



TOWN OF HULL

COMMUNITY BRANDING & WAYFINDING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2018

Prepared by Favermann Design

Prepared for the Department of Housing
and Community Development (DHCD)

**MASSACHUSETTS
DOWNTOWN
INITIATIVE**





BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Located on a peninsula at the southern edge of Boston Harbor, Hull, Massachusetts is a small town in Plymouth County with a population of about 10,300. Densely populated, it is the smallest town in Plymouth County and the fourth smallest in Massachusetts. Initially called Nantasket by the Massachusetts tribe, it is a series of islands connected by sandbars forming a peninsula, the Plymouth Colony established a trading post there in 1621 to trade with the Wampanoags. The town itself was first settled in 1622 and incorporated in 1644. At that time, it was renamed for Kingston-upon-Hull, England. Fishing, trading and shipwreck salvaging were the earliest Hull industries. Starting in 1776, several were built on Hull's Allerton Point and on Hog Island (now Spinnaker Island). The latter one was armed with 16-inch guns, the largest ever deployed by the United States.



John F. Fitzgerald's home

Due to its proximity to the City of Boston as the closest major beach town, Hull has served as the summer residence to several famous people over the years. These have included John Boyle O'Reilly (28 June 1844 – 10 August 1890) was an Irish poet, journalist, author and political activist, former President Calvin Coolidge and former Boston Mayor John F. Fitzgerald (also known as "Honey Fitz").

Fitzgerald was the father of Rose Kennedy, father-in-law of Joseph Kennedy, Sr. and grandfather of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Bobby Kennedy and Senator Ted Kennedy. Each of Honey Fitz's grandchildren spent time in Hull.



Paragon Park Carousel



Rescue at sea has been an important part of Hull's history. The Massachusetts Humane Society placed one of its first Huts of Refuge on Nantasket Beach after the American Revolution. Captain Joshua James (1826–1902), Hull's most recognized lifesaver, became the first Keeper of the Point Allerton U.S. Life Saving Station in

1889. James and both his Humane Society volunteers and his U.S. Life-Savers were estimated to have saved over 1000 people from shipwrecks. Also, the U.S. Coast Guard has had a long and distinguished history in Hull as well. The Hull Lifesaving Museum is now located in the 1889 Point Allerton Life Saving Station. Its Maritime Program is housed in the old Coast Guard Boathouse at Pemberton Point.

Considered one of the finest sand beaches in New England, Nantasket Beach is located in Hull. It is a heavily used public beach overseen by the DCR, Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation. At low tide, there are acres of sandy tide pools; during Nor'easters, the beach is over-run with battering waves and nearby flooded streets. In 1825, entrepreneur Paul Worrick built the Sportsman Hotel on Nantasket Avenue. More grand hotel construction followed, and by 1840, steamboats made three trips a day between Hull and Boston. By 1888, the Old Colony Railroad linked Boston to Hull.

By the mid-19th Century, Hull's Nantasket Beach had become a favored summer destination for huge crowds of middle class Bostonians. By the late nineteenth century, more than 2 million people were visiting the area each summer. Because gamblers, pickpockets and confidence men followed the large crowds onto the boardwalks, Hull town leaders decided to create a safe, appealing attraction adjacent to the beachfront.

Therefore, in 1905, Paragon Park was built as a safe place for visitors seeking family amusement. Along with many other rides, a giant roller coaster was built in 1917. In 1928, the park opened what would become one of its most cherished attractions--a hand-carved carousel. Paragon Park closed in 1984 when the property was sold for condominium development. Today, the only surviving remnants of Paragon Park are the historic carousel and the clock tower located in Hull and the Giant Coaster now located in Six Flags America outside of Washington, D.C. Originally, the colorful carousel featured 66 horses and 2 multi-seat chariots, of which 22 have been restored to their original colors and condition. The Friends of Paragon Carousel, a non-profit organization, oversees the attraction today. In recent years, more than 100,000 visitors happily ride the restored carousel annually.





Gingerbread House and Detail

Architecturally the Town of Hull is an eclectic mix of styles and design history from the ornate to the very unadorned. Houses were and are a function of the wealth of the owners. 19th Century forms including Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne styles are adjacent to Federalist, Swiss Cottage, Neo-Tudor and various forms of Bungalows. In the last 35 years or so modest summer (beach shack) houses have been winterized and upgraded for year-round living in Hull.

Though mostly a bedroom community for Boston workers and retirees, Hull's economy is spearheaded by retail, professional services and medical and health care service jobs. Set in ten (10) residential neighborhoods, housing comes in a variety of sizes and forms in Hull. With an increasingly older population, the fastest growing demographic in Hull is individuals over 65 years old.

The form of government in Hull is an open town meeting and elected Board of Selectmen. A Town Manager oversees day-to-day government activities. Built in the early part of the 20th Century, Hull's beautiful Town Hall houses most town government services. Established in 1913, the Hull Public Library is located in the former home of John Boyle O'Reilly that was built in 1889.

Oddly, the Town of Hull has no directional signs on Massachusetts Route 3, but Nantasket is identified on the Exit 14 sign. This seems to be a political omission. Though electric railroad linkage was begun in 1895, rail and trolley routes were abandoned in Hull during the 1920's. Today, besides roads but no highways, Hull is linked to Downtown Boston by an MBTA Commuter Boat that leaves from Pemberton Point at the very tip of Hull.



Example of various homes



Nantasket Beach

As with other historic and convenient summer vacation and recreation destinations, the Town of Hull and its Nantasket Beach are highly personalized locations of generational family memories and of major nostalgia longings. The now closed Paragon Park is a symbol of youthful fun that escaped day-to-day life responsibilities by taking thrill rides, eating unusual foods and participating in games of questionable skill. Here reminiscence is an act of a seemingly past perfect experience—in essence, historic hand-colored postcards of the mind

PROCESS

The Town of Hull's Department of Community Development and Planning Director and its Town Manager - selected a working group to work with Favermann Design to develop the brand and its wayfinding and strategic signage applications. These included:
Hull Working Group Members

Sarah Clarren – DC&P
Jen Constable – Member of the Board of Selectmen
Dennis Riley – Historic Commission
Don Ritz – Design Review Board
James Dow – DPW
Jeanne Paquin – Planning Board
Jim Pitrolo – Chamber of Commerce
Karen Pitrolo – Chamber of Commerce
Bart Kelly – HRA
Phil Lemnios – Town Manager
Mark Abatuno – Chamber of Commerce
Christopher Dilorio – Community Development
and Planning Director



Town Hall

At an introductory meeting, the consultants, Favermann Design, introduced a wide variety of concepts and examples of community branding techniques and implementation tools and elements. At a following second meeting, the working group was informed about how a dozen or so other Massachusetts communities creatively developed their approaches to a unique community brand. These brands were applied to signage and wayfinding elements.

The third meeting involved an Ideation Exercises Workshop. The working group was asked to describe the Town of Hull by one word, two words and phrases. Additionally, colors, symbols and future aspirations were expressed. This exercise was to develop by words a visual description of the character and personality of Town of Hull. The consultants then took these terms and descriptions and worked with them to create and translate them into vibrant images over the next several weeks.

IDEATION EXERCISE

Describe Hull in ONE WORD

Peninsula	Residential
Summer	Coastal
Beach	Active
Ocean	Recreational
Fun	Diverse
Nostalgia	Sun
Sunset	Sand
Friendly	Boating
Tribal	Fishing
Commuter	Accessible
Food	Affordable
Bedroom	Carousel
Marinas	Vacationers
Walkable	Wind
Historic	Pirates

Describe Hull in TWO WORDS

Boston Beach	Interconnected Community
Sandy Beach	Pristine Water
Good Time	Good Fishing
Blue Collar	Good Value
Pick Up Trucks	Good Surfing
Thickly Settled	
Great Views	
Family Friendly	
Retirement Community	
Paragon Park	
Vacation Destination	
Pedestrian Friendly	
Fishing Tours	
Beach Access	
Historic Architecture	
Strong Community	
Caring Community	

Describe Hull in a Phrase

Honor of Joshua James
 Original Life Savers
 Coast Guard Facility
 Historic Shipwrecks
 Come for a day, stay for a lifetime
 Windmill Point Turbine first on East Coast?
 Wonderful Beachfront Community
 The Town is a Beach
 Life is a Beach
 The Best Beach Town
 Making waves
 An Ocean Haven

What are Hull's SYMBOLS?

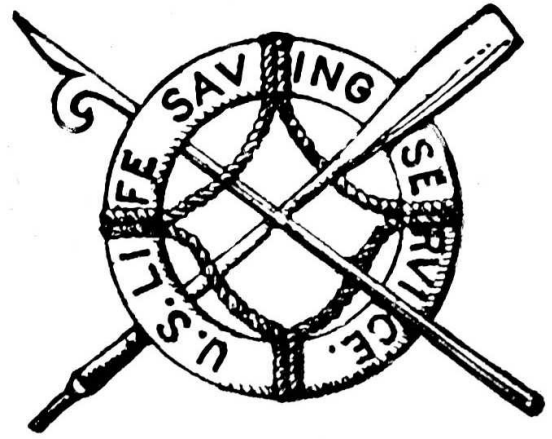
Boston Light
 Carousel
 Fort Revere Tower
 Pirate
 Turbine
 Joshua James
 Sail Boats
 Geography
 Sunset
 Beach Grass
 Roller Coasters/Steamboat (Nostalgia)
 Sailboats

ASPIRATIONS?

Regional Attraction
 Year Round Sustainable
 Safe
 Children
 More Families
 Clean Community
 Economically Strong
 Accessibility Better
 More Distinctive Visitor Destinations
 Refined Destination
 Public Art – Positive Response
 Street Furniture-Positive Response

The design staff at Favermann Design followed-up by creating several visual approaches to the depiction of the essence of Hull. The Workshop #1 Follow-up session went over the previous Ideation results and then presented several design options for the working group to react to and recommend revisions or change of directions.

The designers started with the concept of integrating nostalgic old postcards of Nantasket Beach scenes, graphic depictions of carousel horses and an image of a multi-masted 19th Century sailing ship. A phrase was chosen to consider as a tagline—Making Waves. Additionally, a couple of decorative bands for the bottom of the largest signs were suggested—Victorian gingerbread and wave forms. The working group had problems with most of these first design efforts.



Group members felt that the nostalgic postcard designs depicting Nantasket Beach emphasized the beach and the past too much. Also, it was a DCR-owned asset located in the town. The carousel horses reflected a similar DCR connection, but some Group members wanted to see this direction developed with more colors. The ghost-like ship suggested the negativity of a shipwreck and was dismissed as well. Members also requested seeing a more contemporary image.

As the meetings were open to the public, an individual visited too lobby for an integration of United States Coast Guard City celebratory signs be integrated into the developing Town of Hull sign system. Though not really connected, the consultants found no reason not to accept this concept. Additionally, a group member suggested that a painting of a Joshua James sea rescue be considered as the brand image.



Source: Hull Lifesaving Museum

The gingerbread bottom band was not embraced, and the waves were felt to be less than dynamic. The suggested tagline was considered to have negative connotations not positive implications. Members suggested that a more contemporary approach be taken by the next workshop.

To follow-up Workshop #2, for the next meeting the Favermann Design staff created design options for more colorful carousel images, a simplified view of the clock tower and adjacent buildings to the carousel structure and several

color options of contemporary wave abstractions. The most favored contemporary wave designs were one with a sand background and the other with a sea foam green/blue background. A red "Nantasket" was a secondary title after Hull. The U.S. Coast Guard signs and the sea rescue painting were reviewed along with the consideration of historical markers or a series of signs.

The next iteration of the bottom metal sign band included another, more dynamic wave and silhouettes of sailboats. The wave seemed more ribbon-like to the committee, while members wanted to see more silhouette options additionally to the sailboat. To explore the number of needed sign elements, the group members then applied "The Family of Elements" to a map of the Town of Hull.



For a presentation to the Board of Selectmen on March 22, 2018, the consultants created a number of silhouette band image options for the major sign elements. These included a rescue boat with paddles, a shell, a lighthouse and the sailboat. The BOS pointedly recommended that "Nantasket" be eliminated from the sign.

As it was a public meeting, audience members suggested two additional directions. The first was a design element that differentiated the ten (10) Hull residential neighborhoods; the second concept was how to allow for the history of the town to be shared by tourists.

It was agreed that Favermann Design would create Neighborhood

Signs and Historical Markers and share them with the BOS at a future meeting.

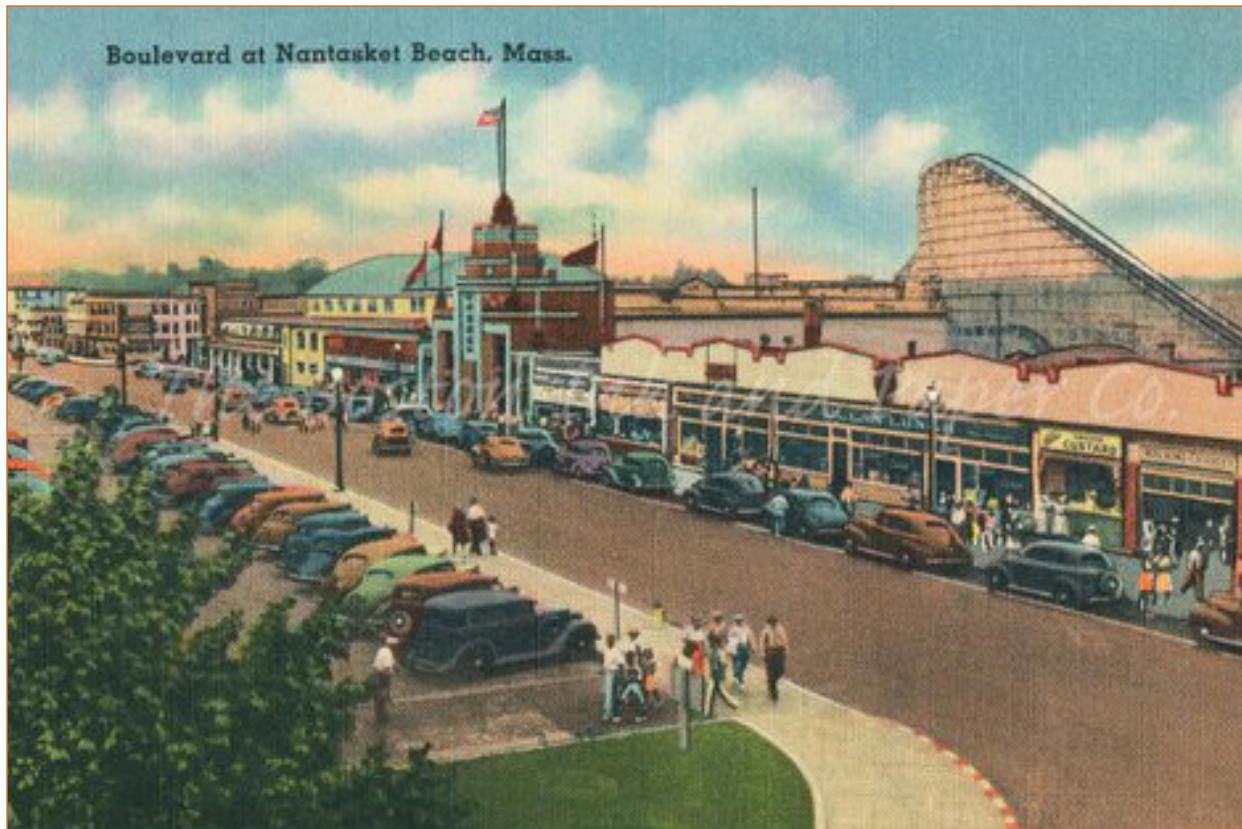
A dissenting Selectman spoke about the lack of the Town Seal being part of the proposed Town of Hull Brand and Wayfinding/Signage elements. The consultants promised to explore this even though the elegance of the contemporary wave design could be aesthetically compromised.

At the September 29, 2018 Hull Board of Selectmen meeting, wayfinding elements were presented set in particular town locations. This was done by Photoshop to clarify visibility, scale and potential locations. After much discussion with the same dissenting selectman, there was a unanimous vote by Board of Selectmen 5-0 in favor of the sand colored contemporary wave design. However, there was a contingency to develop and bring back to the Board of Selectman for review alternative "gateway sign" options that incorporated the Hull Town Seal. At the meeting, the Historical Markers and Neighborhood designation signs were also approved.

The consultant suggested that municipal building site signs and street name signs might all incorporate the town seal. This is done in many communities throughout the Commonwealth. Following this meeting, various town seal integrated images were explored by the Favermann Design staff. Overly visually busy, the results were less than visually compelling.

Discussions were also held regarding costs of Wayfinding and sign fabrication and implementation. The consultants recommended that a phased approach may be the best way to accomplish this. The consultant was also asked to describe funding methods by other communities doing similar activities. Grants, funding from Town Meeting, use of existing DPW budget amounts for signage, and corporate or civic organization gifts were several approaches shared with the BOS.





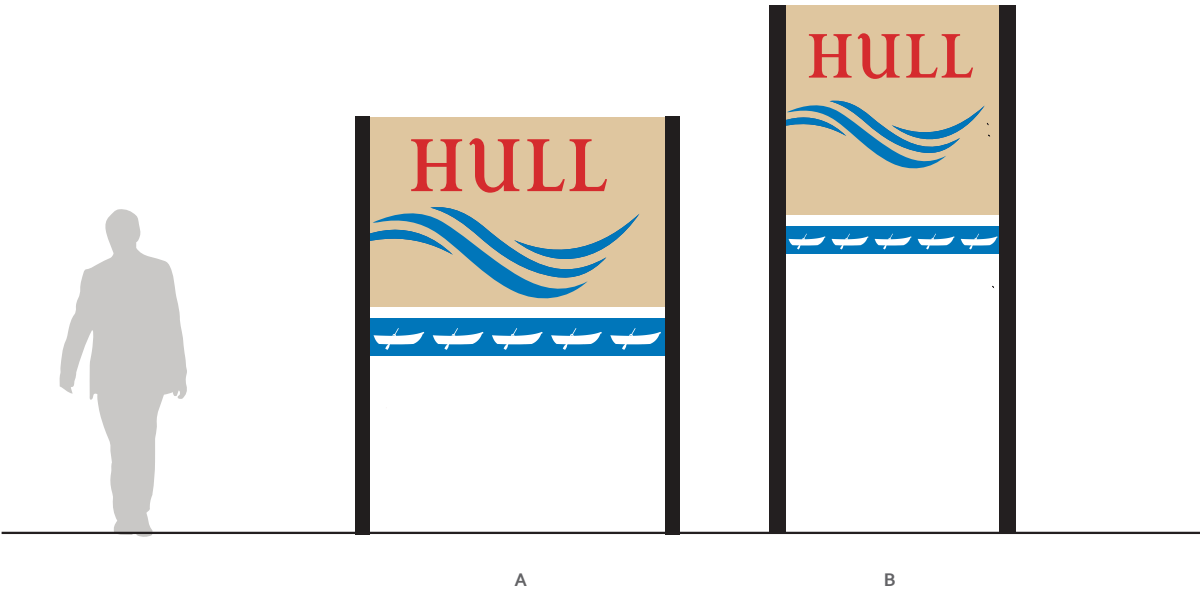
SUMMARY

The statement “Nostalgia isn’t what it used to be” is apparently the approach taken by the Town of Hull. A 19th or early 20th Century branded image or “look” is not what the historic recreation destination community wants. In the last several decades, Hull has become a year round residential community with an aging population and decreasing enrollment in the schools. So the Town of Hull wants a more vigorous contemporary 21st Century image and town brand. Community leaders are desirous of a more youthful and appealing image. By adopting the forward-looking “wave” design collectively created over several months, Hull is able to now position itself as a contemporary community with an inviting sense of modern-day place.

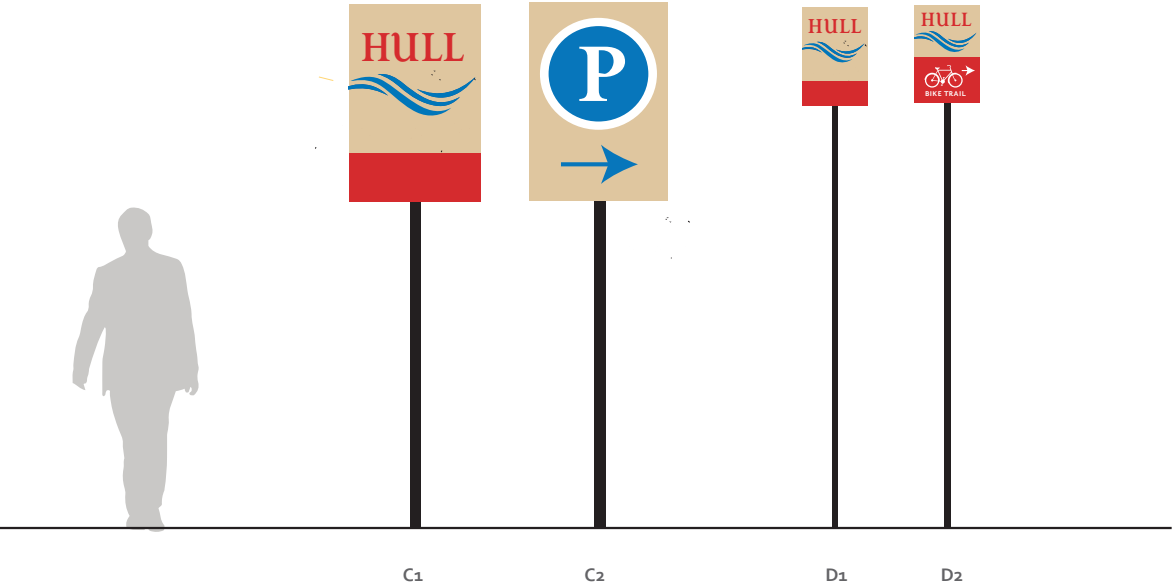
As shown, the “Family of Elements” are created as a hierarchy of gateway signs, directional markers and site signs. In order to allow for a phased, cost-effective fabrication and installation, the elements can be placed into a visual menu or Kit of Parts. Also, an easy to read specifications package should be developed to assist with pricing, bidding and fabrication.

Additionally, Hull’s next steps will be to create a new passageway/art walk from Nantasket Avenue near the beach area to the back of the DCR parking lot. Incorporating the new brand, the town wants to create a sculptural gateway that will draw visitors to use the passageway. By incorporating the new brand image with overhead walkway signage that includes the old Paragon Park flair, it will reinforce a sense of arrival, sense of place as well as underscore community pride and distinctiveness.

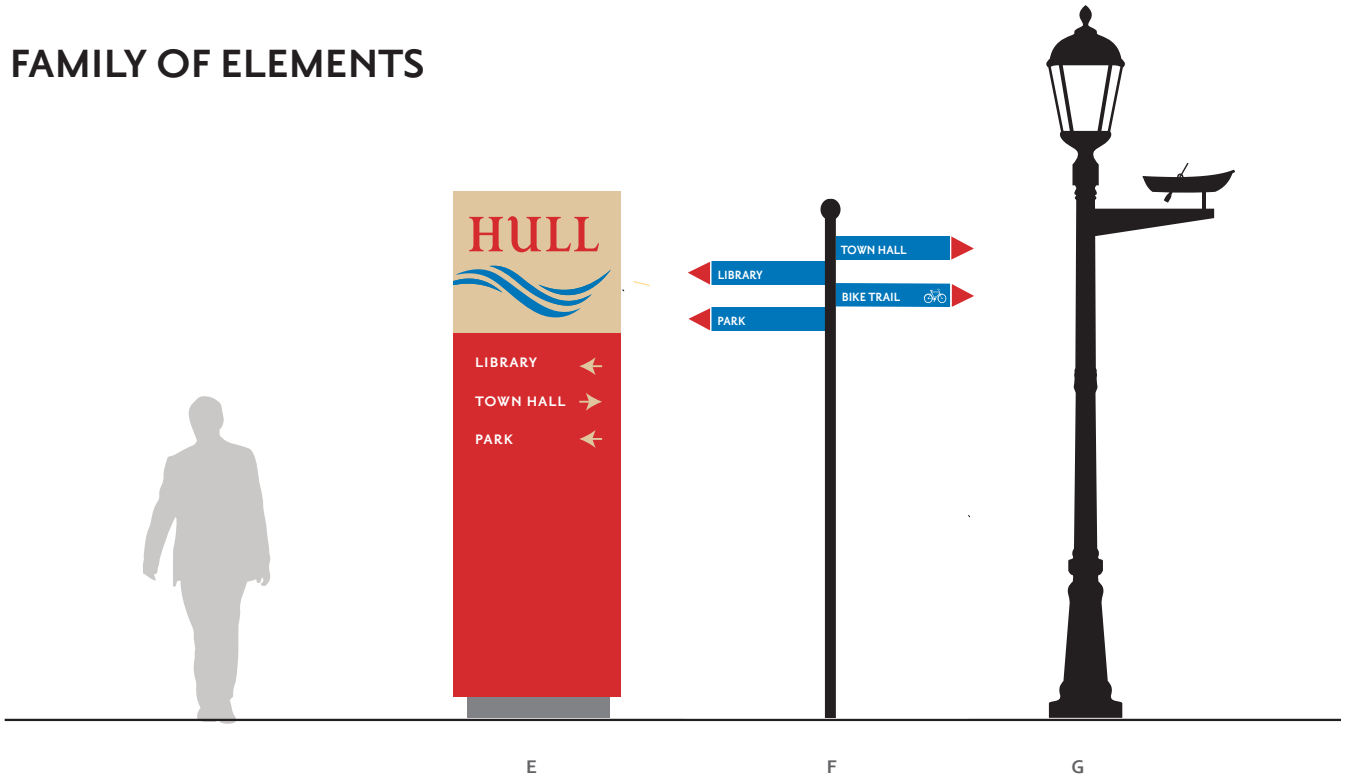
GATEWAY ELEMENTS



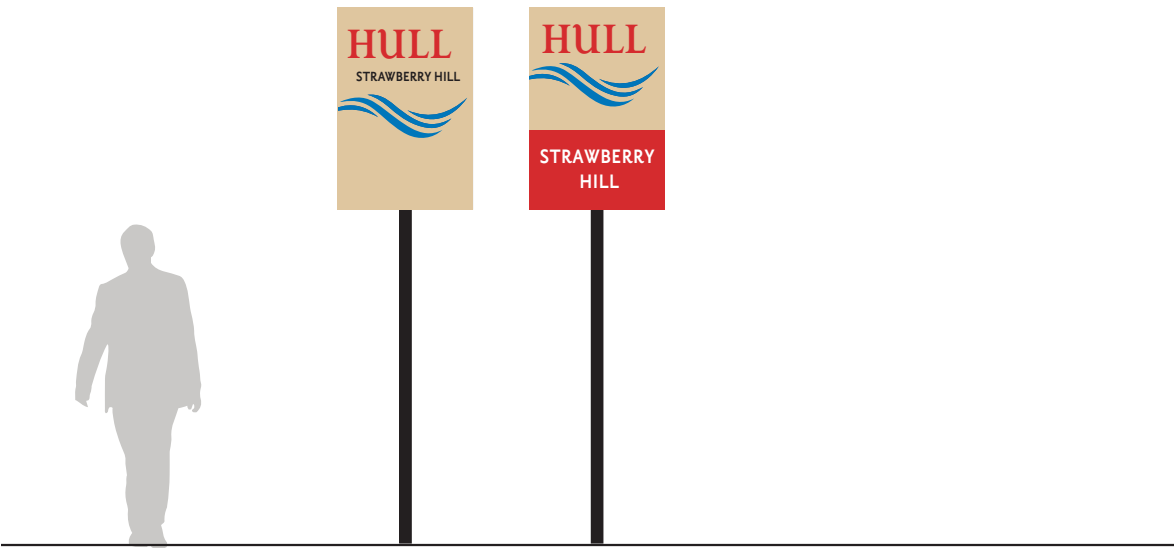
FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



NEIGHBORHOODS



HISTORICAL MARKERS