

Croton-on-Hudson

Visual Identity Program



As we approached the problem of designing an identifying image for the village of Croton-on-Hudson, it was our hope to determine some uniquely iconic historical figure, architectural structure or natural monument that towers over the village, physically or symbolically. Had we done so, there might have been an easy and obvious solution. Unfortunately, we found none. (There's the Cornell Dam, but it's not in Croton, and not ours to claim.)

Any discussion, however, of the unique qualities of the village and its environs will bring up such words as eclectic, diverse, inclusive, and informal. Accessibility to nature, the waterfronts, and such picturesque recreational sites as the Croton River Gorge, Silver Lake, and Senasqua are unanimously valued assets. Though not as prominently mentioned, we felt it important and appropriate to consider the social, economic, and cultural heritage of the community as well.

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We sought a way to represent these several diverse characteristics in a form as distinctive as a fingerprint and as easy to spot, at a glance, as a cattle brand.

We also wanted the image to have a timeless quality that would reward a longer look, have overtones of history, yet would not seem dated or obsolete 10 or 20 years from now. We preferred it to be more casual than formal, more playful than corporate and businesslike.

Our "logo" is not, strictly speaking, a *logo* or *logotype* at all, but an "icon" designed to be used in conjunction with a prescribed system of typography and color to establish a flexible but unified visual identity, appropriate to the wide variety of applications specified by the village.

We have devised, for the purpose, a capital letter “C” with the precisely drawn interior contour of a classic “gothic” letterform surrounded by an irregular, apparently ragged, but distinctive exterior contour that is in fact made up of a series of silhouettes, blending one into the other. Some shapes—sailboat and eagle—are quickly evident, others—cello and fish—may take a second or longer look.

Though no one or two of these images could encompass the range of interests, concerns, and qualities that make this village unique, by bringing together even this small sampling, we suggest the richly varied special qualities of Croton.

The profile of an **Indian**: Native Americans of the Delaware confederacy had recognized the special qualities of this spot and established a settlement at the confluence of the Croton and Hudson rivers long before Henry Hudson first probed as far north as Croton Point. This image stands for our rich local pre-history, historical memory, legend, myth, and tradition.

Croton is one of a very few communities in America where one can sit at the breakfast table and watch a **bald eagle** soar and hunt. That’s special. The eagle represents our natural environment, indigenous wildlife, conservation, and, in its unique capacity as a national symbol, Croton’s part in our national history.

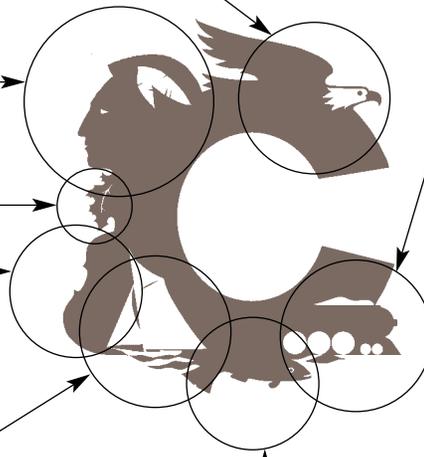
An **oak leaf**: The oak is a typical species throughout the expanses of deciduous woodland—some of it old-growth climax forest—that are accessible to all by trails and waterways in and around the village. Though the hemlock groves, ash, and elm are just about gone, oak, tulip poplar, sycamore, beech and other treasured specimens—including the great Merwin oak, at the center of the village in Vassallo Park—remain.

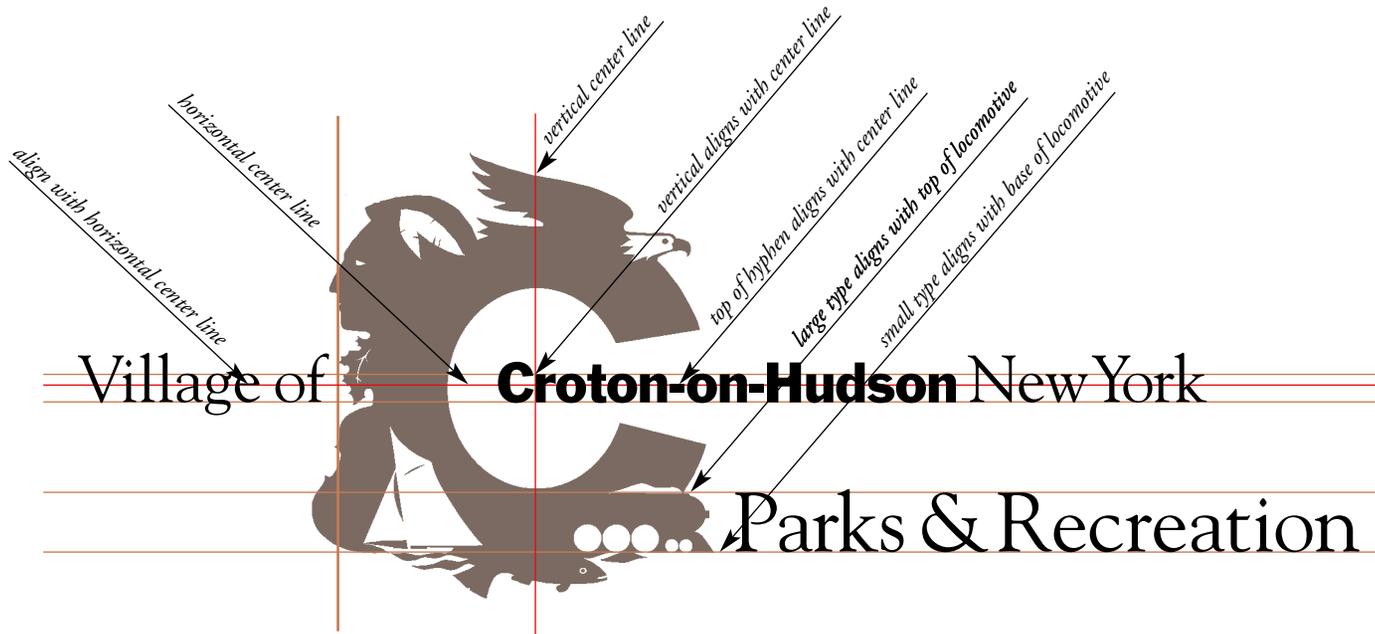
The **railroad**, and its operations, maintenance, and service have been major elements in the lifestyle and economy of Croton from the nineteenth century to the present, and will continue to be, on into the future. The Harmon yards were home to the silver-wheeled, streamlined Hudson locomotives, represented here, that pulled the 20th Century Limited during the great years of luxury railroad travel.

A **cello**, in silhouette, represents Croton’s long tradition of involvement in culture and the arts. The Harmon area was originally developed to be a haven for classical musicians, but all manner of artist—painters, folksingers, writers, sculptors, journalists, photographers, and composers—have found Croton and its surroundings hospitable and inspiring.

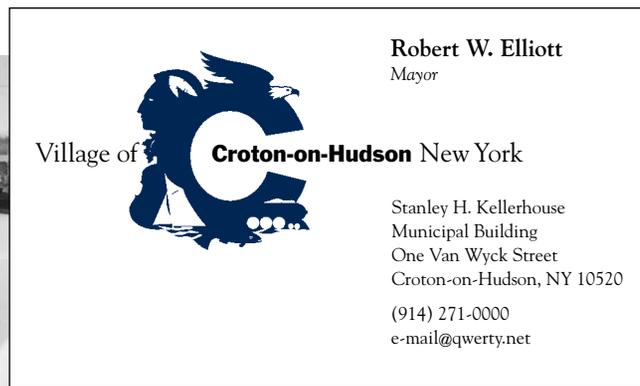
A **sailing sloop**, gaff-rigged here for historical resonance, recalls the busy rivertown commerce of the past as well as the accessibility of waterfronts for contemporary recreational pursuits.

The **fish** is representative of the dozens of species of water and wetlands life that are enjoying the resurgence of the Hudson River and the Croton estuary ecosystem.





departmental markings for vehicles



office stationery and documents



specified color palette



street signs (hypothetical—subject to state regulations)

Combined with a prescribed system of typography and alternatives, the icon provides a coherent but flexible identity for the full range of uses required by the village administration. The specified typefaces are *Franklin Gothic*—a 20th century design based on 18th and 19th century display faces—for its clean, bold, but not overly mechanical qualities, and *Goudy* or *Goudy bold*, two versions of an early 20th century design with soft, rounded forms that suggest traditional heavily-inked letterpress printed letters. These choices have been made for their historical resonance and ability to retain their character under the stress of copying, faxing, silkscreening and less-than-top of the line reproduction of all kinds.

It is the way in which the elements relate to each other that gives the program a clean, crisp and modern look.

A color palette is prescribed, and each major department will have a particular color associated with it.