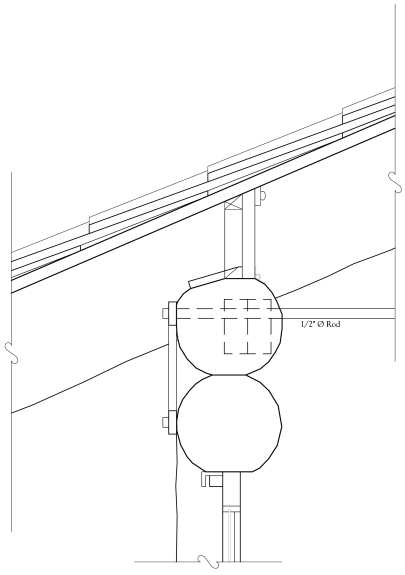
THE WHITE ROCK LOOKOUT TOWER

Great Smoky Mountains National Park • Cosby • Cocke County • Tennessee

WEST ELEVATION

1/2"=1'-0" 1:24

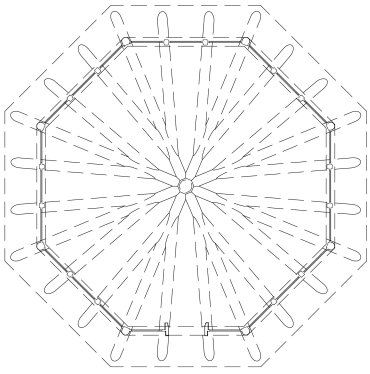


SECTION AT ROOF

3"=1'-0" 1:4

When the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GRSM) was established in 1931, complete fire suppression was the fire management philosophy and goal in national parks and forests across the country. Debris and undergrowth were cleared, fire breaks and manways created, and thousands of fire towers constructed. The young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps provided much of the manpower to complete these tasks, and the group's signature rustic style left its mark on structures throughout the park.

In all, ten towers and nine lookout cabins were built in GRSM between 1934 and 1939, and these sites served as a cohesive unit that both detected and suppressed fires. In spite of their reliance on other towers, the lookouts lived a life of isolation that required the patience to watch the forests daily from sunrise to sunset and the agility to be on alert at a moment's notice during a lightning storm. In the 1970s, fire management techniques and approaches to fire patrol changed, and the fire towers in GRSM were abandoned. Over the next decade, the park removed most of the structures of this fire management system.

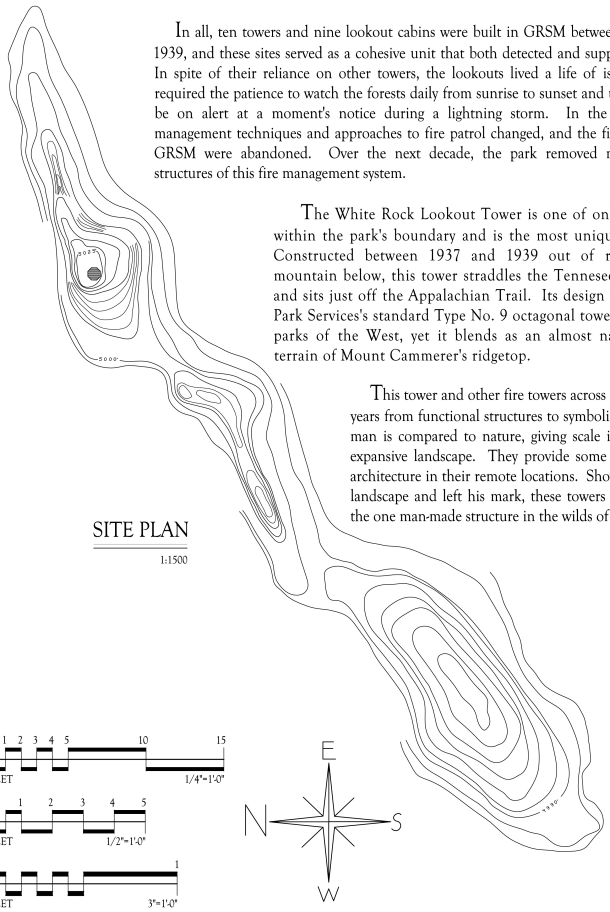


REFLECTED CEILING PLAN

1/4"=1'-0" 1:48

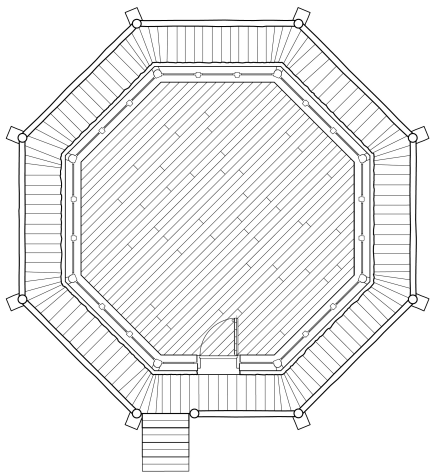
The White Rock Lookout Tower is one of only four remaining towers within the park's boundary and is the most unique of the original group. Constructed between 1937 and 1939 out of rock quarried from the mountain below, this tower straddles the Tennesee-North Carolina border and sits just off the Appalachian Trail. Its design is based on the National Park Services's standard Type No. 9 octagonal tower used more often in the parks of the West, yet it blends as an almost natural part of the rocky terrain of Mount Cammerer's ridgetop.

This tower and other fire towers across the country have evolved through the years from functional structures to symbolic architecture. They show how small man is compared to nature, giving scale in an otherwise completely wild and expansive landscape. They provide some of the only references to early park architecture in their remote locations. Showing how man has intervened on the landscape and left his mark, these towers stand out in the public's memory as the one man-made structure in the wilds of the park.



SITE PLAN

1:1500



OBSERVATION FLOOR PLAN

1/4"=1'-0" 1:48

DRAWN BY: LAURA BETH INGLE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	WHITE ROCK LOOKOUT TOWER GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK COSBY COCKE COUNTY TENNESSEE	SURVEY NO.	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY SHEET 1 OF 01 SHEETS

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