

**Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum Looks Toward Its Future:  
Announces First Comprehensive Master Planning Process**

**CONTACT:**

Karen Jessup  
Organizational Consultant,  
Blithewold Master Plan  
401 751.3376  
karenljessup@cox.net

Tree Callanan  
Dir. of Communications  
401 253.2707  
tcallanan@blithewold.org



Bristol, Rhode Island, May 26, 2010 - On the advice of community leaders and professionals in horticulture, economic sustainability, and management of sites of significant cultural value, the Board of Directors of Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum announces the hiring of an award-winning team of architects, planners, heritage tourism experts, museum professionals, and botanical scientists to help the organization plan its future. From a competitive process, Blithewold has selected the nationally recognized firms of Ann Beha Architects (ABA) of Boston, the Olin Partnership of Philadelphia, Anthony Knerr Associates of New York, and others to prepare Blithewold's first comprehensive master plan. Pamela Hawkes, FAIA, of ABA is Principal-in-Charge.

Blithewold is recognized by the Garden Conservancy as "one of the best preserved estate gardens and one of the most significant collections of trees in New England ... (It) is putting the highest standards of stewardship in place for the next generation."

Underwritten initially by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Blithewold's master plan — a year long effort involving board and staff, volunteers, members of the community, representatives of peer organizations, and selected experts — will consider how to preserve the property's unique assets and atmosphere of serenity, build its profile in the national arena of heritage tourism, and position itself for continued excellence in preserving its impressive collection of 3,000 trees and other important botanical material, its distinctive buildings with family furnishings, and extensive archives detailing the property's history.

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“Blithewold is one of the Northeast’s premier historic sites open to the public. Recent restoration projects have preserved important historic features at the property, and Blithewold is attracting ever more visitors. The property is beautifully maintained by a small, talented staff and very dedicated volunteers, and has expanded its educational programming especially to families, reaching new audiences of diverse ages and interests. Securing the services of such an impressive team of professionals working to create the site’s first ever comprehensive master plan is a boon for this historic property, for the Town of Bristol, and indeed for Rhode Island,” observes Ted Sanderson, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum, a 33 acre historic property in Bristol, Rhode Island, on the shore of Narragansett Bay, was donated in 1976 to a non profit organization by the last member of the family who owned it, with the intent that it be maintained in perpetuity as a public amenity. With grounds open the year ‘round and with four season programming, the site is governed by a 24 member board of directors on a 99 year lease with Preserve Rhode Island. Blithewold’s mission is to preserve New England’s finest garden estate through excellence in horticulture and historic preservation, and by example to teach and inspire others. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Master Plan team members include:

- Ann Beha Architects ([www.annbeha.com](http://www.annbeha.com))
- Shary Page Berg, FASLA
- OLIN, Landscape Architects, ([www.theolinstudio.com](http://www.theolinstudio.com))
- Anthony Knerr & Associates ([www.aknerr.com](http://www.aknerr.com))
- ETM Associates LLC ([etmassociatesllc.com](http://etmassociatesllc.com))
- Altieri Sebor Wieber LLC Consulting Engineers ([www.altieriseborwieber.com](http://www.altieriseborwieber.com))
- Wendy Jessup and Associates, Inc. ([www.collectioncare.com](http://www.collectioncare.com))
- Susan Leidy, Currier Museum of Art, Museum Accreditation Review ([www.currier.org](http://www.currier.org))
- Odeh Engineers, Structural Engineer ([www.odehengineers.com](http://www.odehengineers.com))
- Nitsch Engineering, Civil Engineering ([www.nitscheng.com](http://www.nitscheng.com))
- Davis Langdon, Cost Estimator ([www.davislangdon.com](http://www.davislangdon.com))