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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Springside Landscape Restoration

Title: Springside Landscape Restoration Records

Inclusive Dates: 1870-2024

Bulk Dates: 1972-2017

Quantity: 11 cubic feet (13 boxes)

This collection consists of administrative and financial records, correspondence, and photographs

created by Springside Landscape Restoration, a non-profit organization dedicated to the

Abstract: preservation and maintenance of Springside--a United States National Historic Site and the

summer home of Matthew Vassar (1792-1868). Publications and writings about Springside and its designer, landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), as well as records related to

Springside from its 20th-century owners, the Nelson family, are also included.

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Historical Note

The property called "Springside" was purchased by Matthew Vassar (1792-1868) in 1850, who hired notable American landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) to design the property as an ornamental farm over the next two years. The landscape and buildings were constructed based on Downing's designs over the next several years and it served as Matthew Vassar's summer home until his death in 1868. With no direct heirs and no instructions in his will as to what should become of the property, Springside changed hands several times before being purchased at auction in 1879 by William Nelson. The property remained with the Nelson family for almost a century, but by the 1960s it had fallen into disrepair and only one building, the Porter's Lodge, remained fully intact. The property was photographed by Rollie McKenna and in 1969 Springside was added to the United States National Register of Historic Places. Despite this historical site status, in 1982 developer Springside Associates (later Springside Condominiums, Inc.) received approval from the City of Poughkeepsie to build a luxury condominium complex on the historic property. This galvanized local preservationists, including Vassar faculty member Harvey Flad and local nonprofit organizations Dutchess County Landmarks Association and Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., to petition the City of Poughkeepsie to have an environmental assessment of the property conducted and to deny Springside Associates permission to build on the property.

Springside Landscape Restoration (SLR) was formed in 1984 as part of a compromise between the preservationists, Springside Associates, and the City of Poughkeepsie. It was officially chartered as an

educational non-profit by the New York State Department of Education in 1987. Part of the compromise included a subdivision of the property, with the parcel determined to be the most historic portion officially deeded to SLR in 1990. SLR has since maintained the property and undertaken a number of projects to conserve and restore Andrew Jackson Downing's original vision, including repainting and the Porter's Lodge, clearing almost 20 acres of secondary growth that was not part of Downing's vision, and protecting the site from potentially destructive development projects.

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Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of administrative and financial records, correspondence, and photographs created by Springside Landscape Restoration, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of Springside--a United States National Historic Site and the summer home of Matthew Vassar (1792-1868). Publications and writings about Springside and its designer, landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), as well as records related to Springside from its 20th-century owners, the Nelson family, are also included.

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Arrangement

The collection is organized into seven series: Series I. Administrative Files, 1982-2019; Series II. Grants, 1987-2005; Series III. Photographs, 1972-2006; Series IV. Site Plans and Maps, 1983-2000; Series V. Proposals, Reports, and Surveys, 1972-2023; Series VI. Writings and Publications, 1950-2017; and Series VII. Nelson Family Papers, 1870-2024. Top

Access and Use

Access

Series I. Administrative Files contains one restricted file. The rest of the collection is open for research according to the <u>regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library</u> without any additional restrictions.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the <u>regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library</u>.

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Related Material

Related Materials

- Harvey Flad Papers
- The Rosalie "Rollie" Thorne McKenna Papers include materials related to Springside's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, including correspondence with the National Park Service and photographs of Springside taken by McKenna in 1968.

• Matthew Vassar Papers

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Subject Headings

Names:

- Downing, A. J. (Andrew Jackson), 1815-1852
- Flad, Harvey K., 1938-
- Vassar, Matthew, 1792-1868

Organizations:

- National Historic Landmarks Program (U.S.)
- New York (State). Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
- Poughkeepsie (N.Y.). Common Council

Subjects:

- Historic gardens--New York (State)
- Historic preservation--New York (State)
- Historic sites--Conservation and restoration--New York (State)

Places:

• Poughkeepsie (N.Y.)

Document Types:

- Archaeological objects
- Audiocassettes
- Audiovisual materials
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Compact discs
- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Minutes (administrative records)
- Negatives (photographs)
- Newsletters
- Photographs
- Printed ephemera
- Property records
- Site plans

VCL Categories:

- Local History
- Vassar College

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Emma Gronbeck, June 2024.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Springside Landscape Restoration Records, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Processed by Emma Gronbeck, June 2024.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Springside Landscape Restoration, June 2021. (M2021-007)

Series VII. Nelson Family Papers was the gift of Miles Nelson, May 2024. (M2024-009)

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Series List

Series I. Administrative Files, 1982-2019 (Boxes 1-5)

This series contains correspondence, meeting minutes, vital records, financial records, maintenance and planning records, and other materials related to the founding and operation of Springside Landscape Restoration (SLR). Included are records related to the creation of SLR in response to the proposed condominium project neighboring Springside in 1982, including communications between the City of Poughkeepsie Planning Board, Dutchess County Landmarks Association, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., Springside Associates (later Springside Condominiums, Inc.).

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Series II. Grants, 1987-2005 (Box 5)

This series contains grant applications, correspondence with granting organizations, and other materials related to grants and other monetary awards that Springside Landscape Restoration applied for.

Arranged alphabetically by title, with a chronology of grants filed at the beginning of the sequence and general research filed at the end.

Series III. Photographs, 1972-2006 (Box 6)

This series contains photographic materials--including prints, negatives, and slides--of Springside and Springside Landscape Foundation activities, including cleanup projects, site documentation, and plant sales. Arranged chronologically.

Series IV. Site Plans and Maps, 1983-2000 (Boxes 6, 11-13)

This series contains site plans and maps of Springside, predominantly those created as part of Robert M. Toole's 1985 survey of the property and Walmsley & Company, Inc.'s 1988 survey.

Organized alphabetically by creator, with miscellaneous plans filed at the end. Sub-arranged alphabetically by title.

Series V. Proposals, Reports, and Surveys, 1972-2023 (Boxes 6-8, 10)

This series contains surveys of Springside conducted by outside organizations, as well as proposals and reports presented to Springside Landscape Restoration by those organizations. Included are records of an archeological survey of Springside conducted in the Fall of 2001 by the Vassar College Archaeological Field School, including dozens of samples collected by the students undertaking the field study, such as fragments of rock and glass, pottery shards, bones, and iron nails.

Organized into three subseries: Proposals, Reports, and Surveys - Vassar College Archaeological Field School. Sub-arranged alphabetically by title.

Series VI. Writings and Publications, 1950-2017 (Boxes 8-9)

This series contains writings and publications related to Springside, Springside Landscape Restoration, Andrew Jackson Downing, and other related topics. Writings include published and unpublished drafts of essays, papers, and articles, as well as notes and short writings and summaries. Publications consist primarily of clippings and newsletters, including the newsletter of Springside Landscape Restoration.

Arranged alphabetically by author or title.

Series VII. Nelson Family Papers, 1870-2024 (Boxes 9, 11)

This series contains materials collected by Miles Nelson that document his family's ownership of the Springside property after Matthew Vassar, including property records, notes, and photographs.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

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Folder 1.1	Assisted living facility proposal, 1999
Folder 1.2	Brochures, undated
Folder 1.3	Brochures - Events, 1993
Folder 1.4	Brochures - "Tree Trail," undated
Folder 1.5	Brochures - Walking Tour, circa 2004
Folder 1.6	By-Laws, 1987-1992
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Folder 1.8	Charter amendment petition, 1992-1993
Folder 1.9	Correspondence, 1985

Heritage trail, 2002-2005

Kouri lawsuit, 2004-2006

file:///C:/Users/egronbeck/Documents/EAD-templates/springside landscape restoration.html

Hudson River Valley Greenway trails, 1988-1993

Hydraulic and hydrological features, 1999

Folder 2.13

Folder 2.14

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Folder 3.34	Public relations, 2004
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Folder 3.36	SavATree program, 1992
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Folder 3.39	Springside Associates Lawsuit - Agreement drafts, 1984
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Folder 4.8	Springside Associates Lawsuit - Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., 1984-1986
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Folder 11.1 (Oversize)	Untitled Springside plan, revised, 1985 Nov 7	
Michael George and Lisa Dreishpoon-Weiss		
Folder 11.2 (Oversize)	"Plan of Master Plant Identification for Springside," preliminary analysis, 1987 Dec [2 copies]	
Sandy and Babcock Association / The SWA Group		
Folder 11.3 (Oversize)	"A. J. Downing Original Site Plan," 1987	
Folder 11.3 (Oversize)	"A. J. Downing - Springside," 1987	
Folder 11.3 (Oversize)	"Revised Preliminary Site Plan," 1984 Apr 17	
Folder 11.3 (Oversize)	"Site Analysis - Vegetation," 1987	
Folder 11.3 (Oversize)	"Springside Existing Utilities & Topographic Data Map," sheet ST-1, 1985 Apr 23	

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Robert M. Toole

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Folder 11.4 (Oversize)	"Springside - Design Elements - 1852," Sheet A, annotated, 1990 Jul 10
Folder 11.4 (Oversize)	"Springside - Existing Conditions - 1985," Sheet B, revised, 1986 Oct 25
Folder 11.4 (Oversize)	"Springside - Existing Conditions - 1985," Sheet C, revised, 1986 Oct 25

Tourbier & Walmsley

Folder 11.4 (Oversize)	"Existing Inventory of Major Trees," 1999 Jun - 2000 Apr
Box 12 (OV Roll)	"Existing Inventory of Major Trees," 1999 Jun - 2000 Apr

Walmsley & Company, Inc. - "Master Plan for Restoring the Ornamental Farm of Matthew Vassar"

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Box 13 (OV Roll)	"2a. Existing Conditions - Topography/Slopes," 1988
Box 13 (OV Roll)	"2b. Existing Conditions - Surface Water/Drainage," 1988
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"Historic Landscape Report for Springside" by Robert M. Toole, draft, 1985 May 15

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- Folder 8.7 Bulletin of American Garden History, 1987 Spring
- Folder 8.8 Clark, Kitty, "Springside: An Exemplary American Home" (ART 250), 1987 Dec
- Folder 8.9 The Clearview Navigator, 1984-1985
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- Folder 8.16 Dutchess County Environmental Management Council, "The Lower Wappinger: A Significant Area," 1982 Dec
- Folder 8.17 Effron, Jesse, "How Springside, An Important National Landmark, Was Saved," draft, 1988 Nov
- Folder 8.18 Flad, Harvey, "Matthew Vassar's 'Springside'," correspondence, 1986-1990
- Folder 8.19 Flad, Harvey, "Matthew Vassar's 'Springside'," drafts, circa 1987
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- Folder 8.25 Flad, Harvey, "Meaning (and Mortality) In Preserved Landscapes," undated
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