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**The Cottage in Context: Considerations for Clifton Park's Historic
Gardeners' Cottage**

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ABSTRACT

Adaptive reuse is a way to protect and honor local history - preserving the social meaning and character of a place even if it will be dedicated to a new function. Through rehabilitation of historic buildings, preservationists utilize existing resources and allow for consequential buildings and narratives to persist. The purpose of this project is to define and outline an approach to address the historic but deteriorating Gardeners' Cottage located in a Clifton Park in Baltimore, Maryland. Originally home to the gardener of the Johns Hopkins estate in the late 1800s, the site later functioned as the center of horticultural operations for Baltimore City's park system until the mid-1900s. Left without a plan for maintenance or use thereafter, the building and landscape have become severely degraded. The condition of the Cottage requires urgent action to preserve original materials, alleviate environmental and safety hazards, and address neglect in the cultural landscape. The approach for the site's recovery and future use considers the historic functions of the site, ecological services, assets and resources, contemporary use of the park, and community interests. A variety of methods were applied to explore the context of the Gardener's Cottage including historic research, site documentation, condition assessments, spatial analysis, and discussions with stakeholders. This project investigates preservation as an intentional political tool and a process of planning related to representation, community stewardship, political power, sustainability, and place attachment. It is framed around spatial justice, considering safe and appropriate access to public spaces and opportunities to influence decision making. A successful rehabilitation would recreate the building's exterior while honoring the horticultural tradition and legacy that continues in Clifton Park through other sites and programs, reclaim the site as a public space, and employ a community process that allows the Cottage and surrounding landscape to evolve as a relevant resource for city residents.