

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA

DATE: October 26, 1972
TO: Prince William County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Prince William County Planning Office
RE: Rezoning File #73-7, Signal Hill

STAFF REPORT

LOCATION OF PROPERTY:

This property, containing 105 acres, more or less, consisting of the Signal Hill Fortification and adjacent land is located on Rt. 616 in the Coles Magisterial District and sometimes known as the "Powell Tract".

PROPOSED USE:

Historical Landmark

REQUESTED CHANGE:

Existing Zoning	-	A-1
Proposed Zoning	-	H, as overlay over existing A-1

AREA LAND USE:

North	-	Vacant
East	-	Agricultural & Residential
South	-	Residential
West	-	Vacant

VICINITY ZONING PATTERN:

North	-	A-1
East	-	A-1
South	-	A-1
West	-	A-1

STAFF COMMENTS:

This application for historic (H) zoning of the property, known as the "Powell Tract", located on Route 616 is an extension of rezoning file #72-15 in which the Prince William Historic Commission requested historic (H) zoning for 5.9154 acres known as "Signal Hill". This rezoning is being considered on the Board of Supervisor's own motion (Board of Supervisors Resolution #17 of October 5, 1972). In accordance with requirements of Section 15.1-431 of the Code of Virginia, certified letters were sent to owners of record of the property involved and to owners of abutting properties and those immediately across the road from the property affected.

Since there have been no previous rezonings in the County to the historic district a brief summary of the provisions of this category is included.

The Historic District is an over-lapping zone which does not change the existing zoning of the property. There are, however, additional regulations designed to protect the historic area which do apply. These include:

- 1) No major alteration or renovation which would change the character of a designated historical structure or site may be undertaken without the consent of the Board of Supervisors.
- 2) Any new structure to be erected in a Historical District must conform to the requirements of both the over-lapping districts in which it is located (or appropriate variances be secured). The construction of any such structure (meeting the above requirements) must be also approved by resolution of the County Board of Supervisors acting with the advice of the Historical Commission.
- 3) Additional regulations may be suggested as appropriate to the specific site by the Historical Commission and enacted by the County Board of Supervisors and where necessary arranged by contract with the owner of said property.

Additional results of designation of a site or structure as an Historic District are:

- 1) For all owners of County Historic Landmarks, the Historical Commission upon request, shall advise on questions of historical preservation and restoration.
- 2) Upon its designation as a Historical Landmark, an historical emblem to be designed and designated by the Historical

Commission shall be located upon the site and hereforth the site shall be shown on appropriate county brochures and maps and designated "Open to Public" or "Not Open to Public".

- 3) Reports submitted by the Historical Commission on each Historic District shall be forwarded to the Virginia Historical Landmarks Commission with a request that it be named a state historical landmark and enjoy the privileges thereof.

A certificate of historical appropriateness, approved by the Board of Supervisors, would be required for any construction, alteration, restoration or demolition of any structure or sign within the designated Historic District.

The ordinance further provides for appeal to the Circuit Court of decisions of the Board of Supervisors and also outlines the conditions under which an owner may demolish a designated County Historic Landmark.

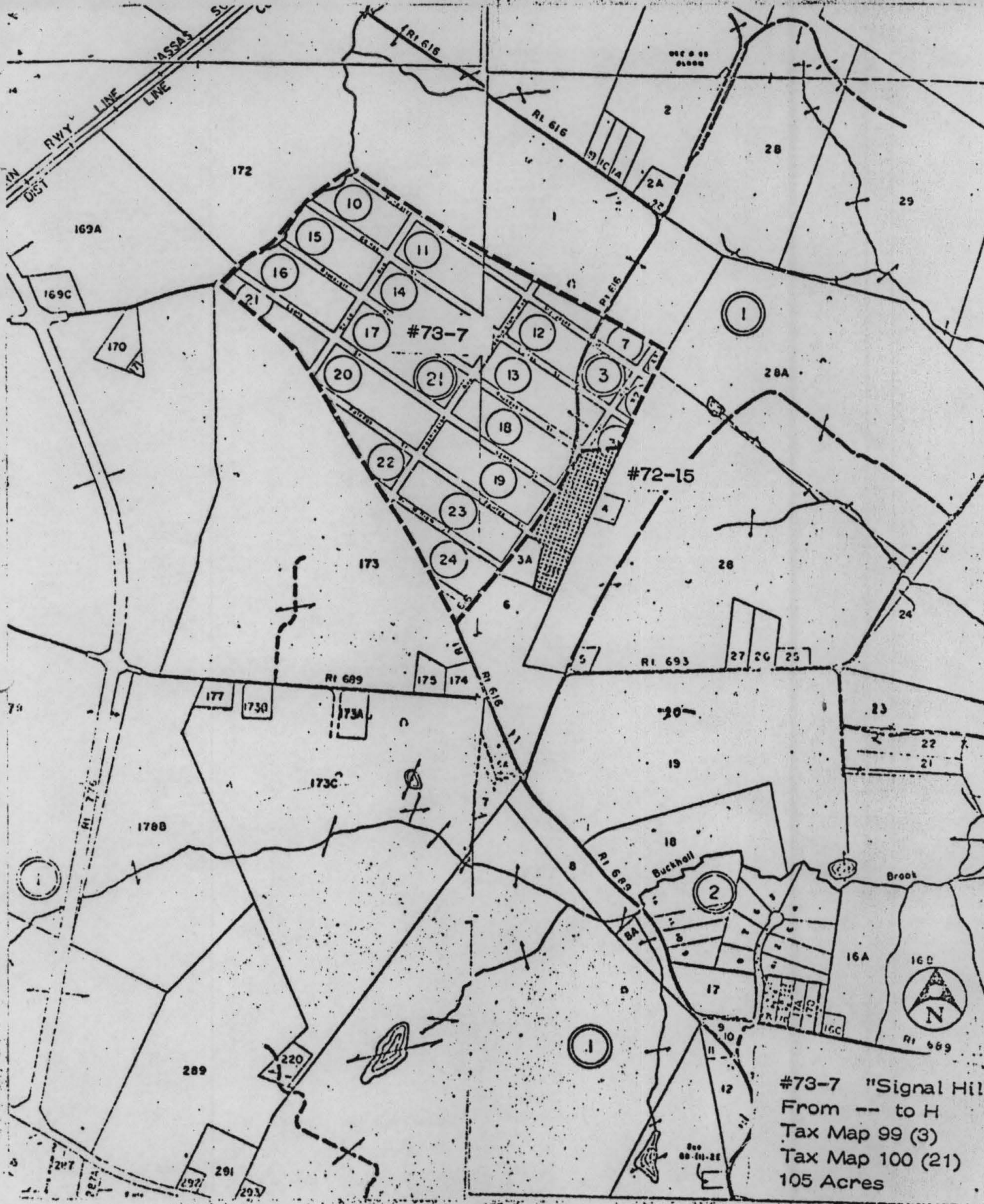
The historical significance of "Signal Hill" and the surrounding area has been documented in various historical sources. It was the site of the Confederate Signal Station during the Battle of Manassas. From this area the first message ever spelled out by flag communication on a battlefield was sent. According to historians, "there exists here today an earth-work fort as perfect, except for the levelling processes of time, as it was when completed in 1861".

This rezoning (including the 5.9 acres in rezoning case #72-15) involves only that portion of the hill to the west of the ridge line, dropping down to Russia Branch. The portion of Signal Hill to the east of the ridge line has not been included. It is recommended that, at a later date, historic zoning be considered for this area also, thus assuring that the entire Signal Hill will be developed in a manner consistent with its historic value.

The entire area between Signal Hill and Bull Run is presently being studied by the Planning Staff as a potential area for parks, recreation and perhaps other public or semi-public facilities. The Town of Manassas Park has expressed interest in advocating these uses for this area also, and has apparently begun to acquire land in this area. The Northern Virginia Park Authority has already acquired one parcel on the Prince William County side of Bull Run, and appears to be interested in additional area for park purposes. In a recent application for Federal Funds for open space land acquisition, Prince William County has indicated potential land acquisition in this area also. Historic zoning on Signal Hill would be consistent with these activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.



#73-7 "Signal Hill"
 From -- to H
 Tax Map 99 (3)
 Tax Map 100 (21)
 105 Acres

#73-7 "Signal Hill"

From -- to H

Tax Map 99 (3)

Tax Map 100 (21)

