Request For Proposals
Gunston Hall National Historic Landmark Update
September 11, 2023

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking the services of a Principal Investigator (PI) or Principal Investigator(s) through a cooperative agreement with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Inc. (ASALH) to update the National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination form for Gunston Hall in Fairfax County, Virginia. Gunston Hall was designated a NHL in 1960 (NRIS# 66000832), according to requirements specified in this Request For Proposals (RFP). It should be noted that while the property was designated a NHL in 1960, a nomination form was not prepared until 1978. The 1978 form is what will be updated. Pursuant to this RFP, the contract will be administered by ASALH, and the work prepared for and completed in coordination with the managers of Gunston Hall Historic Site and the NPS National Historic Landmarks Program.

Interested parties should submit a proposal in response to this RFP to ASALH no later than 5:00 pm EDT on October 31, 2023. Electronic copies may be directed to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at nps@asalh.org.

Project Background
This project will compile the best available sound science and scholarship and use it to update the National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination form for the Gunston Hall National Historic Site which was designated a NHL in 1960. This update will expand our understanding of the Revolutionary period and underrepresented groups as well as help us to better preserve and interpret our nation’s most significant places. Because NHL standards and requirements have changed since the original designation, the nomination form lacks many elements that are now required. These elements better define what needs to be protected and preserved and why.

Required Principal Investigator Qualifications
The selected consultant should be a qualified historian or architectural historian with demonstrated experience showing that they are capable of successfully preparing a fully complete and scholarly NHL nomination update for Gunston Hall, for presentation to the National Historic Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board.

The consultant, at a minimum, shall meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standard for the History or Architectural History disciplines (see below) and the additional qualifications listed below:

Historian
The minimum professional qualifications in history are a graduate degree in history or closely related field; or a bachelor's degree in history or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.

OR

**Architectural Historian**

The minimum professional qualifications in architectural history are a graduate degree in architectural history, art history, historic preservation, or closely related field, with coursework in American architectural history, or a bachelor's degree in architectural history, art history, historic preservation or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, or teaching in American architectural history or restoration architecture with an academic institution, historical organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of American architectural history.

AND

**Additional Qualifications**

The consultant must demonstrate experience evaluating and nominating historic properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or for designation as National Historic Landmarks. Experience evaluating and nominating nationally significant properties and demonstrated knowledge of the NHL Program and nomination process is preferred. Knowledge and experience in African American history and in the history of the American Revolution and the Constitution is highly desired.

If the consultant comprises a consulting firm or team, then a Principal Investigator (PI) must be designated for the project. The PI must meet the minimum qualification requirements specified above and must agree to be principally responsible for all work conducted by other personnel for the project. The individual selected as the Principal Investigator may not change during the project without prior written approval of ASALH and the NPS.

**Scope of Work**

The NPS is interested in updating the history and analysis included in the Gunston Hall NHL nomination to reflect a more expansive history that acknowledges the complexities of the period and the people involved. This includes adding information about the centrality of the institution of slavery in Mason’s life and accomplishments, about the people that Mason enslaved, acknowledgment of women’s roles and accomplishments, and a discussion of the complexities and contradictions of Mason and his ideas that inspired the Declaration of Independence.

---

**ASALH MISSION**

To promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community
New themes or areas of significance to be explored in the revised NHL nomination might include:

- **Slavery**: Both the experiences and contributions of the enslaved and discussion of the paradox of Mason's professed opposition to slavery while enslaving hundreds of people
- **Labor**: elaborate on indentured servitude and how labor issues influenced the values of the period
- **Political implications**: what implications did George Mason’s writings/actions have for marginalized groups (indigenous populations, the enslaved)
- **Architecture**: include analysis of how different people, from owners to domestic laborers, occupied the spaces of the home and landscape

In partnership with the owners and managers of Gunston Hall, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Gunston Hall Board of Regents, the PI will direct new research and preparation of updated physical and historical documentation of the property using research and scholarship produced since the initial designation in 1960. An updated nomination form will be prepared following NHL Program guidelines.

The primary product will be a complete revised and updated NHL nomination package for Gunston Hall which will be submitted for review and designation through the NHL designation process. Please see the [NHL Program page](#) for detailed information on the NHL nomination process and documentation. In order to complete the package, the following work will need to be completed:

- on-site inspection of the property so that a detailed description can be prepared and to identify contributing and non-contributing features;
- review of past archeological work,
- analysis of the boundary and updated GIS-based mapping showing the boundary and the features that contribute and do not contribute to the site's national significance;
- expanded historical background and context that covers Mason, his family, and those who lived and worked at the site to include a discussion and perspectives of underrepresented groups such as enslaved African Americans and women at the site along with contextual information about women and African Americans during the American Revolution era;
- discussion and description of the landscape and its features, noting which are historic features, what has been reconstructed, and what is conjectural;
- explanation of the site's preservation and alterations made since its designation;
- explication of Mason's significance in American history and the national significance of the architecture and design at Gunston Hall; and
- creation of maps and photographs to document current conditions at the property.

The work will include identifying and engaging affiliated groups to ensure multiple perspectives are represented in the document. Gunston Hall is currently working with a consultant to identify descendant communities. The PI will have access to this consultant and others doing historical documentation at the site, along with access to Gunston Hall staff experts.

The NHL nomination package with be completed following instructions in the latest version of [National Register Bulletin: How to Prepare National Historic Landmark Nominations](#) (Revised edition will be release soon). The nomination will document the physical characteristics of the buildings and
their sites through architectural and landscape descriptions and inventories of resources on the property.

The nomination will provide historic context adequate to make clear, convincing, and concise arguments for national significance in one or more area(s) of significance.

Current criteria/areas or significance:

- NHL Criterion 2 [properties associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States: Politics/Government]
- NHL Criterion 4 [properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics or an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for the study of a period, style, or method of construction: Colonial residential architecture (add landscape architecture?)].

The focus of the nominations should be on the argument(s) for national significance, not on creating a complete narrative of the building’s design and construction or ownership/occupation history. The research and evaluation should be adequate to identify events or activities of clear significance to national history and to place them within their appropriate national context by showing how the associated events, persons, or activities were influential within the identified context.

The National Park Service manages the National Historic Landmarks Program which designates nationally important and highly preserved buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. There are just over 2,600 NHLs across the country. Designation is honorary and the NPS does not regulate NHL properties. For more about the program, please see the website and FAQs.

Proposal Submissions

For evaluation purposes, proposals should provide sufficient information to allow ASALH and the NPS to determine the most qualified PI for the project. Those interested in bidding should submit a written proposal that includes the following elements:

- Name of the individual(s) that would work on the project and their proposed area(s) of responsibility.
- A curriculum vitae (for the PI).
- Documentation that the PI candidate meets the qualifications outlined in the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standard for the History or Architectural History disciplines as outlined above.
- Description of specific, relevant education, experience, and qualifications of the Principal Investigator candidate demonstrating knowledge of the processes involved with evaluating and nominating historic properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or for designation as National Historic Landmarks, and experience researching and writing about African American history and the history of the American Revolution and/or the U.S. Constitution.
- Information on projects of a similar nature and of significant work completed by the Principal Investigator candidate in the past five (5) years. Include specific dates and types of services provided, and highlight success in meeting work schedule, project budgets, and product deadlines.
- A list of references (at least three, but not more than five) that may be contacted.
• A short narrative (2 pages or less) that responds to the scope of work as described in this RFP, which demonstrates the Principal Investigator candidate’s proposed approach to the project and capability to accomplish the desired goals.
• A proposed project schedule. For your information, the partner agreement that pertains to this project runs through June 2025. It is our aim to submit the full package to the NHL Committee by January 2025.

All proposals must be received no later than 5:00 pm EST on October 31, 2023. They should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Principal Investigator candidate’s qualifications and capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Proposals may be submitted via email in electronic format (MS Word or PDF format) to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at nps@asalh.org. ASALH will confirm receipt of submissions. However, if there are any issues (e.g., with the attachments working correctly), the Principal Investigator candidate is responsible for resolving these issues with an alternative submission method acceptable to ASALH and NPS.

Selection Criteria

Submittals will be evaluated and ranked based on the following factors, presented in no particular order:
• Qualifications of Principal Investigator candidate.
• Responsiveness of the proposal to the project’s purpose and scope of work.
• Experience evaluating and nominating nationally significant properties.
• Knowledge of the National Register and/or NHL Program and the nomination process.
• Demonstrated capability of meeting project deadlines and successfully completing contracts of this type.
• Past performance and references.
• Proposed project schedule.

Available Funding

The funding available for the principal investigator(s) is $50,000.00. If there are two principal investigators chosen, the amount for each person would be $25,000. There is available funding, in addition to the PI funding, for GIS support, travel, supplies and production of the final NHL nomination.

Terms and Conditions

A. ASALH reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and to waive minor irregularities in any proposal.
B. ASALH reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any Principal Investigator candidate.
C. ASALH and NPS shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Principal Investigator candidates in preparing, submitting or presenting its response to this RFP.
D. All completed nominations and executive summaries must fully comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 accessibility standards (https://www.section508.gov/content/build/create-accessible-documents) for electronic documents.
E. Any and all rights to work produced through his project will be vested in the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, including any copyrights.

ASALH MISSION

To promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community.
The selected Principal Investigator must also comply with all applicable provisions of OMB Circular A-110 A-110 REVISED 11/19/93 As Further Amended 9/30/99. (https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a110/)

Questions

Respondents are invited to submit written questions requesting clarifications or explanations of the information contained in this RFP. Please direct all proposal or contract-related questions to Ms. Kay Phillips, ASALH Project Manager, at nps@asalh.org.