

# 12

## The Archaeology of Vision in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Gardens

*Elizabeth Kryder-Reid*

During the eighteenth century, travelers throughout America's mid-Atlantic region often recorded in diaries and letters the scenery they observed on their journeys. As they rode inland along the river valleys or followed roads connecting coastal ports, these writers repeatedly used specific terms to capture their experience of sight in the landscape. This vocabulary of vision—view, vista, eminence, situation, prospect—appears in descriptions of both the natural landscape and the estates of the colonial planter-gentry. Describing Gov. John Howard's garden in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1794, Thomas Twining wrote, "Situated upon the verge of the descent upon which Baltimore stands, its grounds formed a beautiful slant towards the Chesapeake. . . . The spot thus indebted to Nature and judiciously embellished was as enchanting within its own proper limits as in the fine view which extended far beyond them. . . . Both perfections of the landscape, its near and distant scenery, were united in the view from the bow-window . . . with the desire, I believe, of gratifying me with this exquisite prospect."<sup>1</sup>

In 1791 another traveler, William Loughton Smith, reported of George



Fig. 12.1. George Ropes's 1806 painting of Mount Vernon and its view overlooking the Potomac River. Copyright Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Washington's Mount Vernon (fig. 12.1): "I hardly remember to have been so struck with a prospect. . . . the view extends up and down the river a considerable distance . . . embracing the magnificence of the river with the vessels sailing about; the verdant fields, woods, and parks."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these descriptions, images of garden views and estate prospects abounded on painted furniture, and in portrait backgrounds, needlework samplers, and other objects in America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The predominance of such textual and visual depictions suggests that views in and out of the landscape were highly charged with meanings—conscious and unconscious, intended and received. The specific meanings of those views, however, are less apparent.

Vision as the physical phenomenon of optical sight is known only through culturally determined perception. Interpreting the social and symbolic significance of vision in the early American landscape, therefore, requires not only reconstructing *what* was seen, but understanding the *way* it was seen. This endeavor—interpreting the subjectivity of vision—forms

the cornerstone of much contemporary writing and social commentary,<sup>3</sup> but it has long been a premise of anthropology, particularly since the pioneering work of linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf in nonwestern languages. Demonstrating that languages such as Hopi and Navaho had radically different conceptualizations of time and space, Whorf challenged the assumption that since “every person has talked fluently since infancy . . . he has merely to consult a common substratum of logic or reason which he and everyone else are supposed to possess.” Whorf argued against the view that thought depends “on laws of logic or reason which are supposed to be the same for all observers of the universe . . . whether they speak Chinese or Choctaw.” Instead, Whorf asserted, the way we categorize time, space, motion, and objects—literally the way we “dissect nature”—is determined by our native languages. That which we hold to be “natural” and universal is instead the product of our culture.<sup>4</sup>

For garden historians, this concept of culturally constructed vision offers the opportunity to go beyond interpretations of aesthetics or style; it offers an avenue of inquiry into the ideology of another time as encoded in the organization of space. In the case of the American colonial landscape, the cultural embeddedness of vision requires the garden historian both to reconstruct what the gardens looked like and to investigate how they were perceived by their diverse audience. This essay discusses some of the interpretations of the meaning of sight in America’s colonial gardens and then presents the results of excavations of a terraced garden built in Annapolis, Maryland, in the 1770s as a case study for this archaeology of vision.

### Vision and View in Colonial America

The complexity of vision is not a modern scholarly problem. Noah Webster, author of America’s first English language dictionary, was aware of the varied meanings of words such as prospect and view. He lists among the eleven connotations of “view” that which is seen (“prospect; sight; reach of the eye, the whole extent seen”) and that which is the act of seeing, both physically and metaphorically (“the power of seeing”; “intellectual or mental sight”). Webster acknowledges several meanings for “prospect,” including “that which is presented to the eye” and the “place which affords an extensive view,” as well as the more metaphorical “view of things to come.”<sup>5</sup>

In the Chesapeake region, landscape gardens built in the last half of the eighteenth century were crafted with a similar awareness of the complexity

of the operation of vision.<sup>6</sup> Members of the elite planter-gentry, most of whom made their money growing tobacco for export to England, capitalized on the natural prominences and waterfront views along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to locate their Georgian-style brick or frame country seats. In the few urban centers such as Williamsburg, Alexandria, Annapolis, and Baltimore, the limited topographic relief on smaller city lots often was enhanced by terracing. Garden buildings and ornaments, such as pavilions, temples, summerhouses, statuary, obelisks, and fountains, were used as focal points and viewing platforms. The ornamented exteriors of these generally neoclassical-style structures often belied their more practical functions in the plantation landscape. For instance, Thomas Jefferson designed an ice house for his friend James Madison in the form of a classical temple.<sup>7</sup> At His Lordship’s Kindness, Henry Darnall’s seat in Prince George’s County, Maryland, one of a pair of neoclassical brick pavilions housed a five-hole privy.<sup>8</sup> Excavations of the William Paca garden in Annapolis, Maryland, discovered the foundations of matching spring and garden houses flanking the pavilion at the base of the terraced garden.<sup>9</sup> Charles Willson Peale painted a *trompe l’oeil* arch on the tool shed beside his fountain at Belfield and decorated it with nationalistic emblems celebrating the new republic.<sup>10</sup>

While the architecture, planting, and scale of even the most elaborate of colonial gardens would seem simplistic compared to the premier gardens of Europe, the emphasis on the creation of views in American landscape gardens was as sophisticated as the resources would allow. Moreau de St. Mery, born in Martinique of French parents, commented while traveling in the 1790s: “In America almost everything is sacrificed to the outside view.”<sup>11</sup> Using pattern books and garden treatises as guides,<sup>12</sup> the creators of these Chesapeake landscape gardens used a variety of techniques to fashion eye-catching scenes within the garden, to enhance views of the house, and to create vistas to the surrounding countryside. For example, the governor’s garden in Annapolis contained a mount which served as a focal point within the garden and a viewing platform for the landscape beyond. William Eddis described the scene in 1769: “The garden is not extensive, but it is disposed to the utmost advantage; the center walk is terminated by a small green mount, close to which the Severn approaches: this elevation commands an extensive view of the bay and the adjacent country. . . there are but few mansions in the most rich and cultivated parts of England which are adorned with such splendid romantic scenery.”<sup>13</sup>

The energies of plantation owners were not lost on their many visitors as this 1793 account of David Meade's estate in Virginia attests:

These grounds contain about twelve acres, laid out on the banks of the James river in a most beautiful and enchanting manner. Forest and fruit trees are here arranged as if nature and art had conspired together to strike the eye most agreeably. Beautiful vistas, which open as many pleasing views of the river; the land thrown into many artificial hollows or gentle swellings, with the pleasing verdure of the turf; and the complete order in which the whole is preserved, altogether tend to form it one of the most delightful rural seats that is to be met with in the United States, and do honour to the taste and skill of the proprietor, who is also the architect.<sup>14</sup>

This discussion began by noting that knowing what people saw in these gardens was only the beginning of understanding the way in which the landscapes were seen. For instance, the description of the Meade garden is, at first, seemingly transparent: Meade's garden was enchanting because it had beautiful and pleasing vistas. Yet, beneath this observation lies another subtext—the landscape is worthy of praise; David Meade made it and owns it, therefore David Meade is worthy of praise. But even this syllogistic implication which brings “honour to the skill and taste of the proprietor” is complex and requires spectators (and garden historians) to bring certain assumptions to the scene. Understanding the audiences of these gardens and the assumptions they brought to them is critical if we are to assess how colonial American gardens were read and how perspectives operated within them.

Spectators of Chesapeake gardens were a diverse audience and their opportunities for views of a garden differed markedly depending on whether they sailed past it, peeked at it over the garden wall, processed around it, or gazed upon it from the “great house.” Unfortunately, history generally records only the reactions of those landowners or invited guests who had access to the privileged viewing spots. Rarely do we hear the voice of the slave who weeded the garden or the child who peered through the fence. Yet, the potential audiences of a garden become evident as we begin to reconstruct the garden's form: the height of fences or walls, the locations of apertures (windows or gates) in those visual screens, prominent landmarks in the garden and the landscape beyond, sight lines through alleys of boxwood or avenues of trees, the relationship of house and garden.

Interpretations by archaeologists, historians, and cultural geographers have tried to explain the meanings of such garden views and vantage points. In general, views looking into the garden have been seen as attempts by their owners to enhance their status by displays of wealth, expertise, and taste. For instance, Mark Leone has postulated that the peak of garden construction on the eve of America's break with England may be explained as attempts to shore up an eroding power base through the ostentatious display of resources.<sup>15</sup> Views looking out of the garden have been regarded as claims to a relationship with the outer world by linking the private landscape with distant landmarks or broad vistas.<sup>16</sup>

Views within the landscape may—through the iconography of statuary, the symbolism of objects such as sundials or arches, or the connotations of spaces such as groves—make claims to a mythical past<sup>17</sup> or to “natural” and therefore inevitable forces such as time, geometry, or astronomy.<sup>18</sup> In the long tradition of landowners, the Chesapeake planters rooted themselves in the past in an attempt to project their positions into the future and placed themselves in nature in such a way as to make those positions appear natural and beyond challenge.<sup>19</sup> Views within the landscape have also been seen as attempts to control the experience of the visitor through manipulation of access and sight lines in the garden. For example, Dell Upton has presented an interesting analysis of late-eighteenth-century American gardens as a series of social barriers. He argues that, like the hierarchical arrangement of public and private spaces within the plantation house, the landscape presented obstacles to the white visitor in the form of trees, terraces, and dependencies which had to be passed in order to reach the central seat of the planter. The extent of one's access was an index of one's status. Upton further observes that this formal pattern of movement was constantly circumvented by the black slaves upon whose labor the plantations were dependent. While slaves were not subject to the social posturing of the gentry, in part because their subservience was ensured by force, the freedom to transgress the processional landscape of the planters allowed the slaves one means of forming a private landscape with meanings distinct to their own community and their own social relations.<sup>20</sup>

### The Archaeology of Vision in the Charles Carroll Garden

Given the importance of the control of optical sight in these eighteenth-century gardens, the recovery of garden perspectives is essential to the

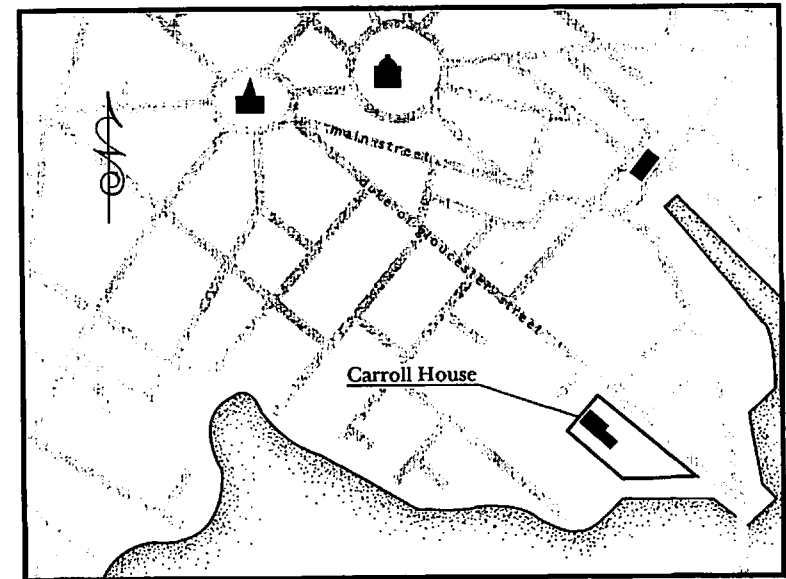
interpretation of these spaces. But how, two hundred years later, can one reconstruct the views and vistas which figured so prominently in their visitors' descriptions? One method is to locate the garden in three-dimensional space using visual, textual, and, most significantly, archaeological evidence. The latter is of course constrained by the preservation of the colonial landscape remains and by the costs of archaeological investigation. Excavations are time consuming (and therefore expensive), and the scale of landscape archaeology generally requires dealing with large areas and often vast amounts of earth moving. Furthermore, archaeology is destructive; once the soil layers of a garden's stratigraphy are excavated, they are lost.<sup>21</sup> Garden archaeology justifies its costs and intrusiveness in cases where recovering the physical evidence of a garden provides information that is not recorded in any other way. These finds include plant remains in the form of pollen, phytoliths, or seeds;<sup>22</sup> ephemeral soil features such as planting beds, tree holes, and ramps which are rarely recorded on deed records, insurance maps or other plan-views; circulation routes such as avenues, stairs, walks; and evidence of garden architecture such as walls, grottos, and pavilions.

Of particular importance for the reconstruction of perspective is that garden archaeology not only identifies these features, but it locates them in three-dimensional space. Much as measured architectural drawings record a standing structure, systematic excavations allow one to plot the exact positions of buried garden features. Two-dimensional representations such as plat maps or insurance records provide evidence of a site's plane geometry, but only the three-dimensional reconstruction of garden elements provides the evidence needed for reading the solid geometry of a garden.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, archaeology reveals what was actually built, as opposed to what was planned in presentation drawings or imagined in artist renderings.<sup>24</sup>

The Charles Carroll site in Annapolis, Maryland, provides an example of the use of archaeologically recovered evidence for reconstructing and interpreting vision.<sup>25</sup> The site dates to the late seventeenth century when the property was purchased by Charles Carroll the Settler at the same time as the capital of the colony was moved from St. Mary's City to Annapolis.<sup>26</sup> The site's most famous inhabitant, however, was the Settler's grandson, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was born there in 1737 and made it his chief residence after returning in 1765 from sixteen years of education in France and England. By the time of his death at the age of ninety-five, Carroll of Carrollton was known primarily as "the last living signer"

of the Declaration of Independence, but today he is recognized for his role in the formation of the new American nation. Carroll served as a commissioner in negotiations for a French Canadian alliance in 1776; he argued a view of the constitution in the widely read "First Citizen Debates" which challenged British authority and supported local autonomy;<sup>27</sup> he was the only Roman Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence; and he served in the Continental Congress and both state and federal legislatures. Carroll's participation in the political process is all the more significant because, in the colonial government prior to 1776, his Catholicism denied him the right to vote and access to elected office.

It was during the time of his early political activities in the 1770s that Carroll embarked on an ambitious program of architectural and landscape improvements at his Annapolis seat. Of particular interest for this discussion was the construction of a terraced garden to the east of the house in the triangular plot created by Carroll Creek (now Spa Creek), Duke of Gloucester Street, and the house (map 12.1). The garden consisted of a series of slopes and terraces falling to the waterfront below and connected



Map 12.1. The Carroll House and garden, Annapolis.

by turfed ramps. The dimensions of the garden were based on the core of the brick house adjoining the garden, and the sides of the right triangles created by the intersecting ramps and terraces were in 3-4-5 proportions.<sup>28</sup>

This Carroll site was excavated over the course of five field seasons (1987–91) by Archaeology in Annapolis.<sup>29</sup> Investigations focused on the garden and the house, including a wing demolished in the mid-nineteenth century. The strategy for the garden excavations was determined in part by clues from the existing topography, in part by documentary evidence, and in part by practical constraints of funding and access. The techniques used to recover perspectives in the garden can be summarized as follows. The first step was to make a topographic map of the existing surface of the garden which was remarkably intact given its location in the heart of Annapolis's Historic District. A remote sensing survey was then conducted which combined the nondestructive techniques of ground-penetrating radar, soil resistivity, and magnetometer readings to locate below-ground anomalies. Each of these techniques—whether reading reflected sound waves, differences in the conductivity of electrical currents, or different measurements of density—identified anomalies below ground; further, the identification of features such as buried paths, areas of fill dirt, or utility lines relied on interpreting the shape of the feature (fig. 12.2). Such identifications were therefore tentative and undated.

To corroborate and clarify the findings of remote sensing, the next stage of investigation was to begin digging, which complemented the site history known from documentary and visual sources. At the Carroll site, we combined two complementary types of testing: coring and excavations. The coring provided a limited view of a wide area while the excavations provided a detailed view of a small area. Cores were taken by driving a metal tube into the ground and retrieving soil samples from a depth of up to eight feet (figs. 12.2 and 12.3). These samples provided a picture of the stratigraphy or soil layers and told the story of the garden's construction by cutting and filling the natural slope of the hillside. Excavation squares (five feet by five feet) were placed in areas of particular interest identified by the remote sensing, by documentary sources, or by the coring samples. For instance, the only evidence of intact planting beds in the garden were found on the top terrace where cores indicated the least nineteenth- and twentieth-century disturbance. In another example, testing of the "deep feature" to the south of the house identified by remote sensing revealed a late-eighteenth-century refuse pit.

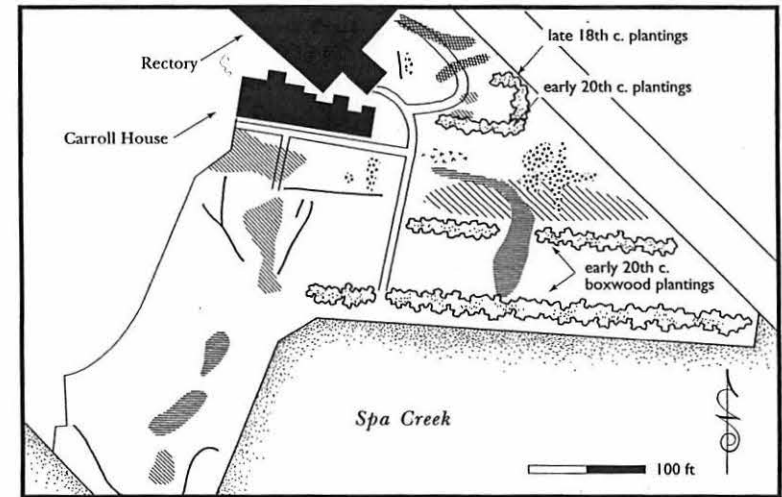


Fig. 12.2. Summary of findings from remote sensing survey of the Carroll garden by Bruce Bevan in 1987 using ground-penetrating radar, soil resistivity, and magnetometer sensing.

### The Meaning of Vision in the Charles Carroll Garden

While the function of perspective in Carroll's garden is certainly not unique among landscape gardens or even among post-medieval visual arts,<sup>30</sup> the excavations provided a basis for reconstructing and interpreting the particular operation of vision at this site (fig. 12.4). Identifying the views into and out of Carroll's garden gives us an idea of how it was intended to be seen by a variety of audiences and therefore what meanings may have been encoded in the space. The problem remains of accounting for spectators such as the laborers in the garden who interacted with the space in very different ways from the invited guest or even passing public. But reconstructing the intended views and circulation routes is the first step in understanding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of garden perspectives from different locations. The audiences of Carroll's garden had the potential for three distinct sets of vantage points which will each be explored in more detail below: views from outside the garden looking in, views within the garden, and views from the house.



Fig. 12.3. Soil core sample being taken from the Carroll garden.

The principal views of the garden from the outside were from the waterfront because the garden wall effectively screened the garden from view to street traffic. Any passing boat rounding Carroll's point and heading up the well-traveled creek had a view of the house with the garden in the foreground. As the traveler journeyed upstream, the oblique relation of the garden and house resolved into a full frontal perspective with views straight up the ramps. As noted above, a common function of Chesapeake landscape gardens was to enhance the view of the house. The Carroll garden was no exception, and the archaeology of the garden revealed several ways that Carroll made his house appear larger and therefore more impressive to the water traffic along the creek. Leone and Paul Shackel have reported

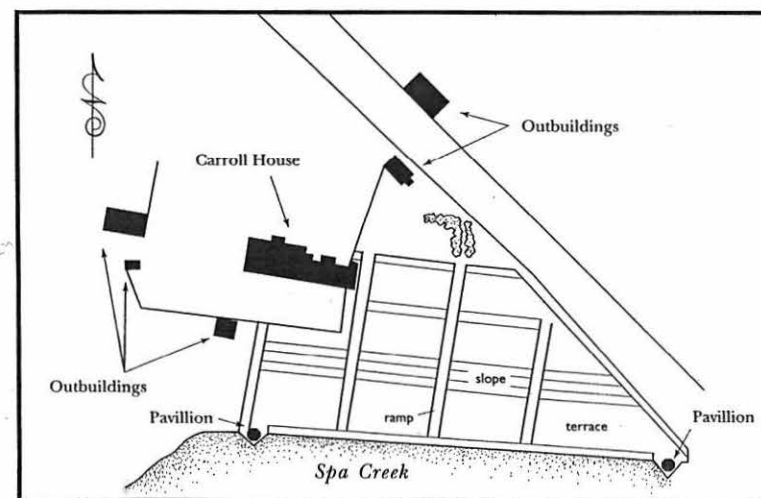


Fig. 12.4. Reconstructed plan of the terraces, walks, and ramps in the Carroll garden based on archaeological, documentary, and photographic evidence.

how the varying widths of the terraces made it difficult for the observer at the base of the garden to estimate the distance to the house and therefore made the house appear larger than it was.<sup>31</sup> Carroll also emphasized the height of the Georgian-style brick structure by building a terrace with a stone retaining wall on the waterfront side of his house. From the base of the garden the lower portion of the ground floor is hidden by this wall, making it difficult to determine the number of floors or to judge the height of the house. In addition to its role as a visual screen, the terrace's sunken, rectangular shape suggests it may have served as a bowling green, although there is no documentary reference to its function.

A second aspect of the view presented to spectators outside the garden helps to explain the unusual oblique relation of the house and garden. It has been noted that the relation of Carroll's house and his triangular garden is unique in the American colonies, and one explanation for the peculiar shape and location of the triangular garden to the east of the house has been that they were determined by the existing parameters of the street and creek.<sup>32</sup> While there are English precedents for the



Map 12.2. A plan of the harbor and city of Annapolis, 1781, known as the Frenchman's map. The Carroll property is on the peninsula in the upper right of the town indicated by "d" on the map. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Marion E. Warren Collection, MSA SC 1890–3502.

symbolic association of triangular shapes and the number three with Catholicism,<sup>33</sup> Carroll never explicitly linked the shape of his garden to his religious faith. Instead, the orientation of house and garden may have been an intentional arrangement to associate Carroll's urban seat with a prominent symbol of power. From the water, the house aligns with the statehouse, the highest landmark in the city. The state capitol building was situated on a hill and conscribed by a circle with radiating streets by Gov. Francis Nicholson, creator of Annapolis's baroque town plan of 1695.<sup>34</sup> Its visibility is evidenced by the Frenchman's map of 1781 which lists only four landmarks in its key, two of which are the statehouse (a) and the Carroll house (d) (map 12.2). Both the buildings were standing when Carroll began construction of his garden in 1770, and he appears to have taken advantage of this existing relationship. As a late-nineteenth-century photograph taken



Fig. 12.5. Redemptorist students, Annapolis, Maryland, 1864. This earliest known photograph of the St. Mary's site shows the Carroll House flanked by the Redemptorists' rectory (1858) and the statehouse dome in the background. Courtesy of St. Mary's Parish Archives.

from the water view demonstrates, the foreground of the garden served as a frame for the house and the apparently adjacent domed tower of the capitol, symbol of Maryland's provincial government and the single most recognizable element of Annapolis's colonial skyline (fig. 12.5).

Carroll also enhanced the views of the house from outside the garden by placing his most elaborate architectural elements on prominent locations for public view. For example, he constructed his two brick pavilions, described by Peale as an octagonal temple and a summerhouse, overhanging the water at each end of the stone seawall at the base of the garden.<sup>35</sup> Carroll also constructed a gatehouse at the street entrance of the garden which would have been visible from the north side of the promontory. The public visibility of these structures is particularly notable given that there appears to have been no obvious architectural focal points within the garden such as along axial vistas of the terraces or at the top of the garden in line with the central ramp and alley. This emphasis on the view of the garden from without, rather than the experience of the visitor within, again demonstrates the outward focus of Carroll's garden design.

The second set of vantage points, those within the garden, include views looking at the house, at the vista beyond the garden, and at focal points within the garden. These views were available to the Carroll family and invited guests, as well as any laborers or slaves. Arriving via the waterfront entrance,<sup>36</sup> visitors were led by a series of ramps and terraces

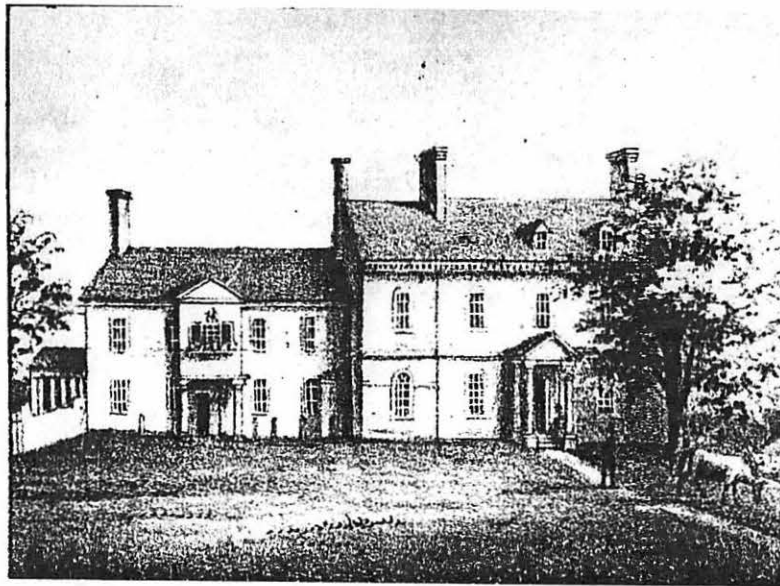


Fig. 12.6. Detail of the Carroll Mansion from Sachse's Birdseye View of Annapolis, 1858. Courtesy of the Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Joseph Bonaparte Girault Collection, MSA SC 1195.

upward toward the highest terrace where they were presented with a striking view of a rolling, verdant lawn in the foreground,<sup>37</sup> Carroll Creek in the middle ground, and the woods and meadows of the opposite bank receding in the distance. Carroll framed this expansive view with a pavilion at each end of the garden seawall and, using the varying widths of the terraces and the foreshortening effect of the slopes to “bring in the country,” created the impression that the water at the base of the garden was closer than it actually was. In doing so, Carroll blurred the line between “his” property and the landscape beyond and made a visual claim that reinforced his political and social aspirations.

The third set of vantage points operated from the various windows and viewing platforms of the house itself, particularly from the porch on the east end of the now demolished eastern “frame house” visible in the Sachse view of 1858 (fig. 12.6). As proposed above, Carroll manipulated lines of sight in the first two sets of vantage points to create optical illusions which

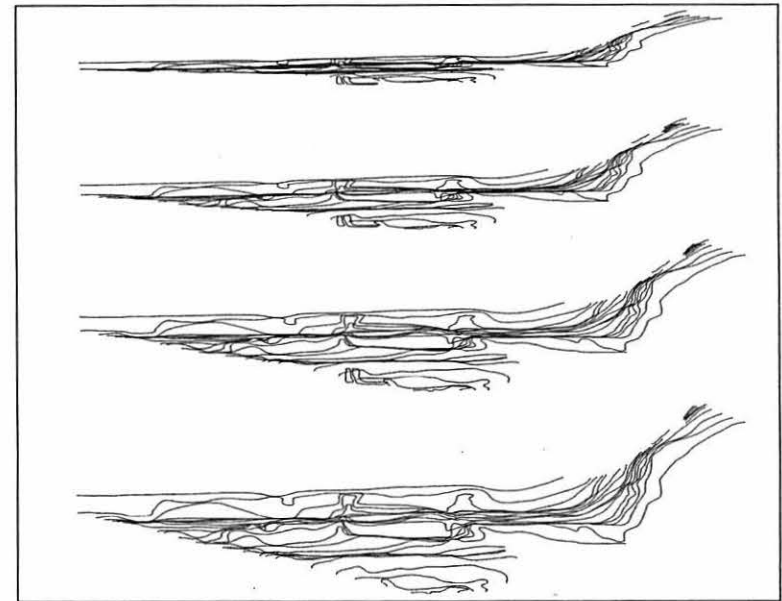


Fig. 12.7. A series of computer-assisted drawings using topographic lines to create perspectival views. The vantage point looks south from the top of the Carroll garden toward the creek below. The viewer of the drawings is in the same position as the viewer at the top of the garden. The viewer's eye is shown at four elevations (10, 15, 20, and 25 degrees), representing positions at increasing heights above the garden. The views demonstrate that the higher the viewer, the less the effect of the foreshortening illusion created by the terraces and slopes of a falling garden.

affected viewers both within and without the garden. But for the third audience—those within the house—Carroll presented an opportunity to “see through” the illusions. Clearly Carroll realized that the illusionistic aspects of the garden are most effective when viewed from the eye level of a person standing in the garden. For instance, the foreshortening effect is minimized as one's height above the garden increases (fig. 12.7). It would seem calculated, therefore, that the principal articulation of the house and garden was from a porch on the first floor (i.e., one floor above ground level) off the eastern end of the house. Because of the elevated position of the



windows, doors, and porticos, viewers from the house were not subject to the same manipulations of perspective as those in the garden or looking up from the water level of the creek. Visitors privileged enough to be admitted into the private sanctuary of the house were not only exempted from the managed perspectives, they were also given the ideal vantage point to observe the patterns of the parterre plantings and the plane geometry of the garden's triangular layout of ramps and terraces.

Using archaeological, architectural, and documentary evidence, it has been possible to assemble a picture of the garden Charles Carroll of Carrollton crafted in the 1770s. The reconstructed plan of this three-dimensional space then allowed us to decipher the creation of views from within and from without the garden. This evidence of the manipulation of perspective in turn suggested the positions of spectators of Carroll's landscaping efforts. But the question remains: what did these views mean to the garden's viewers? In his book on the psychology of perspective, Michael Kubovy argues that perspective in Renaissance painting had several uses: the "structural" rationalization of the representation of space, the "illusionistic" appearance of depth, the "narrative" effect of drawing the spectator's eye to a key figure or action, and the symbolic effect of providing artists with a new code for concealing allusion and meaning in their work. The manipulation of perspective in Carroll's garden, I would argue, served all the same functions. It presented its owner as a master of the allied arts of geometry, botany, and architecture. It enhanced or negated the illusion of depth depending on the position of the spectator. It drew attention to the Carroll's architectural signature—his massive brick house. Finally, the garden's 3-4-5 proportions encoded a knowledge of geometry and classical harmonic proportions.

The positions of spectators provide further clues for interpreting the meaning of vision in Carroll's garden. The emphasis on the external views of the garden suggests that Carroll was concerned with displaying his holdings to the full spectrum of Annapolis society. To this audience, the garden was a display of wealth in a medium that was timeless and natural and therefore immune to challenge. Carroll's position was presented as "natural" because it was embedded in an agrarian, idyllic nature: a man with the resources and the right to own them. It can be argued that for those admitted into the garden, the vista from the top terrace embracing the landscape beyond was an act of incorporation—Carroll's visual claim on the world beyond his walls. Finally, the most select audience (the family

and visitors to the house) was given an elevated view which not only gave them the best prospect for appreciating the plane geometry of parterres and garden plan, but also exempted them from the foreshortening illusions of the terracing. This display of the manipulation of the rules of perspective, the propagation of plants, and the tenets of classical architecture suggests that Carroll's message to his privileged guests was of a select and sophisticated variety. To those more fluent in the intricacies of the Enlightenment arts, the garden bespoke the skills of a natural legislator and the right to practice them.<sup>38</sup> In sum, the perspectives of the garden presented Carroll as a man with all the qualifications for governing—money, the knowledge to use it, and the right to have it. And the perspectives were designed so that optical illusions enhanced Carroll's position before a broad audience while the ability to create illusions was demonstrated to a smaller but more empowered audience.

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The manipulation of sight lines for different viewers suggests some of the meanings Carroll inscribed in his landscape, but it also raises the problem of how those meanings were read by a disparate audience. Each of the interpretations relies on the same supposition as the author of the description of Meade's garden presented above: each assumes a link between the property seen by the spectator and the property's owner. They assume, too, that attempts to naturalize one's position through the medium of the garden relied on a shared concept of what was "natural." But did all the spectators of Carroll's garden participate in the same notions of property, time, space, nature, and natural rights?

The Renaissance has been examined as a time of pivotal change in the relation between the subject and the object or the viewer and the viewed. The argument is that for the first time in painting—and it would follow in landscape design—the centrality of the spectator is paramount. A picture (and a garden) is organized "in terms of the point of view of a particular individual who observes from a particular point of view at a particular moment."<sup>39</sup> This "one-point perspective" relies on a perception of space as continuous, infinite, homogeneous, and quantifiable, as well as on a humanist notion of the spectator as an individual. One such writer, Leonard Goldstein, suggests that this transformation of vision is linked to the economic structure which marked the shift to a post-medieval world, namely the new form of private property in commodity production which is today

called capitalism. He concludes, "All this means that the individual property owner, generalized in Renaissance philosophy as Man, becomes indeed the center of action and of interest, the measure of all things, for it is indeed man who more and more comes to control the world around him and to determine its nature. The increasing control of man over himself and nature is a product of man as entrepreneur, as active, rational organizer of commodity production."<sup>40</sup>

Grounding perspective in the economic means of production would simplify interpretations of vision in the garden, but it also raises a number of questions with which I close. If vision is culturally constructed, can we assume that the audiences of these colonial landscape gardens shared a common understanding of what they saw? Certainly slaves and planters participated in the emerging American economy in very different ways. Did they, in Whorf's words, "consult a common substratum of logic or reason," or were their cultural vocabularies different enough that the gardens served as a means of communication only among a small group of elites with similar landscaping tastes and political ambitions? Furthermore, is capitalism a precondition for the connection of vision and property? Can we make similar connections between elevated position and status, between the display of resources and claims of power in the gardens of Islamic palaces and Roman theaters, to say nothing of prehistoric landscape architecture such as Andean mountain terracing or Pueblo villages?<sup>41</sup> In short, is there any aspect of vision in the garden which is universal, or is the relativity implied by the subjectivity of vision uncompromising?

## Notes

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1. Thomas Twining, *Travels in America 100 Years Ago* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 115–16.
2. William Loughton Smith, *Journal of William Loughton Smith, 1790–1791*, ed. Albert Matthews (Cambridge, Mass.: The Univ. Press, 1917), 63.
3. One of the most influential writers on the construction of vision and its operation as an exercise of power has been Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). See also John Rajchman, "Foucault's Art of Seeing," *October* 14 (1988): 89–119; Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); and the collection of essays in Hal Foster, ed. *Vision and Visuality*, Dia Art Foundation, Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988).
4. Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics," in *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956), 207–19.
5. Noah Webster, *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* (Hartford: Sidney's Press, 1806).
6. Among the growing corpus of American garden history, see Peter Martin, *Pleasure Gardens of Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), for a description of Virginia's colonial gardens. Barbara Sarudy, "Eighteenth-Century Gardens of the Chesapeake," *Journal of Garden History* 9 (3) (1989): 104–59, provides a detailed view of a cross-section of Maryland gardens from the craftsman's town garden of William Faris to the private estates and public gardens of Baltimore.
7. Frederick Doveton Nichols and Ralph E. Griswold, *Thomas Jefferson, Landscape Architect* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1978), 117.
8. Julie Earnstein, personal communication, 1993.
9. Stanley South, "The Paca House, Annapolis, Maryland" (Annapolis: Historic Annapolis Foundation, 1967). For an analysis of the geometry of the Paca garden, see Barbara Paca-Steele with St. Clair Wright, "The Mathematics of an Eighteenth-Century Wilderness Garden," *Journal of Garden History* 6 (4) (1986): 299–320.
10. Therese O'Malley, "Charles Willson Peale's Belfield: Its Place in American Garden History," in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale*, ed. Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 273.
11. Moreau de St. Mery, *American Journey, 1793–1798*, ed. Kenneth Roberts and Anna Roberts (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1947), 121.
12. For a discussion of early American garden literature, see Sarudy, "Eighteenth-Century Gardens"; O'Malley, "Appropriation and Adaptation: Early Gardening Literature in America," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 55 (3) (1992): 401–31; and Brenda Bullion, "Early American Farming and Gardening Literature: 'Adapted to the Climates and Seasons of the United States,'" *Journal of Garden History* 12 (1) (1992): 29–51.

13. Aubrey Land, ed., *Letters from America by William Eddis* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), 12.
14. Rev. John Spooner's 1723 description of Maycox in Prince George's County, Virginia, as quoted in Fiske Kimball, "A Landscape Garden on the James in 1723," *Landscape Architecture* 14 (2) (Jan. 1924): 123.
15. Mark P. Leone, "Rule by Ostentation: The Relationship Between Space and Sight in Eighteenth-Century Landscape Architecture in the Chesapeake Region of Maryland," in *Method and Theory for Activity Area Research: an Ethnoarchaeological Approach*, ed. Susan Kent (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1987), 604–33.
16. For example, the views created at Monticello are interpreted by Walter L. Creese, "Jefferson's Charlottesville," in *The Crowning of the American Landscape: Eight Great Spaces and Their Buildings* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 34–37, and by Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 215–16.
17. For example, O'Malley has noted the classicizing allusions in Charles Willson Peale's garden at Belfield near Philadelphia, particularly his obelisk possibly referencing an obelisk dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus. See O'Malley, "Peale's Belfield," 271–72.
18. Mark P. Leone and Paul A. Shackel, "Forks, Clocks and Power," in *Mirror and Metaphor: Material and Social Constructions of Reality*, ed. Daniel W. Ingersoll and Gordon Bronitsky (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1987), 46–61.
19. Raymond Williams traces the links between changing power structures and landownership in England. See Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), and *The Country and the City* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1985). Rhys Isaac incorporates a similar argument for eighteenth-century Virginia in *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1982). For a case study using archaeological evidence from Annapolis see Leone, "Interpreting Ideology in Historical Archaeology: Using the Rules of Perspective in the William Paca Garden in Annapolis, Maryland," in *Ideology, Representation, and Power in Prehistory*, ed. Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley (Cambridge: Univ. of Cambridge Press, 1984), 25–35.
20. Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Material Life in America, 1600–1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1988), 357–69; and Terrence W. Epperson, "Race and the Disciplines of the Plantation," *Historical Archaeology* 24 (4) (1990): 29–36.
21. William Kelso notes an additional potential drawback of garden excavations. At Bacon's Castle in Virginia, the combination of the impact of heavy machinery used to remove the topsoil and two years of exposed subsoil created severe drainage problems in the subsequently reconstructed garden. See William M. Kelso, "Landscape Archaeology and Garden History Research: Success and Promise at Bacon's Castle, Monticello, and Poplar Forest, Virginia," in *Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1992), 35.
22. Peter Murphy and Robert G. Scaife, "The Environmental Archaeology of Gardens," in *Garden Archaeology*, ed. A. E. Brown, Council of British Archaeology Research Report, 78. (London: Council of British Archaeology, 1991), 83–99.
23. Mark P. Leone and Paul A. Shackel, "Plane and Solid Geometry in Colonial Gardens in Annapolis, Maryland," in *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology*, ed. William M. Kelso and Rachel Most (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1990), 153–67.
24. For excellent discussions of the problematics of landscape and architectural representations, see Robin Evans, "Translations from Drawing to Building," *AA Files* 12 (1986): 13–18, and James Corner, "Representation and Landscape: Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium," *Word & Image* 8 (3) (1992): 243–75.
25. The Carroll site is officially known as the St. Mary's site (18AP45), taking its name from St. Mary's Catholic Church which presently occupies the property. The property is owned by the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (*Congregatio Sanctissimi Redemptoris*) whose generous hospitality made these archaeological investigations possible.
26. The rise and fall of Carroll the Settler's political fortunes including his emigration from Ireland, alliance with Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore, Proprietor of Maryland), and career as attorney general have been traced by Ronald Hoffman, "'Marylando-Hibernus': Charles Carroll the Settler, 1660–1720," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser., 45 (2) (1988): 207–36.
27. Peter S. Onuf, ed. *Maryland and the Empire, 1773: the Antillon-First Citizen Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974).
28. Leone and Shackel, "Plane and Solid Geometry," 159–62. Revisions to their geometric analysis which detail the deviations from this ideal geometry in the executed garden design are presented in Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, *Landscape as Myth: the Contextual Archaeology of an Annapolis Landscape* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Univ. Microfilms International, 1991), 182–86. For instance, the angle of the "right" triangle is actually 84 degrees and the proportions of the triangle's sides are never exactly 3-4-5.
29. Archaeology in Annapolis is jointly sponsored by the Historic Annapolis Foundation (a private, nonprofit preservation organization) and the University of Maryland at College Park. Throughout the excavations, a public program presented the archaeological findings and interpretations to the public. The Carroll house, currently undergoing restoration by Charles Carroll House of Annapolis, Inc., is open for tours which include interpretations of the garden. A site report for the 1987–90 excavations is in progress. The principal findings from the garden are described in Kryder-Reid, *Landscape as Myth*. The 1991 excavations of the interior of the Carroll House are reported in George C. Logan et al., *1991 Archaeological Excavations at the Charles Carroll House in Annapolis, Maryland (18AP45)* (Annapolis: Historic Annapolis Foundation, 1992).
30. Michael Kubovy, *The Psychology of Perspective and Renaissance Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986).
31. Leone and Shackel, "Plane and Solid Geometry," 163.
32. Kryder-Reid, "'As Is the Gardener, So Is the Garden': the Archaeology of Land-

- scape as Myth," in *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake*, ed. Paul A. Shackel and Barbara J. Little (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 131–48.
33. Although Carroll traveled extensively in England, particularly in the southwest region of the country, it is not known whether he was familiar with architecture such as the Triangular Lodge at Rushton Hall (1593–95), which incorporated Catholic symbolism into its architectural and decorative program. See Nikolaus Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, Buildings of England Series (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1961), 399.
  34. John W. Reys, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 103–8.
  35. Charles Willson Peale, *Diary*, (B:P31-2), Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society). Peale's description of the Carroll garden is found in vol. 20: 52–54.
  36. The location of the water entrance to the garden is not known, but a likely place is in the center of the seawall where the central ramp meets the water or near the western pavilion.
  37. Charles Wilson Peale's description indicates that, at least in 1804, some of the terraces contained parterres planted as kitchen gardens. The only other evidence of planting arrangements comes from beds recovered archaeologically on the upper terrace and from a letter discussing planting privet in a quincunx pattern (Charles Carroll of Annapolis to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Mar. 27, 1777, Carroll Papers Ms. 206, no. 383 [736], Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society).
  38. Mark P. Leone et al., "Power Gardens of Annapolis," *Archaeology* (Mar./April 1989): 34–39, 74–75; Kryder-Reid, "As Is the Gardener."
  39. Leonard Goldstein, *The Social and Cultural Roots of Linear Perspective* (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1988), 78.
  40. *Ibid.*, 82.
  41. Cheryl Nickel, "The Semiotics of Andean Terracing," *Art Journal* 42 (3) (1982): 200–203; and John Fritz, "Chaco Canyon and Vijayanagara: Proposing Spatial Meaning in Two Societies," in *Mirror and Metaphor*, 313–49.



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