

ACCESS DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden

Approved September 9, 2017



Lee-Fendall House
MUSEUM AND GARDEN

INTRODUCTION:

The Lee-Fendall House, located in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, is a showcase of American history. Since its construction in 1785, the house has served as home to thirty-seven members of the Lee family (1785-1903), hundreds of convalescing Union soldiers during the American Civil War (1863-1865), Alexandria's locally prominent Downham family (1903-1937), and one of our nation's most controversial and significant 20th century labor leaders, John L. Lewis (1937-1969).

The Lee-Fendall House was built when, in 1784, General Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, Revolutionary War hero and father of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, sold the lot at the corner of Oronoco Street to his cousin Philip Richard Fendall for £300. The following spring, Fendall began construction of the wood frame house that would, over the course of the next 118 years, serve as home to over thirty-seven members of the Lee family. The history of the house did not come to an end with the departure of the last member of the Lee family in 1903. Robert Downham, a prominent Alexandria haberdasher and liquor purveyor, resided with his family in this house for the next thirty-one years. In 1937, Downham conveyed the house to John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, and one of the most powerful and controversial labor leaders in American history. Lewis lived in this house until his death in 1969. Today, Lee-Fendall opens its doors to visitors from around the world as a historic house museum.

The historic home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for state significance and the Virginia Landmarks Register, and is a documented contributing feature to the National Historic Landmark District of Alexandria, Virginia. The property is now owned and operated by the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation and run as a museum to preserve the architectural and historic value of the house and gardens and to spread knowledge and appreciation for Virginian and American history.

PURPOSE:

Title III of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities by places of "public accommodation," including museums. Historic structures are not exempted from the requirement to provide physical access, unless barriers to access can be shown as not readily achievable – that is, not easily accomplished, not able to be

removed without great difficulty or expense, or not able to be removed without threatening or destroying the historically significant features of the site.

To become compliant with the requirements of the ADA, the staff and Board of Directors of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation have approved the following development schedule for an assessment and implementation plan for the Lee-Fendall House Museum & Garden. The schedule will be updated periodically until all accessibility barriers are removed. The Plan is intended to achieve the following:

- 1) Identify physical obstacles that limit the accessibility of services to individuals with disabilities
- 2) Describe the methods to be used to make the services accessible
- 3) Provide a schedule for making the access modifications
- 4) Identify the staff responsible for implementation of the Transition Plan

DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE:

- 1) Review all applicable local and local codes and federal law to determine accessibility requirements. ***Implementation Date: January 2018***
- 2) Conduct a self-assessment of existing barriers to access, both physical and communications. ***Implementation Date: January 2018***
- 3) Develop internal design standards, specifications, and details for removal of barriers. ***Implementation Date: June 2018***
- 4) Identify staff responsible for Plan implementation. ***Implementation Date: June 2018***
- 5) Approve a schedule and budget for implementing the Access Plan. Develop fundraising strategy and schedule as necessary. ***Implementation Date: June 2018***
- 6) Monitor progress on Plan implementation. Update Plan schedule annually until completion. ***Implementation Date: June 2019***