what new and novel about this South and Historic Plants of the Antebellum James Cothran, who wrote the five historic properties are linked into a cohesive campus-like environment through an attractive pedestrian system with strong historic and educational elements. The properties are not seen as separate from their surrounding neighborhoods. Rather, the neighboring community is acknowledged and celebrated by the use of the term the "Robert Mills Garden District." The "garden district" concept has the potential to stimulate redevelopment and cultural heritage tourism for the area that includes Calhoun Street to the north, Barnwell Street to the east, Hampton Street to the south, and Marion Street to the west.

Another break from tradition is that each historic property will interpret a different segment of 100 years of cultural landscape history. Landscape stories start in the 1820s with the Robert Mills House; continue at Hampton Preston Mansion with the 1840s-1860 experience; unfold at the Woodrow Wilson Family Home for the 1870s-1890; reveal the entrepreneurial experience of urban African-American history at the Mann-Simons Cottage landscape from 1890-1920; and wrap up with the 1920s landscape story at the Seibels House.

Historic Columbia Foundation did not sit back while the hired firm did all the work. The Garden Restoration Steering Committee, staff, and local community all partnered in the planning process. There were focus groups, public charrettes, and consultations with local authorities to pursue the path most beneficial to the Columbia community. Robin Waites, Executive Director, clearly feels that telling the story of the landscape is the responsible thing to do. Still also senses the timing is now right, and she has encountered growing support for the development of the cultural landscape master plan. "The committee has been fun to work with. People are now reinvesting in green spaces," she says. Support arrived quickly from private donors, and two large contributions were given by the Columbia Garden Club ($100,000 in increments of $20,000 for five years); and Palmetto Health Joint Reconstruction, Richland ($35,000 over five years). Additional foundation grants are continually being sought.

Larry Grubbs, Director of Properties and Grounds, has also noticed the trend toward green space revival. "There's been a big shift both here and elsewhere, this emphasis on grounds. Lately I've seen more people come out here and sit under the trees and eat their lunch." Grubbs watches over seven properties, 11 acres of grounds, and eight acres of turf. There are three dedicated grounds employees, two full-time plus one part-time. Just like most green industry work cultures, flexibility prevails at HCF. "Grounds people aren't always grounds people; they know to apply the bait in an X pattern over the entire property, rather than focusing on individual mounds. Nutrient recycling, an essential best management practice for the environmental landscape, is successfully implemented under Grubbs. "Out turf is centipede. We mow twice a week and don't cut off too much of the blade at one time. Clippings are left to return to the soil and 30% of nutrients are returned by leaving the clippings."

Mulch is a must for HCF properties and they by-pass the free loads. "We purchase mulch in bulk quantities. You can get it for free but you don't know what else you're getting, there could be poison ivy in it." They use hardwood mulch at HCF because it lasts longer, "looks fresh" and retains its color longer than pine straw. Pine straw is chosen for areas undergoing change. Grubbs acquired his green skills using perseverance, the Internet, and Richland County Library. "You are only as smart as your local library," he claims.

People and inner city wildlife are
HCF is home to several gardens, which together form a pleasing and well-kept area. The gardens are managed by Jenks Farmer, a local plantsman and gardener extraordinaire. The gardens are maintained to provide a green space for the public, with easy access to the property and the surrounding area.

The gardens are designed with a variety of plants, including native species and those that are rare and unique. The selection of plants is based on their ability to thrive in the local climate and to complement the existing landscape. The gardens are also geared towards providing a space for community events and gatherings.

The gardens are an important source of revenue for HCF, with rentals of grounds and buildings for private and company events being a key source of income. The museum gift shop also contributes to the revenue, as it sells souvenirs and other items related to the history of Columbia.

The gardens are well-maintained and provide a pleasant environment for visitors. The grounds are kept tidy, with trimmed edges and sidewalks, and the activities they encourage are enjoyed by all. The gardens have a positive social and cultural effect on the urban neighborhood, and the residents and visitors of South Carolina clearly understand tourism and quality of life issues for Columbia.