



Chapter 1 Introduction

The 2013 Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan (2013 Plan) examines and prioritizes significant battlefield areas and battle elements¹ that contribute to the battlefield cultural landscape and are well suited for further study, planning, and possible protection and/or interpretation. Significant battlefield areas, termed ‘strategic landscapes,’ encompass key battle elements of events and features², the latter broadly categorized as physical geography (terrain, land areas used by troops and civilians, and natural features) and cultural topography (settlement patterns and built features).



Key built feature, Birmingham Meeting, in the 3 Hills Combat Area Strategic Landscape, was employed by local residents as a field hospital

The 2013 Plan identifies 13 strategic landscapes and recommends their further consideration and planning. Strategic landscapes are being examined in phases (Map 1-1) due to the complexity of the battle and large size of the battlefield (approximately 35,000 acres). This plan represents the third phase (‘Phase 3’) of battlefield strategic landscapes projects and covers areas and pivotal timeframes related to the American strategy along Brandywine Creek, Crown Force³ strategy the afternoon of battle, and combat between the two armies. Together, several strategic landscapes form the eastern Brandywine Battlefield where Gen’l Washington devised and began to execute his battle strategy. The American army moved from DE into PA on Sept. 8-10, 1777 (‘American Approach & Encampment Landscape’) and defended fords (‘Fords Landscapes’) and combated Crown Forces (‘Birmingham Road Area Combat’ and ‘Chadds Ford Combat Area’ Landscapes), while Gen’l Howe devised his battle strategy (‘Osborne Hill Landscape’) and engage in combat on Sept. 11, 1777, the day of battle.

Strategic landscapes and their features are areas to focus battlefield-related local planning, land conservation, historic resource protection, and heritage interpretation efforts. Collectively, such efforts honor, preserve, and exhibit areas of American history and the nation’s founding in Chester County, while simultaneously maintaining community identity, sense of place, and enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors within the living and evolving battlefield cultural landscape.

Plan Purpose

This plan examines and delineates the following for eastern battlefield Strategic Landscapes:

- Role in the battlefield of Gen’l Howe’s devised battle strategy at Osborne Hill.
- Role in the battlefield of Gen’l Washington’s military strategy and approach into PA leading to defensive positions along Brandywine Creek and nearby American encampment.
- Role in the battlefield of combat between the two armies.
- Association with military activity, civilian involvement, and impacts on the local rural civilian community
- Historic context and physical features that contribute to an interpretable battlefield landscape.
- Strategies for historic resource, land conservation, and heritage interpretation planning, including highlighting Kennett Square as a center for interpretation of the southern battlefield.

An overview of eastern battlefield Landscapes (this Chapter) and their significance to the battle (Chapter 2), as well as battle history, importance, and recent planning efforts (Appendix A) provide perspective for this plan. Key

¹ Battle elements include battle events, e.g. troop movements and skirmishes, and physical features, e.g. ridges or battle-era buildings.

² For local planning purposes, features can be correlated with natural resource, open space, historic resource, land, and road planning.

³ During the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777, British troops along with Hessian soldiers and local loyalists make up the ‘Crown Forces’.

southern battlefield elements are examined via physical geography, cultural topography, and reference materials (Chapter 3) and identification of battle-era built features (Chapter 4)⁴. This plan clarifies battle elements from the 2013 Plan for eastern battlefield Landscapes and provides locally oriented strategies for historic resource protection and land conservation (Chapter 5) and heritage interpretation (Chapter 6)⁵.

Strategic Landscape & Plan Names & Areas

Battle of Brandywine was a complex, full day battle that involved relatively constant troop activity. It is a difficult battle to describe using simple geographic bounds, as battle elements and locations overlap and blend into one another (as seen on Map 1-1). Battlefield and strategic landscapes boundaries have been created for ease of discussion for local planning purposes. Mapped Strategic Landscape outlines⁶ present general areas for battlefield study and planning. Based on Phase 3 analysis, Landscape outlines changed from the 2013 Plan, which was a shift anticipated by the 2013 Plan when recommending further Landscape analysis.

Focused examination of these Landscapes made clear their story is interrelated and best addressed together, as they focus mostly on American activity and combat between both armies. Examination of these Landscapes also led to their grouping as the ‘eastern battlefield’ for the project. Eastern battlefield landscapes are addressed together in this ‘Rebels & Redcoats’ Plan to capture their focused and linked history largely on the day of battle.

Project Need

The 2013 Plan provides a foundation and framework for ongoing battlefield planning and is the impetus for the Phase 3 project and this plan. Battle of Brandywine activities took place from daybreak to dusk. Phase 3 clarifies battle elements in the morning and proceeding throughout the day of Sept. 11, 1777, as well as identifies associated American army battle elements occurring in the days prior, leading to the day of battle that laid the strategy and groundwork for the battle.

The 2013 Plan includes two fords Strategic Landscapes, while this plan entails all fords defended by American Forces including several fords previously identified differently. The 2013 Plan does not designate the American Approach and Encampment area as a strategic landscape due to lack of understanding about this aspect of the battle; however, via analysis in the plan these battle elements are now called out as a Strategic Landscape and there remain noticeable areas of historic settings and resources. The 2013 Plan includes the other eastern battlefield Strategic Landscapes that are in this plan, however their battle elements have been further vetted and understood via detailed study including locations and activities and changed geography.

This Army Marched at Dawn Southern Brandywine Battlefield Strategies Landscapes Plan is needed to analyze, refine, and clarify assumptions and unknowns in the 2013 Plan to add knowledge about the southern battlefield, for continued planning, education, interpretation, and preservation. In doing so, this plan provides a focused and locally implementable supplement to the 2013 Plan.

Project Contributors

This project is vastly funded through a grant to Chester County from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), which provides competitive funding for battlefield studies and planning nationwide. Created in 1991 and signed into law by Congress in 1996, this National Park Service program is a federal partnership initiative to assist communities in identifying and planning for interpretation and protection of the nation's significant historic

⁴ Municipal historic context and detailed information about battle-era properties, that supplements Chapter 4, is in Appendix B.

⁵ A proposed heritage tour, that supplements Chapter 6, is in Appendix C.

⁶ Strategic Landscapes represent generalized areas for study, reference, and planning discussion. They do not denote firm bounds.

battlefields and related resources, as well as raise awareness of their importance for future generations. ABPP addresses wars that occurred on American soil.

Chester County Planning Commission completed this Phase 3 project, with input from Pennsbury, Birmingham, Thornbury, Westtown, and Chadds Ford Townships, Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates, and ABPP representatives⁷. Professional archivists from Chester County Archives Department used original primary source materials in the Archives and other sources to complete historic resources deed and verification research, locate and map property damages claims, and recreate battle-era property, owner, and road mapping. A professional consultant team made up of South River Heritage Consulting, Western Heritage Mapping, and Dr. Robert Selig provided terrain and geospatial field study, primary and secondary source research, battle mapping, and analysis and assessment of assumed battle events as well as provided vetting of battle history and plan analysis content. Local volunteers provided their research and local knowledge of the area, properties, and owners. Landowners voluntarily offered to work with the project team. This project could not have occurred without this extensive and skilled team working collaboratively and alongside the supportive local residents of Chester County.

⁷ This plan focuses on the battle in PA; however, addresses New Castle County DE in parts of the plan.