1995 to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and replaced the existing steps.
- Perry Wheeler designed the ivy and boxwood plantings and the brick edging around the elliptical center bed.
- Since 2014 non-historic tables, chairs, and umbrellas are placed during warm weather months in the eastern section of the motor court as a place for visitors to rest.

Plants

- The central ellipse is planted with swags of English ivy and capped with small "arrows" of yellow variegated boxwood. The arrow shapes connect the design to the central sculpture of Eros who is reaching for an arrow. This ellipse design was most likely inspired by a similar design found in the motor court at Tregaron. The inner bed of the ellipse (between Eros and the swags) has been enhanced since 2015 with colorful seasonal plantings.
- The brick walls are faced with restored plantings of azaleas, rhododendrons, yews, dogwoods, clematis, and camellias that originally graced the beds.
- The beds along the mansion and in front of the porte cochere are filled with azaleas, trees and other shrubs that have been rejuvenated, replaced, or restored.
- The porte cochere has two full plant change-outs, one in summer and another in winter. Seasonal interest is added for spring and fall.

Statuary

- Eros, the Greek god of love and son of Aphrodite, is depicted as a willowy youth. He draws an arrow with one hand while shielding a kid (a young goat), symbol of fertility, with the other. The statue is made of Boticeanni marble. Post purchased Eros from dealer Albert Georges in Paris, in September 1956. It is purported to be from Chateau Vaux le Penil, once belonging to Princess Faucigny Lucinge, and predating 1830.
- On the roof, a 19th-century weathervane depicts an eagle in flight. It is constructed of copper and was once gilded.

- The small metal eagles on the mansion roof (and on some outbuildings) are snow guards: they help prevent the snow and ice from falling off the roof in large pieces.

Restoration Details

- Declining boxwood in the central ellipse were replaced with Buxus microphylla 'Golden Triumph' in 2023.

French Parterre

Design

- The French parterre is an outdoor extension of the French drawing room, which houses much of Marjorie Post's collection of 18th-century French decorative arts. From the French drawing room, Marjorie Post's guests spilled into the garden through the glass-paneled doors, which opened onto the terrace.
- The French parterre reflects Marjorie Post's passion for the culture and luxury of 18th-century France that is also evident in her second-floor bedroom and dressing room overlooking the garden. Marjorie Post's bedroom window at her previous estate Hillwood, Long Island, also looked down on a formal parterre garden, with paths and low boxwoods.
- The garden is indicative of a formal residential garden in 18th-century France, with Moorish influences represented in the formal plantings, gravel walks, marble statuary, fountains, and trickling water. (Moorish refers to the garden styles of the group of North African Arab people who ruled parts of Spain from 711 until 1492.)
- The term "parterre" [French <par, on + terre, earth] refers to a formal garden with regular beds and paths in a pattern.
- The French parterre was designed for Marjorie Post by Umberto Innocenti and Richard Webel. (Before Marjorie Post purchased Hillwood, the space had a reflecting pool garden with goldfish designed by Rose Greely for the Erwins.)
- Innocenti & Webel's design inspiration for the beds of clipped boxwood was taken from a 17th-century ironwork design.

Plants

- A high wall of carefully clipped English ivy growing on steel frames surrounds the garden.
- The formal plantings of boxwood are arranged in a graceful scroll design, held together by a band of slightly taller yellow variegated boxwood.
- The flowers along the ivy walls are changed three times a year (pansies, annuals, and chrysanthemums) to reflect a similar style and tradition of Marjorie Post.

Statuary and Hardscape

- Water falls from the marble swan fountain into a pool lined with mosaic glass tile. It then spills into a limestone channel (or rill) from the terrace to the central pool. In the west end of the garden, a small frog fountain, at the base of the Diana sculpture, spews water into a basin also lined with glass tile. This water also feeds the central pool. These water elements are typical of 8th-century Moorish gardens.
- Two lead fountain figures located in the central pool are putti (Italian, 'little children,' singular is putto), one on a seahorse and the other on a dolphin. They represent the elements of light and air. (According to *Oxford Art Online*, a putto is a chubby, naked child represented in art since classical times, often as a decorative feature. Originally derived from ancient representations of

Eros, the Greek god of love, since the Renaissance putti have often been associated with his Roman counterpart, Cupid, who is normally represented as a naked winged boy with bow and arrows.) The putti are 20th-century English and were bought from Parke Bernet on June 7, 1956.

- Diana (the Roman goddess of the hunt) is made of terracotta (a reddish clay that is fired and can be used for sculptures) and is a 19th-century replica of a marble statue that is now in the Louvre (pronounced: loov) Museum. The original sculpture was made in 1710 by French sculptor Antoine Coysevox (pronounced: kwa sa voe). It is actually a portrait sculpture of Marie Adélaïde of Savoy. In 1697, Marie Adélaïde (1685-1712) became the wife of Louis, Duke of Burgundy, Dauphin of France (1682-1712). Louis was the grandson of King Louis XIV. Marie and Louis were the parents of the future King Louis XV of France (1710-1774). To look as if she is returning from the hunt, Diana has been strategically placed against a background of evergreen hemlocks. Diana is said to have come from the castle of Madame de Lavale de Germain, France. It was bought from Albert Georges in Paris, September 1956, at the same time Marjorie Post bought the Eros sculpture in the motor court (the dealer would only guarantee that the sculpture had been made "before 1830").
- The original swan fountain was thought to be terracotta. It was later found to be made of plaster, "a compound representing marble." Due to the climate in this area and its outside location, this fountain was not appropriate for outdoor use and a replica was carved from Kasota limestone from Minnesota by Washington sculptor Vincent Tonelli. This soft stone did not withstand the weather and the detail began to fade. The current swan fountain is another replica carved using Tennessee pink marble in 1999 by Constantine Seferlis, sculptor and stone carver (he is known for his work at the Washington National Cathedral).
- Two lamps flanking the swan fountain were added in 1962 by Perry Wheeler. The tops of the lamps look like a crown from which an armature is attached. The bottom part is an elongated half sphere with glass panels etched with a star design, capped by a pinecone shaped finial. They were made in the early 1900s in America and were restored in 1999.
- The white marble sphinxes on the garden terrace may represent dancers of the Paris Opera, Marie Salle and Marie Camargo. Sphinxes became popular decoration of French palace gardens in the 1700s, reviving an ancient Egyptian and Greek art form that is often more familiar to us today. (To see images of French sphinx sculptures from the 1700s, search on Google for images from Madame de Pompadour's Chateau de Menars, the royal palaces of Versailles and Fontainebleau, and even Dumbarton Oaks.) Sphinxes are mythical animals usually with a human head; those popular in 18th-century French gardens were often female lion-sphinxes, sometimes with elaborate coiffures and accoutrements. The marble sphinxes were bought from Alavoine of Paris, September 22, 1961.
- The two terracotta sphinxes outside the French parterre are idealized portraits of aristocratic French ladies. There is speculation that they may represent Marie Antoinette and her friend, the Princess of Lamballe. The terracotta sphinxes were originally on the terrace inside the garden but were moved in 1962 by Perry Wheeler when Marjorie Post acquired the marble sphinxes. These are made of terra cotta, a fine clay that allows delicate modeling but is quite fragile; we cover them during the winter. The originals are in the gardens of Menars on the Loire, built in 1646. The terracotta sphinxes were purchased from McMillen Inc in January 1957.

- The 20th-century French limestone urns on the balustrade (the low wall made of short posts topped by a rail) are decorated with pinecone caps and loops of myrtle, symbolizing love and victory.
- The 20th-century French limestone urns in the niches opposite the central pool are decorated with a pinecone cap (symbol of regeneration) and twisted fluting of laurel (symbol of honor and glory). These were added to the garden by Perry Wheeler in 1962.
- The tables in wrought iron with circular glass tops have bases composed of painted flower stems. They are original to Post's time. Their manufacturer is unknown.

Restoration Details

- The entire garden was restored in 1998/2000 due to failing waterworks and infrastructure, and damage to the limestone, pools, and sculpture.
- The ivy on the brick wall was removed after Marjorie Post's death. It was replaced on a new trellis system during the 1998/2000 restoration.
- In 2013, the English boxwood were replaced with a disease resistant Japanese cultivar ('Morris Dwarf'), and the soil in the beds was renovated. (The slightly taller clumps of boxwood with leaves edged in yellow are a different cultivar—or type—known as 'Golden Dream.') The boxwoods were replaced because the English boxwood had become susceptible to diseases.
- The 'Golden Dream' boxwood never performed as well as desired and were replaced with *Buxus microphylla* 'Golden Triumph' in 2022.
- In 2023, various repairs were made to the limestone in the garden. New sections of coping replaced cracked pieces in the center pool. The balusters on the porch were reproduced and replaced. The limestone diamond-shaped porch stones were also removed and relaid.
- Also in 2023, the planting in front of the porch was renovated. The plants from the 2000 restoration grew out of scale and covered the porch and statuary. New plants were added that grow slowly and stay small.

Rose Garden

Design

- The design of the garden consists of the center circular bed, surrounded by four crown-shaped beds and eight crescent-shaped beds. All beds are divided by intricately laid brick and stone pathways.
- The basic design and circulation of the garden, as well as the pergola (a shaded walkway formed by vertical posts supporting an open lattice) and flagstone steps to the putting green, are elements of the 1920s Gebhart design for Arbremont. Marjorie Post chose to keep the steps and the pergola, complete with climbing roses and white wisteria.
- The interior of the rose garden was re-designed for Marjorie Post by Perry Wheeler in 1956. Perry Wheeler was known for his work in Georgetown (DC), and for assisting in the design and planting of the White House Rose Garden in 1961, which occurred after his work with Post on Hillwood's rose garden. Additionally, he was well known for using various paving materials to create intricate patterns in pathways.
- Perry Wheeler incorporated the materials of brick and flagstone from the existing features in his design. During Marjorie Post's time at Hillwood, a round pool with a fountain of lead figures, surrounded by variegated boxwood, was located in the central bed. American boxwood was moved from the Lunar Lawn area and planted at the edges of the pergola to complete the circle around the garden.

Plants

- In Marjorie Post's time, each bed in the garden was planted with a single cultivar of *floribunda* roses.
- Marjorie Post had the roses under-planted with single early tulips in a variety of colors and a border of violas in spring.
- Today, the central bed is filled with seasonal flowers to decorate Marjorie Post's memorial.

Statuary and Hardscape

- Prior to Marjorie Post's purchase of the estate, the existing rose pergola was covered with ivy and some climbing roses planted at each post.
- Custom-made mahogany benches, chairs and tables were placed under the shade of the pergola. The ones in the garden today are replicas.
- A little over a year after Marjorie Post's death (she died in 1973), the fountain was removed and replaced with the pink granite monument topped with an urn made of porphyry (pronounced: poor fa ree) – a rare, purple-colored, igneous stone. Porphyry has been prized since antiquity for its lustrous color and hardness. The Romans imported it from Egypt, using it in architecture and carved busts. Its rich purple color was the Imperial symbol of power, and with the rediscovery of classical Rome in the Renaissance period in Europe, porphyry was prized again. It was avidly collected by powerful figures like Louis XIV and Cardinal Richelieu. The monument was designed, according to the specifications set by Marjorie Post and her daughters, by Theodore W. Dominick. Inscribed on the north side of the monument is the Post coat of arms. The Latin

inscription translates roughly to “All my hopes rest in me.” Her ashes rest in the monument’s base.

- Today horticulture staff place floral arrangements at Post’s monument on the anniversary of her birth (March 15, 1887) and death (September 12, 1973), continuing a tradition begun by her butler Gus Modig. Often the arrangements feature orchids, her signature flower.

Restoration Details

- In 2011, the stone and brickwork of the paths were completely restored. Over the years, repeated freezes and thaws had resulted in unevenness and breakage in the pathways.
- In 2014, the bed north of the rose garden was renovated (as phase two of a five-year plan created in 2013 by Rodney Robinson Landscape Architects). Soil was removed and enhanced. Plants, trees, shrubs, and ground covers were planted, including a large oak tree. These changes became necessary due to the decline and removal over the years of large established shade trees.
- In 2018, the horticulture staff decided to move away from treating the roses with conventional pesticides, and begin to treat the roses with environmentally friendly products that will work in conjunction with beneficial insects.
- Also in 2018, the roses were planted with an under-layer of perennials. This builds on the precedent that Marjorie Post set with inter-planting tulips with the roses. The new perennials help to keep the rose roots cool during summer months, attract more beneficial insects, and create a barrier between soil disease and rose leaves.
- The first modern floribunda rose cultivars were introduced to the garden in 2023. Prior, only roses available before 1970 or from 1977 (the year of Hillwood’s opening) were included. This change was to address disease issues in the garden. Many newer roses are being bred for disease resistance. It falls in line with Marjorie Post’s legacy of continuing to improve the gardens over her lifetime and her interest in new and exciting plants. It also underscores Hillwood’s commitment to sustainability and sharing that knowledge with our visitors.

Friendship Walk & Four Seasons Overlook

Design

- The concept for the Friendship Walk was conceived by four of Marjorie Post's friends as a house-warming present. They worked with Perry Wheeler and the head gardener at the time (George McRae) to develop a working plan for the garden. (Note: Earl Loy was head gardener after McRae.) Friends of Marjorie Post contributed plants, statuary, and funds to the gardens in honor of her philanthropy, and dedicated the garden to her at a ceremony on November 2, 1957.
- The theme of "Friendship Walk" was inspired by a 1909 postcard written by Tsaritsa (pronounced: sar reet za) Alexandra, the last empress of Russia, to her good friend, Countess Ann Virubova. The postcard is in Hillwood's collection (57.5). Inscribed on a round, black serpentine Italian marble stone in the center of the overlook's circle is this quote from the postcard: "Friendship outstays the hurrying flight of years and aye abides through laughter and through tears." The use of this quote links Marjorie Post's passion for Imperial Russia with her love of gardens.

Plants

- The garden walks were lined with azaleas, rhododendrons, hollies, dogwoods, and other plants to complement the surrounding English-style natural gardens.
- The circle is planted today much like it was in Post's time surrounded by arborvitae and other evergreen plants. During Post's time, those plants framed an overlook to the main drive (now called the lower drive) below.
- The ivy garland growing on chains by the circle was grown from a cutting taken from Buckingham Palace.

Statuary and Hardscape

- Located at the entrance to the walk is a stone of black serpentine Italian marble inscribed with the dedication of the Friendship Walk to Marjorie Post by her friends. The dedication stone reads (punctuation added): "Friendship Walk, Hillwood. Dedicated by her friends as a tribute to Marjorie Merriweather Post for her generous nature, love of beauty, and devotion to human needs. October 1957"
- The iron gates were replaced in 1996 with replicas of the original gates. The donation of the gates by a volunteer garden docent reflects the spirit of the garden.
- Four lead statues of little boys (c. 1920), representing the four seasons with their respective attributes, rest on limestone pedestals mounted with twelve lead tablets listing the 54 individuals and 58 couples who contributed to the establishment of this garden. These statues can be seen in the J.P. White's 1906 Pygthle (pronounced: pie tolls) Works catalogue. John Parish White of England, a purveyor of garden furniture and ornaments, offered the statues in lead or Carrara marble. It is extremely rare to find a complete set of these four statues. The statues are arranged in the order of the seasons: find winter huddled in his cloak (to the left of the path leading to the rose garden, when you are standing in the circular overlook looking back towards the mansion) and move from winter clockwise around the circle to find spring, summer and then fall.

- Three bronze eagles with shields on the front sculpted by American Paul Wayland Bartlett are perched on cast iron posts connected by English ivy garlands. According to the Smithsonian (whose American Art Museum has a Bartlett eagle in its collection), “Bartlett created these eagles in 1916, soon after the British ship *Lusitania* was sunk by the Germans. This event sparked a crusade for military ‘preparedness’ in America, as many people realized that entry into World War I was inevitable.” With his *Eagle of Preparedness*, Bartlett showed his support for the Allied cause. On the middle eagle, “preparedness” can be read in the folds of the banner in front of the shield. These eagles were a gift from Caroline Jones Peter, stepdaughter of Paul Bartlett. Peter was the first wife of the last owner of Tudor Place in Washington, DC.
- Two of the four cast iron benches in the Four Seasons Overlook are original to Marjorie Post’s time, and two were donated in 2014. All four are of the same original pattern.

Restoration Details

- The garden has been restored with plants to replicate the original design as closely as possible. Trees are not pruned to restore the original view from the Four Seasons Overlook because newer homes across the road have altered the vista and would diminish the sense of privacy and seclusion.
- Boxwood along the walk were removed in 2022 due to boxwood blight, a difficult disease afflicting boxwood throughout the US. The staff replanted with a new disease resistant cultivar, *Buxus NewGen Independence*.
- In 2023, the asphalt paths throughout the area were removed and replaced with Porous Pave, a permeable paving material made of recycled rubber. The ‘Redwood’ color of Porous Pave brings back the historic red color of the paths in a safe and efficient manner. The color matches the red slate at the overlook and around the putting green.

Woodland Trail & Path

Woodland Trail

Restoration Details

- A quarter-mile trail that Post walked regularly, which had never been open to visitors, was restored and opened to the public in 2011. The trail is accessed from the walkway connecting the Friendship Walk and the putting green. The trail winds through steep woodland, but empties onto the access road that leads to the main drive (now known as the lower drive). The pathway has a metal edging, from Post's time, and is carpeted with wood chips. The steps, originally of railroad ties that had deteriorated with age, have been replaced with pressure-treated wood. The handrail was also restored and painted.

Woodland Path

Design

- The woodland path was designed by the landscape architect firm Robinson Anderson Summers and installed by the horticulture staff and volunteers in 2016. Allan Summers was called upon to create a new garden along what was previously a service lane used by the gardeners. The garden attaches to the woodland trail and ends near the top of the lower drive. A part of the five-year restoration plan, the intention of the new space was to expand on Marjorie Post's interest in walking out of doors, broaden the visitor experience by offering a less rigorous circuit than the woodland trail, and make a more concrete connection between the gardens and the woodland on the estate. The garden consists of native and non-native plant material and highlights the extensive stone retaining walls installed during Marjorie Post's tenure to maintain the hillside.

This area is not on the docent-led garden tour.

Putting Green

Design

- This nine-hole bentgrass putting green was installed during the 1955-57 renovations so that Marjorie Post and her guests could enjoy leisurely exercise. She always had new putters available for her guests.
- The south end of the green includes a small terrace, which provides a focal point for the garden as well as a resting place for guests. The north end of the green also has a sitting area with a table, chairs, and umbrella for shade.
- In the 1920s Gebhart design, this space was a formal flower garden with boxwood parterres. The parterres were removed in 1955. However, several features from the garden Post found when she moved here were retained: the shape of the space remains somewhat true to its original design, and the steps up to the rose garden remain.
- The large fan in the western bed is turned on in the evening in the summer. Since the putting green is shielded on most sides by plants, the fan circulates air around the bentgrass and thus helps prevent it from contracting diseases.

Plants

- The putting green originally featured a fine, even green of bentgrass turf, complete with cups and pins. After Marjorie Post's death, the putting green was replaced with a lawn. During the restoration in 2000, the bentgrass was re-introduced.
- The pins used on the current putting green are original.
- The putting green is enclosed by hedges of Japanese holly, and they are sometimes confused with boxwood.
- The putting green is framed with azaleas, Japanese snowball viburnum, crabapples, rhododendrons, and other plants that blend with the surrounding English-style natural gardens. Humorously, the Japanese snowball viburnum flowers resemble golf balls.

Restoration Details

- Restoration of the putting green took place in the spring of 2000. It required the total removal of the existing lawn. Specialized drainage and an irrigation system were installed along with the replacement of the sub-grade soil with sand. Bentgrass sod was then laid.
- In 2005, an apron of tall fescue replaced the bentgrass collar. The bentgrass had proven to be susceptible to disease because it was mowed at a higher height than the bentgrass on the putting green surface. The fescue collar helps keep golf balls from rolling into the hedges when the putting green is opened for special events and programs.
- In 2017, the patio was relaid by contracted stonemason John Pond.
- The southern patio was relaid in 2022.

Lunar Lawn

Promenade (referring to the stone walkway closest to the mansion, running east to west)

Design

- The promenade existed as part of the original Gebhart design. Marjorie Post widened the flagstone walk and added the terrace where the statue of the lion rests.

Plants

- American elms, with their vase shape, are located between the promenade and the mansion, as well as in the eastern and western beds flanking the Lunar Lawn. The large elms are original to the mansion, which was built in 1926.
- The elm directly to the west of the portico was replaced by Marjorie Post when the original tree died of Dutch elm disease (DED). The replacement was dug from the woods on the estate and was transported by a flatbed truck, through the gardens, to its present location.
- Some of the elms have been replaced since Post's time. For instance, two declining elms flanking the breakfast room were removed in 2009, and replaced with a new cultivar of American elm called 'Princeton'. These elms are an improved variety of elm that is believed to be more resistant to DED.
- The remaining elms are under the attentive care of skilled arborists in order to maintain their health and prevent infection by DED. This includes a continuous program of detection, removal, and destruction of all dying or recently dead elm wood in these and nearby trees. Treatment also includes injection of fungicide at the buttressing roots. The elms also have cabling and lightning protection to decrease storm damage. In 2023, extensive soil work was completed under the elms nearest the French parterre to reinvigorate the trees.
- The breakfast room exterior walls and fountain were surrounded by ivy trellises during Post's residency.
- Periodically the museum trims the trees on its property that frame the view seen from the steps of the south portico across the lawn. Hillwood's efforts help maintain the historic view of the Washington Monument visible during Post's time. (Note: some of the trees in the view shed are located beyond Hillwood's property lines on public or private land.)

Statuary

- At either end of the promenade is an armillary sphere sculpture. These are decorative pieces, in which Marjorie Post installed electric lamps to light either end of the promenade. Designed by English architect J. Burnet, these sculptures were constructed from lead, steel, and bronze by the Bromsgrove Guild of London in the late 1800s. They consist of a skeleton celestial globe encircled by the signs of the zodiac and held on the shoulders of three putti (infant boys). These sculptures take inspiration from the armillary spheres that were early astronomical devices of Greek origin; the rings represented the great circles of the heavens.
- The wall fountain located outdoors on the east wall of the breakfast room was moved from Marjorie Post's New York apartment. The fountain depicts Eros (the Greek god of love) as a

child, with a garland of roses, playing with a swan on a background of bulrushes. The fountain rests on a marble breastplate and above a marble basin.

Restoration Details

- The gilded lead fountain was restored with new gold leaf in 1999 and the patio was returned to its original grade.
- In 2017, the wall fountain underwent an extensive restoration. The interior plumbing was restored, new gold leaf was applied to the statue, and the marble basin was repaired. The promenade walk was also relaid, by the contracted stonemason John Pond, from the putting green to the eastern armillary sphere.
- In 2018, the patio areas around the armillary were restored by contracted stonemason John Pond.

Lunar Lawn

Design

- The Lunar Lawn is an expanse of turf that furnishes an unobstructed view of the valley below and the Washington Monument, which is less than 5 miles away by car.
- The Lunar Lawn was a choice spot for Marjorie Post's entertaining. Although the day and month changed over time, Marjorie Post and her staff organized three May garden parties, on Saturday, Sunday, and eventually designated Monday for the military, on the Lunar Lawn.
- Designed with a backdrop of tall deciduous trees under-planted with masses of flowering trees, shrubs, and evergreens.
- In the Gebhart design, there was a walkway lined with boxwoods that led across the middle of the lawn, from the mansion to the flagstone vista terrace. These boxwoods were moved during Post's renovations to surround the rose garden.

Plants

- The lawn is a mix of multiple grasses, mainly tall fescue and Bermuda grass. In line with Hillwood's sustainability initiatives, herbicide is no longer applied to the turf areas. Clover is left to provide food for pollinators.
- The masses of shrubs and trees include azaleas, rhododendrons, viburnum, dogwoods, magnolias, crabapples, spruces, Chamaecyparis, and many others. These have been rejuvenated or replaced to restore the borders to their original appearance and scale.
- The shrub beds are fronted by a border planted with seasonal displays of tulips in spring, assorted annuals in summer, and chrysanthemums in autumn.

Statuary and Hardscape

- The stone lion came with an unknown provenance (history of ownership). In Hillwood's unverified records, it is reportedly from an original setting of Old Somerset House in London, which was torn down in 1766. The lion is a symbol of strength and courage. It was purchased from Bert Crowther Ltd, in September 1956, especially to be placed here.

- In celebration of Marjorie Post's 75th birthday, her employees told her that they wanted to give her a flagpole. (Staff told her on her birthday of their birthday present idea, she approved of the idea, and it was presented to her at a party the following October.) Names of the contributing employees are listed on the bronze plaques around the base. The design is reminiscent of the masts from her yacht, *Sea Cloud*. During her lifetime, a yellow and blue pennant flag from *Sea Cloud* flew whenever she was in residence.
- The blue and white lawn chairs, stools, and umbrellas—found in the Lunar Lawn, vista terrace, putting green, and French parterre—are all original to Post's era: some pieces were purchased by Post, while some were purchased by the museum to augment the collection. The furniture was considered perfect for outdoor entertaining in the 1960s. The furniture is restored as needed, and is stored indoors during the winter months.

Restoration Details

- In 2009, the grass on the Lunar Lawn was replaced with new Kentucky bluegrass sod, and the soil was improved. It has since been overseeded with tall fescue.
- In 2013, the western bed flanking the Lunar Lawn was renovated (as phase one of a five-year plan created in 2013 by Rodney Robinson Landscape Architects). The soil was amended with enrichment (pine fines) and new drainpipes were installed to move water through the bed to prevent excessive ponding. New trees (cherry trees), shrubs (hydrangea) and groundcovers (lily turf) were planted alongside existing plants like star magnolia and azaleas. These changes were needed because a large horse-chestnut tree was blown down in a storm and damaged plants in 2010, and the soil was too wet due to poor drainage because the original drainage system had decayed.
- In 2017, a large American elm in the eastern Lunar Lawn bed broke over in a storm which prompted a renovation of the area. Robinson Anderson Summers provided the design, which included a Valley Forge American elm, hydrangeas, and coral bells, amongst other trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- In spring 2018, a large Oriental spruce in the eastern Lunar Lawn bed was blown over in a windstorm, and, subsequently, plants were added to this bed to replace the spruce. Five other trees were felled around the property by the same windstorm.

Vista Terrace

Design

- Located at the south end of the Lunar Lawn, and to the east of the Japanese-style garden, the vista is the long lawn bordered by trees and shrubs.
- The terrace is part of the original Gebhart design.

Plants

- American hollies are planted on each side of the balustrade.
- The shrub beds contain mostly azaleas, with some spirea and deutzia plants.
- The six cast stone planters are filled with seasonal flowers to continue the color theme of the plantings in the Lunar Lawn beds.

Statuary

- There are four limestone satyrs (pronounced: say ters) playing musical instruments, specifically the tambourine, horn, pipes, and cymbals. They were bought from Parke Bernet, June 5, 1958. Additionally, there are two lead satyrs playing the pipes and a horn. (Satyrs are a type of forest god from Greek mythology who have faces and bodies like men, but ears, legs, and tails like goats.)
- In the center of the terrace is a metal sundial. The pointer (or gnomon, pronounced: no mon) is a small sailboat.

The terrace is not a room on the docent-led garden tour but is often used as an orientation space by docents for the Japanese-style garden, which is on the tour.

Japanese-style Garden

Design

- Designed for Marjorie Post in 1957 by landscape architect Shogo J. Myaida, of Long Island, NY (born in Japan in 1897 and died in North Carolina in 1989). (Myaida is pronounced: my eee da)
- The design represents a traditional interpretation of a mountainside landscape in miniature. It includes a mountain stream originating from an evergreen forest that flows into various ponds and through waterfalls, finally coming to rest in a lake at the base of the hillside.
- Shogo Myaida never intended to create a truly authentic Japanese garden. Rather, he designed gardens specifically for American individuals. Myaida was forging new ground by trying to reconcile the Japanese and American cultures and create gardens that were a hybrid of the two. The significance of Marjorie Post's Japanese-style garden is that it is a period piece that was typical of gardens built in the 1950s to evoke an Asian atmosphere but with American horticultural practice and lifestyles in mind. It is also the largest and best extant example of Myaida's work.
- In traditional Japanese gardens, the selection and placement of stones and objects carry deep spiritual meaning and symbolism. Although there are some traditional elements in the garden, one should be careful in reading their significance and meaning into Hillwood's garden.
- After the completion and implementation of the design, Marjorie Post continued to embellish the garden with statuary and plants.
- Before 1955, an "oriental" garden existed in this space.

Plants

- The garden was originally planted with a combination of shrubs and trees typical of both Japanese and American gardens. Many of the original plants have died and were replaced. Plants similar to those found in this garden are repeated throughout the estate and include Japanese maple, cherry, azalea, pine, Chinese fringetree, false cypress, and juniper.

Statuary and Significance

Stones and Hardscape

- In Japanese gardens, stones are considered the backbone of the garden. There are over 400 carefully placed boulders that create the foundation of the garden and an illusion of a rocky mountainside.
- The combination of three partially submerged stones in the lower pool is traditionally known as the "Island of the Blessed" – not to be confused with the island between the bridges.
- The waterfall viewing stone next to the pagoda is a place to watch the cascade and contemplate the garden.
- Local woodworkers built the gate and the bridges out of redwood and cypress. They were left unpainted to develop a gray weathered patina. They were custom-made to Shogo Myaida's

design and won an award for the quality of their craftsmanship. The sign on the gate reads, "Hill Wood Garden, 1957, Shogo Myaida."

Sculptural figures

- The stone guard dogs (*komainu*) above the waterfall have curly hair and fierce scowls. One has its mouth open to chase evil spirits away. The other has its mouth closed to invite good spirits into the garden.
- A smaller pair of granite guard dogs sit on each side of the walkway that leads across the millstones.
- A bronze statue of Kuan Yin, goddess of compassion, holds a single lotus blossom.
- A stone statue of Hotei (often misidentified as a laughing Buddha), god of contentment, happiness, and prosperity, was a 1968 Christmas gift from Marjorie Post's niece. (Hotei is pronounced: hoe tay)
- There are two stone turtles – one on the large island in the lower pool and one in the cascade above the upper pool. Turtles are a traditional symbol of long life.
- Marjorie Post added many metal ornaments to the garden, including the brass goldfish, which sit half-submerged in the pools and spit water.

Lanterns

- There are three Kasuga lanterns. Kasuga lanterns are hexagonal in shape and supported by a column on a stone base, and they frequently bear reliefs depicting mountains and deer.
- There is one rankei (pronounced: ran kay) lantern. Rankei lanterns are short stone lanterns on square stands that curve upward and forward; they are usually found at the water's edge.
- There are three yukimi lanterns, known as "snow-viewing" lanterns. Yukimi lanterns are very short, squat shaped lanterns with horizontal sloping tops, which catch snow in winter.
- There are also two very tall, narrow pagoda-shaped lanterns with five block-and-roof sections on a base with four legs. These five divisions traditionally represent the five elements, which differ regionally in Japan: air, wind, fire, water, and earth, or wood, metal, fire, water, and earth. Additionally, they also may represent the different levels of enlightenment a person must pass through to reach paradise and eternal life, as signified by the lotus bud on top.
- Marjorie Post had the lanterns wired with electrical sockets for light bulbs. This is a very American treatment of an otherwise traditional Japanese element. Archival photos also show lanterns (made of fiberglass but resembling pleated paper) hanging in the garden's trees. The museum has occasionally hung similarly shaped lanterns in this garden during special events or public program, like Tanabata, the Japanese Star Festival held in July at Hillwood since in 2016.

Restoration Details

- Garden plans and photos were researched and, while gaps and uncertainties exist, the Japanese-style garden, including its plantings, statuary, water features and pathways, was fully restored in 2001. Significant work was necessary to preserve and restore the physical aspects of

the garden and to record its significance. The restoration included the repair of the plumbing, waterworks, pool structure, and replacement of lost and damaged statuary. Additionally, major replanting and plant rejuvenation were carried out. Fortunately, Hillwood had the complete set of drawings by Myaida; however, the drawings are conceptual in nature and not drawn to scale.

- Research into the garden's history and designer shows that the site was important to Marjorie Post and is a unique expression of late-1950s American culture.
- In 2008, the bamboo handrails were added to assist visitors. They were constructed to be in keeping with the overall design of the garden. The bamboo was found to deteriorate quickly leading to wasp nests and stung visitors. It was replaced with synthetic bamboo in 2023.
- In 2014, a new water filtration system was installed. The more robust system keeps the water cleaner and removes debris better than the old system.
- In 2017, a Japanese maple, original to the Erwin's "oriental" garden, succumbed to disease, and was replaced by a seedling from the woodlands.
- In 2023, the gate and the two bridges were the focus of a restoration project. All three elements were thoroughly cleaned and had the wood sealed. The roof of the gate was replaced, and repairs were made to the bridges.

Cutting Garden

Design

- It is designed strictly for utilitarian purposes, to maximize productivity of cultivating flowers for cut floral arrangements, with large rectangular beds planted with rows of flower crops. The garden is a combination of annuals, perennials, bulbs, and roses.
- Marjorie Post used these crops to supply arrangements of fresh-cut flowers in the rooms throughout the mansion; flowers are still grown and cut to decorate the mansion, visitor center, Merriweather café, and other public spaces.
- Guests attending Post's gatherings and parties would have rarely seen this part of the estate. Today, visitors may walk through the garden on the mulched paths.

Plants

- Spring annual flowers include delphinium, snapdragon, and sweet William; and perennials such as allium, campanula, and peony.
- Summer annuals include zinnia, gomphrena, sunflower, and celosia; and perennials such as veronica, yarrow, and echinacea.
- Fall annual flowers include chrysanthemum and dahlia; and perennials such as golden rod, aster, and sedum.
- Winter annual flowers are grown in the estate greenhouse and include snapdragon, stock, lily, calla, and ranunculus.
- Several crops are planted in multiple successions to allow for continual harvest throughout the growing season. Examples include sunflower, snapdragon, and zinnia.
- During the height of productivity for the garden (June-September) cut flowers are harvested from the cutting garden each week by a team of volunteers. Flowers are cut in the early morning, excessive foliage is removed, and the stems are placed in warm water containing a floral food and preservative. Most flowers are then placed in refrigeration until it is time for fresh arrangements to be made. Fresh arrangements for use throughout the property are created Wednesdays or Thursdays by staff and volunteers.
- The cutting garden's perennial garden (near the flagstone patio with seating) is lined with Catmint (*Nepeta* 'Walker's Low').
- An herb garden, featuring rosemary, parsley, basil, thyme, and chives, is located on the eastern edge near the Merriweather café. Hillwood's café harvests herbs for use in their dishes.
- Two large clipped golden false cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtuse* 'Crippsii') form an entrance near a set of steps on the garden's north side.
- A picturesque male specimen of *Ginkgo biloba* is located on the northern edge near the greenhouse. It was already planted at the time Marjorie Post purchased Hillwood.

- In the summer, horticulture staff create a plant list for the cutting garden, found as a QR code on a sign in the garden.

Hardscape

- The northwest corner of the garden features a flagstone patio with tables and chairs surrounded by peonies and roses.
- In 2015, a courtyard and tent were installed in front of the Merriweather café, found on the east side of the cutting garden. This courtyard replaced an asphalt lot that was jointly used as café seating and for parking.
- In 2017, the retaining wall encircling half the garden was restored by contracted stonemason, John Pond.
- An extensive irrigation upgrade was completed to the cutting garden in 2018.

Greenhouses

Design

- After Marjorie Post purchased Hillwood, she expanded the number of individual greenhouse buildings so she could cultivate and accommodate her extensive orchid collection. Guests during Post's time would have rarely seen this part of the estate.
- Today the greenhouses look much like they did when Post lived at Hillwood, although their systems (climate control, etc.) are modern.
- The greenhouses today still function as working greenhouses. Visitors are welcome to enter the publicly-accessible buildings, and enjoy the many orchids and other plants on view.
- On the east side of the greenhouses are cold frames. These transparent-roofed structures, which function like mini-greenhouses, are used by staff to acclimate plants before they are planted and to over-winter non-hardy plants.

Plants

- Today the greenhouses house over 2,000 orchids and tropical plants. The collection contains approximately the same number and type of orchid groups as were here during Post's time. Post's signature flower was the orchid and her favorite orchid was the Cattleya, known for its large and fragrant blooms.
- Today, in addition to orchids, the greenhouse also produces cut flowers for winter arrangements, especially when the cutting garden is dormant. Horticulture staff also grows various annual plants like pansies used in seasonal outdoor displays. The staff also cultivates potted plants for display.

Restoration Details

- Rebuilt in 1996, the current greenhouse complex looks much like it did after Post expanded it in the 1950s. Inside, however, it features modern climate control systems and other improvements.
- Since the rebuild, the flooring has been redone twice (2011 and 2021) to prevent leaks in the offices below. The current flooring is a urethane mortar system.

Floral Design at Hillwood

- In documents detailing her arrangements for Hillwood to function as a museum, Post stipulated that fresh flowers be on display in the mansion, reminiscent of when she was in residence.
- Post hired Lewis Potter, a florist whose business was located in the Wardman Park Hotel, in nearby Woodley Park, to produce the large arrangements for her formal events. Potter was Post's florist from her time at Tregaron until her passing.
- During Post's time, the weekly smaller arrangements were done by in-house staff and included those in the mansion's bedrooms, breakfast room, and entry hall.
- During Post's time, the variety of cut flowers commercially available was not nearly as vast as today's options. Post innovated by having her gardeners grow in the greenhouses dozens of

different kinds of specialty chrysanthemums not available on the market. She also enhanced her floral designs by using cut orchid flowers from her orchid collection, a rarity even among the elite circles of her day.

- Post enjoyed fresh flowers so much that she had her orchids and plants from these greenhouses shipped via her private turbo prop plane to her other residences, Mar-A-Lago and Camp Topridge.
- Today the tradition continues of using cut flowers grown in the cutting garden and greenhouses in fresh floral arrangements for display each week around the estate.

Seasonal Plantings

- There are a variety of planting areas at Hillwood that have seasonal planting displays. Horticulture staff creates a comprehensive design plan for each season, to create attractive, interesting, and dynamic seasonal interest for visitors. During Post's time, seasonal plantings were emphasized during spring and fall when Post was in residence; today they extend to every season.
- Seasonal plantings are in areas all across the estate, including the visitor center, motor court, porte cochere, pavilion, French parterre, rose garden, Friendship Walk, putting green, Lunar Lawn, south portico, vista terrace, dacha, cutting garden wall, and greenhouse beds.
- Plants used in seasonal displays, as well as organic material generated from weeding and pruning, are composted at Hillwood. The compost pile is located on the service drive below the Japanese-style garden. The compost is then used by staff as organic matter in lawns and beds throughout the estate.
- Visitors can see what plants are blooming by visiting Hillwood's website (www.hillwoodmuseum.org) and clicking on "Gardens" and "What's In Bloom."

The greenhouses are not on the docent-led garden tour.

Dog Cemetery

Design

- The dog cemetery was designed by Perry Wheeler in 1959 in a secluded, wooded area off the main gardens and to the side of the dacha.
- Prior to Marjorie Post's purchase, a swimming pool occupied this site.

Plants

- The center bed features sweetbox and spring-blooming dogtooth violets.
- The beds on the four sides of the pet cemetery are edged with sweetbox and filled with English ivy, periwinkle, and wood hyacinths.

Statuary

- Miniature cenotaphs (monuments erected to honor those whose remains are elsewhere) commemorate pet dogs of Marjorie Post and her daughters. Only one of her dogs, Scampi, is reportedly buried here.
- Six stone dogs purchased in 1962 stand at the entrance and exit of the garden. They include two poodles with curly hair, two short haired dogs with baskets of flowers in their mouths, and two dogs carrying baskets in their paws.

Restoration Details

- The shrub beds enclosing the garden have been restored. Records indicate the garden was planted with forget-me-nots, bleeding hearts, pansies, dogtooth violets, and lily-of-the-valley, all of which have been replanted. Notice how many of the plant names purposefully reference dogs or memories.

The cemetery is not on the docent-led garden tour.

Dacha and the Adirondack Building

Design

- The dacha (pronounced dah cha) is a nostalgic adaptation of a one-room Russian peasant summer home. In 1969 during the Cold War, Marjorie Post built the dacha to house the collection of Russian art given to Hillwood by her friend Madame Frances Rosso. (Rosso was the American wife of the Italian ambassador to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, when Marjorie Post was the wife of the American ambassador to the Soviet Union, Joseph Davies). The dacha is currently used as a space for exhibitions.
- The Adirondack building's architecture was inspired by the main lodge of Marjorie Post's Upstate New York summer retreat, Camp Topridge. Built after Post's death, this building opened in 1983 and was originally used to house part of Marjorie Post's collection of Native American artifacts that she acquired to decorate Camp Topridge, and bequeathed to the Smithsonian Institution. Today it is used as a location for exhibitions.
- The primary feature of this area is the elliptical shaped lawn with walkways connecting the buildings. The designs of the walkways were modified in 1995 in an effort to make these buildings and the gardens more physically accessible.
- Today, the elliptical lawn on the north side of the Adirondack building is one of several lawns on which visitors may picnic. The other picnic areas include: the Lunar Lawn, the vista lawn, in front of the greenhouse, and the western garden bed between the visitor center and the mansion (look for the benches).
- There is a public restroom, accessible only via steps, at the back of the dacha.

Plants

- Native plants are planted in the beds surrounding the Adirondack building.
- Some of the native trees are red maple, dogwood, umbrella magnolia, yellowwood, Carolina silverbell, and serviceberry.
- Native shrubs include summersweet, red-twig dogwood, dwarf fothergilla, inkberry, Virginia sweetspire, and pepperbush.

These areas are not on the docent-led garden tour.

Upper and Lower Drives

Design

- Innocenti and Webel converted Arbremont's main drive into a service drive (today called the upper drive), and Hillwood's (then) new main drive (today called the lower drive) was designed up and around a hilly slope which Innocenti and Webel terraced with curving stone retaining walls.
- The plantings along the lower drive are original, and give the impression of a colorful, formalized woodland. Some of the trees were already on the estate when Post purchased it; she worked with the designers to retain the largest and most important specimens as they created the drive.
- The lower drive is only opened for car traffic on days with high attendance. Visitors can walk the drive to get a sense of the winding drive that would have greeted visitors in Marjorie Post's time.

Restoration Details

- A rock garden, installed while Post lived at Hillwood, was restored and replanted in 2009. It is located just inside the lower gate.
- In 2015, the upper drive plantings were renovated as part of phase three of a five-year plan created in 2013 by Rodney Robinson Landscape Architects. (This drive was known in Post's time as the service drive.) Additions included hydrangea, azaleas and deutzia for color and substance, and new groundcover and accent plants.

The drives are not on the docent-led garden tour.

Ellen MacNeille Charles Visitor Center

Design

- In 1955, Marjorie Post built a home for the head gardener where the current visitor center stands. He supervised a staff of about fifteen, who maintained Hillwood's extensive gardens and grounds.
- In 1996, the house was razed and the visitor center, along with the parking decks, were constructed to accommodate more visitors. The exterior of the building reflects the aesthetic qualities of the historic buildings of Hillwood.

Restoration

- Early in 2016, a line of Cryptomeria that had been planted in 1996 were removed from the bed between the greenhouse and the visitor center, in preparation for impending construction on the visitor center, and due to the fact they were shading part of the greenhouse.
- Construction started in 2016 on what had been an outdoor patio terrace on the east side of the visitor center. First, a new door, leading from the museum shop outside, was added to allow people easy access to the estate via the shop. Next, the patio was enclosed, and became known as the conservatory. The visitor center conservatory opened in 2017 in time for the museum's annual Valentine's Day party. New plantings including Indian Magic crabapples, skip laurels, and tiarella were installed, and the irrigation system in this area was updated.
- In 2021, the visitor center was renamed to honor Ellen MacNeille Charles, Marjorie Post's granddaughter who led Hillwood's board for 25 years and continues to be involved on the board as President Emerita.

This area is not on the docent-led garden tour.

Native Garden at the Collections and Research Center

Design

- This garden was created following the construction of the Collections and Research Center under the lower parking deck (opened in 2022). Hillwood looked to the landscape architecture firm of Robinson Anderson Summers (formerly Rodney Robinson Landscape Architects) to design the garden. The firm had been involved in other projects with Allan Summers leading the composition.
- The construction project already included a bioretention pond which captures storm water and allows it to percolate back into the ground reducing run-off into Broad Branch Stream. The garden was to build on this sustainable element and become a space for dialog about today's environmental concerns and how visitors can incorporate good practices and native plants in their own gardens.
- The garden was completed in two major phases. Phase one in 2020 included the planting of the bioretention pond and installation of the northern retaining wall with a small section of path. Phase two took all of 2021, which covered the installation of the patio, stairs, and connecting pathways. The construction soil was also amended and prepped before planting.

Features

- The garden is meant to be "Hillwood-esque" but celebrates biodiversity and sustainability. Highlights of the garden include:
 - Native azaleas and a focus on colorful blooming plants similar to the rest of the estate
 - Biodiverse and native: 81 different plant species in the garden, 100% native to the US, and 86% native to the Mid-Atlantic
 - Twenty-two trees to reestablish the tree canopy
 - Plants choices and layering are intended to maximize habitat and include blueberries, oaks, and tulip trees.
 - Bottlebrush Buckeyes were dug as seedlings from elsewhere on the property
 - Paths made of Porous Pave – a permeable paving material made of recycled rubber and stone
 - A sign in the garden with a plant list is available by QR code.

Additions

- In 2023, a section of Porous Pave path was added along the front of the building to complete the path circuit.

This area is not on the docent-led garden tour.

Text of the Outdoor Interpretive Signs in the Gardens

In March 2016, additional outdoor interpretive garden signs were added to those interpreting the estate's buildings, which dated to when the museum re-opened in 2000. The outdoor signs were again updated in 2019.

Chauffeur's House and Garage

Marjorie Post added a chauffeur's house and garage when she renovated the estate during 1955–57. The upper level served as living quarters for the head chauffeur and his wife. The garage, with two bay doors, is located underneath the residence. This building currently houses museum offices.

Caption: Post had her limousine modified, raising the roof, as seen in this drawing, to accommodate her hats.

Visitor Center | Gardener's House

In 1955, Marjorie Post built a home for the head gardener on this site. He supervised a staff of about fifteen that maintained Hillwood's extensive gardens and grounds. The gardener's house was razed in 1996 to make way for the visitor center, the exterior of which reflects the aesthetic qualities of Hillwood's historic buildings.

Caption: Historical photograph of the gardener's house

Mansion

The Georgian-style mansion was built for Washington social figures Helen and Henry Parsons Erwin in 1926. In 1955, Marjorie Post purchased the estate, at the time known as Arbremont, and renamed it Hillwood. From 1955 to 1957, Post renovated and expanded the main house.

Caption: Historical aerial photograph of Hillwood

Motor Court

Marjorie Post designed Hillwood with the pleasure of her guests in mind. The diplomats, politicians, students, military veterans, public figures, and family members who arrived at Hillwood's stately gates followed the winding drive to the lushly landscaped motor court. At its center, a youthful Eros, the Greek god of love, welcomed visitors as their automobiles came to a stop at the porte cochère (covered drive). From there, footmen escorted guests into the mansion, while chauffeurs continued on to park their cars out of sight.

Audio tour stop #: 110

Caption: Guests drove through these gates and uphill to the motor court during Post's residency at Hillwood.

Greenhouse

In Hillwood's greenhouse, Marjorie Post maintained a collection of more than two thousand orchids and other plants and flowers for displays and arrangements in the mansion. Rebuilt in 1996, the current greenhouse complex looks much like the original, but features modern systems. Although it

still functions as a working greenhouse, visitors are welcome to enter and enjoy the many orchids and other plants on view.

Caption: Historical photograph of the greenhouse

Cutting Garden

The cutting garden functions as it did during Marjorie Post's residency at Hillwood. The plantings include snapdragons, chrysanthemums, and other classics of 1950s and 1960s floral design, along with modern varieties of cut flowers introduced since Post's time. For much of the year, the cutting garden provides nearly all the flowers needed for the arrangements displayed in the mansion and other buildings across Hillwood.

Audio tour stop #: 220

Caption: Historical aerial photograph of Hillwood showing the cutting garden, upper right

Butler's House

This structure was one of several buildings erected during 1955–57, just after Marjorie Post bought the estate. The west end was originally built as living quarters for Post's butler, who was head of the household staff, which numbered about fifteen maids and footmen working alternate shifts. The building was enlarged after Hillwood became a museum, and it now houses offices.

Caption: Butler Gus Modig (second from left) with footmen in Hillwood's dining room

Dina Merrill Pavilion | Camellia House

This structure was built in 1968 to protect the camellia collection in winter. Every fall, the garden staff transferred around fifty camellias from the gardens and maintained them here until spring, when they were replanted. The skylights could be opened for ventilation and temperature control. Today, this building is the Dina Merrill Pavilion, named for Marjorie Post's youngest daughter and longtime Hillwood trustee. It is used for museum activities and offices.

Caption: Hillwood's modern varieties of camellias can withstand the snow and cold of winter outdoors.

Fallout Shelter

This is one of Hillwood's four fallout shelters built by Marjorie Post in the 1960s in response to the fear of nuclear attack during the Cold War. Additional shelters were located in a subbasement of the mansion, underneath the greenhouse, and near the upper gate. All had blast doors, decontamination showers, and electrical and plumbing systems.

Caption: Insurance photograph from Hillwood's archives showing a stocked fallout shelter

Café, C.W. Post Center, and Administration | Gardeners' Storage, Garage, and Staff Quarters

When Marjorie Post purchased Hillwood in 1955, the buildings at the left and center were the stable and carriage house, with a livestock area in front. Post renovated these structures for use as a storage facility for the gardeners and a garage for her vehicles. She extended the complex on the right to

provide living quarters for her staff. Today, these buildings serve as spaces for the café and museum activities and offices.

Caption: Gardeners' storage, garage, and staff quarters during Post's residency

French Parterre

Fanciful touches lend a whimsical air to this intimate, formal garden inspired by those designed in France in the 1700s. Ivy-covered walls enclose the garden, and beds of closely trimmed boxwood and gravel paths section the space. Sculptures punctuate the parterre's strong symmetry and geometry while flowing water provides sound and movement. Marjorie Post's guests spilled into the garden through the doors of the adjacent French drawing room. Post enjoyed the view of this garden from her bedroom suite above.

Audio tour stop #: 120

Caption: Post (far left) accompanies a group of students in the French parterre

Rose Garden

Climbing roses and wisteria drape the pergola in this garden in spring to provide shade and pleasant fragrances. Beginning in spring and continuing into summer, floribunda roses delight with their brilliant colors. Marjorie Post, who died in 1973, chose this garden as her final resting place, instructing that her ashes be interred in the base of the pink granite monument at its center. The Post coat of arms decorates the monument, along with a Latin inscription that translates, "All my hopes rest in me," a fitting motto for a woman who lived life with determination and independence.

Audio tour stop #: 130

Caption: Historical aerial photograph of the rose garden before Post's monument was added to the center bed

Friendship Walk and Four Seasons Overlook

In 1957, a group of Marjorie Post's friends created an English-style walk for her new home as a tribute to her kindness and generosity. The informal path leads from the rose garden to open onto a flagstone circle that in Post's day overlooked a vista of the surrounding landscape. Today, a canopy of mature trees encloses the space. A central medallion bears a message about friendship written by Alexandra, the last empress of Russia. Statues representing the four seasons stand on bases listing the names of the friends who contributed to the walk and overlook.

Audio tour stop #: 140

Caption: Watercolor dedication to Post with signatures of the friends who contributed to the creation of the walk and overlook, with the Post family coat of arms at the bottom

Putting Green

Marjorie Post enjoyed an active lifestyle. She loved ballroom and square dancing, garden walks, and golf. Post installed this putting green so friends and family could join her in practicing the game. The green's closely clipped bentgrass turf is the same as that used on many professional golf courses and requires dedicated care. The garden is framed by flowering plants that bloom in spring.

Audio tour stop #: 150

Caption: Japanese snowball viburnums, suggestive of golf balls, encircle the putting green in spring along with pink azaleas

Lunar Lawn

The mansion's portico, or porch, offers a panoramic view across the Lunar Lawn to the Washington Monument in the distance. Marjorie Post hosted garden parties here, welcoming friends, veterans, students, leaders in politics and the arts, and groups involved in her philanthropic interests. American elms encircle the lawn along with an understory of spring-blooming azaleas, rhododendrons, cherry trees, and magnolias. Hillwood's horticulture staff and volunteers continue Post's tradition of creating seasonal displays, planting thousands of spring tulips, summer annuals, and fall chrysanthemums in the beds rimming the half moon-shaped lawn.

Audio tour stop #: 160

Caption: Vietnam War and other veterans mingle on the Lunar Lawn, where from the late 1960s through the early 1970s Post regularly hosted receptions at which they enjoyed refreshments and musical entertainment

Photo Credit: Photograph courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

Japanese-style Garden

Step down into this secluded garden featuring a miniature mountain landscape. Paths follow the rushing stream as it cascades through rocky terrain to fill a peaceful pond below. The garden showcases a mix of Japanese and American gardening traditions. Native plants, like the Colorado blue spruce, flourish alongside Japanese pines, maples, and cedars. Japanese sculptural elements, such as lanterns, look at home among the profusion of fountains and sculptures collected and enjoyed by Marjorie Post.

For your safety, please remain on the path and off the rocks. Adults, please accompany children. The stone paths include steps that some visitors might find difficult to navigate. They are not wheelchair accessible.

Audio tour stop #: 170

Caption: A wooden bridge and stone lanterns overlook the tranquil pool at the garden's base

Photo Credit: Photograph by Alex Jamison

Dog Cemetery

Limestone poodles, spaniels, and hounds bearing flower baskets greet visitors at the entrances to the secluded, wooded area ahead. Marjorie Post created the dog cemetery, planted with fragrant sweet box, as a memorial to the pets she loved throughout her life. Scampi, her last dog, was laid to rest here in 1972. Many of Post's family members shared her great love of dogs and memorialized their pets here as well.

Audio tour stop #: 190

Caption: Post holding Scampi, her beloved schnauzer

Adirondack Building

In 1983, Hillwood commissioned architects to create a structure to house part of Marjorie Post's collection of American Indian objects that she had acquired to decorate Camp Topridge, her retreat

in Upstate New York, and would later donate to the Smithsonian Institution. The building's design replicates the style of the grand, early twentieth-century Adirondack estates. Today, the building is used for special exhibitions and programs.

Audio tour stop #: 210

Caption: Boathouse at Camp Topridge

Dacha

Marjorie Post built this adaptation of a Russian country house, called an izba or dacha, in 1969. Russian-style carvings surround the doors and windows of the California redwood-clad masonry structure. Other details, such as the bright colors on the window carvings and the onion-shaped domes on the roof, reflect American variations on traditional Russian motifs.

Audio tour stop #: 200

Caption: The dacha during Post's residency at Hillwood

Woodland Paths

Marjorie Post encouraged her guests to enjoy all of Hillwood, indoors and out. Visitors today can walk two short woodland paths, both of which begin here. The path veering left passes the remains of a large, uprooted tulip poplar. The path veering right, which goes along curving stone walls constructed under Post's direction, is dedicated to the memory of Adelaide Close Riggs, Post's eldest daughter, who loved gardens. Both paths intersect with the paved drive. Once at a path's end, retrace your steps, or turn right and follow the drive to the motor court.

For your safety, please remain on the paths. They are not wheelchair accessible or recommended for all visitors. Paths are open daily, weather permitting.

Caption: The steps on the path winding to the left