

Rehabilitate the Kennels' Dog Yard at Denali National Park & Preserve

Cultural Resource Report No. 2019-DENA-016

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Abstract

Denali National Park and Preserve is planning an undertaking to rehabilitate the dog yard at the Park Kennels. Rehabilitation would include installation of fencing around the dog yard, relocation of water and electrical lines, installation of night sky friendly lighting, two additional dog pens, and a web cam.

The Park Kennels Building (B105), dog houses (B105A) and dog pens (B105B) contribute to the Mt. McKinley Headquarters Historic District and all work would follow *the Secretary of the Interiors Standards & Guidelines for Historic Preservation* as well as *the Design Guidelines for the Mt. McKinley National Park Headquarters Historic District*.

As designed the project would not adversely affect the Kennels or the Historic District's integrity which qualifies these properties for inclusion within *the National Register of Historic Places*. It is recommended that Denali National Park and Preserve make the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, determination of "No Historic Properties Adversely Effected" (36 CFR Part 800.5(3)(b)).

1 Description of Undertaking

Denali National Park and Preserve (DNA) is planning an undertaking to rehabilitate the dog yard at the Park Kennels. Rehabilitation would include installation of fencing around the dog yard, relocation of water and electrical lines, installation of night sky friendly lighting, two additional dog pens, and a web cam. Currently there is one line of dog pens on the south side of the kennels dog yard and the rest of the dogs are in an open area on chains. A simple rope is all that separates most of these dogs from visitors (several dogs are very visitor friendly and do not have a rope around their areas). The proposed installation of fences would provide security for both the dogs and visitors. The current design of the dog yard is such that there is nothing to stop visitors from entering the Kennels after hours (when no staff are around) and interacting with a dog that may not be friendly. Moose also frequent the area and there is a safety concern that a moose may enter the yard and injure or kill dogs. Each spring DNA spends many hours trying to deter moose from the area and protect the dogs; the proposed fencing would keep the moose out of the dog yard, protecting both the wildlife and the dogs.

The webcam would look out over the dog yard and would allow Kennels staff, who reside close by but out of sight of the kennels, to see what is happening remotely. Kennels staff currently can hear when the dogs get excited over something, but until they actually physically go to the kennels they don't know the cause of the excitement; it could be a moose feeding within a couple feet of the dogs, a squirrel or a hare in the woods, or a visitor who has let themselves into the dog yard after hours. The webcam would allow staff to assess the situation before arriving at it as well as enable them to alert other staff, such as Law Enforcement Rangers, more quickly.

The project may include removal of several trees and relocation of the existing water lines, spigots, and electrical outlets. These would need to be moved/ removed as their current locations are where the fencing would go. The current dog yard would be sectioned into two fenced area, one large, one smaller, with two access doors to each fenced area. The dogs would remain on their tethers in the fenced areas and visitors would be able to walk inside the enclosures when the Kennels is open. The smaller fenced area could also be used as a dog free run and would provide a space for the dogs to interact. There would be gravel paths running through the center of the fenced areas that would be 36" to 60" wide to allow for accessibility, and there would be similar paths on the exterior of the fences.

Helical piles would be driven into the ground on which wooden posts would be mounted, the helical piles would not be visible. The posts should be log. The fencing would be high tensile woven wire (or similar material), 7' to 8' tall and have 6" vertical and horizontal spacing. The gates for each fenced area would be made of wood and designed to match the current wooden doors on the dog pens. Kennels staff have requested mounted outdoor lighting; if installed the lighting would have to meet night sky friendly standards as well as be compatible with the historic district (the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Headquarters Historic District (Historic District) provide this guidance).

The proposed design would provide for the safety of the dogs and visitors. The fenced area would keep moose out of the dog yard. The 6" openings of the fence would minimize the feeling of the fencing at the kennels while still providing safety for the dogs and visitors. The design will also allow visitors to continue to interact with the dogs.

The proposed undertaking would also include the construction of two additional pens on the west end of the current pen row; this area is currently housing two dog houses that are not in pens. The pens would be designed to match the existing pens with the exception of the floors being of gravel or wood chips rather than concrete.

2 Legal location for the undertaking and Local Environment

The legal location of the undertaking is Sec7, T14S, R7W, Fairbanks Meridian. The project occurs within the Alaska Range west of the Nenana River approximately 3.2 miles west of the Park entrance. The project area, located at an elevation of 2050 ft. above sea level, lies within the northern boreal forest biome (taiga).

3 Area of Potential Effect (APE)

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) encompasses 0.57 acres and includes the project footprint as well as the area the undertaking would be visible from.

4 Results of Inventory and Records Check

DENA cultural resource records and GIS data were reviewed previous to this project. The proposed APE has been previously inventoried (Brown, et al. 2008; Curran 2004; Davis 1983; Gilbert 2012; Karchut 2010; Karchut and Coffman 2009). The Mount McKinley Headquarters Historic District is in the APE, including the Dog Feed Cache and Sled Storage Building (B105), the Dog Houses (B105a), and the Dog Pens (B105b).

4.1 Mt. McKinley Headquarters Historic District (MMK-147).

The Mount McKinley National Park Headquarters District (Headquarters District) was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NR) in 1987. The Headquarters District is significant at the state level for its association with park administrative development and with National Park Service (NPS) rustic architecture (Criteria A and C; areas of significance, Architecture and Government). The original period of significance for the district is 1926-1941, encompassing the early years of park headquarters development under the direction of Superintendent Harry Karstens and as built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and park staff (Evans 1987). B105, B105a, and B105b are all contributing features to the original Historic District.

In 2017 a boundary increase for the Historic District was completed. The Mount McKinley National Park Headquarters Historic District Boundary Increase extends the period of significance for the district to include 1950-1961, the years of post-World War II and Mission 66 development within park headquarters, and expands the boundaries of the district to include the buildings constructed during this time period. The addition, like the original district, is significant under Criterion A for its association with the continued development at park headquarters, which fulfilled some of the developments that were planned for by Superintendent Harry Karstens, landscape architect Thomas Vint and park staff but were not realized in the 1940s (Miller 2017).

4.2 Dog Feed Cache and Sled Storage (B105, Kennels Building)

As a part of the original Historic District, the Dog Feed Cache and Sled Storage building is linked with the other buildings in the district, all of which are associated with the operation and administration of Mt. McKinley National Park, which was created to provide outdoor recreational opportunities to the American public. In addition, as the site where the sled dogs were cared for and where patrol sleds were constructed and repaired, this building has been crucial to Mt. McKinley National Park's ranger patrol system with its responsibility to monitor park wildlife. Thus, this building has an integral association with the objectives of the NPS to provide recreational facilities and to conserve wildlife and areas of outstanding national beauty.

From 1929 to 1930, B105 was constructed at its original location (residential area at DENA Headquarters); it was moved to its current location in 1938 (Snow 1987). It was one of the first buildings to emerge from the new era of landscape architecture designed buildings that began in 1928, and the plans for B105 were approved by Thomas Vint (Chief Landscape Architect for the NPS) in 1928. The heavy peeled log exterior post and beam log frame dog cache with reversed board-and-batten in-fill consists of a one and one-half story gable roofed structure measuring 15'3" x 24' with a shed roof additions on either end. The western addition measuring 12' x 24' shed serves as sled storage, while the 8'9" x 16' addition on the east houses the mechanical equipment for the building. The entire structure rests on a concrete slab foundation, which is covered with plank flooring in the main section of the structure. Two six-light casement windows flank the main door, while at the back room two more six-light casement windows occupy the south wall. The log purlin and rafter roofs are covered with wood planks and wood shakes but was originally designed for rolled roofing.

When B105 was first constructed, dog sleds were the only dependable means to patrol the interior of the park during winter months. Current use of the building is the same as the historic use—storage for dog food, sleds, and equipment, and as a cook room. The continuous use of the kennels as a storage area and cook room is one of the most important aspects of its historic nature and integrity. Changing the use of the building would be a major adverse effect to this important historic property.

B105 is a contributing feature to the McKinley Park Headquarters Historic District and the McKinley Park Headquarters Cultural Landscape (CL). In addition to having a high property value, it is the only building in the Historic District that has retained its original use for the entirety of its existence at the park. The building retains a high degree of integrity in all areas other than its site location due to the 1938 move (Feil, et al. 2016; Snow 1987).

4.3 Kennels' Dog Houses (B105a)

The Kennels Dog Houses are a contributing resources to Building 105 and the Headquarters District (Feil, et al. 2016). The houses are continually being used and rebuilt. These 3'6" x 3'6" square dog houses have a low profile of 2'8" and feature plywood construction covered in rounded logs with a shallow shed roof. This resource is in a "consumptive use" status as dogs are not the best at preservation efforts. There are standard plans that the Kennels Staff have developed that blend well with the landscape and meet the needs of the occupants (Feil, et al. 2016).

The Character-defining features of the houses are:

Structure Exterior

- Low Profile
- Square
- Log Construction
- Shallow Shed Roof

4.4 Kennels' Dog Pens (B105b)

The Kennels' Dog Pens are a contributing resources to Building 105 and the Headquarters District (Feil, et al. 2016). First constructed in 1938 when the Kennels Building (B105) was moved to its current location, the pens have been rehabilitated several times since then (as can be expected with structures used to house dogs) and the number and location of the pens has changed through time to fit the needs of this working kennel. Each of the current 14 pens is post frame covered with gage wire mesh, with a concrete floor, and wooden access door for each unit with a log constructed dog house included. All wood is painted "NPS Brown" (Feil, et al. 2016). The number and location of pens and houses at the Kennels has changed through time according to the number of dogs at the Kennel (as indicated by historic photos).

The Character-defining features of the pens are:

Structure Exterior

- Elongated Rectangular Massing
- Post Frame Construction
- Heavy Gage Wire Mesh
- Wood Access Door

5 Recommendations

The proposed construction of the two fenced areas and the two pens will be in keeping with the rustic aesthetic of the Historic District, will follow the recommendations of the Design Guidelines, and be completed in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Through time the number and location of the dog pens and houses has been dependent on the number of dogs in the kennel; the addition of two pens and houses speaks to the current needs and size of the kennel. The current layout of the dog yard where the majority of the dogs are not behind fencing has not always been the arrangement. It appears (from historic photographs) that during much of the period of significance for the Historic District and extending into the 1950s, all of the dogs were housed in fenced pens. As such, there is historic precedence for the proposed fenced areas. As designed the fencing will provide a feeling of freedom for both the dogs and visitors while providing for the safety of both.

If installed, the exterior lighting will follow the recommendations of the Historic District CLR. The web cam would be small (less than 6" diameter), mounted on the new fenced area, and would be painted to match the fencing; it would be mounted in such a way as to minimize its appearance. The electrical outlets and water spigots will follow the recommendations of the CLR.

All ground disturbance will be in areas that have been previously disturbed and as the potential of finding previously undocumented cultural resources is extremely low, monitoring of ground disturbance is not recommended for this project. If, however, cultural resources or items protected by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act are discovered during project implementation, all project-related activities in the vicinity of the discovery would be stopped and the park archaeologist would be notified immediately. DENA in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other consulting parties would determine a course of action per 36 CFR Part 800.13.

As designed the project would not adversely affect B105, B105A, B105B, or the Headquarters District's integrity which qualifies these properties for inclusion within *the National Register of Historic Places*. It is recommended that Denali National Park and Preserve make the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, determination of "No Historic Properties Adversely Effected" (36 CFR Part 800.5(3)(b)).

6 References

Brown, M.C., et al.

2008 Cultural Landscape Report for Park Headquarters, Denali National Park and Preserve, National Park Service. Boston, MA: Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Curran, Michele

2004 Cultural Landscape Inventory: Park Headquarters Historic District. Anchorage, AK: Cultural Landscapes Program Alaska.

Davis, Craig

1983 Field Notes, Archaeological Surveys within Denali National Park and Preserve.

Evans, Gail

1987 Mount McKinley National Park Headquarters District National Register Nomination. Washington DC: National Park Service.

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2016 Design Guidelines Mt. McKinley National Park Headquarters Historic District: Boundary Expansion (1950-1961). Denali National Park and Preserve, National Park Service, AK.

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2017 Draft Mount McKinley National Park Headquarters Historic District (Boundary Increase). National Park Service- Alaska Region.

Snow, David E.

1987 Historic structure report: Mt. McKinley Park Headquarters Historic District & Wonder Lake. [Anchorage, Alaska]: Alaska Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

7 Maps and Figures

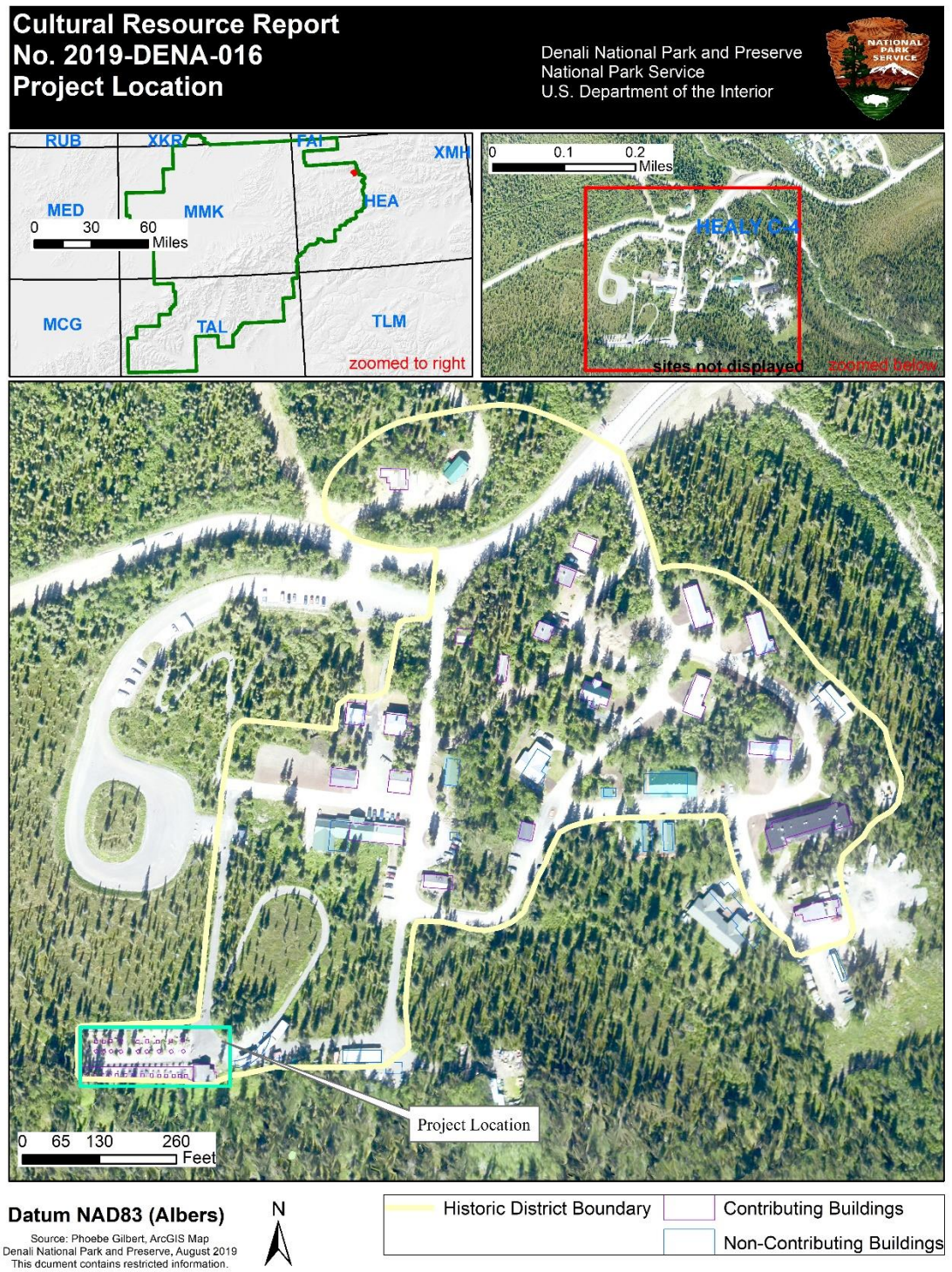


Figure 1- Overview of proposed undertaking area.

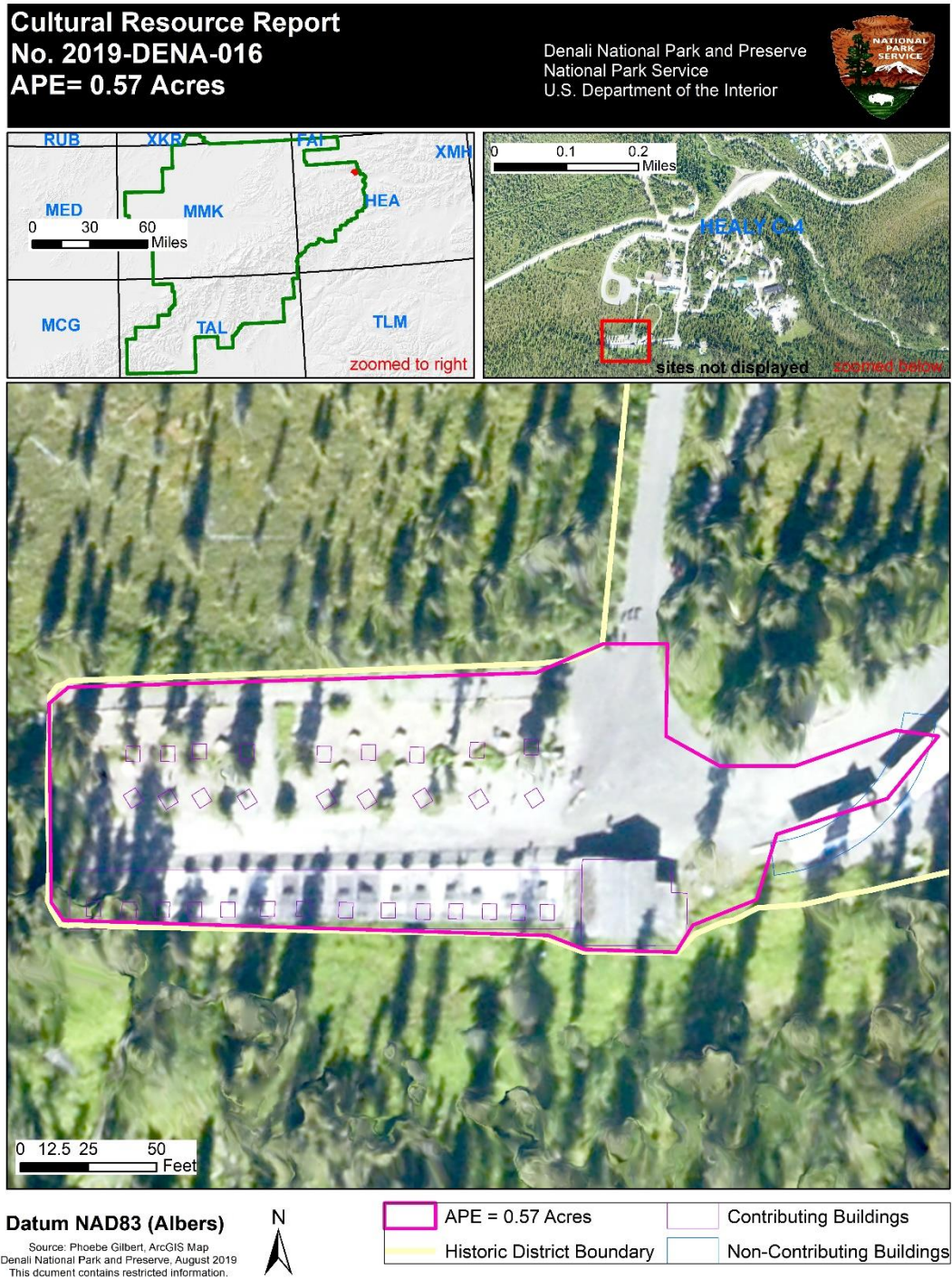


Figure 2- Overview of the APE (0.57 acres).

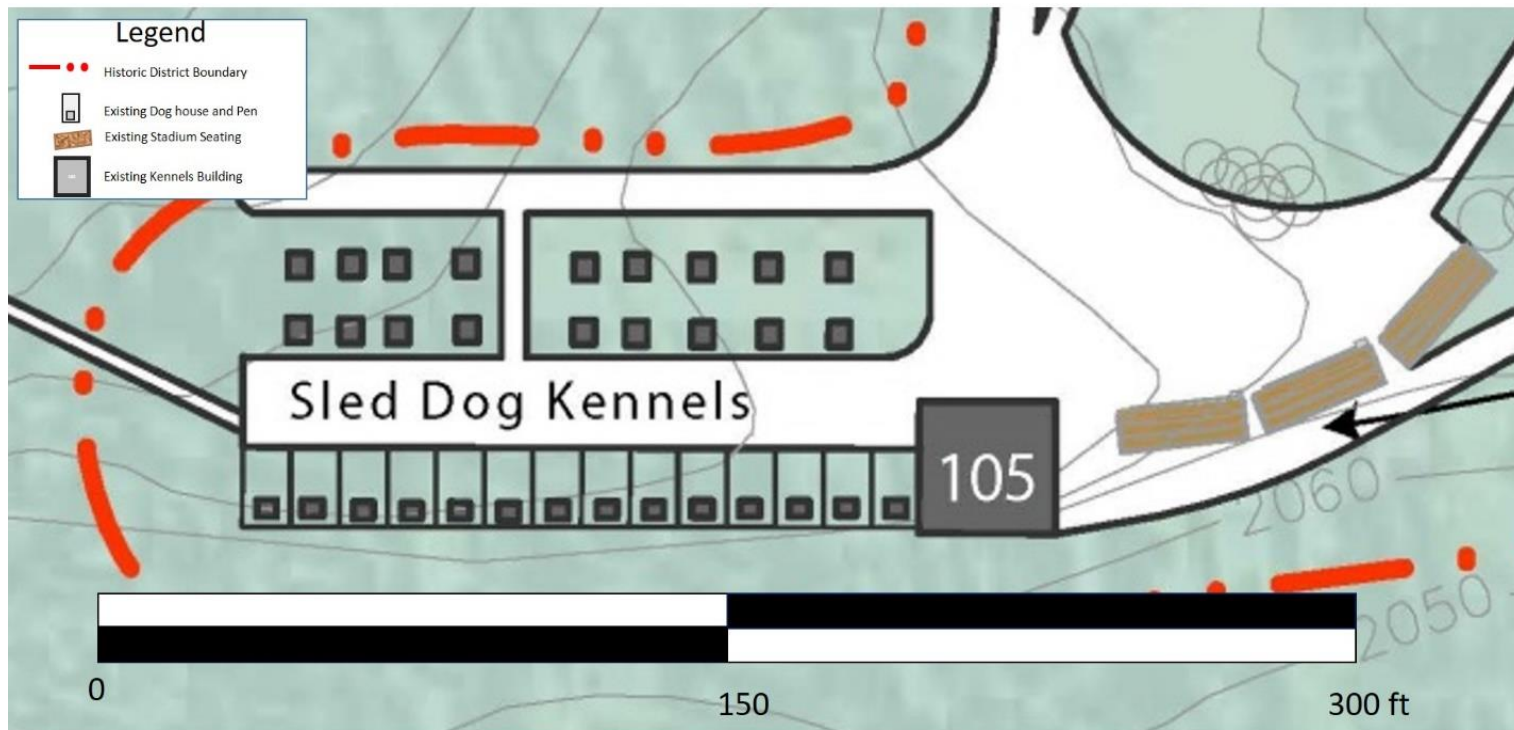


Figure 3- Existing Layout at Kennels; (from Brown, et al. 2008their figure 4.2)

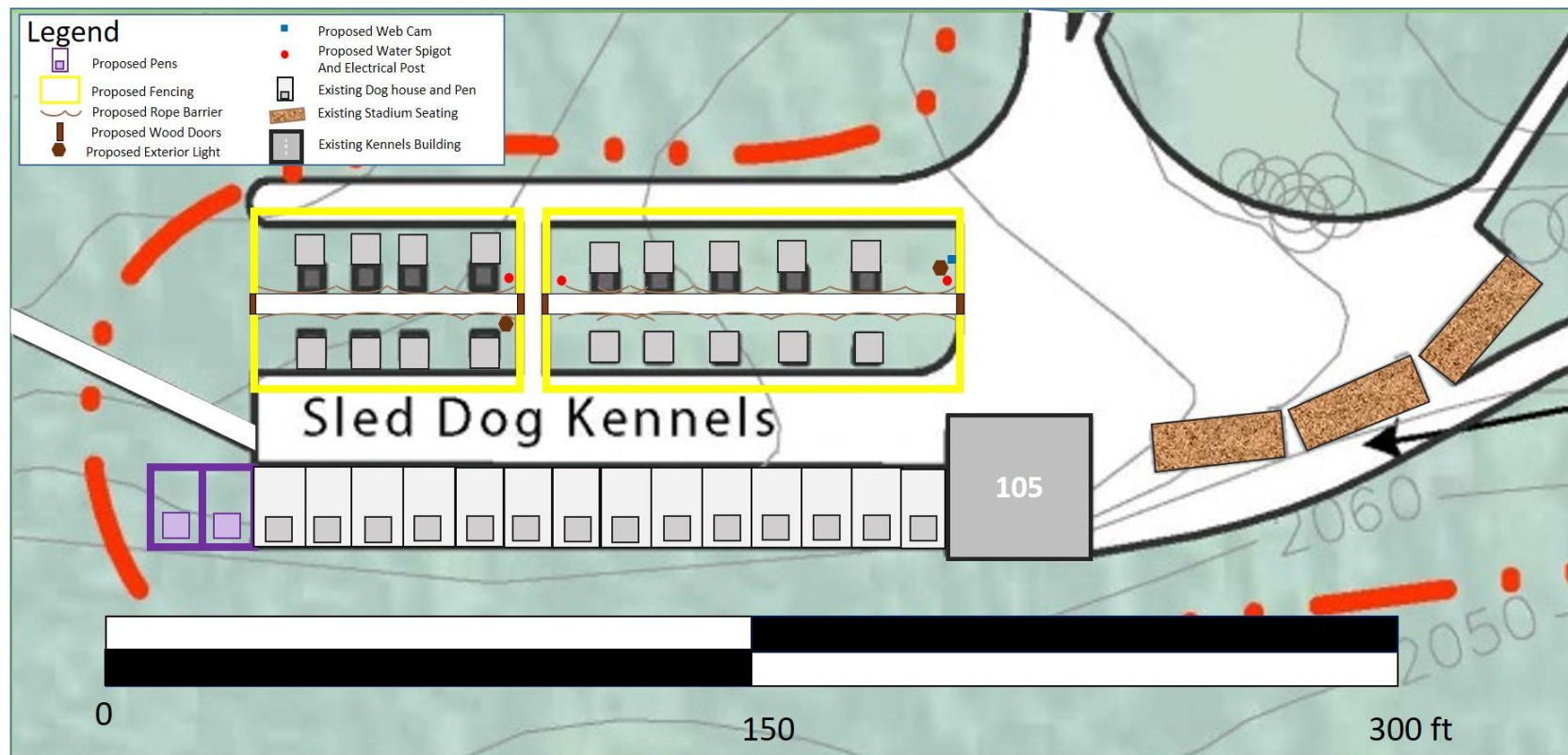


Figure 4- Proposed undertaking shown over existing conditions

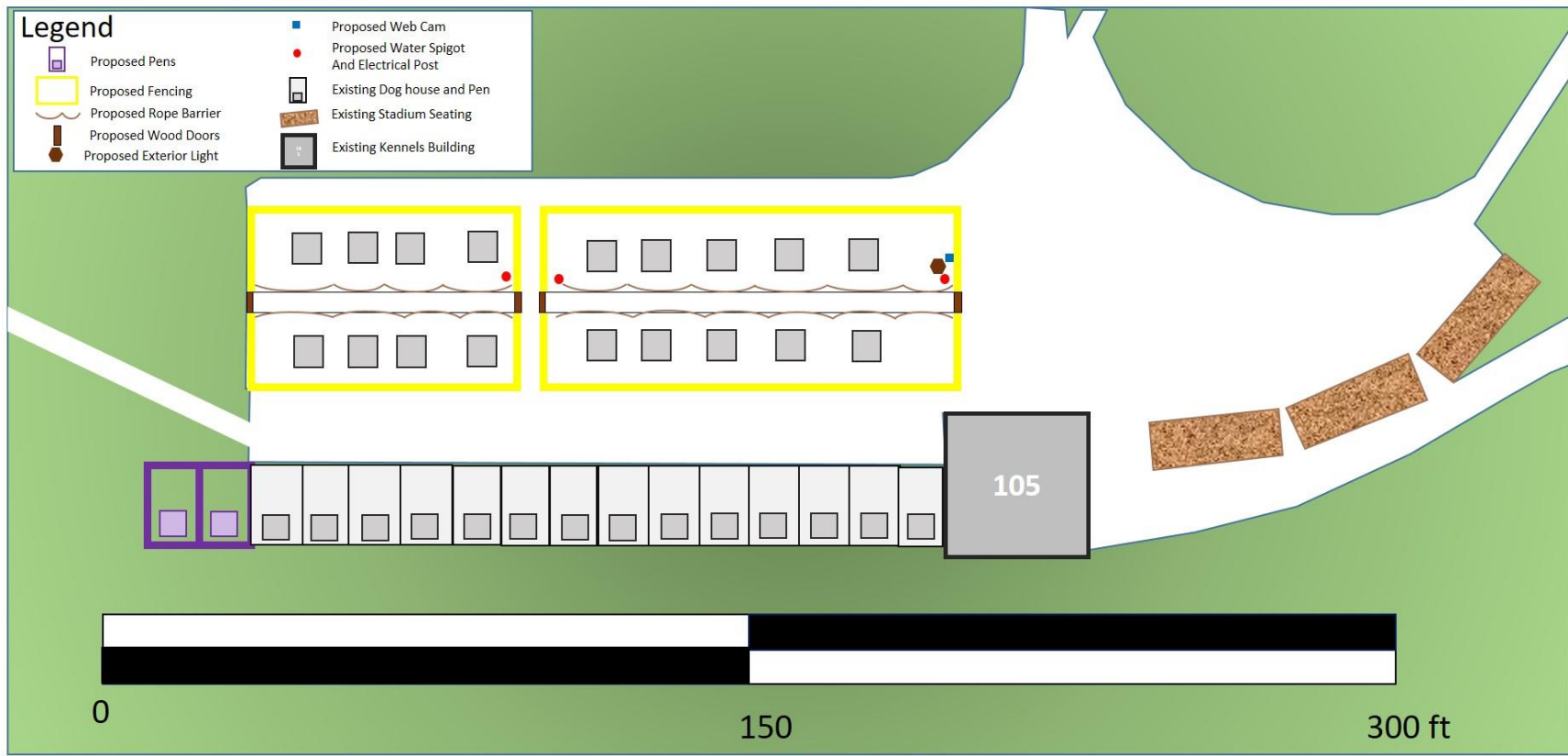


Figure 5- Proposed Undertaking



Figure 6- Dog Pens, 1939 (DENA Photo)



Figure 7- Dog Pens 1939 (DENA Photo)



Figure 8- Dog Pens, 1940. Note that all dogs are fenced in (DENA Photo).



Figure 9- Dog yard, 1940. Note that all dogs are fenced in (DENA 11-13 Dog Kennels).



Figure 10-Dog yard, 1940. Note that all dogs are fenced in (DENA 11-13.4).

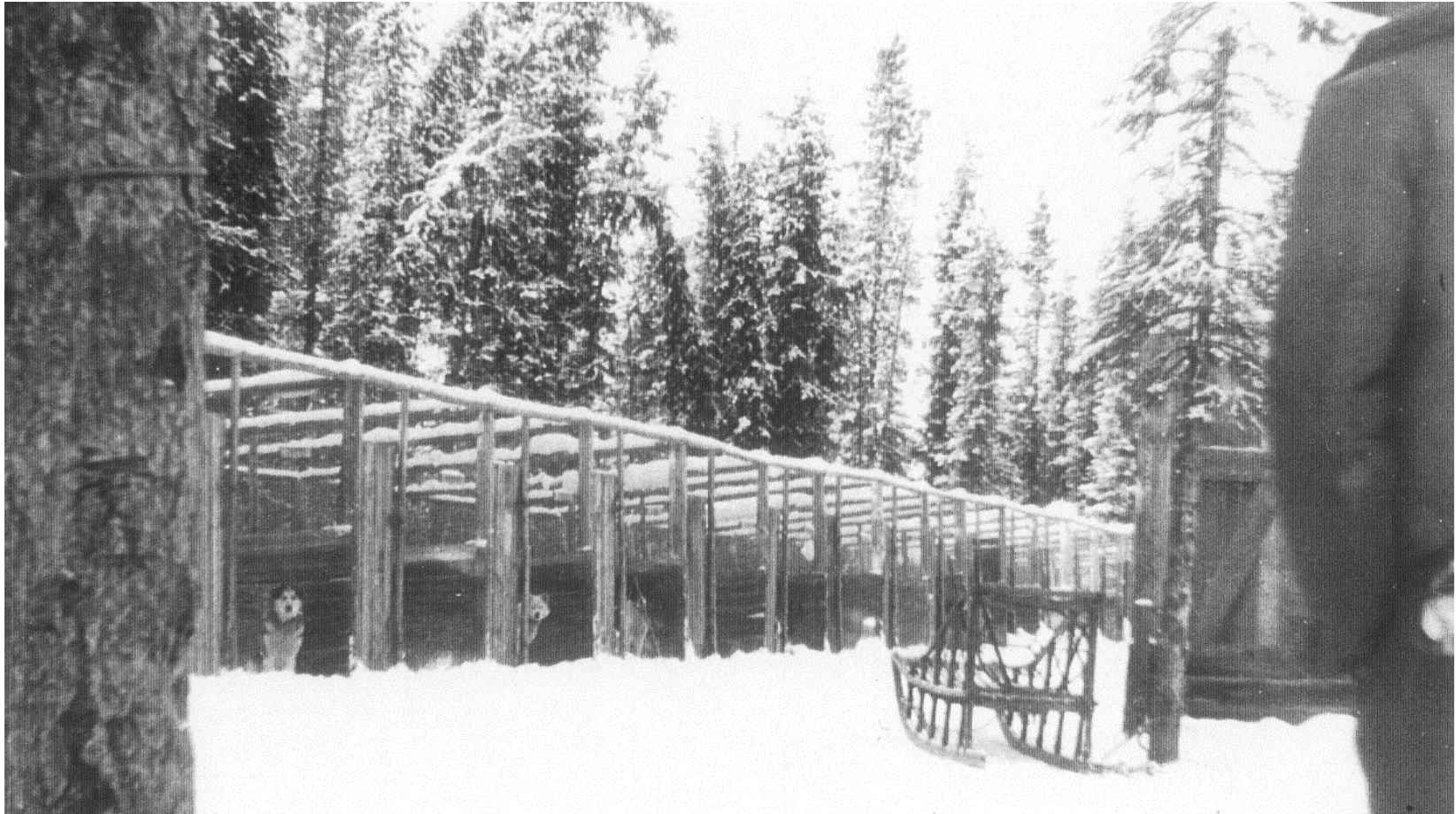


Figure 11- Dog Pens mid-1950s. Note that all dogs are fenced in (DENA Photo).



Figure 12- Dog Pens, mid-1950s (DENA Photo)



Figure 13- Dog Pens, 1954, north row of dog fencing. Proposed design would have similar log posts and cross members, wire spacing would be 6" (DENA Photo).



Figure 14- 1955 removal of north row of dog pens (DENA Photo)



Figure 15- Existing Dog Pens, 1999 (DENA Photo).



Figure 16- Kennels' Dog Pens (B105B) current condition (NPS Photo, September 2019).



Figure 17- Proposed fencing would be similar to that seen here at the Large Animal Research Station, University of Alaska Fairbanks (<https://foursquare.com/v/uaf-lars/4c2fe4283896e21e6bcce490?openPhotoId=4f9c8344e4b0d2bd631772f4>).

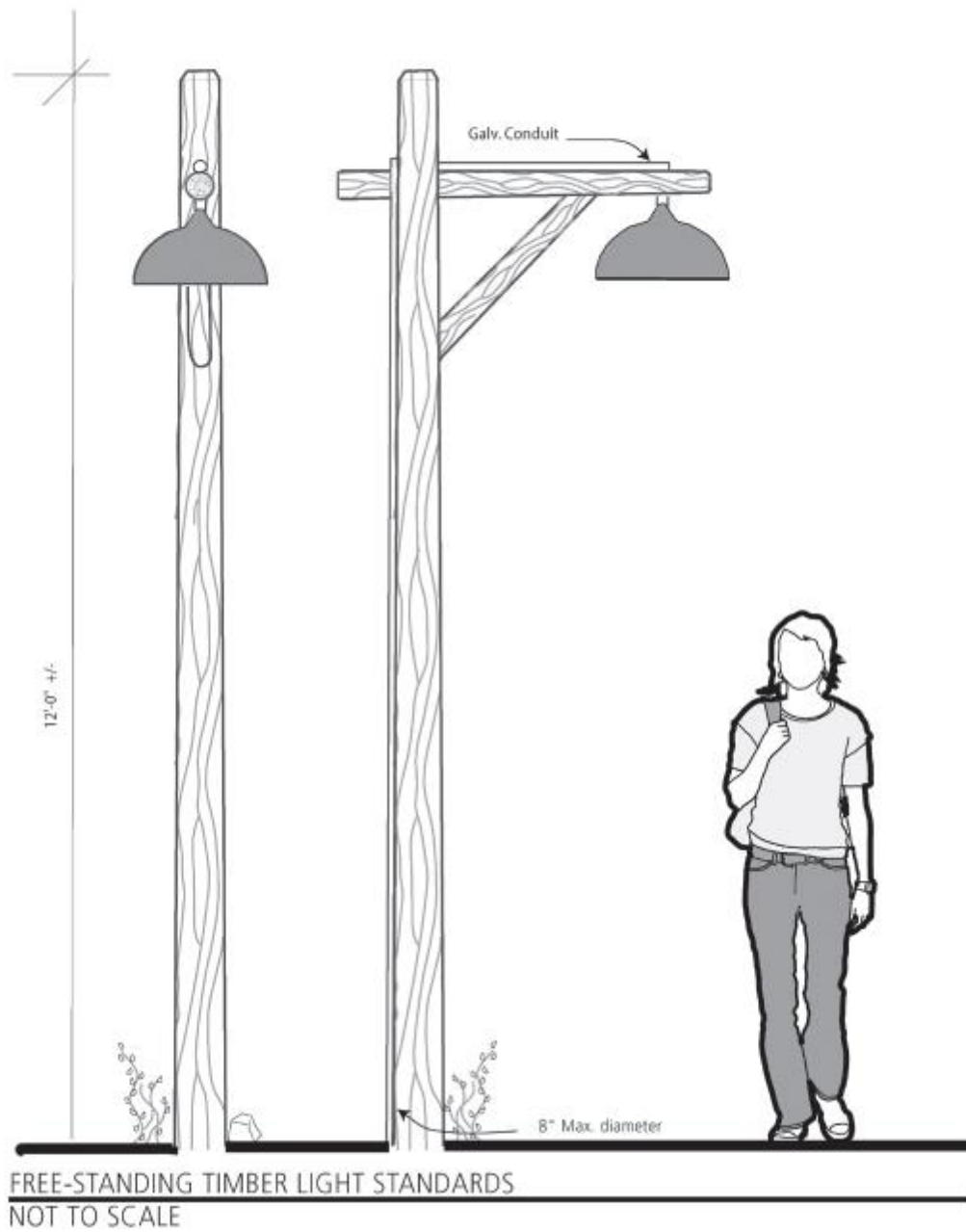


Figure 18- Historically compatible outdoor lighting from the Historic District CLR. Proposed lighting would be a similar design.