

GIMGHOUL CASTLE – Supplement to the ZCP/CoA Application

21. WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

This special property has been the home of the Order of the Gimghouls since the 1920's. The Gimghoul Neighborhood in fact exists because the Order sold all of its property, except for the 2.15 acres on which the Castle sits, for development of the residential neighborhood. Two members of the Order, a developer and an engineer, laid out the streets and the lots.

The proposed improvements and enhancements to the Gimghoul property are intended to convey the sense of uniqueness and pride the Order has for this property, and its awareness of the Castle's significance and historic place in the Gimghoul Neighborhood and the surrounding North Carolina Botanical Garden's property and trails.

The Order is celebrating its 125th anniversary this fall and wishes to commemorate the event by making some initial improvements and renovations to the property. These improvements are part of a long-range master planning effort to sustain the property 25, 50, and 100 years from now.

Description of Proposed Improvements. These are further described on Sheet L-3.1. Except for repairs to stonework and low-key uplighting, no changes are being made to the Castle itself. Although landscaping is not within the purview of the Historic District Commission, it is described here as so that the Commission is aware of the scope of the master plan.

Approach and North Side Area:

- To enhance the dramatic view of the Castle from the entrance drive off Shaffer Circle, the existing bamboo will be removed and replaced by lower buffer plantings and evergreen screening that effectively hides the Castle view until the entrance approach.
- To enhance the existing pole-mounted security lighting, low-key lighting, known as "moon lighting", will be installed to uplight the Castle for special functions.
- To improve vehicular circulation, the stone edging along the entry drives will be refined, and 15-foot wide Belgian Block aprons will be installed at the entry thresholds. The entry drives and parking areas will remain gravel.
- To improve the existing gravel parking, the existing main parking area at the west end of the property will be edged with a low stone border to confine the parking to a limited area.
- To improve the landscaping:
 - The boxwoods outlining the circle at the entrance to the parking area that have declined will be replaced as needed.
 - The specimen double hemlock in the circle will be cabled.
 - The overgrown junipers along the north side of the Castle will be removed and replaced with more appropriate plantings.

East Side Area:

- To improve the service area and access to the caretaker's residential quarters, the existing wooden trash enclosure will be replaced with an ornamental metal screen fence and will be further screened with low-level plantings. The existing wooden steps to the caretaker quarters' rear entrance will be replaced with new steps to complement the architecture.
- At the Battle Overlook, the stonework on the lower rubble wall will be repaired. The Order will coordinate with the NC Botanical Garden to cut back overgrown and invasive vegetation, and to selectively thin the taller pines which have, over the years, obstructed the significant views to the east, replacing the pines with a lower understory tree canopy of dogwoods and redbuds. This will greatly enhance the experience not only for members of the Order, but for the many people who visit the Battle Overlook and use the trails bordering the Gimghoul property.

South and West Side Areas:

- To improve pedestrian circulation and create more functional uses for gathering spaces, a new terrace retaining wall, less than 2½' high, will be backfilled to make a level terrace and create an area for a temporary entertainment tent for special functions. This area will remain as grass and will not be paved.
- The stonework will be repaired on the standing fireplace and the fire circle.
- Removable shade sails will be installed on the back patio for outdoor gatherings.
- Two dead trees on the west side of the property that were struck by lightning will be removed.

Responses to criteria used to determine appropriateness:

a) The height of the building in relation to the average height of the nearest adjacent and opposite buildings;

Not applicable.

b) The setback and placement of the building on the lot in relation to the average setback and placement of the nearest adjacent and opposite buildings;

Not applicable.

c) The exterior construction materials, including textures and patterns;

The stone used for repairs will be matched as closely as possible to the existing. The decorative metal enclosure will be similar in style to the bars on the Castle windows. The replacement steps at the trash caretaker quarters' rear entrance will be more in keeping with the architecture than the existing wooden steps.

d) The architectural detailing such as lintels, cornices, brick bond, and foundation materials;

Not applicable.

e) The roof shape, form, and materials;

Not applicable.

f) The proportion, shape, location, pattern, and size of any elements of fenestration (windows, doors);

Not applicable.

g) The general form and proportion of the buildings;

Not applicable.

h) The accessory fixtures and other features (including lighting fixtures, hardware, awnings, etc);

The uplighting on the Castle will be low-key and the fixtures will not be visible from the perimeters of the property. The shade sails will be a neutral color and will be removed during the cooler months.

i) The architectural scale in relation to existing structures and surrounding buildings;

Not applicable.

j) Structural conditions and soundness.

The intent of the proposed improvements is to restore elements that have fallen into disrepair and improve the safety of the members of the Order and their guests.

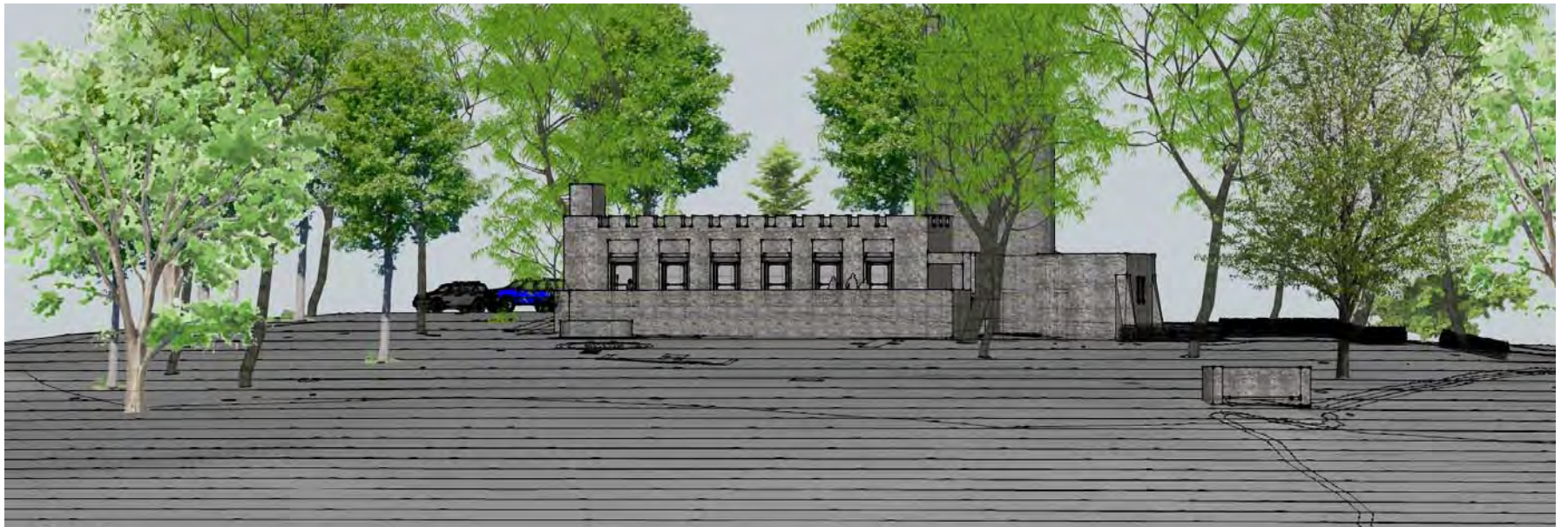
24. INFORMATION REGARDING SURROUNDING PROPERTIES

Gimghoul Castle is like no other property in the Gimghoul Neighborhood. These improvements are being proposed in order to have a long-range plan to maintain the property's uniqueness and special place in the neighborhood.

ELEVATIONS



1 Gimghoul Castle Front Elevation



2 Gimghoul Castle Rear Elevation

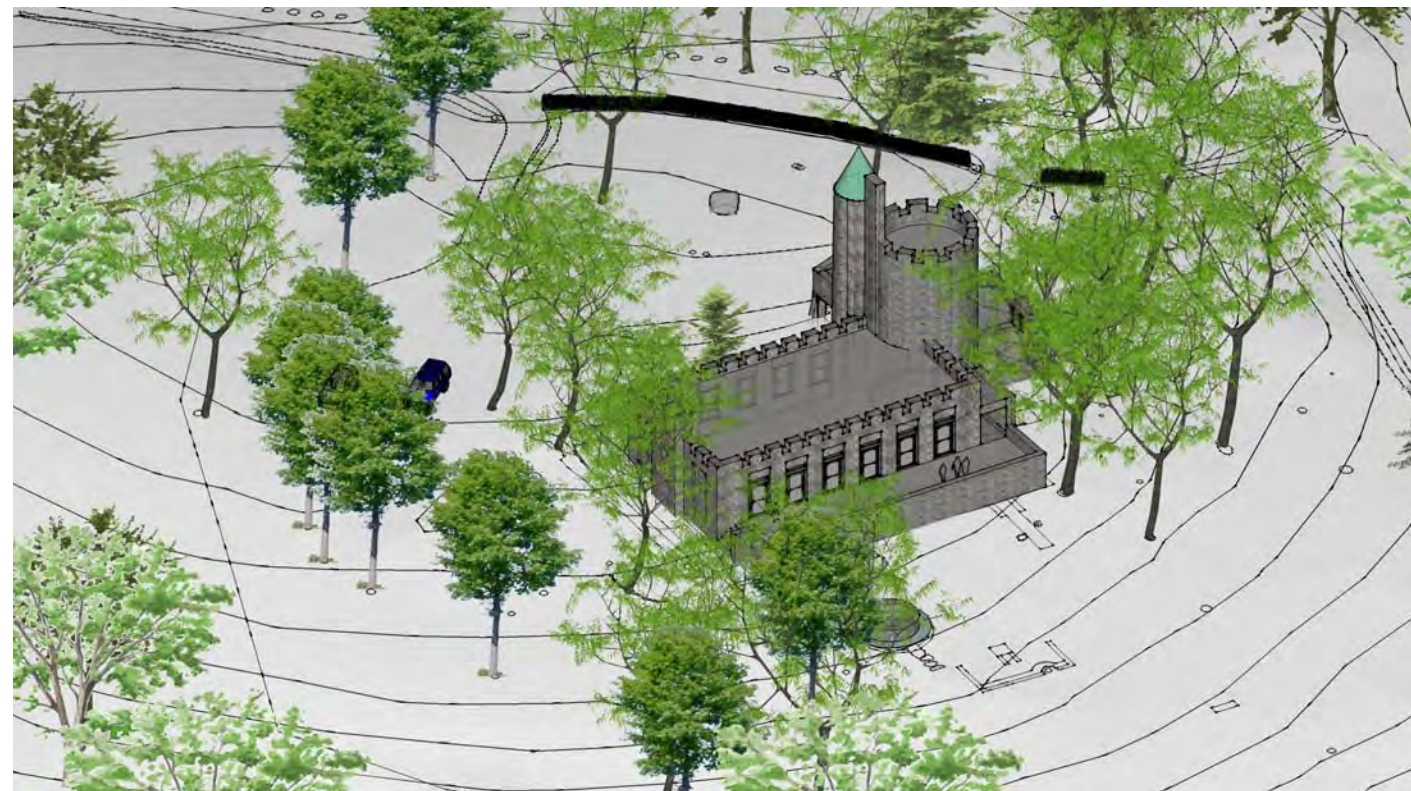
BIRD'S EYE VIEWS



1 Gimghoul Castle from Northeast



2 Gimghoul Castle from North



3 Gimghoul Castle from Southwest



4 Gimghoul Castle from South



01 Entrance to Property



02 Existing Entry Drive



03 Entry Drive with Paving Photosimulation



04 North Elevation with Parking Area



05 South Elevation



06 South and East Elevations



07 Caretaker's Entrance and Trash-Recycling Area



08 South Side with Fireplace and Fire Circle



09 Fire Circle



10 Wall at Fireplace



11 Fireplace



12 Battle Overlook



13 Walking Trail By Overlook Looking North



14 Walking Trail By Overlook Looking South



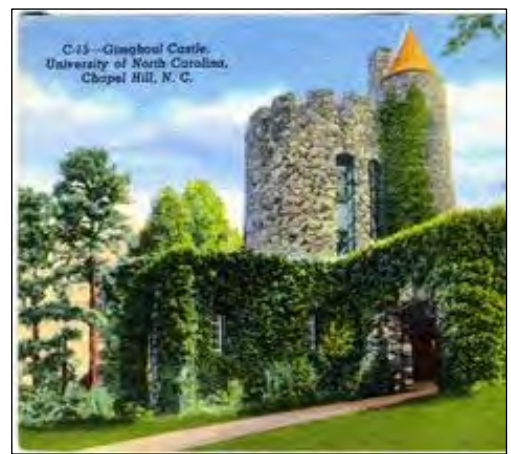
15 Current View of Piney Prospect



In 1892, two young ladies gaze out from Piney Prospect, on the current Gimghoul Castle grounds. The then uncluttered vista now contains the UNC General Administration offices, 317 501-1541.

16 1892 View of Piney Prospect

GIMGHOUL CASTLE



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INTRODUCTION

This is part of a master planning effort of the Gimghoul Castle. The report is intended to inform decisions about the timing and extent of future site and landscape improvement to the grounds of the historic castle.

Analysis: **SITE CONTEXT**

Site Description

Gimghoul Castle is located in the heart of Chapel Hill, NC at the end of Gimghoul Road to the east of the central part of the campus of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The site is within the National Historic District and the Chapel Hill Historic District (Gimghoul Neighborhood). The property is surrounded by UNC-CH land managed by the North Carolina Botanical Garden. The surrounding land use is predominantly low-density single-family residential development on large lots.

The Gimghoul Castle property is 2.15 acres which is 93,654 sf in size.

The property is hexagon in shape and does not have direct frontage to a public road, however, the property is accessed off Shaffer Circle, a tear-dropped looped gravel drive at the end of Gimghoul Road which is a public street.

The surrounding property is part of the 96 acre Battle Park lands, all owned and managed by the University of North Carolina and managed by the North Carolina Botanical Garden since 2004. Historically, this park is named for Kemp Plummer Battle, President of UNC from 1876-1891.

Property Address:

742 Gimghoul Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

PIN: 9788-96-2765
Deed Book Reference: 851/418
CHAPEL HILL TOWNSHIP
ORANGE COUNTY North Carolina

Analysis: **SITE AND BUILDING HISTORY**

History of the Gimghoul Neighborhood

Sources: *National Register Application for the Gimghoul Neighborhood* (1993, Ruth Little); Wikipedia: *Order of Gimghoul*; historic photographs from local Chapel Hill histories

The development of the Gimghoul neighborhood is entwined with the history of the Order of the Gimghouls, a secret society of University of North Carolina students, alumni and faculty which was founded in Chapel Hill in 1889. The order was founded in 1889 by Robert Worth Bingham, Shepard Bryan, William W. Davies, Edward Wray Martin, and Andrew Henry Patterson, who were University of North Carolina students at the time.

From the beginning, a wooded bluff east of the town of Chapel Hill known as Piney Prospect had been a sacred spot to the Gimghouls, and they held their initiation ceremonies on a rock outcropping there which they named Dromgoole Rock. The Order purchased about 94 acres there in 1915 in order to keep the land from development and to build a new lodge. The meeting place of the order, Hippol Castle, was built in 1924 at a cost of nearly \$50,000. Thirteen hundred tons of rough stone were used in its construction giving it the appearance of a castle. It is located at the end of Gimghoul Road.

The natural topography, a ridge which terminates on the east end in the Piney Prospect overlook, and the splendid forest of Battle Park which slopes down on the north side, as well as the proximity of the romantic Gimghoul Castle on Piney Prospect, create a unique setting.

In order to finance construction of the lodge, the western edge of the tract, containing about thirty-five acres, was subdivided for a residential development. Until the 1920s, Chapel Hill was a village clustered around the campus of the University of North Carolina. The Gimghoul neighborhood is the earliest residential development outside of the village. The growth of the university after 1900 led to the influx of more faculty families, and the Gimghouls' subdivision of a portion of their land adjoining the east side of the campus provided needed new housing.

The two members of the Gimghouls who played the major role in supervising this residential project were George Stephens and T. Felix Hickerson, both statewide pioneers in real estate development and road design. George Stephens, a real estate developer who had earlier developed the exclusive, pioneering suburb of Myers Park in Charlotte, North Carolina, supervised the planning of the Gimghoul development. T. Felix Hickerson drew the plat for the subdivision and did the engineering work for sewers, roads and pipe lines. Hickerson was a professor of civil engineering at the University and a road designer of national reputation. He championed aesthetic road design, publishing in the 1920s the key college textbook for road design. One of his

most innovative projects was to survey a portion, of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Another individual instrumental to the planning of the Gimghoul subdivision was Ralph Trimble, a well-known surveyor and a colleague of Hickerson in the School of Engineering. He did the surveying of the new lots and was one of the original subdivision residents. The original subdivision plat gives the name "Gimghoul Piney Prospect Development" to the new subdivision, and was drawn in 1923 by T. F. Hickerson, Registered Engineer.

The names of the new streets in the subdivision reflect the romantic medieval mythology developed by the Gimghouls for the area around their castle. Glandon Drive got its name from Glandon Forest, the name given to the woods around the overlook, Piney Prospect, located adjacent to the castle.

Analysis: **SITE ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Site Analysis and Assessment of Existing Conditions - Constraints and Opportunities. The castle and location on this promontory overlooking the Triassic basin and lands toward east Chapel Hill, Durham and the what has become the Research Triangle Park is truly a special and landmark building and site. This is a hidden and secret 'gem' in the midst of this growing and vibrant urban community. The area immediately around the castle lands will be preserved and protected in posterity. The castle itself, with its unique and mystical location has a tradition and history which must be understood and respected.

The Site Analysis evaluated a number of the physical conditions and environmental features of the property. The goal is to gain a better understanding of the land and unique features before major decisions can be made about improvements. The study makes a very brief evaluation of the following features:

- Topography, Slopes and Drainage
- Soils and Geology
- Existing Vegetation and Plant Communities
- Orientation, Views and Prevailing Winds
- Circulation (vehicular and pedestrian)
- Infrastructure
- The Built Landscape; Site Structures and Stone Walls

***Analysis:* TOPOGRAPHY/DRAINAGE**

Topography - The site is located at the promontory of a long ridge of land which is now part of the Gimghoul neighborhood. The highest point of the site is just to the west of the existing gravel parking lot at elevation 470.1 ft. The property slopes in a generally uniform pattern away from this high point toward the south and southeast. The castle was expertly sited and situated very sensitively on the 'brow' of this hill which allows for positive drainage around the building. This promontory is the end of the long ridge land form and indicative of what makes Chapel Hill unique and special – the village sits on a hill and all major roads and ways to get to the main part of the campus and the town center have to come up an incline. The lowest part of the site proper is the special Piney Prospect Overlook which rests on the edge of the very steepest portion of land dropping down to the Triassic Basin below. The overlook is at roughly elevation 450 ft.

The land form is defined by slopes that extend away from the castle and the high point of the site. The existing gravel parking lot is sited at the high point of the site which happens to be the flattest part of the site. (Parking for vehicles is best sited on slopes under or around 5%.) There needs to be positive slopes for drainage, however, it is not efficient for vehicles to park on too steep of land. The actual high point is on preserved woodland and this is good practice to preserve this feature. The approach from the existing gravel entry drive slopes up toward the castle at 5-10% slopes and then level off to the flatter part, directly in front of the castle. In addition the area directly in front of the castle which is the site of the sacred Dromgoole Rock with slopes under 10%. The land immediately in front of the castle is generally flat but has enough positive slopes for ample drainage. On each side of the castle, the west side and east side and directly behind the castle on the south side, the land form slopes gently at grades of around 7.5%. After the area to the east and south of the existing fire ring, the land form drops more significantly at slopes over 10%. And then beyond the overlook, the land forms drop dramatically with steep conditions over 20%. There is a spoil area (mounds of debris and topsoil from excavated building material) to the south of the property.

Drainage - The site is located at the top of the hill so there isn't any offsite drainage to cause issues. The impervious surface areas include gravel parking (slopes are gentle at less than 5%) and this lot sheet drains and disperses runoff. The flat roof area from the castle is collected in area catch basins and down through metal downspout leaders. It appears that each of these downspout leaders is functioning well. The roof areas require periodic maintenance to keep the drain grates clear of leaves and other debris. The downspouts all daylight at the edge of the building and there isn't evidence of major erosion issues at these concentrated points. Overall, there aren't major drainage issues.

***Analysis:* SOILS and GEOLOGY**

The geology of the area is complex and unique and special and defines Chapel Hill. So much of the rest of the Town of Chapel Hill is urbanized and the geology has been altered to meet and fit the desired site for road and building construction. For better description of the geology of the area, other resources should be consulted; however, this is an abstraction from a paper by Dr Michael Follo of the UNC Geology Department:

The term "Chapel Hill Granite" is actually a complex body of intrusive igneous rocks ranging in composition from granite to diorite. These plutonic rocks were originally thought to have been intruded into Slate Belt volcanic in the Middle Paleozoic. However, recent radiometric age data suggest that the Chapel Hill Granite is in fact the same age or only very slightly younger than the Carolina Slate Belt. In this case, the Chapel Hill Granite can be viewed as the intrusive "roots" of the volcanic arc system. Chapel Hill Granite underlies the entire UNC campus, but crops out at the surface in only a very few scattered locations. One of the best outcrops of Chapel Hill Granite can be found in the small park just north of the Hanes Art Center. Similar weathered outcrops of Chapel Hill Granite are found just east of campus in Battle Park near the Forest Theater.

However, this site is relevantly unspoiled and the building's impact, as imposing as it is, has a light footprint on the land. This is evidenced by the fact that during the construction of the castle they did not blast or bulldoze the bedrock, but rather built on top of the bedrock. The basement foundation has clearly exposed bedrock and this is evidence of the remaining part of the more undisturbed part of the site.

Shallow soils, identified as Appling and Weeodee series in the Orange County Soils Report, overlie two well-defined areas of outcropping bedrock. The Appling series consists of well drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in residuum weathered from acid igneous and metamorphic rock. These soils are on broad ridges and sides of ridges, typical of this site. The Soils survey indicates that the site development potential is moderate, with constraints being clayey soils and slope.

Where there are steeper slopes, especially toward the eastern part of the site toward the overlook, there is evidence of erosion. It appears that the majority of the native topsoil has eroded from the site which has ramifications on growing healthy turf grass.

Analysis: **AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Vegetation - The aerial photo provides a snapshot from Orange County's GIS data depicting the extent of deciduous hardwood forest and other land cover as of 2010, when the photograph was taken. As can be seen, the majority of the site is heavily canopied. There are small areas of existing open areas. Some of these areas are open due to loss of tree canopy.

An overhead utility line within a cleared easement approximately 10-15 feet in width is also located along the western side of the site coming from an off-site pole.

Analysis: **VEGETATION**

Trees - This site is historically known as Piney Prospect. Historic photographs of the site reveal a predominant forest cover of native pines. Pines are an early succession tree in the native forest and most of the pines have either been shaded out or have aged out. The current predominant vegetation of the forest around the castle is mixed deciduous and upland hardwood Piedmont forest. It includes native Oak, Hickory, and Maple in the upland forest, as well as Gum, Maple, and Poplar in the lower areas. The trees all appear to be healthy except for a large Pine and a Hickory located on the western side of the castle. Both trees were struck by lightning and have the potential of causing damage by falling on the castle. A number of other trees in the surrounding forest and in the central island of the teardrop loop drive have fallen due to storm damage. These trees should be removed to prevent further damage. A number of significant Oaks have high value.

The understory of the forest and select trees directly around the castle includes smaller species, including Dogwood and Redbud. A number of native Eastern Red Cedars have been planted for screening and as a supplemental buffer. Red Cedars are prevalent in this landscape and can reach great size and are long-lived. Some Red Cedars in Chapel Hill, particularly along East Franklin Street downtown, are over 150 and 200 years old. The lower understory vegetation appears to have been substantially affected by age and/or deer-browse.

A number of introduced trees were planted to fit the setting of the castle grounds. This includes a large Hemlock located in the front of the castle by the Dromgoole Rock circle. This large native tree is at mature size. This particular specimen tree is split with two main branching trunks. Directly in front of the castle great hall and adjacent to the main tower are two evergreen Deodar Cedars. These trees have reached the size where they visually impair the visual qualities of the castle from the front elevation. The Deodar Cedar is a large, graceful, open and pyramidal coniferous evergreen tree native to the western Himalayas. This tree, in optimal conditions, will grow over 100

feet in height. The Deodar Cedar prefers to be sited in an open area where it can grow and thrive with growth rate of around 2 feet per year. There are also a number of introduced evergreens including, the Chamaecyparis tree, which are located around the castle and at the entry drive. However, most all these trees have died or are in very poor condition and are beyond the point of being restored.

Beyond the lightning damage already noted to the Pine and Hickory, it is noted that this site is very prone to lightning strikes and wind storm damage due to the exposed promontory. Damaged trees should be removed right away before damage is done to the building. The recommendation is to have selected trees cabled to support split branches, especially the specimen Hemlock as well as the Oak at the corner of the rear terrace.

Other Shrub-Level Plants and Groundcover - There are also introduced shrub-level plantings in select areas around the grounds. These plants, as noted on the existing conditions map, were planted for either foundation planting in front of the castle great hall, or intended as filtered screening and evergreen buffer along the western and northern edge of the property. These shrubs include mature Boxwoods set in front of the central island area in front of the castle, and along the peripheral east edge of the property adjacent to the existing pathway that leads to Piney Prospect Overlook. There are also numerous evergreen Ligustrums around the western side of the property, planted as a filtered buffer. The plants that are growing under the tree canopy are not doing as well as those growing in the sunnier situation. Other buffer plants include a stand of evergreen Bamboo along the secondary entry drive. This Bamboo is a lower variety and not tall but rather a lower spreading type. Around the foundation base of the castle are several overgrown Junipers and Plum Yew. These Junipers are not contributing plants nor are they appropriate to the castle.

Lawn and Other - The predominant ground plain cover is leaf litter and uncovered soil. Where there is sun, there is opportunity for lawn.

Wildlife Deer are the largest concern, especially with the planting of new vegetation. Smaller wildlife including raccoon, possum and other animals can be a concern, especially with the exposed trash and recycling containers.

***Analysis:* CIRCULATION**

Entry to the property is from Country Club Road adjacent to the UNC-CH campus. The intersection off Country Club Road opposite Playmakers Theater has a traffic light to access Gimghoul Road, which is located within a Town of Chapel Hill public 60-foot wide right of way.

Vehicular Circulation The site is accessed via a double entry/egress gravel drive on the north side of property from Shaffer Circle, the tear-drop shaped gravel driveway. There are a few sight line glimpses of the castle from this entry driveway. The tear-drop shaped circle is technically not a public street but rather a private driveway, but the general public will use this drive to get close to the castle. This drive is on contour and the gravel varies from 10 ft. wide to 14 ft. wide at the turn. The driveway entry extends into the property through a stone gated entry. The gravel driveway is narrowed down further at the large boulder stones with an upward sloping grade of approximately 10%. A ditch is located on the high side of the driveway, although it has filled in over the years. An 8" corrugated metal culvert crosses the entry drive but it appears it is partially clogged.

The parking areas are undefined for parking, but parking can occur in most places in the gravel surfaced lot. Overall spaces are limited to approximately 15 vehicles. As described, this parking area is on the flattest part of the site (less than 5% slopes)

Pedestrian Circulation The site is accessed only by the entry drive without direct path connections from off site. The only defined pedestrian connection is the paved walk from the gravel parking lot on the western side of the building to the rear terrace. This walk is paved with stamped concrete and is less than 20 years old and is in good condition. The rear terrace is accessed by 7 steps. The walk steps down several steps to meet grade to the rear part of the property.

Analysis: **THE BUILT LANDSCAPE FEATURES –
SITE STRUCTURES and STONE WALLS**

Piney Prospect Overlook The overlook is a traditional part of the story of Gimghoul Castle. This structure is a 6 ft. height curved stone wall set with a seat bench which defines a stone terrace and creates an intimate gathering space. The overlook has a bronze plaque with the inscription "...to President Battle Who Knew and Loved These Woods like No One Else...". The stone terrace is approximately 6 feet in diameter with a 12 foot span. Two stone steps allow access up to the stone terrace. Below this terrace is an informal circular line of dry stacked rocks that provide an edge before dropping off the steeper part of the slope. Several stones have popped out and these are noted on the Analysis Plan.

Fire Ring The existing stone fire ring is a circular table with a stone bench. The diameter of this table is 13'-6". The fire ring is at table height, around 36 inches high. This structure functions as a picnic table and is less used as a fire ring. Portions of the stone bench are failing where some of the stones have popped out and it appears that a portion of the stone bench has settled and collapsed.

Firewood Storage The existing covered firewood storage box is located on the southeastern end of the rear terrace. Its concrete roof is supported by stone pedestals and some of these are in poor condition and some of the stones are in disrepair.

Stone Walls The site is bordered by dry stacked stone walls which define the northern edge between the gravel drive and the open special landscape as well as the eastern edge of the site adjacent to the pathway that leads to the overlook. These dry stack stone walls are mostly stable and in good condition.

Analysis: **INFRASTRUCTURE/LIGHTING**

Utilities The castle is served by public utilities including water, sewer, gas, and electric. The water line location and condition is unknown. The sewer line location and condition is unknown. The castle is served by an overhead power line which accesses the site from the western side of the site. A gas meter is located at the caretaker's terrace under the main tower. These utilities may be able to be field located by a utility locating service.

Security Lighting The site has four large area lights mounted on 18-20 ft. high wood poles. Several spotlights are mounted on the corners of the castle which illuminate the ground around the perimeter of the castle. These lights appear to be LED lamps. It is noted that some of the fixtures are missing or are in disrepair.

Functional Lighting The port-cochere is illuminated with a lamp fixture.