



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: July 11, 2019

PROJECT Rock Creek Park Signage Rock Creek Park Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8084
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 3.60(38.00)44951
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary site development plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary site development plans with comments
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Consent Calendar

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service has submitted preliminary signage guidelines for Rock Creek Park. Authorized by Congress in 1890, the park is primarily located in northwest Washington, DC, north and west of the National Mall, with some sites extending into the northeastern quadrant of the city. While the park is in an urban setting, its 1,754 acres provide a peaceful refuge to visitors and residents. The park unit includes over 32 miles of hiking trails, Civil War fortifications, historic landmarks and sites, recreation areas, and educational and performance program spaces.

Current wayfinding includes a variety of signage types and styles, representing several eras of implementation. Preliminary signage guidelines aim to achieve a unified design for Rock Creek Park identity, simplified messaging, concise and consistent graphic design, and a reduction of visual clutter and redundancy. These guidelines will apply to all signage within the park. Specific signage installation will occur as funding becomes available over time.

KEY INFORMATION

- Rock Creek Park is a 1,754-acre national park administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The park unit includes a wide variety of natural and recreational spaces interspersed with historic sites, monuments and memorials.
- The current wayfinding is a mix of signage types and styles, implemented over time.
- NPS has developed a comprehensive signage and wayfinding guide for all signage within Rock Creek Park.
- The guidelines aim to achieve a unified design for Rock Creek Park identity, simplified messaging, concise and consistent graphic design, and a reduction of visual clutter and redundancy.

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- This review considers signage design guidelines with the understanding that details on specific installation locations, signage selection, and scale will be provided in a final submission.
 - The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approved concept guidelines at their November 15, 2018 meeting, and adopted comments by the Old Georgetown Board (OGB). Both CFA and OGB expressed support for the project and requested that full size mock-ups be incorporated into the final design review process.
 - The signage guidelines are consistent with NPS standards and previously approved signage programs for the National Mall and Memorial Parks.
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RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site development plans for signage within Rock Creek Park.

Supports NPS goals to provide a unified signage design for Rock Creek Park identity with concise and consistent messaging, and to consolidate signage to reduce visual clutter and redundancy.

Notes that the signage plan is consistent with NPS standards and previously approved signage programs for the National Mall and Memorial Parks.

Notes that NPS committed to provide full size mock-ups of typical signs for staff review prior to final submission.

Notes that details on specific installation locations, signage selection, and scale will be provided in a final review submission.

Recommends that NPS further evaluate the type and amount of signage proposed for Meridian Hill Park, given its National Historic Landmark status, and continue consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to evaluate potential adverse effects of any new signage.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	– None
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approval of final signage guidelines

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Rock Creek Park hosts a variety of programs park settings across its 1,754 acres. Existing park identification, information, and wayfinding signage reflects a range of sign types and styles, implemented over time. To achieve a unified design park identity, NPS has developed signage guidelines that aim to achieve simplified and consistent messaging through a concise and current design. As such, staff recommends the **Commission support NPS goals to provide a unified signage design for Rock Creek Park identity with concise and consistent messaging, and consolidate signage to reduce visual clutter and redundancy.**

The guidelines include a materials palette, design options for sign types, and visualizations of signs at selected demonstration locations. Specific decisions regarding locations for new signage will be made as implementation occurs. NPS expects this will occur over time as funding becomes available. Overall, staff believes the updated signage will enhance the visitor experience and heighten awareness of Rock Creek Park. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission approve the preliminary site development plans for signage within Rock Creek Park.**

Analysis

Current wayfinding at Rock Creek Park includes a variety of signage types and styles, representing several eras of implementation. As park signage is replaced or consolidated, the guidelines will be used to inform sign selection and material choice for specific sites, while ensuring a consistent and unified identity for all signs across the park.

Sign Types

Sign types proposed in the guidelines are consistent with existing NPS UniGuide standards and include signs in the following categories:

Road Guide

These signs are placed on park roads to direct motorists and visitors to facilities and areas within a park.

Identification

Signs in this category include park entrance, facility identification, and monument identification signs. They welcome visitors and are designed to provide distinctive and consistent identification of park entrances and significant destinations within the park.

Visitor Information

Most park signs fall within this category, including maps, wayfinding, trail markers, and rules and regulations signs. Signs are designed to present a broad range of information in a concise, consistent, convenient, and attractive format. This category also includes flexible

styles such as bulletin boards and other changeable signs. These signs may serve as identification signs for smaller areas or destinations that do not require more monumental signage.

Materials and Graphics

NPS proposes a unified but flexible palette of materials for signage across the park, with variations responding to context, setting, and use. The most variable elements are the base and post materials. For example, park signs in an urban context, such as Georgetown Waterfront Park, may incorporate a smooth concrete or aggregate base with black painted metal posts. Signs in natural areas or along trails may use rough stone and wood, while signs at historic sites could vary to relate to the specific characteristics of the site.

A limited palette of three colors and two fonts is proposed for use across all sign types. Graphics are consistent with NPS UniGuide standards. All signs should be compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) focuses primarily on building interiors, the UniGuide standards incorporate ADA recommended mounting heights for all signage. UniGuide design templates also consider graphic criteria from the Accessible Text Guidelines developed by the Society for Environmental Graphic Design. The standard NPS Arrowhead will be used in most Primary sign designs. The Civil War Defenses logo will be used to denote specific sites within the Park.

Sign Design and Hierarchy

The guidelines include multiple design variations for each sign category. These variations help communicate a hierarchy to visitors experiencing the park. This hierarchy is expressed through size, scale, and graphics.

Road Guide Signs are typically oriented toward motorists. They include two styles to indicate a hierarchy of roadway entry points. Primary Road Guide 'Pathfinder' signs incorporate a black band across the top, with the NPS Arrowhead at the upper right. Secondary Road Guide signs do not have the black band. Both styles use white text on a brown background, with other NPS standard iconography as needed. The sign portion is framed with a white border, and the sign is mounted on metal or wood posts depending on context.

Identification (ID) signs are located at park entrances, major monuments, significant sites and visitor destinations, and other areas where park identity is important to express. The guidelines include several variations to offer a clear hierarchy of designs, with primary, secondary, and tertiary options applied to different configurations. Monument ID signs denote park entry, significant sites, and other visitor destinations. They are either horizontally oriented signs set in a base at grade or vertically oriented Pylon ID signs set in a base at grade. Secondary and tertiary ID signs are generally smaller, and include hanging, blade style, and horizontally oriented signs mounted on posts. The guidelines include one digital variation of the Monument ID configuration for the Carter Barron Amphitheatre and is the only digital or illuminated option included in the guidelines. The digital portion of the sign can be concealed as needed. Most ID signs incorporate a black band or color field to mark the top or primary side of the sign, with the NPS Arrowhead

located within the band. All options use white text on a brown background. Base and post material vary depending on context and options include concrete, aggregate concrete, or rough stone.

Visitor Information signs include maps, wayfinding, trail markers, and rules and regulations signs. This category also includes flexible styles such as bulletin boards and changeable signs. Sign options are varied to accommodate a broad range of information, but consistently incorporate white text on a brown background. The NPS Arrowhead is featured in a black band at the top of larger signs. Post and base materials vary depending on context.

Demonstration Sites

NPS included a series of visualizations at selected demonstration sites to illustrate how sign design options, including materials, massing, and graphics, may look when installed. Demonstration sites were chosen by NPS because they showcase a range of sign types representative of typical sites within the park unit. Staff did not consider these visualizations as indicative of specific installation locations or site signage plans as part of this preliminary review. As the project advances, staff believes it will be helpful to understand the specific installation locations for any new primary Monument ID or Pylon ID signs, as these have the greatest potential for any visual impacts or effects on historic resources. These also tend to be the largest signs. The replacement of other wayfinding or information signs are unlikely to change the character or setting of the park or impact any resources. NPS committed to provide full size mock-ups for staff review prior to final submission. Details on specific installation locations, signage selection, and scale will be provided in a final review submission. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request that NPS continue to consult with staff on specific signage locations for any new monument or pylon identification signs, to better understand any potential impacts to views or historic resources.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

In general, staff finds this proposal to be consistent with the policies established in the Federal Elements of *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. This plan was reviewed for compliance with specific policies in the Parks and Open Space, Visitors and Commemoration, Historic Preservation, and Urban Design Elements.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS will fulfill its NHPA/Section 106 obligations for this project as it moves forward to final review. NCPC also has a NHPA/Section 106 responsibility and will complete its compliance by final review.

National Environmental Policy Act

NPS anticipates fulfilling its NEPA obligations through the preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) for this project as it moves forward to final review. At preliminary review, no NEPA is required. NCPC also has an independent obligation to comply with NEPA, and staff anticipates applying a CATEX for individual site installations as they are reviewed.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

June 20, 2019, the Coordinating Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with the following agencies: NCPC; the National Park Service; the District of Columbia Office of Planning, The District Department of Transportation, The DC Department of Energy and Environment, and the General Services Administration. The DC SHPO coordinated with the comment that NPS intends to consult with their office in lieu of applying the nationwide Programmatic Agreement. Therefore, staff suggests the **Commission recommend that NPS further evaluate the type and amount of signage proposed for Meridian Hill Park, given its National Historic Landmark status, and continue consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer to evaluate potential adverse effects of any new signage.**

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

At its November 15, 2018 Meeting, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts approved the concept submission and adopted the report of the Old Georgetown Board. See attached letters.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Karin Schierhold
06/17/2019

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

Rock Creek Park Signage

Rock Creek Park, Washington DC

Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: July 11, 2019

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

Session: Consent Calendar

NCPC Review Officer: Karin Schierhold

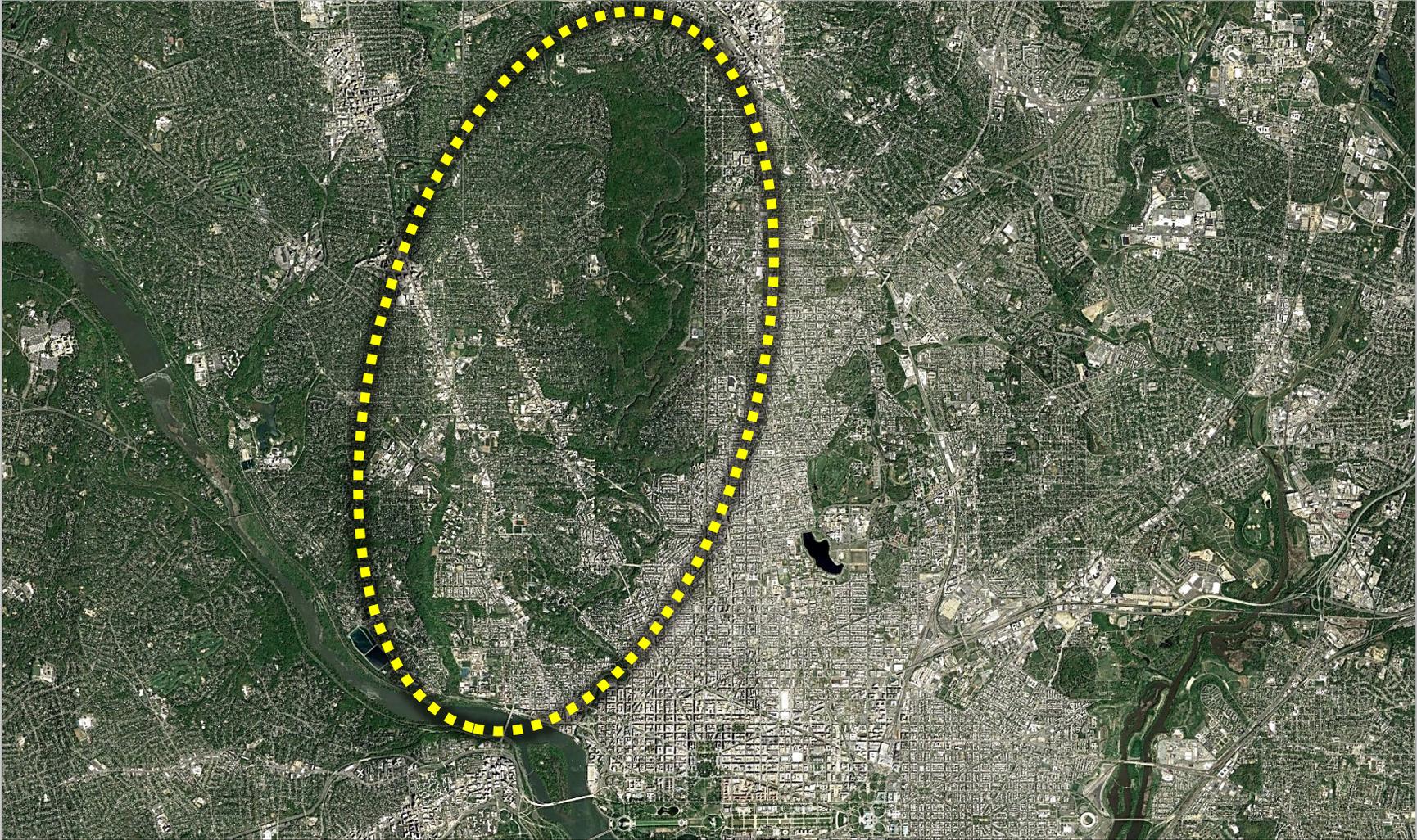
NCPC File Number: 8084

Project Summary:

The National Park Service has submitted preliminary signage guidelines for Rock Creek Park. Authorized by Congress in 1890, the park is primarily located in northwest Washington, DC, north and west of the National Mall, with some sites extending into the northeastern quadrant of the city. While the park is in an urban setting, its 1,754 acres provide a peaceful refuge to visitors and residents. The park unit includes over 32 miles of hiking trails, Civil War fortifications, historic landmarks and sites, recreation areas, and educational and performance program spaces.

Current wayfinding includes a variety of signage types and styles, representing several eras of implementation. The National Park Service has developed signage guidelines for Rock Creek Park that intend to serve as a comprehensive signage and wayfinding project that is designed to be compatible with existing Park Service signage programs in other locations. The guidelines aim to achieve a unified design for Rock Creek Park identity, simplified messaging, concise and consistent graphic design, and a reduction of visual clutter and redundancy. These guidelines will apply to all signage within the park. Specific signage installation will occur as funding becomes available over time.

Site Location



Location Map

Existing Conditions – Road Guide Signs



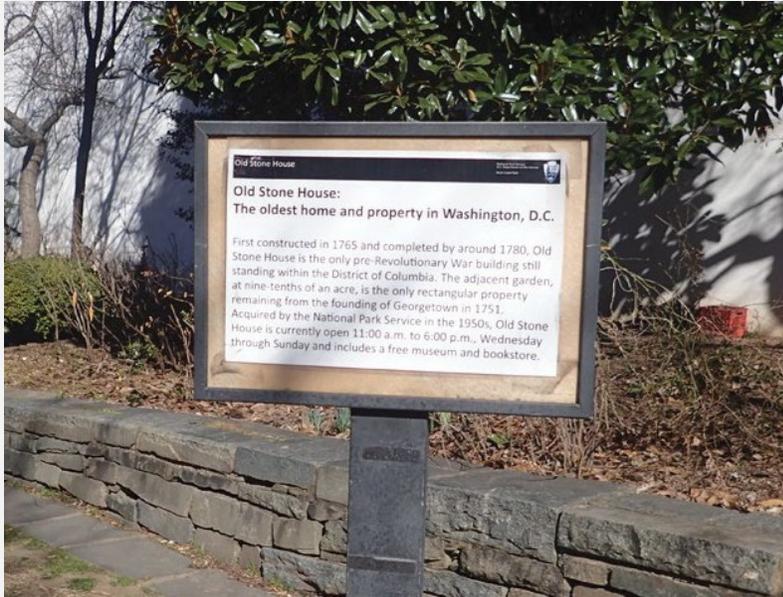
Existing Conditions – Identification Signs



Existing Conditions – Pedestrian Wayfinding Signs



Existing Conditions – Information Signs



Existing Conditions – Trail Signs



Proposed Sign Materials

Urban Context





BLACK PAINTED METAL POSTS



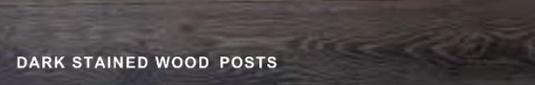
CONCRETE BASE

Natural Environment and Trails





ROUGH STONE BASE



DARK STAINED WOOD POSTS

Regional and Local Use

CONCRETE BASE

Materials may be altered to relate to each particular site if applicable.



BLACK PAINTED METAL POSTS




Historic Sites & Statuary



ROUGH STONE BASE



CONCRETE BASE




ROUGH STONE BASE



DARK STAINED WOOD POSTS



Materials for historic sites and statuary signage to relate to characteristics of each site.




Design Detail Variations

Proposed Sign Graphics

Colors & Fonts

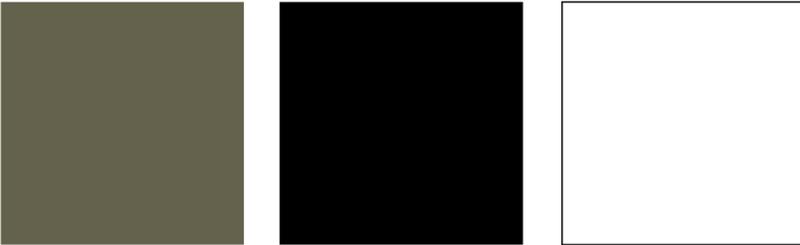
NPS Rawlinson OT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

Frutiger LT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890

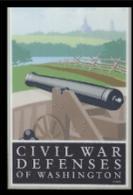
Colors



NPS Arrowhead



Civil War Defenses



Proposed Design - Road Guide Signs

RG Series – Road Guide Signs

Road Guide Signs

RG-1 Road Guide Single Destination without Symbols

RG-2 Road Guide Single Destination with Symbols

RG-3 Road Guide Single Destination with Route Shield

RG-4 Road Guide Single Destination with 2 to 3 Route Shields

RG-5 Road Guide Single Destination with Multiple Symbols

RG-6 Road Guide Single Destination with Distance

RG-7 Road Guide Single Destination with 2 Symbols

RG-8 Road Guide 1 or 2 Symbols Without Legend With Directional Arrow

RG-9 Road Guide Multiple Destinations with Multiple Symbols

RG-10 Road Guide Multiple Destinations with Distances

RG-11 Road Guide Single Destination with 1 Symbol

RG-12 Road Guide 3 Symbols Without Legend With Directional Arrow

RG-13 Road Guide Without Legend With Directional Arrow

Roadway Sign Grids

Road Guide Signs as displayed in the UniGuide.

Road Guide Signs as displayed in the UniGuide.

Pathfinder Signs

PF-1A Pathfinder 1-line Primary Legend with Directional Arrow

PF-1B Pathfinder 1-line Primary Legend with Secondary Legend

PF-2A Pathfinder 2-line Primary Legend with Directional Arrow

PF-2B Pathfinder 2-line Primary Legend with Secondary Legend

PF-3A Pathfinder 3-line Primary Legend with Directional Arrow

PF-3B Pathfinder 3-line Primary Legend with Secondary Legend

PF-4A Pathfinder 4-line Primary Legend with Directional Arrow

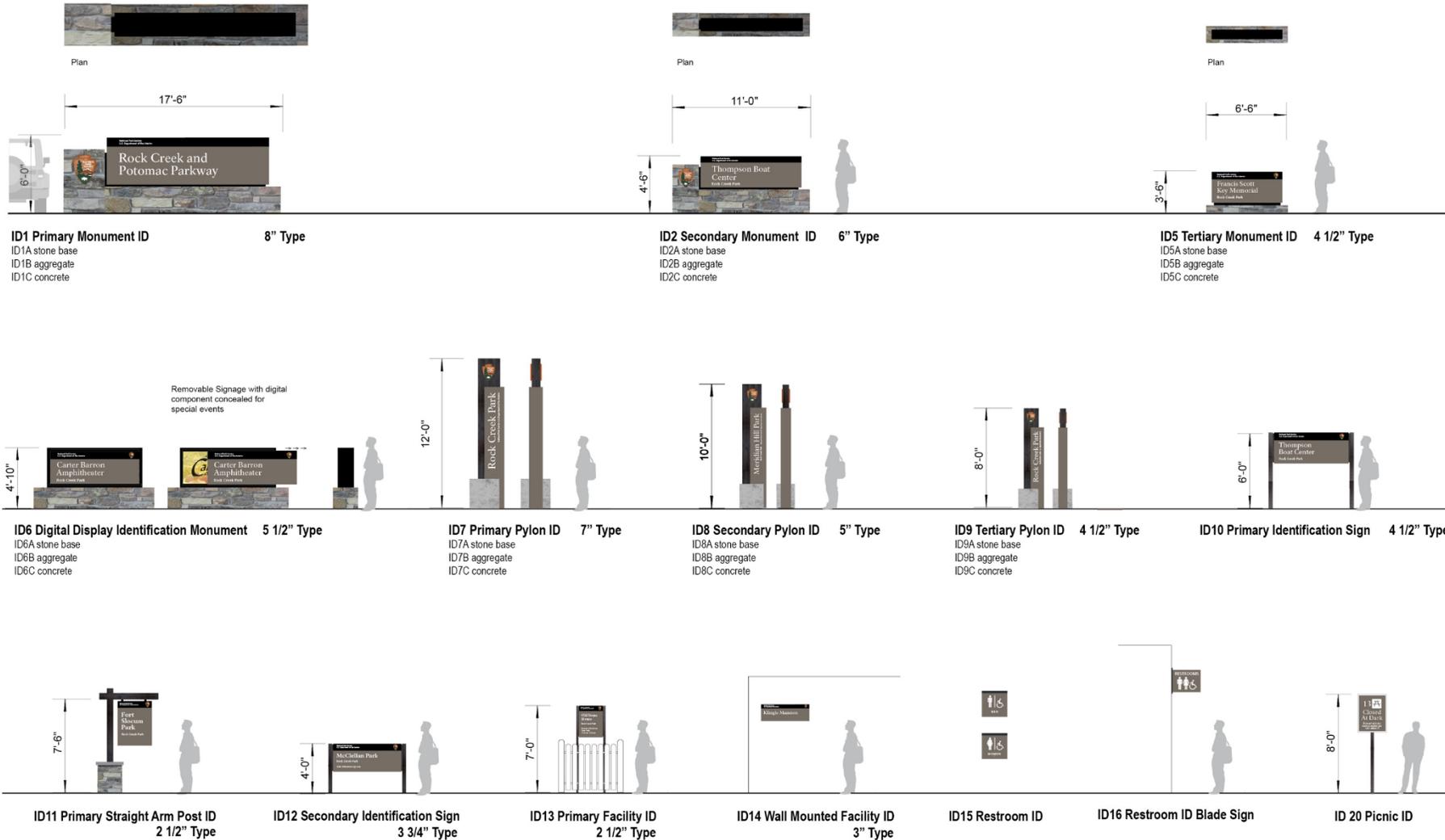
PF-4B Pathfinder 4-line Primary Legend with Secondary Legend

National Park Service UniGuide Program

Volume 2 Chapter 3: Grid Layouts 31-7

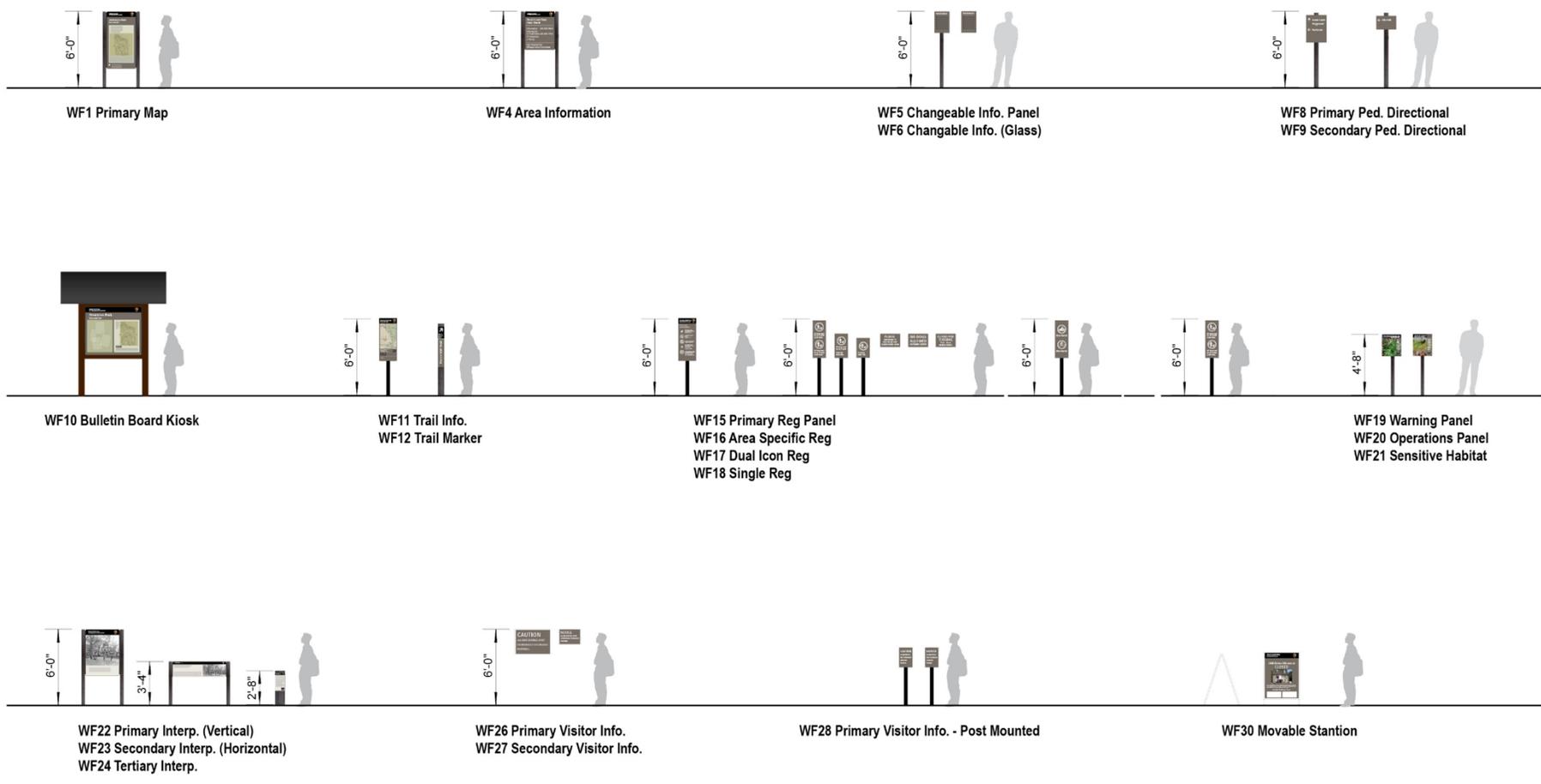
Proposed Design - Park Identification Signs

ID Series – Identification Signs



Proposed Design - Wayfinding Signs

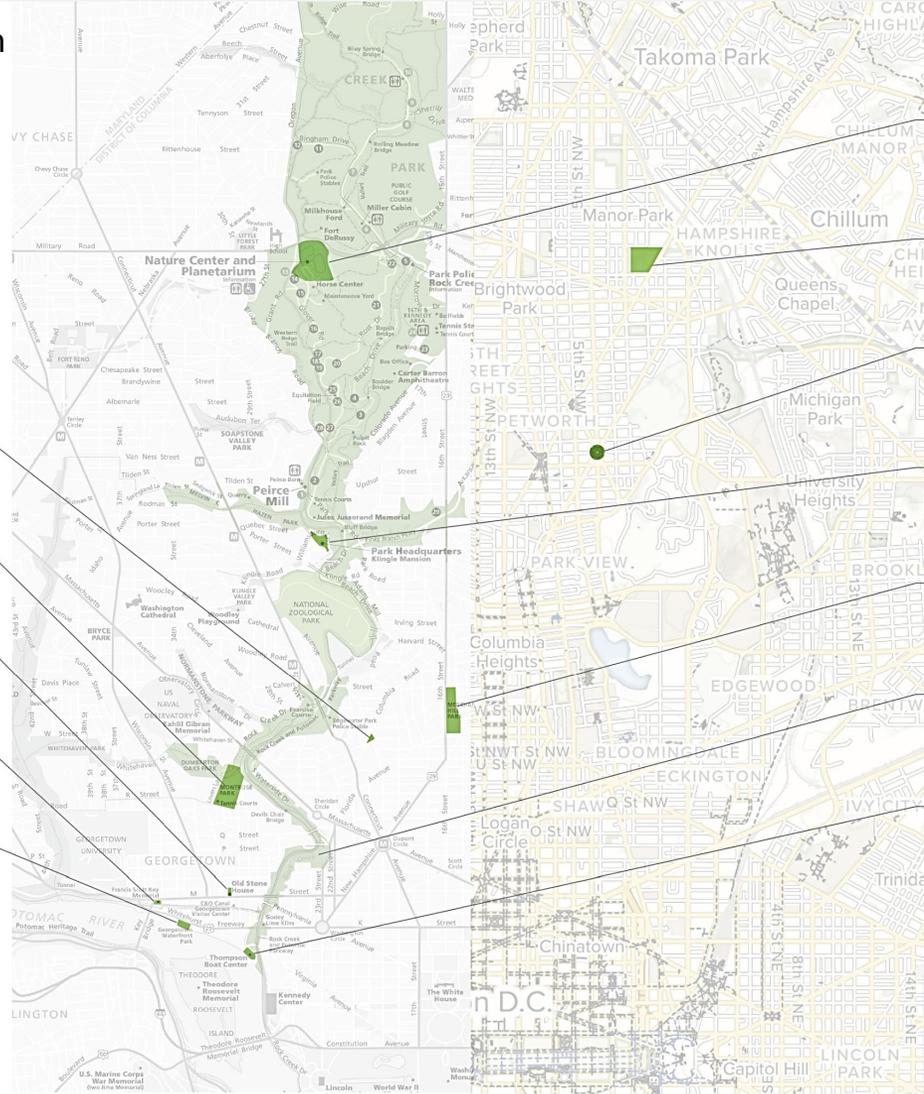
WF Series – Wayfinding Signs



Demonstration Visualization Sites

Demonstration sites shown here were chosen by NPS because they have a broad range of sign types that are representative of the Rock Creek Park signage system.

- McClellan Statue**
Connecticut Ave, NW
and Columbia Road, NW
- Montrose Park**
R Street, NW
- Old Stone House**
M Street, NW, between 31st Street, NW
and Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
- Francis Scott Key Memorial**
M Street, NW between Key Bridge
and 34th Street, NW
- Georgetown Waterfront Park**
Water Street between 30th and 34th Streets, NW



Nature Center and Planetarium
Glover Road, NW

Fort Slocum
Kansas Ave, NW, Madison Street, NW, 3rd Street, NW

Grant Circle Park
New Hampshire Avenue, NW

Park Headquarters Klinge Mansion
3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW

Meridian Hill Park
16th Street, NW between Euclid and W Streets, NW

Rock Creek Parkway
Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, NW

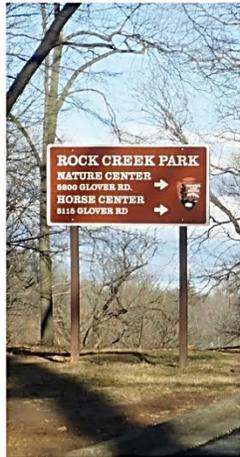
Thompson Boat Center
Virginia Avenue, NW

Visualization – Road Guide Signs

RG Series – Road Guide Signs



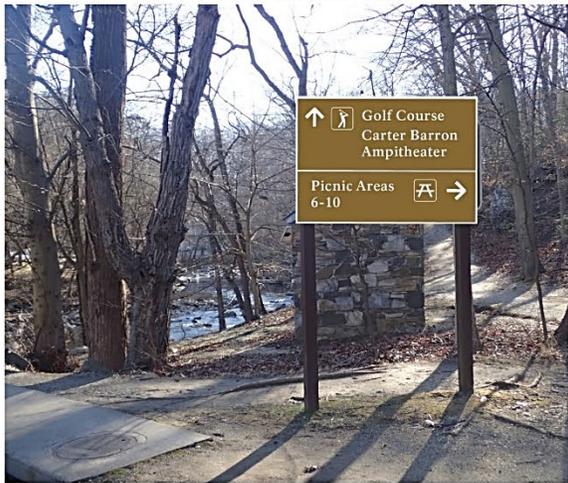
RG-5 / Road Guide Single Destination



PF-4B / Pathfinder 4-line Primary Legend



RG-1 / Road Guide Single Destination



RG-1 / Road Guide Multiple Destinations

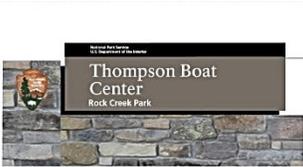
15

Visualization - Identification Signs

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway / Thompson Boat Center



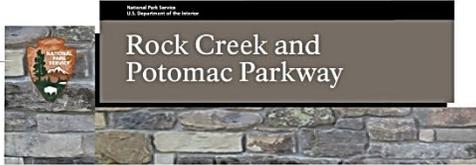
Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in the vicinity of Virginia Avenue, NW



ID2A / Secondary Monument ID



ID10 / Primary Identification Sign



ID1A / Primary Monument ID

Visualization - Identification Signs

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway / Thompson Boat Center



ID10 / Primary Identification Sign

ID1A / Primary Monument ID

Photo looking northbound at Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway at Virginia Avenue, NW

Visualization - Identification Signs

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway



Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway looking southbound in the vicinity of Calvert Street, NW

ID1A / Primary Monument ID

Visualization - Identification Signs

Georgetown Waterfront Park

Georgetown Waterfront Park between 30th Street, NW and 34th Street, NW - photo insert - 30th Street, NW at the Potomac River. Sign locations: Water Street, NW and 34th Street, NW; Wisconsin Avenue and K Street, NW; 30th Street at the Pormenade along the Potomac River.



ID10 / Primary Identification Sign

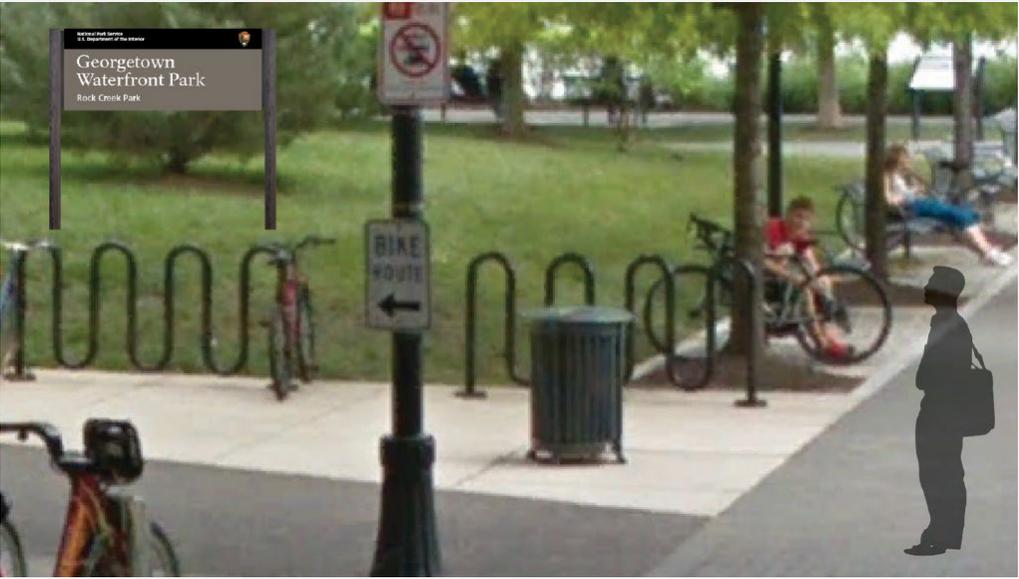


ID10 / Primary Identification Sign



ID8B / Secondary Pylon ID

Visualization - Identification Signs



Visualization - Identification Signs

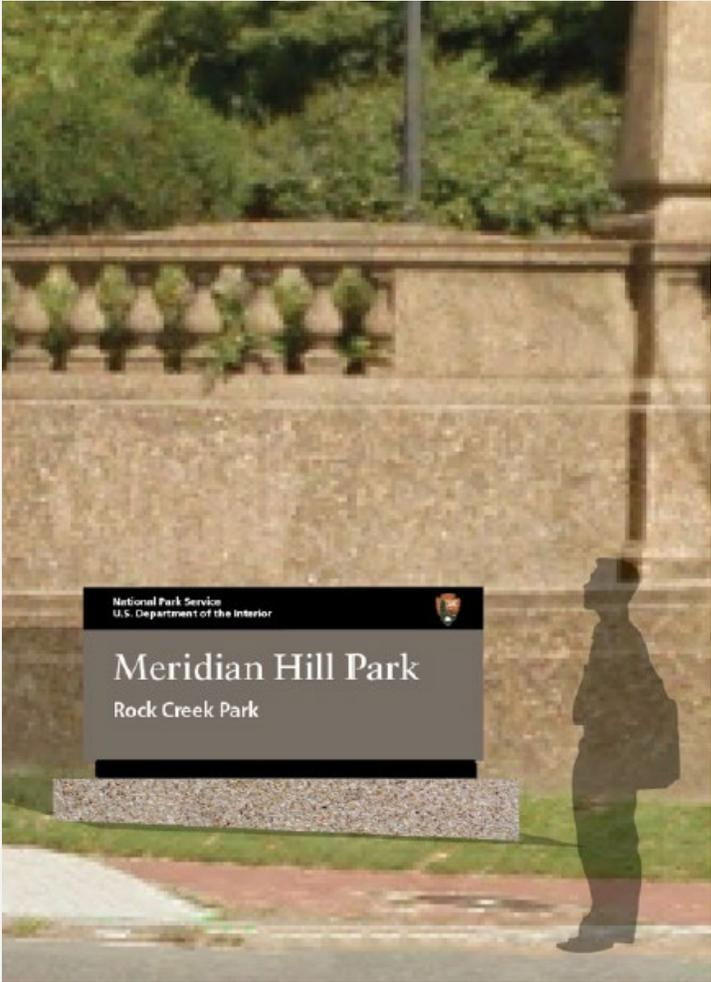
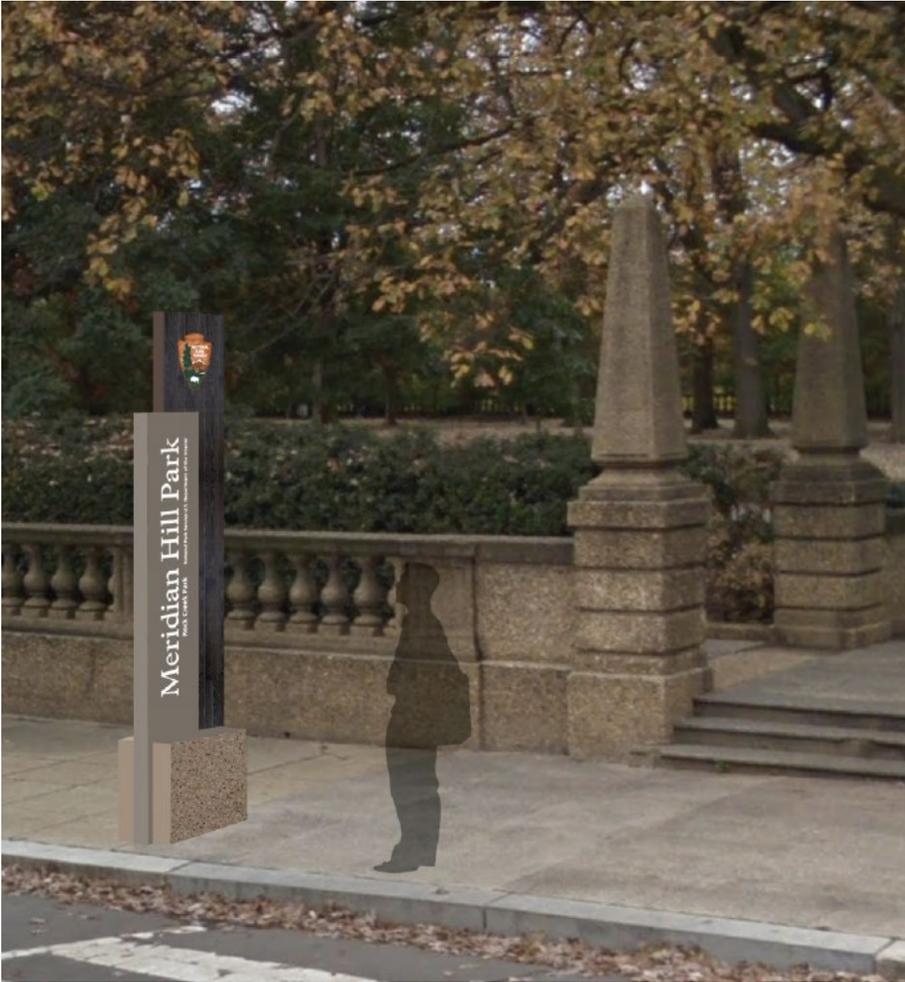
Meridian Hill Park



ID8B / Secondary Pylon ID

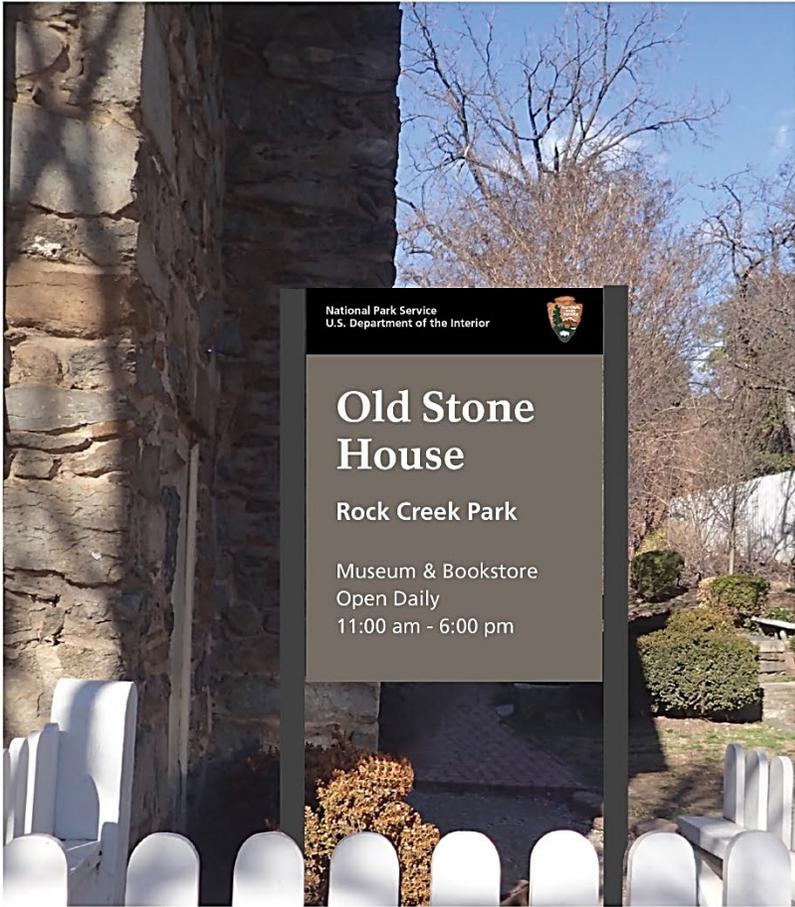
ID5B / Tertiary Monument ID

Visualization - Identification Signs



Visualization - Identification Signs

Old Stone House

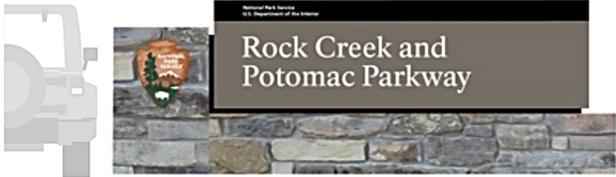


Old Stone House - M Street, NW between 31st Street, NW and Thomas Jefferson Street, NW

ID13 / Primary Facility ID

Visualization - Identification Signs

Rock Creek Park



ID1A / Primary Monument ID



ID7A Primary Pylon ID



ID8B / Secondary Pylon ID



ID9A / Tertiary Pylon ID

Visualization – Wayfinding & Information Signs

WF Series – Wayfinding Signs



WF Series / Primary & Secondary Visitor Information



WF Series / Primary Visitor Information



WF Series / Visitor Information (messaging and size variations)



WF Series / Secondary Interp. (Horizontal) 52

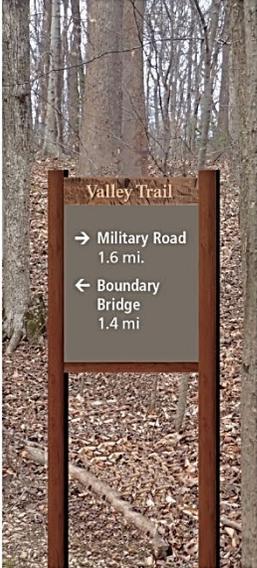
Visualization – Trail Signs

WF Series – Trail Signage

Sample of sandblasted header band



WF Series / Secondary Map



WF Series / Primary Directional



WF Series / Primary Reg

CFA 15/NOV/18-3

LOCATION:

numerous locations
Washington, DC

OWNER:

National Park Service

PROPERTY:

Rock Creek Park and associated sites

DESCRIPTION:

Wayfinding, interpretive, and identification signage guidelines

REVIEW TYPE:

Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 15/NOV/18-3](#)

Letter

26 November 2018

Dear Ms. Mendelson-Ielmini:

In its meeting of 15 November, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept proposal for signage guidelines for Rock Creek Park and the other smaller parks in the Rock Creek Park administrative unit, including several within the Old Georgetown historic district. The Commission approved the concept submission, adopting the report of the Old Georgetown Board (enclosed) and providing the following additional comments.

The Commission members expressed overall support for the development of signage guidelines and commented favorably on the comprehensive iconography of the project. In general, they recommended the use of vertical signs as appropriate for both large and small parks, although they supported some degree of flexibility in the use of horizontal signs at some locations. They commented on the greater adaptability and simplicity of vertical signs; they observed that the larger footprint required for horizontal signs often leads to clutter at the ground plane. Whatever the sign typology, they recommended using a simple, neutral treatment for the bases, consistent with the comprehensive sign program, rather than attempting to imitate a particular park's existing design features. They commented that some small sites, such as the reservation with the McClellan statue, should not have signs, and they acknowledged that signs oriented for drivers—which are likely to be different than those for pedestrians—should be carefully sited if found to be necessary.

In its approval of the concept, the Commission also supported the request of the Old Georgetown Board for mockups. Please coordinate the next submission with the staff, which is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

/s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini, Acting Regional Director
National Park Service, National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

cc: Wayne Hunt, Hunt Design
Encl.: Report of the Old Georgetown Board, 8 November 2018

Report

8 November 2018

CFA 18/NOV/2018-3 (no OG number)
National Park Service
Signage for Rock Creek Park and Associated Sites
Concept

REPORT: The National Park Service submitted a concept application for new and replacement signage in Rock Creek Park, which includes several sites in the Old Georgetown Historic District, including: Francis Scott Key Memorial Park, Georgetown Waterfront Park, Old Stone House, Montrose Park, and Thompson Boat Center. The Old Georgetown Board (OGB) reviewed the application at its public meeting of 4 October 2018 and found that in concept, the proposed signage was appropriate for the historic district, provided the applicant make further refinements related to the scale and placement of the signs within the site. The OGB requested a subsequent design development application with full-size mockups for its review.

Specific recommendations made by the OGB at its public meeting on 4 October 2018 are as follows:

- The OGB found the monument-type signs with stone bases to be the most successful, but preferred the post bases when a hierarchical relationship is necessary, such as for the Thompson Boat Center and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway signs.
- The OGB did not support the six-foot-tall, double-post sign proposed for Georgetown Waterfront Park, finding it too tall for the pedestrian scale of Georgetown. The OGB recommended it be replaced with an appropriately scaled sign and located to a more strategic location at a primary pedestrian entrance to the park.
- The OGB recommended that the Montrose Park sign be integrated into the brick stair cheek wall.
- The OGB requested that the applicant reassess the placement of the proposed signage at the Old Stone House, finding the proposed location appears random and unconsidered, and requesting a full-size mockup for this sign at the appropriate location on the site.
- The OGB did not support replacement of the existing stone marker at Francis Scott Key Memorial Park, finding the existing stone marker a character-defining feature of the 1993 Oehme, van Sweden & Associates park design. The OGB expressed support for the installation of the smallest sign type in the program, located at the westernmost point of the park closest to the bridge.

RECOMMENDATION: No objection to concept design for Rock Creek Park signage, per supplemental drawings received 14 September 2018, PROVIDED that the applicant return for design development review to further refine the siting/placement and scale of the proposed signs as described in the attached report; and that full size mock-ups are incorporated into the design review process. File design development submission at DCRA with detailed and dimensioned drawings for review by the Commission of Fine Arts.