



# Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Johnson Hall State Historic Site

City of Johnstown, Fulton County

July 2020

Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor

Erik Kulleseid  
Commissioner



**NEW YORK**  
STATE OF  
OPPORTUNITY.

**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

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# Acknowledgements

The Johnson Hall State Historic Site Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement are the result of a dedicated effort by many persons. The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation wishes to acknowledge the time and effort of everyone who participated in the development of these documents.

In a cooperative effort, the Agency worked with and coordinated input from the Friends of Johnson Hall, the New York Natural Heritage Program, and many others whose service to this Master Plan is of unparalleled value.

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**SEQR  
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A DRAFT EIS  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**

**Date of Notice:** July 8, 2020  
**Lead Agency:** New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)  
**Title of Action:** Adoption and Implementation of a Master Plan for Johnson Hall State Historic Site  
**SEQR Status:** Type I  
**Location of Action:** Johnson Hall State Historic Site is located in the City of Johnstown, Fulton County, NY.

This Notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

OPRHP, as lead agency, has determined that the adoption and implementation of a Master Plan for Johnson Hall State Historic Site may have a significant effect on the environment. As a result, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been prepared. Copies of the Draft Johnson Hall Master Plan and the DEIS are now available for review and comment.

A public meeting on the Draft Master Plan and DEIS will be hosted online, Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. This meeting will be recorded and made publicly available. During the meeting, Parks' staff will make a presentation about the Draft Master Plan and also be available for a question and answer session afterward. Free registration in advance of the online meeting is required in order to attend. To register, please e-mail [JohnsonHall.plan@parks.ny.gov](mailto:JohnsonHall.plan@parks.ny.gov) no later than Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 p.m.

OPRHP encourages the public to participate in the online public meeting for the Historic Site and welcomes all comments on the draft documents. An online version of the draft Master Plan and DEIS is available at the following publicly accessible website: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>. A non-digital copy of the documents can be provided by the Agency Contact listed below. Signage and posters of the Draft Master Plan will be posted on-site at Johnson Hall State Historic Site, 139 Hall Avenue, Johnstown, New York 12095.

Written comments on the Draft Master Plan/DEIS will be accepted until close of business on Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and may be submitted to [JohnsonHall.plan@parks.ny.gov](mailto:JohnsonHall.plan@parks.ny.gov) or mailed to the contact address below.

Following the comment period, OPRHP will prepare and post a Final Master Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

**Agency Contact:**  
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## Abbreviations and Acronyms Used

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ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BHS	Bureau of Historic Sites
BMP	Best Management Practices
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHP	Division for Historic Preservation
DOT	New York State Department of Transportation
EAF	Environmental Assessment Form
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FSB	Field Service Bureau
HSR	Historic Structures Report
HWA	Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
NYNHP	New York Natural Heritage Program
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
NYS	New York State
OPRHP	Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
PERI	Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst
RIN	Relative Index of Needs
RWHT	Revolutionary War Heritage Trail
SEQR(A)	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SPDES	State Pollution Discharge Elimination System
SRHP	State Register of Historic Places



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# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

**Planning and Environmental Review.** The environmental review of proposed Master Plans for State Park facilities is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). Under SEQR, agencies consider environmental impacts along with social and economic factors early in the decision-making and planning/project design process. Comprehensive land use or resource management plans are considered Type I actions under SEQR, that is, they are likely to have a significant impact on the environment and, therefore, require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) fully integrates the planning and environmental review processes.

**Guiding Principles and Policies.** Overarching OPRHP program principles, policies, and goals and objectives provide a foundation for planning, development, operation, and management decisions made during the master plan process. The following sections summarize directives considered throughout the planning process for Johnson Hall State Historic Site.

The OPRHP planning process adheres to three basic principles:

- 1) Planning must be coordinated and provide for public participation: cooperation among appropriate government organizations, the public at large, special interest groups, and the private sector is not only desirable but necessary.
- 2) Planning is a continuous process: assumptions for the classification and management of park resources must be constantly reevaluated in light of new information, changing needs and priorities, and resource character.
- 3) Planning must be comprehensive: the information base, and additional pertinent research, should support the planning process and should encompass relevant social, economic and physical factors relating to the management and operation of the park and its resources.

OPRHP has developed a number of Agency-wide policies to address management issues commonly faced by the Park and Historic Sites system. Policies cover topics such as historic collections acquisition; loan, transfer, and disposal of museum collections; public-private partnerships, recognition of donations, the management of trees and wildlife, and more.

Please visit the following website to view Agency policies:  
<https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/public-documents.aspx>

## Location and Access

Johnson Hall State Historic Site is located in the City of Johnstown, in Fulton County, New York. The approximately 33-acre Historic Site is accessible by motor vehicle from West State Street (Route 29 W), a State Highway that intersects Johnstown approximately five miles north of Interstate I-90. The Historic Site is within a one-hour driving distance from the cities of Albany, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Utica. Pedestrians and residents of Johnstown can walk to the Site using local streets and access the Site from its entrance on Hall Avenue.

## Historic Site Boundaries

The boundaries of the Historic Site are depicted in Figure 1.

## **Adjacent Land Uses**

The land uses adjacent to Johnson Hall are low-intensity in use and principally suburban-style residential lots, agricultural fields, or vacant properties. The northern perimeter of the Historic Site adjoins a public utility corridor which is a mostly green, vegetative buffer. *See Figure 2.*

## **Recreational Needs Assessment**

The Master Plan identifies Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Saratoga, Albany, Herkimer, and Oneida Counties in New York as the main service area of the Historic Site. The service area was defined based on New York State data only. Less than 5% of visitors to Johnson Hall reside in other U.S. states or in Canada. In this seven-county service area, recreational needs that equal or exceed the New York State average are low-intensity uses (relaxing in the park, picnicking, etc.), walking/jogging, fishing, camping, golfing, local winter activities, downhill winter sports and snowmobiling.

## **Economic Contribution**

Quantitative analysis provided by the Agency and other partners—such as Parks & Trails New York, and the “Economic Benefits of the New York State Park System” report prepared by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (PERI, 2017)—suggests that Johnson Hall contributes approximately \$1.78 million in tourism-related sales to the seven-county core service area. This figure reflects sales associated with spending in industries that supply goods and services to Johnson Hall; spending at establishments in preparation for visiting Johnson Hall (e.g. spending at a gas station or grocery store); spending while on a trip (e.g. spending at restaurants or local boutiques); and spending at Johnson Hall itself. These tourism-related sales are estimated to be responsible for the creation of approximately 60 jobs throughout the seven counties, e.g. employment in industries that supply goods and services to the Historic Site, jobs in various establishments throughout the service area at which visitors spend time and money, inclusive of seasonal employment at Johnson Hall.

## **Designations and Partnerships**

Johnson Hall State Historic Site, with its outstanding historic and cultural resources, is recognized on the State Register of Historic Places (listed 1980), the National Register of Historic Places (listed 1966), and as a National Historic Landmark (listed 1960). These designations do not impose legal limitations on Agency action. Johnson Hall’s major partners are listed in Chapter One of this document.

## **Legal Considerations**

Under federal law, the listing of a property in the National Register of Historic Places, or as a National Historic Landmark, places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with its property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives federal assistance. If federal monies are attached to the property, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) requires that property owners allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation—an independent agency of the federal government—an opportunity to review and comment on the project.

## **Cultural Resources and the Historic Landscape**

As the largest single landowner and most influential person in the settlement of the Mohawk Valley, Sir William was one of the most important men in colonial America. Johnson Hall, its inhabitants, and the surrounding area are associated with several broad patterns in North American history. Johnson Hall is significant to the nation’s Indigenous, early-American trading, French and Indian War (1754-1763), and Revolutionary War (1775-1763) histories.

**Pre-Historic.** Indigenous peoples’ occupation across the land known today as New York State followed the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier, approximately 11,000 years ago. Indigenous groups migrated alongside the animals they hunted and progressed through a period of more restricted movement to a well-defined social organization that employed agriculture with hunting. To date, archaeological testing at the Site has not uncovered any pre-historic collections.

**Indigenous Nations.** The Haudenosaunee, also known as the Six Nations, is a powerful league of indigenous peoples spread across a vast territory that once extended from Ontario, south to the Susquehanna River, and from Lake Erie east to the Hudson River. The Mohawk, one of the Six Nations, held claim to their namesake-Mohawk Valley. With significant value placed upon creating a tightknit community, Haudenosaunee peoples like the Mohawk often built villages of long houses—a distinctive form of communal housing—throughout the area. Given the frequency with which members of the Haudenosaunee visited Johnson Hall during the mid-1700s, it is believed that nation members erected many small temporary structures of this type across the Johnson estate.

The first European people to establish contact with Haudenosaunee were French fur traders. Both French and later Dutch fur traders moved relatively freely within Haudenosaunee territory but did not establish any extensive settlements until after the mid-17th century. In the early 18th century, the British Crown encouraged settlements throughout the Mohawk Valley as the British Crown vied with the French for control of the region. Johnson's charge to encourage settlement of his uncle Sir Peter Warren's (1703-1752) land grant, and eventually his own lands, was part of this effort to occupy and hold claim to at least a portion of the Mohawk's ancestral lands.

During the era of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), when the British colonies were pitted against those of the French, Mohawk-Anglo relations were largely shaped by Mohawk leaders. Younger Mohawks like Joseph Brant (1743-1807) observed political discussions and participated in military actions throughout the War and would become influential Haudenosaunee leaders during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). In 1759, Brant's older sister Molly Brant (c. 1736-1796) married Sir William, who was by then well-known for his capture of Fort Niagara from the French. As part of the Haudenosaunee—a matrilineal culture in which families follow the lineage and clan of the mother—native women in this culture, like Molly, held positions of power, and were responsible for managing property or dispensing advice to leaders. Molly became not only an important link between the Haudenosaunee and Sir William, but a renowned intermediary between the Mohawk people and British officials during the Revolution.

**Historic European Settlement.** Johnson Hall State Historic Site is comprised of approximately 33-acres of what was once Sir William's 700-acre working estate. Here, differing cultures, traditions, and languages combined to create a vibrant and unique life at the edge of the early American frontier. During Sir William's lifetime, the tract served not only as the family's homestead, but a regional diplomatic and trade center of the Mohawk Valley. Sir William, Molly Brant, and their eight children, resided at Johnson Hall from its building date in 1763 until Sir William's death in 1774.

As a colonial military commander, Johnson led some troops and native allies responsible for many of the defeats suffered by the French during the French and Indian War. For his victory at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, Johnson was bestowed the title of Baronet by King George II. The following year, the British Crown appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a position he held throughout his life, along with the responsibility to oversee approximately 170,000 acres of landholdings.

A council fire of the Haudenosaunee was established at Johnson Hall, where Haudenosaunee leaders would meet with Sir William to discuss important matters. Until his death in 1774, Sir William worked alongside the Haudenosaunee with dignity and respect, using knowledge of the Confederacy's customs and languages. This sagacity had a lasting impact on the Haudenosaunee's relationship with the British and contributed to the ultimate victory of the British Crown in the Anglo-French struggle for control of colonial North America.

Approximately one year after Sir William's death the Revolutionary War began and the Loyalist Johnson family—including Sir William's son, Sir John Johnson (1741-1830)—fled to Canada. Molly Brant would soon relocate to Fort Niagara in Youngstown, New York, and further cultivate diplomatic relations between the British and the Haudenosaunee. After the war, Brant would receive a substantial military pension for her services and spend the rest of her days in Kingston, Ontario (NPS, 2015).

**1800s.** In 1776, the family's property—like that of many families loyal to the British Crown—was confiscated by the State of New York. The subsequent sequestration sales of real and personal property found at the

estate influenced the ensuing changes in ownership of the house, lands, and family possessions. Over the next two decades, the property experienced several changes in private ownership. During this period, many outbuildings disappeared, the main home and stonehouses were altered to exhibit the most fashionable architectural designs of the Victorian period. During the last quarter of the 19th century, many improvements were made to the property by John Wells, a locally prominent businessman. In the early 1920s, the grounds saw the installation of a 20th century strolling park, just south of the home.

**1900s and the Establishment of Johnson Hall State Historic Site.** Johnson Hall was sold to the State of New York by a private landowner in December 1906. Throughout the twentieth century, management of the estate was handled by several State agencies. The Conservation Department—known today as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)—Division of Parks managed the estate from 1907 until 1944. A reduction in the Division of Parks’ management responsibilities during World War II led to the management of the estate by the State Education Department between 1944 and 1966. Responsibility for Johnson Hall returned to the Division of Parks in 1966, the same year the New York State Historic Trust—which later became the State Board for Historic Preservation—was established to assist with management of historic sites. The Division of Parks later became an independent State agency, the State Office of Parks and Recreation—renamed the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in 1981—and manages Johnson Hall into the present day.

## **Recreational Resources**

The information below provides a brief introduction to the existing recreational resources at Johnson Hall. For a more complete description of the environmental setting, please refer to Chapter One of this document.

**Interpretation.** Johnson Hall State Historic Site interprets the story of Johnson Hall and its inhabitants in the years between 1763-1774. Through guided tours of the home and historic grounds, and public programs, site staff and volunteers inform the public about domestic life at the estate, as well as the lasting impact of Sir William Johnson, Molly Brant, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

**Passive Recreation.** Year-round, Johnson Hall and the adjacent Johnson Hall Park—the Site’s formally designed 20<sup>th</sup> century strolling park—provide passive recreational opportunities popular with local residents. These opportunities including walking, running, snowshoeing, picnicking, dog-walking, and photography.

## **Natural Resources**

The information below provides a brief introduction to the existing conditions at Johnson Hall. For a more complete description of the environmental setting, please refer to Chapter One of this document.

**Geology and Topography.** Bedrock of the area is Canajoharie Shale, one of several black shales in a belt of indigenous Paleozoic rocks that occupy the Mohawk, Champlain, and Hudson Valleys. Topography and soils found at the Historic Site are typical of the Mohawk Valley. The topography is gently sloping and soils are dominated by well-draining Palatine and Appleton Silt Loams.

**Water and Watershed.** Hall Creek is a rocky headwater stream traversing the Historic Site’s northern portion. It is a Class C stream, appropriate for contact recreation such as fishing. The classification, however, indicates that there are no records of trout populations in the Creek. This is likely due to a general lack of refuge pools in the stretch passing through the site and the sizable bedrock outcrop that forms a small waterfall at the base of the large culvert under Johnson Avenue. Hall Creek eventually feeds into Cayadutta Creek, which does support trout. As part of the Hall Creek-Cayadutta Creek subwatershed, Hall Creek helps to supply cold, oxygenated water to the trout populations downstream.

**Land Cover, Flora and Fauna.** The approximately 33-acre State Historic Site is a post-agricultural landscape typical of the Mohawk River Valley region. Most of the Site is developed. During Sir William’s time it was part of a larger working estate with gardens and orchards. Later the grounds were maintained for formally designed landscapes. Today, most of the Site’s land cover comprises extensive lawn areas interspersed with small clusters of trees and shrubs, many not native to the region. A small island with a

floodplain forest exists in the middle of Hall Creek. There is successional forest on the Creek's north side. Overall, there are no significant natural communities and no rare or endangered species at the Historic Site.

## **Operations and Maintenance Overview**

The grounds of Johnson Hall are open year-round, sunrise to sunset, weather and conditions permitting. The road to the Site is open throughout the year. Tours of the Historic Site are available Wednesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM; Sunday from 1:00 PM through 5:00 PM; and by appointment for large groups or special events. The last tour each day begins at 4:00 PM. The Site office is open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM throughout the year.

Historic Site buildings and infrastructure are maintained by Site staff and Regional maintenance crews. The Site maintenance shop is located directly adjacent to the Site's administrative offices. Maintenance personnel maintain the grounds of the Site. This includes all mowing, weeding, snow plowing and hazardous tree monitoring and removal. They are also responsible for all upkeep and repair of structures, fences, as well as maintenance and service of all Site equipment.

The Johnstown Police and NYS Park Police both support Site activities and operations through enforcement of Site rules and regulations, vehicle and traffic law and other criminal and environmental statutes as necessary. An Emergency Action Written Preparedness Plan is posted in the Office Meeting Room. A copy is also kept on file with the Regional Safety Officer and at the Regional Park Police headquarters.

## **Agency Mission and Johnson Hall State Historic Site Interpretive Statement**

**Agency Mission Statement.** The mission of Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic and cultural resources.

**Johnson Hall State Historic Site Interpretive Statement.** Johnson Hall State Historic Site was the home and business headquarters of Sir William Johnson (c.1715-1774) from the building's construction date in 1763 until Sir William's death in 1774. As the largest single landowner and the most influential person in the settlement of the Mohawk Valley, William Johnson was one of the most important men in colonial America. As a colonial military commander, Johnson was responsible for some of the defeats suffered by the French during the French and Indian War. For his victory at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, he was made a Baronet, a royal appointment. As Superintendent of Indian Affairs, his commitment to working with the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Six Nations, in a dignified and respectful way using his knowledge of the Confederacy's language and culture, had a lasting impact on the Haudenosaunee's relationship with the British and the ultimate victory of the English in the Anglo-French struggle for North America. Johnson Hall, Sir William's final home, was the nucleus of a working estate designed to encourage frontier settlement and to further Johnson's development of his lands. A council fire of the Haudenosaunee was established at Johnson Hall. At the site, many outbuildings were necessary to house servants, enslaved persons, visitors and domestic animals, and to accommodate the chores required daily to support Johnson's extended family, colonial and indigenous visitors.

**Primary Time Period.** The primary period covered will be 1763-1774, the period of Sir William's residency at Johnson Hall.

### **Primary Themes.**

- Sir William Johnson (ca. 1715-1774), his activities as a landowner and land developer, trader, military hero, and king's official among the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations).
- The daily life of the Johnson family and that of the surrounding communities and farms developed under Sir William's patronage.
- The political, cultural, and social history of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) Confederacy, particularly as influenced by Sir William's superintendence.
- Sir William's influence on the political, social, and cultural life of the inhabitants of the Johnson Hall estate.
- The institution of slavery at Johnson Hall, the Mohawk Valley, and Colonial New York.
- The history of the architecture, material culture and land use during the period covered.

## **Development of Alternatives**

This chapter contains an analysis of the alternatives being considered and is divided into five parts: cultural resource protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; environmental stewardship; operations, infrastructure and management at Johnson Hall State Historic Site. The alternatives considered and the preferred alternative(s) for each Plan element are described in narrative form. The initiation and implementation of each preferred alternative will be determined by the level of funding available to OPRHP in future years. A complete description of the plan that results from the preferred alternatives is found in the Master Plan document. The Master Plan includes a proposed implementation timeline that will be reviewed annually.

### ***Strategies for Cultural Resource Protection and Enhancement.***

**Johnson Hall.** The Historic Site is committed to preserving and restoring its premiere historic resource. The outdated restroom from the basement of the mansion will be removed and the space restored to a more original condition. The Site will also continue to install handblocked reproduction wallpaper and textiles throughout the house, as documented to the time period.

**Northwest Stonehouse.** Opening the second floor of the Northwest Stonehouse, the only other structure surviving from the original Johnson estate, to interpretive programming and installing a fire detection system promotes the Site's mission while providing for the health and safety of the historic resource and visitors.

**Northeast Stonehouse.** Improvement of the functionality and use of space in this building will accommodate temporary exhibits, period workshops, and more.

**New Interpretive Structures.** The development of new structures for interpretive purposes (e.g. Trade House, Longhouse, Blacksmith Shop, and Garden House) will further the Site's interpretive message and more effectively and personally impart educational messages to the visiting public. The Site also will consider demarcating the historic footprint of several of these buildings—where the original location of the structure-type is known—and install interpretive signage.

**Restoring the Historic Landscape.** The development of a site planting plan, creation of formal gardens, and other landscape interventions that help preserve the Site's sense of place will cultivate an environment compatible with the Site's period of significance and enhance the interpretive experience.

**Cultural Landscape Report.** An update to the Cultural Landscape Report—written in 2006—that documents alterations and improvements made to the natural landscape, and better reflects scholarship on native and historical species, associated with Johnson Hall will prove a useful tool for the Site Manager and Regional staff to protect the landscape's character-defining features from undue wear, alteration, or loss as new structures are introduced to the Site.

**Historic Furnishing Plan.** A Historic Furnishing Plan will inform and guide the acquisition, care, and maintenance of historic and reproduction furnishings exhibited at Johnson Hall.

**Collections.** Johnson Hall will expand its collections and exhibits, develop relationships with museum partners, and provide access to these resources to support important elements of the Site's interpretive program and its educational objectives.

### ***Strategies for Interpretation and Education.***

**Engagement.** Increased engagement with, and outreach to, Indigenous nations, African American, and other stakeholder communities in the development of educational and interpretative programming at Johnson Hall ensures that the Site offers a diversity of perspectives on the historical legacy of the Site and helps to provide a comprehensive portrait of the lived experience of all persons integral to the story of Johnson Hall.

**Diverse Programming.** Regularly offering living history events, hands-on programming, special events, and programs maximizes the appeal of Historic Sites to a wider audience, promotes personal connections

to historic themes, and provides the visiting public with memorable sensory and tactile experiences that encourage repeat visitation.

**Interpretive Materials.** Interpretive materials available in print, various technological mediums, and in multiple languages will be provided to promote the interpretive mission and accessibility of the Historic Site.

***Strategies for Recreation.***

**Johnson Hall Park Strolling Path.** Asphalt-paving the strolling path will provide safer, more accessible use for the visiting public and reduce demands for staff maintenance.

**Interpretive Trail.** Construction of an interpretive walking trail at the rear of the newly-acquired parcel (137 Hall Avenue) and onto the acreage north of Hall Creek will improve opportunities for interpretation and low-intensity recreational activities.

**Programming.** New programs interpreting 18th century recreation and leisure will be introduced to the site to expand the breadth of interpretation while also offering increased opportunities for low-intensity, on-site recreation.

***Strategies for Environmental Stewardship.***

**Hall Creek.** The use of plants and other natural elements—sometimes in conjunction with harder structures—will help to stabilize the Hall Creek banks to minimize erosion and provide for stream health.

**Invasive Species Management.** A site-specific management strategy will be developed to provide guidance for invasive species and include best management practices to prevent accidental introduction of invasive species through construction, operations and other activities.

***Strategies for Operations, Infrastructure, and Facilities.***

**Visitor Center.** A new Visitor Center would include restrooms (accessible from outside), historical exhibits, a gift shop, multi-function meeting room, staff offices, a small kitchenette, and more. The design will incorporate green design and landscaping that complements the Historic Site without detracting from the grandeur of Johnson Hall itself.

**2020 Acquisition (137 Hall Avenue).** The single-family home retains sufficient integrity to justify its continued use as residential property. Significant renovations will be necessary to offer comfortable, modern housing to staff, Student Conservation Association interns, or artists-in-residence. The provision of housing creates opportunities for staff to expand programmatic offerings at the Site.

**Sustainability.** Sustainability is an approach about ways to improve, operate and maintain State Parks and Historic Sites, while at the same time minimizing or reducing impacts on the environment. Sustainability looks at the whole rather than the individual parts to maximize energy efficiency and minimize environmental impact, reduce use of fossil fuels, protect biodiversity and ecosystems, and use resources carefully, respectfully and efficiently to meet current needs without compromising the needs of other living creatures and the use of those resources by future generations.

**Artist-in-Residence and Docent Programs.** Development of an artist-in-residence program will create opportunities for staff to expand programmatic offerings while simultaneously supporting the arts community by providing artists-in-residence a non-traditional space in which to develop their arts. Initiating a volunteer docent and junior docent training program will expand the capacity of the site to provide a variety of unique tours, demonstrations, interpretive programming, and educational instruction to site visitors.

**Partnerships.** Partnership enhancement and development with the Friends of Johnson Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, regional historic sites, colleges, and others, has resulted in substantial, high-quality contributions to the diversity and excellence of preservation, education, recreation, and stewardship activities at Johnson Hall SHS.



## **Identification of the Preferred Alternative**

The two alternatives considered are the Status Quo and the Master Plan. The preferred alternative is the master plan alternative as described in the accompanying document, the Master Plan.

***Rationale for Selection.*** The Historic Site's current operations and interpretation no longer meet the needs of OPRHP nor the demands of the population within the Site's service area. A new vision and goals for the Historic Site were developed by the Agency to guide this planning effort and the future development. The Master Plan is the preferred alternative because it fulfills the vision and goals for the future of the Historic Site's interpretive and management needs while balancing natural resource protection.

## **The Master Plan**

The Master Plan presents the series of preferred alternatives for future development and operation of Johnson Hall. The plan sets forth a long-term vision to guide future development of new and enhanced Historic Site facilities. The initiation of each specific action will be determined by the level of funding available to OPRHP in future years. The Master Plan includes a proposed implementation timeline. The Master Plan will be reviewed annually to assess the progress of implementation. The Master Plan is a separate document that accompanies this EIS.

## **Environmental Impacts and Mitigation**

The Master Plan for Johnson Hall State Historic Site seeks to further the Historic Site's mission to nurture a greater appreciation for the lives of Sir William Johnson, Molly Brant, and the history of their estate through the preservation and interpretation of Johnson Hall's collections, historic structures, and the surrounding landscape. The Master Plan provides comprehensive guidance for the long-term, sustainable development and management of the Historic Site, ensuring it remains a responsible steward of its inimitable cultural and natural resources for decades to come. Planning for new facilities is in accordance with this, and the proposed location of new or expanded facilities avoids sensitive resources to the extent practicable. The implementation of the Master Plan will have some positive and negative impacts on natural resources. All negative impacts will be mitigated through design and management techniques. These impacts and mitigation steps are further discussed in Chapter 4.

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# Chapter 1 – Environmental Setting

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## Location and Access

Johnson Hall State Historic Site is located in the City of Johnstown, in Fulton County, New York. The Johnstown community, first known as John's Town, was founded in 1762 by Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), the largest single landowner in the settlement of the Mohawk Valley.

The approximately 33-acre Historic Site and its entrance on Hall Avenue are accessible by motor vehicle from West State Street (Route 29 W), a State Highway that intersects Johnstown approximately five miles north of Interstate I-90. The Historic Site is within a one-hour driving distance from the cities of Albany, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Utica.

Pedestrians and residents of Johnstown can walk to the Site using local streets. Johnson Hall can also be reached by bicycle from the Fonda, Johnstown and Gloversville Rail Trail, which intersects West State Street less than a half mile from the Site. Rail service is offered in nearby Amsterdam, New York, making the Historic Site accessible by foot, bicycle, vehicle, and/or train.

## Historic Site Boundaries

(Figure 1)

Johnson Hall sits atop an irregularly shaped parcel at the edge of Johnstown's northwestern city limits. The Historic Site's northern boundary runs along a utility corridor owned by the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation. The southern border parallels West State Street, running diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. The Site's western perimeter is defined by Johnson Avenue, which separates the City of Johnstown from the Town of Johnstown. Toward the southeast the Site is bounded both by +/- 1,000 feet of Hall Creek—which weaves through the northern half of the Site—as well as the property line of the recent acquisition of property formally known as 137 Hall Avenue.

## Adjacent Land Uses

(Figure 2)

The land uses adjacent to Johnson Hall are low-intensity in use and are principally suburban-style residential lots, agricultural fields, or vacant properties. The northern perimeter of the Historic Site adjoins a public utility corridor which is a mostly green, vegetative buffer. The uses closest to the center of the Site—where the Johnson estate, tour orientation building, and administrative offices sit—are single-family residential. Several sizable parcels of vacant land confront the Site to the east. The parcels to the south—on the opposite side of West State Street—are developed with several two-story, multi-family residential buildings, buffered from the Site by a mature vegetative screen.

## Socioeconomic Characteristics

The most recent data available from the US Census Bureau—the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates report—was used to develop the socioeconomic profile of Johnstown.

Johnstown has 8,431 residents with the average age of a resident 39.2 years. The median income of Johnstown is \$44,989, lower than the national median household income of \$55,322. The racial composition of Johnstown is 90% White, 3.7% Black or African American, 1.8% Asian, with 3.2% identifying with two or more races. Other categories of race each comprise less than 1% of the population.

## Recreational Needs Assessment

**Definition of the Facility Service Area.** It is common practice in recreation planning to identify a service area from which a facility draws approximately 75% of its users (Haas et al, 2007). Using this definition, the Master Plan identifies Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady, Saratoga, Albany, Herkimer, and Oneida Counties in New York State (NYS) as the Historic Site's main service area. Less than 5% of Johnson Hall's visitors reside in other U.S. states or in Canada. Due to a lack of recreation data available from outside New York State, the service area was defined using only New York State data.

**Determining the Relative Index of Needs.** The Relative Index of Needs (RIN) is a method for comparing the demand for a particular recreation activity with a service area to the actual supply of that activity. The RIN is expressed on a numerical scale, with 10 being the highest relative level of need and 1 being the least. Based on the 2017 data available from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) 2020-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 5 is considered the statewide average in the current year.

The RIN for each New York State county was determined using a statewide survey. The values for the 7-county service area are presented in Table 1 below. The RIN over the entire service area was calculated using a weighted average based on population (OPRHP, 2019).

Index of Needs	Park	Swim	Bike	Golf	Court	Field	Walk	Camp	Fish	Boat	LocW	DnSki	SnM	Hunt	Horse
Albany	4	9	6	7	8	5	5	4	7	7	7	10	6	5	4
Fulton	3	5	4	4	5	3	10	4	5	4	9	9	5	4	3
Herkimer	4	4	3	3	7	6	4	5	4	3	10	5	4	4	3
Montgomery	6	3	4	3	4	3	4	6	4	3	4	3	5	4	3
Oneida	4	5	4	6	7	5	6	6	5	4	10	6	4	4	3
Saratoga	4	5	5	5	7	4	5	7	5	4	7	2	5	4	4
Schenectady	10	4	5	5	6	4	6	4	5	4	9	4	5	5	4
Average	5	5	4	5	6	4	6	5	5	4	8	6	5	4	3

## Economic Contribution

Johnson Hall's primary service area is comprised of seven counties: Fulton, Montgomery, Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga, Oneida and Herkimer. These counties are in the Saratoga-Capital and Central Regions of the New York State Parks system. Geographically, most of Herkimer and Fulton County exist within the Adirondack Park Region—which is administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)—with the balance of each county in the Central and Saratoga-Capital Regions, respectively.

A study prepared for Parks & Trails New York by the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in April 2016 found that the annual combination of state resident and visitor spending at all New York State Parks supports up to \$4 billion in economic output and business sales for up to 45,000 jobs throughout the State (PERI, 2017). Looking at the study's metrics for both nonlocal economic significance—a broad measure which includes both local and nonlocal visitor expenditures—and local economic impact—a narrower measure that estimates the impacts of visitors traveling less than 50 miles from the subject site—in the Saratoga-Capital and Central Regions specifically, the two regions combined averaged over 5.9 million visitors and more than \$216 million in local economic significance in 2016 (*Ibid*).

Local measures of economic value are used to assess Johnson Hall's cumulative economic effect because of the Historic Site's significant attendance draw from within the seven-county service area. (While the Agency's 2018-2019 Visitor Survey does indicate some attendance from neighboring states in the Northeast—as well as some visitation from Canadian residents—98% of survey respondents reside within a two- to three-hour radius of the Historic Site (OPRHP, 2019a)).

Four Revolutionary War-related State Historic Sites within the Saratoga-Capital and Central Regions were mentioned often in the Johnson Hall 2018-2019 Visitor Survey (OPRHP, 2019a). Each of these sites is part of the State Parks' Revolutionary War Heritage Trail (RWHT), and many visitors explore these four sites in tandem (*Ibid*). Attendance for the four RWHT sites totaled 134,138 during the 2016 calendar year, the same timeframe PERI conducted their study. Johnson Hall is the most visited among the four sites and received 61,247 visitors, or 46% of the visits to the sites. Total visitation to the four RWHT sites represents 2.25% of the combined local regional attendance of the Saratoga-Capital and Central Regions (which together averaged 5,949,848 visitors in 2016) (PERI, 2017).. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume Johnson Hall contributed 1% of the economic impact. This translates into the Site contributing approximately \$1.78 million

in tourism-related sales within the core seven-county service area. This figure reflects sales associated with spending in industries that supply goods and services to Johnson Hall; spending at establishments in preparation for visiting Johnson Hall (e.g. spending at a gas station or grocery store); spending while on the trip (e.g. spending at restaurants or local boutiques); and spending at Johnson Hall itself. These tourism-related sales are estimated to be responsible for the creation of approximately 60 jobs throughout the seven-county service area, e.g. employment in industries that supply goods and services to the Historic Site, jobs in various establishments throughout the service area at which visitors spend time and money, inclusive of seasonal employment at Johnson Hall. The above findings are based on analysis using the IMPLAN data platform, 2017 PERI Report, OPRHP Revenue and Attendance data and the National Park Service (NPS) M1M Park Contribution Economic Model.

## Designations

Many state and national entities have recognized Johnson Hall's outstanding historic and cultural resources with special designations:

- National Historic Landmark (NHL), designated 1960.  
The boundary of the National Historic Landmark is coterminous with the property boundary of the State Historic Site.
- National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), added 1966.
- New York State Register of Historic Places (SRHP), added 1980.

The differing areas and periods of significance established within each individual listing above are important factors when considering impacts to historic properties. Section 14.09 of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law requires all State agencies to consider the potential impacts of any undertaking to historic resources—such as these designated areas and features—and to avoid adverse impacts whenever possible.

## Partnerships

Partnerships include, but are not limited to:

- Friends of Johnson Hall State Historic Site
- Indian Castle Church
- NYS Path Through History: Mohawk Valley Region
- Johnstown Tourism Committee
- Fulton County Regional Chamber of Commerce
- United Empire Loyalists
- Johnstown Historical Society

## Programs

Johnson Hall has not received funding through the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Properties acquired, improved or developed with these funds must be open, maintained and operated in perpetuity for public outdoor recreation.

## Legal Considerations

- In July 1985, the City of Johnstown conveyed the portion of Hall Avenue that extended into the grounds of the Historic Site (approximately 0.69 acres of right-of-way) to New York State. This right-of-way was later converted into parking for the Site. In the same month, the State conveyed approximately 0.24 acres of land within the strolling park to the City of Johnstown by easement. This easement was abandoned in July 1999.
- Under federal law, the listing of a property in the National Register of Historic Places, or as a National Historic Landmark, places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to, and including, destruction unless the property is involved in a project that receives federal assistance. If federal monies are attached to the property, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) requires that property owners allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation—an independent agency of the federal government—an opportunity to review and comment on the project.

## Cultural Resources

Johnson Hall, its inhabitants, and the surrounding area are associated with several broad patterns in American history. Johnson Hall is significant to the nation's Indigenous, early-American trading, French and Indian War (1754-1763), and Revolutionary War (1775-1783) histories.

**Pre-Historic.** Indigenous peoples' occupation across the land known today as New York State followed the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier, approximately 11,000 years ago. Indigenous groups migrated alongside the animals they hunted and progressed through a period of more restricted movement to a well-defined social organization that employed agriculture with hunting. To date, archaeological testing at the Historic Site has not uncovered any pre-historic collections. Teams have uncovered, however, cultural materials dating to the mid-1700s. The bulk of this material includes architectural artifacts (nails, brick, window glass) and food-related items (ceramics, glass, food remains).

**Indigenous Nations.** The Haudenosaunee (*People of the Longhouse*), also known as the Six Nations, is a powerful league of indigenous peoples spread across a vast territory that once used to extend from Ontario, south to the Susquehanna River, and from Lake Erie east to the Hudson River. The Mohawk, one of the Six Nations, held claim to their namesake Mohawk Valley and, as *Keepers of the Eastern Door*, helped to defend the confederacy and the region against attacks from outside groups. With significant value placed upon community, Haudenosaunee peoples like the Mohawk often built villages of long houses—a distinctive form of communal housing—throughout the area. Given the frequency with which members of the Haudenosaunee visited Johnson Hall during the mid-1700s, it is believed that nation members erected many small temporary structures such as this across the estate. While no archaeological evidence of the structures has been found, small clusters of rock found throughout the property during excavations are suggestive of this type.

The first European people to establish contact with the Haudenosaunee were French fur traders. Both French and later Dutch fur traders moved relatively freely within Haudenosaunee territory but did not establish any extensive settlements until after the mid-17th century. In the early 18th century, the British Crown encouraged settlements throughout the Mohawk Valley as the Crown vied with the French for control of the region. Johnson's charge to encourage settlement of his uncle's land grant, and eventually his own manor, was part of this effort to occupy and hold claim to at least a portion of the Mohawk's traditional lands.

During the era of the French and Indian War (1754-1763), when the British colonies were pitted against those of the French, Mohawk-Anglo relations were largely shaped by Mohawk leaders. Younger nation members like Joseph Brant (1743-1807) observed political discussions and participated in military actions throughout the War and would become influential Haudenosaunee leaders during the Revolution. In 1759, Brant's older sister Molly Brant (c.1736-1796) married Sir William, who was by then well-known for his capture of Fort Niagara from the French. As part of the Haudenosaunee—a matrilineal culture in which families follow the lineage and clan of the mother—native women in this culture, like Molly, held positions of power, and often responsible for managing property or dispensing advice to leaders. Molly became not only an important link between the Haudenosaunee and Sir William, but a renowned intermediary between the Mohawk people and British officials during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Contact between Europeans and native peoples, however, proved devastating. Interaction exposed nations to increased warfare and new, highly infectious diseases, contributing to large losses in the population of indigenous groups. These events helped to weaken social structures and the physical capacity of indigenous communities to retain control over their vast territory.

**Historic European Settlement.** Johnson Hall State Historic Site is comprised of approximately 33-acres of what was once Sir William's 700-acre working estate. Here, differing cultures, traditions, and languages combined to create a vibrant and unique life at the edge of the early American frontier. During Sir William's lifetime, the tract served not only as the family's homestead, but a regional diplomatic and trade center of the Mohawk Valley. Sir William, Molly, and their eight children, resided at Johnson Hall from its building date in 1763 until Sir William's death in 1774. At the home, many outbuildings were necessary to house servants, enslaved persons, and domestic animals, and to accommodate the daily chores required to support Sir William's extended family, colonial, and indigenous visitors.

As a colonial military commander, Johnson led some troops and native allies responsible for many of the defeats suffered by the French during the French and Indian War. For his victory at the Battle of Lake

George in 1755, Johnson was bestowed the title of Baronet by King George II. The following year, the British Crown appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a position he held throughout his life, along with the responsibility to oversee approximately 170,000 acres of landholdings.

A council fire of the Haudenosaunee was established at Johnson Hall, where Haudenosaunee leaders would meet with Sir William to discuss important matters. Until his death in 1774, Sir William worked alongside the Haudenosaunee with dignity and respect, using knowledge of their customs and languages. This sagacity had a lasting impact on the Haudenosaunee's relationship with the British and contributed to the ultimate victory of the British Crown in the Anglo-French struggle for control of colonial North America.

Approximately one year after Sir William's death the Revolutionary War began and the Loyalist Johnson family—including Sir William's son, Sir John Johnson (1741-1830)—fled to Canada. Molly would soon relocate to Fort Niagara in Youngstown, New York and further cultivate diplomatic relations between the British and the Haudenosaunee. After the war, Molly would receive a substantial military pension for her services and spend the rest of her days in Kingston, Ontario (NPS, 2015).

**1800s.** In 1776, the family's property—like that of many families loyal to the British Crown—was confiscated by the State of New York. The subsequent sequestration sales of real and personal property found at the estate influenced the ensuing changes in ownership of the house, lands, and family possessions. Over the next two decades, the property experienced several changes in private ownership. During this period, outbuildings disappeared, and the main home and stonehouses were altered to exhibit the most fashionable architectural designs of the Victorian period. During the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many improvements were made to the property by John Wells, a locally prominent businessman. In the early 1920s, the grounds saw the installation of a 20<sup>th</sup> century strolling park, just south of the home. A more expansive discussion of changes made to the property can be found in the Historic Site's Cultural Landscape Report.

**1900s and Establishment of Johnson Hall State Historic Site.** Johnson Hall was sold to the State of New York by a private landowner in December 1906. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, management of the estate was handled by several State agencies. The Conservation Department—known today as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)—Division of Parks managed the estate from 1907 until 1944. A reduction in the Division of Park's management responsibilities during World War II lead to the management of the estate by the State Education Department between 1944 and 1966. Responsibility for Johnson Hall returned to the Division of Parks in 1966, the same year the New York State Historic Trust—which later became the State Board for Historic Preservation—was established to assist with management of historic sites. The Division of Parks later became an independent State agency, the State Office of Parks and Recreation—renamed the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in 1981—and manages Johnson Hall into the present day.

## **Recreational Resources**

### **Interpretation**

Johnson Hall State Historic Site interprets the story of Johnson Hall and its inhabitants in the years between 1763-1774. Through guided tours of the home and historic grounds, and public programs, site staff and volunteers inform the public about domestic life at the estate, as well as the lasting impact of Sir William Johnson, Molly Brant, and the Haudenosaunee. The site has a calendar of events and special programs and offers curricula-driven school programs that serve more than 1,000 students each year.

### **Annual Events**

**Holiday Open House:** Organized in conjunction with the City of Johnstown's Colonial Stroll event, Johnson Hall's annual Holiday Open House draws visitors from across the region. Lanterns illuminate walkways and guide guests to a festively decorated, candlelit house filled with music and interpreters in period dress. Visitors warm themselves by the fireplace in the Northwest Stonehouse and enjoy homemade mulled cider and cookies while they wait for the popular horse-drawn wagon ride across the grounds.

**Annual Lecture Series:** Lectures are scheduled throughout the operating season at locations both on- and off-site. Lectures are free to the public and are intended primarily for adult audiences. Lecture topics vary each year based on site anniversary events, public interest, and new research.

**Hands on History:** An annual children's event is hosted each July, this free event offers multiple family-friendly interpretive presentations that demonstrate a craft or interpret a historical event. Through hands-

on activities, children may experience the past through role play, game play, or interaction with reproduction toys and tools.

*Market Fair:* Johnson Hall's eighteenth-century Market Fair is a bi-annual event begun by Sir William in 1772. This event attracts over thirty vendors from across the northeast who sell period and reproduction goods ranging from knives, firearms, leather goods and jewelry to candles, soap, pots and pans.

*Eighteenth Century Slavery at Johnson Hall:* Johnson Hall continues to expand interpretation of 18<sup>th</sup> century slavery at the estate; in the Mohawk Valley; and across Colonial America. Engaging African American scholars, educators and artists to interpret the African American experience in the period, the Site hosts lectures, cooking demonstrations, and performances.

*Open Hearth Cooking and Baking Workshops:* Each year, the Friends of Johnson Hall offer an annual series of open hearth cooking and baking workshops. Guided by historic foodways experts, students use period recipes, authentic reproduction kitchen tools, and the Northwest Stonehouse's working fireplace to learn the art of cooking and baking over an open fire.

### **Passive Recreation**

Year-round, Johnson Hall provides passive recreational opportunities popular with local residents. These opportunities including walking, running, picnicking, biking, dog-walking, photography, and birding. More active forms of recreation, such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, occur at the Site's formally designed 20<sup>th</sup> century strolling park, Johnson Hall Park. There are no overnight recreational opportunities at Johnson Hall.

## **Natural Resources**

### **Geology**

(Figures 3 and 4)

*Bedrock Geology:* Johnson Hall is entirely sedimentary Canajoharie Shale, formed in ancient seas which covered much of the area during the Paleozoic era. Canajoharie Shale is one of several black shales in a belt of indigenous Paleozoic rocks that occupy the Mohawk Valley.

*Surficial Geology:* The site is entirely Lacustrine Sand, typical of the Mohawk Valley's relatively level lacustrine terrace. The Lacustrine sand is generally well sorted and stratified quartz sand that was deposited in Glacial Lake Albany. These deposits are permeable with a variable thickness of up to 65 feet.

### **Soils**

(Figure 5)

Site soils are dominated (79.99%) by Palatine and Appleton Silt Loams, influenced by the sandy deposits of glacial Lake Albany and commonly found in the Mohawk Valley (NRCS, 2016). Palatine Silt Loam is moderately deep, well drained or somewhat excessively drained soil formed in till with a high component of black shale on glacially modified, bedrock-controlled landforms. Appleton Silt Loam is very deep, somewhat poorly-drained soil formed in calcareous loamy glacial till on shallow slope.

Palatine Silt Loam (90A and 90B) is 51.04% and Appleton Silt Loam (44A and 44B) is 28.95% of Johnson Hall soils. Other Site soil types include Darien Silt Loam, Angola Silt Loam, and Lansing Loam, as well as a corridor of Endoaquolls and Hapludolls (11.68%)—a deep, frequently flooded, and poorly drained soil type with moderate permeability—on Hall Creek's shores.

### **Topography**

(Figure 6)

Topography of the Site is gently sloping, typical of the Mohawk Valley, a major west-east lowland between the Adirondacks and the Appalachian uplands drained eastward by the Mohawk River. The River itself flows in a rather narrow inner valley. Its lowland, however, eroded in soft shales between the hard rocks of the Adirondacks and the Appalachians, is 10-30 miles wide and about 1,000 feet deep, with a broad, open, and slightly rolling, aspect. Johnson Hall sits +/- 670-740 feet above sea level, sloping toward Hall Creek.



## **Watershed**

(Figure 7)

Johnson Hall is within the Hall Creek-Cayadutta Creek subwatershed, which is part of the Cayadutta Creek-Mohawk River Watershed. As part of the Hall Creek-Cayadutta Creek subwatershed, Hall Creek helps to supply cold, oxygenated water to trout populations downstream.

## **Water**

(Figure 6)

*Streams.* Hall Creek is a rocky, cool headwater stream traversing the site's northern portion. It is a Class C stream, appropriate for contact recreation such as fishing. The classification, however, indicates that there are no records of trout populations in Hall Creek. This is likely due to a general lack of refuge pools in the stretch passing through the Site and the sizable bedrock outcrop that forms a small waterfall at the base of the large culvert under Johnson Avenue. Hall Creek feeds into Cayadutta Creek and other high-quality streams downstream that do support high fish diversity, including brook trout. Based on a 2018 study of riparian habitat across New York, Hall Creek scores relatively good for the Johnstown region where many of the watersheds perform much lower due to urban or agricultural landscape (Conley et al, 2018).

## **Ecological Communities**

(Figure 8)

Due to Johnson Hall's small size and recent agricultural use, no natural communities of statewide significance occur at the Site (Lundgren, NYNHP, Personal Communication, 2018). The 2018 Land Cover-Ecological Communities map identifies two naturally-occurring ecological communities, and three that are culturally altered. While the Site's natural communities are not significant on a statewide scale, the fertile, sloping soils and the swift Hall Creek played a key role in the establishment of Johnson Hall. During Sir William's time, the Site was part of a larger working estate with gardens and orchards. Later the grounds were maintained for formally designed landscapes. Similarly, most of the Site's land cover to the south of Hall Creek today comprises extensive lawn areas interspersed with small clusters of trees and shrubs, many not native to the region.

Hall Creek, a small stream described under 'Water' above, delineates the more developed southern portion of the property from the undeveloped northern portion. The Creek's banks are forested, and a small island in it supports a floodplain forest. North of the Creek, former agricultural fields are reverting to forest and shrublands while a small area of successional old field still remains.

The Site currently maintains some trees along Hall Creek but there may be room to improve the watershed condition. The Site can contribute to watershed health by maintaining and promoting native vegetation along the streambanks' riparian buffers; minimizing runoff; and educating the community on options for watershed improvements.

## **Flora and Fauna**

There are no rare, threatened, or endangered species at Johnson Hall. No surveys for rare species have been conducted as the Site's small size and limited amount of suitable habitat for rare species make it a low probability that any would occur here (Lundgren, NYNHP, Personal Communication, 2018).

With habitats mirroring much of the surrounding community, wildlife at the Site consists of common northeastern species such as deer, gray squirrel, garter snake, a variety of common birds, and other species prevalent either in a mixture of successional forests or agricultural fields in various states of use, as well as in suburban to urban residential developments.

## **Invasive Flora**

Surveys for invasive plants have not been conducted at Johnson Hall, however, two of the more common invasive plants for the region, Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), a common street tree, and gout weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*), a perennial groundcover common in the same area as Norway maple, appear to have naturalized along Hall Creek's southern banks.

Though no observations of invasive species at the Site are reported, in the New York iMapInvasives database, instances of invasive species—e.g. Honeysuckle, Japanese Knotweed—have been recorded

within the wider Johnstown community in previous years (iMapInvasives, 2019). The discovery of additional invasive species is inevitable, and efforts to add this data to the iMapInvasives can help identify areas for preventing spread or controlling infestations before they become a pronounced problem at the Site.

### **Invasive Fauna**

No invasive species of fauna have been identified at Johnson Hall; there are no observations of invasive species for the Site in the New York iMapInvasives database (iMapInvasives, 2019).

The most potentially damaging invasive insect for Johnson Hall is the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) (*Adelgis tsugae*), an aphid-like insect that kills hemlock trees. HWA is in the Hudson Valley and recently became known in the Albany area. The Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is also known to be in the Hudson Valley, as well as Western and Central New York (iMapInvasives, 2019). The arrival of HWA in the Johnstown area and the Site seems inevitable. The loss of hemlock trees would impact natural habitat, scenic, and recreation values, and increase the frequency of hazardous tree removals and consequent erosion. Staff will monitor for the presence of HWA at the Site and appropriate action will be taken if found.

### **Air Quality**

Johnson Hall is in Fulton County, an attainment area for primary and secondary ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) pollution (DEC, 2018). New EPA standards for ozone went into effect December 28, 2015. The 2008 standard of 0.075 ppm for fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over 3 years, was changed to 0.070 ppm (EPA, 2016). Fulton County is not within a nonattainment area for particulates (DEC, 2018).

### **Climate**

The Site is located in the humid continental climate zone and has cold, snowy winters, and hot, wet summers; the area experiences four distinct seasons. Many of the region's unique attributes, however, are likely to be affected by climate change (NYSERDA 2011).

Rainfall currently averages 39.35 inches per year. Snowfall is significant, totaling an average of 59.1 inches annually. The area is close enough to the Atlantic coast to receive heavy snow from Nor'easters and occasionally Alberta clippers. Winters can be very cold with fluctuating conditions; temperatures often drop below 0°F at night. Summers at the Site can contain stretches of excessive heat and humidity with temperatures above 90°F. Record temperature extremes measured at nearby Albany International Airport range from -28°F on January 19, 1971, to 104°F on July 4, 1911 (NOAA, 2014).

## **Infrastructure and Operations**

### **Season and Hours of Operation**

The grounds of the Historic Site are open year-round, sunrise to sunset, weather and conditions permitting. The road to the Site is open throughout the year.

Tours of the Site are available Wednesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM; Sunday from 1:00 PM through 5:00 PM; and by appointment for large groups or special events. The last tour each day begins at 4:00 PM. The Site office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM throughout the year.

### **Buildings**

The following buildings are in use at the Site and serviced by municipal water and wastewater systems:

- Office (Caretaker's Cottage) – Wood construction, 1917-1918. One restroom.
- Historic Mansion – Wood construction, 1763. One restroom in the basement, c. 1950.
- Reconstructed Stonehouse – Stone, cinder block and steel reconstruction, 1960s-1976. One ADA-accessible restroom.

The following buildings are in use, but not serviced by water or wastewater systems:

- Maintenance Garage – Wood construction, electric, 1942.
- Storage and Maintenance Building – Wood construction, electric, 2013.
- Southwest Stonehouse – Historic structure used in programming, limited electric, c. 1758-1761.
- Small Kiosk – Storage, electric, c. 2002-2003.

### **Parking Areas**

Parking is available in the lot at the end of Hall Avenue, which terminates at the entrance to the Site. There are 28 parking spaces, inclusive of one handicapped parking space, and two parking slips for buses.

### **Roads and Bridges**

There is approximately a quarter-mile (0.25 miles) of paved driveways and parking lot access. There are no bridges at the Site.

### **Water Supply and Sewer System**

The Site is served by the City of Johnstown municipal water supply and sewer system.

### **Dams and Culverts**

There are no dams or culverts immediately on-site. There is, however, immediately west of the Site, a single arch culvert with concrete bottom that facilitates the flow of Hall Creek beneath Johnson Avenue. The section of the Creek that passes through the culvert immediately flows to the Site.

### **Utilities**

Phone – Frontier Communications	Sewer and Water – Johnstown Department of Public Works
Internet – Spectrum Communications	Electricity, Natural Gas – National Grid

Primary electric service runs in to the site from a transformer located near the parking lot off Hall Avenue to the historic mansion. Propane for the mansion is stored in a 1,000-gallon exterior ground tank. Gallons of diesel and gasoline are stored in the maintenance garage.

### **Maintenance**

The Site's maintenance shop is located directly adjacent to the Caretaker's Cottage. Maintenance personnel maintain the grounds of the Historic Site. This includes all mowing, weeding, snow plowing, hazardous tree monitoring and removal. Staff are also responsible for all upkeep and repair of structures, fences, as well as maintenance and service of all Site equipment.

### **Solid Waste Management and Recycling Programs**

The Site operates on a "Carry In-Carry Out" basis, however, Site staff collect all garbage left behind. Staff store garbage in 30-gallon cans. Solid waste is hauled from the Site by maintenance staff to the Fulton County Department of Solid Waste on Mud Road. On average, the Site hauls 1.7 tons of waste per year to the landfill. All paper, cardboard, and plastics are collected for recycling. Staff transports recycling to the Mud Road facility as well. Each year the Site hauls about .09 tons of mixed containers.

### **Sustainability Programs**

LED lights have been installed in most light fixtures, on-demand propane water heaters have been installed in Mansion and Visitor Center. Recycling is available in the Office, Visitors Center and Garage areas.

### **Special Events/Permits**

Use permits are issued for running events, orienteering events, horse drawn wagon rides, Little League T-Ball practice, commercial tents, wedding ceremonies, and other various unique activities. Geocaching is restricted to caches maintained by Johnson Hall State Historic Site.

### **Emergency Plans and Services**

First responders will come from local agencies including Johnstown Police Department, Johnstown Fire Department, and the Sir William Johnson Volunteer Fire Department.

An Emergency Action Written Preparedness Plan (EAWPP) is posted in the Caretaker's Cottage meeting room. A copy is also kept on file with the Regional Safety Officer and at the Regional Park Police headquarters. The emergency action plan details Site staff roles and responsibilities, evacuations, and responses to emergencies.

The Johnstown Police and New York State Park Police both support Site activities and operations through enforcement of Site rules and regulations, vehicle and traffic law and other criminal and environmental statutes as necessary.

In the event of an evacuation, Johnstown Police and/or Park Police serve as command, assisted by the Site manager and staff. A combination of police and staff driving to various sites and/or areas of the Park will inform patrons of the need to evacuate.

Route 29 W is often patrolled by County Sheriffs as well as New York State Police, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officers and forest rangers. Local fire department staff assist Historic Site staff, Park Police, and DEC forest rangers with search and rescue operations.

The Johnstown Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the Johnstown Fire Department will respond to medical emergencies at the Historic Site.

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## Chapter 2 – Development of Alternatives

### Introduction

This chapter contains an analysis of alternatives—those actions which may facilitate the desired future conditions of Johnson Hall—considered for cultural resource protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; environmental stewardship; operations, infrastructure and management at the Historic Site.

Planning Team discussions, public input, existing resource inventories, as well as identified goals and objectives, helped in the development of these alternatives. The development of alternatives was also informed by the results of the Site's 2018-2019 Visitor Survey (OPRHP, 2019a). More than 150 responses to this custom quantitative survey were collected during operating season. The survey was distributed using a multi-distribution method with responses obtained from self-selecting participants. Participants accessed the survey via e-mail, the Agency's website, social media, or pen and paper copies of the survey left at the Site's information desk. In-person intercept surveys were also gathered using an electronic tablet. Survey data was analyzed using SurveyAnalytics by Question Pro's online survey software.

Findings from the examination of the many alternatives proposed were used to identify preferred alternatives—the alternatives that best meet OPRHP's mission and vision for the Site—within each resource category.

In the pages that follow, the status quo, alternatives, considerations, and preferred alternative(s) for individual issues are described in narrative form. A complete description of the plan that results from the preferred alternatives is found in the Master Plan document.

This chapter is divided into five broad resource categories:

- **Cultural Resources** – Alternatives that aim to protect and expand archeological, architectural, and other cultural resources of the Historic Site.
- **Interpretation and Education** – Alternatives that concentrate on expanding interpretation and public education of resources at the Historic Site.
- **Recreation** – Alternatives that concern areas of the Historic Site that support various recreational activities.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – Alternatives that focus on strategies for stewardship of the Historic Site's natural resources.
- **Operations, Infrastructure and Facilities** – Those buildings and management practices which provide support for the functioning of the Historic Site.

## I. Cultural Resources

### A. Historic Structures

**Johnson Hall.** Johnson Hall is considered the most important structure associated with the estate. The two-story Georgian-style home was designed by leading colonial architect Peter Harrison and built by carpenter Samuel Fuller in 1763. The structure served as the primary residence of the Johnson family from 1763 to 1774. Over the years, Johnson Hall has undergone a gradual restoration process to reintroduce period-appropriate styles and designs more accurate to the period of OPRHP's interpretation. In October 2019, rotted exterior siding not original to the structure was replaced on the rear elevation.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial change in building management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continue restoration and reproduction efforts inside the mansion (including furnishings).</li><li>▪ Exterior maintenance performed as needed.</li><li>▪ New roof (cedar shingles, synthetic rubber membrane) planned for installation in 2020; roof has +/- 20-year life expectancy.</li></ul>
ii) Keep restroom in basement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Active plumbing utilities in historic structures pose potential threat to structures and building foundations.</li><li>▪ Plumbing utilities are decades old.</li><li>▪ Limited restroom facilities on-site.</li><li>▪ Restroom is not ADA-accessible.</li><li>▪ Restroom available during house tour, not open for general use outside of guided tour hours.</li><li>▪ Restroom is non-historic feature.</li></ul>
iii) Remove restroom from basement and restore space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 1950s-bathroom limits space for interpretation in the basement.</li><li>▪ Removing bathroom returns basement to a more historically-appropriate condition.</li><li>▪ Construction/demolition may damage resources.</li><li>▪ New bathroom facilities can be made available elsewhere on-site.</li></ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative i** and **Alternative iii**. The Site will continue to install handblocked reproduction wallpaper and textiles throughout the house, as well as create reproductions of original furnishings and decorative arts. The removal of the non-historic restroom from the basement will mitigate the risks associated with running water in a historic structure. Restoration will also free the floor for interpretation and programming. To account for the removal of the restroom, modern ADA-accessible facilities are proposed for the new Visitor Center and Northeast Stonehouse.

**Northwest Stonehouse.** The Northwest Stonehouse is the only other surviving structure from the original Johnson estate. A definitive construction date has not been determined, although construction of the building was likely completed by the early 1760s. During the 19th century, the structure was enlarged and adapted for use as a private residence. Windows were cut into the exterior masonry walls, a shed-roofed addition (kitchen) was placed at the back wall, and a porch was added to the southwest façade. These additions were removed during the first few decades of the 20th century. The Stonehouse interior was restored to a more historically-appropriate condition in 2016. The restoration included the construction of a working fireplace built with archaeological remains discovered in the Northeast Stonehouse basement.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial change in building management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First floor used as hands-on classroom for interpretive programs and workshops.</li> <li>▪ Second floor used for interpretive equipment storage.</li> <li>▪ Continue programming in this space that emphasizes the role of the African American community in shaping the area's history.</li> </ul>
ii) Open second floor to interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No electric or other utilities on the second floor.</li> <li>▪ Second floor not ADA-accessible.</li> <li>▪ Staff can create a video/slide show to present to those unable to access the floor.</li> <li>▪ All floors within the Northwest Stonehouse will be activated.</li> </ul>
iii) Install fire detection system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quick response to fire events critical to preservation of life and historic resources.</li> <li>▪ Well-designed systems using camouflage/concealing tactics maintain aesthetics and sense of place.</li> <li>▪ Can be challenging to bring historic buildings into full compliance with fire safety requirements without damaging the resource itself.</li> <li>▪ Budgetary challenges.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. These alternatives promote the Historic Site's mission while providing for the health and safety of the historic resource and patrons. Staff will continue to use the building's first floor as classroom and workshop space, helping to interpret the presence of multiple communities at Johnson Hall.

## **B. Purpose-Built Structures**

Most original buildings at Johnson Hall were ephemeral during Sir William's lifetime and likely did not survive to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For many historic sites, the lack of original structures or visible remains can make providing effective interpretation more challenging. The question of whether to design new, purpose-built interpretive structures at Johnson Hall was examined to determine whether new structures would further the Site's interpretive mission and more effectively, and meaningfully, impart educational messages or insights to site patrons. While certain space and organizational inefficiencies can be resolved through the construction of new structures, the primary motivation for discussing new construction at the Site is the potential to enhance interpretation, teach the public about ongoing relevance of Sir William and his Mohawk Valley contemporaries, and create a recognized cultural education center for the region.

**Northeast Stonehouse (Extant).** Adjacent to the mansion is the reconstructed Northeast Stonehouse, built in the 1960s; its forerunner burned in 1866. The building has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but is not listed at this time.

The building's first floor mainly functions as a tour meeting point for the visiting public. The first floor also supports a few display cases of collections and artifacts, a small gift shop, and one unisex ADA restroom facility. During operating hours, this building and its amenities are often not readily available as staff must exit and lock the building to guide mansion tours. The second floor serves in a limited capacity as a library, collections, and storage space. Artifacts from this upstairs space are moved about the building with some frequency to accommodate new acquisitions, or to be placed on display. In previous years, staff office space was provided on the second floor. The space, however, was not conducive to providing all necessary or efficient administrative services. The building's basement functions as both programmatic and storage space.



<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Continue existing uses within the building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As a visitor orientation point, location is obscured from site entrance.</li> <li>▪ Limited space to display collections and gift shop offerings.</li> <li>▪ Space not conducive to hosting larger events but suffices for small lectures.</li> <li>▪ Building frequently closed between tour times.</li> <li>▪ Continued movement of materials throughout building may lead to damage of collections or the building itself.</li> </ul>
ii) Repurpose the first floor as flexible, multipurpose space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would relocate gift shop and collections to proposed Visitor Center.</li> <li>▪ Opens floor space for meetings, interpretation, events, and workshop space.</li> <li>▪ May lead to underutilization of building if not enough activities are scheduled.</li> </ul>
iii) Construct an additional restroom on the first floor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potentially ADA-accessible.</li> <li>▪ Replaces restroom proposed for removal from mansion basement.</li> <li>▪ Accessible and open during special events.</li> </ul>
iv) Construct stone courtyard north of stonehouse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would function as outdoor classroom and event space.</li> <li>▪ Creates additional impervious surface.</li> <li>▪ Special event revenues.</li> <li>▪ Proposed uses for space can be accommodated in Visitor Center.</li> </ul>
<b>Preferred Alternative(s):</b> The preferred alternatives are <b>Alternative ii</b> and <b>Alternative iii</b> . The selection of these alternatives best supports the Historic Site's mission by activating the whole of the building for interpretive, educational, or special event functions, and provides the amenities necessary for the space to be comfortably used.	

**Longhouse (Proposed).** Leaders and members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy played a critical role in daily life at Johnson Hall and the development of the Mohawk Valley. At Johnson Hall, Sir William would formally meet with indigenous communities in council. For these assemblies, the longhouse was both an important metaphorical space and a practical one. In fact, Sir William complained about sitting in council outside in the snow in several written letters before ordering his carpenter to build a 100-foot longhouse on the large estate in 1772. Archaeological evidence of several longhouse structures in the area is well documented and the structure-type is mentioned within the Johnson Papers.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Interpret Haudenosaunee history through home/grounds tours and special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to explore partnerships with indigenous communities and others to provide appropriate interpretation.</li> <li>▪ No physical structures at Johnson Hall are dedicated to the explicit interpretation of indigenous history.</li> <li>▪ Modify existing programs to relay information.</li> </ul>
ii) Create intentional space in new Visitor Center to enhance interpretation of Haudenosaunee life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhanced interpretation of Haudenosaunee community subject to the construction of the new Visitor Center.</li> <li>▪ Could construct segment of a longhouse inside the Visitor Center to improve interpretation or educational experiences.</li> <li>▪ Exhibit could be enhanced with altered reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) components.</li> <li>▪ Does not create new building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>▪ Exhibits less likely to be construed as original Site features.</li> </ul>

iii) Build “ghost structure” with dimensions appropriate to historic context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May require some ground disturbance for structural supports but will not create an impervious building footprint.</li> <li>▪ Appeal to imagination of visiting public.</li> <li>▪ May feel incompatible with character of surrounding architecture.</li> </ul>
iv) Erect moveable, temporary structure without permanent foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affordable interpretive opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Gesture toward an immersive experience.</li> <li>▪ Materials used for interpretation may need to be secured daily.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to engage with indigenous community members in interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Buildings evocative of 18th c. may create false sense of history.</li> <li>▪ Buildings without foundations or improper ventilation may lead to maintenance issues such as mold.</li> </ul>
v) Construct longhouse structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure can greatly contribute to the interpretation of indigenous communities at Johnson Hall.</li> <li>▪ Does not require daily set-up and tear-down.</li> <li>▪ Would create an additional building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>▪ Strong desire to provide dedicated spaces for the stories of those who have been left out of the historical narrative.</li> <li>▪ The usefulness of interpretive structures can be reduced if unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Audio and visual aids can further enhance interpretation or facilitate interpretation when building is unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Examples within the State system of inaccurate purpose-built interpretive structures with significant management challenges.</li> <li>▪ Potential cultural sensitivities.</li> <li>▪ Concerns with Secretary of Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.</li> <li>▪ Active interpretation may be essential to ensure public understands the purpose and significance of the structure.</li> <li>▪ The number of historic structures relative to number of purpose-built.</li> <li>▪ Different opinions on how and what was built on-site.</li> <li>▪ Need to weigh potential historical impreciseness of what is built versus the benefit of interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Potential destruction of archaeological context and deposits.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to involve indigenous community in interpretation; structure would benefit from talented interpreter(s) from apposite indigenous communities.</li> <li>▪ Most costly alternative.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing fiscal and operational impacts of new structures.</li> <li>▪ A 17<sup>th</sup> century bark longhouse exists nearby at Ganondagon SHS (Finger Lakes Region); activity at Johnson Hall occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>▪ Signage can clarify that the building is purpose-built for interpretation, however, signage may be inadequate to explain the nuances inherent in such a space or visitors may not read them.</li> <li>▪ Interpretive structure may become National Register eligible itself.</li> </ul>
a) Locate in old Hall Ave. roadbed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This land has been previously disturbed.</li> <li>▪ Not anticipated to have areas of archeological sensitivity.</li> <li>▪ Architectural buffer between 18<sup>th</sup> century home and 20<sup>th</sup> century park.</li> </ul>
b) Locate in place of parking lot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some alternatives propose removal of the existing lot.</li> <li>▪ Longhouse more period-appropriate structure in mansion viewshed than a parking lot; structure could act as architectural buffer between 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion and the 20<sup>th</sup> century park.</li> <li>▪ Past archaeological work located evidence of structures here.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative:** The preferred alternative is **Alternative v-a**. Whereas Sir William was the representative of the Crown in all dealings with indigenous communities throughout the region, deliberate and thoughtful interpretation of the Haudenosaunee is critical to accomplishing the Site's interpretive mission. Visitor Survey results also revealed that 41.3% of respondents desired interpretive structures; 13% of respondents indicating an interest in 18th century indigenous and African American history programs, specifically. The proposed siting of the structure in the old road bed locates the new feature atop ground that has been previously disturbed and helps to create a more natural transition point between the historic estate and the 20<sup>th</sup> century strolling park.

New structures built for interpretative purposes will involve significant collaboration between Site and Regional staff with the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) Bureau of Historic Sites (BHS) (e.g. archaeology, interpretive, curatorial, and other units). This cooperation will ensure thoughtful design of the structure, siting that is sensitive to existing resources, and significant improvements in the Site's interpretive capacity. New buildings will be carefully considered so their scale and massing does not overpower original resources. Their physical design may require eschewing the use of historic building materials or architectural features so the public is not confused into thinking new structures are historic. An interpretive plan for each building, tied to overall interpretation at the Site, should be created and emphasize how the structure greatly enhances interpretation. All proposed construction will undergo Section 14.09 review in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This review of impacts upon historic resources will require consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and may involve further consideration or revision of the design, materials, construction, etc. of a new structure. Implementation is subject to the availability of capital funding and the need to balance investments throughout the State Parks and Historic Sites system.

**Blacksmith Shop (Proposed).** In his capacity as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William was responsible for maintaining a network of Anglo-Indian diplomatic relations across the colonies. Sir William knew the distribution of gifts, the trading of goods, and the availability of free blacksmithing services (he charged the Crown) were crucial diplomatic components to Britain's alliances with indigenous communities, and frequently sent blacksmiths out to nations and to Britain's fortified trading posts. It is natural Sir William maintained these service buildings on his home estate. Extensive archeological exploration in the late 1950s unearthed features associated with blacksmithing at the northwest corner of the property.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Interpret trade/artisan skills through home/grounds tour, special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpretation regarding historic trades remains in the abstract.</li> <li>A blacksmith shop is listed in the building inventory of the estate prepared shortly after Sir William's death.</li> <li>Modify existing programs to relay information.</li> </ul>
ii) Create intentional space in new Visitor Center to enhance interpretation of trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded interpretation subject to new Visitor Center's construction.</li> <li>Could build facility for blacksmithing/trade demonstrations in Visitor Center to enhance interpretive or educational experiences.</li> <li>Could enhance exhibits with altered reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR).</li> <li>Does not create new building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>Exhibit less likely to be construed as original structure on the site.</li> </ul>
iii) Outline shop footprint on the grounds using pavers and install interpretive signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative at the least cost.</li> <li>Does not provide immersive experience.</li> <li>Archaeology confirms original location of blacksmith shop.</li> <li>Does not create new building footprint.</li> <li>Pavers do not inhibit site maintenance regimes.</li> </ul>
iv) Create moveable, temporary structure without permanent foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable interpretive opportunity.</li> <li>Provides more immersive experience.</li> <li>Buildings evocative of the 18th c. may create a false sense of history.</li> <li>Materials used for interpretation may need to be secured daily.</li> <li>Buildings without foundations or improper ventilation may lead to maintenance issues such as mold.</li> </ul>

v) Build blacksmith shop structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure will greatly contribute to the interpretation of trade and indigenous communities at Johnson Hall.</li> <li>▪ Potential to disrupt archaeological contexts and deposits.</li> <li>▪ Can work with engineers/architects to “float” structure above ground.</li> <li>▪ The number of historic structures relative to number of purpose-built.</li> <li>▪ Active interpretation may be key to ensure public understands the function and significance of purpose-built structures.</li> <li>▪ Examples within the State system of inaccurate purpose-built interpretive structures with significant management challenges.</li> <li>▪ Concerns with Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.</li> <li>▪ Need to weigh potential historical impreciseness of what is built versus the accrued interpretive benefits.</li> <li>▪ Facilitates effectiveness of living history program (e.g. creation of temporary functioning forge).</li> <li>▪ Attractive opportunity for artist-in-residence and other partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Does not require daily set-up and tear-down.</li> <li>▪ How often building is in active use depends on staffing availability; usefulness of interpretive structures may be reduced if unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Audio and visual aids can further enhance interpretation or facilitate interpretation when building is unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing fiscal and operational impacts of new structures.</li> <li>▪ Would create an additional building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>▪ Can design structure to meet needs of artisans to better promote use.</li> <li>▪ Most costly alternative.</li> <li>▪ Signage can clarify that the building is purpose-built for interpretation, however, signage may be inadequate to explain the nuances inherent in such a space or visitors may not read them.</li> <li>▪ Interpretive structure may become National Register eligible itself.</li> <li>▪ Can discuss with Regional Engineering how to design building to “float” above archaeological remains to avoid damage to the record.</li> </ul>
a) Locate atop historic location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Archaeology to support siting at this location.</li> <li>▪ Not best practice to build atop a sensitive archeological location.</li> <li>▪ Creek bank erosion may jeopardize structure’s long-term integrity.</li> </ul>
b) Locate in north side yard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Considerations when constructing adjacent to sensitive forge site.</li> <li>▪ Archaeology suggests structure-type’s location at creek bank’s edge.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative iii** and **Alternative v-b**. Whereas blacksmithing was an integral component of Britain’s ability to retain military power and maintain alliances with indigenous communities, deliberate interpretation of this activity stands to meaningfully enhance interpretation at the site. Visitor Survey results revealed that 41.3% of respondents desired interpretive structures to provide demonstrations. Demonstrations in the shop would facilitate understanding of skilled frontier labor—the work performed, products made—and better illustrate how trades such as this contributed to the estate’s operation, relations with indigenous nations, and the growth of early American commerce. This structure may also create new community partnerships, apprenticing programs, or programmatic opportunities. The preferred location for the site is in the north side yard, in the proximity of the original structure.

New structures built for interpretative purposes will involve significant collaboration between Site and Regional staff with the DHP’s BHS (e.g. archaeology, interpretive, curatorial, and other units). This cooperation will ensure thoughtful design of the structure, siting that is sensitive to existing resources, and significant improvements in the Site’s interpretive capacity. New buildings will be carefully considered so their scale and massing does not overpower original resources. Their physical design may require

eschewing the use of historic building materials or architectural features so the public is not confused into thinking new structures are historic. An interpretive plan for each building, tied to overall interpretation at the Site, should be created and emphasize how the structure greatly enhances interpretation. All proposed construction will undergo Section 14.09 review in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This assessment of the impacts of an undertaking upon historic resources will require consultation with the SHPO and may concern further consideration or revision of the design, materials, construction, etc. of a new structure.

**Trade House (Proposed).** In his capacity as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William was responsible for maintaining a network of Anglo-Indian diplomatic relations across the colonies. Sir William knew the distribution of gifts and the trading of goods were crucial diplomatic components to Britain's alliances with indigenous communities. The Johnson Papers chronicle extensive trade between social communities at Johnson Hall and it is natural Sir William maintained these service buildings on his home estate. In fact, an "Indian store" was listed in the building inventory prepared shortly after Sir William's death.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Interpret trade/diplomacy through home tour, special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interpretation regarding commerce remains in the abstract.</li> <li>▪ Trade bale outreach program provided both on- and off-site.</li> <li>▪ Modify existing programs to relay information.</li> </ul>
ii) Create intentional space in new Visitor Center to interpret trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhanced interpretation subject to new Visitor Center construction.</li> <li>▪ Could construct segment of trade house to increase interpretive or educational experiences.</li> <li>▪ Exhibit could be enhanced with altered reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) components.</li> <li>▪ Does not create new building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>▪ Exhibit less likely to be construed as an original structure on the site.</li> </ul>
iii) Outline trade house on the grounds using pavers and install interpretive signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most affordable option.</li> <li>▪ Does not provide immersive experience.</li> <li>▪ Does not formalize new building footprint.</li> <li>▪ Pavers do not inhibit site maintenance.</li> </ul>
iv) Create moveable, temporary structure without permanent foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affordable interpretive opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Provides more immersive experience.</li> <li>▪ Materials used for interpretation may need to be secured daily.</li> <li>▪ Buildings evocative of 18th c. may create a false sense of history.</li> <li>▪ Buildings without foundations or improper ventilation may lead to maintenance issues such as mold.</li> </ul>

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| v) Construct trade house structure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structure will greatly contribute to the interpretation of trade, diplomacy, and indigenous communities at Johnson Hall.</li> <li>▪ Does not require daily set-up and tear-down.</li> <li>▪ Active interpretation may be essential to ensure public understands the purpose and significance of purpose-built structures.</li> <li>▪ Examples within the State system of inaccurate purpose-built interpretive structures with significant management challenges.</li> <li>▪ Would create an additional building footprint.</li> <li>▪ Concerns with Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.</li> <li>▪ Need to weigh potential historical impreciseness of what is built versus the accrued interpretive benefits.</li> <li>▪ Most costly alternative.</li> <li>▪ Potential to destroy archaeological contexts and deposits.</li> <li>▪ Can discuss with Regional Engineering how to design building to “float” above archaeological remains to avoid damage to the record.</li> <li>▪ Usefulness as interpretive space may be reduced if structure is unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Audio and visual aids can further enhance interpretation or facilitate interpretation when building is unstaffed.</li> <li>▪ Ability to minimize or avoid archaeological impacts through inventive engineering.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to create point of sale within new interpretive building to enhance living history experience.</li> <li>▪ Signage can clarify that the building is purpose-built for interpretation, however, signage may be inadequate to explain the nuances inherent in such a space or visitors may not read them.</li> <li>▪ Number of historic structures relative to number of purpose-built.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing fiscal and operational impacts of new structures.</li> <li>▪ Interpretive structure may become National Register eligible itself.</li> </ul> |
| a) Locate in north sideyard.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Archaeology to support siting at this location.</li> <li>▪ Proximity to other structures used during tour facilitates circulation.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative iii** and **Alternative v-a**. The Planning Team determined that a trade house structure was essential to most-effectively tell the story of Johnson Hall and Sir William, whose early wealth was built upon his founding and managing a regional fur trade. Fur and land transactions brought Sir William into frequent contact with the owners of those commodities, the Haudenosaunee, who were frequent visitors to Johnson Hall and instrumental in his professional and personal success. Results from the Visitor Survey revealed that 41.3% of respondents desired interpretive structures to enhance their visit to the Historic Site. The preferred location for the structure is in the north side yard, in proximity to the structure’s original location.

New structures built for interpretative purposes will involve significant collaboration between Site and Regional staff with the DHP’s BHS (e.g. archaeology, interpretive, curatorial, and other units). This cooperation will ensure thoughtful development of the structure, siting that is sensitive to existing resources, and significant improvements in the Site’s interpretive capacity. New buildings will be carefully considered so their scale and massing does not overpower original resources. Their physical design may require eschewing the use of historic building materials or architectural features so the public is not confused into thinking new structures are historic. An interpretive plan for each building, tied to overall interpretation at the Site, should be created and emphasize how the structure greatly enhances interpretation. All new construction will undergo Section 14.09 review in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This assessment of the impacts of an undertaking upon historic resources will require consultation with the SHPO and may involve further consideration or revision of the design, materials, construction, etc. of a new structure.

**Garden House (Proposed).** A cluster of large stones uncovered in 1980 may mark the location of one of the estate's garden houses, historically referred to as a summer house. Garden houses were enclosed or open-air structures, possibly at the terminus of a main path. Like other structures at the estate, garden houses helped define the property's spatial organization and the movement of people across the property. This structure-type is mentioned in the Johnson Papers ("*little summer houses to build in my gardens*").

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Interpret leisure through tours and special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited plantings or structures on site that create dramatic sense of arrival and leisure, as was cultivated by Sir William in his lifetime.</li> <li>▪ Modify existing programs to relay information.</li> </ul>
ii) Outline a garden house footprint and install interpretive signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most affordable option.</li> <li>▪ No additional building footprint.</li> <li>▪ Least effective alternative in conveying spatial organization.</li> </ul>
iii) Construct garden house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would create an additional building footprint on historic grounds.</li> <li>▪ Number of historic structures relative to number of purpose-built.</li> <li>▪ Concerns with Secretary of Interior Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.</li> <li>▪ Signage can clarify that a building is purpose-built for interpretation, however, signage may be inadequate to explain the nuances inherent in such a space or visitors may not read them.</li> <li>▪ Most costly alternative.</li> <li>▪ Structure may be attractive for use at special events.</li> </ul>
a) Locate near Hall Creek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concerns about erosion when constructing near Hall Creek.</li> <li>▪ No archaeological evidence to support location.</li> </ul>
b) Locate in front yard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some archaeological evidence to support location.</li> <li>▪ May help screen non-historic development down Hall Avenue.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative iii-b**. The Garden House will enhance the sense of place Sir William strived to create at his estate. According to the Site's NRHP Inventory Nomination Form nomination, Sir William's "home was necessarily designed as a billboard advertising the fortunes which could be accumulated in the New World." Though no known graphic representations of Sir William's gardens exist—nor are their locations specifically mentioned—traditional colonial gardens were placed on axis with the home's main entrance. Additional scholarship on 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape design suggests that Sir William's approach to landscape design was not only influenced by topography but was likely to incorporate both traditional elements as well as emerging gardening trends that reflected wealth and social standing. The development of a Garden House, as well as formal gardens, is likely to be an attractive feature at the Site, becoming a popular destination for gardeners and photographers alike.

New structures built for interpretative purposes will involve significant collaboration between Site and Regional staff with the DHP's BHS (e.g. archaeology, interpretive, curatorial, and other units). This cooperation will ensure thoughtful development of the structure, siting that is sensitive to existing resources, and significant improvements in the Site's interpretive capacity. New buildings will be carefully considered so their scale and massing does not overpower original resources. Their physical design may require eschewing the use of historic building materials or architectural features so the public is not confused into thinking new structures are historic. An interpretive plan for each building, tied to overall interpretation at the Site, should be created and emphasize how the structure greatly enhances interpretation. All new construction will undergo Section 14.09 review in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This assessment of the impacts of an undertaking upon historic resources will require consultation with the SHPO and may involve further consideration or revision of the design, materials, construction, etc. of a new structure.

**Additional Interpretive Structures.** The structures considered within this section represent only a fraction of the total number of structures built at various times during Sir William’s residency at Johnson Hall. Over the course of the planning process several other structure types mentioned in the Johnson Papers were discussed at length as potential interpretive opportunities for the Historic Site. These structures included a tailor’s shop, a cordwainer’s shop, a washhouse, etc. The Planning Team carefully evaluated each alternative but determined that many suggestions were not the most appropriate alternative for the Site. Some reasons these alternatives were not identified as preferred alternatives include: a structure type did not elevate interpretation of life at Johnson Hall, the addition of another structure would make the Site feel cluttered; a desired structure type or interpretive opportunity could be located elsewhere within the region; potential interference with other programming activities on the land; other interpretive structure types accommodated a greater diversity of site users and programs. Interpretive buildings identified as preferred alternatives are considered by staff to be structures that most effectively convey the historical significance of the site and its most meaningful educational themes.

## C. Historic Landscape

**Viewshed Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Landscape.** Effective cultural landscape protection derives from a thorough understanding of the elements surrounding the principal historic resource. Johnson Hall has a naturalistic landscape, shaped in large part by Hall Creek and the land’s history as a working estate. Johnson Hall strives to preserve and develop an appreciation of the historical associations of place—an understanding of the centrality of the home as both a meeting place and working farm—and to educate patrons on the value and importance of informal planting and landscape development.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial changes to management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited screening at present.</li> <li>▪ Development beyond the Historic Site may be visually disruptive to the experience.</li> </ul>
ii) Plant period-appropriate formal garden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The sample herb/teaching garden will be removed.</li> <li>▪ Would create an attractive space.</li> <li>▪ May need to defer formal garden until substantiated by updated Cultural Landscape Report.</li> <li>▪ Interpretation and emulation of period leisure.</li> <li>▪ Additional maintenance demands.</li> </ul>
iii) Install landscaping or fencing to screen mechanicals or development occurring outside State property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Screening using trees, perennials, etc. bolsters sense of place within the site.</li> <li>▪ Process of moving through Site intended to be one of discovery.</li> <li>▪ Additional maintenance demands on staff.</li> <li>▪ Should ensure fencing historically appropriate, if possible.</li> </ul>
iv) Create dramatic sense of arrival to site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Colonial gardens often enclosed with hedges, terraced; walkways in both simple and geometric patterns.</li> <li>▪ Steeps visitor in historic experience.</li> <li>▪ Would create positive first impression of the site.</li> </ul>
v) Improve the aesthetics and function of the rear property boundary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fencing provides additional security.</li> <li>▪ Question whether to fence only certain edges or whole perimeter.</li> <li>▪ Most homes built before 1900 had fences to keep animals out.</li> <li>▪ Costly to install perimeter fencing.</li> <li>▪ If built, materials should be appropriate for the period.</li> </ul>



a) Remove chainlink fence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fence provides some level of safety and security for the Site.</li> <li>▪ Volume of traffic along Johnson Avenue can be high.</li> <li>▪ Chain-link is arguably aesthetically displeasing.</li> <li>▪ Chain-link tends to “disappear” beneath organic material.</li> <li>▪ Chain-link is not historically appropriate; was popular first in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.</li> <li>▪ Removal of fencing may damage existing vegetation.</li> </ul>
b) Construct fence around the property perimeter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides additional security.</li> <li>▪ Could be surface for painting murals and way to engage community.</li> <li>▪ Most homes before 1900 had fences to keep animals out.</li> <li>▪ Costly to install fencing and material must be period-appropriate.</li> </ul>
vi) Remove subsurface roadbed to facilitate orchard health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Orchard planted atop old parking lot and roots do not appear to have broken through blacktop.</li> <li>▪ Grounds around orchard often wet.</li> <li>▪ No historic record of orchard at this location.</li> </ul>
vii) Remove orchard, commemorate with interpretive signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current location of orchard not historic.</li> <li>▪ Additional maintenance demands on staff.</li> </ul>
viii) Replant orchards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching and potential revenue-generating opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Facilitates interpretation of the historic landscape.</li> <li>▪ Additional maintenance demands.</li> <li>▪ Site was known for its “large orchard of the best fruit trees.”</li> <li>▪ Must work with SHPO to find non-sensitive location.</li> </ul>
ix) Develop and implement site planting plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cohesive approach to landscaping, avoids piecemeal plantings.</li> <li>▪ Ensures thorough review of selected materials.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vi, and ix.** These alternatives best demonstrate a thorough understanding of the natural elements surrounding the principal historic resource and contribute to their protection and enhancement. Prior to proceeding with Preferred Alternative implementation, staff should work with SHPO to update the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). The findings of the updated CLR should substantiate the proposed changes above.

#### D. Documentation

Effective management of cultural resources derives from a thorough understanding of the significance of each of the components that contributes to the resource. Compiling adequate research and documentation—often in the form of Cultural Landscape Reports, Historic Structure Reports, or Historic Furnishing Plans—is a critical step toward determining the measures that are needed to preserve and protect cultural resources in their many forms. Other critical management strategies include developing and implementing cyclical maintenance programs for historic structures, landscapes, and objects.

**Archaeology.** The archeological resources at Johnson Hall include historic artifacts, the foundations or remains of buildings, and other manmade structures. According to the Historic Site’s NRHP Inventory Nomination Form, there are documentary references to a washhouse, “mill, coach house, shay house, tailor shop, several barns, slave quarters, gunsmith shop, lime kiln and kitchen all of some of which have yet to be definitely identified through archaeological research” (NRHP, 1984). Archaeological testing within the boundaries of Johnson Hall has uncovered cultural material dating to as early as the mid-18th century. The bulk of this material includes architectural artifacts (nails, brick, window glass) and food-related items (ceramics, glass, food remains). Testing within the Historic Site has uncovered a great deal of domestic

debris scattered across the landscape relating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century occupation of the grounds. Evidence has also been found of the 20<sup>th</sup> century development of the property as a public park. State Scientist (Archeology) Lois Feister's 1995 study provides the most comprehensive review and summary of the archaeological work conducted at Johnson Hall. The study is confined to the period 1945-1991, but this covers the bulk of the excavations at Johnson Hall and the discovery of most of its prominent archaeological features (Feister, 1995). A subsequent report from 1996 provides an additional review of Johnson Hall archaeology between 1991 and 1993. The sporadic archaeology projects that have been conducted since 1993 are detailed in various archaeology memos on file with the DHP.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Archaeology on an as-needed basis prior to ground disturbance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excavations have been very small-scale and limited in scope.</li> <li>▪ Most work has been focused on the original west flanker building, both its interior and exterior.</li> </ul>
ii) Prepare a Phase 1B for areas of new construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides critical information regarding the type and location of known or suspected archeological sites and features.</li> <li>▪ Lack of report potentially puts resources at risk for damage or destruction from a broad range of activities.</li> <li>▪ Battle of Johnstown said to have occurred in general area of site.</li> </ul>
iii) Survey the entire site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At a substantial expense.</li> <li>▪ Areas believed to have greatest sensitivity previously explored.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. At Johnson Hall, there is significant interest in conducting archaeological surveys and exploratory work in the name of preservation, rather than extracting resources from their historical context. Archaeological work is of paramount importance when considering new construction and will be a central concern when siting new structures. Any projects or activities that require ground disturbance either associated with this Master Plan or routine operation and maintenance will require review by the DHP to ensure resources are not adversely impacted.

**Cultural Landscape Report (CLR).** Compiling research and updating documentation is a critical step toward understanding a historic site's significance and determining the appropriate measures needed to preserve and protect its resources. According to the National Park Service's Preservation Brief #36, a CLR is "the primary report that documents the history, significance and treatment of a cultural landscape." A CLR evaluates the history and integrity of the landscape including any changes to its geographical context, features, materials, and use. CLRs are often prepared when a change (e.g. a new visitor center or parking area to a landscape) is proposed. A CLR can provide managers, curators and others with information needed to make management decisions. Johnson Hall's CLR was written in 2006.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Use existing Cultural Landscape Report (2006).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2006 CLR may not reflect contemporary best practices/research.</li> <li>▪ Design and siting of proposed changes to the site (e.g. a new visitor center) may lack the best information concerning original estate construction and design.</li> </ul>
ii) Update the Cultural Landscape Report (2006).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May require hiring a contractor or firm at a significant cost.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to mitigate costs through grant monies.</li> <li>▪ Would inform future decisions with respect to siting and design.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. Updating the CLR will prove a useful tool for the Site Manager and Regional staff to protect the landscape's character-defining features from undue wear, alteration, or loss as new structures are introduced to the Site. Whereas CLRs are considered evolving references, updated as new information is discovered or Site conditions change, proposals within the Master Plan for changes to the historic landscape—e.g. the orchard, formal garden, etc.—should be supported by findings in the updated CLR prior to implementation.

**Historic Furnishing Plan (HFP).** “Historic furnishings are groups of objects (such as furniture, paintings, other decorative and utilitarian objects, books, wall and floor coverings) assembled according to a documented report that recreate historic interior spaces” (NPS, 2002). An HFP informs and guides the acquisition, care, and maintenance of historic and reproduction furnishings on exhibit at a site. In lieu of a formal HFP, Johnson Hall staff use the estate's 1774 probate inventory; invoices and other correspondence in the 13 volumes of the Johnson Papers to help fill in commonplace objects or items omitted from the probate inventory; research on commonly used personal objects of the period to help furnish the Hall's guest rooms with items that would have been in use by guests traveling to Johnson Hall.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No Historic Furnishing Plan exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The staff currently benefits from the 1774 probate inventory and other primary resources.</li> <li>▪ Reproduction furnishings may not be based on accurate information.</li> <li>▪ Can use research on the preferences of others in Sir William's social class and ethnic background to select appropriate pieces where no specific records exist.</li> </ul>
ii) Prepare a Historic Furnishing Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An inventory of original furnishings taken 3 weeks after Sir William's death make possible a detailed, effective HFP.</li> <li>▪ Goal of Bureau of Historic Sites to have HFP for all Historic Sites.</li> <li>▪ HFP can be used to train staff and volunteers in the care and maintenance of the interior furnishings in order to better preserve the collection</li> <li>▪ Would inform future decisions with respect to interior design.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. Preparing a Historic Furnishing Plan will prove a useful tool for the Site Manager and Regional staff to best preserve, furnish, and interpret the physical objects associated with Sir William and his contemporaries at Johnson Hall.

**Historic Structure Report (HSR).** HSRs are broadly acknowledged as critical tools in preservation planning that provide detailed information about a building's design, construction, and use. Information within an HSR is often essential to evaluating a structure's historic character, significance, and integrity. Such reports help organizations to make educated decisions about a structure's treatment. HSRs are particularly important for buildings undergoing a change in use or occupancy.

Only two structures from the original estate survive: the mansion and the Northwest Stonehouse. An HSR for the Northwest Stonehouse was prepared in 1971. Since an HSR does not exist for the mansion, the Planning Team considered an alternative to prepare one for the residence. After discussion, however, it was decided that the preparation of an HSR for the mansion was not a priority. The rationale for this decision is based primarily on the intent to preserve the building “as is” (with only minor changes to remove a modern bathroom). It was decided that the significant allocation of resources necessary to prepare such a report (e.g. staff availability, time, cost) would be better allocated to other research needs at the property.

**Collections.** The museum collections at Johnson Hall include approximately 1,000 historic collections (furniture, decorative arts, paintings, etc.) and over 68,000 archaeological objects. Johnson Hall actively seeks donations or acquisitions of historic collections that were owned by or directly related to the personages who occupied the estate prior to 1783. Some of the historic collections at Johnson Hall were owned by Sir William or his descendants, and many more are similar in nature to what Sir William had in the period. These collections form the core for the historic house furnishings displayed in the period rooms at the Site. The extensive archaeological collection includes objects dating from prehistory to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with many thousands belonging to the period of Sir William's occupation. The archaeological collections show Sir William's wealth and his extravagant and fashionable 18<sup>th</sup> century tastes, as well as provide staff an opportunity to learn about the lives of those who did not leave an expansive written historic record like Sir William did. Artifacts belonging to the workers, the servants, the enslaved, common soldiers, visitors, and indigenous peoples are all part of the archaeological collection and are frequently exhibited at the Site.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Limited collections on display.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many reproductions of period pieces.</li> <li>▪ Substantial collections to rotate within displays.</li> <li>▪ Limited archaeological collections on display due to limited exhibit space and storage facilities at Johnson Hall.</li> </ul>
ii) Develop relationships with partners to gain access to rotating collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many original pieces in possession of other museums.</li> <li>▪ Rotating collections incentivize repeated visitation.</li> </ul>
iii) Provide public access to records and collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expanded access to online Collection Management System.</li> <li>▪ Encourages open exchange of knowledge and research.</li> </ul>
iv) Develop collections storage facilities with climate control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better conditions in which to store collections.</li> <li>▪ Reducing movement and transportation of artifacts is in the best interest of the materials.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii, iii, and iv**. These alternatives promote the Site's mission, responsibly provide for unique historic resources, and encourage public engagement and participation with the Historic Site.

## II. Interpretation and Education

With the wealth of cultural and historic resources at Johnson Hall, there is a tremendous opportunity to expand interpretation and public education of these resources for generations to come. While the primary focus of interpretation at Johnson Hall has been Sir William and his relationship with the Haudenosaunee as the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, the Site is looking to expand programming opportunities and themes to meaningfully explore the work and living conditions of all people present at Johnson Hall in the 18th century.

**Interpretation/Programming.** The Historic Site interprets the story of Johnson Hall and its inhabitants in the years between 1763-1774. Through guided tours—typically 45 to 60 minutes long—and public programs, staff and volunteers inform the public about domestic life at the estate, as well as the lasting impact of Sir William, Molly Brandt, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy on the political, trade, and military landscape of the Mohawk Valley. In conjunction with the Friends of Johnson Hall and independent interpreters from the community, the Site has a calendar of events and special programs—Market Fair, Holiday Open House, etc.—and offers curricula-driven school programs each year.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No changes to interpretive programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited staff to support more special events, programs.</li> <li>▪ While patron satisfaction is high with existing interpretation, preserving Status Quo will not necessarily improve satisfaction.</li> <li>▪ Staff guide tours in business casual/Agency-branded clothing.</li> <li>▪ No electronic mediums incorporated into interpretation.</li> </ul>
ii) Increase engagement and consultation with indigenous, African American, and other stakeholder communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Authentic and effective interpretation depends upon collaboration and co-creation among all stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Ensures the integrity of interpretation and education.</li> <li>▪ Agency mission to embrace inclusion and cultural diversity.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to create advisory and working groups.</li> <li>▪ Work with indigenous and African American stakeholders to expand interpretation of community histories from 18<sup>th</sup> century through modern day.</li> <li>▪ Ensures interpretation and programming presents a balanced and comprehensive portrait of the estate and its history.</li> </ul>
iii) Regularly offer living history events and other hands-on programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrate living history into daily interpretation.</li> <li>▪ Would likely increase patron satisfaction.</li> <li>▪ Programming quality depends in part on talented interpreters.</li> <li>▪ Experiential learning is an effective interpretation tool.</li> <li>▪ Importance in presenting visitors with a sense of “a way of life” rather than recreating exact events.</li> <li>▪ Preference for 3<sup>rd</sup> person narration v. 1<sup>st</sup> person interpretation.</li> </ul>
iv) Increase number of special events and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Event diversity can attract wide variety of audiences and encourage repeated visitation.</li> <li>▪ Changing programming keeps the site “fresh.”</li> <li>▪ Need to closely evaluate events for impacts (e.g. effects on historic grounds, to Johnson Hall, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Friends Group and other partners to assist with staffing needs.</li> <li>▪ Economic and partnership benefits to enhancing number of heritage tourism events.</li> </ul>
v) Develop specific programs for interpretive buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ International spaces for interpretation by living stakeholders (e.g. indigenous communities).</li> <li>▪ Interpretation for purpose-built places (e.g. trade house).</li> <li>▪ Give greater insight into culture, business and personal relationships with Sir William, etc.</li> <li>▪ Maximum utilization of interpretive structures.</li> </ul>
vi) Create programming that reflects upon the ongoing impact of historical themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programming can be tailored to local interests or themes.</li> <li>▪ Story of the past is also a story of the future.</li> <li>▪ Interpretation discusses resources that are inherently valuable and have modern-day relevance.</li> </ul>
vii) Use interpretation and programming to connect with broad audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patron diversity (age, race, creed, color, national origin, economic status, educational attainment, etc.) is an asset.</li> <li>▪ Agency commitment to Service: to equal access and outreach to all segments of society, recognizing individual needs &amp; interests.</li> </ul>
viii) Create interpretive brochures and guidebooks for interpretive structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guides exist for some special topics, e.g. Sir William’s death.</li> <li>▪ Can include historic drawings to enhance experience.</li> <li>▪ Affordable media type that can become core element in the Site’s interpretive program.</li> <li>▪ Can include logistical and safety information in content.</li> <li>▪ Way for visitors to engage with the Site other than guided tour.</li> <li>▪ Visually appealing materials also function as advertising.</li> <li>▪ Free guides or leaflets may lead to inadvertent littering.</li> </ul>

ix) Provide interpretive materials in multiple languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means to enhance accessibility.</li> <li>Can attract a more diverse heritage economy.</li> <li>Changing demographics within the region.</li> </ul>
x) Introduce multimedia platforms and other media services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology has changed the way people engage with sites.</li> <li>Commissioner priority to develop and promote phone apps.</li> <li>Technology can enhance in-person experiences, e.g. digital panels.</li> <li>Augmented reality opportunities.</li> <li>Expensive buy-in and maintenance.</li> <li>Potential service delays if equipment malfunctions.</li> <li>Can provide “access” to information/collections not on-hand.</li> </ul>
xi) Prepare an Interpretive Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive management document to guide decisions about interpretation and programming.</li> <li>Identifies best ways interpretive themes are relayed to visitors through their site experiences.</li> <li>Interpretation Plan for entire site system has been discussed.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternatives ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x and xi**. Interpretation at Johnson Hall is driven by the desire to tell the story of Sir William and his contemporaries, and the desire to engage patrons’ emotions as to enhance their experience. Successful interpretation will also encourage patrons to engage in site stewardship. The Preferred Alternatives above reflect Planning Team discussions in which Team members were asked to evaluate best practices for interpretation and to consider what actions might strengthen the personal connections visitors establish with the Site and remember long after their visit has ended. The Team met with the BHS’s Interpretation Unit to develop these alternatives in detail and benefit from the Unit’s expertise. Collectively, the Team and Interpretation Unit determined these Alternatives help interpret the ideals of the past for generations of today (and future generations) via multiple methods (e.g. traditional, face-to-face interactions and materials, as well as modern mediums) and best facilitate staff in creating opportunities for visitors to make their own intellectual and emotional connections to the story.

**Outreach.** Staff lead and participate in educational programs throughout the local community, and are often asked to present as guest lecturers across the State. In years past, the Site was involved in a meaningful way with programming at local schools. In recent years, however, the Site has had less involvement with the schools in light of growing mandates on classroom curriculum and limited staff resources.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No significant changes to existing level of community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curricula-driven school programs available for students each year.</li> <li>Some schools take advantage of Connect Kids program to visit.</li> <li>Community presentations upon request.</li> <li>Tabling at special events to promote the Site, seek volunteers.</li> </ul>
ii) Expand curriculum-based programming at local schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes public knowledge, stewardship interest, and Historic Site appreciation from an early age.</li> <li>Creates a new generation of stewards for Johnson Hall.</li> <li>Staff can work with SHPO interpreters and educators to bolster effectiveness of lesson plans and meet Common Core demands.</li> </ul>
iii) Develop exchange program with indigenous communities for interpretation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer regular cultural programs to reservations.</li> <li>Means to preserving and sharing knowledge and tradition.</li> <li>Can use technology to reach rural communities.</li> <li>Social responsibility to stakeholder communities.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. Johnson Hall staff will use multiple means of educational instruction and interpretation to educate diverse audiences on the legacy of Sir William and his contemporaries. Continued efforts to extend programming beyond the Site inspire a broader, cross-generation appreciation for history, preservation, and stewardship, and also help to eliminate barriers to access of this information. Plans to develop exchange programs between Johnson Hall staff and indigenous populations in, and outside of, Central New York not only emphasize the value of cross-cultural engagement but help to enrich the capacity of staff to provide effective interpretation of native cultures. This opportunity for interpersonal communication and professional development between staff and native community members will help staff more deeply appreciate the nuances of other cultural perspectives and the array of approaches used to promote heritage preservation and education.

**Interpretive Signage (Outdoor).** In 2014, approximately 12 corrugated plastic interpretive signs—measuring 22” x 16”—were installed across the Historic Site. The signs are mounted on plywood and inserted into the ground on wooden posts. The signs use clear, educational messages and content—including historic drawings—to inform the public of the Site’s historic context and significance. Since 2014, a handful of the signs have been repaired or replaced due to weathering and/or vandalism.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No changes to outdoor interpretive signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patrons can learn about the Site without carrying brochures.</li> <li>To some, the landscape may appear cluttered with signs.</li> <li>Continue to replace signs on an as needed basis.</li> </ul>
ii) Develop and implement an interpretive signage plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage will be needed for any new interpretive structures.</li> <li>Traditional interpretive signage is designed to reveal meanings and relationships of the Historic Site’s cultural and natural heritage and should provide pertinent, meaningful information on a subject.</li> </ul>
a) Narrative interpretive panels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too many panels create clutter and overwhelm visitors.</li> <li>Interpretive panels should be aesthetically consistent.</li> <li>Higher sign fabrication costs.</li> <li>Narrative signs are important communication devices as they relay information to visitors in the absence of staff.</li> <li>Visitors will not need a supplemental brochure to explore the Site.</li> </ul>
b) Numbered interpretive system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces visual impact on landscape.</li> <li>System easy to design and install; signs can be rearranged.</li> <li>Visitors will need to obtain Site guide to learn about each feature; information may not be accessible without a guide booklet.</li> <li>Corresponding guides can be taken by visitors for future reference or as a souvenir of their visit.</li> <li>Potential for visitors to overlook unobtrusive signage.</li> <li>Reduced sign fabrication costs.</li> <li>May include QR code or other technology to have interpretive content provided via personal cell phone or tablet.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. Further conversations are needed to decide on the signage system that is most appropriate for the Site.

### III. Recreation

Today, as in the colonial era of Sir William, recreation and leisure activities are a significant component of our daily lives. These activities encourage social connections and physical wellbeing. Johnson Hall strives to maintain and provide recreational opportunities compatible with the character of the historic estate and complimentary to its interpretive statement. During special events, the Historic Site often provides access to lawn games and other equipment to learn about period leisure. These activities are often conducted in the corner of the strolling park, closest to the parking lot and mansion.

**Johnson Hall Park and Strolling Path.** The idea of creating a strolling park adjacent to Johnson Hall begun as early as 1893 when the Aldine Literary Society of Johnstown established a fund to erect a monument to Sir William Johnson. The Society unveiled its monument in 1905. A design was prepared by Nelson Miller Wells in January 1926. Based on a 1958 aerial photograph, it appears the Park design closely followed Wells' 1926 plan (OPRHP, 2006). Today, the Park and its strolling path are frequently used for low-intensity community recreation such as picnicking, dog-walking, and jogging.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial change in management or use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Park remains peripherally associated with the Historic Site.</li> <li>▪ Annual Johnson Jog 5K fundraiser hosted in the Park.</li> <li>▪ Park is within the National Historic Landmark (NHL) boundary.</li> <li>▪ Parts of the path—½ stone dust, ½ paved—eroding/washing away.</li> <li>▪ Path can get muddy in low-lying areas.</li> <li>▪ Park and path are not included in daily interpretation.</li> </ul>
ii) Incorporate path into interpretive programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park determined eligible for the National Register but has not been formally listed; may merit recognition as example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century park design/landscape &amp; the product of local philanthropy.</li> <li>▪ Agency mission to provide safe, enjoyable recreation opportunities.</li> <li>▪ New recreation offerings could attract new park patrons.</li> <li>▪ Mansion tour could visit Park (as seasonally appropriate).</li> <li>▪ Time constraints with incorporating path into traditional tour.</li> </ul>
iii) Pave whole Park strolling loop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would require less piecemeal maintenance work.</li> <li>▪ Firm and stable path enhances accessibility.</li> <li>▪ Impacts on National Register eligibility or NHL integrity.</li> </ul>
a) Tar & chip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More solid surface than stone dust; rough texture offers grip.</li> <li>▪ Most affordable option; doesn't need to be regularly sealed.</li> <li>▪ 7-10 year lifespan, depending on use and maintenance.</li> <li>▪ More naturalistic appearance.</li> </ul>
b) Asphalt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flexible petroleum product, less susceptible to cracking.</li> <li>▪ 12-20 year lifespan, depending on use and maintenance.</li> <li>▪ Most affordable paving treatment.</li> <li>▪ Less naturalistic; may not be consistent with paved paths at the Historic Site as to promote sense of visual continuity.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii-b**. Expanding programming to include the Park—or introducing special tours with a focus on it—will require minimal resources. During special events, staff offer special tours emphasizing the historic landscape and gardens. The creation of a new special tour stands to expand the appeal of the site to visitors. New programs or events will be compatible with the preservation of the Site's cultural and natural resources and adverse impacts mitigated through appropriate event planning. Asphalt requires far less ongoing maintenance than stone dust or tar & chip paths. The Agency will remain open to other sustainable surfacing options where appropriate and where funds are available.



**Interpretive Trails.** Interpretive trails, also known as education paths, are developed to take advantage of cultural or natural points of interest in a particular area. Such trails intend to offer patrons more information about attraction points along a path; an opportunity to explore a subject matter more deeply; or simply to give patrons a brief interlude into a natural setting.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No interpretive trail at Johnson Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Site is adjacent to Johnson Hall Park and its strolling path is an opportunity for low-intensity recreation.</li> <li>▪ Johnson Hall is a Historic Site and not a recreation park.</li> <li>▪ Current interpretation does not really address period recreation.</li> <li>▪ Successional old fields remain undisturbed.</li> <li>▪ Possibility to install interpretive signage throughout strolling park.</li> </ul>
ii) Construct a signed interpretive trail at the rear of the 2020 Acquisition (137 Hall Avenue) parcel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A more naturalistic and scenic route than the strolling path.</li> <li>▪ Can follow along Hall Creek and connect to pedestrian circulation paths between interpretive structures.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for interpretive signage about Hall Creek or the property's natural setting.</li> </ul>
iii) Expand the interpretive trail onto parkland north of Hall Creek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ North property offers attractive setting for extended nature path: mix of mature trees, successional growth field.</li> <li>▪ There is no existing visitor access to acreage across Hall Creek; must ford stream or walk across bridge on Johnson Avenue to use access easement from a private driveway.</li> <li>▪ Historic stone bridge abutments offer a potential crossing site as well as an interpretive opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Potentially opens new grant application opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Additional maintenance demands required of staff.</li> <li>▪ Potential enforcement challenges.</li> </ul>
a) Access on foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land may be inaccessible in high water.</li> <li>▪ Safety concerns.</li> <li>▪ Not accessible to all patrons.</li> </ul>
b) Build bridge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bridge materials to consider: aluminum, wood.</li> <li>▪ Maintenance staff can access site without access easement.</li> <li>▪ More costly alternative.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii-b**. The addition of interpretive trails at Johnson Hall would allow visitors to explore not only the edge of Hall Creek but the larger area of Sir William's estate. Establishing trails would expand upon the appeal of the property to visitors that frequent Johnson Hall Park, and could also be an attractive amenity to nearby school groups for outdoor education. The trails could incorporate interpretive signage and information that reflect upon the estate's natural setting or the restoration of agricultural fields. Pending funding, trails are likely to be constructed in two phases: Phase I trail on the Hall Avenue property, and Phase II expansion of the trail north of Hall Creek.

**Programming.** State Historic Sites tell the story of New York’s rich cultural heritage through a variety of themes. Scholarship on life at Johnson Hall makes mention of sporting games as a beloved pastime of Sir William and his contemporaries. Recreation and leisure activities at Johnson Hall were shaped by cultural, religious, and ethnic differences as well as the unique settlement pattern of the Mohawk Valley. Accordingly, Johnson Hall presents a unique opportunity to incorporate recreation into interpretative programming and special events.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No significant changes to programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Passive, low intensity recreational activities supported at the Site.</li> <li>▪ Elements of period-appropriate leisure (e.g. lawn games) are available during special events.</li> </ul>
ii) Introduce new programs interpreting period-appropriate recreation and leisure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for special events that present sports of cultures present at Johnson Hall e.g. Haudenosaunee lacrosse demonstrations.</li> <li>▪ Support passive, low-intensity recreation activities in interpretative programming, e.g. creation of bowling green, sack races, running events, picnicking, bird watching, etc.</li> </ul>

The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. This alternative develops an interpretative theme at the Site that better engages patrons with the historical culture of the Historic Site. By improving recreation interpretation above the Status Quo, the Site may develop partnerships or special events that attract a new visitor demographic and expand the relevance of the Site to the next generation.

#### IV. Environmental Stewardship

Although Johnson Hall is best known for its cultural and historical resources, roughly one-third of the site is a post-agricultural landscape of successional forest. Environmental stewardship is necessary to secure this ecological community, enhance biodiversity, and encourage comprehensive environmental health. Responsible management of Johnson Hall’s natural resources is further important to the preservation the Site’s unique cultural resources—such as the archaeological record—but also visitor enjoyment of the natural landscape surrounding the estate. The stewardship strategies below will help to provide guidance for the continued protection of the Site’s natural resources, and consequently, its irreplaceable historic assets.

**Hall Creek Bank Stabilization.** Hall Creek—which converges with Mathew Creek—is a minor tributary of Cayadutta Creek, which runs in a southwesterly direction, discharging into the Mohawk River at Fonda. A recent assessment of riparian habitat across New York State provides information on opportunities for OPRHP to support riparian protection and function (Conley et al, 2018); such support can contribute to the quality of fish, flora, and stream habitat in the larger landscape. The Site currently maintains some trees along Hall Creek, but the riparian assessment indicates that there may be room to improve the watershed condition.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial change in management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimum maintenance, little cost and manpower to manage.</li> <li>▪ Continued degradation of streambank and watershed could lead to damage or unsafe conditions.</li> <li>▪ Erosion may damage or threaten archaeological resources.</li> <li>▪ Associated soil disturbance likely to enhance spread of invasives.</li> <li>▪ Accelerated siltation of the streambed may impact fish spawning sites or macro-invertebrate habitat.</li> </ul>

ii) Native vegetation restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Erosion will be moderately slowed, bringing erosion forces back to more natural levels.</li> <li>▪ Establishing native vegetation benefits wildlife that depend on riparian habitat.</li> <li>▪ Provides enhanced aesthetics.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for interpretation of native riparian vegetation.</li> <li>▪ Wards against future establishment of invasive species.</li> <li>▪ Erosion may be enhanced immediately following revegetation efforts due to soil disturbance during planting/removal activities.</li> <li>▪ Streambank stabilization benefits will not be fully realized until root systems are well established, approximately one year following revegetation efforts.</li> <li>▪ Plantings would occur in conjunction with the removal of invasive vegetation along streambank.</li> </ul>
iii) Bioengineer stream bank stabilization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engineered solutions that utilize natural materials and mimic natural systems to slow water flow, protect stream banks, and capture transported sediment, are available.</li> <li>▪ Natural materials (logs, stones) used to redirect hydraulic forces.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to interpret streambank restoration techniques.</li> <li>▪ Use of natural materials would reduce aesthetic impact.</li> <li>▪ More labor and material-intensive; greater up-front cost.</li> <li>▪ Heavy machinery may be required for some installation.</li> <li>▪ May require coordination with adjacent landowners.</li> </ul>
iv) Hardscape stream bank stabilization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of traditional engineering solutions to stabilize streambanks (i.e. rip rap, rock walls, or concrete barriers)</li> <li>▪ Speed of installation results in quick project completion.</li> <li>▪ Good drainage.</li> <li>▪ Materials are flexible to allow small movements of earth.</li> <li>▪ Over time, gaps will fill with vegetation.</li> <li>▪ Project would increase stream velocities, increasing erosion and flooding potential on opposite banks and downstream areas without protection.</li> </ul>
v) Re-establish dam at historic location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In creek bed is an alignment of large stone boulders that may be the remains of a historic dam that retained a mill pond.</li> <li>▪ Potential damage to historic deposits or archaeological contexts.</li> <li>▪ Most costly alternative.</li> <li>▪ Concerns with Secretary of Interior Standards.</li> </ul>
vi) Partner with Fish & Wildlife Service, DEC, and/or Fulton County Soil Conservation District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Division of costs, labor, and other resources.</li> <li>▪ Availability of subject matter experts in the larger environmental context of the region.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are a combination of **Alternatives ii, iii, iv** and **vi**. The meandering of streams is a natural process. At this time, the meandering is not threatening any particular infrastructure. With the proposal to build new interpretive structures in the vicinity of the Creek, however, it becomes increasingly important to stabilize the banks. This alternative combines the benefits of riparian vegetation restoration with engineered solutions. Bioengineering techniques are the preferred option for reducing erosion and improving safety. Traditional engineering techniques may be required, but will require more evaluation and review. Native shrubs could be planted in areas that are not experiencing severe erosion pressures while bare root stock, poles, and whips could be planted closer to the water with minimal added disturbance to the soil. As an additional bioengineering option, a biodegradable erosion control blanket could be installed and then planted to further protect the banks with a very natural look and result. This blanket would biodegrade over time, replaced by rooted vegetation. Following the restoration, interpretative signage documenting the restoration, invasive species threats, and/or stream ecology could be installed. OPRHP will consider working closely with partner organizations to properly design and engineer the stream. Ensuring that biological materials and plantings successfully establish themselves along the Creek may require a high level of monitoring, maintenance, and evaluation. This responsibility can also be shared among partner organizations.

**Invasive Species Management.** The introduction or spread of invasive species, unwanted changes in environmental conditions, and the effects of projected climate change, risk irreversible damage to the natural world and historic resources at the Historic Site. Invasive species are usually defined as non-native plant or animal species that adversely affect the habitats they invade economically, environmentally, or ecologically. These species, due usually to a lack of competition or predation, can develop extremely large populations, causing severe adverse effects. Failure to appropriately manage these threats may destabilize native biodiversity and ecosystem function; increase the frequency of hazardous tree removals and erosion; impact scenic viewsheds or inhibit recreation opportunities.

Currently, there are no known populations of invasive animal species at Johnson Hall. Surveys for invasive plants have not been conducted at the Site, however, two of the more common invasive plants for the region—Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), a common street tree, and gout weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*), a perennial groundcover—appear to have naturalized along the southern banks of Hall Creek.

<u><b>Alternatives</b></u>	<u><b>Considerations</b></u>
i) Status Quo: No changes to current management of species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sensitive areas continue to be susceptible.</li> <li>▪ At this time, limited resources to devote to management.</li> </ul>
ii) Decrease Norway Maple population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excess shade created by Norway Maple canopy inhibits growth of other plant species; Norway Maples may also host aphids.</li> <li>▪ Removal would result in improved habitat value, function.</li> <li>▪ Removing species can sometimes be resource intensive.</li> <li>▪ Soil disturbance may enhance the spread of invasive species.</li> </ul>
iii) Interplant native species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Native plants often have better survivorship because they are well adapted to the native habitat and local climate.</li> <li>▪ Support local ecology.</li> <li>▪ Once established, native species generally require little maintenance.</li> <li>▪ Deep root systems help stabilize soil columns.</li> <li>▪ Native plantings minimize runoff, improve watershed health.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. Invasive species management efforts will focus on eradication of invasives from sensitive habitats, eradication of invasions where there is a reasonable chance of success, and prevention of new infestations. An invasive species control program has been established in OPRHP with the overall goal to preserve biodiversity and reduce the threat of invasive species to Site resources. Native plantings can also help ward against future establishment of invasive species. Many native plants have historical and cultural significance and maintaining communities of native species is thus an important aspect of preserving the natural heritage of Johnson Hall. Selection of native plant species—or communities of species—for Johnson Hall should be site-specific, taking into consideration the natural, ecological, historic, archeological, and aesthetic elements in the immediate area, as well as Site management goals.

## V. Facilities, Infrastructure and Operations

### A. Existing Facilities

**Caretaker's Cottage.** The Caretaker's Cottage is a two and one-half story wood-framed structure built under the supervision of the Office of the State Architect between 1917 and 1918. The structure was built atop a stone foundation that formerly supported a barn. The Cottage's garage appears to be of the same decade. The Cottage currently provides staff with four offices. This structure has been identified as a historic resource unique to the administrative history of the Agency by the SHPO and has been determined eligible for the NRHP but is not formally listed at this time.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Cottage houses staff offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office space currently meets staffing levels.</li> <li>Visiting public will interrupt staff when seeking tour information rather than heading to the Northeast Stonehouse.</li> </ul>
ii) Relocate staff offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidation of operations and guest services in single location is more conducive to providing a quality visitor experience.</li> <li>There may be more appropriate uses for this space.</li> </ul>
a) Reuse as support staff housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building would not require remodeling or updated utilities.</li> <li>Proximity to site provides additional measure of security.</li> <li>Attractive benefit to offer potential staff.</li> <li>Resident(s) may experience disruptions from patrons mistaking building as administrative offices.</li> </ul>
iii) Relocate cottage elsewhere on-site for use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocation of structure would be at a significant cost to the Agency.</li> <li>Could damage the structure in moving it.</li> </ul>
iv) Donate or surplus structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure would not be destroyed.</li> <li>Cottage could be sold as surplus with expenses incurred by purchaser.</li> <li>Revenue-generating opportunity.</li> <li>Reduction of total impervious surface at the Site.</li> </ul>
v) Demolish structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removes a building whose construction date is outside the primary period of significance for interpretation at the Site.</li> <li>Loss of a structure that is significant to Agency's administrative history.</li> <li>May require significant 14.09 mitigation.</li> <li>Cost of demolition and site work needed after demolition.</li> </ul>

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vi) Landscape screen the structure.

- Landscaping would mitigate the intrusion of a 20<sup>th</sup> century structure on a Historic Site whose period of significance is the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Screening will provide privacy to staff/staff residents.
- Must be careful to avoid introducing plant material that is incompatible with the historic site/setting.

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii-a** and **Alternative vi**. The use of the Cottage as support staff housing returns the structure to its original use and may help attract interns or artists-in-residence, which helps to alleviate potential operational restraints that may ensue from the introduction of new programming, interpretive structures, etc. The installation of landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of the Cottage will help preserve the Historic Site's sense of place, as well as enhance privacy for residents. Johnson Hall strives to cultivate an environment compatible with the Site's period of significance as to enhance the cultural landscape and interpretive experiences.

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**Maintenance Garage and Equipment Shed.** Two buildings currently support maintenance operations at Johnson Hall: the original Caretaker's Cottage garage and the equipment shed. The garage was built in 1942; the equipment shed was built around 2015. Maintenance operations have outgrown these two structures leading to operational inefficiencies and a greater dependence upon Regional maintenance staff.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Maintain existing maintenance facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Existing structural and operational deficiencies remain.</li><li>▪ Repairs to problem areas may become increasingly necessary as repairs continue to be deferred.</li><li>▪ Avoids new construction costs and ground disturbance.</li><li>▪ Dependence on Regional maintenance for certain issues can lead to periods of deferred maintenance due to scheduling conflicts.</li></ul>
ii) Build additional equipment shed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Creates multiple, disconnected building footprints.</li><li>▪ Does not resolve issues created by decentralized operations.</li></ul>
iii) Construct new maintenance facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Greater cost of construction.</li><li>▪ Land disturbance minimal for pole barn structure.</li><li>▪ Consolidation of maintenance functions—including staff work space and equipment storage—and improved working conditions (e.g. climate-controlled facility, bathroom, office) for staff.</li><li>▪ Ability to store more equipment reduces dependence on Regional staff.</li></ul>
a) Keep behind Caretaker's Cottage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Previous ground disturbance in this area.</li><li>▪ Whereas the Caretaker's Cottage and its garage are historic resources unique to the administrative history of the Agency, the maintenance structure is not, and thus an intrusion on the landscape.</li><li>▪ Facility in closer proximity to mansion than if it were sited elsewhere.</li></ul>
b) Locate on Acquisition parcel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Facility is further removed from viewshed of historic mansion.</li><li>▪ New construction occurs on a parcel that is not included within the NHL boundary.</li><li>▪ New ground disturbance.</li></ul>
c) Locate in new Visitor Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Maintenance operations create noise and mechanical odors.</li><li>▪ One less building footprint on the landscape if maintenance located here.</li></ul>

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iv) Repurpose garage for covered staff parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides protection for personal property of Caretaker Cottage residents.</li> <li>Garage will require some repairs.</li> <li>Adaptive reuse consistent with resource protection guidelines, including the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.</li> </ul>
v) Landscape screen maintenance facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscaping would mitigate the intrusion of a 20<sup>th</sup> century structure.</li> <li>Screening will provide privacy to staff.</li> <li>Must be careful to avoid introducing plant material that is incompatible with the historic site/setting.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative iii-b, iv, and v.** The construction of a new maintenance facility toward the rear of the 2020 Acquisition (137 Hall Avenue) parcel would not only provide a more appropriately designed building for maintenance needs but also permit the historic use of the Caretaker Cottage's garage. Providing in-residence support staff with a garage minimizes the liability of leaving personal property uncovered. The installation of a vegetative buffer will reduce the visual impacts of modern construction adjacent to a historic landscape and helps to re-establish the sense of place Sir William cultivated at his estate during his lifetime.

**Visitor Kiosk.** The visitor kiosk at the western edge of the existing parking lot was built in the early 2000s. The structure was intended to serve as an easily-locatable visitor greeting and orientation point. The structure did not serve this function and is used instead as enclosed storage space.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Leave kiosk in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kiosk remains an intrusion at the Historic Site.</li> <li>Viewed as an eyesore on the landscape.</li> <li>The structure does not serve its intended function.</li> </ul>
ii) Determine new use for kiosk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure considered too small to be staffed.</li> <li>Adaptive reuse considered more sustainable alternative.</li> </ul>
iii) Demolish structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of non-historic, unattractive structure helps return the Site to its historic condition.</li> <li>Demolition can be performed by hand without heavy equipment.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative iii.** The removal of the structure—which is neither historic nor functional—will help return the property to a more historic condition and contribute to the development of open space.

**2020 Acquisition (137 Hall Avenue) – Residence.** The Agency will assume jurisdiction for the 3.3-acre property with +/- 1,680 square foot single-family home at 137 Hall Avenue in Summer 2020. The home, built around 1925, was occupied until the year of sale. When surveyed by the SHPO in 2003, staff determined the structure to be non-historic and ineligible for listing with the National Register.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Building is vacant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vacant structure is a target for vandalism (attractive nuisance).</li> <li>Degradation of building will continue.</li> <li>Cost to maintain underutilized structure.</li> <li>Waste of an available resource.</li> </ul>
ii) Renovate building for use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building requires renovation to meet modern standards.</li> <li>Cost of rehabilitation may be expensive.</li> <li>Long-term building maintenance costs.</li> <li>Re-use of existing structure is sustainable.</li> </ul>

a) Reuse as staff offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing Cottage meets basic staff needs at this time.</li> <li>Structure is approximately same size as Caretaker's Cottage.</li> <li>Adaptive reuse promotes principles of sustainability.</li> <li>Patrons may not disrupt staff as the structure blends in with adjacent residences and is not situated adjacent to the mansion.</li> </ul>
b) Reuse as support staff housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attractive benefit to offer staff (e.g. site manager, artist-in-residence, Student Conservation Association interns, etc).</li> <li>Patrons less likely to disrupt residents as the structure blends in with residential streetscape.</li> <li>Structure has historically been used as a residence.</li> <li>Staff living in proximity to site provides additional measure of security.</li> </ul>
c) Reuse as Visitor Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure is first building a patron would encounter on State property.</li> <li>Structure is adjacent to the Historic Site.</li> <li>Small size would not accommodate expanded visitor amenities.</li> <li>Would require significant interior modification to serve in this capacity.</li> <li>Parking challenges.</li> </ul>
iii) Surplus or relocate structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocation of structure would be at a significant cost.</li> <li>Could damage the structure in moving it.</li> <li>Reduces number of building footprints on historic landscape.</li> <li>One less building to maintain.</li> </ul>
iv) Demolish structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced maintenance/operation costs with one less building to maintain.</li> <li>Cost of demolition.</li> <li>Reclamation of open space.</li> <li>Elimination of attractive nuisance.</li> </ul>
vii) Landscape screen the structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20<sup>th</sup> century structure is an intrusion on the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape.</li> <li>Screening will provide privacy to staff/staff residents.</li> <li>Must be careful to avoid introducing plant material that is incompatible with the historic site/setting.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii-b** and **Alternative vii**. The single-family home retains sufficient integrity to justify its continued use as a residential property. Effective landscape screening will mitigate the impact of the non-historic structure on the cultural landscape and heighten the sense of separation and privacy for inhabitants.

**2020 Acquisition (137 Hall Avenue) – Barn.** 137 Hall Avenue includes a +/- 900 square foot barn in significant disrepair at the eastern edge of the property. The barn also sits near the perimeter of the NHL boundary. Preliminary evaluations of the structure by the SHPO suggest that the structure is non-historic and ineligible for listing on the NRHP.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Structure in disrepair.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degradation of building will continue.</li> <li>Costs to maintain underutilized structure.</li> <li>Target for vandalism (attractive nuisance).</li> <li>Health and safety issue.</li> </ul>
ii) Restore barn for maintenance storage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure easily accessible from road.</li> <li>Structure would require significant repairs to be usable.</li> <li>Repairs may be cost inefficient relative to new construction.</li> <li>Structure in an inconvenient location to maintain efficient site circulation.</li> </ul>



iii) Demolish the barn.

- Non-historic structure does not serve intended purpose.
- Removal of the structure would allow for construction of a more aesthetically-pleasing, purpose-built structure.
- Demolition and site work costs.
- Regional engineers believe structure cannot be salvaged.

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative iii**. The visually-intrusive barn is not original to the Johnson estate. Its removal clears the way for the construction of a new building that better serves the Historic Site's mission and operation. The size of any new building will be scaled in such a manner as to best preserve the historic character and appearance of the landscape.

## B. Proposed Facilities

**Visitor Center.** Limited guest services are currently provided to the visiting public in the Northeast Stonehouse. Tours of the mansion depart from this location, and the building's first floor functions as a small museum space and gift shop, and also provides the Site's only ADA-accessible restroom facility. The building's basement serves both visitors and staff needs, functioning intermittently as a small meeting room or classroom, and storage space. The Northeast Stonehouse's second floor provides collections and record storage space. Members of the public cannot always access the Northeast Stonehouse and its limited amenities during operating hours as staff must exit and lock the building to guide tours. Because the Northeast Stonehouse strives to meet both visitor and administrative demands, this frequently leads to operational inefficiencies and diminishes visitor satisfaction. In instances of inclement weather, when events may no longer be held outdoors, this space cannot accommodate the crowds that must be brought indoors which often leads to visitors leaving an event, or presenters finding conditions less than ideal. Relatedly, rooms often need to be set-up to meet immediate or temporary needs. In many instances, collections and furniture must be moved to different floors within the building, jeopardizing irreplaceable artifacts and resulting in damage to flooring, walls, etc. The Northeast Stonehouse is located behind the mansion and obscured from view of the visitor parking lot. Patrons frequently go instead to the Caretaker's Cottage—which is clearly visible from the lot—to obtain tour information, disrupting administrative staff.

### Alternatives

### Considerations

i) Status Quo:  
Continue to provide limited services and staff functions.

- Patrons are often confused where to start site orientation.
- Park patrons continue to interrupt administrative staff.
- Collections are kept in storage rather than displayed due to lack of space.
- No new restroom facilities provided.
- Limited ability to move events inside to account for inclement weather.

ii) Reorganize current building uses.

- Several iterations of building uses tried to date with no satisfactory arrangement.
- Relocation of services in different buildings may constitute change in occupancy and require alterations to comply with building code.
- Any adaptive reuse will be consistent with resource protection guidelines.

iii) Construct new Visitor Center to provide modern amenities, event and gathering space.

- Will create new building footprint on site.
- Reduced stress on the historic Stonehouse and mansion for both program and storage space.
- Opportunity for sustainable design and improved energy efficiencies.
- Obtaining funding will be critical.

a) Locate adjacent to existing parking lot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patrons naturally gravitate to structure for guest services.</li> <li>▪ May better mediate space between the 20<sup>th</sup> century park and the 18<sup>th</sup> century estate.</li> <li>▪ Building that provides guest services and interpretive space may be “less objectionable” within a National Historic Landmark boundary than a parking lot.</li> <li>▪ Building would be intrusion in the park.</li> </ul>
b) Locate on property boundary btwn. Johnson Hall and 137 Hall Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Located at perimeter of National Historic Landmark boundary rather than within it.</li> <li>▪ Concerns regarding established archaeological record.</li> <li>▪ Building visible from the mansion’s front door unless properly screened.</li> <li>▪ Site may pose topographic challenges for construction.</li> </ul>
c) Locate at edge of JH Park, along Hall Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building may be considered significant intrusion to National Register boundary as no buildings were cited in the original 1926 plans for the park; accordingly, may require significant mitigation or declaration of adverse impact.</li> <li>▪ Location would better unify Historic Site and Johnson Hall Park.</li> <li>▪ Park previously disturbed when perimeter served as traffic turnaround.</li> <li>▪ May provide better location as far as traffic and circulation are concerned.</li> </ul>
iv) Provide additional restroom facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current facilities do not meet Site needs, especially during special events.</li> <li>▪ Need to pay for portable toilets during special events.</li> <li>▪ Can remove bathrooms from inside the historic mansion.</li> <li>▪ Only one ADA-accessible restroom on-site, which is not always available.</li> </ul>
a) Construct free-standing comfort station.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Three-season use.</li> <li>▪ Can be designed and built with materials appropriate for the Site.</li> <li>▪ Facility would serve both site visitors and strolling park patrons.</li> </ul>
b) Provide new facilities in Visitor Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design can ensure restrooms accessible through the Visitor Center lobby during operating hours and through other means when the Visitor Center is closed.</li> <li>▪ Close facility at night to deter vandalism and loitering.</li> <li>▪ Utility cost savings with energy and water-efficient fixtures.</li> </ul>
v) Picnic facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ +/- 10 picnic tables available, includes ADA-accessible tables.</li> <li>▪ Popular attraction at the Site; frequent lunch crowd in the Park in summer.</li> </ul>
a) Construct free-standing structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revenue-generating opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Can be designed with Site-appropriate materials.</li> <li>▪ Locating structure near Hall Creek could be attractive venue.</li> <li>▪ Locating structure in Park would be an intrusion into the historic landscape.</li> </ul>
b) Provide function in Visitor Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduces number of building footprints on the landscape.</li> <li>▪ More efficient use of space for events, catering, etc.</li> <li>▪ Proximity to restroom facilities, parking, and other visitor amenities.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative iii-b, iv-b, and v-b.** The Northeast Stonehouse does not meet the visiting public's needs, nor staff operations, and should to be replaced with a facility that improves visitor orientation, interpretation, amenities, community and administrative uses.

Visitors to a New York State Historic Site should be able to easily locate and access a staffed Visitor Center. They should immediately be met with a point of orientation that provides them with essential information on the Historic Site and its historical context. Visitors should be prepared to enter the historic landscape after being given information that makes their visit to the site meaningful and memorable. Visitors should be able to avail themselves of rich interpretive information, as well as modern conveniences and amenities, that improve their visitor and educational experience. In the Status Quo the visiting public has already traveled through much of the historic estate without having a face-to-face interaction with interpretive staff or an opportunity to educate themselves on the Historic Site's regional and national importance. The Status Quo not only results in the loss of significant interpretive opportunities but does not provide visitors with quality levels of customer service. In the Status Quo, the Historic Site also loses out on the revenues that may be generated from a quality gift shop or rentable community space, functions that would be provided in a new Visitor Center.

Provided the significant resources and effort that will be necessary to site and construct a Visitor Center, great consideration was given by the Planning Team to a multitude of alternatives. The Status Quo, as well as other alternatives, however, were deemed unacceptable because the alternatives do not fulfill the Historic Site vision, nor resolve outstanding programmatic and operational issues. A modern Visitor Center was considered by the Planning Team to be essential to the growth of the Historic Site and its capacity to function at its programmatic and operational best. The above alternatives were chosen because they meet many of the requirements that had been set out by the Planning Team to better provide for the visitor experience and interpretive mission of the Historic Site.

The Visitor Center will include restrooms (accessible from outside), historical exhibits, a gift shop, multi-function meeting room, park offices, a small kitchenette, and more. The design will incorporate green design and landscaping that complements the Historic Site without detracting from the grandeur of Johnson Hall itself. The preferred location of the Visitor Center is contingent upon the completion of archaeological review and support from the DHP and BHS.

## C. Operations

**Staffing.** Throughout the year, Johnson Hall is powered by the dedication and talent of seven staff members. A Site Manager, Interpretive Program Assistant, and Maintenance Worker are employed full time, year-round. One Secretary is employed part time, year-round. Two Interpreters and one Maintenance Worker are hired full time, seasonally.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial changes to staffing levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Regional staff provide assistance when needed, e.g. skilled trades (restoration carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers).</li><li>Professionally-funded interpretive staff.</li><li>Limited staffing resources are targeted where they are most effective.</li></ul>
ii) Develop artist-in-residence program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Position could be filled on-contract.</li><li>Explore funding of position through grants.</li><li>Ability to provide unique living history programs or create exhibits.</li><li>Unique opportunity for artists to work in special cultural setting.</li><li>Important to improve operational capacity given number of new structures and programs proposed.</li></ul>

iii) Initiate a volunteer docent and junior docent training program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires training from Site staff.</li> <li>Docents can provide period-appropriate programming based on their interests, e.g. woodworking, gardening, etc.</li> <li>Experience with volunteers being uncomfortable providing interpretation to visitors.</li> <li>Important to improve operational capacity given number of new structures and programs proposed.</li> <li>Increases sense of local ownership/pride of Site, incentivizes volunteering.</li> </ul>
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**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. Expanding the staffing capacity of the Site is critical to provide diverse programmatic opportunities that appeal to a broader visitor demographic; maintain and operate new interpretive structures and landscape features; promote the continued relevance and quality of the Historic Site. Supporting these positions through housing or supplemental grant monies will reduce financial pressures on the Site.

**Partnerships.** OPRHP and Johnson Hall have a long and successful history of partnership building. These mutually beneficial partnerships have resulted in substantial contributions to the diversity and excellence of preservation, recreation, and stewardship activities within the State Parks and Historic Sites System.

Partners of Johnson Hall include, but are not limited to: not-for-profit organizations that provide operational support and undertake fundraising activities on the Site's behalf; donors whose contributions are dedicated to supporting specific activities or improvements; volunteers who supplement staffing; individual or corporate event sponsors; and individuals or groups that further educational, interpretative, and research activities for the Site.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial change to current partnership management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing partnerships with the Friends of Johnson Hall, other organizations, and individuals improves the quality of educational programming and events.</li> <li>Some projects are dependent upon financial participation from such partners.</li> <li>Partnerships provide important resources for Master Plan implementation.</li> </ul>
ii) Enhance partnership with the Friends of Johnson Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Friends of Johnson Hall contribute in meaningful ways to the Site.</li> <li>Opportunity to have further assistance with resource management.</li> <li>The capacity of the Friends to fundraise and build relationships with other partners and individuals is key to the Site's success and operation.</li> <li>Meets Commissioner goal to align Site programming goals with mission of Friends Groups in a manner that honors OPRHP stewardship goals.</li> </ul>
iii) Develop partnerships with the area Chamber of Commerce and other tourism agencies to promote Site-specific and regional tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May require additional time to develop relationships within larger community.</li> <li>Opportunity to better inform the general public of the Site's significance, its events, and program offerings.</li> <li>Additional promotional capacity/underwriting with Chamber assistance.</li> <li>Introductions to other partners can be facilitated through this relationship.</li> <li>Means to share and promote the Site's economic impact within the region.</li> <li>Way to involve local businesses and local tourism economy in Site initiatives.</li> </ul>
iv) Enhance partnerships with local colleges and universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful past experiences with university programs/student interpreters.</li> <li>Increased communication between Historic Site staff and community leaders.</li> <li>Potential to recruit participation of subject matter experts in programming.</li> <li>Potential to develop research partnerships.</li> <li>Additional staff time needed to work with student interns or researchers.</li> </ul>

v) Encourage collaboration and thematic connections with other Regional historic sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration with other organizations promises further support and assistance in protecting the Site's cultural, natural, and recreational assets.</li> <li>▪ Creating linkages between sites could help Johnson Hall to become a regional cultural center.</li> <li>▪ Will help in Site's interpretative mission by providing a broader context.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to capitalize on the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Revolutionary War.</li> </ul>
vi) Explore merchandising partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Artisanal products made at the Historic Site (e.g. at blacksmith shop) can be made available for purchase in the gift shop.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to promote the cultural products of indigenous communities.</li> <li>▪ Commissioner goal to explore merchandising partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Merchandise revenues help to support programming.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii, iii, iv, v, and vi**. The Master Plan seeks to foster lasting partnerships by deepening connections with existing partners, and by building new, meaningful connections with cultural communities, organizations, and individuals. Partners often share a like-minded vision and goal for the Historic Site and stewardship of its resources. In addition to partnerships developed in the immediate vicinity of the Historic Site, this Master Plan calls for strengthening partnerships with entities operating in the larger Mohawk Valley region, perhaps even internationally, to advance goals for preservation, economic and cultural development. OPRHP's management of these partnerships, and the evaluation of opportunities for new partnerships, will be governed by the Policy on Public/Private Partnerships in New York State Parks and Historic Sites. Partnership activities should be environmentally and fiscally sustainable with the impacts on the Site's cultural resources, facilities, landscapes, operational and capital impacts, all factored into the partnership arrangement.

**Communication and Marketing.** Johnson Hall employs a diverse mix of traditional and electronic media to communicate special events and activities. According to the 2018-2019 Visitor Survey, social media such as Facebook (14.0%)—used by both the Historic Site and the Friends of Johnson Hall—is as effective as Word-of-Mouth (14.8%) for communicating. Direct mail from Johnson Hall (11.7%), Newspaper/Magazine Article (11%) and the OPRHP website or web browsing (11.3%) were also found to be effective means of communicating (OPRHPa, 2019).

<u><b>Alternatives</b></u>	<u><b>Considerations</b></u>
i) Status Quo: No substantial changes to communication or marketing efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Visitor Survey confirms the site successfully uses a broad mix of advertising platforms to promote programs/events (e.g. social media, email/direct mail, word-of-mouth, and newspaper/magazines).</li> <li>▪ Site typically has two social media (Facebook) posts per month.</li> </ul>
ii) Continue to offer opportunities for public input regarding programming and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Means to gather data to improve site programming, management, and maintain community engagement.</li> <li>▪ Work with OPRHP Recreation Analysts to study site trends.</li> <li>▪ Can be time-intensive process.</li> <li>▪ Could host online/on-site survey or a special event.</li> <li>▪ Increases sense of local ownership/pride of Site, incentivizes volunteering.</li> </ul>

iii) Enhance the Site's social media presense.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective tool for visitor engagement, marketing events, programs/exhibits, and can attract new visitors, especially younger audiences.</li> <li>▪ Audiences can engage with online content and share posts to expand viewership of the Historic Site's marketing and message.</li> <li>▪ Maintain year-round interest in the Site, outside of operating season, with fun, creative posts, using social media as an educational tool.</li> <li>▪ Lack of time, staff availability, and/or technological know-how can inhibit effective use of social media or use of multiple platforms.</li> <li>▪ Minimal monetary costs to use social media compared to more traditional marketing tools.</li> <li>▪ May need to keep tabs on social media trends and identify which platforms are most popular to ensure use of tool is effective.</li> <li>▪ Friends of Johnson Hall operate an active social media page that could help supplement the need for the Historic Site itself to actively post.</li> <li>▪ Responsibility to post on social media could be assigned to an intern or volunteer with oversight from Site Manager.</li> </ul>
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**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. Effective communication is vital to the successful operation of a Historic Site. Quality customer service begins with excellent communication and Johnson Hall must continue to put a strong emphasis on promotion, marketing, and community engagement for a consistent message that is inclusive and attractive to current and potential visitors.

**Point of Sale System.** Currently, the Johnson Hall gift shop can only accept cash payment.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No changes to sales system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May lose out on sales as many persons do not carry cash.</li> <li>▪ May be unable to identify purchasing habits of visitors.</li> </ul>
ii) Purchase digital point of sale system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will allow the Site and Friends Group to accept multiple payment methods.</li> <li>▪ May facilitate ability to manage sales with improved efficiency and more accurately monitor stock levels or purchase trends.</li> <li>▪ Software systems can malfunction or be confusing to operators.</li> <li>▪ Need to consider on-premise system versus a "cloud"-based system.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. With the right point of sale system, the Site will be able to modernize its gift shop operations and stands to improve its sales as it will be able to accept multiple payment types (e.g. credit card).

## D. Access, Circulation, and Wayfinding

**Circulation.** Pre-established circulation paths are intended to make visitors feel accommodated and encouraged within a site without making them feel as if their experience is heavily prescribed. Circulation within a site should feel organic and natural. Strategic, well-planned paths facilitated by good landscape design will give visitors a safe, efficient, and enjoyable visit to Johnson Hall.

**Parking (Motorized).** The parking lot for Johnson Hall is located at the northwestern edge of Johnson Hall Park and is within the viewshed of the historic mansion. Though the lot is situated at the perimeter of the Park, the parking lot remains a non-historic intrusion to the Site; there is no visual screening of the lot from the mansion viewshed. While there is adequate parking to accommodate daily visitor and staff parking, overflow traffic poses a challenge during special events. Over the years, staff have accommodated this overflow by coordinating with the local high school to use their parking facilities. There have been instances, however, where events at the high school preclude the availability of additional parking space.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Use existing lot in current configuration; address overflow as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing lot intrudes into Johnson Hall's historic landscape and the strolling park, part of the NHL boundary,.</li><li>Lot is within the mansion viewshed.</li><li>Often does not meet needs for special events.</li><li>Existing lot is convenient for accessing mansion.</li><li>Potential visitors may not attend special events when they cannot easily locate parking at the Site.</li></ul>
ii) Construct small satellite lot further south, at Park edge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Additional intrusion into Johnson Hall Park.</li><li>Alleviates some overflow parking.</li><li>Within reasonable walking distance of Site.</li><li>May require OPRHP to seek permissions from City to create new curb cut.</li></ul>
iii) Substantially remove existing lot; expand lot south.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Removing part of the lot would eliminate some of the non-historic intrusion closest to the mansion.</li><li>Could screen the lot with vegetation.</li></ul>
iv) Create new lot at Visitor Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lot would not be within the National Historic Landmark (NHL) boundary.</li><li>Better meet the Site's parking demands.</li><li>New construction/land disturbance may require significant mitigation.</li><li>Proximity of new lot to Visitor Center provides increased measure of safety.</li></ul>
a) Build with permeable pavers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May mitigate runoff impacts.</li><li>Preferable for sites with areas of potential archaeological significance.</li><li>Maintenance challenges.</li></ul>
b) Pave with asphalt concrete on fill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Easier to maintain than some alternative treatments.</li><li>Potential stormwater management issues.</li><li>Fill may help avoid adverse archaeological impacts.</li><li>Asphalt generates less roadway noise than many concrete materials.</li></ul>
c) Pave with porous asphalt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Requires much deeper section to create a stone reservoir area underneath.</li><li>Potential adverse impacts to archaeological resources.</li><li>May help with stormwater management.</li></ul>
v) Remove old parking lot and restore vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creates open space for programmatic use.</li><li>Helps to return the landscape to a more historic condition.</li></ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative iv-b** and **Alternative v**. A new parking lot for the proposed Visitor Center is necessary to address existing operational inefficiencies. Failure to address parking challenges will lead to the continued loss of visitors—dissuaded from attending programming based on a perceived difficulty to access the Site—during popular special events. Traffic flow and circulation within the lot will be carefully designed and consistent with safety, accessibility, capacity, and archaeology goals.

**Parking (Non-Motorized).** Patrons arrive to the Site via multiple transportation modes: vehicle, bike, foot.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No secure location for patrons to lock bikes.</li> <li>▪ May disincentivize arrival by bike for fear of property loss or damage.</li> </ul>
ii) Encourage pedestrian and bicycle access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affordable means to encourage non-motorized Site access.</li> <li>▪ Commissioner priority to provide bike-friendly infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to collaborate with the Fonda, Johnstown and Gloversville Rail Trail; could encourage wayfinding signs or interpretive panels about Johnson Hall along the bike trail.</li> <li>▪ Racks are easily screened from historic viewshed.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternative is **Alternative ii**. This Alternative is easily implemented, supports the Agency’s sustainability/“green travel” goals, and encourages regional partnerships that benefit the Historic Site.

**Signage (Directional, Wayfinding, etc.).** Proper directional and wayfinding signage—for pedestrians and vehicular traffic—is essential to a positive site experience. Signage is often the first impression a visitor has of a site; it also helps patrons know where they are allowed and where they are not (e.g. maintenance areas, sensitive archaeological spaces). A lack of signage can mitigate the visitor experience while too much can create clutter on the historic landscape.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: No changes to existing signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited directional and wayfinding signage on-site currently.</li> <li>▪ Existing informational signs have open/close dates, though the operating dates vary every year and so the dates are often wrong.</li> </ul>
ii) New entrance signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The existing entrance sign is a pole/post sign with a brown aluminum panel suspended between two posts; located on the north side of Hall Avenue.</li> <li>▪ Current sign doesn’t meet Agency Wayfinding Signage Program standards.</li> <li>▪ New sign would reinforce overall Agency brand.</li> <li>▪ Current sign neither detracts from, nor obscures, the mansion.</li> <li>▪ Existing sign does not contribute to visual pollution of the residential street.</li> </ul>
a) Pole sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More affordable alternative than gateway monument-style sign.</li> <li>▪ Sign is at more of a “pedestrian” scale than a gateway monument sign.</li> </ul>
b) Gateway monument-style sign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More costly option.</li> <li>▪ An opportunity to speak to the vernacular architecture of the Site by incorporating Site materials and construction style into sign design.</li> </ul>
c) Install closer to Hall Ave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Draw attention from traffic along West State Street.</li> <li>▪ Positioning of sign helps define Site boundaries.</li> </ul>



iii) Improve signage along Route 29.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Must work with appropriate transportation authorities.</li> <li>▪ Signage must meet modern transportation safety standards.</li> <li>▪ Signage may only be used to advertise special events.</li> <li>▪ Effective means to attract visitors that may not otherwise know of the Site.</li> </ul>
iv) Improve directional and wayfinding signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agency Wayfinding Signage Program advises how best to orient visitors within State facilities.</li> <li>▪ Existing signs have open/close dates which vary every year.</li> <li>▪ Consistent signage is important to quality of experience.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to make signage copasetic with Site and historic architecture.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii-b, ii-c, and iii**. Signage often holds the unique responsibility of giving visitors a positive first impression. A more prominent sign can aid in the creation of a sense of place. Materials used in the sign can help to define the historical context of the environment in which visitors will immerse themselves. Furthermore, entrance signs may feature the logos of partner organizations. By including partner logos on the sign, the Site can more publicly announce its community relationships and visually express the fact that the Site is meaningful to a variety of stakeholders.

## E. Infrastructure

**Utility Management.** Johnson Hall has served the public as a State Historic Site for more than 100 years. As with any aging facility or infrastructure, the need to upgrade and replace utility lines is often of concern. Infrastructure/utility projects may be replacement in-kind, entailing temporary or minor impacts, while more substantial initiatives may involve significant resources or create numerous impacts. Any proposals for modifications or upgrades will receive additional review under SEQRA when details become available.

<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>Considerations</u>
i) Status Quo: Improve utilities as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utility upgrades include: high-speed internet (2019), powerline to Caretaker's Cottage replaced (2019), new electric line from kiosk to parking lot (2019), replaced waterline from mansion to Cottage (2019), waterline valve (2017).</li> <li>▪ Maintenance of existing utilities may not be most sustainable option.</li> </ul>
ii) Create utility corridors when introducing, replacing, or removing service lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active utility lines decentralized.</li> <li>▪ Uncertainty as to location of historic utilities.</li> <li>▪ When utilities are well mapped, Site Maintenance and utility companies may quickly access lines without having to dig access trenches or resort to confused and outdated utility maps.</li> <li>▪ Matter of safety.</li> </ul>
iii) Maximize energy efficiency using green design, utilities, and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainability principles and energy efficiency will be considered in the design of all proposed construction.</li> <li>▪ OPRHP is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and to becoming more carbon neutral.</li> <li>▪ Consider appropriateness of actions within the historic landscape.</li> </ul>

**Preferred Alternative(s):** The preferred alternatives are **Alternative ii** and **Alternative iii**. Johnson Hall is committed to exploring all sustainability features available to its facility to the extent interventions do not unduly detract from the historic integrity of the Site or its unique sense of place. The Site will tap into the expertise of the Agency's trained Sustainability staff and continue to assess opportunities to improve energy efficiencies. Where utility or energy efficiency upgrades may result in temporary increases in noise during construction, work will generally be scheduled for periods of low Site visitation to minimize impacts to patrons.

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## Chapter 3 – Selection of the Preferred Alternative

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### Rationale for Selection

The Planning Team analyzed the status quo and alternatives proposed for Johnson Hall with emphasis on achieving the Historic Site's goal and vision to improve the visitor experience and responsibly steward historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Johnson Hall operates with a high degree of excellence. In its 2018-2019 Visitor Survey, 90% of respondents rated staff knowledge and courtesy as *excellent*; 78.3% rated the condition of structures and the grounds as *excellent*; 77.5% rated programming and special events as *excellent*, too (OPRHPa, 2019). Some changes are necessary, however, because the Site is increasingly faced with demand for new interpretive experiences and expanded visitor amenities. Throughout the planning process, Site staff and the visiting public indicated areas where changes and improvements could be made at the Site to better support, and expand upon, its existing resources for generations to come.

In choosing the Master Plan over the status quo, OPRHP is making a commitment over the next 10 to 15 years to implement these changes and improvements, subject to available funding. These changes—which will be in the interest of visitors and staff—will also have a positive impact on cultural, recreational, and natural resources.

Cultural resource protection is improved at the Site by supporting ongoing restoration initiatives in the main home; the installation of a fire detection system in the original Northwest Stonehouse; and strong collaboration between the Site, OPRHP's Division for Historic Preservation, and the Friends of Johnson Hall. Together, these groups will help the Site to obtain new exhibits, construct new interpretive structures, and lay out historic landscape designs.

Educational and interpretive opportunities at the Site are improved by increasing engagement with Indigenous nations, African American, and other stakeholder communities during the development of site programming. This concerted effort will present patrons with diverse perspectives on the legacy of Sir William and help to provide a comprehensive portrait of the lived experience of all persons at Johnson Hall. With successful implementation of the Master Plan, visitors will also enjoy a greater number of special events and the ability to engage with interpretive information through technological mediums. New interpretive brochures and signage will also improve the Site's educational and interpretive offerings.

Recreational opportunities at the Site are improved for visitors through the upgrading of existing amenities, increased programming, and the development of new recreation features. The popular strolling path at Johnson Hall Park will be paved and better incorporated into interpretive programming. The proposed interpretive trail on the 2020 Acquisition parcel (137 Hall Avenue) will be enhanced with educational signage.

Environmental stewardship is improved beyond the status quo by recommending Site-specific strategies to stabilize the banks of Hall Creek and control the introduction or proliferation of invasive species.

Operations and infrastructure are improved over the status quo by resolving space and organizational inefficiencies; expanding visitor services and parking in a new, purpose-built facility; restoring existing structures to provide support staff housing; and maximizing energy efficiency using green design, utilities, and infrastructure where appropriate in the historic landscape. The new maintenance facility will consolidate maintenance functions, including staff work space and equipment storage.

All improvements will be accomplished after exploring all sustainable resources available and by following ADA compatibility standards.

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## Chapter 4 – Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

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### Introduction

This chapter of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) focuses on the environmental impacts and mitigation of potential adverse impacts that may result from implementation of the preferred alternative, i.e. the Master Plan. The Master Plan is the compilation of *all* preferred alternatives for cultural resource and landscape protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; natural resource protection; access, circulation, and wayfinding; management and operations at the Historic Site.

For the purpose of SEQRA compliance, the Draft Master Plan and the DEIS together satisfy the requirement for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement as specified in 6 NYCRR Part 617, the rules and regulations implementing SEQRA. A description of the preferred alternatives for the Historic Site—the elements that comprise the Master Plan—can be found in the Master Plan document. The Historic Site's environmental setting is discussed in DEIS Chapter 1. An analysis of the alternatives and the selection of the preferred alternative is discussed in DEIS Chapter 2.

### Environmental Impacts of the Preferred Alternatives

Alternatives were developed and analyzed in Chapter 2 for cultural resource and landscape protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; natural resource protection; access, circulation, and wayfinding; management and operations at the Site. The analyses and choice of preferred alternatives are based on:

- information about existing conditions;
- consideration of demand for various activities;
- site constraints;
- other considerations as identified in each element resource analyses.

The Master Plan consists of the combined preferred alternatives for each identified activity.

### Status Quo Alternative

This alternative consists of the current facilities, programs, and practices at the Historic Site as described in DEIS Chapter 1. Under the Status Quo alternative, current resource protection, operations, and facility management practices would continue. Any increasing or changing demands on the Historic Site would not be addressed, nor would existing impacts be mitigated.

The Status Quo alternative would not result in any adverse environmental impacts. The potential for long-term indirect adverse environmental impacts, however, is likely since there would be no plan to guide use, protection, or development of the Site. If more visitors seek to use the Historic Site, and use it in new or unforeseen ways, additional demands will be placed on its cultural, recreational, and natural resources, as well as its infrastructure. Without the guidance provided by the Master Plan—which, for example, provides for the measured development of new interpretive structures and visitor facilities in areas with capacity for such use—the potential for adverse impacts on cultural and environmental resources increases.

### Preferred Alternative – The Master Plan

The distinct components of the Master Plan are identified in DEIS Chapter 2. This collection of all preferred alternatives for cultural resource and landscape protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; natural resource protection; access, circulation, and wayfinding; management and operations at the Site was subject to evaluation and synthesis to assure that there was consistency among the various alternatives. The Master Plan will provide considerable interpretive and education benefits for the visiting public while providing resource stewardship and changes that facilitate efficient operations. From a long-term perspective, Master Plan implementation will result in a beneficial environmental impact by ensuring that changes to the Site take place in areas appropriate for development while simultaneously protecting the sensitive resources of the Site. Environmental impacts of the Master Plan are discussed more fully in the rest of this chapter.

## Environmental Impacts Associated with Implementation of the Master Plan and Proposed Mitigation

The Master Plan for Johnson Hall State Historic Site seeks to further the Site's mission to nurture a greater appreciation for the lives of Sir William Johnson, Molly Brant, and the history of their estate, through the interpretation and preservation of Johnson Hall's collections, historic structures, and the surrounding landscape. The Master Plan provides comprehensive guidance for the long-term, sustainable development and management of the Site, ensuring it remains a responsible steward of its inimitable cultural and natural resources for decades to come. Planning for new facilities at the Site reflects this, and the proposed locations for new or expanded facilities avoids sensitive resources to the extent practical.

### Biological Resources/Ecology

Though new development is proposed in this Master Plan, direct impacts to biological resources are expected to be minimal. Projects have almost exclusively been sited in areas with previous development, limited environmental sensitivity, and general accessibility to existing infrastructure.

#### *Land (Topography, Geology, and Soils)*

Implementation of the Plan will result in some physical change to the land at Johnson Hall. Proportionally, most of the Site will remain as it is now.

Impacts to land will occur where the Master Plan calls for the removal of extant structures, construction of new facilities, and the infrastructure to support these changes. Such changes proposed in the plan include: four new interpretive structures, interpretive trails on both sides of Hall Creek, the paving of the Johnson Hall Park strolling path, the construction of a new Visitor Center and parking lot, the demolition of two structures (visitor kiosk, barn), removal of the existing parking lot, and the construction of a new maintenance building. Much of the work will take place in previously disturbed grassy areas.

The proposed locations for interpretive structures may require some grading in current lawn areas. The proposed Visitor Center, parking lot, and maintenance facility will require some grading and potential removal of trees. To minimize the amount of grading needed, site specific design of these facilities will incorporate the existing grade levels where possible. Projects involving ground disturbance will minimize sedimentation and erosion impacts through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) as described in the New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control (DEC, 2016). Vegetative buffers will be preserved and seeding and mulching of disturbed areas will occur as soon as possible. Disturbed areas will be restored using native vegetation where appropriate.

Potential impacts on land would also result from the construction of new trails. Impacts of trail construction will vary based on the proposed use of the trail, its proposed surfacing, and its location with respect to steep slopes and streams. Disturbance of land will be limited to the required width of the trail corridor. Trail construction will follow the policies and guidelines for trail building that have been established by recognized trail organizations and government agencies. Adherence to these guidelines will assure that work is completed in a manner that maximizes protection of Historic Site resources.

#### **Water**

It is not anticipated that the implementation of the Master Plan will have significant adverse environmental impacts on water resources. Erosion and sediment controls will be installed as needed during construction. Several projects such as stabilization of the Hall Creek banks will reduce erosion, restore impacted areas and in turn provide better stream protection and ecosystem health. Several of the natural resource management strategies provide guidance for the future management and protection of important water resources such as Hall Creek.

**Impact on Stream Water Quality.** No projects in the Master Plan will have a detrimental impact on water quality in Hall Creek. Erosion and sediment controls will be installed as needed during construction.

No new buildings or facilities are proposed in flood-prone areas within the Historic Site.

**Impact on Ground Water Quality.** Increased stormwater runoff can affect surface waters such as streams by increasing the sediment load and introducing pollutants that are carried by the runoff. Stormwater can

also cause erosion and changes to stream habitats. This has a direct effect on the biodiversity of the stream and its corridor.

Stormwater runoff is increased by the addition of impervious surfaces such as building roofs, roadways, trails, and parking lots. Current pavement and impervious surfaces at the Site are limited, consisting mostly of the singular roadway into the Historic Site, a main visitor parking area, and buildings including the Johnson mansion and Caretaker's Cottage. Currently, the roadway and paved areas of the site total 0.82 acres, or 2.4% of the total Historic Site area.

There is minimal new pavement proposed in the Master Plan. Upon completion of the new Visitor Center and parking lot, the old lot will be removed and revegetated. The surface area of new buildings with impervious roofs will include the new interpretive structures (e.g. blacksmith shop, trade house, and longhouse) and the new maintenance building. The design for the new Visitor Center and its supporting parking lot has not been explored in extensive detail.

An increase in impervious surfaces could result in an increase in the quantity and velocity of runoff generated during storm events. Permeable materials will be used whenever practical with respect to site conditions, cost and operations, especially for parking areas. All new structures and parking areas will have drainage infrastructure designed to mitigate stormwater runoff. Green design will be utilized for new buildings as much as possible without detracting from its historic resources.

Paving the Johnson Hall Park strolling path, as well as the proposed interpretive walking trails, will increase impervious surfaces at the Site. Standard water abatement techniques will help remediate these concerns. Trail areas that require more than routine measures, such as construction of bridges or boardwalks, will be planned in consultation with Regional and Site staff. Regional staff may be required to review proposals and consult with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and/or the United State Army Corps of Engineers as appropriate.

At the time of implementation, an erosion control plan will be prepared for construction projects proposed in the Master Plan that exceed one acre. Projects that disturb one acre or more will be subject to the State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit process. Best management practices as described in the New York Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control (DEC, 2016d) will be used to reduce impacts to soils on the project sites. Some measures which will be used include minimizing soil disturbance and vegetation clearing, the use of silt fencing and straw bales where needed, preservation of vegetated buffers, and seeding and mulching of disturbed areas as soon as possible following work.

During field layout of trails, the Agency will retain a buffer between new trails and Hall Creek. All new trail work will be designed to control stormwater and minimize erosion.

### ***Air***

Impacts to air quality are expected to be minor and of a short-term nature. When fully implemented, the Master Plan will result in increased use of the Historic Site. Air quality impacts from increased traffic, however, are not expected to be significant. Short-term, temporary air quality impacts may occur from temporary increases in vehicle exhaust and generation of dust during construction. These effects will be temporary and localized, and will occur over time as the Plan is implemented. Air quality impacts from construction vehicles will be mitigated by assuring that these vehicles are in good running condition and are not producing excessive exhaust.

### ***Ecological Communities***

There are no significant natural communities nor rare or endangered species at the Historic Site. The approximately 33-acre site is a post-agricultural landscape, and most of its grounds are extensive lawn interspersed with small clusters of trees and shrubs. Most of the Site's vegetation is not native to the region.

Preferred alternatives in the Master Plan seek to restore ecological diversity and health through the planting of native species and the use of living shoreline designs that help to stabilize the banks of Hall Creek.

Prior to implementation, Site staff, Agency stewardship and trails planning staff, will review and assess designs for the construction and development of interpretive trails. This review ensures trail routing will avoid impacts to natural resources—including the spread or introduction of invasive species—and ensure

trails are sited in a sustainable manner. Trail design and development will follow the procedures and guidelines established in the “Trails Technical Document #1, Standards and Guidelines for Trails in NYS Parks” (OPRHP, 2010). Trail construction will be monitored; erosion controls will be in place.

### ***Flora***

The construction of new facilities will require the removal of some minor amount of ground vegetation during construction. The vegetation removed will primarily be in the building’s footprint which are largely planned in lawn or developed areas of the Historic Site. None of the construction/rehabilitation proposed under the Master Plan will be located near rare plant locations as no rare species are known at the Site.

The proposed planting of vegetative landscape screenings and a period-appropriate formal garden will involve several native species and evergreens. In addition, the new Visitor Center and parking lot will be designed around the historic landscape—as informed by the Site’s updated Cultural Landscape Report—to preserve existing trees and protect the viewshed from the mansion.

For the interpretive trails, potential impacts to areas where trail segments are proposed will be avoided or minimized by requiring on-site selection of the most appropriate route through the area, trimming some vegetation, and installing signs or blazes to mark the trail while minimizing removal of existing native vegetation.

Areas that will require vegetative restoration or will be part of a design will incorporate the use of native species or historically appropriate non-invasive species that are indigenous to the area. The Regional Landscape Architect and the Regional Biologist will be consulted regarding the appropriate species to be used in any planting plans. In addition, facility design and implementation will be consistent with OPRHP’s Tree Management and Native Plants policies (OPRHP, 2009 and OPRHP, 2015).

### ***Fauna***

Minimal impacts to the fauna are expected due to the small amount of physical change being proposed in the Master Plan. In general, areas proposed for improvements either through rehabilitation or new construction are not located near sensitive environmental areas and are not expected to affect wildlife in the area. Construction in OPRHP facilities is usually planned for the late fall and winter when public use is lower. This timing also minimizes any disturbance to wildlife by avoiding periods of higher biological activity, such as bird breeding seasons and bat roosting. Similarly, any tree removals will be timed to occur between November and March to minimize disturbance to bats and other wildlife. Outside of this window, consultation will occur with the Regional Biologist to minimize impacts to fauna. Site-specific design of new facilities and trails will include surveys for sensitive or rare species or habitats. If needed, proposed facilities or trails will be re-located to avoid or minimize any adverse impacts to wildlife.

### ***Invasive Species***

Invasive plant seeds can be inadvertently introduced on construction equipment and through the use of mulch, imported soil, gravel, and sod. Trail use can also facilitate the spread of invasive species. Regional and Agency stewardship staff are very knowledgeable regarding the impacts of invasive species. Ongoing training will improve their ability to prevent the spread of invasives. A site-specific management strategy will be developed by staff to provide guidance for invasives, including how best to decrease the Site’s number of Norway Maple trees. Implementation of this management strategy will focus on prevention, early detection and identification of invasives, rapid response, and eradication.

In addition, new construction projects, as well as day-to-day operations, have the potential for spreading invasive species. It is important to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize the spread of invasives. The New York State Department of Transportation has developed useful BMPs for invasive plant control that can be tailored to site-specific projects and operations at Johnson Hall (DOT, 2011). These BMPs—which include the inspection of all equipment, soils, straw and other construction materials used at construction sites, as well as proper material disposal and equipment cleaning—will be applied and help to assure that invasives are not transported during construction. These actions will limit the potential of invasives to establish at the Site, as well as in new locations in the surrounding area.



## Cultural Resources

This Master Plan—which recognizes, enhances, and protects the Historic Site's many cultural resources—may have some impacts on existing cultural resources. Many of these impacts are beneficial for resources in the long-term and provides for their continued protection and recognition.

Any project or activity proposed in the Master Plan that may impact historic resources or landscapes at the Site will undergo Section 14.09 review by OPRHP's Division for Historic Preservation (DHP), in accordance with the State Historic Preservation Act. Any routine operation or maintenance that requires ground disturbance also requires further review by DHP. To assess the impact of any proposal for development, DHP will apply the Secretary of Interior Standards. These standards and criteria reflect national, and international, consensus among preservation specialists and advocates.

Several of the Site's cultural resources have ongoing maintenance and restoration needs. In accordance with the Master Plan, OPRHP will continue its work repairing and restoring these important resources in order to constrain deterioration and retain as much historic integrity as possible. In the short-term, construction activity and materials storage associated with restoration activity may have temporary, minor adverse impacts on the cultural landscape and visitor experience. One approach to mitigating these impacts is by building, to the extent possible, in the off-season or appropriately screening construction areas. Additional mitigation steps may be prescribed by DHP as appropriate. Ultimately, the removal of the restroom from the basement of the mansion will restore the space to a more original condition. Removing the restroom will help to mitigate the risks associated with running water through a historic structure and make the space more conducive to interpretive programming. Similarly, the installation of a fire detection system in the Northwest Stonehouse provides for the integrity of the resource and the health and safety of visiting patrons. A reorganization of uses within existing structures (e.g. Northeast and -west Stonehouses) relocates administrative and non-interpretive functions to other structures, freeing buildings for educational and interpretive uses that better achieve the Historic Site's interpretive mission and vision.

Critical to mitigating the potential long-term adverse impacts that may stem from development of new interpretive structures at the Historic Site is the thoughtful, deliberate approach to their design, siting, engineering, and construction. To minimize the potential adverse visual impacts of these features on the cultural landscape, Regional Engineering staff will work with Historic Site and DHP staff to devise approaches to design that are appropriate for an 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape. The visual integrity of the cultural landscape, as well as the value of the visitor experience, is largely dependent upon the capacity of the Historic Site to adequately maintain these new structures. Accordingly, collaboration between the Region, Historic Site and DHP staff will ensure that new interpretive structures are also designed to require minimal maintenance. This should help reduce demands on Site and Regional trades staff and promote operational efficiency at the Site. Additional mitigation of the impact of these new structures on the historic landscape includes the provision of interpretive programming and signage that emphasizes that the structures are purpose-built for educational purposes and that the facilities are *not* reconstructions. Other mitigation steps may be prescribed by DHP once the structures are included in regular site programming. The construction of new interpretive features—properly designed for the landscape and a practicable maintenance regime—enhances interpretive opportunities at Johnson Hall and creates a unique experience and sense of place that more effectively conveys to the visiting public the historic significance of Sir William Johnson and his contemporaries.

A rigorous level of review will also be applied prior to construction of the Visitor Center, new maintenance facilities, the bridge across Hall Creek, and other proposed work as part of the Master Plan, in order to ensure that cultural resources are not adversely impacted. It is a specific goal of the Master Plan to site and engineer new construction using designs that are compatible with the historical context of the Site, and to construct them in a location and manner that is least impactful to the Site's archaeological record. Projects will be designed in conjunction with DHP expertise to avoid adverse impacts or reduce and mitigate any minor impacts. Mitigation steps will be prescribed by DHP as appropriate.

All new construction at the Site will avoid damage to the subsurface archeological record to the best of its ability. To minimize any potential impacts to the archaeological record, the Agency's Field Service Bureau

(FSB)—which is part of DHP and responsible for identifying, evaluating, preserving, and protecting archeological and cultural resources—will coordinate survey work and determine the preliminary presence or absence of cultural resources within, or adjacent to, a building site. Prior to construction, or other ground-disturbing activities, the FSB will ensure compliance with procedures and requirements prescribed within Section 14.09 of the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law (OPRHP, 1980). Any information gleaned from this archeological activity will create positive, long-term impacts by further establishing the Site's documented historical record for use in the development of new exhibits and interpretive programming.

The Master Plan provides for the long-term benefit of the Historic Site's collections and archives by its recommendation to expand collections and further develop exhibit spaces with appropriate environmental controls. This helps the Site better meet current museum storage standards and improves its capacity to secure, steward, and preserve collections for the educational benefit of the public. The Site's ability to gain access to rotating collections facilities the development of partnerships with other cultural resource stewards, and encourages further public and professional engagement with the Site.

The development of educational exhibits at the Visitor Center, provision of interpretive materials in multiple languages, installation of interpretive signage statewide, and engagement with a variety of cultural communities will help the Historic Site to fully interpret its cultural resources using a variety of perspectives and promote a nuanced understanding of key historical themes. Additional beneficial impacts associated with the Plan include the preparation of a Historic Furnishing Plan and a Cultural Landscape Report, which will compile and provide important information about the Site's cultural resources and provide further guidance for resource management and protection. The Cultural Landscape Report may call for landscape restoration activities such as vegetation removal, drainage system removal or repair, or reconstruction of historic roads or paths. As these details are not known at the current time, additional environmental review will be needed when the report is complete prior to any implementation.

## **Scenic Resources**

Implementation of the Master Plan will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the Site's scenic resources. Many preferred alternatives were selected due to their ability to respect and enhance viewsheds of the historic home and their potential to enhance the cultural landscape.

## **Recreation**

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in improvements to facilities that support recreational activities at Johnson Hall. The paving of the Johnson Hall Park strolling path will provide safer, more accessible use for the visiting public. The development of interpretive trails will expand low-intensity recreation opportunities such as enjoying site interpretation, walking, running, birding, and photography. Recreational improvements will follow the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

## **Open Space**

There will be no impacts to open space resources from the implementation of the Master Plan. OPRHP will evaluate and consider acquisition of fee, title or easements on adjacent properties as they become available. The Historic Site and Region will also monitor any development proposals that may affect the quality of the Site's scenic resources.

## **Transportation, Access, and Traffic**

Implementation of the Master Plan will result in some transportation improvements but does not call for any significant changes to traffic patterns or access to the Historic Site. The Site's new Visitor Center parking area will improve circulation, include ADA-compliant parking spots, and feature improved directional signage.

Full implementation of the Master Plan can result in increased visitation to the Historic Site and accordingly, a potential increase in traffic. The capacity of the existing road leading to the Site, Hall Avenue, was considered during the planning process. It was determined that the road functions effectively and should be able to accommodate added use and safe traffic flow.

## **Public Health and Safety**

Public health and safety are important elements in Site operations. New or substantially rehabilitated facilities will be designed and constructed to meet all applicable health and safety codes including compliance with the ADA. Design and rehabilitation of infrastructure systems such as electric, water, and sewer—where needed—will ensure public health protection.

## **Energy, Noise, and Odor**

Sustainability principles and energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into the design of all new Site buildings, particularly the new Visitor Center. Construction activities associated with Master Plan implementation may result in some minor temporary increases in noise during construction.

## **Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

The proposed Master Plan may result in some unavoidable adverse impacts. There will be some minimal permanent loss of pervious soil surface and vegetative cover as a result of construction of the new Visitor Center, its parking lot, and interpretive structures. Construction will be monitored by Site staff and action will be taken, if necessary, to prevent any significant impacts from occurring.

In addition to the impacts outlined above, there may also be temporary air and noise impacts (e.g. fugitive dust, noise from construction equipment and vehicles, etc.) associated with construction of proposed improvements.

## **Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources**

The planning, development, and implementation of this Master Plan—including construction of new interpretive structures, Visitor Center, and maintenance facility—will involve the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of public resources in the form of time, labor, and materials. It will also require a commitment to the long-term operation and maintenance costs of the enhanced Historic Site.

## **Growth Inducement**

Implementation of the Master Plan may result in increased interpretive and recreational use of the Site. This increased use will be carefully managed in an effort to support the Site's vision and goals and to maintain the quality of the Site's important historic, cultural, and natural resources. There may be positive, on-going, economic impacts to the communities surrounding the Historic Site in the form of business to boutiques, restaurants, gas stations and convenience stores. In particular, tourism related expenditures surrounding cultural and heritage tourism activities can be an element in the economic vitality of communities. Multiple national studies reveal that cultural and heritage travelers are more frequent travelers, more likely to travel further to get the experiences they want, and spend more money than the average traveler during their travels (Livable, 2014).

## **Supplemental Environmental Review**

Portions of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement are somewhat general or conceptual. Decisions regarding the type and extent of certain actions will be dependent on the findings from site-specific studies or analysis in the field. For example, the specific designs for the new Visitor Center, interpretive structures, and maintenance facility will require more detailed site analysis and inter-Agency collaboration. The findings from these site-specific evaluations may identify impacts that were not adequately addressed in this DEIS. Under such a circumstance, an additional or supplemental environmental review will be required.

As part of the Agency's responsibility under SEQRA, staff will review proposed implementation projects with respect to consistency with this Plan and the EIS. Projects found by Agency staff to be consistent with the Master Plan can go forward without any additional review. Other types of proposals may require further review ranging from completion of an Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) to perhaps a site-specific EIS.

To assist in this consistency evaluation, the following types of actions have been identified in 6 NYCRR Part 617 as likely to require additional review under SEQR:

- Any new actions not addressed within this EIS that do not meet the Type II categories identified in Part 617;
- Any change from the preferred alternatives for cultural resource and landscape protection; interpretation and education; recreation enhancement; natural resource protection; access, circulation, and wayfinding; management and operations or other elements of the plan which would result in significant environmental impacts;
- Any leases, easements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between OPRHP and private entities or other agencies that affect resources in a manner that is not sufficiently addressed in this plan;
- Any project determined through review by the OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation to have an Adverse Impact on historic or cultural resources at the Historic Site;
- Any proposals for new trails, trail segments, or trail uses not addressed within the Master Plan.

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## Cover Image

Edward Lamson Henry, 1903. "Johnson Hall (Sir William Johnson Presenting Medals to the Indian Chiefs of the Six Nations at Johnstown, NY, 1772)." Oil on Canvas. Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, New York. Online. Available: <https://www.albanyinstitute.org/details/items/johnson-hall-sir-william-johnson-presenting-medals-to-the-i.html>. Accessed 2019.

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