

# RE \_ \_ \_ IMAGINE LEFFFEERTS



Reimagine Lefferts welcomes Lenape and African descendant communities to reclaim a colonial battlefield and site of enslavement to celebrate the resilience of their ancestors. Doing so enhances Prospect Park with the transformative wisdom and inspiration necessary for all visitors to re-imagine Brooklyn, America and themselves.



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Moving the house into Prospect Park in 1918. Center for Brooklyn History.

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# FORWARD

Prospect Park Alliance's core values of community, inclusiveness, innovation, leadership and sustainability inform every aspect of our work, including how we show up for the diverse communities we serve. The park is the great equalizer, welcoming millions of park users from Brooklyn, across the city and all over the world to come as they are and to find a sense of community. Through the Relmagine Lefferts initiative, the Alliance is engaging the public around the ongoing legacies of dispossession and enslavement in Brooklyn and beyond. As the Alliance's first Black leader, I am honored to be ushering in this new era of recognition and celebration of the stories and histories that have been ignored for centuries. We look forward to working with our partners to make the museum a place for healing and a forum for thoughtful dialogue and learning for our community.

**Morgan Monaco**, President

Effectively interpreting the Indigenous and African foundations of this county is one of the most difficult and pressing tasks for cultural institutions in our time. Soliciting guidance from descendent community leaders on how to best do this at Lefferts House has been, and continues to be, an incredible honor and privilege. While this report marks an important phase in this work, these conversations will continue indefinitely. We look forward to deepening the many relationships we have made so that together we can deliver the interpretive concepts developed here to those who consider Brooklyn to be their homeland and/or home.

**Maria Carrasco**, MA Vice President of Public Programs

**Dylan Yeats**, PhD Relmagine Lefferts Project Manager

**Riah Kinsey**, MA Public Programs Manager

**Maryam Batts**, BFA Public Programs Coordinator

**Shari Jones**, MSW Museum Social Work Advisor





# BACKGROUND

Lefferts Historic House is a New York City landmark, jointly operated by the Historic House Trust and Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that sustains, restores and advances Prospect Park in partnership with the City of New York. The house was built by enslaved Africans in 1783 on top of an earlier colonial foundation. Brooklyn Borough Parks Commissioner Raymond V. Ingersoll brought the house into Prospect Park in 1918 to serve as a museum from its original location six blocks south on Flatbush Avenue near Maple Street.

The Alliance is transforming the museum to further focus its mission and programming to explore the lives, resistance and resilience of the Indigenous people of Lenapehoking, whose unceded ancestral lands the park and house rests upon, and the Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family. With guidance from descendant communities, culture bearers, scholars, artists, civic leaders and museum professionals, the Alliance seeks to create a safe space for engaging with our collective past as well as contemporary issues affecting these communities today.

A generous Humanities in Place grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2023 enabled the Alliance to bring this work forward, and assemble the advisors, partners, and consultants necessary to create a new interpretive plan to Relmagine Lefferts. The Alliance selected Ralph Appelbaum Associates to coordinate this work and develop the following report.





# VISION

Reimagine Lefferts strengthens the healing nature of Prospect Park by acknowledging the Indigenous and African foundations of this city and country. As renowned Prospect Park designer Frederick Law Olmsted explained to the Brooklyn Parks Commissioners in 1866, the goal of any public park should be the collective “recuperation” of the populace. Offering visitors a place to learn and reflect on these often-marginalized histories is restorative and empowering.

The Alliance has the unparalleled opportunity to offer Lefferts to the public both as a witness and venue. The land that became Prospect Park was taken from the Lenape by force and without compensation by the Dutch West India Company in 1645. Africans were forced to cultivate this land by European settlers including the Lefferts, until New York state abolished slavery in 1827. During that period, more enslaved people lived and worked on the Lefferts’ farm than free people. Today, New York City is home to the largest number of Native Americans in any U.S. metropolis and the museum is in the largest and most diverse Black neighborhood in the county.

Reimagine Lefferts welcomes Lenape and African descendant communities to reclaim a colonial battlefield and site of enslavement to celebrate the resilience of their ancestors. Doing so enhances Prospect Park with the transformative wisdom and inspiration necessary for visitors to re-imagine Brooklyn, America and themselves.

Pinkster African Festival, May 1990.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prospect Park Alliance seeks to commemorate the past in order to build a better future. Creating engaging exhibits and programs that focus on the experiences, resistance and resilience of Lenape and African peoples in Brooklyn will inspire pride and empowerment among descendant visitors, which will also inspire and empower the full diversity of communities we serve as well.

To Relmagine Lefferts for and with descendent communities will ensure that the museum supports existing community efforts, goals and needs and is welcoming to visitors most closely connected to this living history. This will transform a site of brutality into a place of social healing that can complement the healing, recuperative nature of the park as a whole.

This interpretive plan is the result of thousands of hours of conversations with Prospect Park stakeholders, descendent community leaders, frontline historic preservationists, public intellectuals, and museum experts made possible through the generosity of The Mellon Foundation.

## INTERPRETATION AND PROGRAMMING WILL ENCOURAGE VARIOUS FORMS OF HEALING:

- Historical information and recovery
- Connection to the earth
- Space for reflection and contemplation
- Community building
- Programming
- Stewardship

## LENAPE INTERPRETATION AND PROGRAMMING WILL:

- Inspire pride and empowerment
- Prioritize working with the governments of all Lenape nations
- Emphasize living history and culture
- Emphasize resistance without downplaying destruction
- Encourage respect for culture, not adoption of culture
- Support Munsee language revitalization

## AFRICAN INTERPRETATION AND PROGRAMMING WILL:

- Inspire pride and empowerment
- Honor wisdom, skills, genius, accomplishments and impact of enslaved Africans
- Focus on Black joy and resilience as well as resistance and oppression
- Resist prioritizing freedom-seekers who escaped over those who stayed
- Encourage connection to African wisdom and culture
- Encourage diasporic unity through shared histories

## MUSEUM PARTNERSHIPS WILL PRIORITIZE:

- Descendants (both literal descendants and communities with shared history)
- Proximity (work outwards from Crown Heights and Flatbush)
- Longevity (honor legacies of foundational work first and build out from there)



## INDIGENOUS PARTNERS

Lefferts is partnering with the Eenda-Lunaapeewahkiing Collective to engage Lenape and Associated Nations across the diaspora to interpret their living histories and cultures.

## PILOT PARTNERS

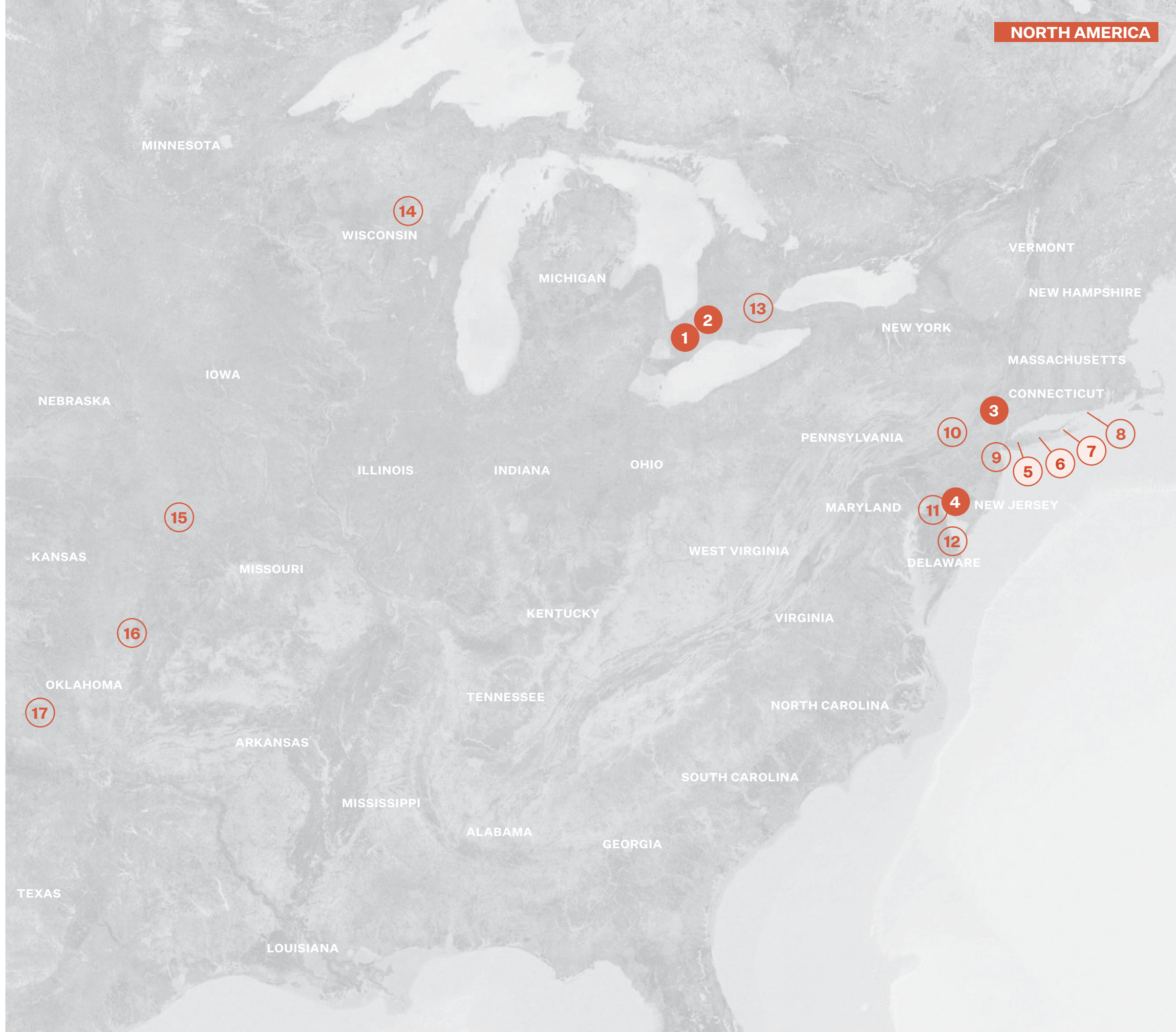
- 1 Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit
- 2 Munsee-Delaware Nation
- 3 Ramapough Lenape Nation
- 4 Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Nation

## IN CONVERSATION

- 5 Matinecock Tribal Nation
- 6 Unkechaug Indian Nation
- 7 Shinnecock Nation

## ASPIRING

- 8 Montaukett Indian Nation
- 9 Sand Hill Indians
- 10 Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania
- 11 Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware
- 12 Nanticoke Indian Tribe of Delaware
- 13 Delaware of the Six Nations of the Grand River
- 14 Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians
- 15 Kansas Delaware Tribe
- 16 Delaware Tribe of Indians
- 17 Delaware Nation





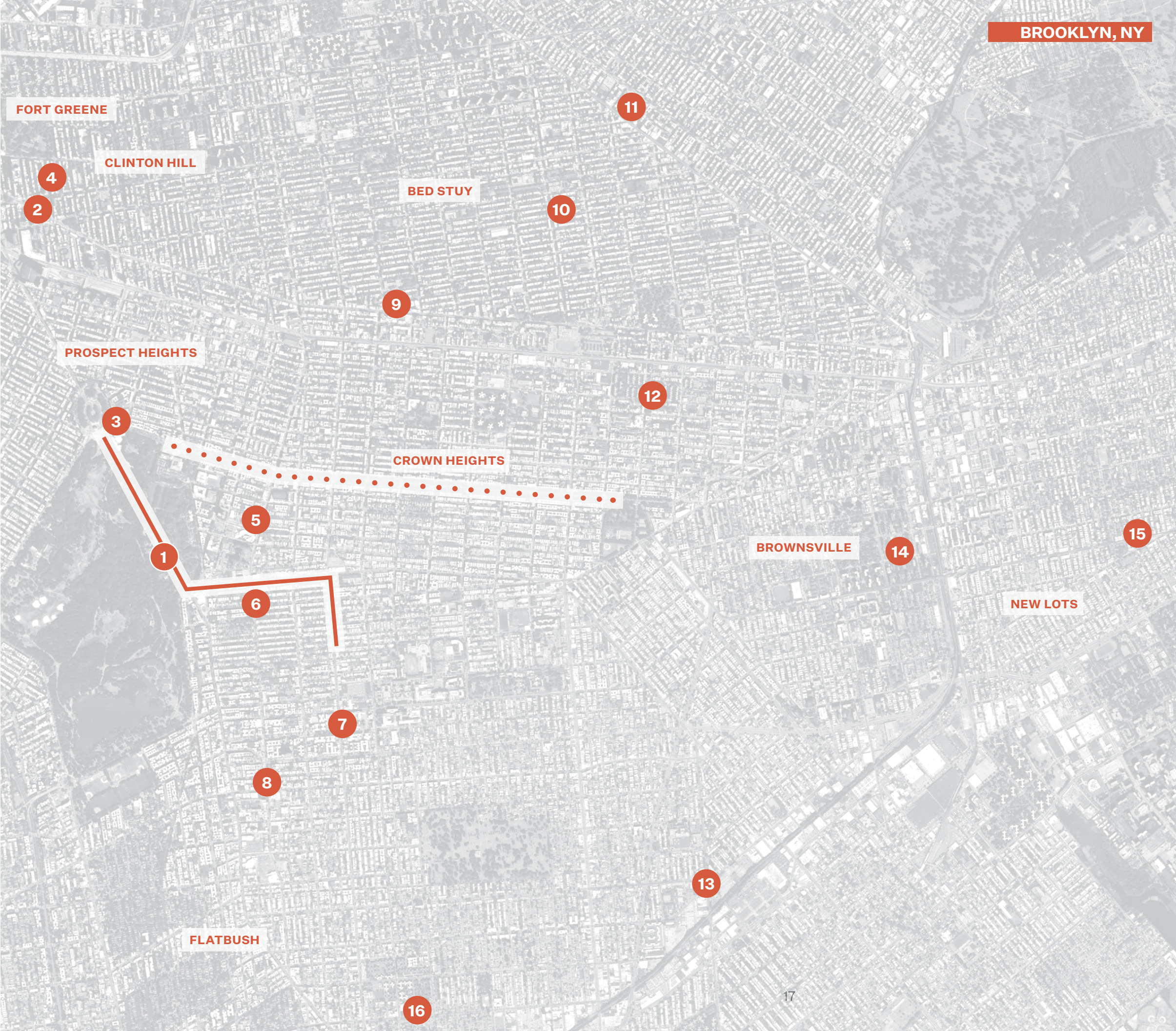
# BLACK HISTORY PARTNERS

Relmagine Lefferts proudly places the museum in conversation and collaboration with a network of partner sites that comprise a Central Brooklyn Black History and Culture Corridor. The museum seeks to support Black Brooklynites preserve, communicate and reflect on this important four-century legacy for the future.

- 1 Lefferts Historic House
- 2 Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)
- 3 Brooklyn Public Library
- 4 Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church
- 5 Medgar Evers College, CUNY
- 6 Grace Reformed Church of Flatbush
- 7 Lenox Road Baptist Church
- 8 Flatbush African Burial Ground
- 9 Restoration Plaza
- 10 Bridge Street AME Church
- 11 Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation
- 12 Weeksville Heritage Center
- 13 Wyckoff House Museum
- 14 Brownsville Heritage House
- 15 Sankofa Park & New Lots Library
- 16 Brooklyn College Africana Research Center

— J’ouvert Route

• • • West Indian American Day Parade Route





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Community Conversation on Healing, November 5, 2023.

To develop a new interpretive plan, the Prospect Park Alliance solicited guidance from community, and especially descendent community, members, leaders, and culture bearers. Outreach included forming a Relmagine Lefferts Advisory Committee, hiring expert consultants, collaborating with programming partners, and hosting targeted and public Community Conversations. The Alliance pledges to continue to solicit further guidance and feedback as the museum launches more pilot exhibits and develops more permanent schematic plans.

Community guidance not only helped develop resonant new interpretation and programming concepts but also helped the Alliance fundamentally reimagine how a historic house can serve new cultural and community roles for audiences.

Lessons learned through community engagement included:

- Programming is more important than exhibits
- Community spaces are more important than period rooms
- Brutal history makes the house quasi-sacred space
- Offering descendant communities access to the house as a venue for their contemporary needs is reparative
- Focusing on outdoor experiences broadens impact
- Ongoing partnerships are more important than one time commissions



**REIMAGINE LEFFERTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Alliance formed a Relmage Lefferts Advisory Committee made up of local culture bearers, community leaders, and museum professionals in January 2023. Committee members received modest honorariums for their participation.

**LENAPE LEADERS:**

Chief Vincent Mann, Ramapough Lunaape Nation, Turtle Clan.  
Chief Dwaine Perry, Ramapough Lunaape Nation  
Chairman Urie Ridgeway, Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation  
Brent Stonefish, Delaware Nation at Moraviantown  
George Stonefish, Delaware Nation at Moraviantown & American Indian Community House  
Chief Roger Thomas, Munsee-Delaware Nation.

**BLACK HISTORY & CULTURE BEARERS:**

Donnamarie Barnes, Sylvester Manor  
Sandra A. M. Bell, JouvayFest  
Shirley Brown Alleyne, Center for Brooklyn History  
Lynda Day, Brooklyn College  
Adama Delphine Fawundu, Columbia University  
Nona Faustine, photographer  
Rev. Fr. Sheldon N.N. Hamblin, St. Paul’s Church in the Village of Flatbush  
Erica Harper, Weeksville Heritage Center  
Sharon Myrie, Queens Public Library  
Lavada Nahon, New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation  
Shanna Sabio, Flatbush African Burial Ground Coalition  
Craig Steven Wilder, MIT  
Shelley Worrell, I AM CARIBBEAING  
Shawne’ Lee, Friends of Abolitionist Place

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HISTORY PROFESSIONALS:**

Deborah Mutnick, Brooklyn College & Voices of Lefferts  
Jack Tchen, Rutgers Newark & The Public History Project  
Cindy VandenBosch & Andrew Gustafson, Turnstile Tours

**SPECIAL OBSERVER:**

Jack Travis, Practitioner and Professor of Architecture



Visit to Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Nation with Brent Stonefish and George Stonefish, October 20, 2023.

**EXPERT CONSULTANTS:**

The Alliance hired leading local culture bearers and expert professionals to assist in planning and interpretation at the site.

George Stonefish (Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit)  
Indigenous Outreach

Brent Stonefish, MA (Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit)  
Lenape History and Culture

Chief Vincent Mann & Michaline Picaro (Ramapough Lunaape Nation)  
Lenape Agriculture and Landscape

Chief Baba Neil Clarke, BA  
Africanisms in America

Tonya Hopkins, BA  
African Diasporic Culinary History

K. Kennedy Withers, AIA, MArch/MUP  
Architecture of Enslavement

**PROGRAMMING PARTNERS:**

The Alliance partnered with existing organizations already doing this work to pilot different programs at Lefferts. These collaborations offered opportunities to solicit guidance from these partners as well as their audiences for how to interpret and program at the site in a responsible and resonant way.

African-Atlantic Genealogical Society	J’Ouvert City International
American Indian Community House	Juwandi House Riddems
Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation	2J & Friends
Beats, Rhythm, & Lyrics	Kutters Rhythm Section
BPL/Center for Brooklyn History	Lenox Road Baptist Church
Bridge Street AME Church	Maakheru Music
Brooklyn College Africana Research Center	Munsee Three Sisters Medicinal Farm
Brooklyn Level Up	Brooklyn NAACP
BUSH WO/MAN Conversations	New York Landmarks Conservancy
CityLore	Nirvana Humanitarian Foundation
Dyckman Farmhouse	NYC Municipal Archives
Empress Poetry	Public History Project
Flatbush African Burial Ground Coalition	Pinkster Players
Flatbush Mixtape	Uhuru Season: 17 Days of Freedom
Friends of Abolitionist Place	Voices of Lefferts
GrowHouse NYC	Weeksville Heritage Center
Guyana Cultural Association	West Indian American Day Carnival Association
I AM CARIBBEING	Wyckoff House Museum
JouvayFest	*77* District 40

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

The Alliance met with Lenape leaders and hosted public Community Conversations for local and especially descendent community residents to solicit guidance and feedback on interpretation, programming, and design concepts for Relmagine Lefferts. Extensive followup by email, video conference, and phone accompanied each of these in person meetings.

**LENAPE LEADER MEETINGS:**

- MAY 19, 2023** Lenape advisors and families visit Lefferts House (15 Lenape participants)
- MAY 20, 2023** Munsee Three Sisters Medicinal Farm visit (12 Lenape participants)
- SEPTEMBER 18, 2023** Lenape programming meeting (3 Lenape participants)
- OCTOBER 20-23, 2023** Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Nation visit (10 Lenape participants)

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:**

- JANUARY 21, 2023** New Research and Interpretive Approach with Relmagine Lefferts Project Manager Dylan Yeats (approximately 60 attendees)
- FEBRUARY 11, 2023** New Research and Interpretive Approach with Relmagine Lefferts Project Manager Dylan Yeats (approximately 90 attendees)
- JULY 8, 2023** Outdoor Opportunities with RAA Project Leader Rick Sobel and Content Developer Nafees Khan (approximately 60 attendees)
- SEPTEMBER 23, 2023** Interpreting Enslavement with Joseph McGill Jr. of the Slave Dwelling Project, journalist Herb Frazier, and culinary historian LisaRoxanne Walters (approximately 50 attendees)
- NOVEMBER 5, 2023** Healing with Relmagine Lefferts Museum Social Work Advisor Shari Jones, RAA Content Developer Nafees Khan, and poet Robert Gibbons (approximately 40 attendees)





# INTRODUCTION

Reimagine Lefferts is an opportunity to rethink how this historic house museum and its outdoor spaces can engage the histories and communities of Brooklyn, particularly those east of Prospect Park. Based on extensive descendent and local community guidance and discussion, the following design layout is organized around thematic zones, visitor flow and interpretation.

Exhibits will visually signal Lenape and African presence at the site to attract and welcome descendant community visitors. While Dutch settler society will not be ignored, Lenape and African aesthetics will help balance a more inclusive and accurate history and inspire visitors to want to learn more.

Programming will vary throughout the year with the overall mission of supporting and championing Lenape and African histories and cultures. These exhibits and events will inspire pride and empowerment among descendant visitors as well as other visitors.



# THEMATIC ZONES



## LENAPE TODAY

The Lenape are still here and their ancestral wisdom is urgently needed to build a viable future. Learn about modern Lenape Nations today before exploring the creation of the world.



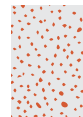
## NATIVE LANDSCAPES

The Pre-Olmsted landscape signals the historic importance of the site while offering visitors important lessons in Lenape permaculture.



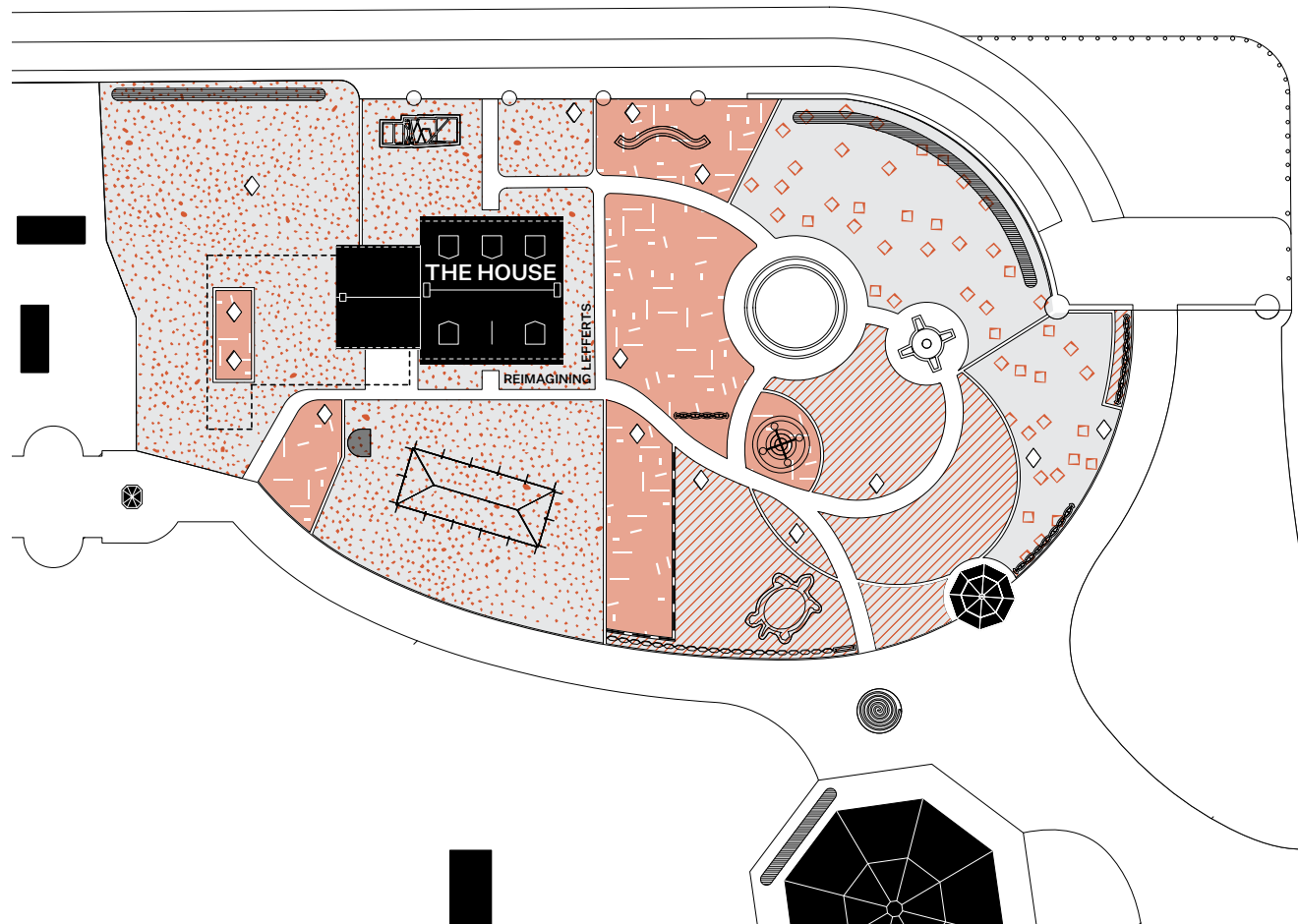
## ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE

This is a site of inspiring resilience because it was a site of horrible oppression. We celebrate those who were heroes of their own lives.



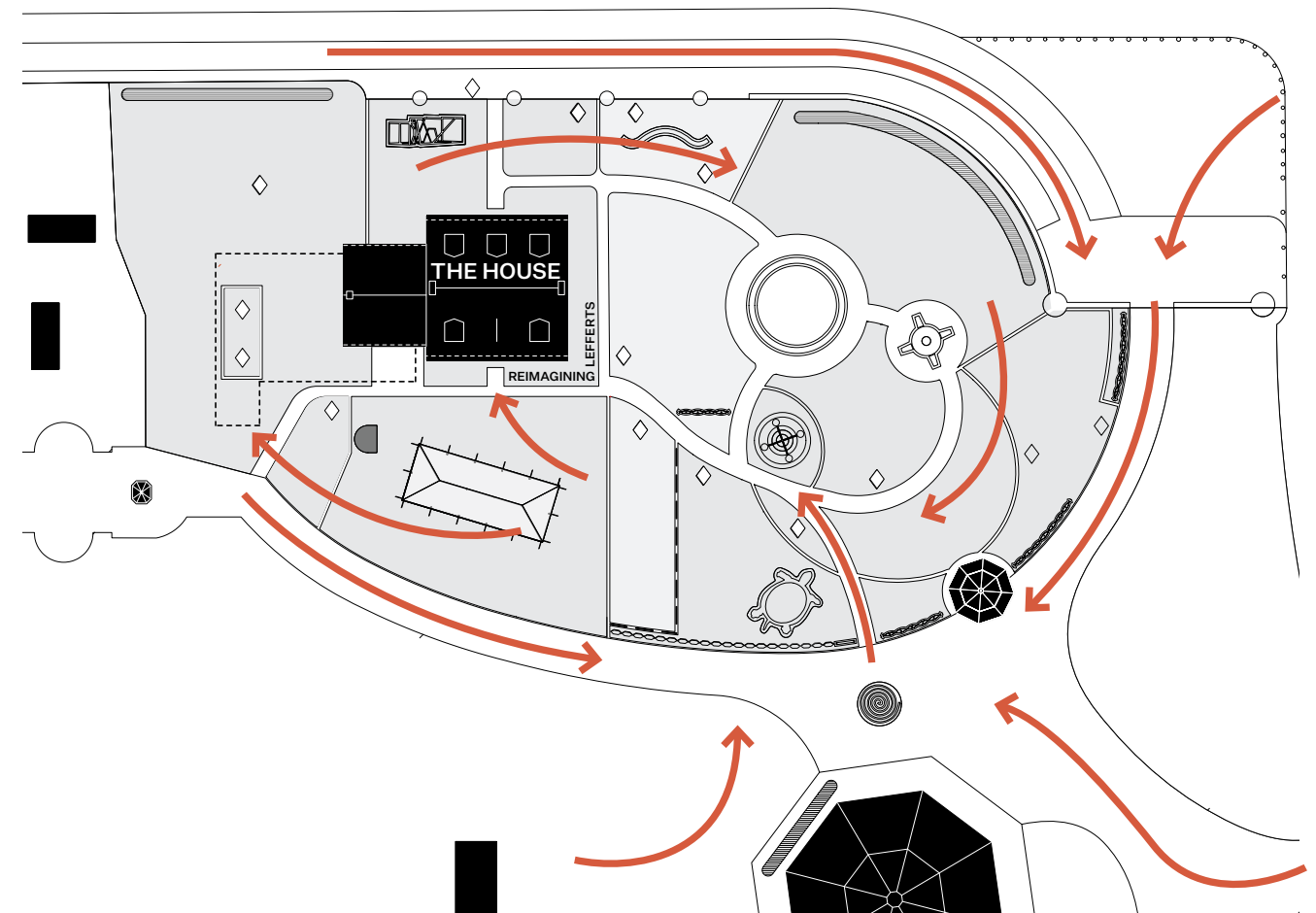
## PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

This is not a static historic house but a dynamic venue for multi-sensory engagement with the wisdom of those who came before us.



# VISITOR FLOW

Visitors are guided through the site in a natural feeling but intentional sequence that can communicate key lessons through a short loop. Thematic zones allow for accessible and clear historical gestures that convey crucial lessons almost immediately. The experience is scaled so visitors can gain something from a short walk-through, but also be encouraged to linger and learn more or just enjoy. Meet the Lenape today, then encounter the ancient Kongo Cosmogram, before learning the history of the house itself. Healing plants, vistas and reflection areas are present from start to finish, welcoming visitors to return again and again.



# INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Within each thematic zone, core interpretive features anchor learning objectives. While visitors are encouraged to explore the site freely, these features act as visual guides through a reparative journey focused on awareness, resistance, resilience, and healing.

## LENAPE TODAY

- 1 Lenape Nations Panels
- 2 Creation Story Sculpture
- 3 Three Sisters Garden
- 4 Healing Herb Garden

## ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE


- 5 Dikenga Cosmogram
- 6 Flax Crop
- 7 Freedom Seeker Wall
- 8 Reclaiming Watermelon Garden


## ORIENTATION & REFLECTION

- 9 Welcome Wall
- 10 Tollbooth Reclaimed
- 11 Reflection Circle
- 12 Sky Terrace


## PROGRAMMING & EVENTS


- 13 Public Art
- 14 Celebration Yard
- 15 Events Tent
- 16 Future Admin Wing

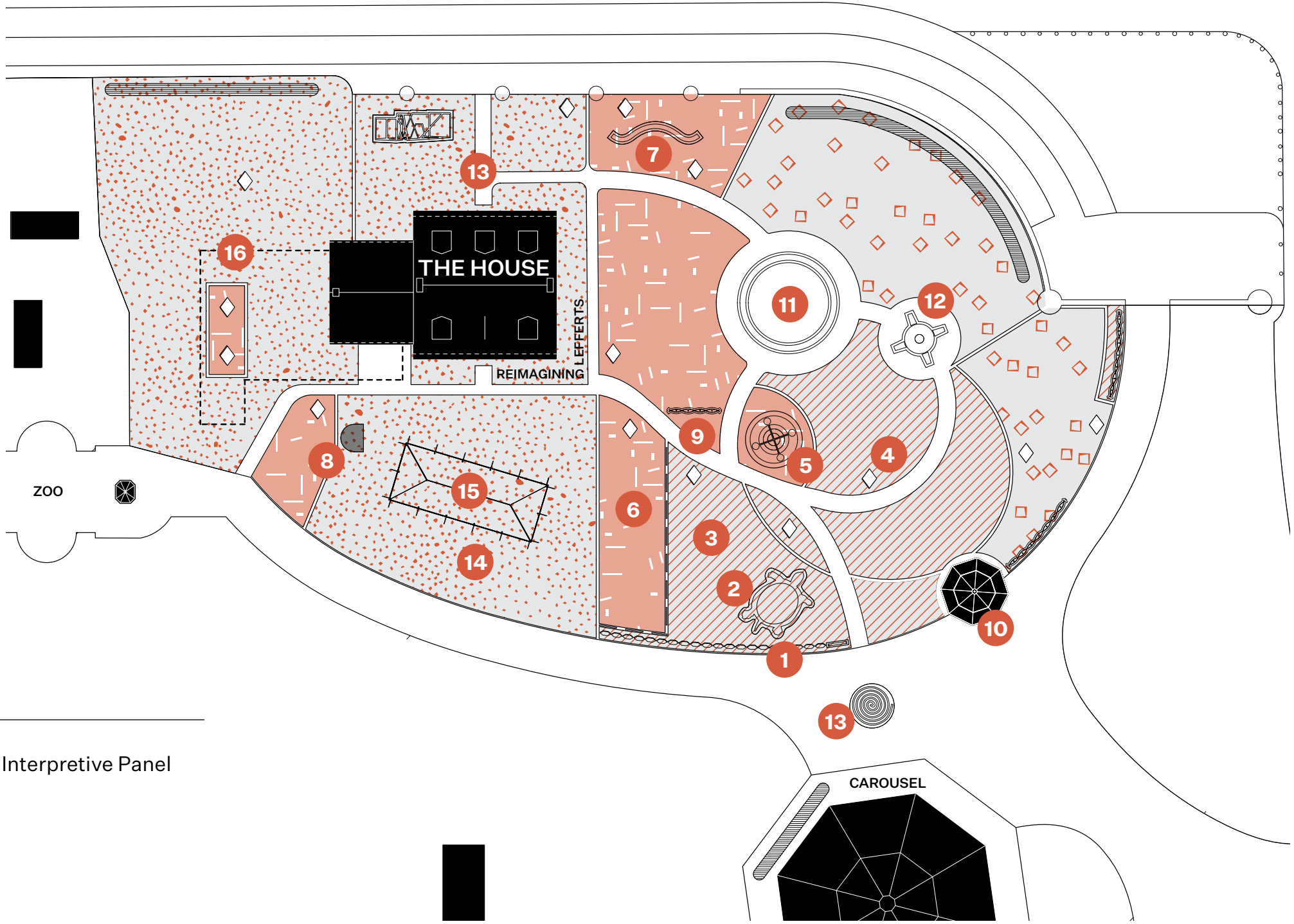
 Lenape Today

 Enslavement & Resilience

 Interpretive Panel

 Native Landscapes

 Programming & Events





# EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW & SEQUENCE




- The primary focus of Lefferts interpretation and exhibits is outside. This is because more visitors engage with the grounds than enter the museum because they only intend to walk by, come at off hours, have bulky strollers or are with active children.
- The exhibit rooms inside the house will host rotating community-curated exhibits. The museum will also offer these rooms to community groups and cultural organizations with allied missions to use for meetings, gatherings and special events.
- Resonant cultural programming curated by museum staff in partnership with other organizations will transform the historic house into a descendant culture venue and incubator.
- Interpretation will not be static, but continually updated in conversation and partnership with descendant community leaders and organizations. These ongoing partnerships will build deeper trust and accountability over time.

Songs of Resistance and Joy! with Shawne' Lee, July 30, 2023.





# EVENTS CALENDAR

MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
THREE SISTERS PLANTING EVENT	VOTER REGISTRATION EVENT	PERCUSSION WORKSHOP	WEST INDIAN EMANCIPATION DAY	J'OUVERT & WEST INDIAN AMERICAN DAY PARADE	LENAPE POW WOW	ALL SOULS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE	KWANZAA
WATERMELON PLANTING EVENT	SHEKERE WORKSHOP	BLACK INDEPENDENCE DAY	BASKET WEAVING WORKSHOP	KENTE CLOTH WORKSHOP	GOSPEL CHOIR	DRUM GROUP PERFORMANCE	JANUARY
ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE EXHIBIT OPENING	UHURU SEASON EXHIBIT OPENING	BLACK HISTORY OF ICE CREAM	FRITTER FESTIVAL	VOTER REGISTRATION EVENT	BEADING WORKSHOP	QUILTING WORKSHOP	DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
ADINKRA STAMP WORKSHOP	JUNETEENTH	NATURAL HAIRCARE WORKSHOP	LENAPE DICE	RECLAIMING WATERMELON PICNIC	INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY	SPOKEN WORD EVENT	FEBRUARY
HAITIAN FLAG DAY	CELEBRATING BLACK QUEER ANCESTORS	WORLD STEELPAN DAY	DEEP HISTORY OF CORNROWS & CANEROWS	BARBERING ON THE PORCH	TREE SISTERS SOUP COOKING DEMONSTRATION	THANKSGIVING	FREDERICK DOUGLAS DAY
PINKSTER AFRICAN FESTIVAL	RHYTHM SECTION WORKSHOP	TAP DANCE PROGRAM	STICK FIGHTER DEMONSTRATION	FOLK GAMES IN THE YARD	FIBER ARTS WORKSHOP	INDIGENOUS ART FAIR	REMEMBERING CORLEARS HOOK
MEMORIAL DAY	CHOOR IN THE YARD	INDIGO WORKSHOP	DJ ON THE PORCH	DEEP HISTORY OF CHICKEN & WAFFLES	AFRICAN DIASPORA HARVEST FESTIVAL	SHIRLEY CHISHOLM DAY	MARCH
DJ ON THE PORCH	PEPPERPOT COOKING DEMONSTRATION	DOMINOES	MASQUERADE WORKSHOP	DJ ON THE PORCH	REMEMBERING STONO		WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
HAIR BRAIDING WORKSHOP	HEADWRAP WORKSHOP	RECLAIMING WATERMELON PICNIC	RECLAIMING WATERMELON PICNIC	SPOKEN WORD EVENT			HARRIET TUBMAN DAY
OWARE TOURNAMENT	DJ ON THE PORCH	BANJO PROGRAM					REMEMBERING 1741
KING CORN DEMONSTRATION		REMEMBERING 1706					IDA B. WELLS DAY
							APRIL
							REMEMBERING 1712
 PLANTING MONTH	 TENDING MONTHS	 HARVEST MONTHS					

# OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

- Outdoor exhibits and programs will immediately signal Lenape and African presence at the site. This will help attract and welcome descendant community visitors and give all a better understanding of the three foundational peoples (Lenape, African, and European) who shaped this land.
- Outdoor exhibits and programs will be accessible and inclusive through their brevity and clarity. The experience will be scaled so visitors can gain something from a short walk-through, but also be encouraged to linger and learn more or just enjoy.
- Outdoor exhibits and programs will inspire pride and empowerment among descendant visitors, which will also inspire and empower others as well. While the trauma and brutality of dispossession and enslavement will not be downplayed, they will serve as the context rather than the focus for stories of resistance and resilience.

Banjo Strums a New York Song with Ayodele Maakheru, October 1, 2023.





## REIMAGINE LEFFERTS PUBLIC ART YARD

Monumental rotating public art displays on the Flatbush Avenue-facing side of the museum announce something new, exciting and relevant is happening at this historic house.

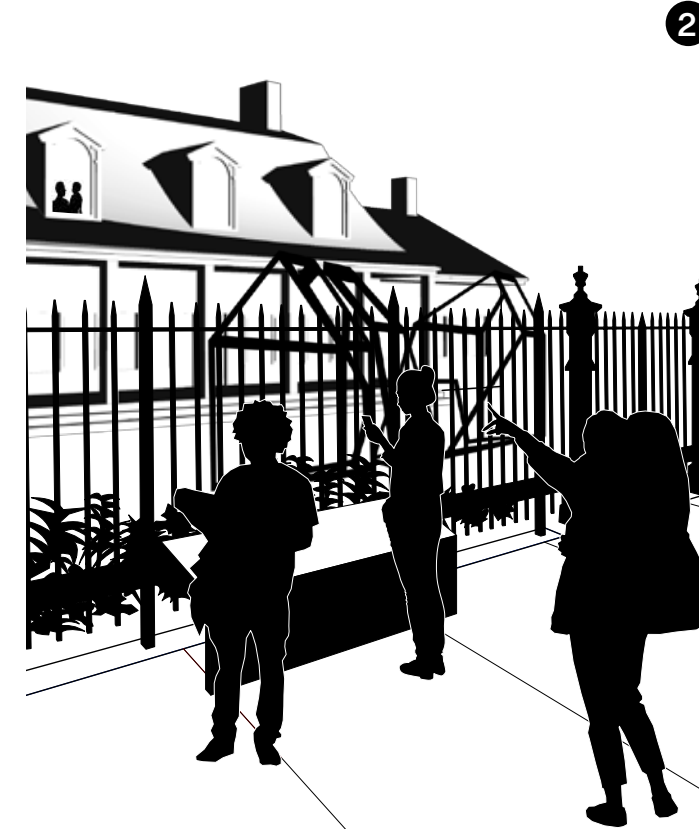
- Contemporary aesthetics recontextualize the 1783 building.
- Art should be simple and bold to be legible to pedestrians and to catch the attention of passengers in vehicles.

## REIMAGINE LEFFERTS

### FLATBUSH SIGNAGE

Clear signage along the Flatbush Avenue fence will help passersby understand the Lefferts mission and why they should enter the park to learn and experience more.

- Descriptive tactile panel should offer site overview near closed gate.
- Large scale signage encourages visitation.

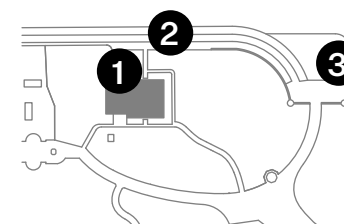


## REIMAGINE LEFFERTS

### WAYFINDING

The museum's location in a public park offers many advantages, but can also be confusing. A large sign that is visible from Willink Plaza that explains what the house is will help considerably.

- Clear signage welcomes visitors who might be wary or unsure that the museum is for them.
- Sign should clarify that museum exhibits and programs are free.



REIMAGINE LEFFERTS  
**TOLLBOOTH RECLAIMED**

Lenape built Flatbush Avenue in ancient times. In the 1800s, the Lefferts family charged a toll for using a road that was always free. Rededicating this structure to rotating descendant art displays shows historical awareness and reparative intention.

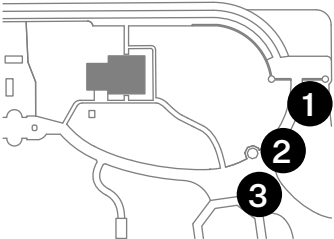
- Welcomes descendant visitors with Indigenous and African aesthetics.
- Signals something new and exciting is happening at the museum.



LENAPE TODAY  
**LARGE SCALE STATEMENTS**

Monumental works announce new goals. This will place statements important to descendant communities in conversation with the recognizably European colonial structure.

- Disrupts typical historic house approach.
- Offers an accurate and inclusive interpretive approach with literal words.



LENAPE TODAY  
**LENAPE NATION PANELS AND NATIVE GARDEN**

Panels illustrating the Lenape nations of today as thriving modern peoples still connected to their homelands should line the entrance to the museum from Flatbush Avenue. In addition, a Native Garden suggestive of the historic woodlands landscape before the creation of Prospect Park can bring visitors back in time.

- New Lenape interpretive elements across the path from the existing Juneteenth Way benches welcomes both descendant populations.



LEFFERTS SITE ENTRY

# HEALING HERB GARDENS

Native and other resonant medicinal healing herbs will be strategically planted throughout the site. This will signal to visitors that healing is an important interpretive goal. Acknowledging history helps heal the spirit, mind and body.

- Lenape and Africans in Brooklyn often planted healing herbs in secret for their own use and to sell.
- Opportunity for visitors to learn inspiring history as well as simple natural remedies.

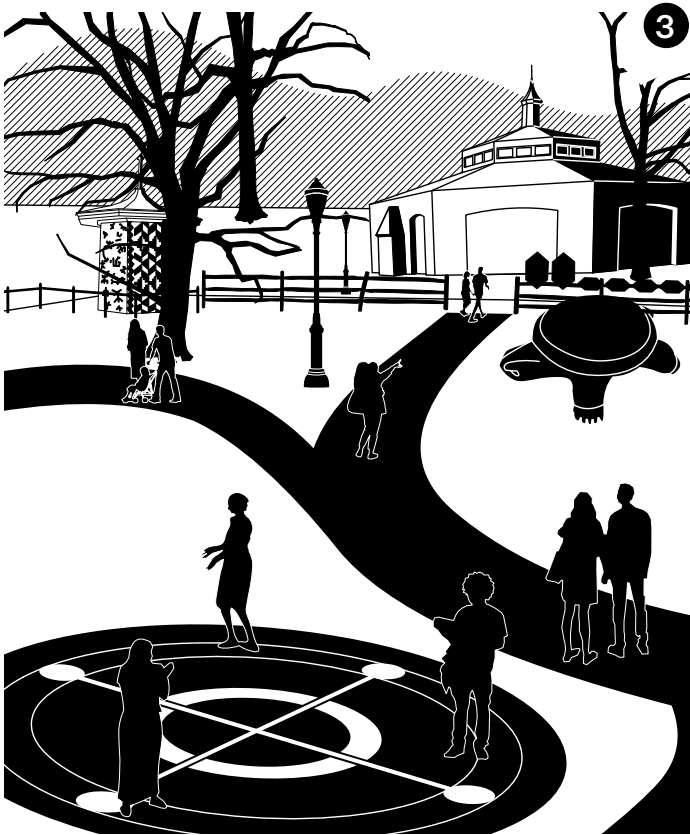


LEFFERTS SITE ENTRY

# DIKENGA COSMOGRAM

Our story also begins in Africa. Ancient wisdom gave the ancestors the strength to endure, resist and ultimately thrive. Africans brought their scientific knowledge, wisdom and skills to the new lands they were forced to come to and work.

- Many of the Africans forced to live and labor in New York in the colonial period were stolen from the Kongo region of West Central Africa.
- A large gesture is welcoming, intriguing and fun to explore.

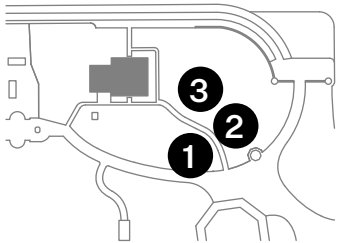


LENAPE TODAY

# LENAPE CREATION SCULPTURE

The world began when the turtle raised his back. The humble muskrat played his part too. Everything starts and ends with creation.

- Beginning with the Lenape creation sculpture makes a powerful statement of purpose.
- Such a large object is welcoming, intriguing, and fun to explore.

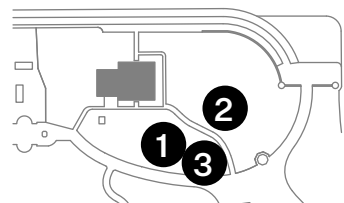




## LENAPE TODAY RESTORATIVE CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Descendant cultural programming reclaims the space. The museum should support programming that recognizes the value and importance of the people and cultures that European settlers like the Lefferts sought to suppress and exploit.

- Accessible intentional performances are a form of healing.



## REIMAGINE LEFFERTS ORIENTATION WALL

After learning about Lenape and African origins, visitors learn what the House is and why it is in the park before they actually enter the building.

- Most visitors remain outside due to logistics, so information about the house should be available to them.
- Large simple displays allow for dynamic interpretive approaches.



## LENAPE TODAY THREE SISTERS GARDEN

The Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash—feed the world. They represent Indigenous scientific wisdom because each crop supports the growth of the other without the aid of chemical fertilizers and the resulting harvest constitutes a balanced diet.

- Visitors not only learn about different forms of agriculture but get to practice it as well.
- Garden symbolizes Lenape civilization before European invasion, but is also relevant to environmental issues today.





FREEDOM SEEKING

# COMMISSIONED STORYTELLING OBJECTS

To create more interpretive opportunities beyond the house itself, descendant artists can create sculptures that anchor specific resonant stories across the site.

- Tactile and weighty objects can elegantly stand in as focal points for historical figures without photographs or portraits.



ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE

# FREEDOM SEEKER WALL

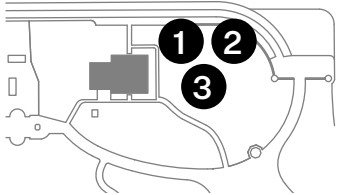
Visitors face away from the house as they engage human-scale biographical profiles of Africans who endured enslavement at the house and what they accomplished after they left.

- Large colorful images and text draw in visitors from both the street and park.
- Wall serves as a venue for important stories and blocks traffic noise from Flatbush Avenue.



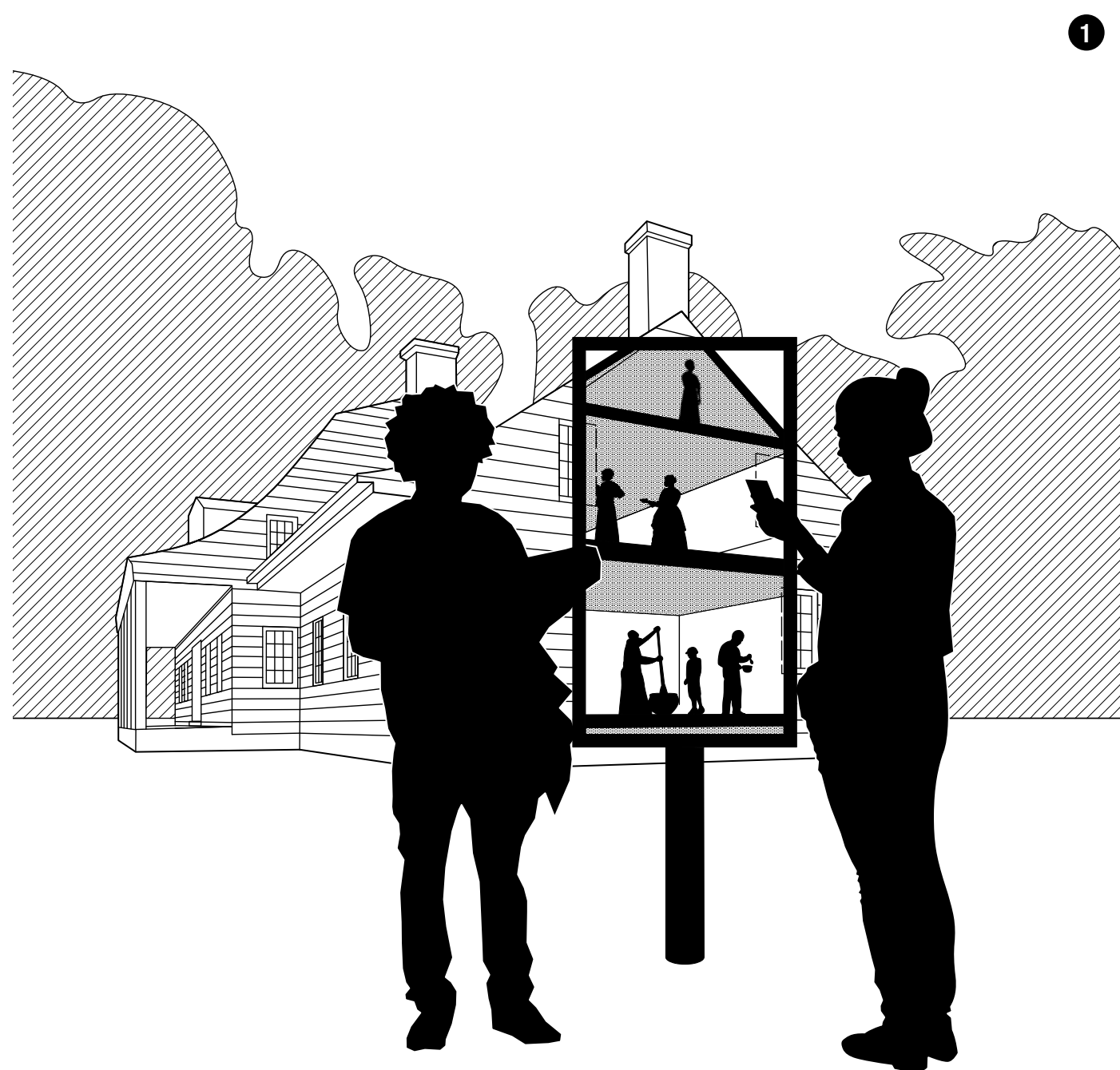
FREEDOM SEEKING

# NAMES OF THE ENSLAVED



25 names have been recovered of Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family at this house between its construction in 1783 and the abolition of slavery in New York in 1827. A simple list of these names serves as a powerful memorial. The placement of this memorial can encourage visitors to reflect not only on how and where these names were held in bondage, but also where they went and what they did outside of and after slavery.





## ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE WHAT HAPPENED HERE

The brutality of dispossession and slavery will be explored after Lenape and African origins and resilience are celebrated. Poignant but not traumatic graphics intentionally placed to allow for intentional viewing and reflection will give visitors a way to imagine what happened here.

- Exterior “x-ray” vision panels will allow visitors to see what life in the house was like.

## ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE

### RECLAIMING WATERMELON GARDEN

Africans forced to work in Brooklyn brought watermelons with them in the 17th century. They strategically planted this incredible fruit alongside the fields they had to work to provide needed hydration and nutrition in a hostile land. White supremacists sought to denigrate this proud history. The museum seeks to help Black Brooklynites reclaim it.

- This agricultural feature offers a powerful history lesson and practical tool to teach visitors useful urban farming techniques.

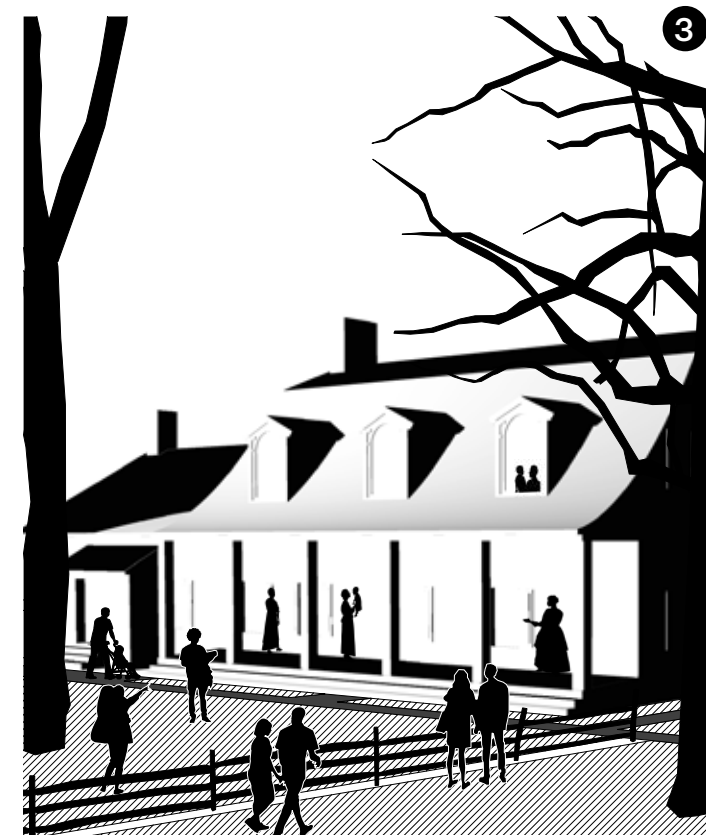
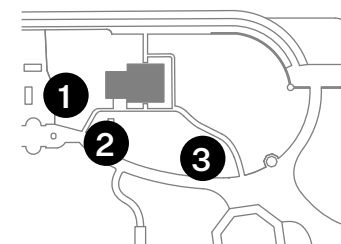


## ENSLAVEMENT & RESILIENCE

### PEOPLING THE HOUSE

Simple human-scale displays can powerfully communicate new research into the 25 or more African individuals enslaved at Lefferts.

- Displays cannot and should not recreate the past, but instead ask visitors to use their imaginations to connect with inspiring stories of resistance and resilience.

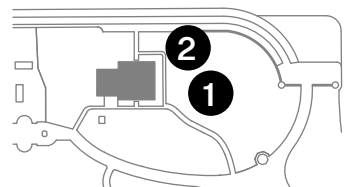




REIMAGINE LEFFERTS  
**SKY TERRACE**

After exploring the site and learning the history, visitors are encouraged to sit down and look up to the sky to reflect, think about their own ancestors and connect with something bigger than themselves.

- Visitors deserve aftercare and processing space when facing difficult content.
- Sky Terrace harnesses existing clearing in the tree grove.
- Visible yet removed from the street, it attracts visitors while also offering a peaceful setting.



REIMAGINE LEFFERTS  
**COMMUNITY  
EVENTS**

The Yard can support community events that celebrate contemporary descendant cultures transforming a site of oppression into an incubator of joy. Descendants can reclaim a space their ancestors weren't allowed to enjoy.

- The porch makes for a great stage and the house is a resonant historical backdrop.





LENAPE TODAY

# LENAPE NATION PANELS

Panels curated by all the different Lenape Nations about their lives today encircle the site. This will force visitors to see the Lenape today before they venture into the past. This will also help visually reinforce the lesson that contrary to popular misinformation, the Lenape are still here.

- The Lenape are still here. They are thriving modern peoples.

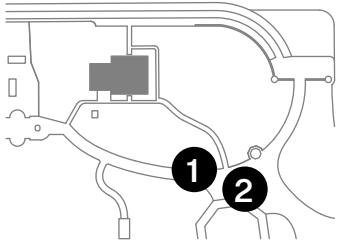


LENAPE TODAY

# ENTRY MARKER

A large-scale, enticing and resonant symbol marks the entrance to the museum. This guides visitors to navigate the site in the intended order, minimizes confusion and maximizes visitors feeling welcome.

- Symbol also serves as further counterbalance to classic European farmhouse, announcing the new and more inclusive interpretive approach.



# INTERIOR OPPORTUNITIES

- First-floor exhibit rooms will host community-curated exhibits and will be offered to allied community groups for meetings, gatherings and special events. Period rooms are not well suited to interpreting enslavement, which would be further complicated by 19th-century renovations and the limitations of the museum collection.
- The kitchen wing and attic should be studied to see how best to restore, interpret and program. This was the space the 25 Africans enslaved by the Lefferts used most and may have lived in. With further research, it could serve as a powerful teaching tool if left empty or used as a period room.
- Second-floor exhibit rooms will serve as administrative space to allow for parts of the kitchen wing to remain empty until additional offices can be built nearby. Weight capacity limits and limited fire egress make the second floor less useful as exhibit space.





REIMAGINE LEFFERTS  
**COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS**

Lefferts can serve as an important venue for descendant and local community organizations aligned with the museum’s mission. Offering up the space to community partners is a significant way the museum can support its target audiences in genuine collaboration.

- It is difficult to find meeting space in neighboring communities.
- Lenape deserve a venue in their homelands.
- Gentrification has displaced many Black venues.

COMMUNITY CURATED  
**GATHERINGS**

The Lefferts family entertained Flatbush elites in the house for 150 years. The museum can host social events for groups seeking to preserve and advance descendent cultures and dismantle oppressive systems.



COMMUNITY CURATED  
**MEETINGS**

Descendant and local community groups are starved for meeting space, which they need to preserve their histories and cultures in Flatbush and beyond. Supporting such efforts with free space to discuss the issues facing our neighborhood, city and world builds the relationships and trust we need going forward.



REIMAGINE LEFFERTS

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

The museum as a good neighbor who welcomes others into their home. Hosting community events will help expand audiences and build the ongoing relationships needed to keep the museum relevant and serving its communities. Through such programming Lefferts can help cultivate the next generation of Flatbush and Brooklyn history leaders.

The museum can add a valuable vibe and sense of legitimacy to emerging cultural organizations.



REIMAGINE LEFFERTS

## COMMUNITY EXHIBITS

Many descendent and local community groups have important stories to tell, but not always a means for telling them. The museum should be a platform for these stories through inexpensive exhibit templates that partners can easily use to say what they need to say.

- The museum serves as an incubator to help descendant and local communities learn how to communicate their stories effectively.



COMMUNITY CURATED

## CHANGING DISPLAYS

Interior community partner-curated exhibits will be simple but striking. Leaning into impermanence will maintain resonance, accessibility, openness, as well as keep projects affordable.



# DESIGN APPROACH

Accessibility, openness, and practicality are hallmark themes of our approach to the interior spaces.

## FLEXIBLE INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS

Interior display systems will be flexible, functional and minimal, preserving and respecting the historic nature of the rooms.

WALL HANGING SYSTEMS



FLEXIBLE DISPLAY STRUCTURES



## PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS & CONFIGURATIONS

Ground level spaces will be treated as a blank canvas encouraging a rotating series of community partner-curated installations.



FLEXIBLE CONFIGURATIONS

## MATERIALS APPROACH

Emphasis will be on materials’ durability and outdoor performance. Cut-out coated metals to show silhouettes of historic characters, bronze for object sculptures. Stone tiles may be used to describe plants.

SILHOUETTE CHARACTER CUT-OUT SIGNS



STONE TILES REVEALING PLANTS



# GRAPHIC APPROACH

The graphic design will use large-scale silhouetted imagery of people and flora to bring the story of Lefferts House and its surroundings to life. Paired with durable materials, this imagery and any accompanying text will follow the Prospect Park Alliance (PPA)’s guidelines for typography and color.

## FONT

Graphic exhibition signs and wayfinding will be using Founders Grotesk and Neue Haas Grotesk Display to follow PPA Guidelines.

FOUNDERS GROTESK  
TITLES

ABCDEFGHI  
abcdefghijkl  
lmnopqrstu  
vwxyz 0123  
456789

NEUE HAAS GROTESK  
BODY COPY

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer at leo neque. Duis vestibulum odio est, non ornare justo pulvinar vel. Cras commodo posuere laoreet. Fusce convallis, nulla vitae volutpat venenatis, magna felis commodo massa, eget dapibus metus.

GREEN  
3435

WHITE

BLACK  
431

ORANGE  
375 40%

ORANGE  
151 50%

YELLOW  
109 70%

## COLORS

Colors will be picked from the PPA identity guidelines with approved pairings to be specifically used within the graphic hierarchy.

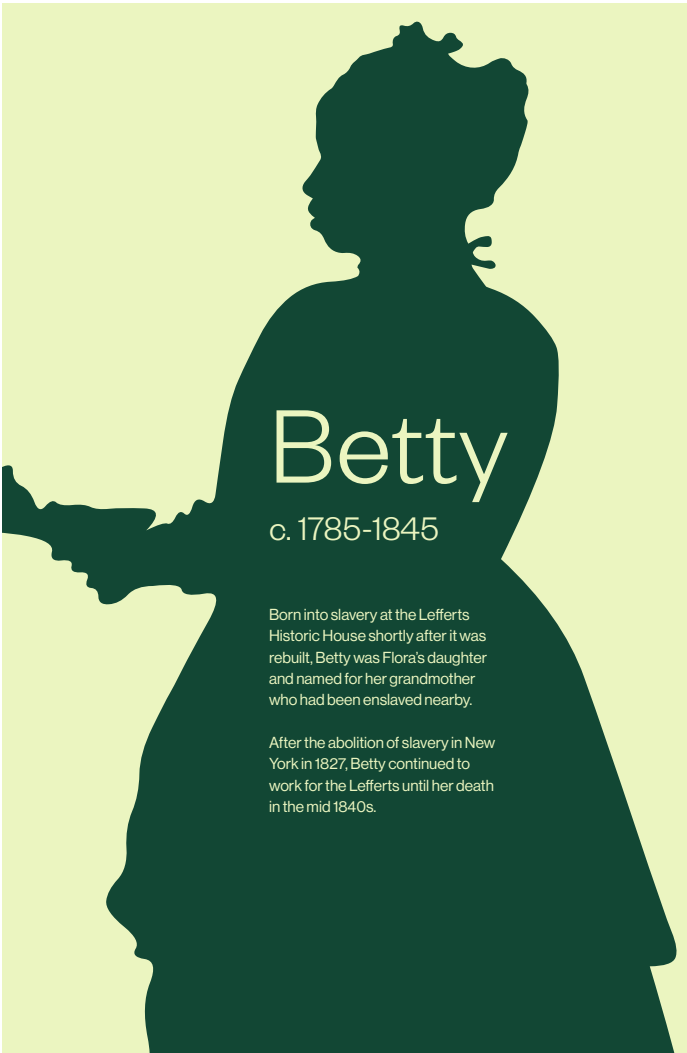
PAIRING 1

PAIRING 2

PAIRING 3

## IMAGES & ILLUSTRATIONS

Image and illustration-heavy graphics with an emphasis on silhouetted illustrations. They will bring to life characters connected to the history of Lefferts House, as well as flora found in the gardens.





We must ReImagine Lefferts for and with descendent communities, especially those closest to us. This will ensure that the museum compliments existing community efforts, goals, and needs and is welcoming to visitors most closely connected to this living history.

**At least 25 people enslaved  
at Lefferts House, 1776 - 1827**

**Anna, Ben, Betty, Bram,  
Caesar, Cato, Cato, Dick, Dyna,  
Flora, Grace, Harry, Isabella,  
Isaac, Issack, Jack, Jenny,  
Mary, Mercy, Nan, Nero,  
Samuel, Susan, Tom, Yaft**

