Development and Presentation of a New Graphic Identity System for the Seneca Zoological Society

Patricia Wright

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Zoo Design Program

Development and Presentation of a New Graphic Identity System for the Seneca Zoological Society

Patricia Wright

Candidate for the Masters of Fine Arts
College of Fine and Applied Arts
Rochester Institute of Technology

May 1977

Thesis Committee

R. Roger Remington, Chief Advisor
Joe Watson
Toby Thompson

Approved
Dr. Robert H. Johnston, Dean
College of Fine and Applied Arts
May 6, 1977
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Prototype Design Applications include:

Letterhead
Envelope
Business Cards
Memo Pad
Mailing Labels
Decals
Patches
Buttons
Newsletter
Newspaper Ads
Annual Report: covers and interior pages
Vehicle Identification
Supergraphics Wall for Exterior of ZOObazaar
Four various sized gift bags for gift shop
Suggested gift items:
Three Children's Posters (without logoband)
Three Animal Posters (with logoband)
The original thesis proposal was the result of a request made by a representative of the Seneca Zoological Society to evaluate its status and make the necessary adjustments to bring the image up to an optimum position.

The representative was very open for change, but needed substantial backup for presentation to others in order to validate the need and define the extent of alteration or modification.

The following pages document the major stages in both the feasibility and design phases.
The initial stage of the feasibility study began during the summer session with the accumulation of data concerning the history and present status of zoos. Addresses of both similar sized and larger zoos were collected and contacted to request information regarding their total graphic design systems - identity, displays, signage, exhibits and environmental design. While waiting for their responses, an investigation was made into the creation of corporate identity programs and how effective these programs were. The material gathered was evaluated and translated into a workable application for the Society. As some thirty returns came in, it was discovered that the problem of identity was not just a local one. The larger zoos, as expected, seemed to have greater public visibility and had realized the necessity for a design system. The smaller zoos, as a rule, still realized the necessity but were financially unable to undertake such a problem. However, there were exceptions. Zoos in Boston, Buffalo, Indianapolis and Topeka had initiated a graphic design program and were very supportive of a proposal for development of one here. After this preliminary work was complete, the next phase was to utilize the data in a physical appraisal
of the Seneca Park Zoo. The primary problem was seen as informational. More specifically, the problem separated into two areas: Identity and Signage. A graphic design system appeared to be the solution for this Informational Identity/Signage Problem. One would complement the other in raising the viewing standard of the zoo.

The major concern for this thesis was development of a positive contemporary visual identity. Signage has been developed by a fellow student who worked in conjunction with me throughout the year in creating a system that would have a direct correlation with the identity program described here.

The identity problem was analysed and it was discovered that there was a strong need for a bold and simple device — either a symbol or logotype. It would need to communicate quickly and easily the idea of the Society and its concern for progress. Timing for the creation of an identity was appropriate because of the increased recent advertising. The reason for implementing this program was psychologically based. Research results showed that an effective image created greater public use and concern.

The Society's use of the lion seemed to be feasible
as a symbol but lacked sensitivity and hadn't been carried to its fullest as a total system. The recommendation made was creation of a clean, simple, bold, positive-focus image that could be utilized easily and effectively.

Another need was incorporation of this developed symbol into all literature. The lion was not used on all printed material and therefore broke the chain of constant imagery necessary for establishing a strong public identity.

Recommendations for some sort of consistency in color for the exterior and interior of buildings was seen. Possible use of supergraphics, banners or large sculpture plus use of an integrated system of trash receptacles and street furniture would unify and enhance the area. The ZOObazaar Gift Shop needed to be redesigned totally. The exterior needed identification, the quality of the material sold needed to be upgraded and geared toward either educational ends or publicity for the Zoo and Society.

The last recommendation made was for use of creative advertising in public service announcements on radio, TV and in the newspaper.
Phase II

The Design Study began by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of different types of identity devices. Following were the analyses made:

**Allegorical and Product Service**
- Disregard both categories; are too nebulous and other options are more concrete

**Abstract - Geometric-Oriented Form**

**Advantages**
- no previous connotations
- would be designed based on input of individuals
- designer sets the limitations
- easy to utilize with type variations
- designed uniquely for the zoo here

**Disadvantages**
- public would need to be educated to form an association of that image with the zoological society
- very broad limitations
- real understanding of the symbol difficult to explain
- no direct animal orientation
- child's impression would be difficult to interpret
- establishing a starting point difficult

**Logotype - Seneca Zoological Society**

**Advantages**
- simple, direct
- understood immediately
- could possibly denote zoo and society

**Disadvantages**
- dependent on letterforms
- lengthy title
- would be difficult to utilize
- not a real change
- difficult to show many aspects of verbal input
- not an initial impact, but secondary because it must be read
- no animal orientation
- couldn't be used for the zoo without alterations
Literal - Seneca/Indian meaning so disregard; Zoo-
logical/multi-animal meaning
Advantages
- direct animal association
- show stability
Disadvantages
- difficult to reproduce
- difficult to show many animals together
- difficult to portray progressive, bold, changing attitude
- would be redundant because title would still be needed

Initial - SZS
Advantages
- short, easy to use
- possible unique letter combination
- easy reproduction
Disadvantages
- difficult to associate with the zoo
- would need to be educated to form any kind of relationship
- redundant because of need to also include full name
- child's impression would be difficult
- might appear too corporate and not public service oriented
- awkward sounding
- no animal orientation
- couldn't be used for the zoo

Pictograph - pick a specific animal and interpret or symbolize it
Advantages
- initial animal orientation
- would follow general trend developing for zoo identities
- could show more aspects of input
- easy to use in applications
- easy to educate the public to form an association with the zoo and the society
Disadvantages
- would still need to have title included
- new association for selected animal, must be chosen carefully
Alphaglyph - combination of animal (stylized) and typography (logo)

Advantages
- shows animal orientation
- includes association within the design, title and animal
- easy to use and reproduce
- shows input easily
- not dependent on either letterform or animal, balanced
- many zoos have similar symbols or identities
- applications could have many variations

Disadvantages
- is a somewhat common approach
- if initials were used title would still be required

Conclusion

The process narrowed the choices to pictograph or alphaglyph.
Developing an image for the pictograph began by using Yves Zimmerman's methodology of cross-impact matrix. This is a process whereby the designer makes a rational approach to design decisions and the many possibilities that are available. The idea is that visual expression can be understood through verbal expression, and the combination of the two strengthens the resulting image.

In this case the verbal input was gathered from five individuals who had a great deal to do with either the zoo, the society or both. The major questions asked were: How would they like to have the zoo viewed? What kind of public image should be portrayed? Many of the response words were repetitive or close in meaning and eventually pared down to eight visual/verbal associations.

The next step dealt with isolating existing developed trademarks that best expressed or possessed those certain verbal qualities. (see illustration/page 9)

Then from the collected appropriate images, it was narrowed down to three forms from each category. These forms were examined and reduced to a basic geometric shape. (see illustration/page 10)

This completed, the investigation began to decide exactly which animal would be used.
The results of a study, conducted in June 1976, regarding Monroe County residents' opinion of the zoo was one basis for direction. In general, cats and monkeys were chosen as the favorite animals. Monkeys were omitted because they had a strong similarity to human form when abstracted. Cats were considered.

Another study was conducted in the Communication Design area. The general response to animals associated with the word zoo was extremely varied. From these responses it was determined that the more exotic kind of animals such as giraffes, elephants, zebras, tigers and lions seemed to conjure up the idea of zoo and vice versa. There were no giraffes or elephants at the zoo here so they were dropped from consideration. Zebras were graphically exciting but had been overused for zoo identities. Tigers and lions reiterated the cat as the favorite animal, but these images also seemed to have been exhausted in use elsewhere.

The arrival of a snow leopard at the zoo seemed to be strategically timed. It had the strong graphic quality of a zebra or tiger, was a member of the cat family and was a new addition to the zoo. This could possibly be used to symbolize the new, fresh view of the Society. Photographs of the snow leopard were collected and initial sketches were made to get the feel of the animal. It
was discovered that a unique negative/positive relationship existed in the pattern of the leopard's fur. Preliminary trials began to show that there was a great need for a basic animal shape and the individual design elements. (see illustration/page 14)

Here the shapes resulting from the cross-impact matrix gain importance. The circle/square combination became the principal design element and it was arranged to show the basic form and pattern of the leopard. (see page 15)

An evaluation and review of the design research seemed needed. It wasn't working into the process as it should have. The animal tested didn't have the qualities found in the collected trademarks. It was too fragmented and weak. There were too many aspects of the animal (form, pattern, thick fur, whiskers, large tail) to contend with and simplify into a bold and modern image.

Review of the animal choices created a different result this time. The response from the CD area showed that many animals were thought of when the word zoo was mentioned. The word zoo itself seemed to connotate animals. Possibly a better approach was to use just the word zoo and not limit the image to one animal.

Review of the options of identity devices also showed that an alphaglyph had many advantages.
If this were the case, type requirements for both the alphaglyph and the rest of the program needed to be established.

Type Requirements
- Versatility/multi-purpose
- Legibility from road signs to business cards
- Must work in various weights
- Needed for heads, subheads and text - printed matter and signs
- Easy to acquire
- Easy to reproduce
- Available in a variety of spacings
- Have good letter proportion
- Have a large "x" height
- Able to work with the symbol, present surroundings and future developments
- Look clean, modern, personal, human
- Work with typewriter type
- Could be serif, sans serif or combination

After experimenting and test trials, Century Schoolbook Bold became the selected typeface with the regular weight used for the printed text copy. (see illustrations/pages 17, 18)

Returning to work with the idea of zoo as the identity image meant incorporating this typeface into the alphaglyph. A combination of the animal pattern of the leopard with the word zoo began to take on the image of a paw print. Extending this idea, other animal tracks were experimented with until the final decision was made to use the cat paw print. (see illustration/page 19)

This is where the second design process of Karl Gerstner was used. The morphological box of the typogram was
Initial Sketches for Zoo
reviewed and made various options in designing the logo symbol more visible.

Combinations of the parameters helped in the test trials of the alphaglyph. (see illustration/page 21)

It was decided that the serif versus sans serif would be used. Although the idea of contrast to the base serif typeface was appealing, the sans serif image seemed too cold and corporate.

The next step was formalization of the symbol. Weight was added to the "z" and "o" and then tests of different paw prints were made until one was finally decided upon. (see illustration/page 22)

The space relationship between the elements from touching, overlapping to blending were tried until an appropriate space relationship was established. Then slight modifications were made to the paw print to finalize the design elements of the logo. (see illustration/page 23)

Once the logo was complete, the position or layout of the logo had to be arranged. After a number of sketches, the idea of incorporating the logo within a band opened up the possibility of using the logo in reverse. This simple, easy option offered a solution to one of the original qualifications. This concept made another
color variation possible. In addition to the two color version, there could also be a one color version. Tests were also made to incorporate other applications of the word zoo. Zoo World was the Seneca Zoological Society Newsletter. The term Zoo World never seemed to be used without the entire description and was much too lengthy. The decision was made to shorten the word to ZOOnewsletter which communicated immediately the contents of the literature. The same method of combining the word Zoo into other variations followed. (see illustration/page 26)

The next concern was the use of color. Color tests for a two color band included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Color</th>
<th>Band Color</th>
<th>Color Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>looked too much like fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>gold</td>
<td>looked too much like a tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>wasn't animal oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gold</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>looked like a circus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue</td>
<td>gold</td>
<td>wasn't animal oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>blue</td>
<td>too dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green</td>
<td>brown</td>
<td>too heavy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brown</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>examine further</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The positive association of green strengthened the idea of vegetation, nature, life and newness. The color brown was associated with the earth and had the basic meaning of public recreation. Another aspect of the color was that the majority of animals are brown. Brown was also a very legible color when printed on white, but had a much warmer, human feeling to it than black; thus, the decision
was made to use brown instead of black for most printed matter except in instances such as newspapers and magazines. Accent colors of red, gold and blue were established so that future random choices of color would be avoided. The beige/black environment colors were the colors recently used in repainting the exterior cages. It seemed best to set exact specifications for future interior/exterior painting. (see illustration/page 28)

Space relationships also needed to be considered in the design of the band incorporation. Basic proportions were decided upon and adapted to the base 11 point unit grid. This 11 point unit was established because it seemed to be the most accommodating. 11 point type was an appealing size for the address and the 10/11 point type specifications for the text seemed to be the most legible. The 10 unit modular became the basic working unit. (see illustration/page 29/twice originals)
Color Specifications
A proper appreciation of the lead to typography inevitably can back through the centuries six tho years, to the time when man’s th were first recorded in symbolic for tablets of clay. Not that we may this mental flight, to discover in the of the Chaldeans anything worth names harmony, balance, symmet design—these follow as a consequ natural evolution. But it marks the ning of recorded time, and as the
The Application Study meant taking the basic 11 point unit and the 10 unit modular and working to create the most pleasing arrangements. The following grids (50% originals) show the results of the investigations with the measurements stated. Horizontal measures are defined by use of heavy lines. (see illustrations/pages 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35)

Rough comps were sketched from these designs and shown to the Zoological Society representative for evaluation. Input requests were made for any suggestions or alterations. The legibility of the word/symbol was his only concern. The desire to include the paw print to break the repetition of the two "0"s together and act as a secondary design element was explained and understood. Additional tests were carried out to alleviate his concern with the word/symbol and it was found legible.
Grids of Applications
Grids of Applications
Grids of Application

1.5

1.5

8.5

14

8.5

20

2

6.5

1.5

36

6.5

1.5

2
Before implementation, a review of work with advisors was arranged. Consistency seemed to be the major concern and alterations were made accordingly to create a more coherent, logical system. The final designs for the ZOObazaar were also created at this time. A freer attitude was taken, but association was still retained with the more formal identity system. The concept of animal tracks and paw prints was continued in the supergraphics wall, the gift bags and children's posters. Animal posters were designed to show the use of the logoband for future reference. The completed screen images are included in the appendix.
Animal Tracks/Additional Design Elements
The final design recommendations dealt with control and use of the logoband. A small graphics standard guide accompanied the presentation to the Seneca Zoological Society so that the design system would be totally understood, followed and maintained. Also included in the guide were lists of specifications, samples of designed pieces and information gathered concerning the acquisition of recommended trash receptacles and street furniture.
The procedures involved in the Zoo Design Program have been an initiation of sorts into various rational methods available for creating images. The knowledge of such systems offers further design opportunities that are available to complement or go beyond just an intuitive approach. As a learning designer, understanding as many options as possible to finding design solutions opens and increases the range of creativity.
Bibliography


Zimmerman, Yves, Recorded Discussion in Communication Design Department, Rochester Institute of Technology
John C. Hermann  
151 Westchester Ave.  
Rochester, NY  
14623  

March 31, 1977  

Dear Mr. Hermann,  

Thank you for your interest in the new graphic design program of the Seneca Zoological Society.  

As you can see we've changed to a new letterhead and envelope. We feel that the use of the word ZOO is totally effective in communicating the idea of animals. Zoo means animals to most people and singling out one animal would limit reaching the general public.  

The style of typing a letter flush left is considered more contemporary and in this case acts as a balance to the horizontal logo band. The brown typewriter ribbon is used to further complement the design.  

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.  

Sincerely,  

Marion Benham  

Marion Benham  
Business Manager
A proper appreciation of the lead to typography inevitably carry back through the centuries six thousand years, to the time when man's thoughts were first recorded in symbolic form. Not that we may this mental flight, to discover in the of the Chaldeans anything worth names harmony, balance, symmetrical design—these follow as a consequent natural evolution. But it marks the time of recorded time, and as the A proper appreciation of the cause lead to typography inevitably carry back through the centuries six thousand years, to the time when man's thoughts were first recorded in symbolic form. Not that we may this mental flight, to discover in the of the Chaldeans anything worth names harmony, balance, symmetrical design—these follow as a consequent natural evolution. But it marks the time of recorded time, and as the
Come learn the bear facts.

Winter hours 9AM to 5PM daily. Admission free during the week, 65¢ per family on weekends.