

## Notes on signage for Carderock Springs Historic District

Ken Hinga, September 2020

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1. **General Comments:** As requested by the Carderock board, I have evaluated each sign and will characterize each sign, and potential sign, and offer comments on characteristics and condition. I am working with the assumptions that 1) there is a desire to provide some standardization in signage, and 2) to incorporate signage designating the historic district with each sign. I have included comments on the Club-related signs as these the club clearly a significant part of the Carderock neighborhood, (and is in the historic district as well).

The conditions of the existing signage vary considerably, from one being in excellent shape to another in danger of falling apart.

As for an overall color scheme, I have previously suggested a rich brown background with white letters. This would match the color scheme of the cul-de-sac street number signs used throughout Carderock and I believe would, with new paint, be sufficient to make the signs stand out. Certainly, other color schemes could be proposed.

2. **Comment on historic district signs:** As the entry signs are of quite different size, I suggest that the signs designating the historic district would also need to be of different sizes. As I expect the signs to be cut into wood with a computer-driven CNC machine, this would likely not be a significant cost issue, other than the costs of the materials. If one were to incorporate the Carderock logo into the historic designation sign, the use of a CNC machine (driven by a computer) would also allow some customization (e.g. horizontal vs vertical layout) in the layout of each sign as would look best at each site.

While there are likely a number of places which could cut new signs, I know that this can be done by staff at the Woodworkers Club in Rockville. I have not yet talked to them about prices etc.

### 3. Entry sign at Lilly Stone at Persimmon Tree Lane



Dimensions of sign (not including stonework: 16 foot 1 inch by 12 inches.

Lettering: height 8 inches, font lines  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch, cut  $\frac{1}{4}$  deep with flat bottom

**Condition:** This sign is in the best shape of the three existing entry signs. Sign is attached to wood posts sunk into the soil in front of stonework, all of which appear to be sound. I see the only issue with the sign itself is the lack of contrast between the white letters and the silver-gray background. The proposed white letters on brown background would increase the contrast.

**Historic Designation Sign:** A historic designation sign at this site would likely fit in well as a stand alone sign of appropriate size. This might fit well to the left of the sign either adjacent to or above the existing section of lettering. In order for the lettering on the sign to be legible

from the road, I would expect a sign non the order of 2 foot in dimension to be adequate, but that depends a bit on the sie of the lettering on the historic designation sign.

**Suggestion: Lighting.** As can be seen in the photo above and another below, there is a light post incorporated into the general scene. I think it would be nice to change out this post. The design of this post will send little light onto the sign. Replacing this post with a light (or two) that directs light downward would be desirable. This would achieve two goals. It would light up the sign itself, making it more prominent at night, and by directing light downward will reduce light pollution heading up into the atmosphere.



**landscaping** near the sign has clearly been kept up. Who has been doing this?



Night photo showing how the lights are not very effective in highlighting the sign, and that the lack of contrast makes the sign hard to read.



#### 4. Entry Sign at Carderock Springs Drive by River Road



Dimensions (wood area): Eight foot by 2 foot.

Lettering: eight inches high, 1&1/4 font lines, recessed ¼ deep, flat bottom.

Stonework immediately around sign is about 8 inches wide and deep.

Sign is imbedded in masonry. Attachment unclear.

Below the sign is a stonework ledge with a curious “step” in the middle I wonder its original purpose. (Was this once a water feature?) Behind the stone ledge the wall is constructed of wood landscape timbers.

Distance from road about 35 feet.

**Condition:** This sign is in pretty poor condition. The 2x12 boards with the lettering are loose and have clearly dropped down from the masonry on the left side. Some of the stonework is

loose and need of reattachment (photo below). The wood on the sign has been damaged but is small enough of area that it should be repairable with epoxy wood filler.

**Historic Designation Sign:** The only real option would appear to be for a stand-alone sign. Presumably, this would be placed beside the existing sign. It would need to be large enough to be legible from 35 feet. Given the stonework below the sign, it might be suitable to place the historic sign below the Carderock sign, perhaps where the reeds are to the left of the sign.

**Landscaping:** The general appearance of this site is untended and seedy.

- 1) Dirt has moved downhill from above the sign to bury the stonework and part of the wood at the right of the sign
- 2) The large prominent stone immediately in front of the sign detracts from the sign itself.
- 3) One of the prominent plantings to the right and below the sign partially blocks the view of the sign from the road. (pic below.)
- 4) The floodlight illuminating the sign is working well to illuminate sign (pic below). However it was on midday. It would be good to replace the light with a photosensor controlled LED flood to not waste electricity.
- 5) The swampy area in front of the sign drains well to the left of the sign by flooding over the curb (pic below). This is a bit unsightly and it would be nice to find some way to clean this up. There are some piles of stone and loose stone. It might be possible to change the direction of the drainage toward River Road which would put the water into another drainage area
- 6) There is also a curious pile of stones toward the River Road from the floodlight. It has a concrete pad, with attachments for locks. Is it worth removing?

Sign damage



Loose stonework



Back of sign showing concrete fill behind sign.



Loose grout which looks to have been the way the sign was held in place originally.



Drainage over curb leaving permanent discoloring of curb



Stones and possible new direction of drainage toward River Road



Small concrete pad hidden by loose stones



View from center of Carderock Springs drive



View From close to River Road showing plantings obscuring sign.



Night photo



## 5. Transition Sign at Hamilton Spring and Lilly Stone



**Dimensions:** Lettering area. 42 inches by 11 inches high. Woodwork is made from 5&1/2 inch lumber. Cross member is 42 inches long. Total length of section containing lettering is 53&1/2 long. Stone base is 48 by 48 inches.

**Lettering:** Main lettering is 4 inch high, ½ inch font line with round bottom ¼ deep. Lettering on historic register sign is 1 inch high. Historic sign is 14 inch high by 13 inch wide.

**Condition:** Structural elements seem to be in good shape. The section of the sign with the Carderock Springs lettering has a slight downward slope. This can be leveled by inserting shims at the top of the vertical post supporting that section of the sign.

**Historic designation sign:** The placement of the historic sign seems appropriate here. However it could be replaced with one with larger lettering.

**Landscaping:** Clearly pruning is needed. Pruning should be back from the sign and not lowering the height so there is still separation from the house behind. There could be better plantings in the bed created by the stonework, but plant selection will need to pick plants that will not grow so as to cover the sign. In order to make this sign a bit more prominent, perhaps a bed of plantings could be created in front of the stonework. There is a solar light in the interior bed. It does not appear to be functioning. Even if it were, it would likely take a more significant solar-driven system to be effective.

## 6. Potential transition sign on upper Fenway Road

There is adequate space adjacent to the first Carderock house as one moves south on Fenway to place a historic designation sign. (Adjacent to 8612 Fenway).

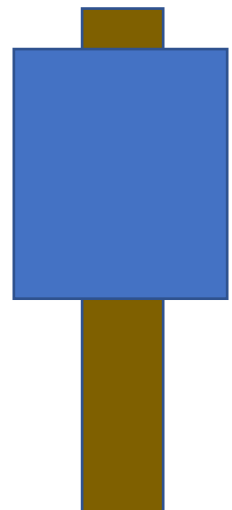
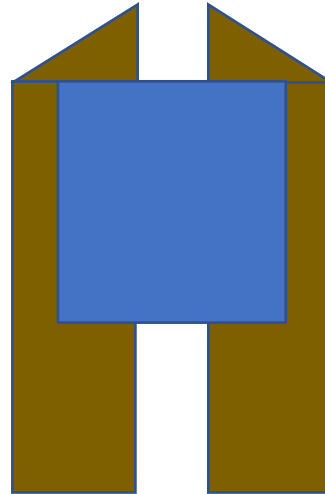
I suggest such a sign should be of the scale of a Carderock Mailbox structure. As such it would be no more intrusive than the mailboxes which line the streets in Carderock.

The sign would be of the same design as the signs used at the entry locations, mounted on either a single post, on a pair of posts like the side of a Carderock mailbox, or on a upside down "U" structure like those used for street numberings at the Carderock cul-de-sacs.

A suitable location might be just before the bushes shown below.



Possible sign mounting options: Affix sign to two verticals like the side of the mailbox structures or use the structure of the cul-de-sac signs, or a simple post



## 7. Potential transition sign on Stone trail by Comanche Ct.

I believe there is plenty of room to put a historic designation sign at by the location of the “short cut” pathway to the elementary school. This assumes a simple flat structure as discussed above. Again, it would be of dimensions similar to a mailbox.

I would propose placing the sign at the location of the leftmost post in the pic below. Given the utility box and the evidence of the existing path use, such a location would not impede foot or bike traffic and would be visible to all forms of transportation.

View of area straight on



## 8. Swim and tennis club sign at entrance to club



Dimensions: 16 inches high by 11 feet 6 inches (in two sections note line between C and K)

Lettering: 6 inch high letters, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  font line cut with a V groove.

Stonework is 20 foot long with a outward L at left (4 foot 6 inches) and an inward L at right (38 inches). Stonework is 17 to 18 inches deep.

Sign is supported by 5 &  $\frac{1}{2}$  square posts screwed to metal plates at back. It should be possible to reattach the sections of the sign to the supporting posts to eliminate the current gap in the middle of the sign.

There is dirt fill to the height of the stonework behind the sign.

Landscaping: Clearly significant pruning is needed. The area in front of the sign has gone feral. It would be nice to dress up that area, even only with mulch. A question would be where does

the pool property end in front of the sign. Presumably at least as far as the length of the L at the left (about 40 inches).

**9. Direction to club sign at Hamilton Spring Court and Fenway Road**



This is a two-sided sign that can be read from Fenway, either from the north or south. It is essentially the same design as the sign at Hamilton Springs and Lilly Stone.

Dimensions: Main lettering area: 51 inches by 11 inches. Constructed from 5 & ½ inch stock.

Total wood length: 68 inches by 47 inches.  
Stone base 48 by 48 inches.

Lettering: 4-inch high letters with ½ inch font line, round bottom.

Condition: Except for some rot at the end of one post without lettering (pic below) structure seems sound. Restoration wood filler could be used to patch the timber rather than replacing. Assuming the entire structure is painted, the patch wouldn't stand out.

Landscaping: Flowers are growing up a bit so as to cover some of the lettering.



10. Direction to club sign at foot of Carderock Springs on Fenway Road.



Dimensions: 40 inches by 11 inches.

Lettering: 3 & ½ inch high 1 inch font line, flat bottom ½ inch deep.

Condition: Everything seems sound.

Comment: Only problem with this sign is that it is a bit cryptic to read with a weird arrow. Could be much clearer with different lettering. Might be nice to match the lettering of the other direction to club sign. I also suggest that the "C.S." is unnecessary. As one has just entered Carderock springs passing an entry sign and one is not looking for a random club. would propose:

Swim and Tennis Club  
← Third left