



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Interpretive Exhibition Planning

Stone Mountain Memorial Association  
Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, GA

RFP Issue Date: Monday, November 25, 2021

Contact: Bill Stephens, [b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org)

*Proposals must be received by Tuesday, April 12, 2022, by 2pm EST.*

### Project Overview

The Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA), a State of Georgia Authority charged by Georgia law with the management of Stone Mountain Park and located in Stone Mountain, Georgia, is requesting proposals from cultural and museum exhibition design and interpretive planning teams or individuals for the development of an Interpretive Plan for Memorial Hall in Stone Mountain Park. SMMA was formed in 1958 by an Act of the Georgia Legislature to purchase Stone Mountain and the surrounding land for a park to serve as a memorial to Southern history and a place of recreation for Georgia's citizens and visitors. Between four and five million people visit the park annually. In 2019-2020, about 7,000 students attended the Park's education programs prior to the onset of COVID-19. Typically, about 20,000 students attend annually.

### Project Background

Memorial Hall, a museum, is located within Georgia's 3,200-acre Stone Mountain Park and is part of a designed landscape produced in the 1960s as a Confederate Memorial. The Georgia architectural firm Robert & Company created the master plan for the park and guided its development. Memorial Hall and the Memorial Lawn are companion structures to the carving that provide interpretive space and a place for viewing the sculpture. Memorial Hall consists of three, square buildings faced with Stone Mountain granite and joined by glass walled walkways. The museum space, located in the central building, features a floor to ceiling glass wall for viewing

the carving, an auditorium, and exhibit space on a mezzanine accessed by curving Palladian stairs. The “hall” space references a plantation house façade in its architecture.

The original interpretations in Memorial Hall likely focused on the Civil War. Their scope was expanded in 1996 for the Olympics when the earlier Memorial Hall exhibits were replaced with exhibits that provided a broader, more general history of the area. Olympics visitors could learn about prehistory, American Indians, the settlement of Stone Mountain, and the granite industry, as well as the Civil War, at the Olympic venue. To balance this new direction, a Civil War video that narrowly focused upon the Civil War in Georgia was developed. A short film titled *the Men Who Carved Stone Mountain* that conveyed the importance of the sculpture as art and celebrated the skill, talent, and dedication of the men who completed the carving, was also completed. The Olympic era exhibits, including the two films, remain in place today.

While the three-acre carving of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis on the mountain’s north wall remain the focal point of the landscape, Memorial Hall and its lawn play strong complementary roles in telling the chosen narrative of the Confederacy and the Civil War. The large sculpture was a product of the twentieth century, starting in 1915 and then preceding in fits and starts over the next six decades. The final push to completion occurred in 1958 when the Georgia legislature funded the carving’s completion, the purchase of the park, and the construction of Memorial Hall. This push coincided with the fight for racial integration in the South. Such links are significant and current scholarship calls for a reexamination of the memorial’s history and the development of new interpretation.

## Project Objectives and Phases

SMMA desires to establish Memorial Hall as the gateway for learning about Southern history through both traditional, interactive, and immersive exhibits. We also want to provide an expanded interpretation of the sculpture as art, the technological achievement it reflects, and its relationship to local history. The new exhibit should be thought-provoking and engaging and should entice new visitors to the museum as well as encourage and excite Georgians to revisit it.

SMMA has structured the Memorial Hall exhibit update in phases. Phase I is the development of an Exhibit Plan and Phase II is the execution of the plan with the breakdown of current exhibits and the fabrication and installation of the planned elements. Plan proposals should include a complete redevelopment of the approximately 4,000 square foot exhibit space on the second floor. In addition, proposals should include updates to the interpretive signage in the viewing gallery (if recommended and needed), the exhibit wing on the first floor, and interpretive films. Phase I is projected to be completed in early 2023.

## Existing Conditions

The Memorial Hall Museum consists of two floors that occupy the central portion of Memorial Hall (see floor plan). The first floor is bisected by a central hallway with an auditorium and concessions area on one side and a large viewing gallery on the other side. The viewing gallery measures approximately 84' wide by 24' deep with a 25-foot ceiling. The entire southern wall of the gallery is occupied by a massive window that offers a scenic vista of the carving and the mountain itself. The north side of the gallery contains two smaller "pocket" galleries on either side of the large gallery. Twin curving staircases lead to the second floor mezzanine and exhibit space.

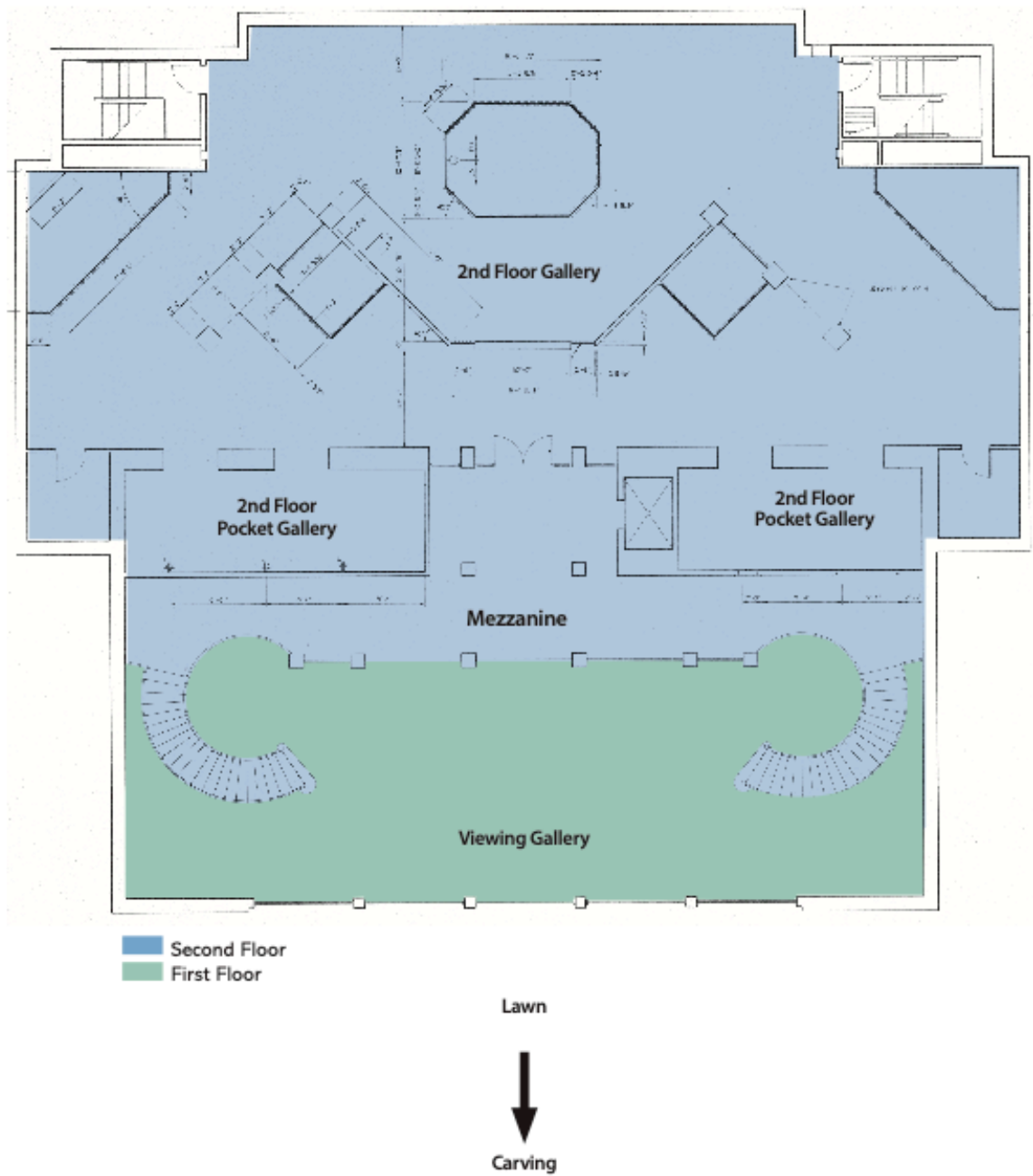
The second floor gallery is approximately 100' wide by 40' deep. Currently there are drywall partitions dividing the space. There are two small pocket galleries on this level on either side of the gallery entrance. Large photo murals that provide scale for the carving help define the upper walls. An appendix contains interior views keyed to the plan.

## Existing Exhibit Description/ Background

*(This information is included for project orientation and does not suggest all or some of the current exhibits or furniture need to be retained.)*

The two-story Memorial Hall includes museum exhibit space on both the first and second floors, but the primary exhibit space is approximately 4,000 square feet and located on the second floor.

## Memorial Hall Museum



The only dedicated exhibit space on the first floor is in a small wing off the viewing gallery. This room is currently occupied by an exhibit, titled "How the Carving Came to Be," which highlights the artists who were hired to design the carving. This exhibit illustrates the multiple changes in design throughout the decades of construction.

To view the main exhibit space on the second floor, visitors enter by way of the viewing gallery, requiring the visitor to take in the Stone Mountain monument before ascending the stairs. Two spiral staircases lead to a balcony-like viewing area, which overlooks the memorial lawn. The visitor is then directed to the left to begin a linear exhibit. Best described as a timeline of the human occupation of Stone Mountain, this exhibit features a mix of floor-to-ceiling diorama cases, tabletop displays, and wall mounted displays.

The exhibit begins with a discussion of the prehistoric American Indian inhabitants of the Stone Mountain area. This portion of the exhibit is located in a pocket gallery and includes recessed artifact cases and a touchable soapstone bowl.

Visitors move through the gallery clockwise, to a section on euro-American settlement and farming of the area. This includes a floor-to-ceiling display vitrine titled "New People Arrive," featuring an array of homesteading tools and household goods, and a tabletop diorama of "A Stone Mountain Farm."

Visitors move next into the antebellum, Civil War, and postbellum periods. The full length of the north wall is dedicated to this timespan, with exhibits titled "What Was at Stake," "What Happened Here," and "What Changed Here." These exhibits feature wall-mounted text, reproduced photographs, and select wall-mounted artifacts. A central octagonal vitrine features a three-tiered diorama displaying military objects from the Confederate and Federal armies and discusses the Georgia campaign. Opposite of the north wall is a large diorama that suggests a soldier's camp stocked with looted supplies (including a piano) and a large wall-mounted vitrine full of metal objects.

Next the visitor moves into the twentieth century and the history of granite quarrying at Stone Mountain. Another floor-to-ceiling display vitrine is located here, with a backdrop of a Stone Mountain quarry operation featuring a full-sized wagon.

Finally, visitors can enter the pocket gallery adjacent to the start of the exhibit. This wing discusses geology and ecology at Stone Mountain. The room features four inset televisions and wall text and imagery.

In total, there are four floor-to-ceiling vitrine displays, a single tabletop vitrine, and a single, octagonal vitrine display which may be repurposed in future exhibits.

Memorial Hall has two short films available for visitors. Both are documentary-style, featuring historic images and background narration. The museum has two viewing spaces: one large auditorium with theatre-style seating, and a small video theatre wing with a few small benches

located off of the viewing gallery. Currently, both films are shown in the main auditorium on a back-to-back schedule as part of the park protocol for COVID-19 safety.

The first film is over 20 minutes long and is a detailed military history of the Civil War events and battles in Georgia, beginning with the Union Army's capture of the locomotive, The General, near present-day Kennesaw, and ending with the Confederate defeat at Fort McAllister outside of Savannah. This film is heavily laden with Civil War facts and detail on the military maneuvers of both armies within the state. It is targeted toward a narrow audience that has a deep and specific interest in Civil War-era military history in Georgia.

The second film is 11 minutes long and focuses on the construction of the Stone Mountain Confederate monument. "The Men Who Carved the Mountain" narrates the construction of the monument and includes the stories of the artists who designed the carving and also the local stonecutters who were hired to work and supervise the project.

## Deliverables

The deliverables for this phase of work are 1) a well-developed exhibit plan document, containing both text and illustrations, that places the carving and its designed landscape in its twentieth-century context as an artifact and as art; and 2) a PowerPoint presentation for public review of the plan.

- 1) **Exhibit Plan** - At a minimum, the plan should contain the following elements:

*Concept Statement for New Interpretation and Exhibit Space*

*Discussion of Audience(s)*

*Discussion of Voice*

*Key Themes –*

Develop Key Themes through Archival Research and Oral History (The latter should be filmed for inclusion where possible in the exhibit and should be conducted by a professional oral historian using Oral History Association guidelines )

*Potential Layout and Look of Updated Exhibit Spaces*

Plan should include a complete redevelopment of the approximately-4,000 square foot exhibit space on the second floor. In addition, plan should include updates to the interpretive signage in the viewing hall and the first-floor exhibit wing.

*Identification of Interactive Elements Associated with Key Themes (This would include the potential to collect stories of visitor's thoughts)*

*Potential for Immersive Exhibit Pieces Using Digital Media Technologies*

*Identification of Artifacts from Existing Exhibit for Reuse or Loans*

*Identification of Consultants and their Expertise*

*Development of Community/Stakeholder Communication Plan*

*Development of Training Guidelines for SMMA Educators and Docent (These would enable them to better deal with the sensitivity of the exhibit and its themes)*

*Proposed Schedule*

*Projected Cost for Phase II – Breakdown of Existing Exhibits, Fabrication and Installation*

## **2) PowerPoint Presentation – Summary presentation of exhibit plan**

### **Open House/Visit**

SMMA will hold an open house on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, from 10:00am – 4:00pm at the Memorial Hall Museum located within Stone Mountain Park, to allow prospective offerors an opportunity to conduct a field visit of Memorial Hall. Interested attendees are asked to notify SMMA if they are coming so entry into the Park can be arranged. Please contact Duane Studdard by email at [d.studdard@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:d.studdard@stonemountainpark.org). Offerors are strongly encouraged to attend but attendance is not mandatory.

While attendance at the open house visit is not mandatory, each firm that is interested in submitting a proposal must notify SMMA of their interest so that any additional information, questions or addenda can be distributed to all parties.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should provide a straightforward, complete, and concise description of the firm's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Submissions should be submitted electronically by email.

- 1) Cover letter with contact information for technical lead/project manager.
- 2) Technical Proposal
  - Summary of your firm's background, resources, and relevant experience
  - Examples of three to five similar exhibit plans
  - Summary of firm's design philosophy and capabilities
  - Project management/communication plan
  - Approach to project
  - Proposed schedule

- Resumes for proposed key staff
- Use of subcontractors
- References from 3-5 past clients of projects of similar size and scope

### 3) Cost Proposal

Proposals should be submitted electronically in PDF format. Submission should be made to Bill Stephens [b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org).

## Questions

As stated above, each interested firm must notify SMMA of their interest in submitting a proposal so that, SMMA can ensure, additional information, questions/responses or addenda can be distributed to all parties. Submissions should be made to Bill Stephens [b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:b.stephens@stonemountainpark.org).

Questions will be accepted until Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 2:00pm. Responses will be issued no later than Tuesday, Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 2:00pm.

## Proposed Schedule

Task	Date and Time	Day
Post RFP	10-25-2021	Mon
"Open House" for prospective offers	1-11-2022 8:00am – 4:00pm	Tue
Deadline for prospective offers to notify SMMA of their intent to submit. For any information and addenda released subsequent to the RFP	1-11-2022 4:00pm	Tue
Question Deadline	2-15-2022 2:00pm	Tue
Response issued to questions	3-8-2022 2:00pm	Tue
Proposals Due	4-12-2022 2:00pm	Tue
Top 2-3 proposals announced	5-17-2022 5:00pm	Tue
Presentations	6-7-2022 TBD	Tue
Final Selection Announced	On or Before 6-28-2022	Tue

All times are Eastern Standard Time.

## Evaluation Criteria

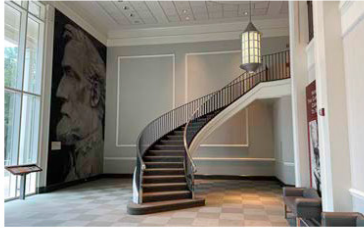
SMMA will select the preferred offeror based on their demonstrated creative and innovative experience, cost, and ability to satisfy the RFP requirements on time and on budget.



## APPENDIX- INTERIOR VIEWS AND PHOTO KEY



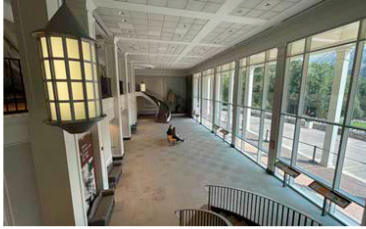
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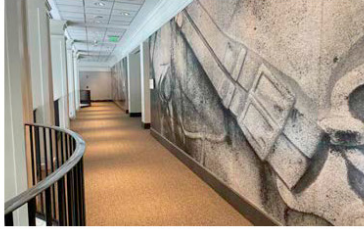
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## Photo Key

### Memorial Hall Museum

