



# *Van Zandt*

H O M E S T E A D





# Van Zandt

H O M E S T E A D

PROJECT PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 2019

Endorsed by the Fort Worth Park & Recreation Advisory Board--April 24, 2019

**MuseWork**

exhibit planning and design



P R O J E C T *Overview*

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The roads and trails that wind through Trinity River corridor connect communities in Fort Worth to the heart of the city’s cultural district. Hundreds of people use these paths each week — for walking, running, biking, and more. Thousands more stream through the grounds during the city’s annual Mayfest.

In the past, a lucky few happened across a historic treasure, tucked under centuries-old oaks in a far corner of the park. For some, the **Van Zandt Homestead** evoked a sense of wonder, of discovering a little piece of the past, quietly bearing witness to the passage of time.

Thanks to the Trail Drive project, an improved trail system will soon pass right in front of the **Van Zandt Homestead**. Along with other planned improvements, including a nearby parking lot and improved roadway, these developments will bring scores of new park visitors to the doorstep of one of Fort Worth’s oldest homes.



IMPROVEMENTS TO TRINITY PARK’S TRAIL SYSTEMS WILL  
BRING MORE PEOPLE TO THE VAN ZANDT HOMESTEAD.

## INTERPRETIVE RESOURCES & CHALLENGES

### **Van Zandt Homestead & Cultural Landscape**

*The Van Zandt Homestead itself is the most important interpretive resource on site.* Beyond its significance as the home of one of Fort Worth's founding citizens, the story of the cottage's preservation stands as a testament to the importance of caring for our cultural heritage. The simple, unimposing structure provides a glimpse into the humble beginnings of a now-great city. Inside, original beams, wallpapers, and construction techniques are exposed behind protective acrylic. The cottage is a touchstone for an important historic landscape. Nestled in the heart of Fort Worth's cultural district, the cottage has borne witness to great changes and challenges including the 1936 Texas Frontier Centennial and the 1949 flood.

### **Artifacts and Archival Resources**

The cottage's restoration and furnishings reflect its past as an early preservation project and do not necessarily reflect the way the home looked when the Van Zandt family lived there. Changes — such as the conversion of the back porch to additional living space and the addition of four-over-one windows — have altered the cottage and transformed it



into a romanticized version of its former self. A few items of furniture do have provenance related to the Van Zandt family from a later point in time, but these furnishings do little to support the site's current interpretive goals.

A small handful of archival photographs and written documents are available to document the cottage's past. However, a much larger trove of resources is available to tell the extended story of Van Zandt and his influence upon the development of Fort Worth.

**VISITORS TO THE VAN ZANDT HOMESTEAD CAN GLIMPSE  
19TH-CENTURY CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES.**

## OPERATIONAL GOALS & SAFETY

### **Site Security**

While this plan is not charged with making operational recommendations, city staff have clearly identified site safety as a critical operational goal. Both shrub removal and additional fencing have been proposed as possible safety remedies. Shrub and undergrowth clearing will also support interpretive goals by enhancing visibility for potential audiences. Additional fencing, if added, should be placed with proposed interpretation in mind.

### **Visitor Access**

Operationally, this plan assumes that the inside of the Van Zandt Homestead will continue to have restricted access — by special appointment or during interpretive programs. This plan also assumes that professional photographers will continue to utilize the cottage as an attractive venue. The plan preserves typically photographed sightlines and should not interfere with continued use of the cottage by professional photographers.



LOCAL FAMILIES CURRENTLY USE THE COTTAGE AS A BACKDROP FOR PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS. PLANNED OUTDOOR INTERPRETATION SHOULD CAREFULLY AVOID POPULAR SIGHTLINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS.

### **Increased Public Visibility**

This plan includes recommendations for a purposeful and defined interpretive area directly along the hike and bike trail that will run in front of the cottage. By creating a delineated space complete with amenities such as seating, drinking fountains, and trash cans, this interpretive area will call attention to the historic homestead and create an opportunity for park visitors to stop and enjoy the interpretive signage.

*We also recommend that site staff coordinate with other city departments and project planners to ensure that these planned improvements at the Van Zandt Homestead are clearly indicated on wayfinding materials and visitor orientation maps throughout the park.*





PROJECT  
*Goal Statement*

CAPITALIZE ON THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY OVERALL  
PARK IMPROVEMENTS TO ENHANCE THE FOOTPRINT OF THE  
**VAN ZANDT HOMESTEAD**  
AND SHARE ITS STORIES WITH A LARGER AUDIENCE.

## T A R G E T *Audiences*

*While all members of the public are potential audiences for the Van Zandt Homestead, this report identifies three sub-groups whose needs and interests deserve particular consideration: incidental visitors, school audiences, and lifelong learners.*

## TARGET AUDIENCE #1

### Incidental Visitors

Although they represent the largest potential audience group, incidental visitors have other plans and priorities and will benefit from interpretation that is visually attractive and succinct. This audience includes a diverse user group such as bike commuters, recreating families, and members of the public who are using the nearby parking lot and will pass by the cottage on their way elsewhere. This plan is cognizant of the needs and attitudes of incidental visitors and provides opportunities for both a quick interpretive overview to help place the cottage in a historical context and for more in-depth study.

THE BEST INTERPRETATION FOR INCIDENTAL VISITORS  
MUST BE COMPATIBLE WITH THEIR PRIMARY ACTIVITY  
AND PROVIDE AN EASY SEGUE INTO INFORMAL LEARNING.



STUDENTS ON FIELD TRIPS TO FORT WORTH'S CULTURAL DISTRICT CAN ENJOY INTERPRETATION GEARED TO INCIDENTAL VISITORS.

## TARGET AUDIENCE #2

### School Audiences

While its size and condition means that the Van Zandt Homestead is not an appropriate field trip destination for a large group of school students, school audiences are still an important demographic for consideration. Students on field trips to other nearby destinations may become incidental audiences as they picnic or explore near the Van Zandt cottage. Students may also become remote audiences through digital, online learning experiences. This plan includes recommendations for interpretive products targeted towards upper elementary and middle school students who are studying local and state history.





## TARGET AUDIENCE #3

### Lifelong Learners

Lifelong learners are defined as adults who seek out extended educational opportunities in their home communities and while traveling. These audiences are best served through in-depth public programming such as personalized site tours and topical lectures. While the Van Zandt Homestead currently serves this audience through programming of this kind, this plan does address the needs and interests of this important demographic.

LIFELONG LEARNERS ENJOY OPPORTUNITIES FOR GUIDED TOURS AND OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMMING.



EXPERIENTIAL &  
*Educational Goals*

## INTERPRETIVE THEMES

**Interpretive Themes** are simple, universal statements which provide an accessible entry point and an intellectual scaffold for site-specific content. They are conceptual tools for exhibit planning and will not necessarily appear as written text in the final products. More detail on how each interpretive opportunity might present site stories through the lens of these themes is provided in *Proposed Interpretive Opportunities*.

- ☞ History happened here.
- ☞ One person can make a difference.
- ☞ We should preserve and protect our past.

## EXPERIENTIAL GOALS

**Experiential Goals** are goals for the types of experiences we want visitors to enjoy. Setting these goals creates guidelines for interpretive opportunities and will help guide design.

- ☞ Park patrons will be aware of the Van Zandt Homestead and have the opportunity to quickly understand what the structure is and why it is important.
- ☞ Park patrons will be attracted to the interpretive rest stop and will have the opportunity to take a break from their activities and learn about the history of Van Zandt, Fort Worth, and the cultural landscape they are currently enjoying.
- ☞ Audiences can experience the inside of the Van Zandt Homestead either virtually or through guided tours and programs.
- ☞ People, particularly school audiences, who are not physically in the park will be able to access expanded interpretive materials about the Van Zandt Homestead.





R E C O M M E N D E D  
*Interpretive Opportunities*

## INVESTING IN INTERPRETATION

Like all design-dependent projects, site interpretation can be successful across a wide spectrum of budgets. For the purposes of this proposal and future fundraising, we have provided examples representing two different levels of investment in interpretation.

### CUSTOM-CRAFTED

A step above the National Park Service's standards, which typically utilize long-lasting, plain base structures and weather resistant graphic panels, this custom-crafted option would express a clear and unique design philosophy and utilize custom materials.



### ART & ARTISTRY

Interpretive options in this category would include significant investment in custom fine arts and/or artistically rendered materials.

## ON-SITE INTERPRETATION

### **Site Plan**

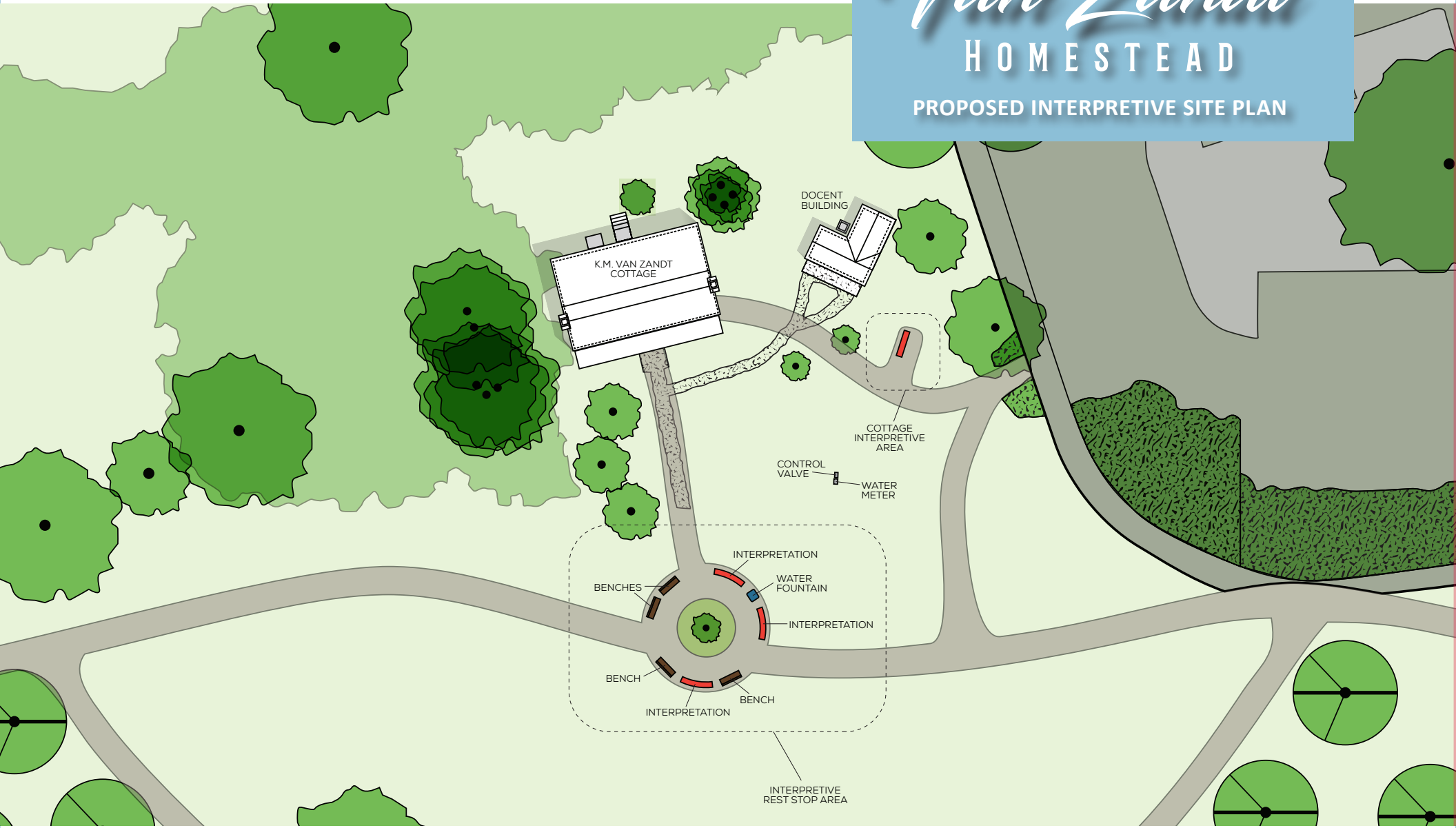
As part of the larger Trail Drive project, site improvements are being planned near the Van Zandt Homestead. This proposed site plan is based upon emerging and evolving landscape planning documents and should be updated as progress on the overall park improvement project continues.

This plan proposes two distinct interpretive areas that seek to take advantage of future visitor walkways and sightlines. Park patrons exiting the parking lot towards the walking paths should have an unobstructed view of the cottage as will pedestrians, bicyclists, and other park trail users.

# Van Zandt

## HOMESTEAD

### PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE SITE PLAN



## COTTAGE INTERPRETIVE AREA

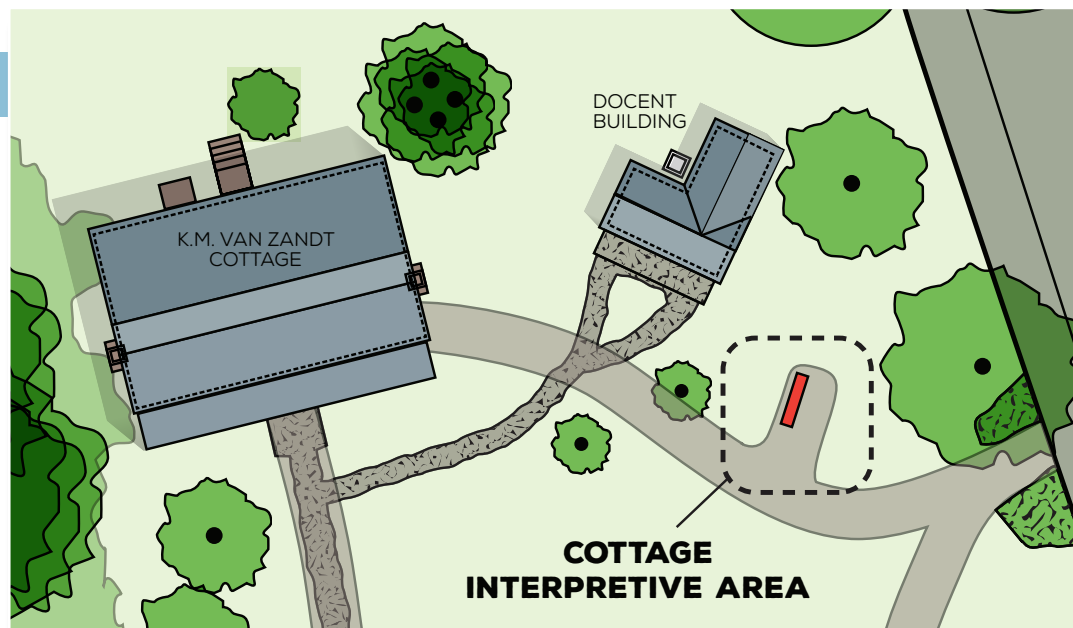
RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF INTERPRETATION:  
CUSTOM CRAFT - \$8,000

### CONNECTING THEMES

- History happened here.

### TOPICS COVERED

- Timeframe and Style of Original Construction
- Lifeways during Van Zandt Family's Occupation of the Homestead



## COTTAGE INTERPRETIVE AREA

### Recommendations

For many incidental visitors, the primary experiential goal of any interpretation will be simply to raise their awareness of the cottage and its significance without demanding a substantial amount of their attention. By creating an attraction with a clear line of sight from the parking lot, this interpretive area will encourage incidental visitors to approach the cottage. The cottage interpretive area will seek to provide a fun, fast, and engaging overview that will answer common questions audiences may have such as: *“What is this place?”* or, *“Who lived here?”*

The final design should evolve after a budget is set. However, we currently envision a simple, low-tech interactive that uses forced perspective to overlay a view of the cottage as it appeared in the 1860s over the visitor’s current view. Potentially, an artistic sketch of the cottage could be etched into tempered glass. This engaging view into the past could be paired with interpretive text focused on the history of the Van Zandt’s occupation of the property and its role as an early stagecoach stop.

## COTTAGE INTERPRETIVE AREA



### FRAMING THE VIEW

This example of a forced-perspective interactive literally “frames” a particular view of a historic structure and juxtaposes it with a historic photo taken from the same vantage point.



### CUSTOM-CRAFTED CUT-OUT

A custom-crafted interpretive area could include artistic cut-outs that “populate” the space around the cottage in a nod to the site’s history as a stagecoach stop.



### PRESERVING THE SIGHT

While our proposed interpretation would overlay an illustration, this example shows the use of a transparent panel that preserves sight-lines while layering interpretive content.

## COTTAGE INTERPRETIVE AREA

### Scheduling Considerations

It would be most efficient to design and create the cottage interpretation on the same schedule as the interpretive rest stop. However, this unit could be phased earlier or later as a separate project.

### BUDGET OPTIONS

#### CUSTOM CRAFT

Recommended level

**\$ 8,000**

#### ART & ARTISTRY

If a more generous budget becomes available, then we would suggest investing in a more artistically designed framing system for the forced perspective experience.

**\$ 12,000+**

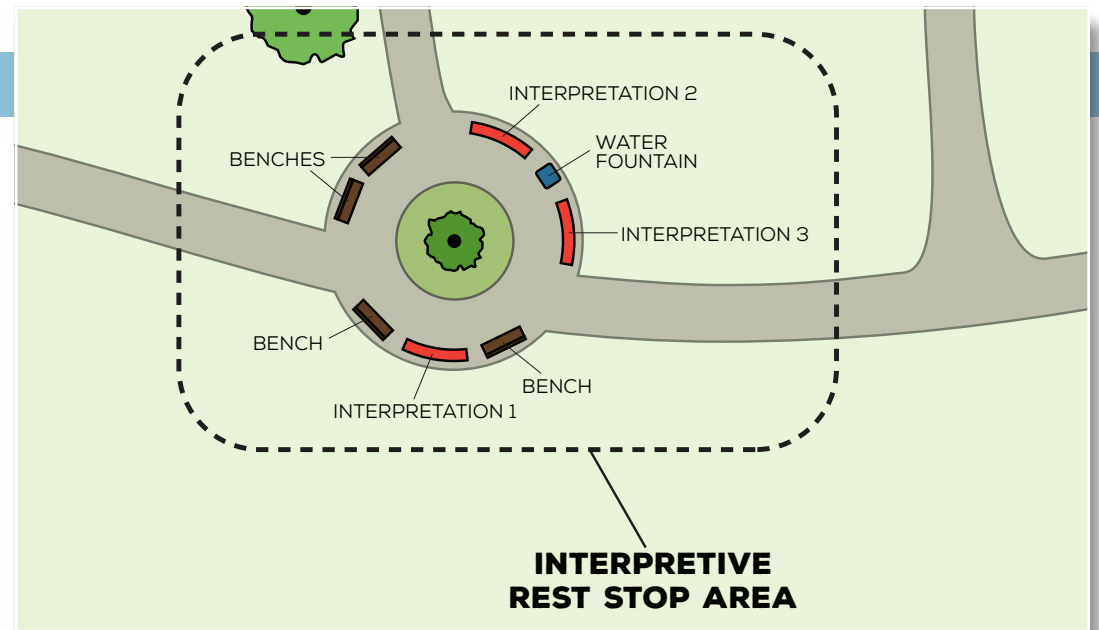


## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF INTERPRETATION:  
CUSTOM CRAFT - \$60,000

### Overview

In order to create an incentive for park users to engage with the historical and cultural landscape of the cottage, we propose to use design to designate a clear interpretive zone that caters to visitors' immediate needs and invites rest and reflection. We recommend that the city's overall landscape design include creature comforts, including but not limited to seating, shade, a water fountain, and garbage cans. We also recommend that the trail be widened and that plantings be used to create a demarcated activity zone within the overall landscape design. For the purposes of early conversations and planning, we have depicted the interpretive rest stop as a circular "landing" with a central planter. A wide range of other landscaping options could also work to define the space. The design style and materials used to create the interpretive

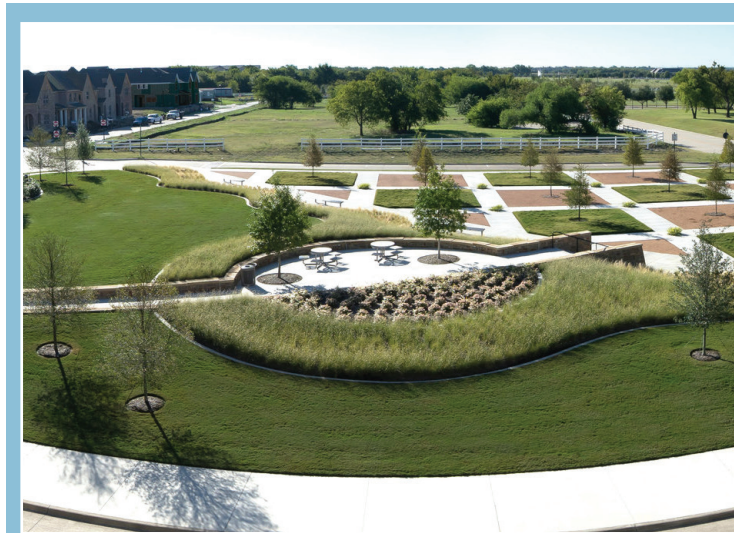


## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

signage in this rest stop should flow from the rest stop materials and the overall aesthetic used throughout Trinity Park. Ultimately, those decisions are at the discretion of the landscape architects and overall Trail Drive project planners.

Within the interpretive rest stop area, we propose three interpretive zones that will help visitors connect their current experience to the historical landscape they are currently enjoying.

The style and design of the interpretive signage is entirely contingent upon the larger Trail Drive and Trinity Park projects. Ideally, landscaping features like retaining walls, benches, or shade structures could double as locations for interpretation. Materials used in other parts of the park can be incorporated or complemented by artfully-designed outdoor exhibits.



### CREATING ZONES

This landscape design uses plantings and semi-circular walls to create a defined activity zone for picnicking.

## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

*Examples shown here are included only for the purpose of illustrating the variety of forms such interpretation could take.*



### **PRACTICAL AND ACTIVE**

This interpretive zone offers seating, bike racks, and access to garbage cans. The standard style interpretive signs and widened pathway help create spatial boundaries and clearly demarcate an activity zone.



### **STOP AND LEARN**

An attractively designed interpretive rest stop will provide an incentive for incidental audiences to stop and learn about the Van Zandt Homestead.

## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

### INTERPRETIVE ZONE #1

The interpretive theme here unites messages that connect the user's experience of the park, river front, and cultural district to the former lands of the Van Zandt Homestead. With a series of illustrated maps and photographs, this interpretive area will help explain how the land of the Van Zandt family homestead reflects the development of Fort Worth itself.

#### CONNECTING THEMES

☞ History happened here.

#### TOPICS COVERED

- ☞ Early Settlers
- ☞ Stagecoach Lines
- ☞ Frontier Centennial
- ☞ Historic Floods
- ☞ Current Park and Cultural District



#### OUTDOOR DURABILITY

These low-profile panels stacked on decorative, themed metal backers are a good example of durable, outdoor exhibits at the Custom Craft level.

## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

### INTERPRETIVE ZONE #2

The themes of this area will help illustrate Van Zandt's influence and leadership in early Fort Worth. Archival documents and photographs could be supported by interpretive text that explores Van Zandt's many contributions and provides historical context for his actions.

#### CONNECTING THEMES

- ☞ One person can make a difference

#### TOPICS COVERED

- ☞ Post Civil War westward movement and economic changes
- ☞ Van Zandt's role in the Fort Worth National Bank
- ☞ Van Zandt's role in developing railroads
- ☞ Van Zandt's Land Company
- ☞ Van Zandt's many leadership roles in Fort Worth



#### REFLECTING THE CULTURE

These signs incorporate weathered steel and large wooden beams, materials that reflect the cultural history of the park.

## INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

### INTERPRETIVE ZONE #3

Located with a clear view of the cottage, this area will help visitors understand the significance of the early preservation efforts which led to the protection of this special place. Additionally, current and ongoing efforts should be highlighted in order to communicate the ongoing investment made in the preservation of the Van Zandt Homestead. The themes of this area will help audiences clearly link past and current preservation efforts to their own opportunity to enjoy this special place. A call to action might encourage visitors to support preservation efforts.

#### CONNECTING THEMES

☞ We should preserve and protect our past.

#### TOPICS COVERED

- ☞ 1936 Restoration
- ☞ 2012 National Register of Historic Places
- ☞ 2000 Restoration
- ☞ Current Projects

## DONOR RECOGNITION

*Recognizing donors in this area will help underscore the important role donors play in preserving and protecting our past.*



## EVOKING HISTORY WITH DESIGN

These striking outdoor exhibits combine large format archival imagery with cut metal accents to create a design that is modern while still evoking a sense of history.

# INTERPRETIVE REST STOP AREA

## Scheduling Considerations

The pathways, landscaping and amenities proposed interpretive rest stop must necessarily be designed and developed by the landscape architects, city, and other stakeholders of the larger Trail Drive and Trinity Park projects. MuseWork should work in tandem with this process, contributing coordinating designs for the interpretive zones.

<h3>BUDGET OPTIONS</h3>	<p><b>CUSTOM CRAFT</b> Recommended level</p> <p><b>\$ 60,000</b></p>	<p><b>ART &amp; ARTISTRY</b></p> <p>If a more generous budget becomes available, we suggest inviting local fine artists to contribute sculptural or other outdoor art installations that complement the project's themes. Due to the site's location, there may be a possibility for collaboration with a neighboring fine arts organization.</p> <p><b>\$ 70,000+</b></p>
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\*Our budget estimates assume that MuseWork would design and produce only those elements in the Interpretive Zones, not the ancillary rest stop features such as benches, landscaping, paths, water fountains, etc.

## DIGITAL INTERPRETATION

The Van Zandt Homestead provides a link to the stories of an important city father and of Fort Worth itself. By examining the stories of this important place, school-age audiences can expand their understanding of state and local history. However, the cottage does not present an ideal opportunity for most school field trips. Online, digital interpretive options can open the door far wider and allow school audiences and lifelong learners to explore the cottage itself and its tangible links to local history.

### **Online Learning Portal**

Geared towards upper elementary and middle school students, an online learning portal can provide a platform for a wide variety of experiences. While the exact content and methods utilized should emerge from further research and consultation, the online portal or “online exhibit” could provide learners with access to the same content exhibited at the cottage, digitized access to archival images and documents, learning games, and curricular guides.

Online spaces lend themselves to modular, iterative content and are a great way to provide learners with stories about specialized content. For example, the site could provide a forum for a rotating gallery highlighting the story of one special artifact or image each month.

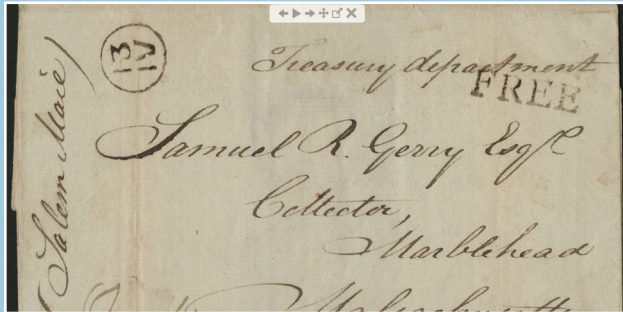




### VISIT ONLINE

The Smithsonian's National Postal Museum's online exhibit about Alexander Hamilton includes archival imagery, photos of artifacts, and an accessible narrative.

[www.postalmuseum.si.edu/hamilton](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/hamilton)



### INVESTIGATE ARCHIVES

Online audiences can zoom in on archival letters bearing Hamilton's signature, providing an opportunity for object-based learning.



### NAVIGATE AND PLAY

This online exhibition from the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History includes interactive components allowing audiences to navigate an interactive timeline or play simple learning games.

## DIGITAL INTERPRETATION

### Scheduling Considerations

As an online exhibit does not require integration with physical site improvements, the process of planning and developing digital content can be phased as a discrete project. MuseWork should work in tandem with this process contributing coordinating designs for the interpretive zones.

## DIGITAL INTERPRETATION

### BUDGET OPTIONS

#### ONLINE PORTAL

An informative, cleanly-designed, online interpretive portal — complete with archival imagery and accessible content — can be created within a budget of \$5,000 to \$7,000. Interactive or animated modules can be added, as desired, to endlessly expand the online experience. Each module’s budget would reflect its scope and complexity.

\$ 7,000

#### MODULES

Interactive modules could encourage playful engagement with site stories. While the opportunities for digital modules are endless, here are a few of our favorites:

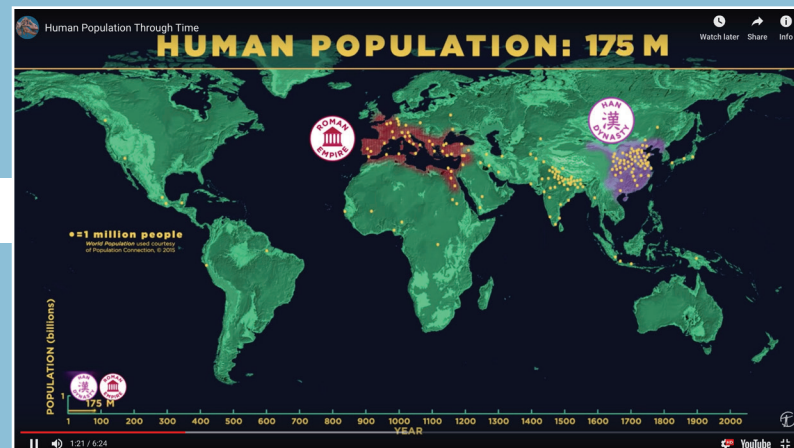
#### INTERACTIVE / ANIMATED MAP

An illustrated, interactive map could allow audiences to go “back in time” to take a look at the vast changes on the landscape of the Van Zandt Homestead. Simple animations could help audiences visualize how Van Zandt’s lands overlay the current Fort Worth Cultural District.

\$ 5,000

THIS ANIMATED MAP FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY PROVIDES A VISUAL OVERVIEW OF HUMAN MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE EARTH OVER TIME.

[WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=PUWMA3QO\\_0E](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=PUWMA3QO_0E)



## BUDGET OPTIONS

### DIGITAL INTERPRETATION — MODULES

#### **VIRTUAL TOUR**

Because cottage tours are only available by appointment, few visitors to the Van Zandt Homestead will have the opportunity to step inside the cottage. A virtual tour experience that is accessible either via web browser or through a virtual reality platform will allow far more people to get a glimpse inside one of Fort Worth's oldest structures. Utilizing 360° photography paired with interpretive text or audio which walks viewers through stops around and inside the cottage, a virtual tour can capitalize on a popular and easy-to-use technology.

**\$ 10,000**



THESE SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE USING  
INEXPENSIVE CARDBOARD VIRTUAL  
REALITY VIEWERS.

## BUDGET OPTIONS

### DIGITAL INTERPRETATION — MODULES

#### **AUGMENTED VIRTUAL TOUR**

While a tour of the cottage as it currently exists is very informative, some audiences may be interested in how the cottage appeared when the Van Zandts first lived there. Using a mixture of illustration and computer animation, an augmented tour could transport audiences back to the “1860s.” Using material culture research, the augmented tour would clearly provide an “artist’s rendering” of interior decor and furnishings typical of the time.

**\$ 15,000**



**THIS DIGITAL RECREATION OF AN 1860S BLACKSMITH SHOP ALLOWS VIEWERS TO EXPLORE A BUILDING THAT NO LONGER EXISTS.**



I N T E R P R E T I V E  
*Concepts by Audience*

## INTERPRETIVE CONCEPTS BY AUDIENCE

	INCIDENTAL	STUDENTS	LIFELONG LEARNERS
COTTAGE INTERPRETATION	✓	✓	✓
INTERPRETIVE REST STOP	✓	✓	✓
ONLINE LEARNING PORTAL		✓	✓
INTERACTIVE MAP		✓	✓
VIRTUAL TOUR	✓	✓	
AUGMENTED VIRTUAL TOUR		✓	✓

## BUDGET OVERVIEW

	CUSTOM CRAFT LEVEL	ART & ARTISTRY LEVEL
COTTAGE INTERPRETATION	\$ 8,000	\$ 12,000+
INTERPRETIVE REST STOP	\$ 60,000	\$ 70,000+
ONLINE LEARNING PORTAL	\$ 7,000	\$ 10,000+
INTERACTIVE MAP	\$ 5,000	\$ 8,000+
VIRTUAL TOUR	\$ 8,000	\$ 15,000+
AUGMENTED VIRTUAL TOUR	\$ 15,000	\$ 20,000+
	<i>RECOMMENDED</i>	<i>HIGH END</i>
<b>TOTAL RECOMMENDED FUNDRAISING BUDGET</b>	<b>\$ 103,000</b>	<b>\$ 135,000+</b>



# *Van Zandt*

H O M E S T E A D

