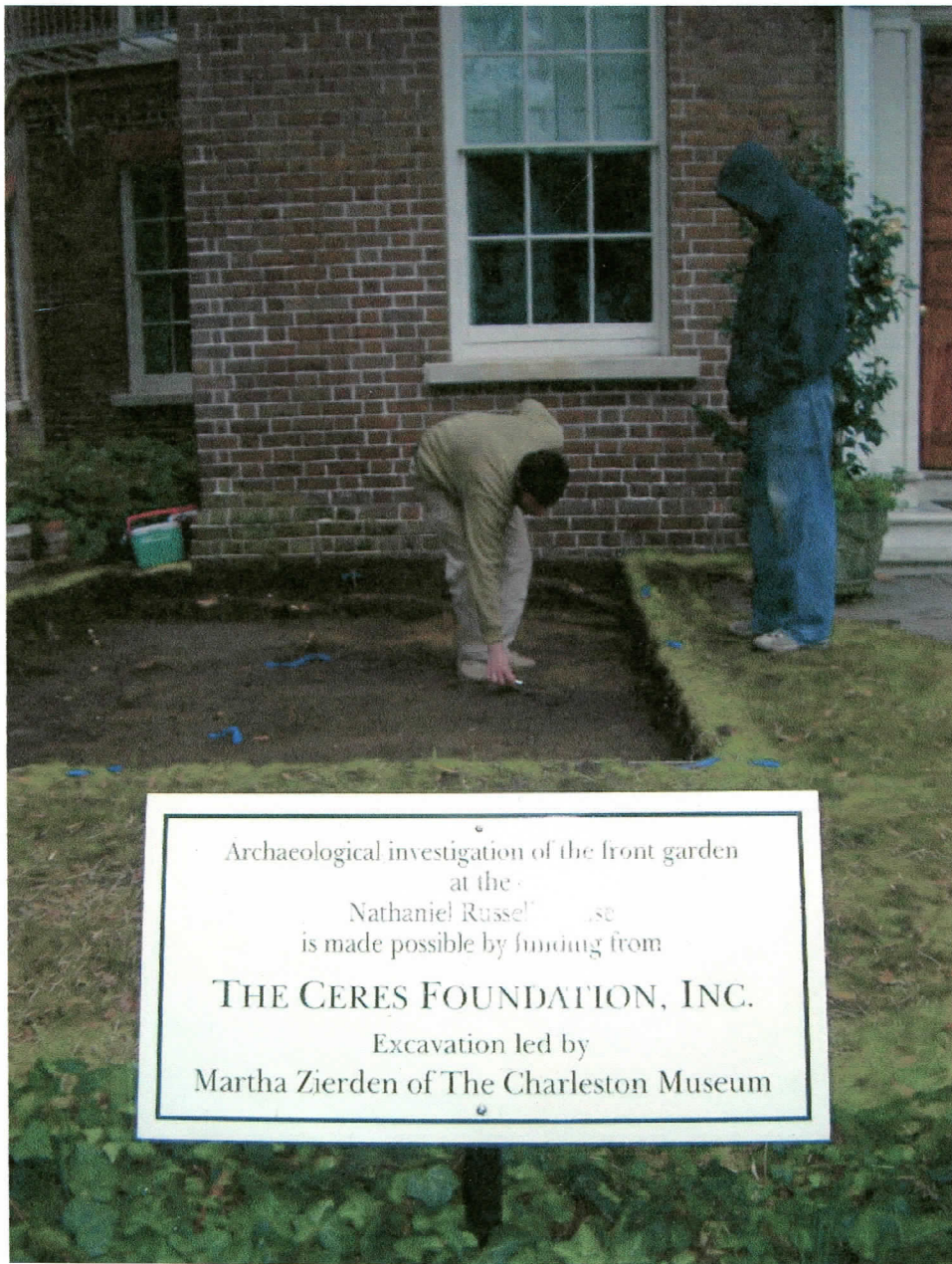


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Preliminary Report: Excavations in the Front Lawn
Nathaniel Russell House – January 2003

Martha Zierden
The Charleston Museum



Fieldwork at the Front lawn, Nathaniel Russell House
January 2003
Interim Report

Fieldwork was conducted by The Charleston Museum in the front yard of the Nathaniel Russell House for two weeks in January 2003. The purpose of the project was to search for remains of gardens, formal or informal, in the front area, to aid in restoration of this portion of the site. The project was sponsored by Historic Charleston Foundation and funded by the Ceres Foundation. The fieldwork was conducted by Martha Zierden of The Charleston Museum, aided by Ronald Anthony, three field technicians, and three student interns from the College of Charleston.

Field Methods

Horizontal control was established in relation to known landmarks, and to the site grid established in 1994-1995. A single 5' unit was excavated in this vicinity in 1994. This was located adjacent to the southeast corner of the house, abutting the front foundation. The southwest corner of the unit was 2.0' south of the front house corner. In 1994 this unit was designated N200.4E297, and was located according the foundation position, rather than even grid increments. For the 2003 project, this unit was used to place the block excavations in the front. For convenience sake, the ".4" designation was dropped, and the old unit was assigned N200E297 (figure 1).

Vertical control also continued the 1994 system. Reference Point 1 was re-established for the duration of the project. This was a mark placed on the sidewalk adjacent to the southeast corner of the northern gatepost leading to the front door. In 1994 this point was tied into the U.S.G.S. marker located in the doorway of the U.S. Post Office at the corner of Meeting and Broad streets. The absolute elevation of RP1 is 8.37'. All elevations during the current project were taken relative to this point.

All excavations were conducted by hand using shovels and trowels. Excavations followed natural zones, and deep zones were subdivided into arbitrary levels. All materials were dry-screened through 1/4 inch mesh. Soil samples were recovered from most natural proveniences.

Record keeping entailed narrative notes and completion of a variety of forms on a daily basis. Planview and profile maps were made for each unit, or block, as appropriate. Material

from each designated provenience were bagged and tagged separately; a field specimen number (FS#) was assigned to each in ordinal fashion. Photographs were taken in black and white (T-max 100) and color slide (Kodachrome 200 professional film), and processed for archival stability. In addition, a series of digital photographs were taken, for instant analysis.

Results of Fieldwork

To begin grid layout, this 1994 unit was relocated. A large block was then triangulated from the southwest corner of the unit and the front of the Russell house. Initially, a six-unit block was laid out, measuring 10' south to north and 15' west to east. Each unit was designated according to the grid. The units in the 6-unit block were excavated simultaneously, including the backfill from N200E297. Sod was removed and placed in the shade of the rear garden. Zone 1 was excavated and discarded; this soil was taken by wheelbarrow to a separate pile in the rear parking area of the house. Zone 1 was a dark topsoil, established for the current garden (10yr3/1). The zone contained relatively few artifact and was densely laden with roots from the large magnolia. This soil was sampled and discarded.

Beneath the greatest concentration of tree roots, the soil was slightly browner, and the artifact concentration increased somewhat. This was designated zone 2 (10yr3/2). Zone 2 was excavated in two levels, with a greater concentration in the lower level. The zone 2 soils were screened and all artifacts retained. Garden features were first noted at the base of zone 2. A series of small round pits of dark grey-brown soil (10yr3/2) with a light grey center (10yr4/1) were noted along the south wall of the block, in units N200E302 and N200E307 (figure 2). These were aligned with the south edge of the building facade, running east/west. They were designated features 80 through 83. The features were .6' in diameter and were .8' apart, center to center. A fifth possible feature, on the western edge of N200E302, was an area of soil disturbance caused by a large root. Though no feature could be defined here, the location of the root and the size of the disturbed area were consistent with the pattern presented by the four plant stains. Likewise, two similar features were noted in N200E207 in 1994. Features 7 and 8 were of similar stratigraphic position, size, and location, and contained similar fill. Their position is shown in figure 3. At this same level, two larger round stains were located in the N205 units. These were amorphous at this time, but received the designation feature 84 and feature 85. Feature 84 contained soil deposits identical to the smaller plant stains: dark soil (10yr3/2) filled with grey sand (10yr4/1). Feature 85 was slightly lighter brown/grey sand (10yr4/2).

A different soil deposit was visible at the base of zone 2. This was designated zone 3. Zone 3 was a lighter brown (10yr4/3) and more heavily flecked with shell fragments. As the goal was definition of the earliest garden, and a flat floor, the intrusive features were excavated first, but only to a depth even with the base of the first level of zone 4 (about 3/10). The small plant features were excavated first. They were initially interpreted as possible posts and postholes, but upon excavation proved to be shallow pits in which the grey sand and dark soil were mixed

together. As these features were only .3' deep, they were excavated completely at the base of zone 2. A comparable first level of features 84 and 85 was excavated to .3' below the top of the feature. A series of small dark features were also noted adjacent to the house, in N205E297. These were very small, and were excavated separately. Features 86 through 89 averaged .6' in diameter and .4' in depth. These may represent small, individual plantings (figure 4).

Excavation of zone 3 throughout the block then commenced. This revealed a continuation of some of the zone 2 features, and a new series of features at the base of zone 3 level 1. These were uniformly brown soil (10yr4/2 or 10yr4/3) with an increased concentration of shell fragments. At this point, the block was expanded to the east and the north, and excavation continued in the same manner. A single 5' unit, N200E312, was excavated to the east. Two units to the north intersected the central slate drive, N210E302 and N210E307. Again, sod was removed and stored and zone 1 was excavated and discarded. Zone 2 was excavated in two levels, and the soils screened through 1/4" mesh. Unit N200E312 revealed a continuation of the row of small plant stains; to the east of feature 80 were three additional features, 100, 101, and 102. These were encountered at the base of zone 2 and excavated completely (figures 2 and 3).

The northerly units adjacent to the walk were a bit more complex. The sod was removed and zone 1 was excavated and discarded. Excavation of zone 2 was interrupted when an area of crushed shell was encountered at the base of zone 2 level 1, one half foot below surface. This was in N210E302, adjacent to the curve in the present bluestone walk. This was designated feature 99, and was interpreted as a foundation for a previous paving event. This feature was recorded and excavated, and excavation of zone 2 level 2 continued. This revealed a large oval pit of dark soil mottled with red clay. This was designated feature 103. This was defined at the base of zone 3. The oval feature nearly encompassed the entire unit floor in N210E307. This proved to be relatively shallow, and was completely excavated at the base of zone 3 level 1.

The first level of zone 3 was then excavated for each of the 8 units in the block; this averaged .2 to .3 feet. This revealed a second series of features, beneath and distinct from those defined in the zone 2 matrix (figure 5). Composite maps of new features, and the remaining portions of later features, were prepared, as were overall photographs, including several from the second story balcony. A variety of new features were defined at this level. Feature 94 was the designation given to the amorphous area of dark soil along the south wall of the block. This linear area difficult to map, as it appeared as a gradual darkening of soil as one moved south (figure 6). The original edge of this darker area was defined 3' north of the southern edge of the block, while the more distinct area initiated about .6 to 1.1' north of the block wall. Excavation of a cross-section of this feature revealed that the more southerly line was the true limit of a deep planting feature.

The most intriguing deposit was feature 95, a series of small oval plant stains of medium brown sand (10yr4/3) containing shell flecks (figures 4-7). This line of small (.3-.4' in diameter) oval stains appears to transect the block on the diagonal, from the southeastern corner of the

block in N200E312 to the northwest corner of N205E302. None of these small plant stains were excavated at this time, but they appear to represent a linear series of small plants.

Likely associated with feature 95, based on soil color and stratigraphic position, were a number of larger planting stains. Feature 97, in N205E302, appeared to be rectangular (3' by 4'), and aligned with the axis of feature 95. This feature was truncated by two round pits, each about 3' in diameter, feature 98 and feature 85, respectively. Feature 111 was a rounded stain located in N205E307, also truncated by two overlying features, feature 96 and feature 84. Unit N200E312 also contained some early features, underlying intrusive pits. Feature 115 was a rounded pit about 1.1' in diameter, underlying a rounded pit of similar dimensions, feature 104. These were located just north of feature 94, the aforementioned linear area of dark soil. Unit N205E297, adjacent to the house, also contained some smaller pits filled with the characteristic brown shell-flecked soil. Feature 109 was of moderate size, 2.4' in diameter, while features 110 and 112 were smaller stains. Features associated by soil type and artifact content are shown in figures 3-5.

After consultation with HCF staff, some of these were selected for sampling, while the majority were left intact. Of particular significance were three clusters of superimposed pits. These include features 104, 94, and 115 in N200E312, features 84, 96, and 111 in N205E307, and features 85, 98, and 97 in N205E302. In each case, the clusters were bisected north/south, and the western half excavated, with each feature segregated. The profiles of each of these three groups were then drawn and photographed (figures 8 and 9).

Features filled with brown sand characteristic of the early 19th century were also encountered in the N210 units. Of particular interest was a well-defined linear area of brown sand, 2.0' in diameter, designated feature 105. A series of small round stains was located immediately north of this; these were designated features 106 through 108. These were first interpreted as further garden evidence; a linear bed and associated individual plantings. Excavation of a sample of feature 105, however, revealed that this was a trench for two iron service pipes, of considerable age. The small features were not sampled and they may still reflect gardening activity. The presence of these features would suggest that the sidewalk retains its original configuration, but this remains subject to further review (see figure 10).

In order to preserve as much of the early 19th century garden as possible, excavations were halted at this point. This left a level excavation surface throughout the block, at .9' below ground surface. This was not at sterile subsoil, however. A second level of zone 3, or an underlying zone 4 (as defined in 1994) was present at the ground surface; this presented as a mottled brown and orange sand, obviously containing cultural materials, particularly brick fragments and ceramics. These may be associated with construction of the Russell House, or the buildings which predate the mansion. Likewise, the backfill of N200E297 was excavated only to this point. The zone 4 deposits excavated in 1994 continued to a depth of 2.1' below surface.

Two units were excavated north of the central sidewalk, but these received less attention. Units N225E312 and N225E317 were placed in the center of the north lawn area. Sod and zone 1 were removed as before. Excavation of zone 1 in N225E317 revealed an entry pipe to an old fuel oil tank. The iron cap was removed, revealing the pipe to the tank and indicating that the tank still contained fuel. The cap was replaced and excavation of this unit abandoned. Excavation of N225E312 continued to the base of zone 3. Zone 2 was excavated in two levels and screened.

A number of features, most poorly defined, were encountered at the base of zone 2, and again at the base of zone 3 level 2. A well-defined linear area along the southern wall of the unit was likely the line from the fuel tank to the house. A large oval area occupying the eastern 2/3 of the unit contained brown soil (10yr4/3) mottled with orange clay (10yr7/8). This may be related to feature 103 encountered in N210E307. The western portion of the unit contained a series of small to medium pits of brown sand (10yr4/3 to 5/4). None of these received feature designations at this time. The units were photographed and backfilled, to await further excavation.

Winter weather was a factor in the process of the fieldwork. The weather was cold and wet during the project, and heavy rains hampered the project. The numerous overcast days, however, aided in visibility of the subtle soil stains encountered during the project; bright sunny days would have seriously reduced visibility in the unit floors. The units were covered carefully with black (4mil) plastic each day, and the soils were often damp. Likewise, the units were riddled with roots of all sizes, from the modern garden, which hampered visibility in some areas. Minimal interruption of visitor traffic was another factor in the fieldwork. Filter fabric was placed on the ground prior to screening, and all screening was conducted under the large magnolia, adjacent to the block. All roots were removed from the area during screening, and discarded separately. The units were left open for two weeks for consultation, and then backfilled and re-sodded. The excavated features were filled with sterile orange builders sand prior to backfilling.

Dating the Deposits

All encountered archaeological deposits were dated on the basis of stratigraphic point of initiation and Terminus Post Quem. Terminus Post Quem, or TPQ, is the principal which states that no provenience can be deposited earlier than the invention date of the latest dating item in the provenience. A provenience can be deposited any time after that date; therefore, date of deposition is rarely the same as the TPQ date. The front lawn units at Russell contained a sparse artifact assemblage, but fortunately one large enough, and diverse enough, to aid in dating and sequencing the encountered deposits.

Stratigraphic point of initiation is based on the Law of Superimposition, the geological principal that soils gradually accumulate on sites of human occupation. Therefore, the deepest deposit is the earliest, with deposits occurring later as one approaches the top of the ground. Relative dates are therefore assigned according to the profile map and the level of the top (or

point of initiation) of each deposit. Thus the date of deposition assigned to each archaeological provenience is based on both techniques and is determined by considering each provenience relative to those around it. The three clusters of features described above, therefore, were central to dating the deposits encountered in the excavations, and determining the overall evolution of the front lawn area.

On sites such as Russell, where dispersed test units are excavated, additional emphasis is placed on recognizing stratigraphy, in terms of dating, depth, artifact content, and physical characteristics, across broad areas of the site. The evidence recovered in the excavation of N200E297 in 1994 was unclear at that time; with a larger area exposed, however, the features encountered there could be placed in proper temporal and functional context. The excavations contain evidence of activity dating to the first half of the 19th century, to the mid to late 19th century, and to the late 20th century, respectively.

Provenience Guide

| | <u>FS#</u> | <u>Unit</u> | <u>Level</u> | <u>TPQ</u> |
|------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| (Zone 2 level 1) | | | | |
| | 363 | N200E302 | zone 2 lev 1 | brown glass |
| | 364 | N205E307 | zone 2 lev 1 | pressed glass |
| | 366 | N205E302 | zone 2 lev 1 | jet button |
| | 367 | N200E307 | zone 2 lev 1 | cheese whiz jar |
| | 368 | N205E297 | zone 2 lev 1 | brown glass |
| | 383 | N225E312 | zone 2 lev 1 | brown glass/prosser button |
| | 399 | N210E307 | zone 2 lev 1 | flower pot |
| | 400 | N210E302 | zone 2 lev 1 | undec. whiteware |
| | 385 | N205E302, | zone 3 lev 1/fea 96 | late flower pot |
| (Zone 2 level 2) | | | | |
| | 369 | N200E307 | zone 2 lev 2 | blue milk glass |
| | 370 | N205E297 | zone 2 lev 2 | rockingham/green tr.pr. ww |
| | 372 | N200 block | trowel base z.2 | blue milk glass |
| | 373 | N205E297 | zone 2 lev 3 | minie ball |
| | 383 | N225E312 | zone 2 lev 2 | brown glass/prosser button |
| | 395 | N200E312 | zone 2 lev 2 | blue milk glass |
| | 396 | N210E307 | zone 2 lev 2 | tr.pr. whiteware |
| | 397 | N210E302 | zone 2 lev 2 | molded glass |
| | 414 | N210E302 | pipe | white porcelain |
| (Zone 3 level 1) | | | | |
| | 379 | N205E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | transfer print whiteware |
| | 380 | N200E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | purple tr. pr. whiteware |

| | | | |
|-----|----------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 381 | N205E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | transfer print pearlware |
| 382 | N200E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | chinese porcelain |
| 384 | N205E302 | e. 1/2, zone 3 | undec. whiteware |
| 389 | N205E203 | trowel b. zone 3 | undec pearlware |
| 390 | N200E302 | zone 3 lev 1 | gaudy dutch/tr. pr. whiteware |
| 391 | N225E312 | zone 3 lev 1 | milk glass |
| 392 | N225E312 | zone 3 lev 2 | Canton porcelain/whiteware |
| 410 | N200E312 | zone 3 lev 1 | wire nail/tr. pr. pearlware |
| 412 | N205E297 | zone 3 lev 1 | tr. pr. ww/prosser button |
| 415 | N210E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | flow blue whiteware |
| 416 | N210E302 | zone 3 lev 1 | cut nail/white porcelain |

(Zone 2 features)

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 371 | N205E297 | feature 79 | dispensary bottle |
| 377 | N200E307 | feature 80 | sprig ware |
| 378 | N200E307 | feature 81 | creamware |
| 387 | N200E302 | feature 82 | creamware |
| 388 | N200E302 | feature 83 | brick |
| 401 | N200E312 | feature 100 | transfer print pearlware |
| 402 | N200E312 | feature 101 | green glass |
| 403 | N200E312 | feature 102 | brick rubble |
| 404 | N205E297 | feature 86 | window glass |
| 406 | N205E297 | feature 87 | tr. pr. whiteware |
| 407 | N205E297 | feature 88 | wire nail |
| 408 | N205E297 | feature 89 | pressed glass |
| 409 | N205E297 | feature 90 | clear bottle glass |
| 411 | N310E302 | feature 99 lev 1 | creamware |
| 418 | N210E302 | feature 99 lev 2 | yellow ware/whiteware |
| 421 | N205E307 | feature 84 | Canton porcelain/whiteware |
| 422, 398, 384 | N205E302 | feature 85 | whiteware/container glass |
| 417 | N210E307 | feature 103 | whiteware |
| 426 | N205E302 | feature 98 | tr. pr. whiteware |
| 423 | N200E312 | feature 94 | gaudy dutch |
| 405 | N200E312 | feature 94 lev 1 | white porcelain |

(Zone 3 features)

| | | | |
|-----|----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 431 | N205E302 | feature 97 | tr. pr. pearlware (1810) |
| 428 | N205E307 | feature 111 | shell edge pearlware |
| 424 | N205E307 | feature 96 | creamware |
| 429 | N200E312 | feature 115 | tr. pr. pearlware |
| 425 | N200E312 | feature 104 | creamware |
| 430 | N210E307 | feature 105 | creamware |

(1994 excavations)

| | | | | |
|----|----------|--------------|--------------------|------|
| 36 | N200E297 | zone 2 lev 2 | brown bottle glass | 1870 |
| 35 | N200E297 | feature 6 | nail | 1870 |

| | | | | |
|----|----------|---------------|--------------------|------|
| 39 | N200E297 | feature 7 | brown bottle glass | 1870 |
| 40 | N200E297 | feature 8 | table glass | |
| 41 | N200E297 | resid. zone 2 | milk glass | 1870 |
| 42 | N200E297 | zone 3 | yellow ware | 1850 |
| 47 | N200E297 | feature 9 | undec pw | 1820 |
| 48 | N200E297 | feature 10 | tr pr whiteware | 1830 |
| 49 | N200E297 | zone 4 | pearlware | 1800 |
| 54 | N200E297 | zone 4 lev 2 | green bottle glass | |
| 58 | N200E297 | feature 13 | iron | 1810 |

Sequencing the Proveniences

The stratigraphic position of the features and zones encountered, plus the artifacts they contain, are sufficient to suggest three distinct planting episodes. The earliest is represented by the brown shell-flecked features encountered at the base of zone 3 level 1, and underlying the intrusive plant stains. This garden is represented by features 95, 96, 97, 104, 115, 111, and features 109-112. Those excavated contained transfer printed pearlware dated to c. 1810 as the latest artifact, as well as other refined earthenwares from the 1780s-1820s. This is the earliest garden event, conceivably installed shortly after the house was complete. The overlying zone 3, likely a planting surface for these features and containing their true tops, contains artifacts invented through the first half of the 19th century. White porcelain, dating to 1851, and wire nails of the same era, suggest this zone received debris and cultural material throughout this half century.

The second planting episode is represented by some of the darker features, including the linear bed represented by feature 94, the small features near the house (features 86-90), the larger round plant stains, feature 98 and possibly feature 85. The mottled deposit of dark soil and red clay, feature 103, may also date to this era, as suggested by the red clay features encountered in front of the kitchen in 1995. These deposits may represent garden plantings by the Allstons, 1857-1870. The lower levels of zone 2, though somewhat disturbed by installation of the irrigation system, contain some materials from the second half of the 19th century, but the majority reflect wares popular during the middle of the 19th century.

Though the artifact content is not significantly later, stratigraphic position and similarity of soil matrix suggest that the row of small plantings (features 80-83, 100-102, and 6-7) plus the large round plant stain, feature 84, are a third event, one dating to the late 19th century and possibly some time in the first half of the 20th century.

Continued excavation of this front area, combined with careful reconsideration of the images of the Russell yard, are the next step in analysis of gardening activities in the front yard area. Though the results of pollen analysis from the 1995 project were disappointing, it is suggested that pollen and phytolith analysis be attempted on some of the many soil samples

retained during the present project. Soil chemistry studies might also inform on the intensity of fertilizing efforts in this area. The degree of preservation of garden features in this area of the yard is remarkable, and is amenable to additional research.

List of Illustrations

1. Site map, excavations in front of the Nathaniel Russell House.
2. Excavations of N200 block in progress
3. Andrew Agha designating features 80-83.
4. Composite map of late 19th century features, including those from 1994 project.
5. View of excavation from balcony at base of zone 2; late 19th century features exposed.
6. Composite map of mid 19th century features.
7. Composite map of early 19th century features.
8. View of excavation block, from balcony, at base of zone 3 level 1; early 19th century features are exposed, later features are still intrusive.
9. Close-up view of the line of small oval stains comprising feature 95, facing south.
10. Profile of features 85, 98, and 97.
11. Profile of features 84, 96, and 111.
12. View of the front lawn of the Nathaniel Russell house, c. 1898.

Nathaniel Russell House

shell driveway

N200
E297

grassed area

garden walkway

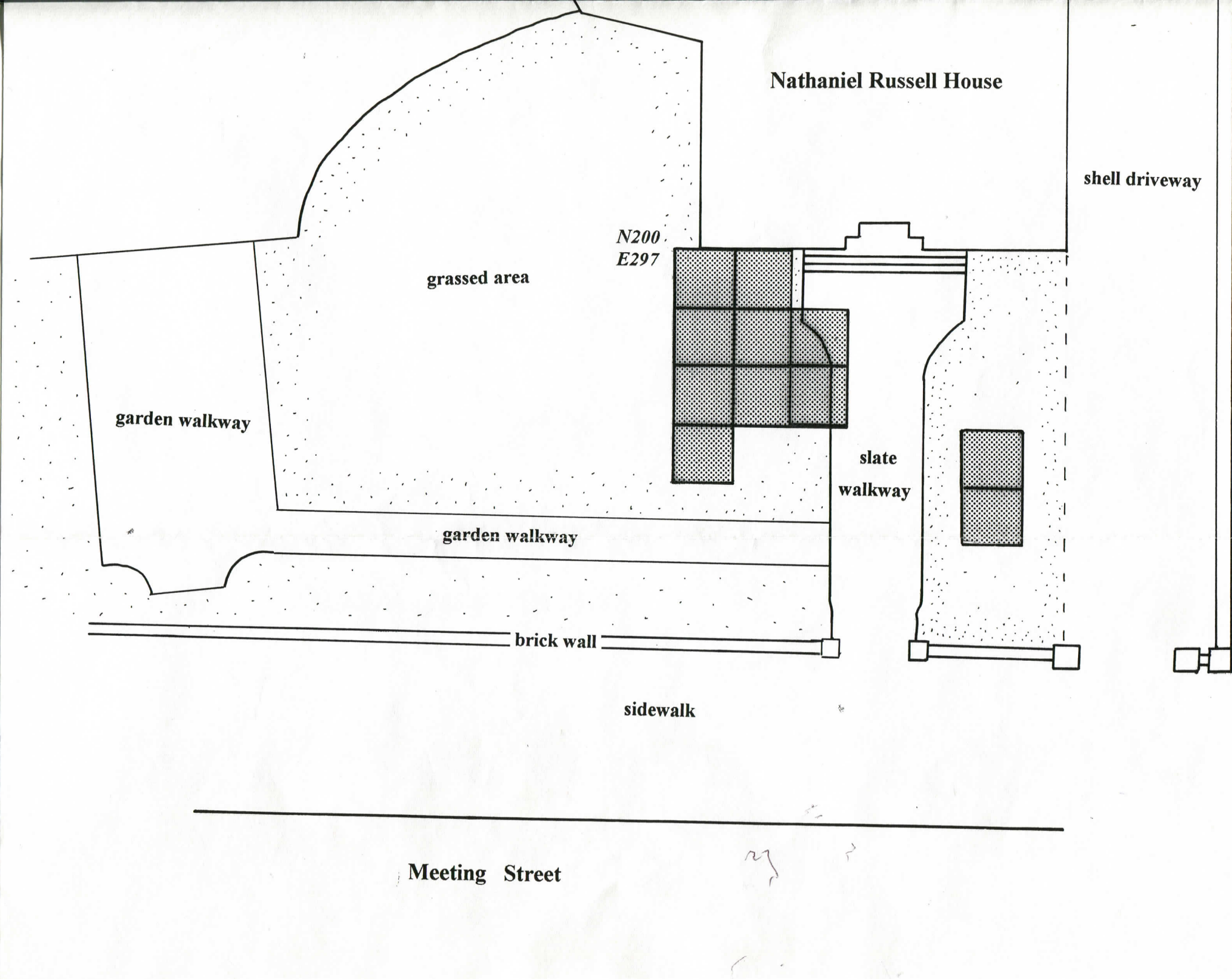
slate
walkway

garden walkway

brick wall

sidewalk

Meeting Street





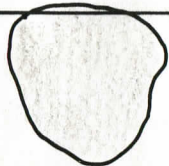
front of house

door

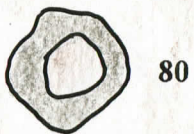
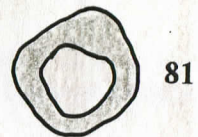
N200
E297



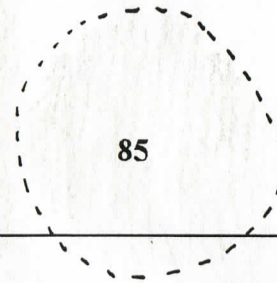
N200
E302



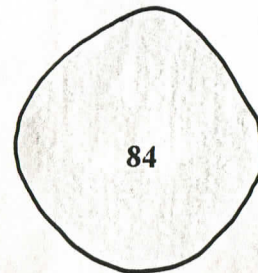
N200
E307



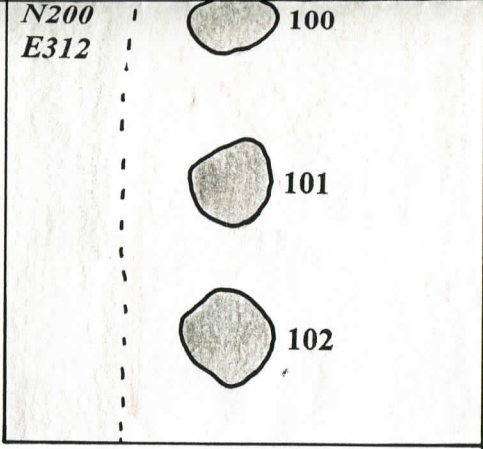
N205
E302



N210
E307



front walk



garden walk

Nathaniel Russell House

Garden Features, late 19th - early 20th Century



front o. ouse

door

N200
E297



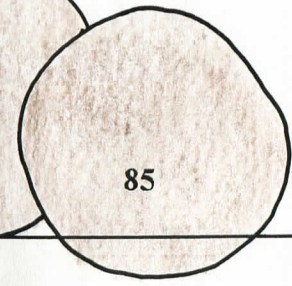
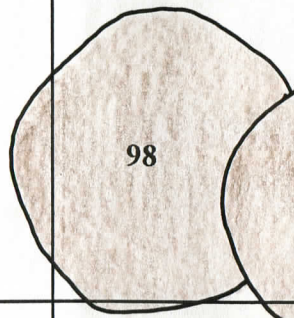
front walk

N200
E302

N205
E302

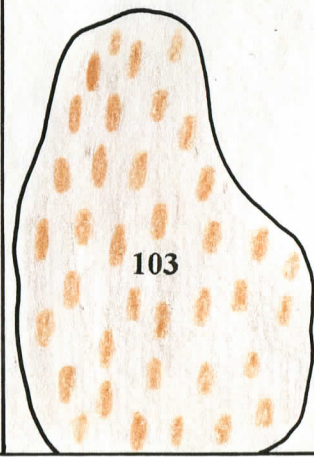
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94

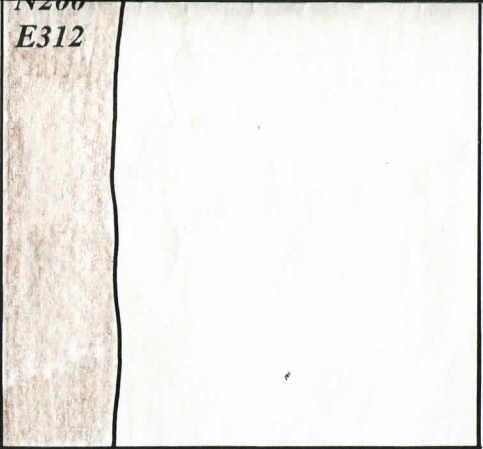


N200
E307

103



N200
E312



garden walk

Nathaniel Russell House

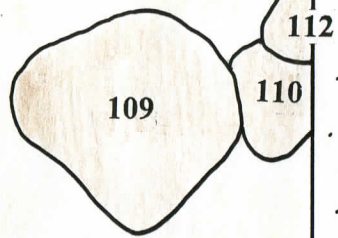
Garden Features, mid- 19th Century

front of house

door

N200
E297

113

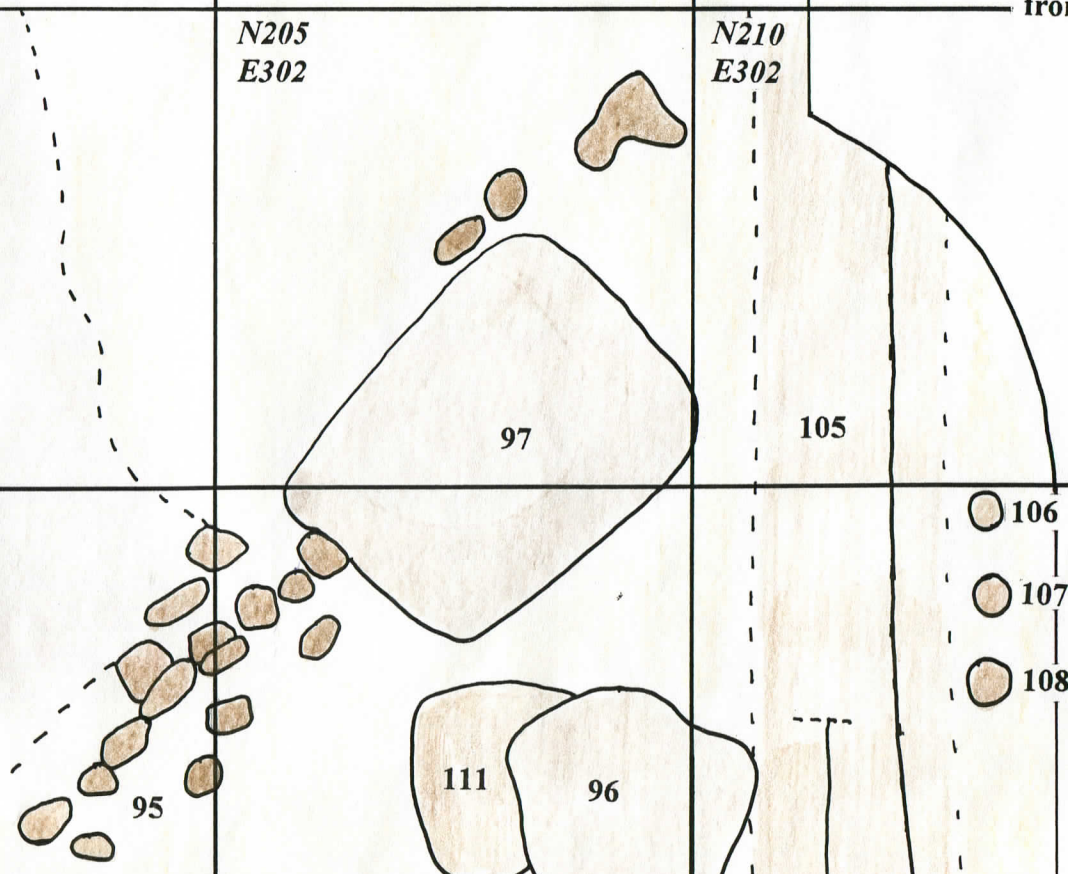


N200
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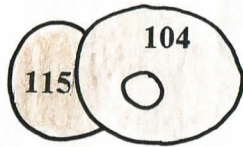
N205
E302

N210
E302

front walk



N200
E312



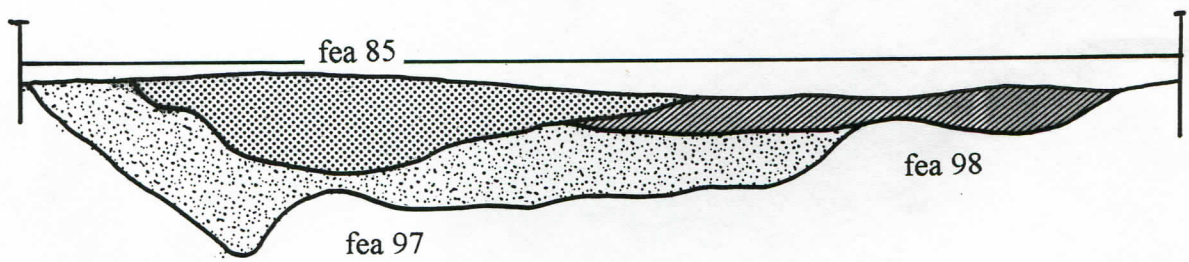
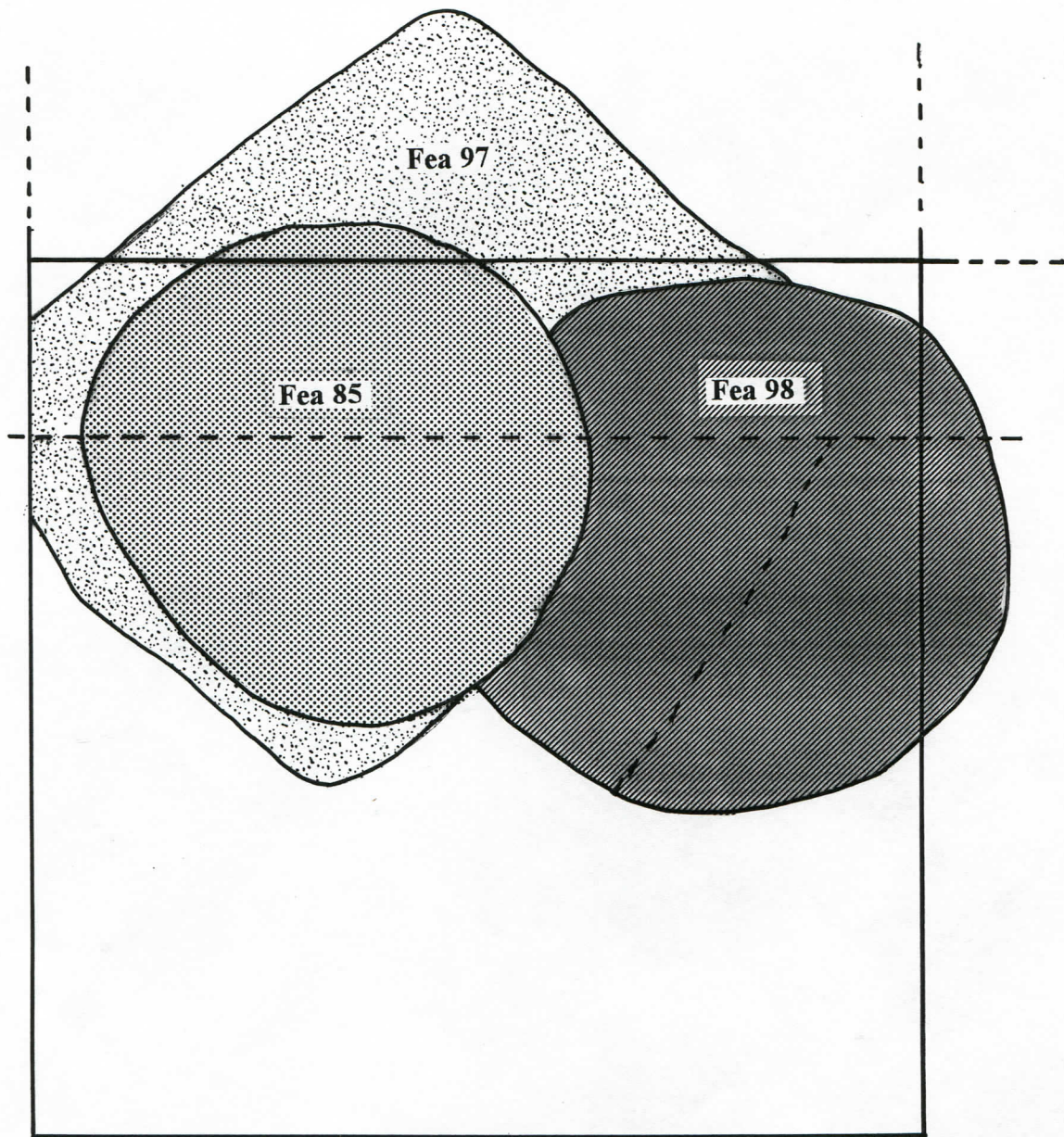
garden walk

Nathaniel Russell House

Garden Features, Early 19th Century

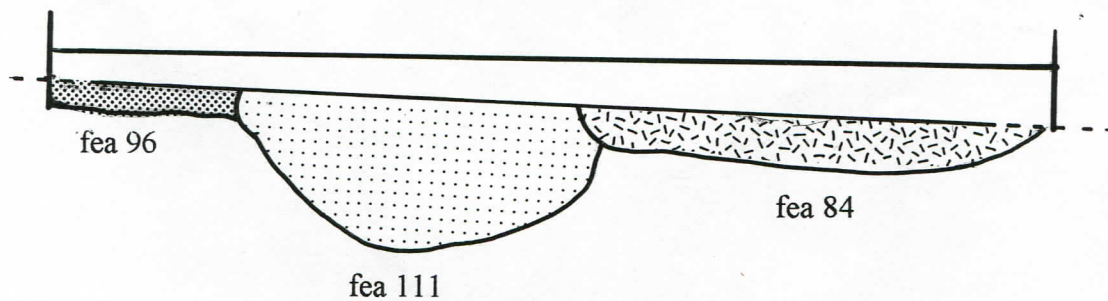
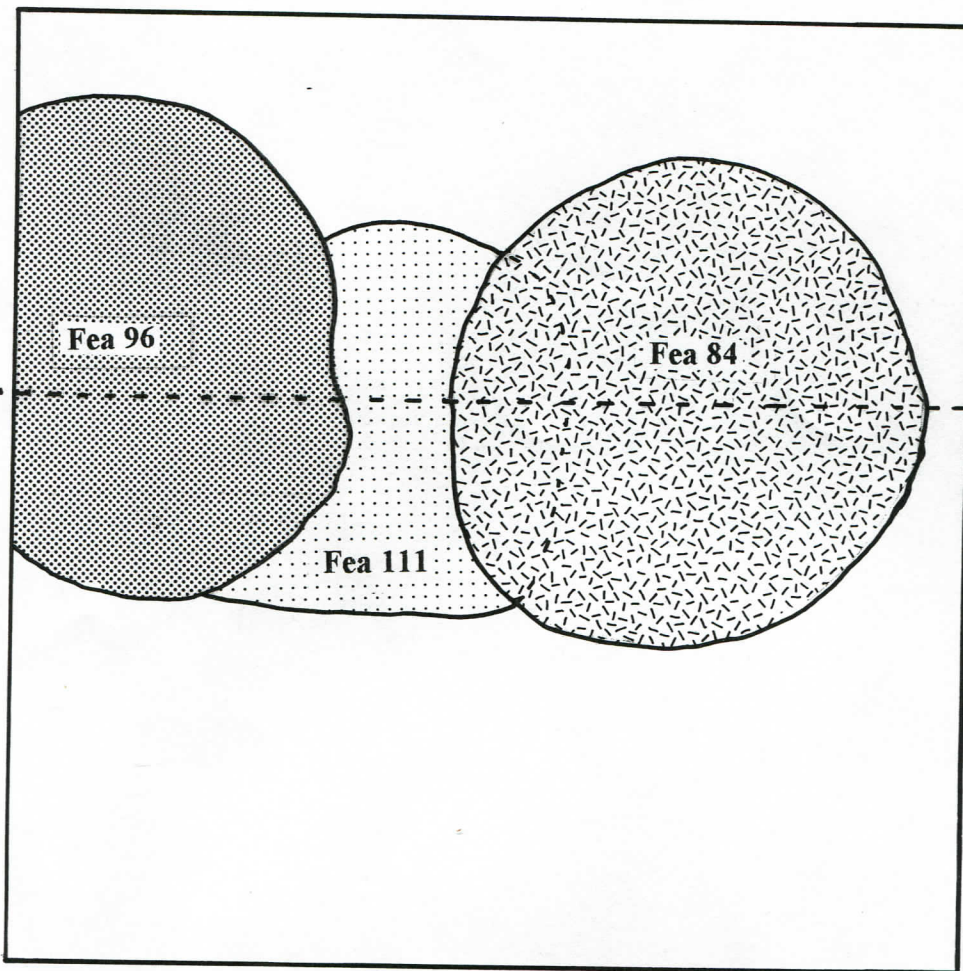






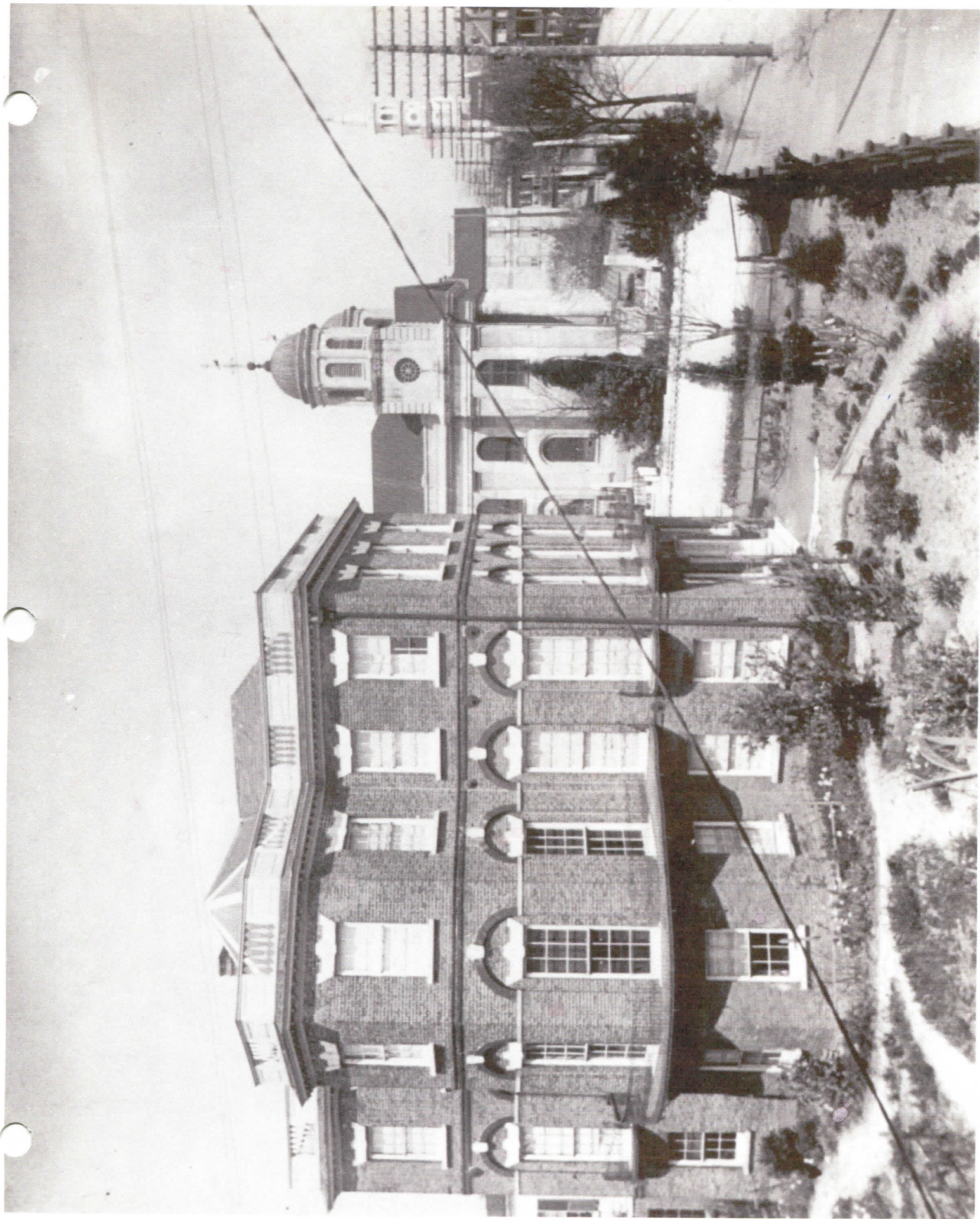
N205E302, feature cross-section

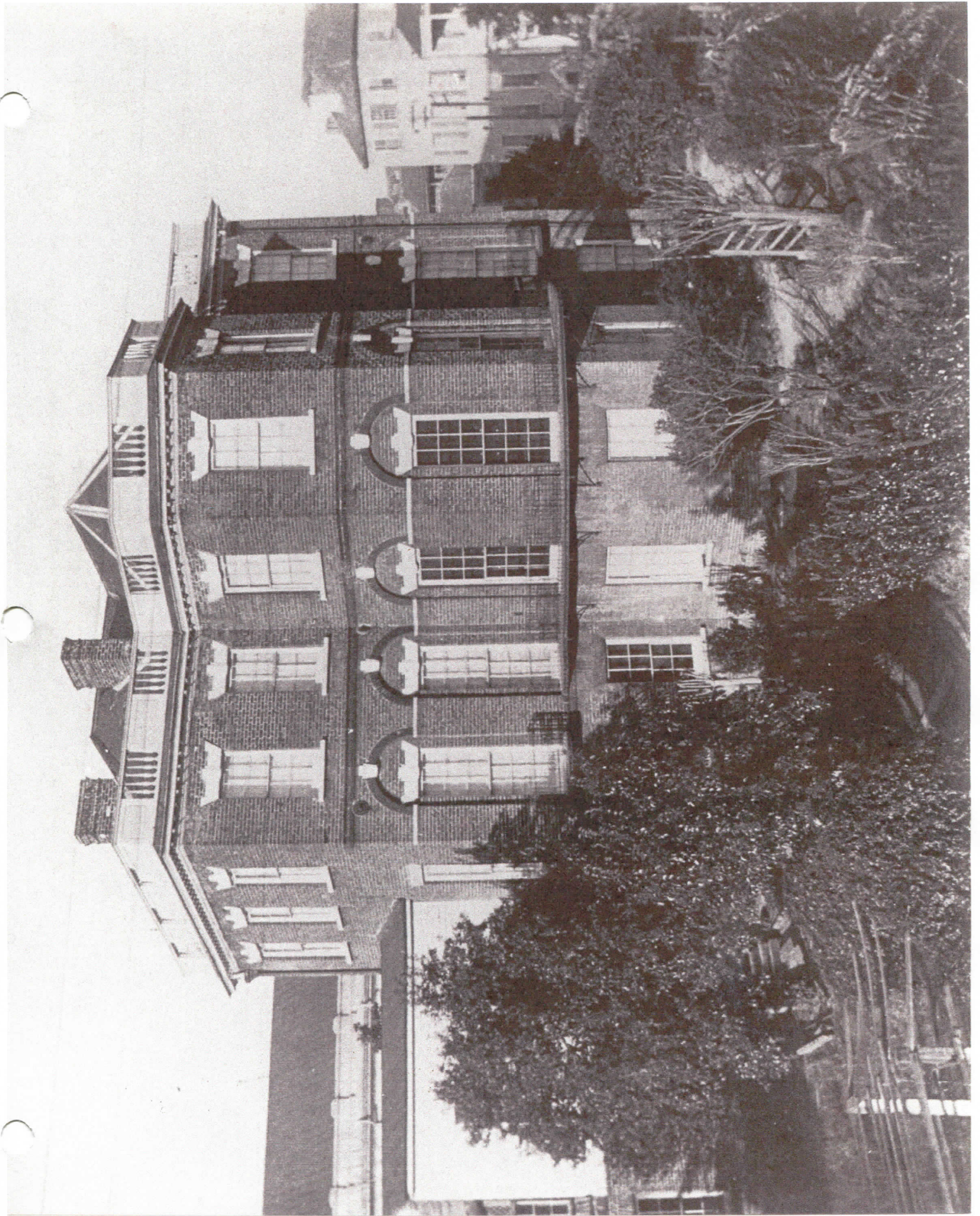
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| Feature 85 | 10yr4/2 | undecorated whiteware |
| Feature 98 | 10yr4/2 | transfer printed whiteware |
| Feature 97 | 10yr4/3 | transfer printed pearlware (1810) |



N205E307, feature cross-section

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| Feature 84 | 10yr3/2 | Canton porcelain |
| Feature 96 | 10yr5/3 | creamware |
| Feature 111 | 10yr4/3 | shell edged pearlware |





More Fieldwork in the Front Lawn, Nathaniel Russell House January 2004 Interim Report

Based on the promising results of the 2003 project, additional fieldwork was conducted in the front yard of the Nathaniel Russell House in January 2004. This work was scheduled to coincide with short-term closure of the house for a range of renovations. These are the final projects of the decade-long renovation and reinterpretation of the property, as proposed in the Historic Structures Analysis. The second phase of fieldwork was funded by the Ceres Foundation and Wachovia, through Historic Charleston Foundation. Fieldwork was directed by Ronald Anthony, Andrew Agha, and Martha Zierden, with a crew of four technicians and five College of Charleston students, all graduates of the College of Charleston/Charleston Museum field school in historical archaeology.

Field Methods

Planning for the second phase of fieldwork required coordination among Historic Charleston Foundation staff, the garden maintenance staff, the landscape architectural firm, the restoration contractors and specialists, and the archaeological crew. The house was closed to visitation on January 5. Though closed, access through the front door was required by the contractors. Also, a carpentry crew would be decking the second-storey balconies concurrent with the excavations below. The garden and front lawn needed restoration prior to full visitor access. Unit location was planned in consultation with Jonathan Poston and Sheila Wertimer, and a map prepared. Sod and bushes in these areas were removed and stored by Bob Cox and his crew at Landscapes Limited. The irrigation system was de-activated for this area for the duration of the dig. Topsoil, both screened and un-screened, was stored in a separate location to be backfilled last. All roots cut during excavation (a considerable volume) were discarded elsewhere. Landscaping fabric was placed beneath all screens. Screening was conducted beneath the magnolia tree for the southern block, and traffic across the lawn was minimized. Upon completion of the excavations, the block was backfilled by the archaeological crew, using the screened soils from zones 2 and 3, to a level 3" below present ground surface. Re-sodding and bush planting was handled by the landscape staff.

Field methods for the 2003 dig were replicated for the 2004 project. In anticipation of a return to the field, grid nails along the N200 line were left in place in 2003. These were re-discovered in 2004, and the new, adjoining units to the south were triangulated from these points. A line of 5' units was excavated along the southern boundary of the 2003 block. These extended from the front of the house to the front brick wall. Yew bushes were removed from the front wall, but the brick walkway was left in place. Seven 5' units were established along the N195' line; three of these were partial units, due to truncation by the brick walkway and the front wall. Units excavated here were N195E297 through N195E327 (referred to hereafter as the N195 block).

A block of four 5' units was excavated on the northern side of the front walk. These were established by measuring along the front wall of the main house, beginning with the northeast corner of the foundation and measuring south. A ten-foot block was then triangulated to the east, based on this line. This alignment with the corner of the house served to give the units grid coordinates of N223.5E297/302 and N228.5E297/302 (referred to hereafter as the N223 block).

As was the case in 2003, the units in the two blocks were excavated simultaneously, zone by zone. Three zones were identified, and the blocks were troweled and photographed at the base of each zone. Zone 1 was a dark topsoil (10yr3/1), established during the 20th century for landscaping purposes. The zone contained relatively few artifacts and was densely laden with roots from the large magnolia. This soil was sampled (50%) and discarded. Artifact content was minimal. Two days were required to excavate all units to the base of zone 1.

Beneath the topsoil, the soil was somewhat browner (10yr3/2), and the artifact concentration increased somewhat. This was designated zone 2. Zone 2 was initially excavated in two levels, as was the case in 2003. In some units, however, remnant dark brown soil remained; this was excavated as a third level of zone 2. Features were first noted at the base of zone 2; these were photographed and mapped. The 2004 blocks contained fewer late 19th/early 20th century features than did the 2003 block, and so definition and excavation of feature fill at this point was minimal.

The distinct soil change noted at the base of zone 2 was again encountered in the two blocks. This was again designated zone 3, and was lighter and browner (10yr4/3) and more heavily flecked with shell fragments. Soil visibility also improves at this level. As the continuing goal of the project was to define the earliest garden, the upper levels of intrusive features were excavated first, and then a first level of zone 3 was excavated by unit across the block (about 3/10 foot). Careful troweling of the blocks at this level revealed a number of features, which were photographed and mapped. In some locations, the soil remained somewhat disturbed by the extensive root network and the irrigation system, and a second shallow level of zone 3 was excavated and the features re-mapped. Excavation of some of the features revealed that zone 4 was present about .2' below the zone 3 level 2 surface. As sampled in 1994 and encountered in 2003, the zone 4 soils were characterized by light brown sand (10yr5/4), filled with sporadic brick rubble and a few 18th century artifacts. Zone 4 was noted in the base of excavated features, but the lower levels of zone 3 and zone 4 was not excavated during the present project. Excavations for both blocks were terminated in the middle of zone 3, 1.0' below the present ground surface.

In the N223 block, several features were noted in the zone 2 context. First encountered were a line of brick headers, running north/south along the front of the house (1.5' from the front of the house). These were large red bricks, and they enclosed a border bed along the front of the house. The bricks were breached in two places. A gap occurred at a terminal sprinkler line, and the bricks were removed by the planting of the yew bushes along the driveway. A second line of brick edging was visible on the driveway surface, 1.0' north of the edge of the block. These were mapped in relation to the block. They likely represent a border bed along the southern side of the drive, and appear to be associated with the front border bed. The soils inside the bed were not excavated at this point. Two large circular features were also encountered in N223.5E302.

Feature 129 was completely circular, and measured 2.2'. Soil was dark brown (10yr3/2) mottled with red clay (non-local clay). The south half of this feature was sampled and yielded a wire nail, dating it to the second half of the 19th century. A larger feature (feature 130), 3.7' in diameter, was filled with dark soil mottled with yellow sand. This was not sampled.

The most pertinent feature in the block was a linear path, running north/south in the E297 units, from the slate walkway to the driveway. The northern end of this feature was truncated by the backfilled holes of the yew hedge. The brick border bed formed the western edge of the feature. Feature 119 as initially defined exhibited a curved eastern edge, 3.7' on the southern side and 2.1' wide at the northern edge. Within the zone 2 levels, feature 19 exhibited a surface of coal ash. These upper deposits were excavated as level 1. A concentration of black marble fragments, matching the mantle in the back parlor (installed during the Allston period, 1857-1870), were recovered in this ash.

Beneath this was a packed surface of whole and crushed oyster shell, designated feature 119 level 2. This appeared to be a shell path surface. A builders trench for the small red bricks edging the slate walkway intruded into the shell. This was designated feature 134.

No new features were defined at the base of zone 3 level 1. A 1.5' wide sample of feature 119 level 2 was excavated. The upper level, about .15' thick, was well-prepared shell, a mixture of whole and crushed oyster. Beneath this, the feature was characterized by large brick fragments mixed with pockets of crushed shell. Excavations were terminated at what appeared to be the top of zone 4.

In order to investigate the possibility that the shell from feature 119 continued below the present slate walkway, three bricks were removed from the edging as a 1.0' wide sample. Here, the narrow construction trench, feature 134, was excavated, revealing a profile of the slate walk. Beneath the slate was a lense of dark soil about .3' deep. Beneath this, the shell paving clearly continued beneath the slate. Excavations were halted at this point.

As the excavations were five feet closer to the large magnolia tree that dominates the front garden, the N195 block was characterized by heavy root mass. Several large roots, including the major root that runs along the front of the house (encountered in the 1994 unit and in the 2003 block), were left in place. A host of smaller roots were trimmed in removed. The roots hampered visibility to the base of zone 2, and entailed excavation of two levels of zone 3 in some units.

Features were first mapped in this block at the base of zone 2. In N195E312-E317, a diagonal swath of brown soil with a concentration of oyster shell was interpreted as ephemeral evidence of a shell garden path. This was designated feature 120. Feature 120 never exhibited well-defined edges, and the shell concentration decreased as excavations continued into zone 3. The interface with other features in this area (also poorly defined) remained difficult to determine. Four small dark circular-to-oval stains (.5' in diameter) along the southern edge of feature 120 were interpreted as small plant stains and were collectively designated feature 127. An amorphous concentration of artifacts and slightly orange mottled soil was present along the southern profile, and was designated feature 126. Finally, the units revealed the southern portion

The stratigraphic sequencing of feature 94 and feature 120 was difficult to determine.

The westernmost units in the block were more heavily impacted by large roots. But the top of zone 3 was higher in these units, and so feature visibility was actually better. A variety of small garden features were revealed in N195E297, N195E302, and N195E307. Two clusters of small plant stains were recorded. Most distinct were the fourteen small oval stains of brown soil (10yr4/2) in N195E297. These trended southwest/northeast, and in places appeared to be three abreast. Soil on either side of this plant cluster appeared to be slightly darker than the zone 3 soil beneath feature 125; this may be the result of root disturbance, or it may be additional evidence of the overall footprint of the garden. A second cluster of small oval/circular stains was located in the center of N195E302. Eleven stains were initially defined, and were collectively designated feature 124. This feature was roughly circular, but there was a suggested linear trend, again northeast/southwest. Between these two features were small patches of finely crushed shell, again highly disturbed by roots. The two shell pockets mapped were designated feature 123.

A large feature of slightly darker soil did not match the plant stains, and may not be associated with garden activities. Feature 122 was an oval area of dark brown soil (10yr3/4) filled with large fragments of wall plaster. This feature was initially encountered at the base of zone 2 and a first level was excavated before zone 3 level 1 was removed. A small excavated sample revealed a heavy concentration of wall plaster in a rounded pit.

A single late planting feature, characterized by dark soil (10yr3/1), was present in the southern profile of N195E307. The dark soil contained areas of mottled gold and tan sand in the center of the feature. This feature intruded into an amorphous area of brown sand and crushed shell, designated feature 128. Neither of these features were excavated.

Many of these features were re-defined and re-mapped at the base of zone 3 level 1. The overall configuration of all of the features remained. Fewer individual stains remained for feature 124, while an additional cluster was noted for feature 127. The possible path area, feature 120, diminished in size, but was replaced by new small deposits of feature 127. Interestingly, the individual features of feature 127 trended with feature 120. The shell concentration designated feature 128 in N195E307 increased in size, but these features were difficult to isolate due to disturbance from the irrigation pipes in the northern portion of this unit.

A few of the encountered features were selected for sample excavation. The goal was to excavate enough features to date the various garden events, but to minimize disturbance of the pattern below the zone 3 level. A single stain of each of the clusters was excavated, as was one area of the crushed shell. The enigmatic feature 122 was sampled to determine the nature of the architectural debris and any possible association with the garden features. The single stain from feature 127 exhibited sloping sides and a rounded bottom, and was .5' deep. The sample stain from feature 125 was similar, but was only .25' deep. The small patch of crushed shell, feature 123, exhibited regular sides and was .4' deep. The shell contained a moderate amount of artifacts, as well as some brick fragments. All of these features intruded into zone 4, and so any brick rubble may have been redeposited from zone 4.

Feature 122 was more substantial, and the portion contained in N195E307 was sampled to the unit boundary. This revealed a feature of dark soil and moderate amounts of wall plaster, initially 2.5' in diameter, about .8' deep, followed by a narrower pit full of solid plaster, 1.0' in diameter. Also sampled was a 1.5' wide section of feature 94, against the north profile of N95E312. This is in roughly the same location as the feature taken from N200E312 last year. Feature 94 remained difficult to define on the sides, but had a clearly defined flat bottom on top of zone 4, about .3' deep. At this point there was a darker circular area, which received a separate designation (feature 135) and was excavated separately. It was only an additional .25' in depth.

Two partial units were excavated on the east side of the brick walkway. N195E327 was badly disturbed by the yew hedge, while N195E322 was less so. Excavation of zones 1 and 2 revealed the 19th century brick wall foundation below the present front wall (designated feature 22 in 1994), and a pier for that wall. As noted in the excavation of N130E328, these excavations confirm that the location of sectional piers in the present wall does not match those in the previous wall. The present excavation provides additional data for future study. Amorphous, roughly circular areas of slightly darker dirt were noted in the northern profile of N195E322 and in the southeast corner of N195E327. The former was designated feature 133. The latter was badly truncated by the yew hedge, and so was not designated a feature. A layer of coal ash was present on the top of this area, but no other feature boundaries were revealed. Neither deposit was excavated.

Dating the proveniences

At the present time, all of the materials excavated in January have been washed, and TPQ items have been identified for the most pertinent proveniences. These are shown in the chart below; grouping of proveniences by temporal association follows the parameters set forth in 2003. In coming months, the artifacts will be completely analyzed, and temporal and horizontal patterning will be explored in greater depth.

Provenience Guide - 2004

| | <u>FS#</u> | <u>Unit</u> | <u>Level</u> | <u>TPQ</u> |
|------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| (Zone 2 level 1) | 444 | N195E297 | zone 2 level 1 | |
| | 445 | N195E307 | zone 2 level 1 | |
| | 446 | N223.5E297 | zone 2 level 1 | black marble |
| | 447 | N223.5E302 | zone 2 level 1 | |
| | 448 | N228.5E302 | zone 2 level 1 | manganese glass |
| | 449 | N195E302 | zone 2 level 1 | |
| | 450 | N195E307 | zone 2 level 1 | mang. glass, jet button |
| | 452 | N195E307 | zone 2 level 1 | non-wire nail |
| | 453 | N195E317 | zone 2 level 1 | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | 493 | N195E322 | zone 2 level 1 | |
| (Zone 2 level 2) | 454 | N195E297 | zone 2 lev 2 | wire nail |
| | 455 | N223.5E302 | zone 2 lev 2 | glass marble, 1976 coin |
| | 456 | N228.5E297 | zone 2 lev 2 | manganese glass |
| | 457 | N228.5E302 | zone 2 lev 2 | 2-hole shell button |
| | 458 | N195E302 | zone 2 lev 2 | brown glass |
| | 459 | N195E307 | zone 2 lev 2 | |
| | 460 | N223.5E297 | zone 2 lev 2 | |
| | 461 | N195E312 | zone 2 lev 2 | manganese glass |
| | 462 | N195E317 | zone 2 lev 2 | |
| | 501 | N195E317 | zone 2 lev 2 | |
| | 496 | N195E322 | zone 2 lev 2 | |
| (Zone 2 level 3) | 472 | N195E307 | zone 2 lev 3 | |
| | 473 | N195E302 | zone 2 lev 3 | |
| | 481 | N223.5E302 | zone 2 lev 3 | |
| | 484 | N228.5E302 | zone 2 lev 3 | |
| | 498 | N195E322 | zone 2 lev 3 | |
| (Zone 2 features) | 478 | N223.5E297 | feature 119 lev 1 | white porcelain |
| | 479 | N228.5E297 | feature 119 lev 1 | wire nail |
| | 508 | N223.5E302 | feature 134 | wire nail |
| (Zone 3 level 1) | 474 | N195E302 | zone 3 lev 1 | undec. whiteware |
| | 475 | N195E307 | zone 3 lev 1 | blue tr.pr. whiteware |
| | 476 | N195E312 | zone 3 lev 1 | transfer print pearlware |
| | 477 | N195E297 | zone 3 lev 1 | whiteware - 1840s |
| | 480 | N195E317 | zone 3 lev 1 | Canton porcelain |
| | 486 | N223.5E302 | zone 3 lev 1 | hand painted pearlware |
| | 487 | N228.5E302 | zone 3 lev 1 | creamware (later) |
| | 499 | N195E322 | zone 3 lev 1 | w.w./ wire nail |
| (Zone 3 level 2) | 490 | N195E317 | zone 3 lev 2 | creamware/whiteware? |
| | 491 | N195E312 | zone 3 lev 2 | |
| | 492 | N195E307 | zone 3 lev 2 | creamware/whiteware? |
| | 494 | N195E302 | zone 3 lev 2 | whiteware |
| (zone 3 features) | 502 | N228.5E297 | feature 119 lev 2 | |
| | 489 | N195E317 | feature 94 lev 1 | transfer print pearlware |
| | 497 | N195E317 | feature 94 lev 2 | blue hand paint pw |
| | 510 | N195E317 | feature 94 sample | annular pearlware |
| | 495 | N195E302 | feature 122 level 1 | |
| | 507 | N195E302 | feature 122 level 2 | |
| | 504 | N195E317 | feature 127 | slipware |

| | | | |
|-----|------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 505 | N195E297 | feature 125 | cut nail fragment |
| 506 | N195E302 | feature 123b | creamware |
| 509 | N228.5E297 | feature 131 | red transfer print w.w. |
| 511 | N223.5E302 | feature 129 | later creamware |
| 512 | N195E312 | feature 135 | Oriental porcelain |

Interpretations

The data retrieved in 2004 generally support the interpretations proposed a year ago. Generally, the earliest group of garden features conform to the pattern visible in the c. 1890s photo. The features encountered, particularly those from the present season are ephemeral, and marked by subtle shadings in the soil. Shell concentrations, presumed to reflect pathways, are present, but again they are reflected by a subtle increase in shell density rather than a feature with definite edges.

The definitive feature of this early garden episode are the clusters of small circular-to-oval stains of brown shell-flecked soil. A 5-foot-long section of these, two to three deep, was encountered last year (feature 95). Three more clusters of these were encountered in the N195 block (features 124, 125, 127). Associated with these features, and aligned with them, were subtle soil differences, reflected on the maps as dashed lines. The combined maps, though, show an alignment of these features, and suggest that the pattern noted in 2003 matches that encountered this year.

The archaeological footprint of this earliest garden event conforms to the pattern visible in the 1890s photo. While this is strongly supported by the feature position, an early 19th century date for this garden is less certain. The 2004 section presented the opportunity to sample additional features. All contained artifacts from the late 18th century, redeposited from zone 4 below. Two features contained artifacts dating to 1810-1815. These artifacts suggest that the oval pattern could date to the 1810s to 1820s, and remain in use through the 19th century. Based on the principals of Terminus Post Quem and Stratigraphy, however, it is still possible that the garden was installed some decades later. There has been no evidence to date, however, of any earlier garden event in this portion of the yard. The underlying zone 4, encountered across the front lawn proper, contains artifacts that predate the Russell house and seem to be associated with the demolition of earlier structures and construction of the Russell house.

Most enigmatic is the roughly linear (east/west) area of darker soil designated feature 94. This feature was marked by poorly-delineated concentration of darker soil and an increase in artifacts. A sample of the north half, excavated in 2003, recovered a sherd of gaudy dutch whiteware (c. 1830); the 2004 sample contained only pearlwares (c. 1795). This suggests that feature 94 may be associated with the early 19th century garden, rather than the mid-19th century as suggested last year. Regardless, the configuration of feature 94, as mapped, does not conform to the oval pattern formed by the other features. The shape of the feature is poorly-defined, though, and may reflect a concentration of midden or planting soils within a large bed. Maps of the early

19th century pattern have been prepared with and without feature 94.

Excavations were less extensive, but patterning for the earliest garden is more difficult to discern north of the central walk. The most concrete feature is the well-defined shell path from the central walk north to the driveway. Most likely, the interface of this walk and the drive was marked by a fence and/or gate, but this location has been impacted by the large yew bushes. Removal of the brick edging to the slate walkway (in the south profile of the N223.5 block) revealed that the compacted shell continued beneath the present slate walk, reflecting an earlier paving event. A cluster of small plant stains filled with the earliest soil type were present in the western half of N225E312; the area exposed was too limited to discern any pattern.

Red clay seems to be the visual marker of gardening events by the Allstons during their tenure at the Russell House (1858-1870). A solid layer of red clay was encountered next to the kitchen in 1994, and was dated to the mid-19th century. Red clay was also noted in a plant feature from N172E270, a unit located in the garden proper in 1995. This clay-filled feature was stratigraphically above large beds dating to the early 19th century. Three large plant stains exhibiting this signature were discovered in the front lawn. Feature 103 and feature 136 appear to bracket the central walkway, midway between the street and the front door. A third feature was noted in N223.5E302, in the curve between the main walk and the auxiliary walk.

The edging formed by the brick headers, noted in the N223.5 block, is also a mid-19th century event. The brick edge forms border beds along the front of the house and the south side of the driveway. These match a brick-edged border bed along the northern side of the driveway, explored in 1995. Here the well-preserved, complex stratigraphy strongly supported an 1850s date of installation. The border beds encountered this year were not excavated.

Careful examination of the 1898 photo suggests that the path north of the central walk is slate, not shell, and is a single event with the central walk. The main garden paths to the south appear to be a lighter material, possibly shell. There is an irregular border between the two. The layer of coal ash above the shell in feature 119 may be a preparation surface for this slate paving. Fragments of black marble, matching the mantle in the back parlor, date this construction to the Allston period.

The third garden event is marked by the sporadic placement of larger planting stains, likely representing bushes. One additional feature (feature 121) was encountered this year; this was located south of the line of small bushes noted last year. A second feature was present in N228.5E302. Most of the 20th century planting events are marked by a lack of artifacts, as is the associated zone 2 level 1.

List of 2004 Illustrations

1. Site map, showing 2003 and 2004 excavations.
2. Map, 2003 block, early 19th century features.
3. Map, 2004 block, early 19th century features
4. Composite map, early 19th century features, south side of walkway
5. Photo, 2003 block
6. Photo, possible shell path, N195E312-N195E317
7. Photo, 2004 block, N195E297-N195E307
8. Photo, 2004 block, N195E307-N195E317
9. Map, early 19th century features north of the walkway
10. Photo, N223.5 block, from balcony
11. Photo, closeup of feature 119 shell continuing beneath slate walkway
12. Map, garden features from mid-19th century, south of walk
13. Map, garden features from late 19th-early 20th centuries, south of walk
14. Map, garden features from mid to late 19th century, north of walk.
15. C. 1890s view of the front of the Russell House.

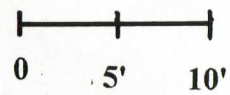
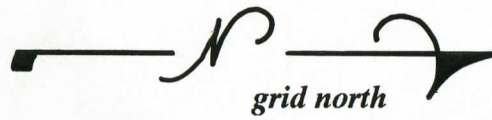
Nathaniel Russell House

Front Garden Excavations

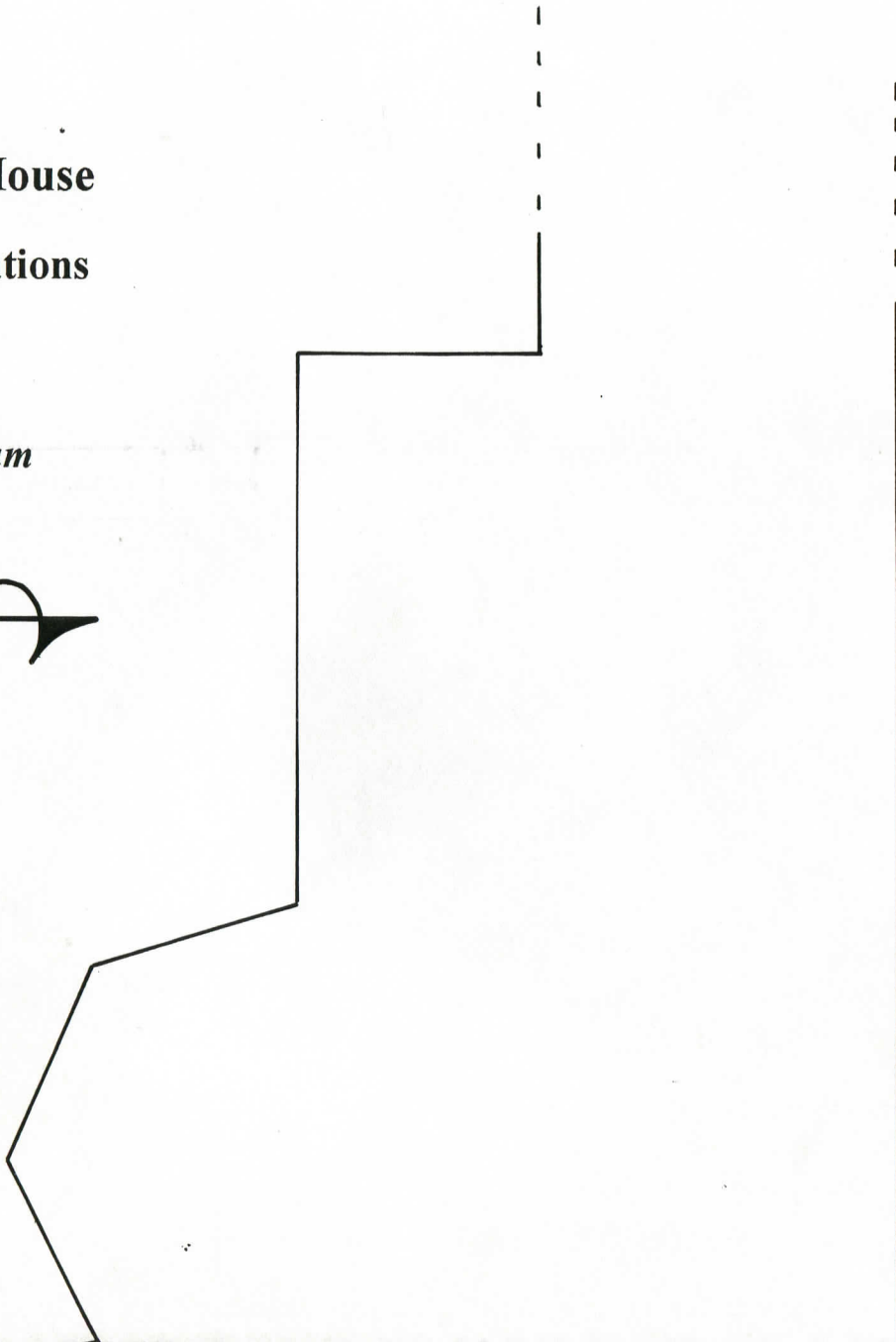
▣ January 2003

▨ January 2004

The Charleston Museum



formal garden



Nathaniel Russell House

shell driveway

N195 N200
E297 E297

grassed area

garden walkway

garden walkway

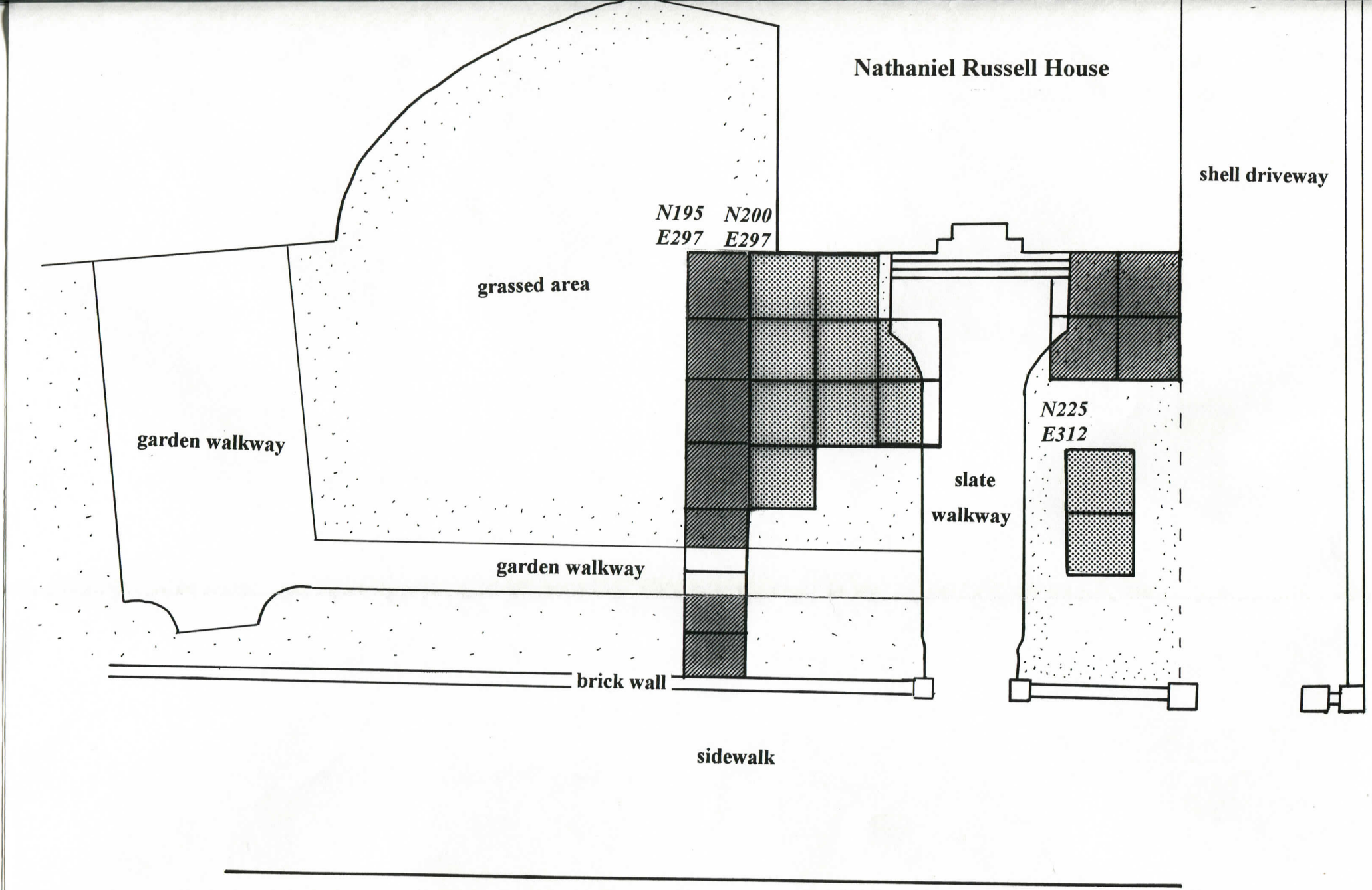
slate
walkway

N225
E312

brick wall

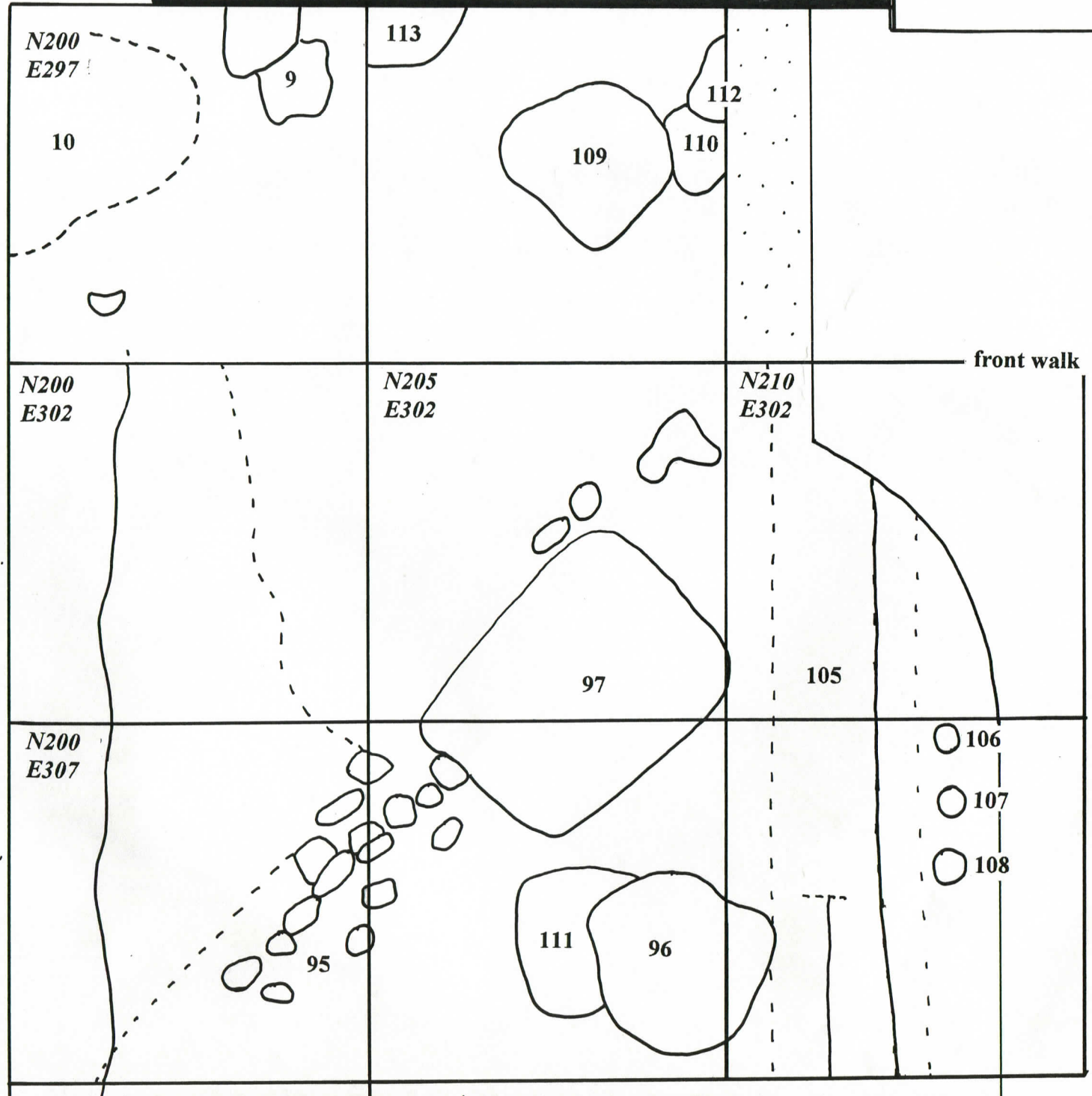
sidewalk

Meeting Street

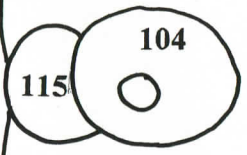


front of house

door



N200
E312

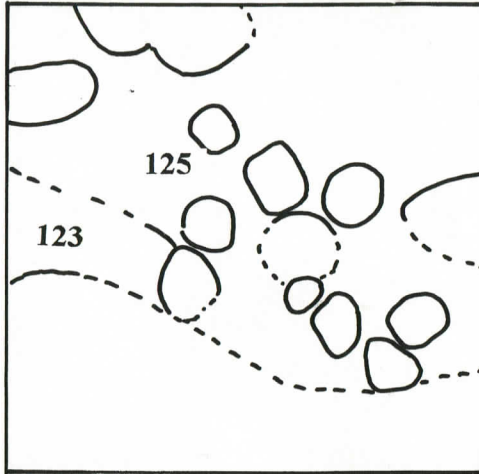


garden walk

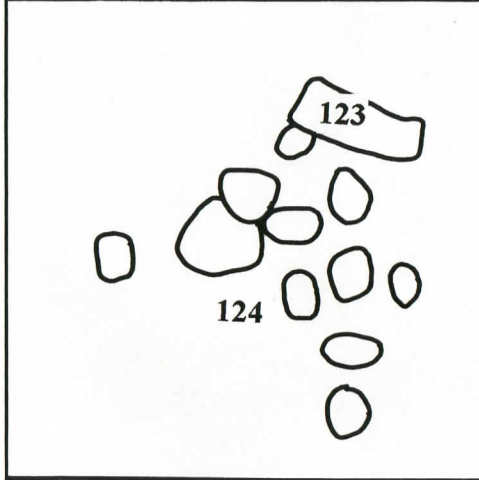
Nathaniel Russell House

Garden Features, Early 19th Century

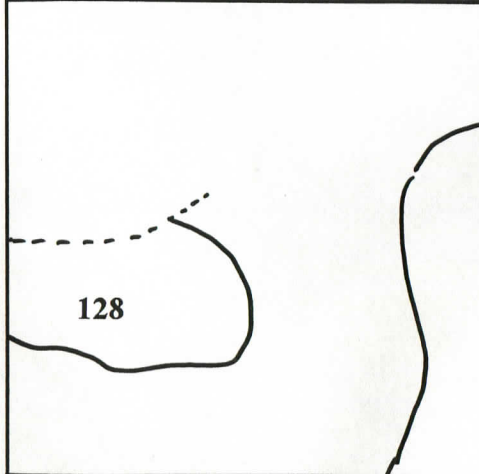
N195
E297

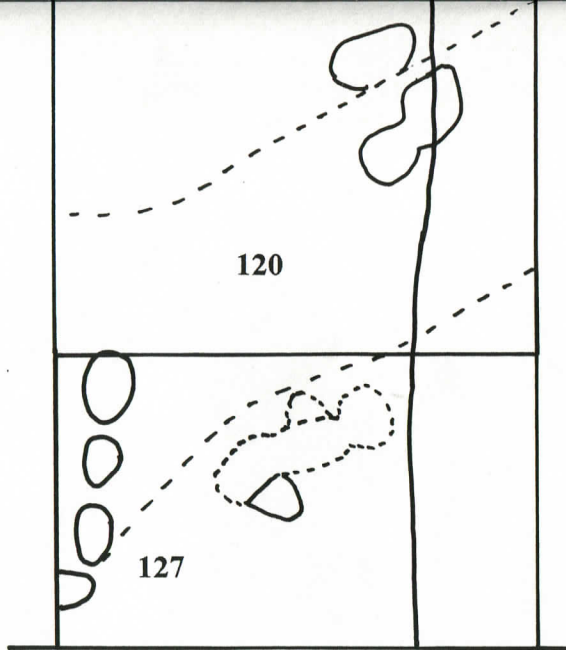


N195
E302



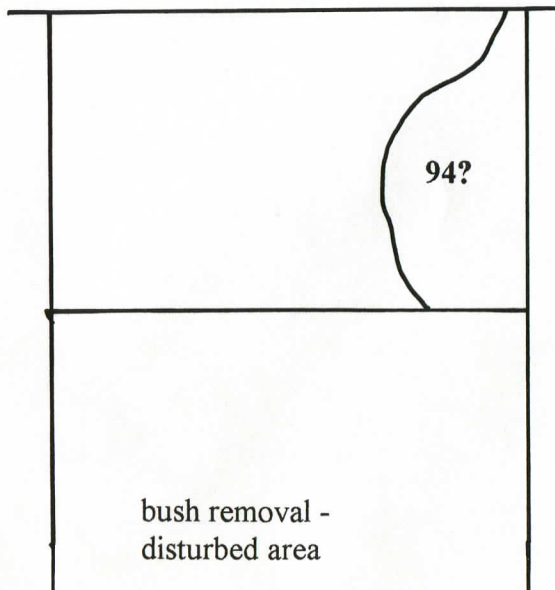
N195
E312





N195
E322

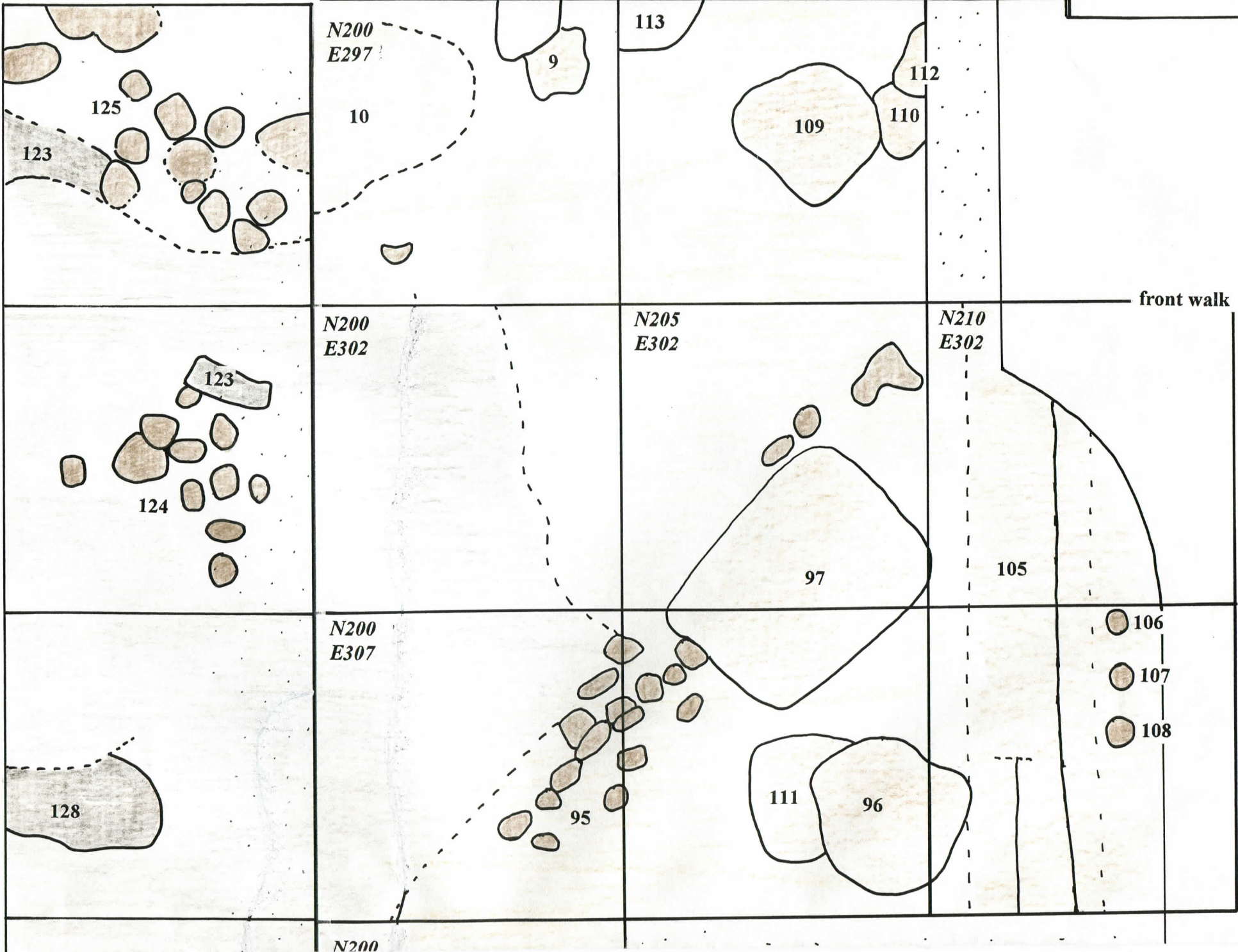
brick walkway



15
17

front of house

door

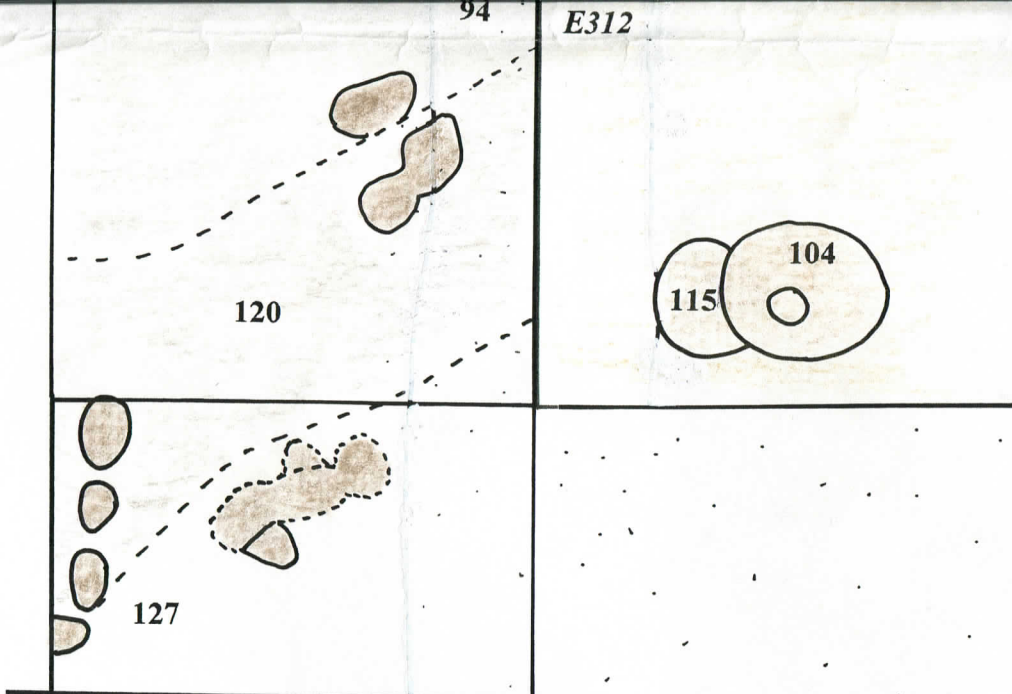


15
12

front walk

5
2

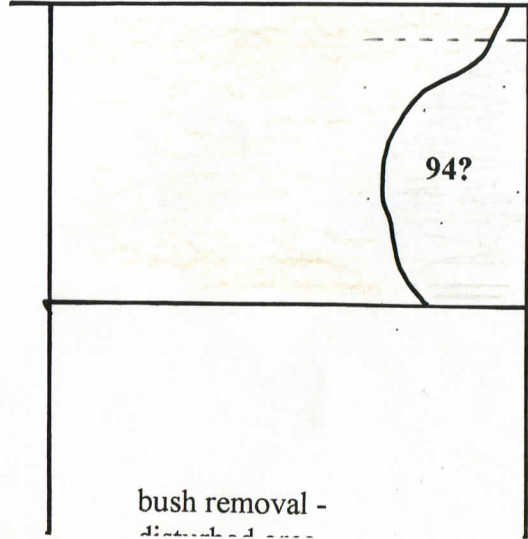
N200



15
12

brick walkway

garden walk



Nathaniel Russell House
Garden Features, Early 19th Century

bush removal -
disturbed area







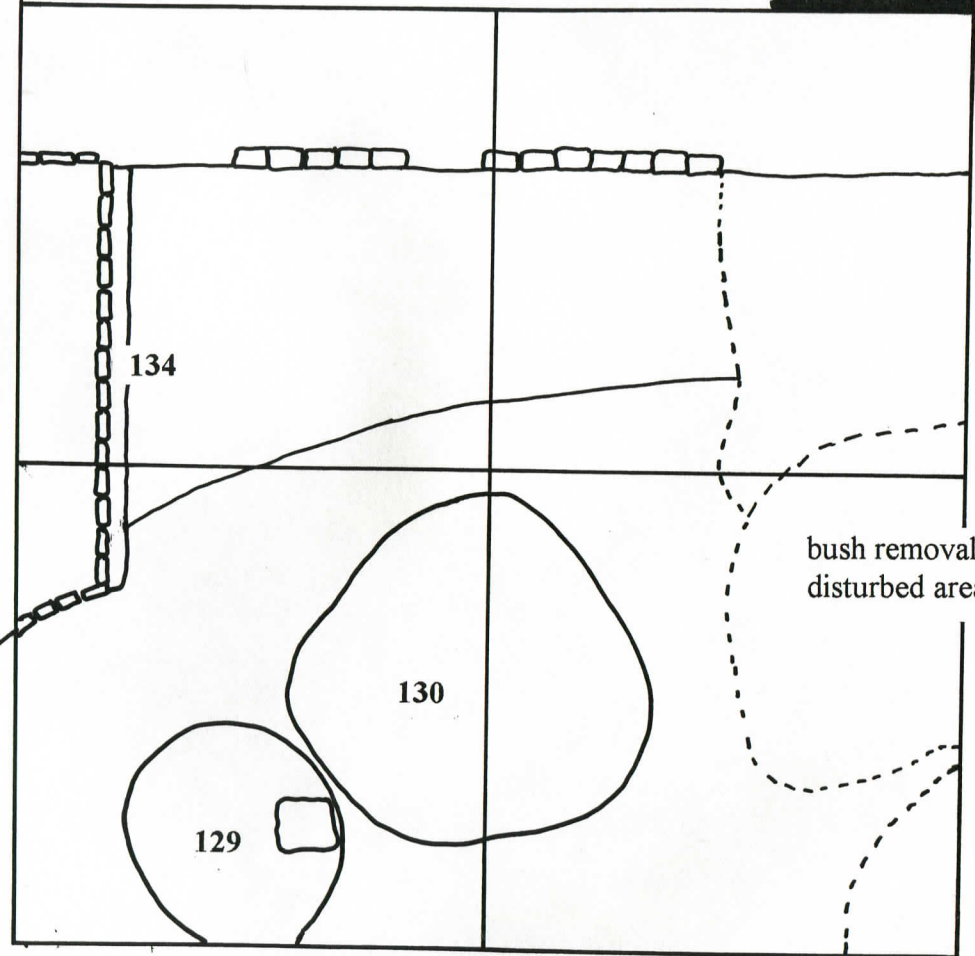
N215E297

N220E297

N223.5
E297

N225E297

front of house



driveway

bush removal -
disturbed area

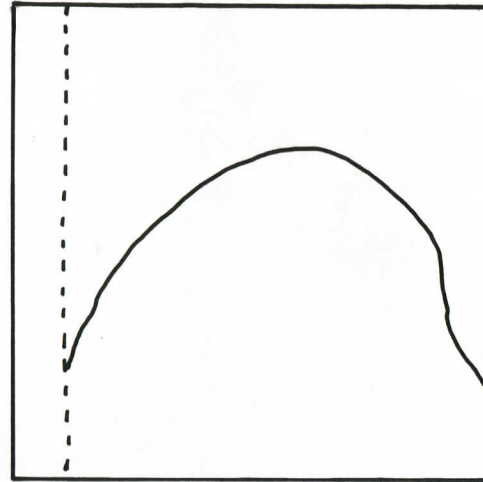
134

130

129

front walk

N225
E312



Nathaniel Russell House

Garden Features, mid-late 19th Century



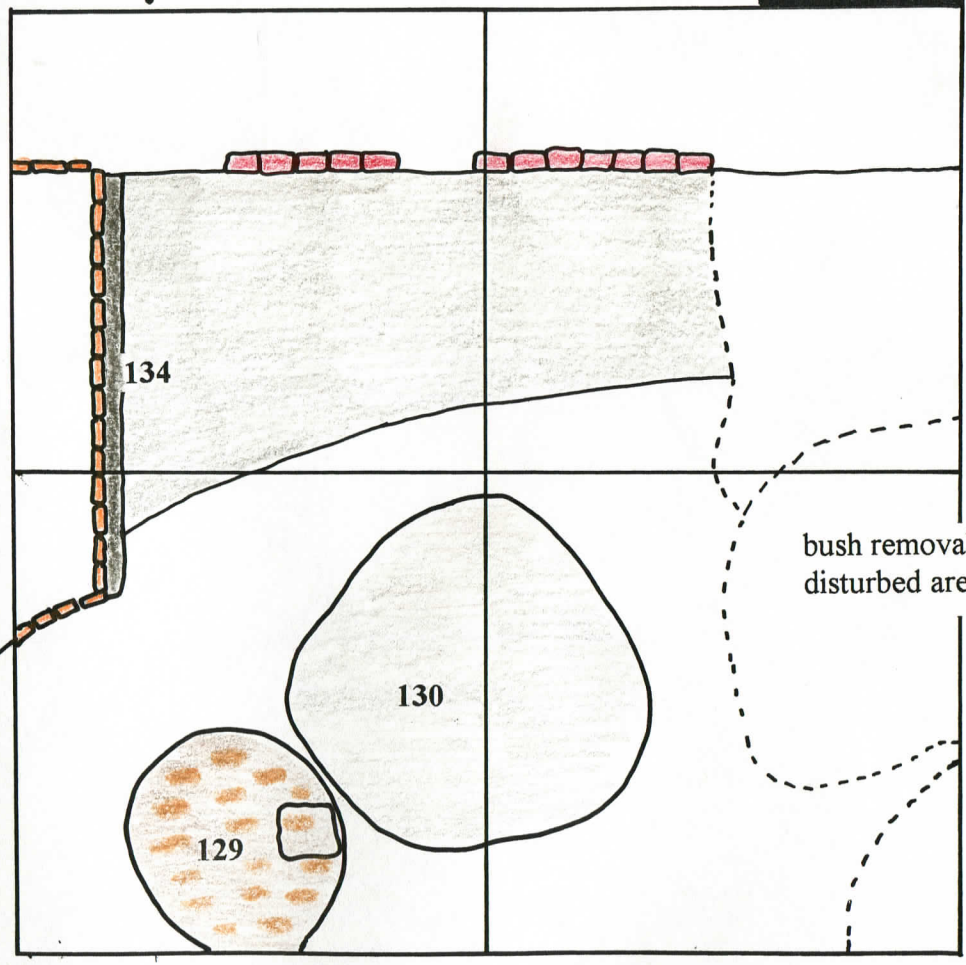
N215E297

N220E297

N223.5
E297

N225E297

front of house



134

130

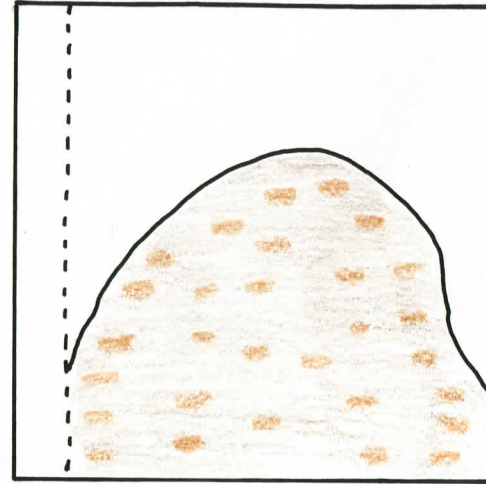
129

bush removal -
disturbed area

driveway

front walk

N225
E312



Nathaniel Russell House

Garden Features, mid-late 19th Century

