

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park  
Georgia



# Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm Cultural Landscape Report Environmental Assessment

November 2021



Cover Photos by: Quinn Evans

**US Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
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Environmental Assessment**

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Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (the park) is a 2,884-acre unit of the national park system, located in Cobb County, Georgia, approximately 3 miles west of Marietta and 25 miles northwest of Atlanta. The park was established in 1917 to preserve and interpret the sites of the Civil War Battles of Kolb Farm and Kennesaw Mountain, which occurred within the surrounding landscape between June 18 and July 2, 1864, as part of General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign.

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a cultural landscape report with recommended treatments to protect the surviving remnants of the Civil War battlefield and enhance the ability of the landscape to interpret and communicate the role of the signal hill and the field hospital at the Wallis Farm in the Atlanta Campaign. This environmental assessment (EA) evaluates the potential impacts of two alternatives: the no-action alternative and the proposed action (the cultural landscape report treatment recommendations). The no-action alternative would continue the current management of the park in which the project area is not rehabilitated and no public access would be provided beyond the existing parking lot and short trailhead. The proposed action would include rehabilitation of important contributing features to the cultural landscape and adding public access and interpretation of the site. These two alternatives have the potential to result in beneficial and adverse effects on park resources; specifically, the EA evaluates the impact topics of visitor use and experience as well as cultural resources such as cultural landscapes, historic structures, and archeological resources.

This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 United States Code [USC] 4332[2] [C]); the implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508.9), as updated and issued July 12, 2020; the Department of the Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR Part 46); and NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making* (NPS 2011) and the accompanying NEPA Handbook (NPS 2015).

**Note to Reviewers and Respondents:**

This EA will be provided for public and agency review for 30 days from the release date. If you wish to comment, please provide comments on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/kemo> or by mailing to the name and address below. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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# CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND NEED

## INTRODUCTION

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (the park) was established as a unit of the national park system in 1917 to preserve and interpret the sites of the Civil War Battles of Kolb Farm and Kennesaw Mountain, which occurred within the surrounding landscape between June 18 and July 2, 1864, as part of General William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign. The battles involved 100,000 Union troops under the leadership of General Sherman and 63,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston. Although a Confederate tactical victory, the battle resulted in a Federal flanking move that allowed Union forces to continue their progression to Atlanta.

The signal hill and field hospital at the Wallis Farm (project area) contains a portion of the cultural landscape associated with several engagements of the Civil War's Atlanta Campaign. The property consists of three parcels of land: the eastern parcel and two contiguous western parcels. Within the eastern parcel is the Wallis House, which served as the temporary headquarters of Union Major-General Oliver Otis Howard and as a field hospital for both Federal and Confederate soldiers. The Wallis House was owned by Josiah and Julia Wallis, who were active members of the New Salem Church, located east of the Wallis Farm property on Burnt Hickory Road. The Wallis House is one of the only remaining examples of mid-19th century architecture in the area and, once acquired, will be one of two structures within Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park surviving from the Civil War. The western parcels include a hill that provided key terrain for Confederate earthworks and a Civil War signal station; these parcels are referred to as the signal hill.

The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a cultural landscape report with recommended treatments to protect the surviving remnants of the Civil War battlefield and enhance the ability of the landscape to interpret and communicate the role of the signal hill and field hospital at the Wallis Farm in the Atlanta Campaign. This environmental assessment (EA) evaluates two alternatives developed: the no-action alternative and the proposed action (the cultural landscape report treatment recommendations). The no-action alternative would continue the current management under which the project area is not rehabilitated and there is very limited public access to the site and no interpretation. The proposed action would include rehabilitation of important contributing features to the cultural landscape and adding public access and interpretation of the site. These alternatives are described in detail in "Chapter 2: Alternatives."

This EA analyzes the potential impacts these alternatives would have on the natural, historic, and human environment. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 United States Code [USC] 4332[2] [C]); the implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508.9), as updated and issued July 12, 2020; the Department of the Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR Part 46); and NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-Making* (NPS 2011) and the accompanying NEPA Handbook (NPS 2015).

## PROJECT AREA LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The park consists of 2,884 acres located in Cobb County, Georgia, approximately 3 miles west of Marietta and 25 miles northwest of Atlanta (see figure 1 below). The park follows a roughly north-south alignment encompassing Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains. It is surrounded by low-density suburban development characterized by sprawling subdivisions connected to smaller urban centers by an irregular network of roads and highways.

The project area is in the process of being acquired by the National Park Service as an addition to the park to interpret the Union positions during the Battles of Kolb Farm and Kennesaw Mountain. The project area totals approximately 8 acres, composed of three parcels located approximately one half-mile west of the existing park boundary in a single-family residential district of Cobb County (see figure 2 below). Two parcels are contiguous, located on the western side of the project area, and the third parcel is located on the eastern side of the project area, separated from the other two by the contemporary Wallis Farms residential subdivision (see figure 3 below). All three parcels are located on the north side of Burnt Hickory Road.

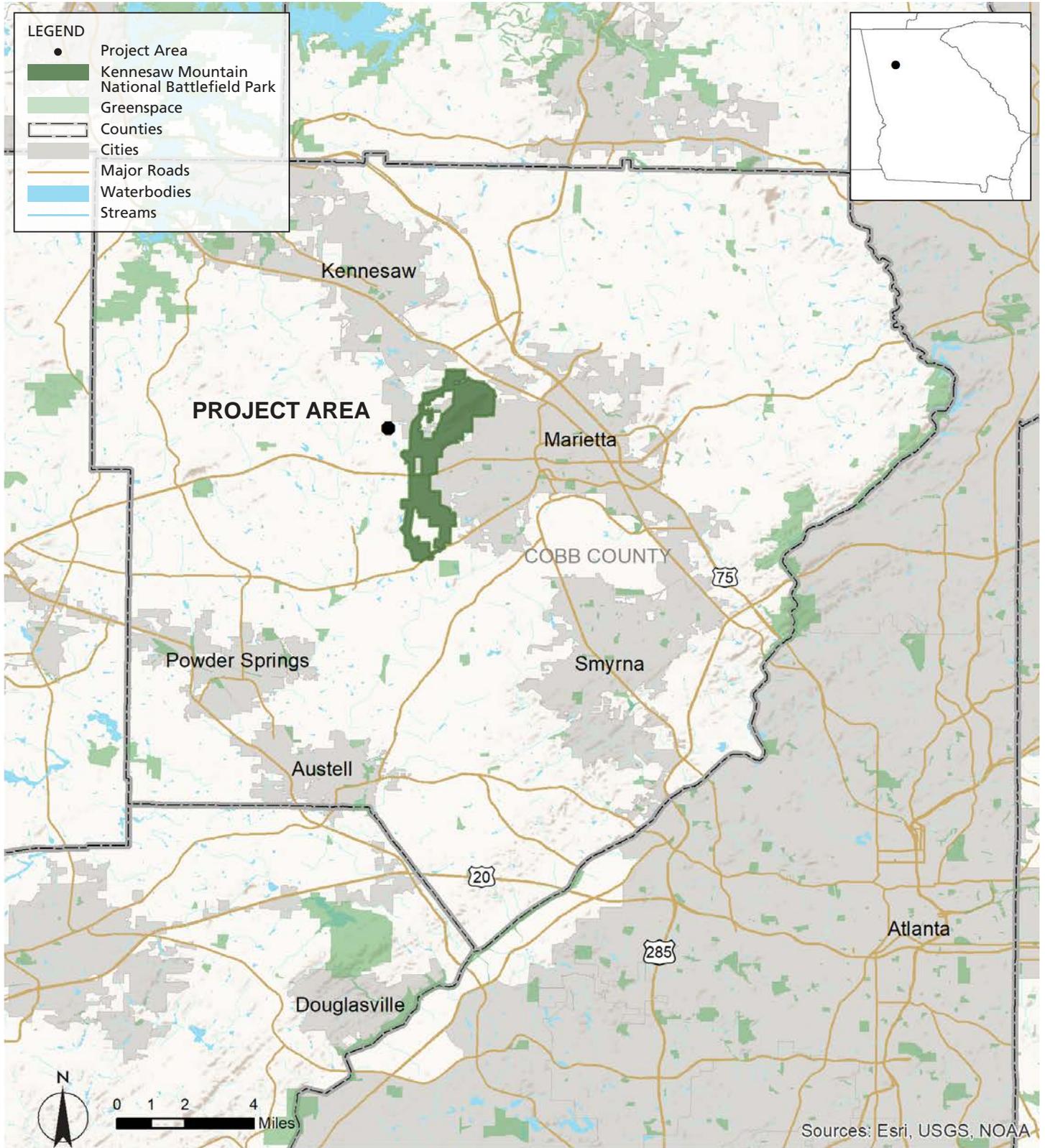
For the purposes of this EA, landscape character areas are used to further define the landscapes within the project area. Landscape character areas are places that contain similar physical characteristics, qualities, attributes, and associated cultural landscape resources. The two landscape character areas are the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area and the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, described below.

The two contiguous parcels on the western side of the project area are collectively referred to as the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. This area is located at the northeast corner of Burnt Hickory Road and Ernest W. Barrett Parkway. Its primary feature is a large hill, referred to as Harriston Hill in some documentation, that was used as a signal station and as key terrain for Confederate Earthworks during June 1864. The smaller of the two parcels is just over 1 acre, located in the southwestern portion of this area at the corner of Burnt Hickory Road and Ernest W. Barrett Parkway. This parcel includes a trailhead parking lot and a 25-foot sign and easement right-of-way along the southern and eastern boundaries. The larger parcel is 5.5 acres in the northern portion of the property and includes Confederate earthworks but is otherwise wooded and undeveloped.

The separate eastern parcel is referred to as the Wallis House Landscape Character Area and is approximately 1.2 acres located approximately 400 feet east of the signal hill area along Burnt Hickory Road. The parcel contains the Wallis House and associated outbuildings, vegetation, small-scale features, and circulation routes.

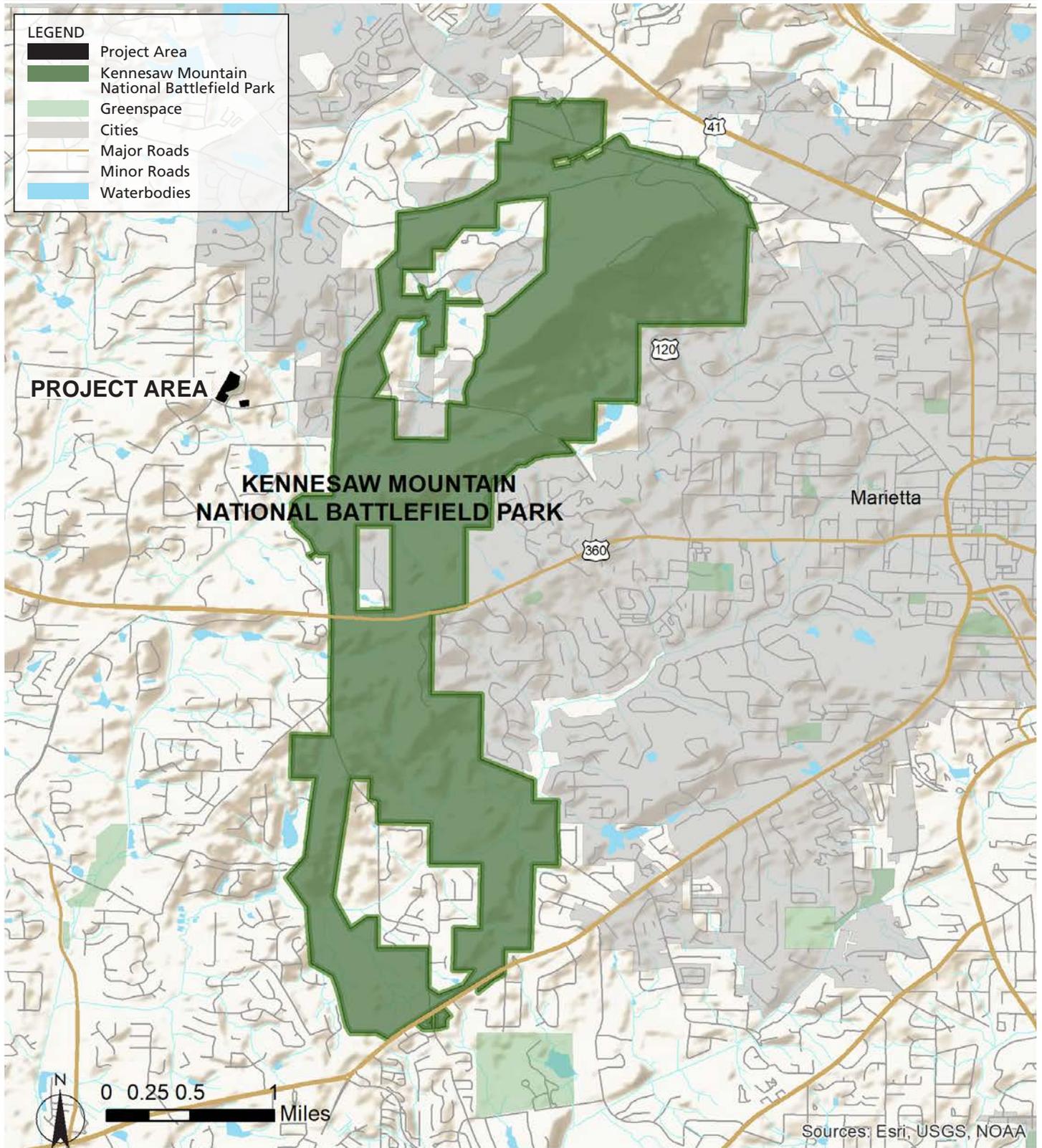


The Wallis House, looking northeast (QE 2021)



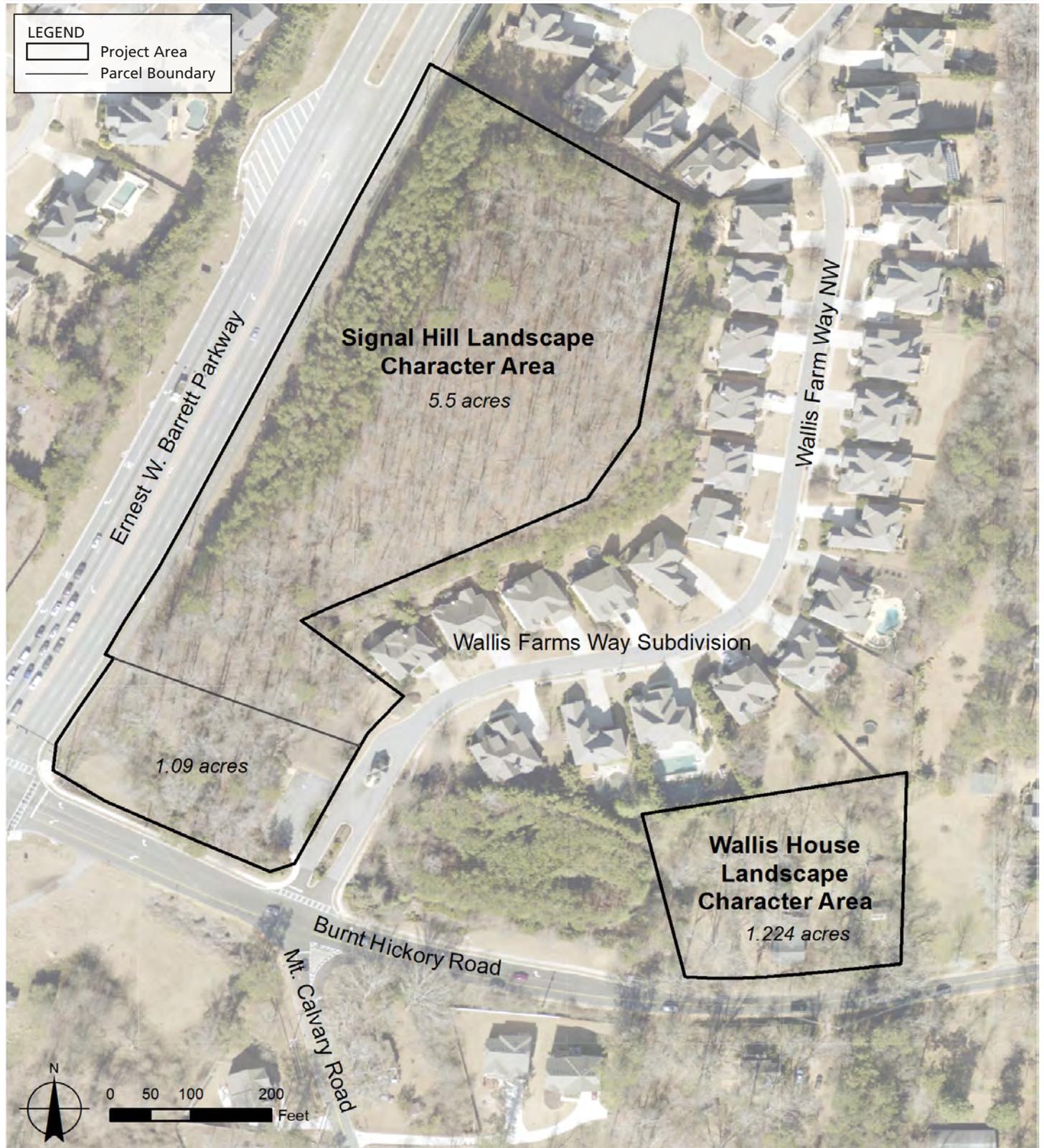
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FIGURE 1  
Project Vicinity



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FIGURE 2  
Project Area Location



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FIGURE 3  
Project Area

## PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of this project is to protect surviving remnants of the Civil War battlefield and enhance the ability of the landscape to interpret and communicate the role of the signal hill and the field hospital at the Wallis Farm in the Atlanta Campaign. Goals for this project include the following:

- Preserve contributing features
- Enhance visitor understanding
- Identify interpretive opportunities
- Provide connections to the rest of the park
- Provide access to site resources
- Enhance site security
- Integrate natural resource concerns into cultural landscape treatment recommendations (consider long-term resilience in light of climate change)
- Selectively remove features from outside the period of significance

This project is needed because the NPS is expected to acquire the parcels that make up the project area, as authorized in Section 2103 of Public Law 116-9 (the Dingell Act). In order for the NPS to provide visitor access and interpretation of the Union perspective at the battlefield park in line with the goals described above, the NPS requires documentation, analysis, and planning for the signal hill and field hospital at the Wallis Farm landscape.

## ISSUES AND IMPACT TOPICS

### Impact Topics Analyzed in this Environmental Assessment

During the planning process, specific issues were identified as critical to this project area. Along with the purpose of and need for the project, these issues and opportunities guided the development of alternatives and contributed to the identification of impact topics. Impact topics are resources within the project area that could be affected, either beneficially or adversely, by the range of alternatives presented in this EA. Impact topics considered in this document were identified based on the issues raised during scoping, site conditions, federal laws, regulations, Executive Orders, NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Director's Orders, and staff knowledge of the park's resources. During the scoping process, impact topics were either retained for further analysis in this EA or dismissed from further consideration. This section provides an overview of the impact topics that were retained for analysis in this EA.

**Visitor Use and Experience.** The Organic Act of 1916 and NPS management policies require the National Park Service to provide opportunities for enjoyment of a park unit's resources and values. At this time, there is very limited visitor access to or use of the site, and the project area is physically disconnected from the contiguous Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park property. The proposed action would provide opportunities for interpretation of the site's role in the Atlanta Campaign as well as its relationship to the rest of the park. Visitor facilities would be provided as part of the new visitor use of the project area, such as wayfinding, accessible pedestrian routes, a trail to the apex of the signal hill, and interpretive signage. Three waysides have been produced for the project area, and the proposed action would identify locations for those waysides. The waysides address the signal hill (titled, "See Something? Say Something!"), the Wallis House (titled, "Homestead, Hospital, Headquarters"), and the landscape

preservation process (titled, “Saving Wallis Farm”). Development of the project area into an interpretive area must balance visitor use with visual and auditory screening between the adjacent residential neighborhood and the project area. As part of creating visitor access to and use of the project area, the NPS plans to transition the parking lot to a fee area consistent with other parking areas within the park. Because of the proposed changes to the visitor experience, this topic is retained for further analysis.

**Cultural Resources.** NEPA, National Historic Preservation Act, the NPS Organic Act, NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Director’s Order #12, and Director’s Order #28: *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* require the consideration of impacts on any cultural resource that might be affected by a proposed federal action. Cultural resources within the project area include cultural landscapes, archeological resources, and historic structures. Historically important views between the signal hill and Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains as well as between the Wallis House and Burnt Hickory Road are currently partially obscured by woody vegetation. Additionally, adjacent modern development is visible from within the project area. The proposed action would include strategies for the stabilization of historic buildings and structures including the Wallis House and the original well, as well as for the protection of the Confederate earthworks on the signal hill. The alternatives in this EA propose changes to and within the vicinity of cultural resources within the project area; therefore, the impact topic of the cultural resources was retained for detailed analysis.

### **Impact Topics Dismissed from Further Analysis**

The following presents an overview of impact topics that were considered for full analysis but were ultimately dismissed from further analysis in this EA. An impact topic was initially considered for but dismissed from further analysis if it was determined that the resource is not present in the project area or because any potential impacts would not be noticeable, would be typically temporary, and would be localized.

**Vegetation.** Vegetation within the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area is dominated by woodland vegetation. Three forest types are present in the area including upland mesic forest, traditional/bottomland forest, and planted pine woodland. Limited lawn and ornamental plantings are also present within the area. Vegetation within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area includes woodland, meadow, ornamental plantings, and scattered individual trees. Some individual trees are identified as hazard trees due to their proximity to buildings, structures, or other historic resources. Changes to vegetation proposed by this project would include maintaining existing woodlands as a sustainable mix of native vegetation, selective removal or pruning of vegetation to reestablish views, adding low height understory vegetation to screen views, removing ornamental plants and hazard trees, and maintaining lawn areas. Vegetation management actions would be undertaken with the goal to improve the resilience of the forest areas, which are likely to experience shifts in composition over the next 50 to 100 years due to climate change. None of the vegetation species that would be removed represent unique vegetation or serve a critical role in the local ecosystem. The addition of vegetation within the landscape would not include invasive species and would be based on recommendations of the cultural landscape report. The proposed changes in vegetation are analyzed under the impact topic of cultural landscape because the issue of concern is how the vegetation removal and new plantings would relate to and possibly reestablish the historic appearance and views. Therefore, the impact topic of vegetation was considered, but dismissed from further analysis.

**Soils and Erosion.** As discussed above, an issue affecting the project area is that erosion occurs on steep slopes throughout the area. Strategies would be implemented to address resilience of site resources in response to anticipated changes in temperature and precipitation, in particular those that exacerbate erosion and stormwater management issues. Erosion would be minimized through design considerations for all proposed improvements to the landscape. Additionally, prior to any removal of woody vegetation, a survey of the area would be conducted to determine areas of slope erosion; actions that may result in additional erosion impacts would be avoided. All ground disturbing activities would adhere to the park’s soil and erosions control plan. New trails would be constructed following the 2019 *Cultural Landscape Treatment Brief for Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield: Trail and Erosion Repair* (NPS 2019). Trails would be sited to sit within the existing slope and would be constructed of porous surfaces. Water bars and drainage ditches would be used on trail portions with steep slopes to control erosion. Native vegetation would be established as part of the vegetation management actions for erosion control and slope stabilization wherever possible. Because erosion would be taken into consideration during the design phase of the project, minimal impacts on soils and erosion within the project area are anticipated. Therefore, the impact topic of soils and erosion was dismissed from further analysis.

**Adjacent Communities.** The project area is in close proximity to modern residential development; therefore, consideration of impacts to these residences was an important part of the planning and alternatives development process. Landscape enhancement to support historic character and visitor access would be balanced with considerations to buffer views and limit impacts to and from the adjacent residential development. At the signal hill, the relatively high elevation of the proposed viewpoint would raise the viewshed above the lower elevation of nearby residential properties. See figure 4 below. If needed, low height vegetation may be added to screen views of adjacent private property. Additionally, development of the parcels into public points of interest is not expected to result in noticeable changes to the local economy or changes in tourism patterns. Therefore, the impact topic of adjacent communities was considered but dismissed from further analysis.

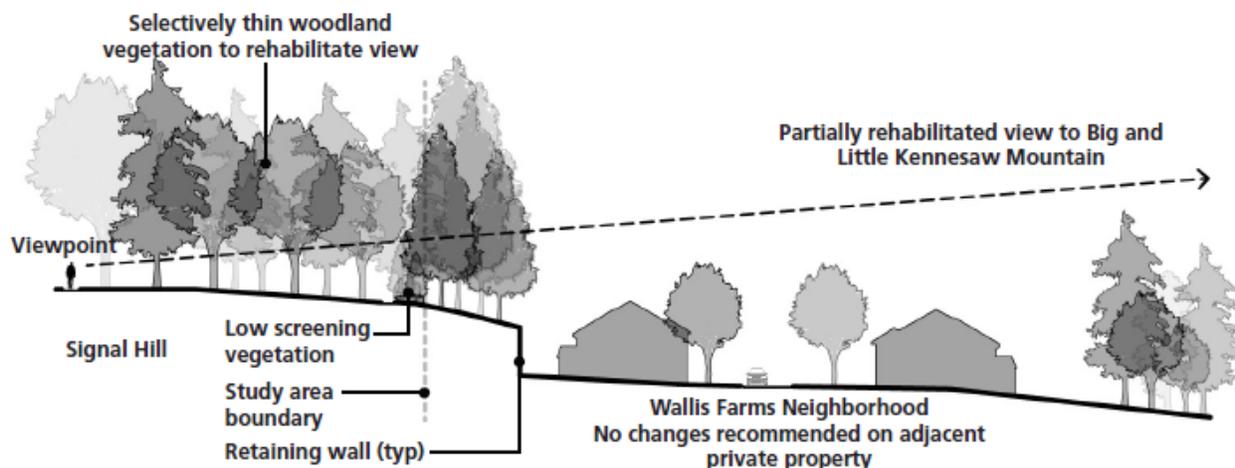


Figure 4. Relative Elevations of the Proposed Viewpoint and Wallis Farm Neighborhood

**Wildlife and Special Status Species.** Title I of NEPA contains a Declaration of National Environmental Policy which requires the federal government to use all practicable means to protect the components and processes of naturally occurring biotic communities, including the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of plants and animals. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 USC 1531 et seq.) requires examination of impacts to all federally-listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species. In addition, the NPS *Management Policies 2006* requires the NPS to examine the impacts on federally-listed, endangered and candidate species, as well as state-listed threatened, endangered, candidate, rare, declining, and sensitive species. The project area is within range of four special status species: the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), Michaux's sumac (*Rhus michauxii*), and white fringeless orchid (*Platanthera integrilabia*). However, surveys for these special status plant species would be conducted prior to any ground disturbance for construction to avoid impacts (or initiate consultation if avoidance is not possible), and tree removal would not occur between June 1 and July 31 to avoid the roosting season for the bat species. The proposed alternatives would not result in substantial modifications to the habitat of wildlife or special status species, and mitigation measures, including time of year restrictions on tree clearing, would be implemented as necessary to protect wildlife and special status species prior to or during implementation of the alternatives. Therefore, this impact topic was dismissed from further consideration.

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## CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES

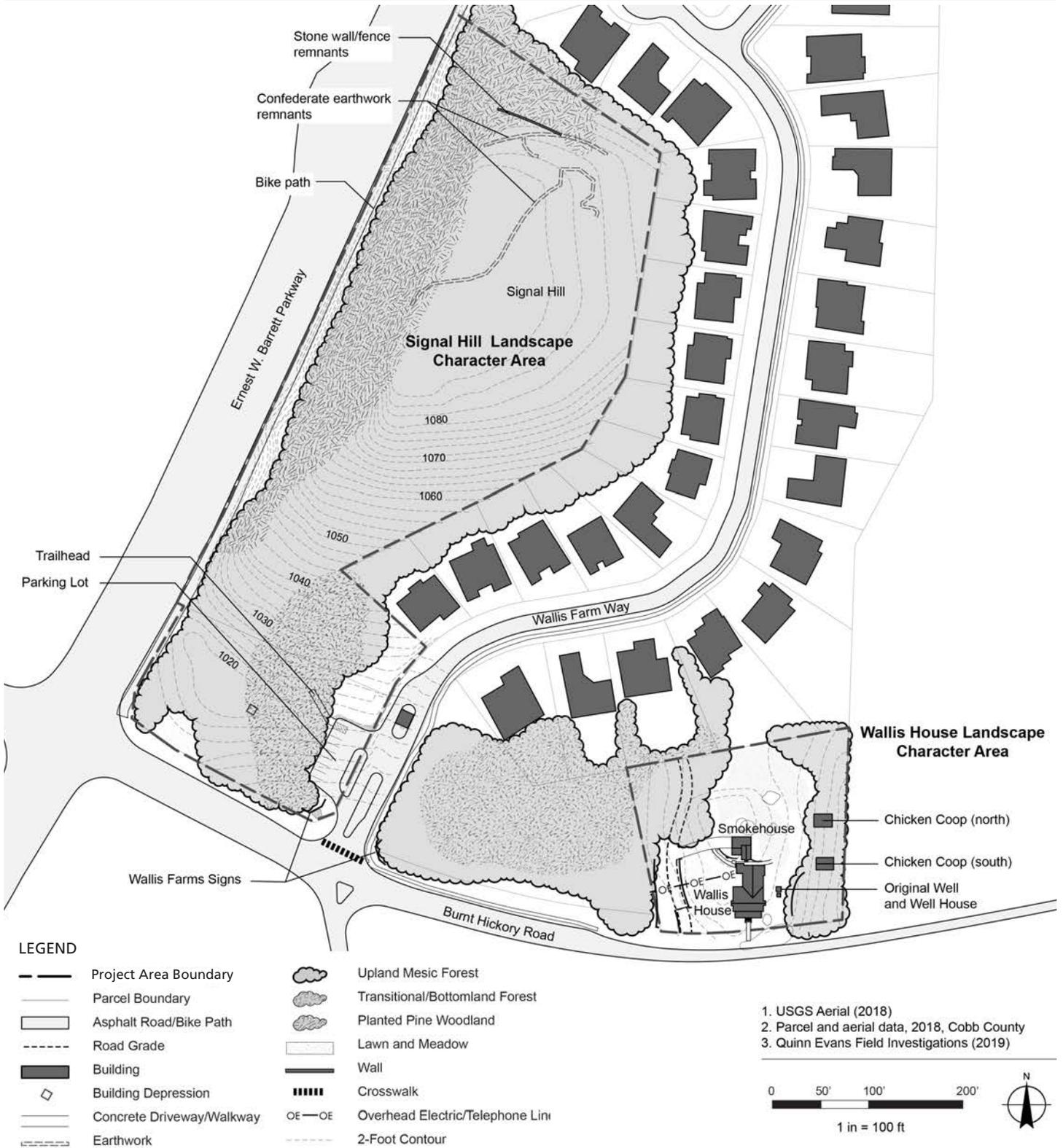
This chapter describes actions that would take place under each alternative. CEQ regulations for implementation of the NEPA process call for the inclusion of a no-action alternative to be considered in a document. The description and evaluation of this alternative provides a baseline to which the action alternative can be compared. This EA evaluates two alternatives: “Alternative 1: No Action” and “Alternative 2: Proposed Action.” The elements of these alternatives are described in the following sections. Impacts associated with the alternatives are described in “Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.”

### ALTERNATIVE 1: NO ACTION

Under the no-action alternative, current management of the project area would continue. See figures 5 and 6 below for site plans of the existing conditions. There would be no visitor access to the site (beyond use of the existing parking lot with no associated amenities), nor would there be any interpretation of the site. No visual or interpretive connection between the site and the rest of the park would be created. The parking lot, which contains seven standard parking spaces and two accessible spaces, would remain a fee-free area, and there would be no trail connecting the parking lot to the signal hill. The existing concrete trailhead would not be connected to any interpretive trail. No rehabilitation of the landscape would occur under the no-action alternative, and vegetation management would not be implemented. There would be no vegetation removal on the signal hill or around the Wallis House. Hazard trees would remain in their existing locations adjacent to historic structures and features. Non-contributing ornamental and invasive vegetation would remain in place and would be allowed to continue to grow. Under the proposed action, all buildings, structures, small-scale features, and circulation patterns would remain in their current locations, orientations, and in their existing conditions. No physical interventions or stabilization of the historic Wallis House or the original well would be undertaken. All non-contributing structures and small-scale features would remain within the landscape.

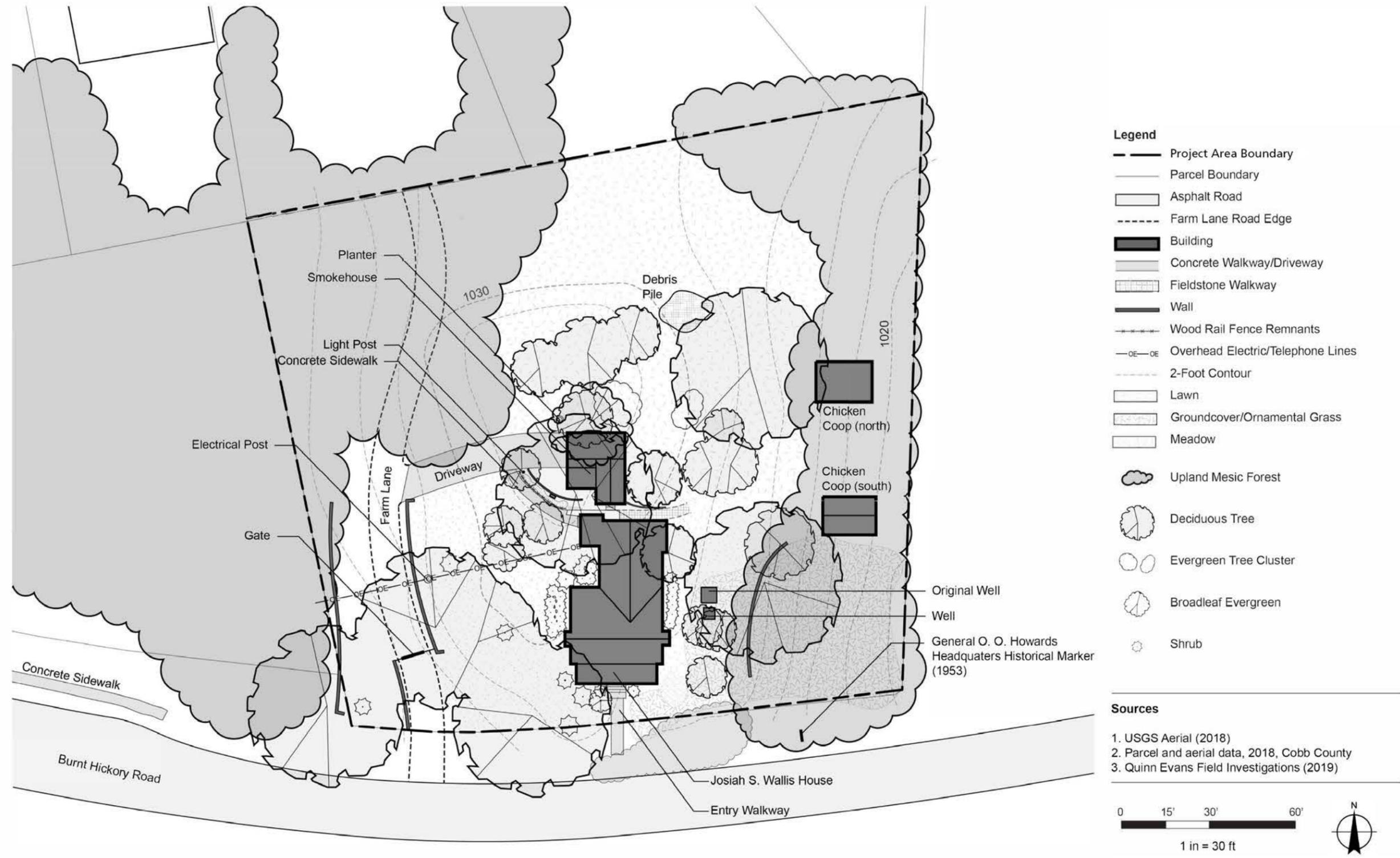
### ALTERNATIVE 2: PROPOSED ACTION

Under alternative 2, the NPS would implement improvements to provide visitor access, interpretation, and landscape rehabilitation within the project area. These actions are described in detail in the “Treatment Recommendations” chapter of the *Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm Cultural Landscape Report* (QE 2021). The following summarizes the treatment recommendations that would be implemented under the proposed action for both the Signal Hill and Wallis House Landscape Character Areas. Relevant sections of the cultural landscape report are incorporated by reference throughout the summary. See figure 7 below for an overall site plan of these changes within the project area. To minimize negative environmental impacts related to the proposed action, the park would implement mitigation measures whenever feasible. See appendix A for a list of these potential mitigation measures.



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FIGURE 5  
Alternative 1: No Action, Site Plan



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FIGURE 6  
Alternative 1: No Action, Site Plan, Wallis House Landscape Character Area



Proposed Action

- 1 Preserve remnants of Confederate earthworks
- 2 Maintain existing upland mesic forest and transitional/bottomland forest
- 3 Manage planted pine woodland to encourage revegetation with upland mesic species
- 4 Maintain existing lawn at the parking area
- 5 Rehabilitate a portion of the view between signal hill and Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains
- 6 Maintain existing parking lot
- 7 Maintain existing concrete trailhead
- 8 Work with Cobb County DOT to extend sidewalk
- 9 Work with Cobb County DOT to add a pedestrian crosswalk
- 10 Add interpretive trail extending from parking area to signal hill
- 11 Maintain stone wall and barbed wire fence north of earthworks
- 12 Add a snake rail fence along location of historic fence line
- 13 Add a snake rail fence on the north side of Burnt Hickory Road
- 14 Add wayside to interpret new snake rail fence
- 15 Add wayside to interpret the earthworks remnants
- 16 Install "Save Wallis Farm" wayside near existing concrete trailhead
- 17 Install "See Something? Say Something!" wayside at apex of signal hill
- 18 Add NPS fee signage at the parking area
- 19 Add park identification sign at the parking area
- 20 Add bench at the parking area
- 21 Add bench along interpretive trail near the waysides at the apex of signal hill

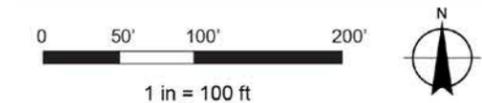


Legend

- Project area boundary
- Parcel boundary
- ▭ Asphalt road/bike path (outside study area)
- - - Farm lane (refer to Wallis House LCA)
- Maintain concrete route
- ⋯ Add interpretive trail
- ▭ Building (refer to Wallis House LCA)
- - - Preserve earthwork
- ☁ Maintain upland mesic forest
- ☁ Maintain transitional/bottomland forest
- ☁ Manage planted pine woodland for species transition
- ☀ Selectively prune or remove vegetation to rehabilitate view
- ▭ Maintain lawn
- Maintain stone wall
- OE—OE Maintain overhead electric/telephone lines (refer to Wallis House LCA)
- ⚡ Add snake rail fence
- ▬ Add or maintain crosswalk
- - - 2-foot contour (existing)

Sources

1. USGS Aerial (2018)
2. Parcel and aerial data, 2018, Cobb County
3. Quinn Evans Field Investigations (2019)



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FIGURE 7  
Alternative 2: Proposed Action, Site Plan

## Signal Hill Landscape Character Area

### **Topography**

Under the proposed action, the remnants of the Confederate earthworks would be preserved following guidance provided in the NPS *Sustainable Military Earthworks Management* and the 2013 *Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park Cultural Landscape Report* (NPS n.d. and NPS 2013). As described in task 1 of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area Treatment Tasks in the cultural landscape report, preservation actions would include maintaining the woodland community surrounding the earthworks to ensure that there is adequate tree cover to maintain leaf litter over the earthworks, which is the most effective vegetative cover for earthworks preservation (NPS 1989). Leaf litter or mulch would be applied to any earthwork with exposed soil. Fallen trees and branches would be removed from the earthworks, and trees would be removed from the slopes of the earthworks by flush cutting and leaving the stump in place. Hazard trees in the vicinity of the earthworks would be regularly evaluated and selectively pruned or removed if they may fall on the earthworks. Understory vegetation would be selectively removed to expand the view along the extent of the earthworks. See figure 8 below for a graphic summary of treatments. Invasive vegetation in the vicinity of the earthworks would be monitored and treated. Visitor use in the vicinity of the earthworks would be monitored; if visitor use patterns risk damage to the resources, the NPS would install signage or short segments of fence along the trail to protect the earthworks. Interpretive messaging would be developed with information about the earthworks.

### **Vegetation and Views**

Under the proposed action, the existing woodlands would be maintained within the Signal Hill Character Area (task 3 in the cultural landscape report). These woodlands would be managed to maintain a sustainable mix of native vegetation and allow for alterations to the forest composition to support continued forest cover. For example, as short-lived shortleaf pine species on the west slope of the hill die off, the woodlands would be managed to encourage upland mesic woodland species to revegetate the area. At the parking area at the base of the hill, the existing lawn would be maintained in good condition (task 4 in the cultural landscape report).

Reestablishing and maintaining important views would also be part of the proposed action (task 5 in the cultural landscape report). A portion of the historically important view between the signal hill and Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains would be rehabilitated. A viewpoint would be selected along a proposed interpretive trail (discussed below) near the apex of the signal hill at a high enough elevation to avoid views into the adjacent residential development (see figure 4 above). Individual plants would be selectively pruned or removed to reestablish a visual connection from the signal hill to Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains. If it is necessary to locate the viewpoint at a lower elevation, the NPS would engage with adjacent property owners to determine an appropriate strategy to avoid impacts to both the visitor experience and neighborhood residents.

The NPS would plant low height understory vegetation along the property area boundary to screen views into and from the adjacent development. The planned wayside exhibit titled, “See Something? Say Something!” would be installed at the viewpoint to interpret the use of the site as a signal hill (see figure 5-11 of the cultural landscape report).



Remove trees from slopes of earthwork

Remove trees from slopes of earthwork

Maintain protective cover of leaf litter

Selectively clear underbrush to expand view along earthwork



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FIGURE 8  
Alternative 2: Proposed Action,  
Confederate Earthwork Remnants

Other interpretive materials would be installed to highlight the view toward Big and Little Kennesaw Mountain, such as semi-transparent signage to convey the relationship between the historic viewshed and existing conditions. Additionally, the NPS would add interpretive messaging at Big Kennesaw Mountain or Pigeon Hill to interpret the view from those locations toward the signal hill.



Existing view east from signal hill. The overlaid line identifies the approximate topography of Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains (QE 2021)

### ***Circulation***

Circulation improvements at the signal hill would be implemented under the proposed action, as detailed in the cultural landscape report. The existing parking lot and concrete trailhead would be maintained in good condition (tasks 6 and 7 in the cultural landscape report). An interpretive loop trail would be added from the existing concrete trailhead to the top of the signal hill and the proposed viewpoint (task 10 in the cultural landscape report). This trail would be constructed according to the park's 2019 trail and erosion repair guidelines for installation of new trails (NPS 2019). The specific alignment would be designed to fit within the existing slopes, avoid large trees and roots, and take advantage of existing grade and swales where appropriate. The trail would be a minimum of 36 inches wide and consist of a 2-inch porous tread over a 4-inch crushed rock base. Water bars that also function as trail steps would be used to control erosion as needed along steep slopes, and 6-inch-deep drainage ditches would be added where the trail traverses grades exceeding 10 percent.

Under the proposed action, circulation improvements would be implemented to create a pedestrian connection between the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area and the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. The NPS would work with the Cobb County Department of Transportation (DOT) to extend the existing sidewalk connection from the parking lot at the signal hill to the farm lane at the Wallis House (task 8 of the cultural landscape report). The proposed sidewalk connection would be shifted north of the existing sidewalk to accommodate a snake rail fence along the road. The NPS would also work with the Cobb County DOT to establish a pedestrian crosswalk across Burnt Hickory Road on the east side of Wallis Farm Way (task 9 of the cultural landscape report). The NPS would consider working with the Wallis Farms homeowner's association to establish an easement on the parcel between the Signal Hill and Wallis House Landscape Character Areas. If an easement is established, the proposed sidewalk could be routed through the center of the parcel to buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic and modern development.

### ***Buildings, Structures, and Small-Scale Features***

Under the proposed action, the stone wall and barbed wire fence north of the Confederate earthworks would be retained and protected from ground disturbance and dislocation of stones (task 11 of the cultural landscape report). A wood snake rail fence would be added in the location of a historic fence line on the signal hill (task 12 of the cultural landscape report). Due to the potential for below grade archeological

features and erosion of the slope, disturbance of the ground surface would be avoided. If necessary, the NPS archeologists would conduct an archeological study or investigation before implementation. The NPS would work with Cobb County DOT to add a snake rail fence between Burnt Hickory Road and the new sidewalk on the north side of the road, as discussed under “Circulation” above (task 8 of the cultural landscape report).

New interpretive signage would be installed throughout the project area under the proposed action. Interpretive waysides would be added to interpret site features including the new snake rail fence on the signal hill and the Confederate earthworks (tasks 14 and 15 of the cultural landscape report). Interpretive materials would provide a clear differentiation between fences in historic locations and any fences in non-historic locations. The planned “Saving Wallis Farm” wayside would be installed near the existing concrete trailhead (task 16 and figure 5-10 of the cultural landscape report). This wayside would communicate to visitors that they are in Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and would convey information about battlefield preservation. The planned “See Something? Say Something!” wayside would be installed at the apex of the signal hill facing east toward Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains (task 17 and figure 5-11 of the cultural landscape report). A bench would be installed along the proposed trail near this wayside (task 21 of the cultural landscape report).

New NPS signage would be added near the entrance to inform visitors that they are entering a unit of the national park system (tasks 18 and 19 of the cultural landscape report). A park identification sign and NPS fee signage would be added at the parking area. This signage would adhere to NPS sign standards and be in a style consistent with other signage within the park. The park identification sign would also adhere to local municipality standards. A bench would also be added at the parking area (task 20 of the cultural landscape report). See figure 9 below for a sketch of the parking area improvements.

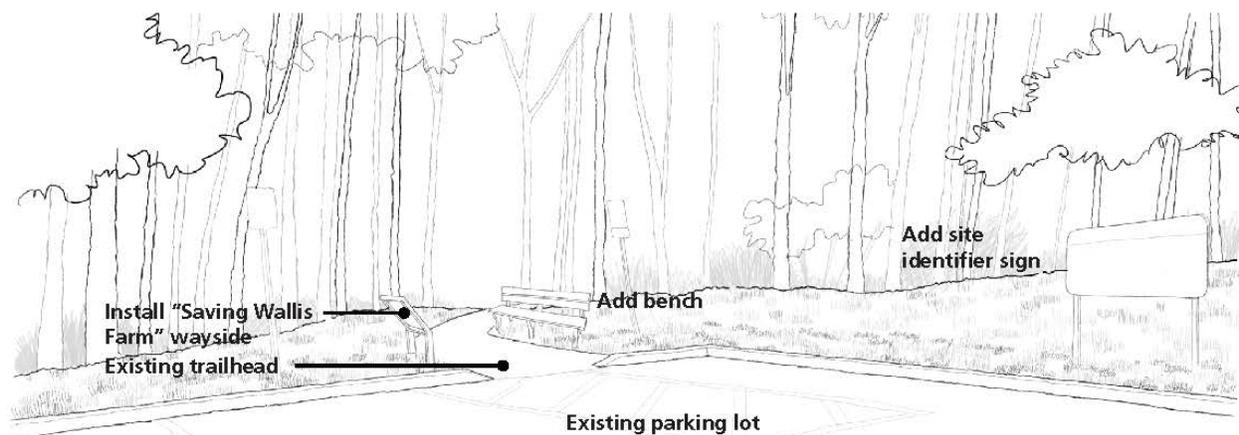


Figure 9. Proposed Improvements to the Parking Area at the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area

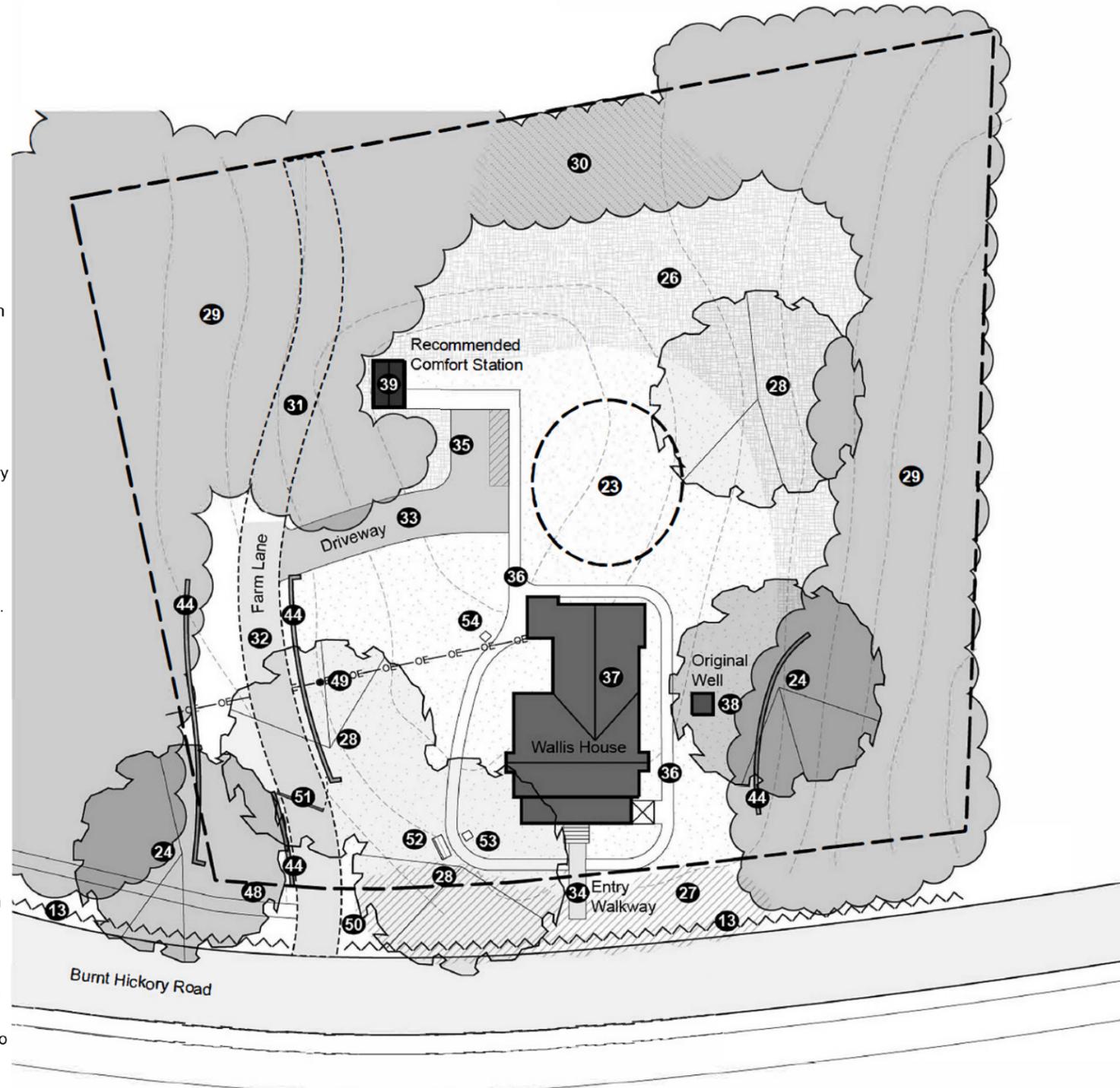
## Wallis House Landscape Character Area

The following describes the improvements proposed within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. See figures 10 and 11 below for overall site plans of the proposed action in the vicinity of the Wallis House.



Proposed Action

- 13 Add a snake rail fence
- 23 Consider providing an outdoor education area
- 24 Preserve two witness trees
- 26 Add native grasses
- 27 Rehabilitate view between Wallis House and Burnt Hickory Road; maintain low vegetation to stabilize slope
- 28 Maintain three large trees
- 29 Maintain existing upland mesic forest
- 30 Add trees and understory vegetation to screen view
- 31 Preserve the northern portion of the farm lane
- 32 Repair the gravel surface of the southern portion of the farm lane
- 33 Repair existing concrete driveway
- 34 Repair existing concrete entry walkway
- 35 Add one ADA accessible parking space
- 36 Add accessible route. This option incorporates a lift connecting to the front porch.
- 37 Preserve the Wallis House
- 38 Preserve the original well
- 39 Consider adding a comfort station
- 44 Maintain non-contributing retaining walls
- 48 Relocate the "Gen. O. O. Howard's Headquarters" historical marker
- 49 Maintain the utility pole and overhead utility lines
- 50 Add a park identification sign
- 51 Replace swing gate
- 52 Add bench
- 53 Install "Homestead, Hospital, Headquarters" wayside
- 54 Consider installing wayside to interpret missing view

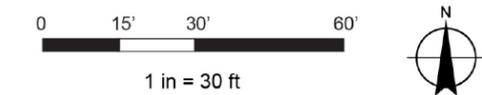


Legend

- Project area boundary
- ▭ Asphalt road (outside of study area)
- - - Preserve Farm Lane
- ▨ Repair gravel surface of Farm Lane
- ▤ Preserve contributing building
- ▥ Add new building or structure
- ▧ Repair or add concrete route
- ▩ Add accessible walkway
- Maintain stone wall
- OE—OE Maintain overhead electric/telephone lines
- ▭ Maintain short rough lawn
- ▨ Add native grasses
- ▩ Maintain low height vegetation on slope
- ☁ Maintain upland mesic forest
- ☁ Add woody vegetation to screen view
- 🌳 Maintain large tree
- 🌳 Preserve witness tree
- ◇ Add wayside
- ▭ Add bench
- ⊠ Add outdoor lift
- ⚡ Add snake rail fence
- - - Provide outdoor education area
- ⋯ 2-foot contour (existing)

Sources

1. USGS Aerial (2018)
2. Parcel and aerial data, 2018, Cobb County
3. Quinn Evans Field Investigations (2019)



Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm CLR  
Environmental Assessment

FIGURE 10  
Alternative 2: Proposed Action, Wallis House  
Landscape Character Area Site Plan



Proposed Action

- 25 Remove ornamental plants
- 26 Remove ornamental plants and small trees on the northern and eastern slopes of the knoll
- 27 Remove large woody vegetation along the southern boundary of the parcel
- 28 Remove noncontributing trees when they die
- 32 Remove vegetative growth along the southern portion of the farm lane
- 36 In association with adding an accessible route around Wallis House, remove existing concrete walkways at the north end of the house
- 39 In association with adding a comfort station, remove the smokehouse/garage
- 40 Remove non-contributing well house
- 41 Remove non-contributing north chicken coop
- 42 Remove non-contributing south chicken coop
- 43 Remove the non-contributing stone retaining walls between the Wallis House and smokehouse/garage
- 45 Remove non-contributing post-and-board fence
- 46 Remove non-contributing light post
- 47 Remove non-contributing debris pile

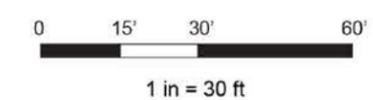


Legend

- Project Area Boundary
- Remove Building or Structure
- Remove Fence Remnants
- Remove Tree
- Remove Evergreen Tree Cluster
- Remove Shrub, Ornamental Grasses, or Groundcover
- Remove Concrete Walkways

Sources

1. USGS Aerial (2018)
2. Parcel and aerial data, 2018, Cobb County
3. Quinn Evans Field Investigations (2019)



Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm CLR Environmental Assessment

FIGURE 11  
Alternative 2: Proposed Action, Wallis House  
Landscape Character Area Demolition Plan

## **Historic Structures Report**

In order to fully understand the existing conditions and treatment potential of the Wallis House and other structures within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, the NPS would prepare a historic structures report (task 22 of the cultural landscape report). Through this report, the NPS would confirm the construction dates and the contributing status for the Wallis House and the original well using dendrochronology of wood features or other accepted materials dating method. The findings of this report would determine long-term treatment for the Wallis House, the smokehouse/garage, and the original well. Based on the outcome of the Historic Structure Report's recommendations, specific options would be determined for a new comfort station, outdoor educational space, access around and into the Wallis House structure, and placement of small-scale features. Conceptual options for these landscape improvements are discussed below with the understanding that the specific design, siting, and other details would be determined during a future phase of the project after completion of the historic structures report. Two examples of treatment options are shown as conceptual drawings in appendix B. The maximum level of change on the landscape is analyzed in this EA to provide flexibility in actual siting and design of each element to take into consideration the future recommendations of the historic structures report. The actual improvements implemented under the proposed action may result in a lesser degree of change to the landscape than described in this EA.

## **Vegetation and Views**

Witness trees would be preserved under the proposed action (task 24 of the cultural landscape report). The NPS would consult with an arborist to prune dead branches and improve tree health. When the witness trees die, they would be replaced in kind in the general location of the historic tree. If the historic species becomes unviable or unavailable, a replacement tree with similar characteristics to the historic tree (e.g. form, size, growth habit, seasonal interest) would be selected.

Around the Wallis House and original well, ornamental plants would be removed, and short rough lawn would be maintained (task 25 of the cultural landscape report). The lawn would not have a manicured appearance but would be maintained as rough turf. Weeds and small bare patches (less than 6 inches in diameter) would be considered acceptable representations of a historic lawn surface. When grass requires replacement, species that have a coarse texture (for instance, coarse tall fescue [*Festuca arundinacea*]) would be used. Periodic mowing to no lower than 3 inches tall would occur, and no herbicides or chemical fertilizers would be used.

On the northern and eastern slopes of the knoll as well as the exterior of the parcel, ornamental plants and small trees would be removed and replaced with a mix of native warm and cool season grasses, sedges, and forbs (task 26 of the cultural landscape report). This vegetation would be maintained through annual mowing to a height of 5 or 6 inches in late May or early June.

The view between the Wallis House and Burnt Hickory Road would be rehabilitated by selectively removing large woody vegetation along the southern boundary of the parcel (task 27 of the cultural landscape report). Ornamental species that are not representative of the landscape condition during the period of significance would be prioritized for removal. Low height woody and herbaceous vegetation would be maintained to stabilize the slope, and based on conditions, low stumps may be retained. If additional vegetation is required for slope stabilization, species consistent with the native grass mix used in other portions of the area would be used.

Large trees would be maintained within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area (task 28 of the cultural landscape report). The NPS would consult with an arborist to evaluate and treat hazard trees. When non-contributing trees die, they would not be replaced in kind. The dead tree would be removed and ground surface repaired to rough lawn or native grass based on the location of the tree.

Existing upland mesic forest on the east and west sides of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area would be maintained (task 29 of the cultural landscape report). Trees and understory vegetation would be added along the northern parcel boundary to buffer views into the adjacent neighborhood (task 30 of the cultural landscape report). A vegetation mix representative of the surrounding upland mesic forest would be selected. To ensure adjacent properties are visually buffered from activities within the parcel, both native canopy trees and understory vegetation would be planted.

### ***Circulation***

Under the proposed action, the northern portion of the farm lane would be preserved and the southern portion would be repaired (tasks 31 and 32 of the cultural landscape report). Prior to making any alterations to the farm lane, an NPS archeologist would conduct an archeological study to date the road grade to the period of significance. The archeologist's recommendations for preservation or protection of the resource would be followed. Along the southern portion of the road grade, between Burnt Hickory Road and the existing concrete driveway, vegetative growth would be removed, and the gravel surface would be repaired. The existing concrete driveway would be repaired, as would the existing concrete entry walkway to the Wallis House front porch. One accessible parking space would be added at the east end of the driveway. The NPS may use porous materials for the parking surface to reduce the amount of impervious surface added to the site.

At the Wallis House, an accessible visitor entrance would be provided into the interior of the house, reached by an accessible route from the grounds (task 22 of the cultural landscape report). Two locations are possible for the single entrance: (1) the rear of the Wallis House (north side) or (2) the front porch of the house (south side). If the entrance is located at the front porch, the NPS would use a ramp or possibly an outdoor lift to provide an accessible route. Non-contributing concrete walkways at the north end of the Wallis House would be removed and the ground surface repaired to short rough lawn (task 36 of the cultural landscape report).

An on-grade accessible route around the Wallis House would be created (task 36 of the cultural landscape report) to connect from the accessible parking spaces to key viewpoints of contributing features within the landscape character area, including to the Wallis House front porch. For the purposes of the impact analysis, this EA considers an accessible route that loops around the Wallis House because it has the greatest level of change to the landscape. The route selected for implementation may be shorter (and less impactful) than what is analyzed in this EA. The surface material for the new route would be compatible with the size, scale, and materiality of the landscape while being clearly differentiated from historic materials present on the site. See figure 12 below for a sketch of some of the improvements to the landscape around the Wallis House.

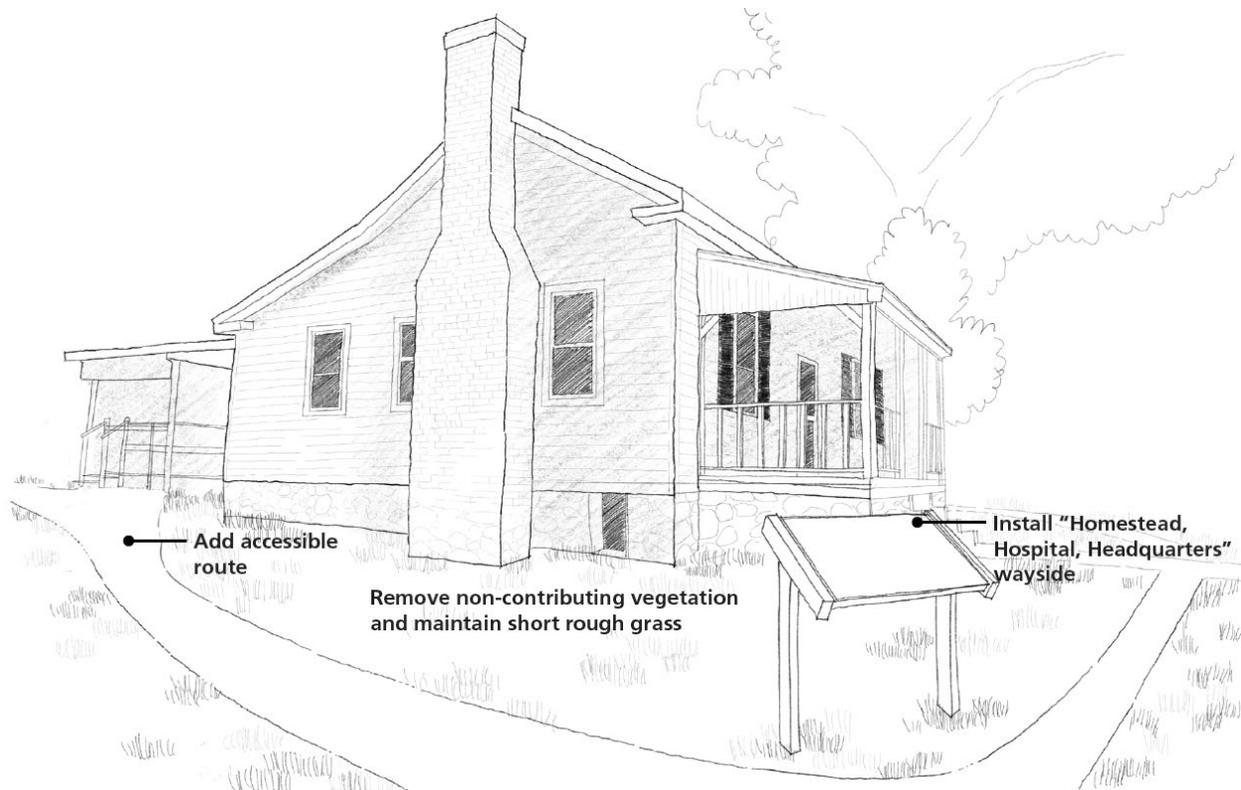


Figure 12. Proposed Improvements to the Landscape Around the Wallis House

### ***Buildings and Structures***

Under the proposed action, short-term actions would be undertaken to stabilize and preserve the Wallis House and the original well, including chimney repair and updated building security (task 37 of the cultural landscape report). Long-term treatment of these structures would be determined through the future historic structures report discussed above, as well as through archeological investigations of the original well (task 38 of the cultural landscape report).

A comfort station would be added within the project area (tasks 22 and 39 of the cultural landscape report), in one of two possible locations: (1) within the existing smokehouse/garage if it is a candidate for adaptive reuse, or (2) in a new building constructed near the treeline northwest of the Wallis House if the smokehouse/garage is removed. The siting of a new comfort station building would use the existing wooded area to buffer views of the building to the extent possible. The design of the comfort station would be consistent with the park's standard design, or it could be a low-profile gabled structure compatible with the historic character of the landscape. The comfort station would comply with international building code.

Under the proposed action, the NPS would create an area for outdoor educational programming focused on the history of the Wallis House and its role in the Atlanta Campaign (task 23 of the cultural landscape report). This education area would be constructed north of the Wallis House in the open area; the NPS would determine the capacity and potential programming for the education area during a future phase of the project. Potential activities appropriate for this space may include living history demonstrations and

interpretation of civilian life before and during the Atlanta Campaign as well as ranger-led tours and educational programs.

Other non-contributing buildings and structures within this landscape character area would be removed, including the well house, the north and south chicken coops, and some stone retaining walls (task 40-43 of the cultural landscape report). After removal of these non-contributing buildings and structures, the ground surfaces would be repaired and a native grass mix or short rough grass would be established. The non-contributing retaining walls on the east and west sides of the Wallis House would be maintained in good condition (task 44 of the cultural landscape report). Displaced stones would be repaired, and vegetative growth within the walls would be removed to maintain the slope stabilization function.

### ***Small-Scale Features***

Improvements to small-scale features would occur throughout the project area under the proposed action. The following non-contributing small-scale features would be removed: the post-and-board fence, the light post, and the debris pile (tasks 45-47 of the cultural landscape report). In the short-term, the utility pole and overhead utility lines connecting to the Wallis House would be maintained; a long-term treatment would be determined through the historic structures report (task 49 of the cultural landscape report). A park identification sign would be added near the intersection of the farm lane and Burnt Hickory Road, and it would adhere to NPS and local municipality standards (task 50 in the cultural landscape report). The swing gate at the entrance to the farm lane would be replaced with a standard park security gate (task 51 of the cultural landscape report).

The planned “Homestead, Hospital, Headquarters” wayside would be installed along the proposed accessible route (figure 5-19 of the cultural landscape report) and would be sited where the perspective of the wayside rendering roughly matches the view of the house (task 53 of the cultural landscape report). The NPS would also consider installing a wayside to interpret the missing view between the Wallis House and signal hill, aligned with the general direction of the historic view (task 54 of the cultural landscape report). The NPS would work with the Georgia Historical Society to relocate the “Gen. O. O. Howard’s Headquarters” historical marker to a location that can be safely accessed by pedestrians, potentially within the interior of the parcel (task 48 of the cultural landscape report).

## **ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED**

In December 2020, a treatment workshop was held with the park and their consultants to identify treatment elements to consider during the planning process. These elements were combined into concepts, which were further refined into the proposed action. Through this workshops and internal discussions, the park narrowed down the reasonable range of alternatives to those included in this EA. Some of the alternative elements identified earlier in the process were determined to be unnecessary or much less desirable than similar options included in the analysis and were therefore not carried forward for analysis in this EA. The descriptions below summarize the alternative elements that were considered but dismissed from further analysis and the rationale behind the dismissal.

## **Reestablishing the Full Historic View from the Signal Hill**

The NPS considered reestablishing the full historic view towards Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains from the apex of the signal hill. This would create a setting that more accurately reflects the historic conditions of the signal hill, and that more clearly connects the signal hill to Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains. This alternative element was ultimately dismissed from further consideration because it would require substantial tree clearing at the apex of the signal hill, which would have much greater impacts on vegetation, wildlife, and potentially special status species than the proposed action. Additionally, clearing the apex of the signal hill would remove the existing visual buffer between the historic site and the modern residential development adjacent. The residential houses would be much more visible and would detract from the historic viewshed. Noise from the residential development would more easily carry to the signal hill, which would detract from the historic setting. Conversely, visitors at the signal hill would be visible from the residential development, which would result in impacts on the adjacent community. Residents in the development may be uncomfortable with park visitors having a view towards their homes and into their backyards. Overall, the NPS considered these impacts to be much less desirable than the impacts under the proposed action. Therefore, reestablishing the full historic view from the signal hill was dismissed from further consideration.

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## **CHAPTER 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

This chapter describes the current environmental conditions in and surrounding the project as they relate to each impact topic retained for analysis, as outlined in chapter 1. These conditions serve as a baseline for understanding the resources that could be impacted by implementing the project. This chapter also analyzes the beneficial and adverse impacts that would result from implementing any of the alternatives considered in this EA.

### **GENERAL METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYZING IMPACTS**

In accordance with the CEQ regulations for implementation of NEPA, impacts of the alternatives are described under each impact topic (40 CFR 1502.16), and the impacts are assessed in terms of context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). Where appropriate, mitigating measures for adverse impacts are also described and incorporated into the evaluation of impacts. The specific methods used to assess impacts for each resource may vary; therefore, these methodologies are described under each impact topic.

### **VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE**

#### **Affected Environment**

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park has the highest visitation of any Civil War battlefield park in the nation. The park recorded 2,621,050 visitors in 2019. Visitation is busiest during the summer months, especially July. Weekend visitation is typically high on spring and fall weekends and evenings, and many school groups take field trips on weekdays from mid-August through mid-November. Although park visitation is slowest during the winter, individual warm winter days are frequently busy (NPS 2020).

Approximately 80 percent of visitors are local area recreational users who live in Marietta, Cobb County, and the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. These users visit the park to experience the natural environment, trails, and unique viewsheds. Approximately 15 percent of the park's visitors come to the battlefield for its primary purpose of Civil War history. The remaining visitors are a mix of traditional NPS vacationers and educational groups (NPS 2010).

Programming within the park is supported by educational exhibits within the visitor center as well as wayside exhibits along trails, guided tours, living history (costumed interpretation), education programs, and special events. Volunteer partnerships with the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era at Kennesaw State University and the Kennesaw Mountain Historical Association support research and interpretation of the park's history related to the Atlanta Campaign. The volunteer Kennesaw Mountain Trail Corps maintain and repair the park's trails. Public safety is supported by a partnership with the Cobb County Department of Public Safety (NPS 2010).

The three parcels that comprise the project area have not yet been acquired by the NPS and have not yet been developed for visitor use. There are no established trails or interpretive programming within the project area, and existing wayfinding does not direct visitors to the property.

In 2012, a paved multiuse trail known as the West Cobb Trail (also called the Barrett Parkway Trail) was constructed on the east side of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway. This 3.5-mile trail begins approximately 1,375 feet south of the intersection of the parkway and Burnt Hickory Road and continues along the parkway to the Old 41 Highway where it connects to the Noonday Creek Trail and the broader Cobb County trail network (Cobb County 2021). The existing sidewalk along Burnt Hickory Road connects to West Cobb Trail at the intersection with the Ernest W. Barrett Parkway.

## **Methodology**

Potential impacts on visitor use and experience are assessed based on anticipated changes to the way people use the project area, as well as how the alternatives would alter visitors' experiences. Recreation related to and enjoyment of park resources and values by the people of the United States is part of the fundamental purpose of all parks (NPS 2006). The park strives to provide opportunities for forms of enjoyment that are uniquely suited and appropriate to the natural and cultural resources found in parks. The current conditions of visitor use and experience, as presented in the "Affected Environment" section above, were compared with the alternatives described in chapter 2 to determine how visitor use and experience would be affected.

## **Impacts of Alternative 1: No Action**

Under the no-action alternative, there would be no change to the current visitor use of the project area because no additional visitor access or interpretation would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no impacts on visitor use and experience under the no-action alternative.

## **Impacts of Alternative 2: Proposed Action**

Under alternative 2, visitors to the park would have opportunities to learn about the Atlanta Campaign through a new point of interest. At the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, visitors would learn about the role the signal hill played in the Atlanta Campaign in June 1864 by being at the apex of the hill and experiencing the view first-hand. Selective clearing to partially restore the historic view towards Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains would improve the signal hill's ability to convey this association. Interpretive waysides would provide visitors additional context and information about the significance of the site and its role in the Civil War. Although the setting and view has changed over time, and modern development would detract somewhat from the experience, the proposed action expands opportunities for immersive experiences within the park and for expanded understanding of Union operations that is currently unavailable at the park. Visitors would also have the new opportunity to engage in the passive recreational activity of walking along a trail through a forest in what is an otherwise relatively developed suburban area. Overall, when compared to the no-action alternative, the proposed action would result in an improved visitor experience at the signal hill and an improved understanding of the site's association with the Atlanta Campaign.

At the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, visitors would have the opportunity to immerse themselves at the historic location of a field hospital used during the Atlanta Campaign. Similar to the experience of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, though the setting has changed over time, the proposed action would expand opportunities for visitors to learn about Union operations during the Atlanta Campaign and the impact of the battles on the local community. Vegetation management, including removing non-contributing ornamental trees and restoring lawn representative of the historic

period would improve the landscape character area's ability to convey its association with the Civil War. Interpretive waysides would provide additional context on the site's role as a field hospital during the Atlanta Campaign. Additionally, the outdoor educational program area would allow the park to offer visitors a variety of interpretive and educational experiences, not just of the Wallis House and the field hospital, but of civilian life before and during the Civil War. The proposed accessible walkway throughout the parcel and into the Wallis House would allow visitors of all abilities to experience the landscape and setting. Overall, when compared to the no-action alternative, the proposed action would result in an improved visitor experience at the Wallis House and an improved understanding of the site's association with the Atlanta Campaign as a field hospital.

The proposed NPS signage and new walkways would provide clear and intuitive wayfinding into the parking lot as well as between the two parcels. Visitors would know they are within a unit of the national park system and they would know the types of activities and interpretive opportunities exist on site. Visitors would have a clear and comfortable pedestrian route between the two landscape character areas that would be buffered from the vehicular traffic on Burnt Hickory Road. If the NPS obtains an easement from the Wallis Farms homeowner's association and routes the sidewalk away from the roadway, visitors would have a larger buffer between themselves and vehicular traffic while on the sidewalk, which may be a more comfortable pedestrian experience than walking closer to the roadway. Under the proposed action, the new sidewalk would also result in new connections between local destinations and the project area. Under the proposed action, the new sidewalk would connect both sections of the project area to the West Cobb Trail via the existing Burnt Hickory Road sidewalk. Therefore, the proposed action would result in a new bicycle and pedestrian connection from the project area to nearby destinations, as well as a new connection to the broader county trail network. Overall, the proposed action would result in improved pedestrian connections throughout the project area and to the adjacent community. While this is unlikely to become a major pedestrian or bicycle connection for the broader region, it would be a benefit to visitors to the project area. Improvements are relative to the lack of access, interpretation, and connections provided under the no-action alternative.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Affected Environment**

Cultural resources within the project area include the cultural landscape, historic structures, and archeological resources associated with the physical condition of the property at the time that it was occupied by Federal and Confederate forces during the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War. These resources are described below.

#### ***Cultural Landscape***

Landscape characteristics are the tangible and intangible aspects that, individually and collectively, create historic character and aid in understanding cultural importance. The landscape characteristics relevant to the cultural landscape of the signal hill and field hospital at the Wallis Farm include the following: natural systems and features, land use, topography, spatial organization, views and vistas, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Although there are many features within the project area that contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape, only those features or resources that may be affected by the alternatives in this EA are discussed in more detail below. Overall site

plans of the existing conditions of the Signal Hill and the Wallis House Landscape Character Areas are shown on figures 5 and 6 above.

### *Land Use*

Public access within the study area is limited. A small parking area and trailhead at the southeast corner of the western parcel were constructed in 2002 with the intention that these features will serve future visitors, but there are no existing interpretative or resource management land uses. Informal hiking may occur at the signal hill. The Wallis property is unoccupied. The buildings are vacant and a gate at the driveway restricts access to the site.

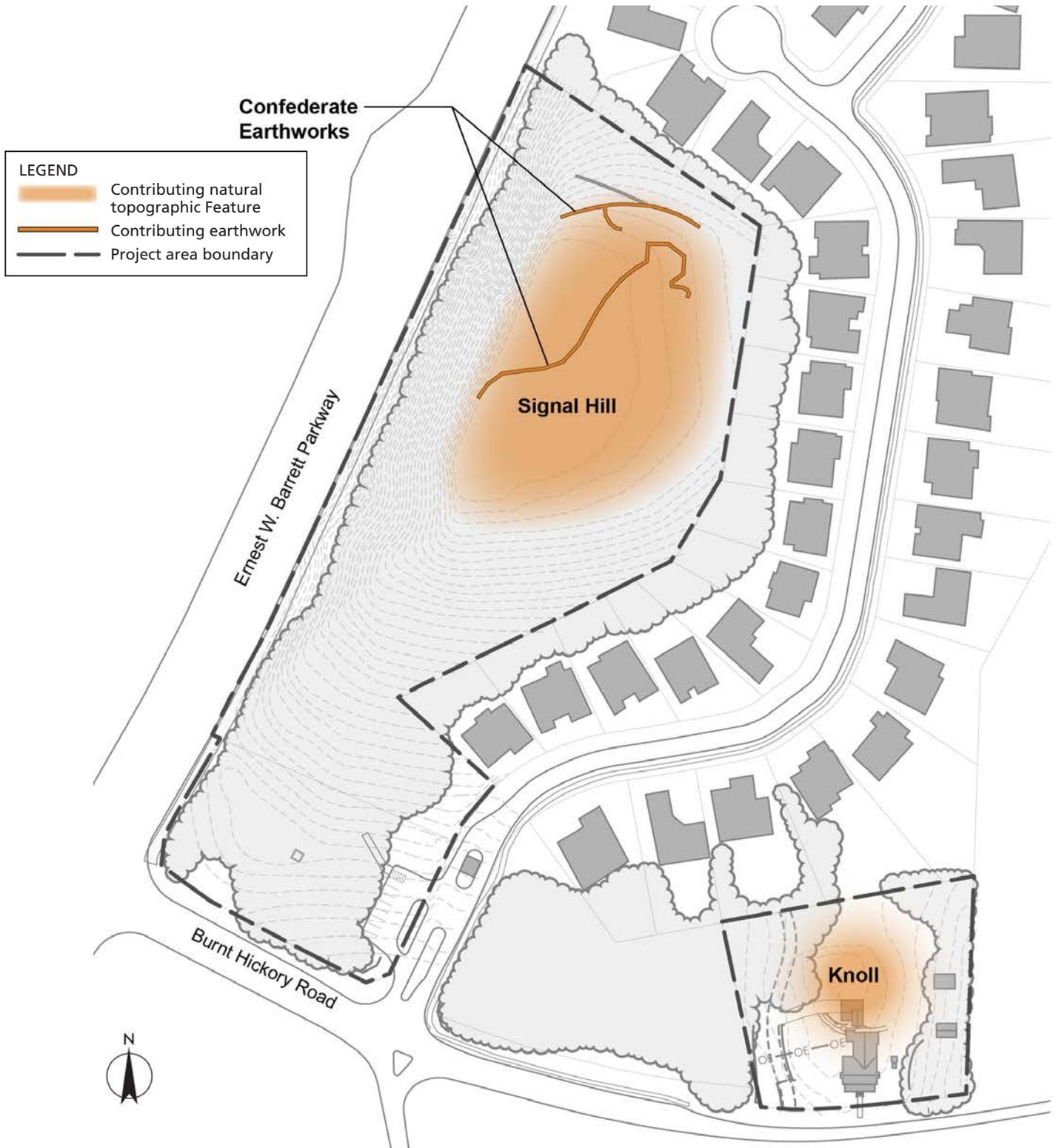
The NPS is currently completing acquisition of the three parcels that encompass the project site. The Signal Hill Landscape Character Area site is located on two adjacent parcels: a 1.09 acre lot at the corner of Burnt Hickory Road and Ernest W. Barrett Parkway, which includes the parking area and a 25-foot easement along its southern and eastern boundaries, and a 5.5 acre parcel comprising the northern portion of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. The Josiah S. Wallis House (Wallis House Landscape Character Area) is located on a 1.22-acre parcel approximately 400 feet east of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area along Burnt Hickory Road. Once acquired by NPS, all three parcels will be used for preservation and interpretation of the site's relationship to the Civil War Atlanta Campaign. See figure 3.

### *Topography*

The signal hill is the dominant topographic feature within the project area (see figure 13). The crest of the hill is located at the northern end of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area at an elevation of 1094 feet above sea level; from this point the topography slopes down in all directions, reaching a low point at the southern end of the landscape character area at approximately 1018 feet above sea level. The western slope of the signal hill was regraded in the 1990s in association with construction of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway to a slope substantially steeper than the naturally occurring topography of the hill. This area has been stabilized by evergreen trees. At the north and east sides of the signal hill, the hill is cut to provide backyard space for homes in the Wallis Farms subdivision, supported by retaining walls. Water draining from the signal hill collects in the low area at the southern end of the parcel.

Manmade modifications to the topography of the signal hill include remnants of Confederate earthworks constructed on the west aspect of the signal hill (see figure 13). The earthworks total approximately 288 feet in length and consist of mounds 12-24 inches in height accompanied by shallow trenches. All associated features are difficult to discern from the surrounding ground surface. Although the existing earthworks are in a relatively undisturbed location, construction of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway in the mid-1990s and the Wallis Farms neighborhood in the early 2000s may have destroyed a substantial portion of the earthworks to the west and northeast.

The Wallis House Landscape Character Area is centered on a low knoll (see figure 13). The high point of the rise is situated immediately north of the smokehouse/garage; from this location, the topography gradually slopes down in all directions. The Wallis House and smokehouse/garage occupy a relatively flat terrace at the top of the knoll. Low retaining walls on the south side of the smokehouse and on the east side of the original well and well house serve to level the yard around the Wallis House. A linear grade associated with the farm lane traverses the western side of the property from north to south. The grade is defined by retaining walls and steep slopes to the east and west that create a relatively level route approximately 12 feet wide connecting from Burnt Hickory Road to the Wallis House driveway;



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FIGURE 13  
Existing Conditions: Contributing Topography

north of the driveway, the grade becomes overgrown but appears to continue through the property along the historic route of a farm road.

A range of slopes are present within the project area (see figure 14). Gentle slopes, below 8.3 percent, can be easily mown. These slopes are typically located at the top of the knoll surrounding the Wallis House and at the southern end of the hill to the west of the house. Moderate slopes are identified as those between 8.3 and 25 percent. Moderate slopes typically occur on the north, east, and south sides of the signal hill, and at lower elevations near the base of the hill. Steep slopes greater than 25 percent are located along the west side of the hill and are vulnerable to erosion and sloughing. Erosion is also evident at the base of the hill to the west of the parking lot where runoff water has carved stream channels into the landscape.

### *Spatial Organization*

Spatial organization of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area is dominated by a large hill sloping down on all sides from its high point in the north-central portion of the parcel (see figure 15). The top of the hill is relatively flat and enclosed by the surrounding steep topography. The site is almost entirely forested except for a small parking area located at the southeast corner of the site accessed from Wallis Farm Way and a mown retention pond located near the southwest corner of the site. Remnants of Confederate earthworks are arranged in two lines along the north and west aspects of the hill, near its apex. Although the dense woodland vegetation spatially separates the interior of the landscape character area from surrounding suburban development, traffic noise from Ernest W. Barrett Parkway is prevalent along the western side of the property.

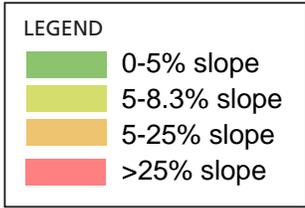
Spatial organization of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area is centered around the Wallis House, which is situated near the center of the parcel on a low knoll (see figure 15). The house is part of a cluster of buildings that includes the smokehouse/garage, the original well, the well house, and two chicken coops. The parcel is accessed on its west side where a gravel-paved farm lane enters the property. Woodland vegetation encloses the east and west sides of the knoll, surrounding a clearing that extends from the Wallis House to the northern end of the parcel. Ornamental domestic plantings concentrated along the southern side of the parcel spatially separate the Wallis House and outbuildings from the road, although road noise is still noticeable within the interior portions of the small site.

### *Views and Vistas*

Woodland vegetation obscures views from the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. Adjacent homes are visible along the southeast and northeast edges of the property. Due to the elevation of the property above the Wallis Farms subdivision, portions of the surrounding rolling wooded landscape are visible from the signal hill. Of particular importance is the vista northeast from the signal hill. From this point, both Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains are partially visible through vegetative growth. Within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, views are enclosed by dense vegetation on the east, south, and west sides of the property. To the north are partial views of the adjacent Wallis Farms subdivisions. See figure 16 for a graphic depiction of historic views both extant and lost within the project area.



Obscured view from the Wallis House toward the signal hill (QE 2021)



Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm CLR  
Environmental Assessment

FIGURE 14  
Existing Conditions: Slopes



**LEGEND**

- Enclosed space
- Open space
- Building
- High point enclosed by steep slopes
- Project Area Boundary



Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm CLR  
Environmental Assessment

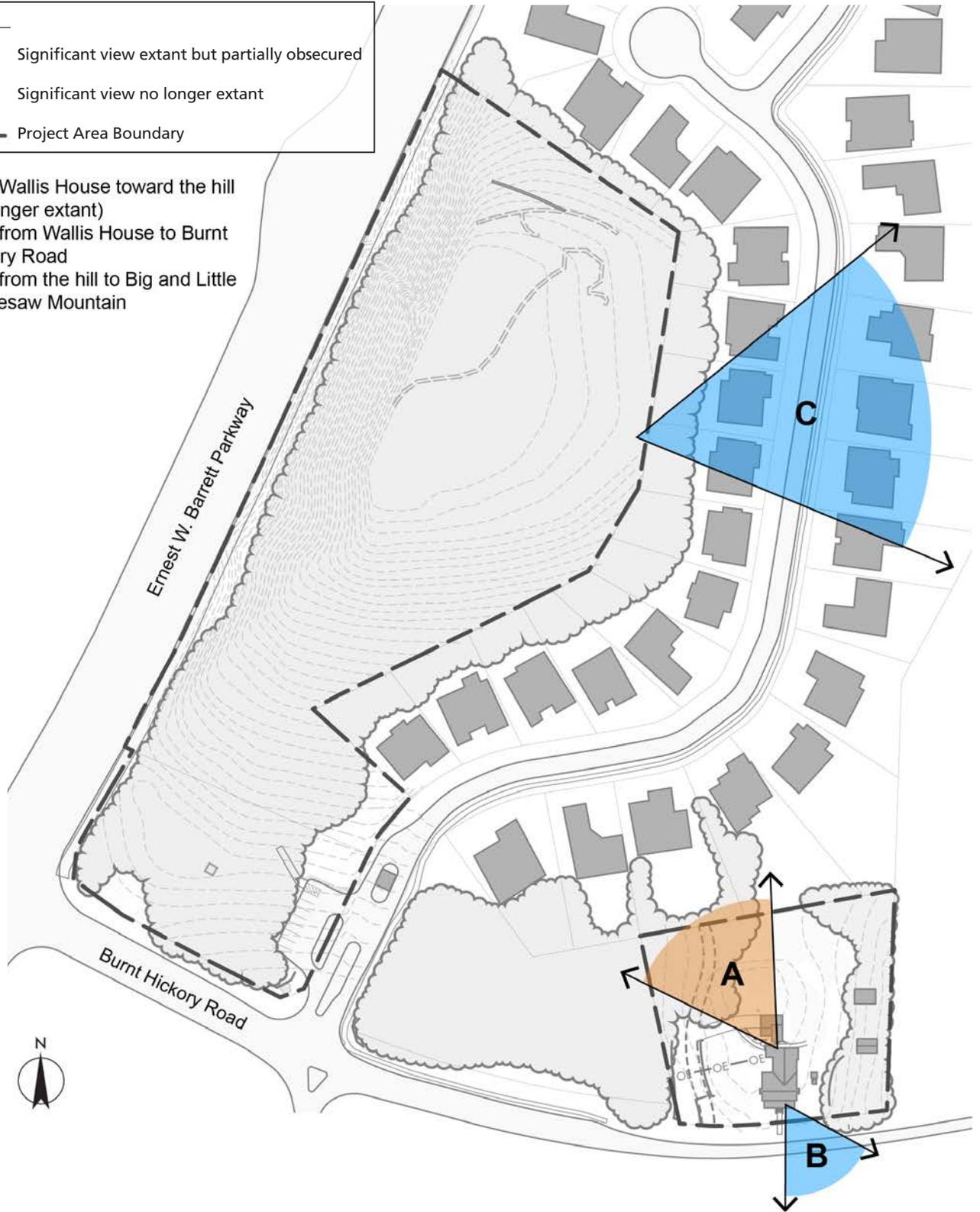
FIGURE 15  
Existing Conditions: Spatial Organization



**LEGEND**

- Significant view extant but partially obscured
- Significant view no longer extant
- Project Area Boundary

- A** View Wallis House toward the hill (no longer extant)
- B** View from Wallis House to Burnt Hickory Road
- C** View from the hill to Big and Little Kennesaw Mountain



Signal Hill and Field Hospital at the Wallis Farm CLR  
Environmental Assessment

FIGURE 16  
Existing Conditions: Historic Views

### *Vegetation*

Vegetation within the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area is dominated by woodland vegetation comprising three forest types. Upland mesic forest is the most common forest type within the area and is located in rocky, dry locations at mid to high elevations along the eastern and northern portions of the signal hill, as well as the southwest corner of the site. This forest type is dominated by black oak (*Quercus velutina*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), hickory (*Carya ovata*), ash (*Fraxinus americana*), and mature loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*), with understory elm (*Ulmus rubra*) and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) seedlings as well as flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). A Transitional/Bottomland Forest is located at low elevations in the southern portion of the landscape character area, where water collects at the base of the hill. The canopy is characterized by tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), Carolina red maple (*Acer rubrum* var. *trilobum*), southern sugar maple (*Acer saccharum floridanum*), and lesser quantities of mature pine. Within the understory are redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), and grape (*Vitis* spp.). Planted Pine Woodland forest stabilizes the steep slope along the west side of the hill. In this location, dense shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata* or *Pinus virginiana*) woodland was planted in association with construction of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway. Seedling sugar maple, red oak, and hickory volunteers comprise the understory.

Vegetation within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area includes woodland, meadow, ornamental plantings, and scattered individual trees. Woodland vegetation is located along the west and east sides of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. Numerous small volunteer trees have also begun to grow within cleared areas at the top of the knoll and on the north side of the property. The woodland on the west and northwest side of the landscape character area is a mix of post oak, loblolly pine, elm (*Ulmus* spp.), and catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*), with an edge of thick understory vegetation. Along the fencerow on the east boundary of the parcel are post oak, elm, hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) and walnut (*Juglans nigra*) trees. Thick clusters of low woody vegetation including multiflora rose (*Rosa* spp.) and poison ivy vines are overgrowing the two chicken coops along the base of the slope.

A mix of grasses and herbaceous species, predominantly aster (*Symphotrichum* spp.) and goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), create a meadow that extends from the smokehouse/garage to the northern boundary of the parcel. Scattered walnut (*Juglans* spp.), holly (*Ilex* spp.), dogwood, and juniper (*Juniperus* spp.) are present within this meadow.

Ornamental plantings are located throughout the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. A cluster of crapemyrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) is located immediately southeast of the Wallis House along the edge of the road cut. Vinca forms a dense groundcover on the east side of the Wallis House, extending from the brick walkway at the south side of the building to the southeast corner of the property, and north to the south chicken coop. Along the front (south) side of the house are spirea (*Spirea* spp.) and honeysuckle, interspersed with tall herbaceous volunteers. Several yuccas (*Yucca* spp.) are located southwest of the house near the road cut, and a magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) is situated immediately west of the house. Remnants of a planting area located off the southwest corner of the smokehouse/garage are evidenced by ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*) and liriopse that has spread out of the confines of the original bed. Another magnolia is clustered with a walnut tree off the northwest corner of the smokehouse/garage; it is unclear if this tree is a volunteer or was planted intentionally.

Remnant lawn extends from the west side of the Wallis House to the retaining wall along the east side of the farm lane; within the lawn are numerous woody volunteers, including elm and pine (*Pinus* spp.) seedlings and scattered spirea. Turf grasses continue between the Wallis House and the smokehouse/garage, and they become intermixed with the meadow vegetation to the northwest of the house.

Individual trees identified as hazards to buildings, structures, or other historic resources are also noted within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. A walnut tree is located immediately adjacent to the southwest corner of the smokehouse/garage, with branches extending over the building. An elm is located south of the west addition to the smokehouse/garage, approximately 2 feet west of the walnut tree. The trunk is located adjacent to the building foundation, and branches extend over the structure. A large post oak is growing within the retaining wall at the west side of the farm lane. Dead and live branches extend over the utility line. One branch of an elm tree to the west of the Wallis House extends over the west chimney. Roots of an elm are located immediately adjacent to the foundation of the Wallis House at its northeast



Hazard walnut and elm trees adjacent to the smokehouse (QE 2021)

corner. A dogwood to the south of the well house and original well has dead branches extending over the structures. The tree is overgrown with poison ivy and leaning to the north. An elm located to the south of the well house and original well is topped and has the potential to impact the adjacent structures. A poor condition dogwood is growing from the retaining wall to the east of the Wallis House. A large red oak (*Quercus rubra*) to the southeast of the Wallis House is in poor condition. Branches are damaged, the tree is overgrown with ivy, and the tree exhibits evidence of a hollow trunk. A large post oak to the west of the farm lane has a large scar and rot on the north side of the trunk and is growing with poison ivy. Volunteer magnolia and walnut trees are impacting the north side of the smokehouse/garage.

### ***Circulation Patterns and Features***

***Vehicular Circulation.*** Burnt Hickory Road is located along the southern boundary of both landscape character areas and serves as the primary vehicular access route to the project area. Ernest W. Barrett Parkway extends along the western side of the project area and meets Burnt Hickory Road at a heavily trafficked intersection at the southwest corner of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. Wallis Farm Way, a two-way, asphalt-paved secondary residential street, extends north from Burnt Hickory Road to access the Wallis Farms residential development dividing the two landscape character areas. Mt. Calvary Road, another two-lane residential street, extends south from this intersection on the opposite side of Burnt Hickory Road. See figure 3.

A small asphalt-paved parking area is located on the west side of Wallis Farm Way, near the intersection of Wallis Farm Way and Burnt Hickory Road. It was constructed in 2002 with the intention that it would serve future visitors. It contains seven standard parking spaces and two accessible spaces. The parking area provides access to an unfinished trailhead that was constructed in anticipation of a trail route on the signal hill.

The Wallis House Landscape Character Area is accessed via the farm lane extending north from Burnt Hickory Road. Visibility of the entrance is partially obscured by dense vegetation. Vehicular access is controlled by a white plastic gate connected to trees flanking the driveway. The farm lane consists of a gravel-paved road grade flanked by retaining walls. Vegetative growth within the farm lane grade is extensive, and the gravel surface is in poor condition. The grade continues along its alignment into the northern portion of the parcel, although the surface is overgrown and no longer apparent. Dense vegetation at the southwest corner of the site obscures views of oncoming traffic in both directions at the southern end of the farm lane.

Approximately 80 feet north of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area parcel boundary, a concrete driveway extends east from the farm lane to the garage. The concrete driveway is approximately 60 feet long, and measures between 13 feet 10 inches and 10 feet 2 inches wide. Extensive cracking, spalling, and vegetative growth are present on the concrete driveway, which is in poor condition.



Concrete driveway overgrown with vegetation  
(QE 2021)

*Pedestrian Circulation.* Pedestrian circulation in the immediate vicinity of the project area includes sidewalks outside of the subject parcel boundaries that connect the project area to adjacent suburban areas; walkways at the Wallis House; and an unfinished trailhead within the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area.

At the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, concrete sidewalks are located on the north side of Burnt Hickory Road and along the east side of Wallis Farm Way. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide and in good condition; however, the sidewalk along Burnt Hickory Road ends approximately 80 feet west of the Wallis House driveway and therefore does not provide a continuous pedestrian connection between the two landscape character areas. Along the west side of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway, the sidewalk transitions to a 10-foot wide asphalt-paved bicycle trail. There are no formally developed pedestrian trails within the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. At the northwest corner of the parking lot is an unfinished trailhead consisting of a 45-foot long, 6-foot wide concrete walkway extending into the woods. The walkway was intended to connect to a hiking trail that has not been constructed.

At the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, a concrete walkway extends from the bottom of the Wallis House front steps to the edge of Burnt Hickory Road, where it terminates at the top of the road cut. The walkway measures approximately 44 inches wide and is in fair condition. Although the surface is largely intact, the walkway exhibits some weathering, cracking, and vegetative encroachment. On the north side of the Wallis House, a series of irregular concrete walkways connects the concrete driveway, smokehouse, back porch of the Wallis House, and the yard to the east of the house. A curving concrete sidewalk approximately 48 inches wide extends from the south side of the concrete driveway to the back porch of the Wallis House, where it connects to a set of wood steps. The walkway is in fair condition. The surface is overgrown by herbaceous vegetation, partially buried, and exhibits wear and cracking. Immediately north of the Wallis House back porch, the concrete walkway connects to an irregular series

of concrete slabs that extend between the back porch of the house and the south entrance to the smokehouse/garage. The concrete slabs are partially buried by soil and vegetation, but otherwise appear to be in fair condition. A poorly defined path extends along the north side of the Wallis House, connecting from the back porch and smokehouse/garage to the east yard. Near the smokehouse/garage, partially buried irregular stones define a 3-foot wide walkway. The walkway extends approximately 25 feet to the east, but the surface becomes less apparent at its eastern end.

### *Buildings and Structures*

Buildings and structures within the landscape are generally located within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. They include the Wallis House, the smokehouse/garage, the north and south chicken coops, the well house, the original well, and retaining walls. The smokehouse/garage, the north and south chicken coops, the well house, and several retaining walls are not from the site's period of significance and are therefore considered non-contributing features of the landscape. The non-contributing structures are discussed here; the Wallis House and the original well are discussed under the "Historic Structures" heading below.

*Smokehouse/Garage.* The smokehouse/garage is located approximately 10 feet north of the Wallis House. The structure incorporates a single-story front gable frame portion on the south side, a single-story shed-roof carport spanning the rear (north) elevation, and a smaller shed roof frame carport located on the west side of the structure at the terminus of the driveway. The smokehouse is set on a stone pier foundation, clad in weatherboard siding, and topped by a corrugated metal roof (CRA 2020). The entrance to the gabled portion of the structure is accessed by two concrete steps; entrances to the carports are on grade. The smokehouse is in poor condition due to deterioration of the envelope and the presence of hazard trees in close proximity to the structure.



Views of the smokehouse/garage (QE 2021)

*Chicken Coops (north and south).* A single-story, shed-roof, frame chicken coop building is located east-northeast of the Wallis House. The structure is located on the east side of the topographic rise, at an elevation approximately 10 feet below the Wallis House. The building is deteriorated and overgrown with vegetation. Another chicken coop is located east of the Wallis House, approximately 30 feet south of the north chicken coop. The building consists of a single-story front-gable frame building oriented east-west on a mortared stone foundation. Although encroached upon by adjacent trees and vines, the building itself is in fair condition.

*Well House.* A 5-by-5-foot plywood box shelters the well immediately east of the Wallis House. The well likely dates to the early 20th century; the plywood structure is a late 20th century addition and is in fair condition.

*Retaining Walls.* Stone retaining walls are located within the Wallis House Landscape Character Area in three locations: along the southern portion of the farm lane grade, to the south of the smokehouse, and to the east of the well house and original well (see figure 6). These walls are relatively small in scale and vary in height from approximately 8 inches to approximately 32 inches. The two retaining walls flanking the southern portion of the farm lane are constructed of dry laid stone. The other retaining walls are constructed of mortared stone. The conditions of the retaining walls vary from fair to poor. There are deteriorated sections along most of the walls, and vegetation growth within the walls is common.

### ***Small-Scale Features***

Small-scale features within the cultural landscape are most prevalent around the Wallis House and include fences and gates, a light post, a debris pile, and a historic marker near the southeast edge of the project area along Burnt Hickory Road. Within the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, small-scale features are limited to a wire fence along the northern boundary of the site. These features are described below.

*Fences and Gates.* At the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, a wood post and board fence are situated between the concrete path immediately north of the Wallis House and the retaining wall on the south side of the smokehouse/garage. Although at one point in time the fence may have extended around the planting bed at the southwest corner of the garage, only four posts remain from the original fence, and several segments of railing have become disconnected from the posts. The most intact section is located at the west end of the feature, where the fence abuts the driveway. At the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, barbed wire fence remnants are visible in a rough line along the ruins of a stacked stone wall at the northwest end of the signal hill. The fence remnants are visible as short segments of wire embedded within trees; no fence posts remain. The Wallis House Landscape Character Area entry gate separating the farm lane and Burnt Hickory Road is a white plastic non-permanent barrier held in place by two chains wrapped around trees on both sides of the farm lane. It is in fair condition. Various types of perimeter fencing edge the boundaries of both the Wallis House Landscape Character Area and Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. The fences are typically wood board, powder coated chain link, or iron picket fences. Although the fences are located on adjacent private property, they are clearly visible from within both landscape character areas. A steel rail fence edges the bike path along Ernest W. Barrett Parkway on the west side of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area.

*Light Post.* A single decorative iron light post stands at the west side of the smokehouse/garage, near the corner of the driveway and the concrete path that leads up to the rear of the house. Although the light post itself is in good condition, it is situated within a planting bed and is overgrown with vines.

*Debris Pile.* A cluster of debris including wood railings, posts, tree branches, plastic garden containers, and a concrete slab is located in the clearing north of the Wallis House. Grasses and vines have begun to envelop the debris pile.

*Utilities.* An overhead electric line extends from a post to the east of the farm lane to the north end of the Wallis House.

*Historical Marker.* A historical marker is located immediately south of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area along Burnt Hickory Road, near the southeast corner of the parcel. The marker was placed in 1953 by the Georgia Historical Commission and is composed of a metal plaque situated atop a pole. The plaque commemorates the Wallis House as General O.O. Howards Headquarters during the Atlanta Campaign. Although the marker is in good condition, it is almost entirely obscured by vegetation and there is no visual connection between the marker and the house.

### *Archeological Sites*

The project area contains two previously recorded archeological sites: Confederate earthworks present on the signal hill and the Wallis House lot. These resources are discussed under “Archeological Resources” heading below.

### *Historic Structures*

#### *Wallis House*

The Wallis House is a single-story, side-gabled frame dwelling with rear additions situated on a level knoll approximately 35 feet north of Burnt Hickory Road. The original portion of the house, likely constructed ca. 1853, consists of a center-hall plan with a symmetrical central front entryway flanked by equally sized rooms on the east and west. Two brick chimneys are located on the east and west sides of the structure. A porch with wood deck, oriented toward Burnt Hickory Road on the south side of the structure, shelters the front entry to the house. The residence sits on a mortared fieldstone foundation, is clad in white-painted weatherboard siding, and is topped with an asphalt shingle roof. Two shed-roofed rear additions and a gable-oriented porch are situated on the north end of the structure, and date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century and the mid-twentieth century (CRA 2020).



Views of the Wallis House front (left) and rear (right) (QE 2021)

#### *Original Well*

Immediately north of the well house is a small on-grade shed-roofed structure sheltering a below-grade stone-lined cellar or greenhouse. The above-grade portion of the structure is square with windows located on the east, south, and west sides. A steeply pitched corrugated metal roof drains to the north. Below-grade, a wooden ladder connects to wooden shelves extending around the mortared stone space. The structure is in poor condition.

## **Archeological Resources**

The project area contains two previously recorded archeological sites: Confederate earthworks present on the signal hill and the Wallis House lot. The Confederate earthworks site consists of two segments of earthworks at the northwestern end of the signal hill. Three additional features may relate to historic use of the property but are not recorded archeological sites. Remnants of a stone wall extend east-west along the northern end of the signal hill. In approximately the same alignment as the wall are fragments of barbed wire that were likely part of a post and wire fence. At the southwestern end of the signal hill is a possible building remnant consisting of a roughly rectangular depression lined with stone. The earthworks were originally mapped in 2008 by Southeastern Archaeological Services, Inc. for a proposed widening of Ernest W. Barrett Parkway (Greshman and Jones 2009). A 2016 project by the National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center surveyed both the previously identified earthworks on the hill as well as the Wallis House lot. Archeological investigations at the Wallis House lot included 11 shovel tests and a metal detector survey conducted in north-south transects beginning at the southwest corner of the site. Shovel tests recovered several items of interest related to Civil War use of the site (Jansen 2017).

## **Methodology**

Potential impacts on cultural resources are evaluated based on changes to character-defining features of the resource, which are the characteristics of a historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register. This approach is derived from the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*, Director's Order #28: *Cultural Resource Management Guidelines*, as well as the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation implementing the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. Character-defining features contribute to a property's integrity, which is composed of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and/or association. Shaped through time by historical land-use and management practices, as well as politics and property laws, levels of technology, and economic conditions, cultural landscapes provide a living record of an area's past, as well as a visual chronicle of its history. Archeological resources are the remains of past human activity and the records documenting the analysis of such remains (NPS 1998). Potential impacts on archeological resources are evaluated based on the amount of disturbance to an archeological resource and the degree to which the integrity remains or is otherwise lost without recordation of the remains. The current conditions of the cultural resources, as presented under the "Affected Environment" section above, were compared with the alternatives described in chapter 2 to determine the potential impacts on cultural resources.

## **Impacts of Alternative 1: No-Action Alternative**

Under the no-action alternative, there would be no protection of cultural resources within the project area, and existing trends would be allowed to continue. The impacts of the existing trends are described below, organized by landscape character area.

### **Signal Hill Landscape Character Area**

At the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, the historic view from the top of the hill towards Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains would continue to be obscured by vegetation. This, along with an ongoing lack of formalized access to the summit or other viewpoint, would continue to limit the site's ability to convey its association with the Atlanta Campaign and its relationship to the mountains. Overall, the no-

action alternative would result in a continuation of the diminished historic integrity of the cultural resources at the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area.

### ***Wallis House Landscape Character Area***

At the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, the historic Wallis House and original well would continue to destabilize due to lack of intervention. Vegetation would continue to overgrow the structures, which would likely result in continued degradation of the structures. Over time, this could result in a loss of historic material and, therefore, a loss of historic integrity. Hazard trees would not be addressed and would continue to pose a risk of damaging the structures through falling branches or trees. Under the no-action alternative, the historic views to the signal hill and towards Burnt Hickory Road would continue to be obscured by vegetation or diminished by adjacent modern development. This would continue to limit the



View of original well (QE 2021)

site's ability to convey its association with the Atlanta Campaign and its relationship to the signal hill and the nearby New Salem Church. Non-historic ornamental and invasive vegetation would continue to grow within the landscape, which would continue to diminish the historic appearance and character to the period of significance. Non-contributing structures, buildings, and small-scale features such as the well house, north and south chicken coops, smokehouse/garage, retaining walls, and concrete walkways would continue to result in a diminished integrity to the period of significance. However, because there would be no ground disturbing activities undertaken under the no-action alternative, any existing archeological resources would remain intact and undisturbed. Additionally, no new, non-contributing buildings or small-scale features would be introduced into the landscape. Overall, the no-action alternative would result in a continuation of the diminished historic integrity of the cultural resources at the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. Additionally, because degradation of materials would continue to occur, additional loss of integrity of materials, workmanship, design, and feeling may occur.

### **Impacts of Alternative 2: Proposed Action**

Under alternative 2, cultural resources within the project area would be protected, preserved, and rehabilitated. Overall, the proposed action would have both adverse and beneficial impacts on cultural resources within the project area, including the cultural landscape, historic structures, and archeological resources. These impacts are discussed in detail below, organized by landscape character area.

### ***Signal Hill Landscape Character Area***

At the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area, the historic topography and archeological sites of the Confederate earthworks would be preserved. The removal of fallen trees, branches, and understory vegetation from the vicinity of the earthworks, as well as the maintenance of leaf litter over the earthworks would protect the adjacent topography and the resource itself. These actions would be undertaken with oversight and guidance from an archeologist in order to ensure no adverse impacts on the resources occur during project implementation. Although the earthworks would not be entirely restored to their original

condition and appearance, long-term forest management would limit future damage of the resources and ensure their preservation.

Vegetation management under the proposed action would partially reestablish historically important views from the top of the signal hill towards Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains. Although the remaining vegetation would continue to partially block and diminish the integrity of the historic views, interpretive signage would provide additional context and allow the landscape to partially convey its association with the Atlanta Campaign. Modern development between the signal hill and Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains would detract from the historic views; however, understory vegetation would visually screen the closest development, the adjacent Wallis Farm subdivision. This would somewhat mitigate the visual distraction from the signal hill and allow the view to Big and Little Kennesaw Mountains to remain the focal point. Although the views that would be restored on the apex of the signal hill would be small when compared to the views that existed during the period of significance when the apex was void of large vegetation, the proposed action would reestablish the most historically important views from the apex.

Circulation improvements proposed under the proposed action would result in non-contributing circulation routes being added to the cultural landscape. The trail from the parking lot to the signal hill would introduce a circulation pattern that did not exist during the period of significance. The trail would be designed to be compatible with the surrounding woodlands to the extent possible in terms of material and color while meeting relevant standards. The signal hill's historic appearance is already diminished by the wooded nature of the area (during the period of significance, the apex of the hill was likely void of large vegetation); therefore, the creation of a pedestrian trail through this area of diminished historic integrity would not result in a substantial visual impact on the landscape. The sidewalk connecting the two landscape character areas would also be visually intrusive and introduce a non-historic circulation pattern on the landscape. If the sidewalk is located parallel to the roadway, it would roughly follow an existing circulation pattern, though it would deviate somewhat due to its location offset from the roadway. If the NPS obtains an easement from the Wallis Farms homeowner's association and routes the sidewalk away from the roadway, the sidewalk would not follow any existing circulation routes, and therefore would be somewhat more intrusive on the landscape than if it was routed along the roadside. Under either location, the sidewalk would be located on the exterior of the landscape character areas and away from the core historic features. Additionally, the sidewalk would be mostly visually screened by the existing vegetation. Therefore, the visual impacts of this sidewalk would not detract from the historic character of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area.

Under the proposed action, new small-scale features would be added into the landscape, including signage and fences. These features would be modern intrusions on the landscape and would somewhat visually detract from the historic character; however, these intrusions would not result in substantial changes to the landscape. Some of these features, such as the park information and fee signage, would be located in the parking area, which is outside of the core historic area of signal hill. Interpretive signage at the signal hill would be carefully sited and designed to limit the visual disturbance on the landscape. Fencing at the signal hill would be installed in the location of a missing historic fence line and would be interpreted through wayside signage. New fencing added to the project area would be identified as such in interpretive signage. Due to the potential for below grade archeological features on the signal hill, an NPS archeologist would conduct an archeological study or investigation before conducting any ground-disturbing activity for installation of these features, thereby minimizing the risk of impacts on these potential resources. Although these small-scale features would result in intrusions on the landscape, they

would be fully reversible and would not diminish the overall remaining historic integrity of the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area.

The proposed action would result in both beneficial and adverse impacts on cultural resources at the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area. While activities associated with adding new circulation patterns and small-scale features would result in modern intrusions on the landscape and would slightly visually detract from the historic character, actions associated with vegetation management would restore and protect the remaining historic character. Overall, the Signal Hill Landscape Character Area would retain its remaining historic integrity and would be better able to convey its association with the period of significance and the Atlanta Campaign when compared to the no-action alternative.

### ***Wallis House Landscape Character Area***

At the Wallis House Landscape Character Area, the NPS would conduct a historic structures report, which would provide the NPS with more information on the historic buildings that remain, the condition of the structures themselves, and ways to protect and preserve the remaining historic integrity. Although the specific impacts would depend on the treatment recommendations laid out in the historic structures report, they would result in an overall benefit to the landscape character area by preserving the buildings and structures important to the period of significance.

Vegetation management at the Wallis House Landscape Character Area would restore some of the lost historic integrity of setting and feeling because non-contributing ornamental vegetation would be removed and replaced with vegetation more representative of the historic setting. The preservation of potential witness trees would protect some of the remaining historic integrity of setting and feeling. The assessment and potential removal of hazard trees would result in the protection of historic features that may be damaged by the trees if left unchecked. This would assist with the long-term protection due to reduced risk of damage by growing tree roots or falling branches or entire trees. Selective vegetation removal on the southern portion of the parcel would result in the rehabilitation of the historic view between the Wallis House and Burnt Hickory Road, which would restore some of the lost historic integrity of setting, feeling, and association. On the northeastern portion of the parcel, the addition of canopy trees and understory vegetation would also result in the adjacent modern development being less visually intrusive on the landscape. Overall, vegetation management would result in a noticeable improvement of the landscape's historic appearance to the period of significance.

Under the proposed action, some historic circulation patterns would be preserved and new, non-contributing circulation patterns would be added. The historic circulation pattern of the farm lane would be preserved through the repair of the southern portion of the lane and the protection of the northern portion following an archeological study and recommendations of an archeologist. The removal of non-contributing concrete paths would restore some of the historic character through removal of non-contributing circulation patterns. However, the overall circulation patterns of the site would be altered due to the proposed accessible route throughout the landscape and into the Wallis House. The extent of the alteration would depend on the final siting and design of the accessible route. The historic structures report would be used to determine the appropriate location for entry into the house, which would inform the specific location. The accessible route would diminish the integrity of setting, design, and feeling of the Wallis House Landscape Character Area because it would introduce non-contributing materials and circulation patterns throughout the landscape and within the direct setting of the historic house. However,

the route would be fully reversible and would be designed to be compatible with the historic character in terms of color, materials, and scale. Overall, the changes to circulation patterns in the landscape character area would result in a noticeable change in the historic appearance to the period of significance; however, these changes would not result in an overall loss of historic integrity.

Stabilization of the Wallis House and the original well would result in short-term protection and preservation of the historic structures. The historic structures report and archeological investigations would result in long-term protection of these historic structures because they would identify specific treatments that should be undertaken by the park in order to more fully preserve or rehabilitate these resources. Although the specific impacts would depend on the treatment recommendations laid out in the historic structures report, they would result in an overall benefit to the landscape character area by preserving the buildings and structures important to the period of significance.

Removal of non-contributing structures including the well house, the north and south chicken coops, retaining walls, and potentially the smokehouse/garage would restore some lost integrity of setting, feeling, and design of the landscape because structures that do not represent the period of significance would be removed. If the smokehouse/garage is adapted for reuse as a comfort station, it would result in a non-contributing building remaining within the landscape. This would not result in a new adverse impact on the landscape but would allow the existing diminished integrity to continue. Because the building itself is not considered a contributing building, its adaption for a new use would not result in an impact on a historic resource. If the smokehouse/garage is demolished, it would result in the removal of a non-contributing structure from the landscape, which would restore some historic integrity. A new building constructed for a comfort station, however, would introduce a new, non-contributing building into the landscape where none previously existing. This would alter the setting and spatial organization of the landscape around the Wallis House. To minimize the visual intrusion on the landscape, the new comfort station would be sited in a manner that it would be partially buffered by the existing wooded area northwest or west of the Wallis House. The building would also be designed to be compatible with the historic character in terms of scale, materials, and color. Construction of the building on the landscape would also be fully reversible and would not diminish the remaining historic integrity in a manner that would result in the landscape being ineligible for listing in the National Register.

The addition of small-scale features such as park signage and wayside exhibits would introduce non-contributing elements onto the landscape, which would somewhat diminish the historic character. However, these features would be carefully cited to be as minimally-intrusive on the landscape as practicable; additionally, these features would be fully reversible. The removal of non-contributing features would restore some lost historic integrity due to the removal of features that were not present during the period of significance. Overall, although the changes related to small-scale features would be noticeable alterations to the landscape, they would not result in a substantial diminishment of historic integrity.

Ground-disturbing activities required for actions such as construction of the new accessible route, construction of a new comfort station, and installation of proposed small-scale features would be carefully planned and sited following archeological investigations and recommendations by an archeologist to ensure intact archeological resources are not disturbed during project implementation. Therefore, no adverse impacts on archeological resources are anticipated under the proposed action.

The proposed action would result in both beneficial and adverse impacts on cultural resources at the Wallis House Landscape Character Area. While actions associated with adding new circulation patterns, structures, and small-scale features would result in modern intrusions on the landscape and would somewhat visually detract from the historic character, actions associated with vegetation management and removal of non-contributing structures and features would restore and reestablish some of the lost historic integrity. Overall, the Wallis House Landscape Character Area would retain its remaining historic integrity and would be better able to convey its association with the period of significance and the Atlanta Campaign when compared to the no-action alternative.

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## CHAPTER 4: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

NPS Director's Order #12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making* requires the park to make "diligent" efforts to involve the interested and affected public in the NEPA process. This process helps to achieve the following: determine the important issues and eliminate those that are not; allocate assignments among the interdisciplinary team members and/or other participating agencies; identify related projects and associated documents; identify other permits, surveys, consultations, etc. required by other agencies; and create a schedule that allows adequate time to prepare and distribute the environmental document for public review and comment before a final decision is made. This chapter documents the agencies and Tribes consulted during the NEPA process and summarizes the public review process for this EA.

### AGENCY AND TRIBAL CONSULTATION

During the NEPA process, the park contacted the following agencies and tribes for consultation:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

### National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106

As required by Section 106 of the NHPA, the park has initiated conversations with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office and associated Tribes to assess the effect of the project on historic properties. Consultation under Section 106 is ongoing, and the park will continue consultation as appropriate during project implementation.

### Endangered Species Act, Section 7

For the reasons described in chapter 1, there are no impacts anticipated on special status species. Should the avoidance measures noted not be feasible during future design or implementation, the NPS will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on the potential effects of the proposed action on federally listed species as required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

### PUBLIC REVIEW

The EA will be on formal public and agency review for 30 days and has been distributed to a variety of interested individuals, agencies, and organizations. It also is available on the internet at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/kemo>, and hard copies are available by request.

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# APPENDIX A: MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

## MITIGATION MEASURES OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

To minimize negative environmental impacts related to the action alternative, the park would implement mitigation measures whenever feasible. Exact mitigation measures to be implemented would depend upon the final design and approval of plans by relevant agencies and would be determined during future design and construction phases. The following is a list of actions that the park may implement directly or may require of contractors:

- Instruct all personnel engaged in undertaking any portion of the proposed action on the sensitivity of the general environment, and monitor their activities in order to mitigate and minimize potential impacts on natural and cultural resources during construction. Corridors for construction vehicle movement would be established and defined on the ground. Staging of construction equipment would be restricted to the road corridor, parking lots, and other identified previously disturbed areas to avoid impacts on natural and cultural resources.
- Clearly state all protection measures in the construction specifications, and instruct workers to avoid conducting activities beyond the fenced construction zone.
- Fence all areas in order to keep related disturbances within an NPS-defined and minimal impact area required for construction.
- Implement standard noise abatement measures during construction. Standard noise abatement measures could include the following elements: a schedule that minimizes impacts on adjacent noise-sensitive uses, the use of the best available noise control techniques wherever feasible, the use of hydraulically or electrically powered impact tools when feasible, and location of temporary noise sources as far from sensitive uses as possible.
- Minimize soil erosion by limiting the time that soil is left exposed and by applying other erosion control measures, such as erosion matting and silt fencing, in construction areas to reduce erosion, surface scouring, and discharge to water bodies.
- Implement measures to prevent invasive plants from entering construction areas, such as ensuring that construction-related equipment arrives at the site free of mud or seed-bearing materials and certifying that all seeds and straw material are weed-free.
- Remove invasive plants that may have entered construction areas using approaches prescribed in the park Integrated Pest Management Program.
- Rehabilitate areas that are disturbed, either during construction or areas that were previously disturbed, with NPS-approved vegetation, as per NPS standards and consistent with the cultural landscape report.
- Immediately implement NHPA Section 106 procedures if any unknown archeological resources are uncovered during ground-disturbing activities. If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall be halted until the resources are identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in accordance with pertinent laws and regulations, including the stipulations of the 2008 Programmatic Agreement Among the park (US Department of the Interior), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.
- Surveys for state rare or sensitive plants would be conducted prior to implementation of the project as necessary to ensure avoidance of these species.

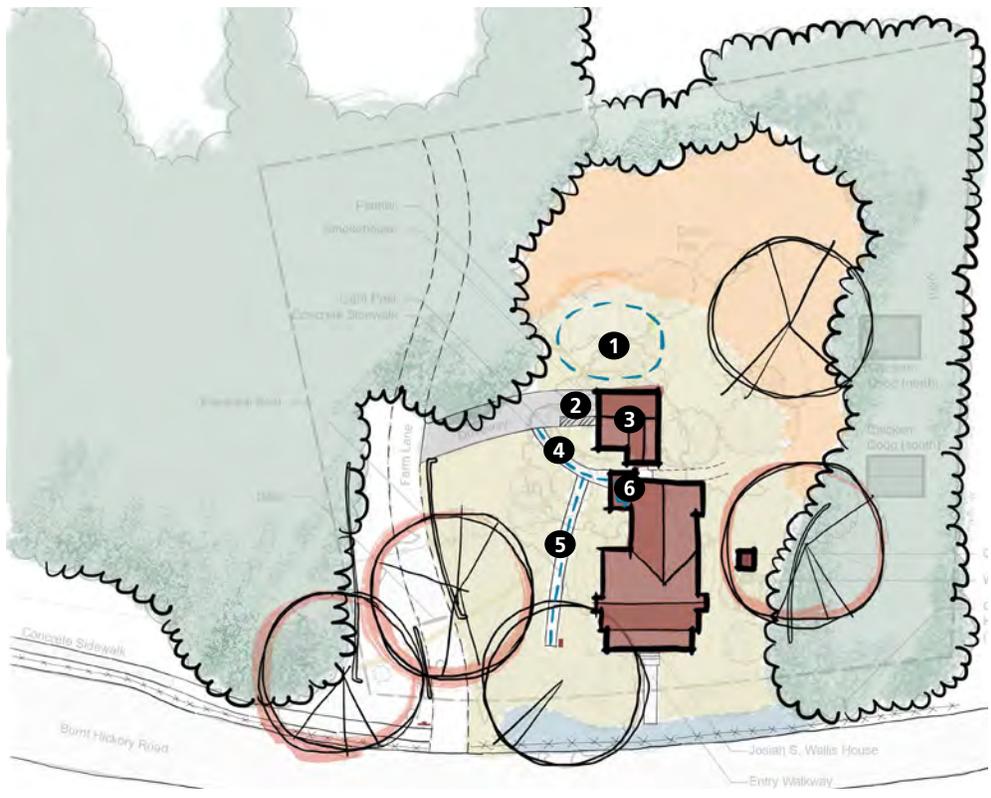
- Tree removal activities would not take place during the roosting season of the northern long-eared bat (June 1-July 31) to avoid disturbance to potential maternity roosts in the area. If it is determined that tree removal is needed during these seasons, the NPS would coordinate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure no impacts would occur.
- Apply the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties* to the extent practicable for all proposed changes on the landscape.

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**APPENDIX B: WALLIS HOUSE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA  
EXAMPLE TREATMENT OPTIONS**

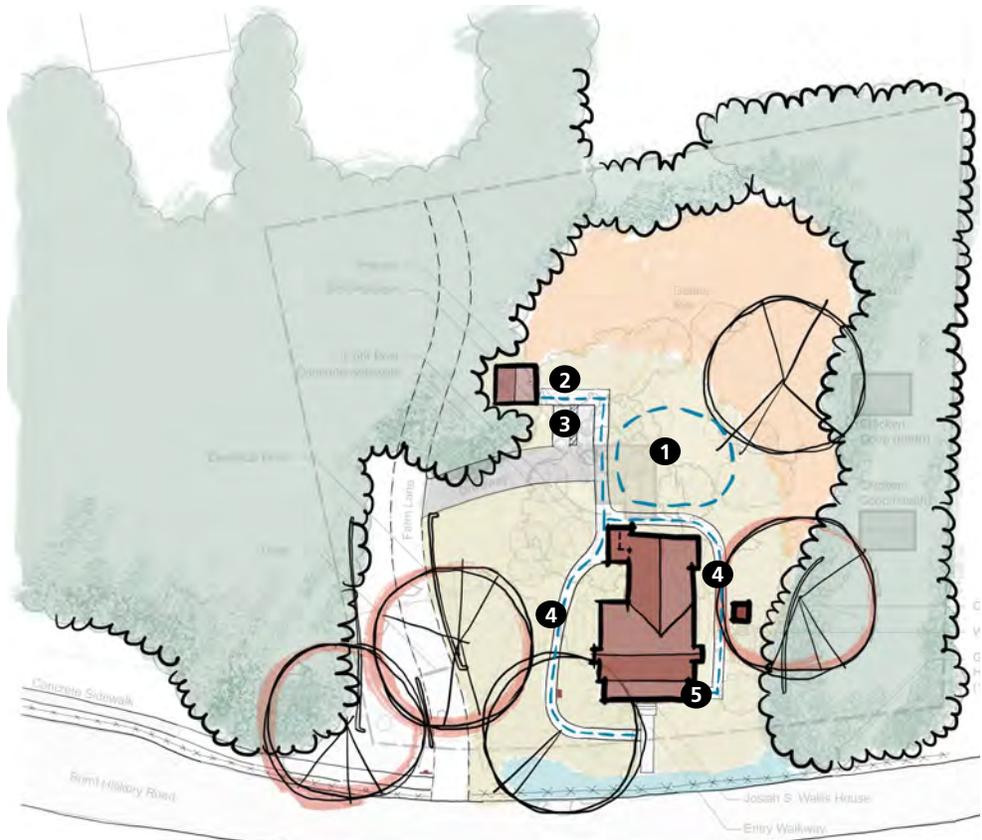
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- 1 Outdoor education space
- 2 Parking at existing driveway
- 3 Smokehouse/ garage converted to comfort station
- 4 Repaired existing sidewalk
- 5 New accessible walkway
- 6 Accessible entrance to Wallis House



**Option 1** recommends renovating the existing smokehouse/garage as a comfort station. In this option, the east end of the existing driveway would provide an accessible parking space, and existing walkways north of the house would be repaired to provide universal access to the site and into the north (rear) portion of the house. A new accessible walkway would extend along the west side of the house to the "Homestead, Hospital, Headquarters" wayside.

- 1 Outdoor education space
- 2 New comfort station
- 3 New accessible parking space
- 4 New accessible loop walkway
- 5 Outdoor lift to Wallis House front porch



**Option 2** recommends constructing a new comfort station northwest of the house. An accessible parking space would be provided on the north side of the existing driveway. New accessible walkways would form a loop around the exterior of the Wallis House, and a lift would connect to the east side of the front porch, on the opposite side of the structure from the primary view of the house.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibilities for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.