



FAVERMANN DESIGN
16 ABERDEEN ST., BOSTON, MA 02215

Amesbury Branding and Wayfinding Project Final Report 2014



This report was funded by the:



Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Department of Housing & Community Development, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114

Dt: December 15, 2014



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To: William Scott,
Director of Community & Economic Development
City Hall, 62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

Fr: Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Re: Amesbury Branding and Wayfinding Final Report

A former farming and mill town, Amesbury is today largely residential. It is the northernmost city in Massachusetts. First settled in 1637, it was initially a modest agricultural community that later developed into a vibrant maritime and industrial economy.

At the beginning of the 19th century, textile mills were built at the falls, as was a mechanized nail-making factory, believed to be the nation's first.

Soon, Amesbury became famous as a manufacturing town. Other prominent manufacturers settled in Amesbury. The Merrimac Hat Company (1863-1944) produced more hats than any other US company. Beginning in 1853, Amesbury became famous for building carriages, a trade which evolved into the manufacture of automobile bodies.

Additionally, this transportation vehicle industry required goods, tools and services that required supporting businesses and manufacturers as well. The Great Depression ended the industry.

Though its industrial heritage has shaped Amesbury both economically and physically, the community has an impressive collection of Federal and Victorian style architecture. Many mill buildings are currently being reused as offices, apartments and even artist studios. In recent years, there has been a restoration of the historic downtown.

Massachusetts Route 110 connects Interstate I-95 and I-495. So Amesbury is somewhat of a pass through community. It was realized by government officials and businesses that there is a lack of cohesive branding and wayfinding to encourage the thousands of commuters and vacation travelers to stop, shop and buy in Amesbury.



Victorian architecture is a prominent feature in Amesbury

The existing conditions are at best a fragmented approach without any uniform guidelines or branding. With many additional Amesbury resources for visitors beyond downtown, it was apparent that locations were difficult to find without a coherent brand and hierarchical sign system. Currently, such attractions as Cider Hill Farm, Lake Gardner and historic Lowell Boats Shops are awkward at best and difficult at worst to find.



existing signage is inconsistent and confusing

To address this situation, an Amesbury Stakeholder Advisory Committee was set up. This committee developed an overview of the existing conditions and set goals that would encourage ease of access and lead to encouragement of economic expansion.

Desired outcomes were expressed. These included: the notion that traffic to visitor destinations would increase; trips off of major arteries would increase; cross-referenced and multipurpose trips within Amesbury would increase; drivers getting lost would decrease; seasonal traffic would be enhanced through better signs; consistent use of branding will make businesses more coherent; and follow up with surveys after the project will continue to refine and add to the success of the wayfinding system.

The Advisory Committee developed a series of tasks that included both by City of Amesbury staff and for a consultant to administer. These included:

- Inventory/ Assessment of Existing Public Signage
- Inventory/ Assessment of Existing Business Signage
- Sign Ordinance Review
- Mapping Location assessment
- Preferred Routes from Origin to Destinations
- Sign Partnership Program
- Design and Development of Logo or Brand
- Sign Hierarchy
- Sign Locations
- Sign Specification Package
- Cost Estimates

Using the thoughtful work done by the Advisory Committee and municipal staff in 2013, the Community Development Office of the City of Amesbury was awarded a grant under the Downtown Initiatives Program for branding and wayfinding consultant services. Favermann Design was assigned to work with the City of Amesbury on the process of developing wayfinding and a branded identity.

During the months of April through July, 2014, Favermann Design participated in four (4) committee and one (1) public workshop for specific branding and signage for Amesbury. Community participation was key in developing appropriate options for review.



Mark Favermann presenting during the Amesbury Community Workshop

Favermann Design conducted an analysis of Amesbury's signage and branding needs in various ways. The staff took photographs, researched the history of Amesbury, and researched their mill buildings and existing carriage building history and identity.

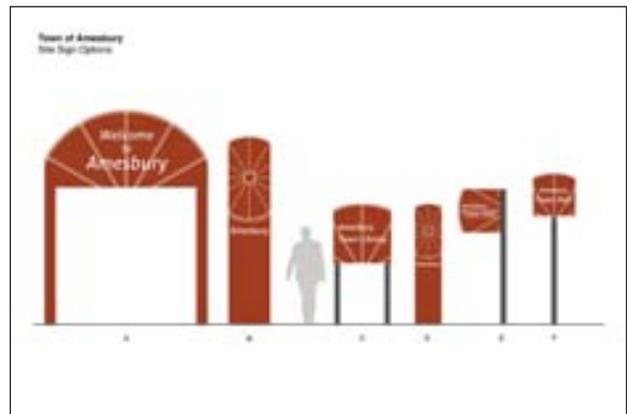
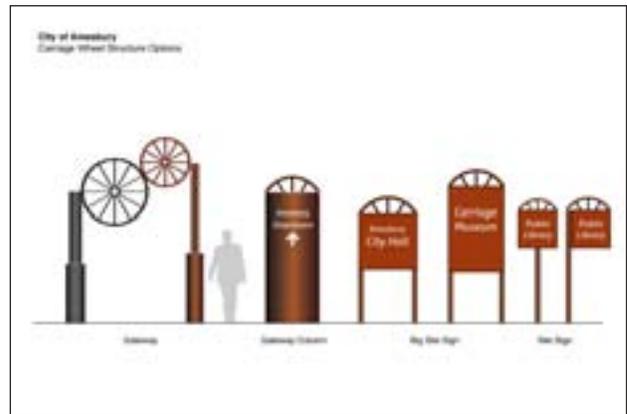


mill building architecture and carriage-building are prevalent branding identity opportunities for Amesbury

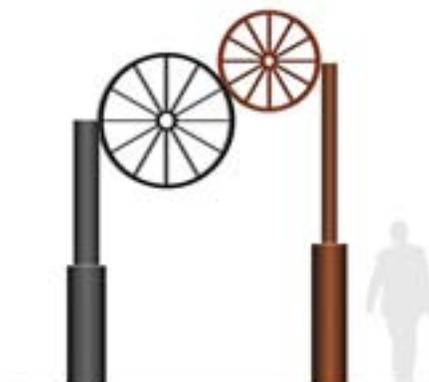
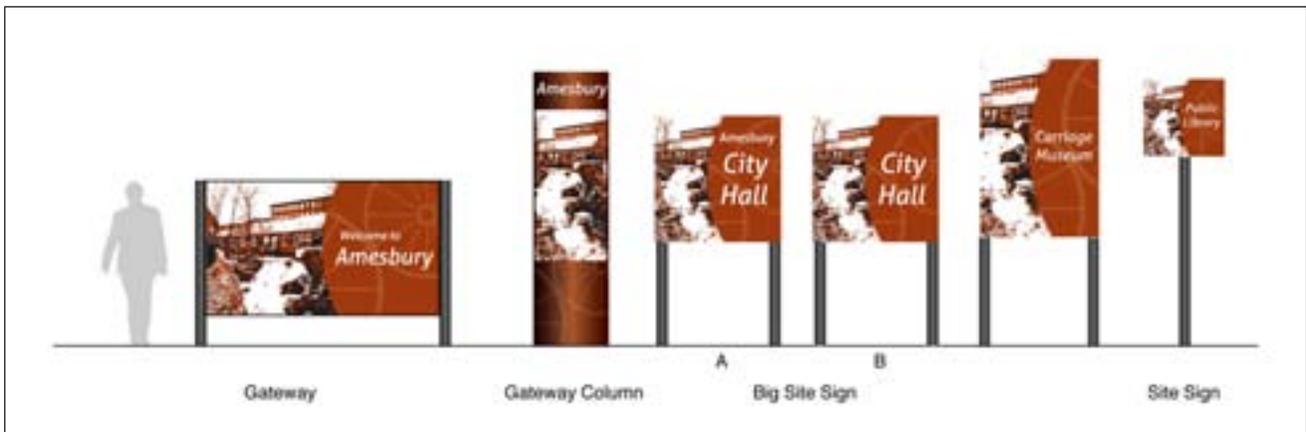


During the workshops, it was agreed that the Mill building and carriage identity was an existing potential brand opportunity that they would like to see strengthened. However, there was concern expressed that the historic overwhelmed the contemporary nature of 21st century industries moving in to Amesbury. This was taken into consideration when the consultant created design options.

For the following committee workshops, Favermann Design developed a series of branding and potential sign applications for exploring these desired identity options, showing both mill building identity and carriage wheel identity options. These were expressed in a contemporary graphic way.



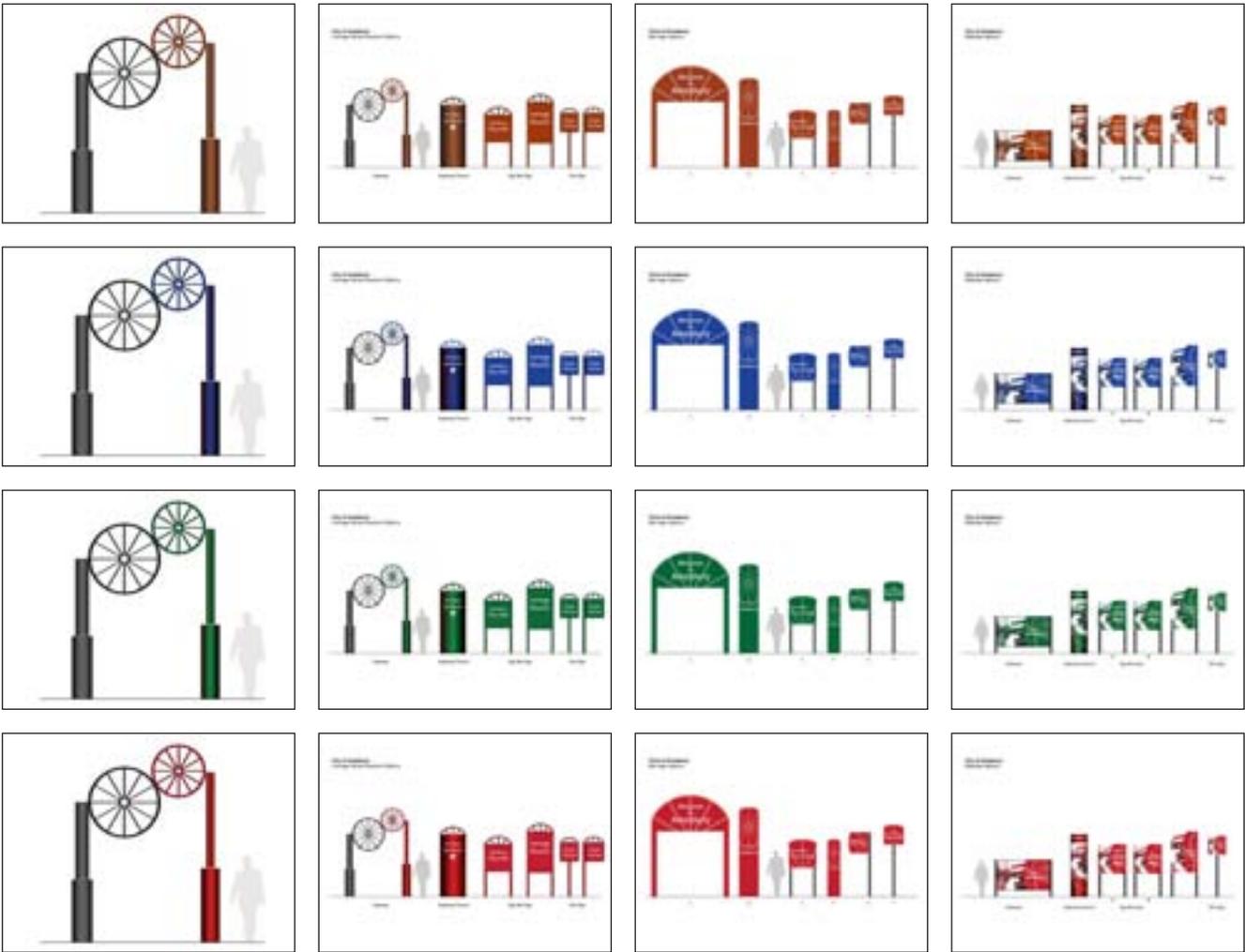
A variety of streetscape family options were developed and presented to the City



In addition to iconic branding identity elements, Favermann Design worked with the group to determine colors for their signs, as well as what was needed for the functionality and scale of this sign program.

- Brick Red 
- Forest Green 
- French Blue 
- Burnt Umber 

It should be noted that because the various participants indicated a high priority for the sense of arrival, we developed various gateway identity elements for them to strengthen the sense of arrival, along with associated sign type families, exploring color, scale, legibility, and sign content. These streetscape sign family options were presented in each of the 4 colors options that the group had preferred, for easier decision-making.



after preferred colors were determined with the Amesbury working group, Favermann Design submitted color variations for each of the 3 streetscape system families

After this due diligence and thoughtful consideration by the group, the decision-making was brought to the general public, with some of these design element options published in the Amesbury Daily News, announcing that all the options for Amesbury's new branding and signage program would be on display during the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce's Amesbury Day's Block Party.



WAYFINDING INITIATIVE



In an effort to guide travelers from the busy Route 110 to the major gateways leading to our downtown area, the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce has been

working closely with Mayor Ken Gray and Community & Economic Development Director Bill Scott to gain funding to make it happen. Earlier this year, together we applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development that paid for wayfinding concepts by a state-selected designer.

In July 2014, feedback was collected from the community regarding the designs (including the concept pictured here) and recommendations were made to the City for next steps. Our committee and board agreed with the community that design revisions were necessary to best communicate Amesbury's brand. Since the initial grant is not nearly enough to complete the design process or produce actual signs, our work continues with the City to find more funding to take next steps.

We welcome communication from our members regarding all such efforts so that we can fully consider all viewpoints before making recommendations to our elected officials. Please call 978.388.3178 or email Melissa@amesburychamber.com.

Strategically, the Chamber produced an online survey to generate input from the general public. The designs were presented to city council on July 8, 2014. Currently the draft is subject to review by the Mayor of Amesbury Ken Gray, the Wayfinding Advisory Committee and the Amesbury City Council.

a summary of the wayfinding initiative can be found at the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce website

Amesbury Chamber of Commerce Executive Director is quoted in the Amesbury Daily News that the designs are “innovative, they are creative,” and that “ they sort of bridge the past, present and future of Amesbury.” She adds that “When we get the money we will have identified the best places to put the signs.”



June 23, 2014
Input sought on new signs for Amesbury
By Jim Sullivan
STAFF WRITER

AMESBURY – A new look is coming to Carriagetown and Amesbury Chamber of Commerce executive director Melissa Cerasuolo wants the public's take.

“This really will catapult Amesbury into the next level,” Cerasuolo said. “Having signage around town and having a branding will really help to bring more people into the community to all the great restaurants and shops.”

The city was awarded a wayfinding grant of \$10,000 by the state of Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development back in February, allowing signage consultant Mark Favermann to get to work. Favermann Design has worked with the Boston Red Sox in the past as well as with the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics and came up with three separate designs that the Chamber presented to the public at a special public hearing early last week.

“They are innovative, they are creative,” Cerasuolo said. “They sort of bridge the past, present and future in Amesbury with tying in the carriage wheels and the modern colors that they are using. One of the concepts is the waterfall in the Upper Millyard and that is bringing that into one of the concepts.”

Currently preliminary drafts and still subject to review by both Mayor Ken Gray, the Wayfinding Committee and the City Council, the first design makes use of a carriage wheel silhouette. The second design mixes the silhouette with a dramatic photo of the waterfall in the Upper Millyard and the third design is a three-dimensional carriage wheel construct.

“They are a past, present and future take on Amesbury,” Cerasuolo said. “Where it was, where it is and where it is going.”

The Chamber has linked to an online survey on their Facebook page for people to vote on the designs. So far, 126 responses have been received with the carriage wheel construct becoming the early favorite. Once the final design is settled, the signs will be seen in the downtown area, the next step in the wayfinding process will be to expand their reach and State Sen. Kathleen O'Connor Ives, D-Newburyport has recently secured \$300,000 to assist in that effort.

“There is a process to this and identifying the downtown is first,” Cerasuolo said. “What is next is identifying the Route 110 and 150 corridor and then the I-95, I-495 (interchange). It is definitely a process of identifying all the specific areas in where the signage should be placed and that will be an ongoing conversation.”

The designs will be on display during the Chamber's Amesbury Days block party Thursday as well and Cerasuolo hopes to get as much feedback as possible before presenting them to the City Council for review on July 8.

“We are just doing our due diligence now,” Cerasuolo said. “So when we get the money we will have identified the best places to put the signs.”

