

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	10700 Columbia Pike, Silver Spring	Meeting Date:	11/13/2024
Resource:	Master Plan Site #33/22 Robert B. Morse Complex (WSSC)	Report Date:	11/6/2024
Applicant:	Montgomery Parks Foundation (Katie Rictor, Agent)	Public Notice:	10/28/2024
Review:	HAWP	Tax Credit:	No
Permit No.:	1090544	Staff:	Laura DiPasquale
Proposal:	After the fact approval of commemorative bench and hardscape		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.



Figure 1: The Robert B. Morse Complex (WSSC) Master Plan Site.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

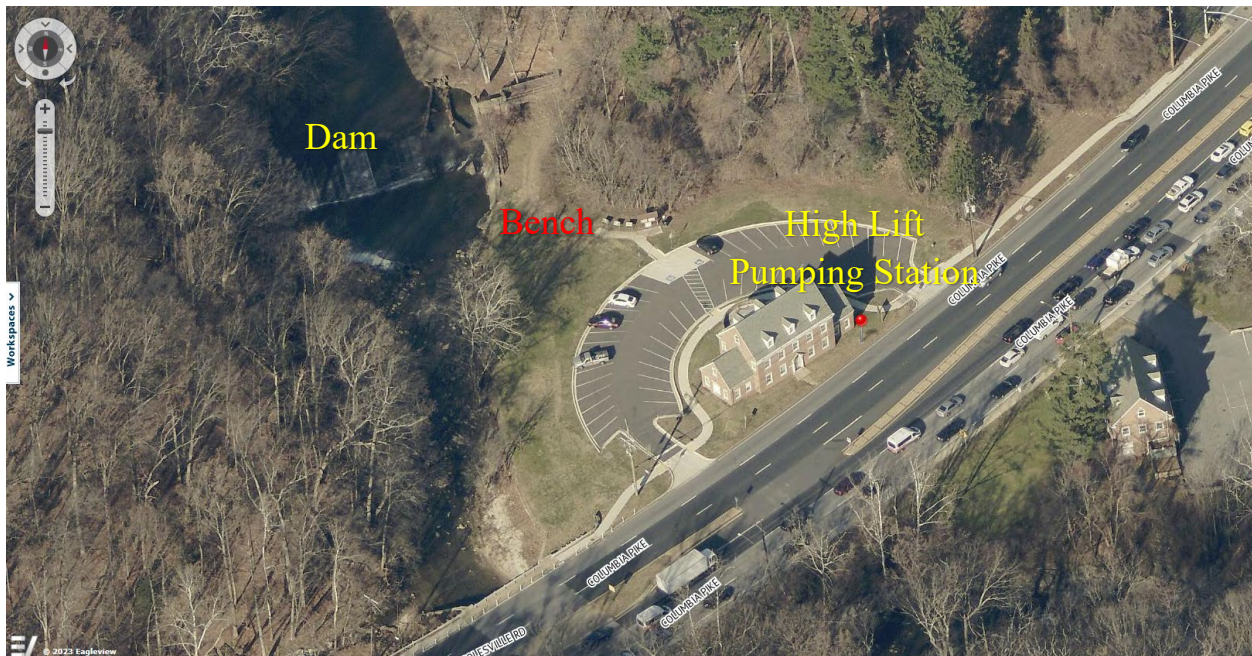
SIGNIFICANCE: Master Plan Site #33/22
 Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Complex (WSSC)

DATE: 1929-36

Excerpt from *Places from the Past*:

The Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Plant is important in the early history of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) and the overall suburban development of Montgomery County. The Burnt Mills filtration plant, designed to function as the “water supply workhorse” of Montgomery and Prince George’s counties, was the region’s principal source of reliable clean water until the 1950s. At the height of its operations, this ambitious water supply project supplied the region with 10 million gallons of water a day and created the foundation of a water supply infrastructure that significantly influenced the direction and nature of residential development in the 20th century. This WSSC plant also has architectural importance as an example of Georgian Revival style architecture and as a period and type of public works design and construction. Although the Morse filtration apparatus has been removed from the site, the distinctive pump houses and dam structure still stand.

The site has also been documented by the Historic American Engineering Survey, and documentation is available through the Library of Congress.¹



PROPOSAL

The applicant seeks retroactive approval for installation of a 4-foot by 7-foot concrete pad with an attached 6-foot long bench. The application does not provide details on the depth of the concrete pad.

¹ HAER documentation for the Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Plant is available here: <https://www.loc.gov/item/md1796/>



Figure 1: View of the bench and concrete pad, looking towards the rear of the High Lift Pumping Station building.



Figure 2: View of the bench (right) in relation to the dam (center).

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

In accordance with section 1.5 of the Historic Preservation Commission Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures (Regulation No. 27-97) ("Regulations"), in developing its decision when reviewing a Historic Area Work Permit application for an undertaking at a Master Plan site the Commission uses section 24A-8 of the Montgomery County Code ("Chapter 24A"), *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* ("*Standards*"), and pertinent guidance in applicable master plans. The pertinent information in these documents, incorporated in their entirety by reference herein, is outline below.

Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8

- (b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:
 - (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
 - (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
 - (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
 - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; or
 - (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or
 - (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” Because the property is a Master Plan Site, the Commission’s focus in reviewing the proposal should be the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The applicable *Standards* are as follows:

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The concrete pad and bench were installed on a grassy area overlooking the dam and Northwest Branch, adjacent to the Northwest Branch trails that run through what is now the Burnt Mills West Special Park. The Montgomery Parks Foundation, the non-profit partner of Montgomery Parks, installed the pad and bench without review by the Montgomery Parks historic preservation and archaeology teams and without a HAWP. Had approval been sought prior to installation, HPC staff would have recommended archaeological monitoring of the concrete pad installation owing to the proximity of the location to the dam and former filter assemblies, as well as the mills that predated the Robert B. Morse Water Treatment Plant. Nevertheless, staff supports the installation of the pad and bench, finding that it did not remove any distinctive materials or alter any spatial relationships that characterize the site, is minimal in size and does not alter spatial relationships that characterize the site, and could be removed in the future while leaving the essential form and integrity of the property and its environment unimpaired, satisfying *Standards 2, 9, and 10*. Staff also finds that the work does not substantially alter and is compatible in character with the historic site, in keeping with Chapter 24A-8-(b)(1) and (2). Staff has confirmed that the Montgomery Parks Cultural Resources Stewardship Section staff have also reviewed the location and finds it compatible with the setting and the HPC’s criteria for approval and also recommends approval.

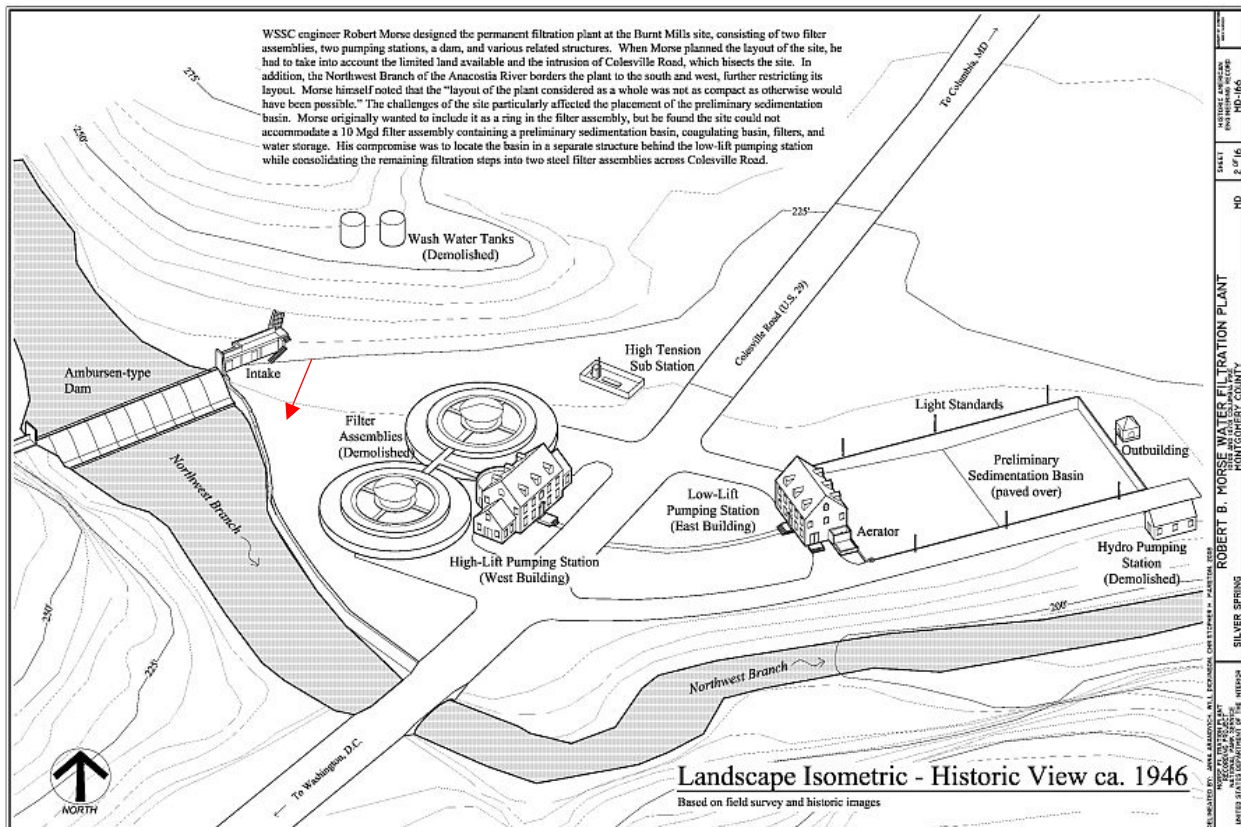


Figure 3: Isometric view of the historic landscape c. 1946. Source: Library of Congress. A red arrow points to the approximate location of the installed bench.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) and (2), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the purposes of Chapter 24A;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* # 2, 9, and 10;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present an electronic set of drawings, if applicable, to HPC staff for review and stamping prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the HPC as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the HPC staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-495-2167 or laura.dipasquale@montgomeryplanning.org to schedule a follow-up site visit.



**APPLICATION FOR
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT**
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301.563.3400

FOR STAFF ONLY:
HAWP# _____
DATE ASSIGNED _____

APPLICANT:

Name: _____ E-mail: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Daytime Phone: _____ Tax Account No.: _____

AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):

Name: _____ E-mail: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Daytime Phone: _____ Contractor Registration No.: _____

LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of Historic Property _____

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? Yes/District Name _____
 No/Individual Site Name _____

Is there an Historic Preservation/Land Trust/Environmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a map of the easement, and documentation from the Easement Holder supporting this application.

Are other Planning and/or Hearing Examiner Approvals /Reviews Required as part of this Application? (Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If YES, include information on these reviews as supplemental information.

Building Number: _____ Street: _____

Town/City: _____ Nearest Cross Street: _____

Lot: _____ Block: _____ Subdivision: _____ Parcel: _____

TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items for proposed work are submitted with this application. Incomplete Applications will not be accepted for review. Check all that apply:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck/Porch | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardscape/Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree removal/planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grading/Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Roof | <input type="checkbox"/> Window/Door |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct and accurate and that the construction will comply with plans reviewed and approved by all necessary agencies and hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

Signature of owner or authorized agent _____
Date

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

Owner's mailing address	Owner's Agent's mailing address
Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses	

Description of Property: Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

Description of Work Proposed: Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

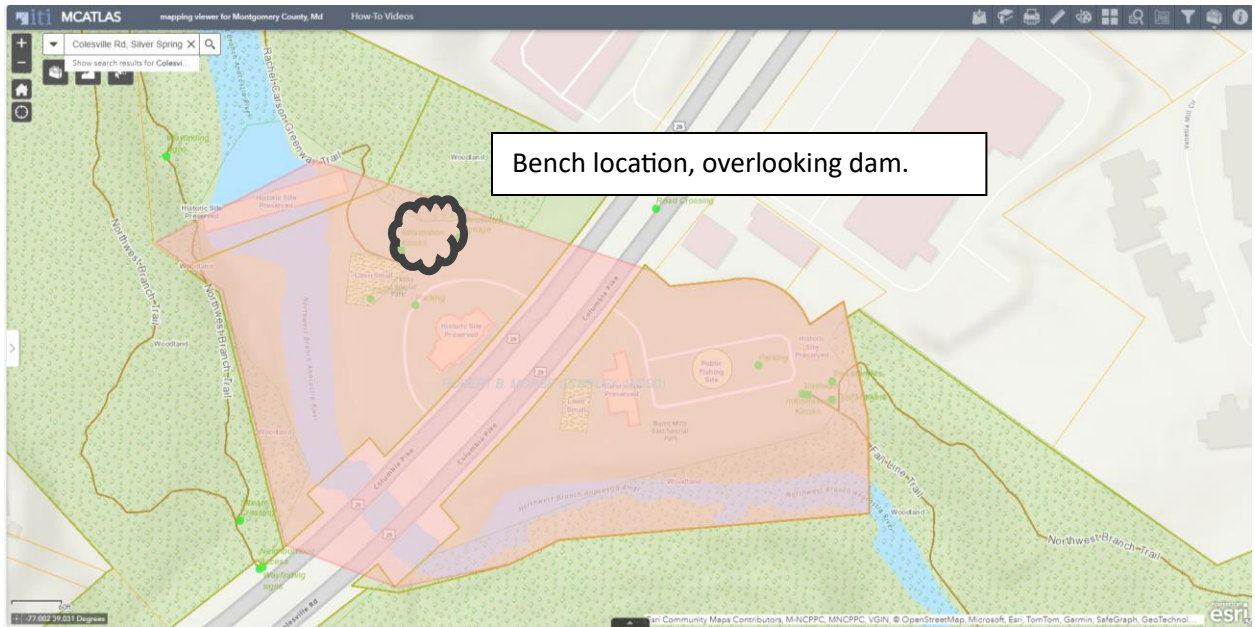
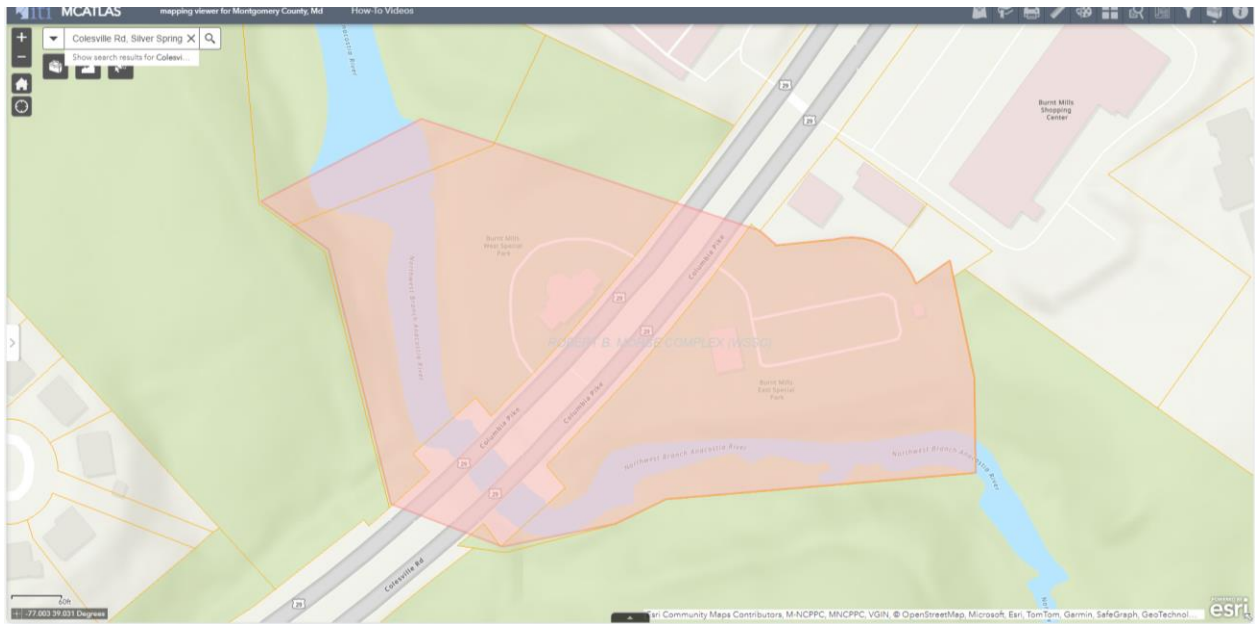
Work Item 1: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

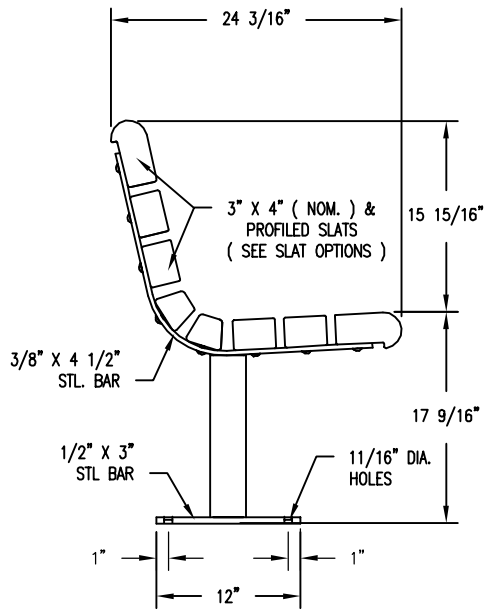
Work Item 2: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

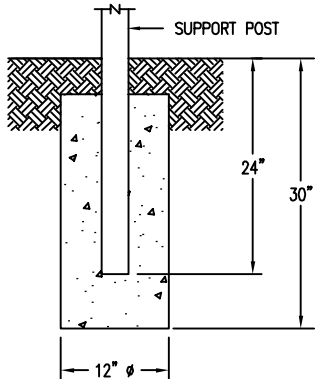
**HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT
CHECKLIST OF
APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Driveway/Parking Area	*	*		*	*	*	*
Grading/Excavation/Landscaping	*	*		*	*	*	*
Tree Removal	*	*		*	*	*	*
Siding/ Roof Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Window/ Door Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Masonry Repair/Repoint	*	*	*	*	*		*
Signs	*	*	*	*	*		*

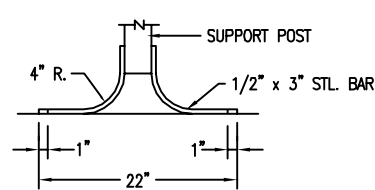




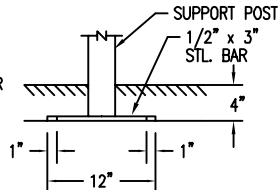
S-2 SURFACE MOUNT



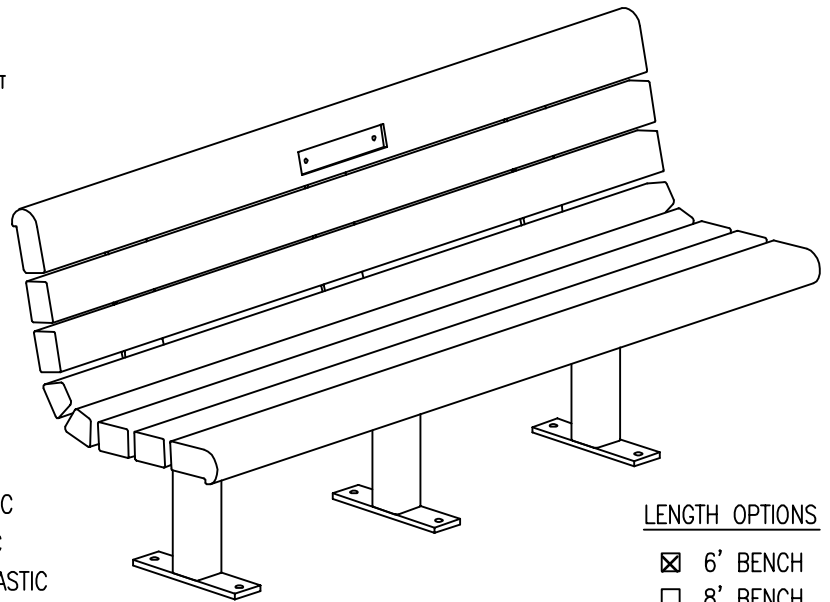
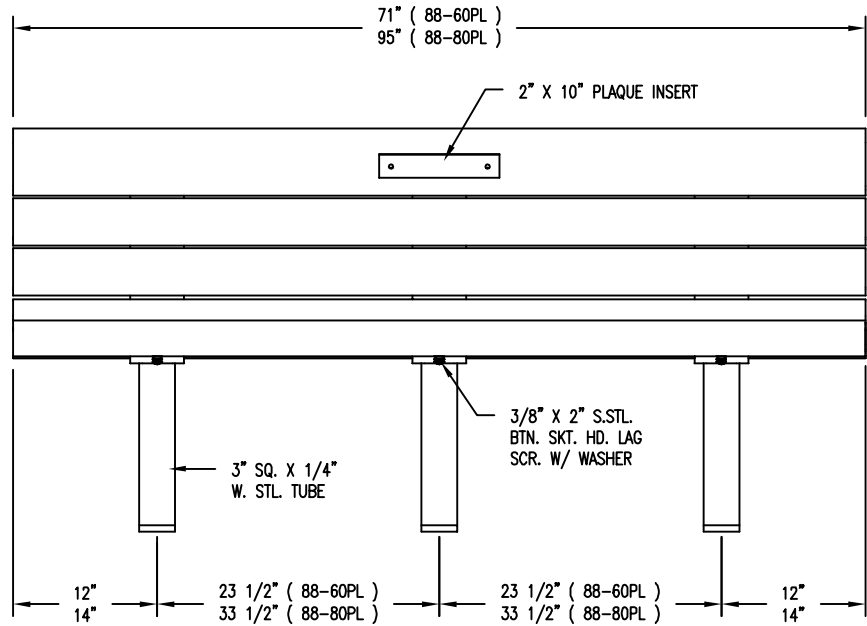
S-1 EMBEDMENT



S-3 GULL WING



S-4 SUB FLOOR



LENGTH OPTIONS

- 6' BENCH
- 8' BENCH

NOTES:

- 1.) ALL STL. MEMBERS COATED W/ ZINC RICH EPOXY THEN FINISHED W/ POLYESTER POWDER COATING.
- 2.) 1/2" X 3 3/4" EXPANSION ANCHOR BOLTS PROVIDED FOR OPTIONS S-2, S-3, & S-4.

SLAT OPTIONS

- "CEDAR" RECYCLED PLASTIC
- "GREY" RECYCLED PLASTIC
- "REDWOOD" RECYCLED PLASTIC
- "WALNUT" RECYCLED PLASTIC
- OTHER _____



BENCH

DATE DRAWN : 06/23/98
 DRAWN BY : AWH
 DATE REV. : 08/16/12
 REV. BY : ESS

REV.
D

DRAWING
NUMBER

88 SERIES PL-Q01
 FOR 2" X 10" PLAQUE

SHEET
1 OF 2





DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Rabbiah Sabbakhan
Director

HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

Application Date: 10/17/2024

Application No: 1090544
AP Type: HISTORIC
Customer No: 1379330

Affidavit Acknowledgement

The Homeowner is the Primary applicant
This application does not violate any covenants and deed restrictions

Primary Applicant Information

Address 10700 COLESVILLE RD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20901
Homeowner MC Parks Facilities Management (Primary)

Historic Area Work Permit Details

Work Type ALTER
Scope of Work Install bench on concrete pad