

THE CORNISH LIBRARY EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

This report is presented to the Cornish Select Board and the citizens of Cornish, New Hampshire, on the feasibility and advisability of accepting a donated building renovated as a new library. In this report and its appendices, please find committee and consultant reports, tables of operating costs, maintenance schedules, renovation costs, furnishing (soft) costs, cost-benefit analysis, and other supporting documents. To give as accurate a comparison as possible, all costs are given in present-dollar amounts, calculated in identical “price per” units, and based in current and anticipated demand for library resources and services provided at each location. Please refer to the Interim Report, which gives additional details and information.

Background

The Cornish Library Exploratory Committee was created by the Cornish Board of Selectmen in response to Colleen O’Neill’s offer to donate the general store property for the purposes of a library and community center. The Selectboard charged the committee with conducting a feasibility study of the relocation of the Cornish Library (G.H. Stowell Free Library) to the Cornish General Store building. The charge¹ was revised On March 14, 2002, the Select Board revised the charge to add “advisability.” The charge directed the committee to consider all relevant factors including, but not limited to financial and operational impacts, practicality, other impacts to the Town, timeframe, and expected benefits or liabilities to the Cornish community.

O’Neill’s offer was made in response to the Trustee’s request to rent part of the Cornish general store building as library space. The trustees had discussed the need to make the library accessible to all, for more space for collections and programs, for parking, for bathrooms and running water – all needs reinforced by community responses to the Library Open Forum held in 2018 – and decided to explore the possibility of moving some or all library operations to the general store. After meeting with a trustee, O’Neill offered to donate the entire building, and it was announced at the June 8, 2021, Town Meeting. Storrs read a letter from Colleen O’Neill. O’Neill detailed her intention to donate the current Cornish General Store building to the Town of Cornish to serve as a new library and community center. O’Neill made multiple revisions to the offer based on several meetings with Exploratory committee members and in February 2022, announced that the newly formed non-profit organization, the Cornish Community Initiative (CCI) would also raise the necessary funds to renovate the entire building as a library and community center. She most recently updated the letter of intent² to address two issues raised by the committee

¹ Appendix 1: Charge

² Appendix 2: Letter of Intent

Committee Work

Since the work detailed in the Interim Report, the Exploratory Committee has requested and received funding³ for additional information gathering, including an ADA report⁴, a “soft cost” report for furniture⁵, and fees for the MA+KE Architects to revise and enhance their previous renovation plans for the Stowell building. These plans were requested by the Select Board to give the town a point of comparison between the costs and benefits of renovating the current building and accepting the renovated store as a library.

Public Opinion was solicited from an Open Forum held on July 23⁶ and from a town survey⁷. Information on operating costs, maintenance schedules, libraries as community centers, and other community facilities was also gathered during this period.

Phase One plans⁸ for the renovation of the general store were presented on September 29 by Banwell Architects. Phase One plans⁹ for current library renovations were presented on October 4 by MA+KE Architects.

Needs and Comparisons

The needs of the library and the limitations of the current building are well recognized. The question the Committee addresses is whether to accept a fully renovated building that meets those needs. The comparison requested by the Select Board was a renovation of the Stowell building, rather than a comparison to the current building as is, or a comparison to the current building with the 2018 renovation plans. The committee responds to this question by referring to needs and issues, and how, by comparison, those would be met and addressed in both a new library building versus a renovated Stowell building.

To present this information, the Committee has prepared three documents:

- The Quantitative Analysis Chart, providing comparative numbers for costs, square footage, and other quantifiable information
- The Narrative Comparative Analysis, with comparative information on features considered the most important for library needs, as expressed in the 2018 Open Forum and the list generated by the Interior/Exterior Subcommittee that was used by both architect firms
- Identified Space/Area Needs

³ Appendix 3: Proposed Town Warrant

⁴ Appendix 4: Thomas A. Ladd, MLS, Building Assessment Report

⁵ Appendix 5: Dano Anderson. Quotes and Plans from School Furnishings

⁶ Appendix 6: Minutes from July 23 Open Forum [URL]

⁷ Appendix 7: Survey Results [URL]

⁸ Appendix 8: Banwell Architect Plans [URL]

⁹ Appendix 9: MA+KE Architect Plans [URL]

Recommendation

The Library Exploratory Committee recommends that the Selectboard accept the findings of the Final Report of the Committee - that the gift by Colleen O'Neill to donate the general store property for use as a library and community center is both feasible and advisable. The Library Exploratory Committee has found that the proposed library in the general store will better serve the community by addressing the ADA needs providing access for all, toilets and running water, expanded space for the book collection, increased space for seating, a separate community gathering space, a larger children's area, energy efficient mechanical systems, parking for 14 to 18 cars directly on site with 2 accessible spaces, and more visibility to the public. The Committee found that the proposed plan by Banwell Architects was feasible since the plan addresses and answers all the needs identified by the committee, the public in public forums, and the trustees, without reservation.

The Library Exploratory Committee recommends that the Selectboard accepts the findings of the Final Report. Not only has it found that the proposed plan is feasible, it has also found the plan to be advisable. The Committee has found that it, as well as the Selectboard, have a fiduciary obligation to the voters of the Town of Cornish to offer a plan that would be of no cost to the taxpayer. Colleen O'Neill has offered through a non-binding letter of donor intent to donate the general store building and that the "Town of Cornish will have no costs to acquire the real estate and no cost to renovate the building." This proposal should be decided by the voters of Cornish to decline or accept this offer. The offer is a once in a lifetime opportunity that expires on March 31st of 2023, and the Cornish voting public should decide its fate. The town meeting vote is the place and time to make that decision, so the Committee finds it advisable for the Selectboard to make that discussion available at Town Meeting March 2023 with the inclusion of a properly worded warrant article.

In conclusion, the voters of Cornish deserve to have the chance to decide what direction the Town wishes to follow for their future library. The Selectboard, supported by the many months of work by the Library Exploratory Committee, has both a fiduciary responsibility and knowledge of its feasibility to address the multiple deficits of the present George Stowell Library and needs to allow the voters their chance to decide its direction for the future. The store building renovation better fits the needs of a modern library and would be a valuable resource for the Cornish community.

Approved 1 November 2022

QUANTITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Point of Comparison	Cornish Library & Community Center	Renovated Stowell Library
Total Square Feet	Total: 6,000 +/- sf	Current - 2,480 sf (main floor and basement) Proposed addition - 1,641 sf Total: 4,121 sf
Construction Costs	\$2,159,748	\$1,826,235
Plus additional architect fees (@9%)	\$194,377	\$164,361
Total Cost	\$2,354,125	\$1,990,596
Cost Per Square Foot	\$392 per sf	\$483 per sf
Revenue Sources for Renovation	CCI Capital Campaign	Tax dollar, bond, donations, grants, fund
Net Cost to Town for Renovation	\$0	From \$0 to \$1.8M
Tax Impact for Renovation	\$0	From \$0 to full \$0.95/yr for 10 yrs.
Tax Impact for Construction Costs	\$0 (all construction costs donated)	From \$0 to full \$0.95/yr for 10 yrs.
Operating Costs (Includes Staffing)	\$61,922.00	\$62,422.00
Cost Per Square Foot	\$10.32 per sf	15.15 per sf
Staffing (at 20 open hours)	\$42,780	\$42,780
Social Security is figured at at 6.2%	Librarian @\$18.00 * 25 hours/week	Librarian @\$18.00 * 25 hours/week
Medicare is figured at 1.45%	Library Aides @\$13.00* 20 hrs/week	Library Aides @\$13.00* 20 hrs/week
	Custodian @ \$20 * 3 hours/week	Custodian @ \$20 * 3 hours/week
Soft Costs (furnishing and moving) Relative comparison only. Trustees estimate true cost <1/4 of this.	\$206,717	\$123,599
Parking	14 (minimum) + 2 ADA off-street spaces	7 (maximum) + 1 ADA on-street spaces
Shelving Space	1,574 linear feet (minimum available) Adult/YA-1,177 lf; Children's-186 lf; Art/History-73 lf; Circulation Desk-138 lf	1,268 linear feet (maximum available) Adult(main floor+basement-973 lf; Children's/YA190 lf; Multipurpose-45 lf; Circulation Desk-57 lf
Program Space	585 sf in the multipurpose area + porch area + green space area + story hour space in the children's area	382 sf in the multipurpose space + 380 sf in the basement + lawn space in the back of the addition
Tech Center	counter space for 6 computers	counter space for 3-4 computers

QUANTITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Dedicated Children's Area	476 sf	234 sf or 357 sf, depending on location
Staff Work Space	129 sf	66 sf
Janitor Room and Storage	153 sf on main floor; more in basement	in basement mechanical/furnace room
Toilets	2 bathrooms - 67 sf in each 2 changing table - 1 in each bathroom	2 bathrooms - 59 sf and 63 sf 1 changing table in the larger bathroom
Meeting Room Space	585 sf in the multipurpose area (capacity 25-30 at tables)	382 sf in the new multipurpose area (capacity 15 at tables)
Projected capital maintenance costs	Cornish Library & Community Center	Renovated Stowell Library
Mechanical System (25 to 30 yrs)	\$125,000	\$125,000
Lighting (25 to 30 yrs)	\$35,000	\$35,000
Exterior Painting (15, 22, 29 yrs)	\$16,000 each	\$8,000 each
Roof Membrane Replacement (30 yrs)	N/A	\$65,000
Slate Roof (5 to 30 yrs)	N/A	\$60,000
Synthetic Slate roof option	N/A	\$35,000
Septic System (25 yrs)	\$25,000	\$25,000
Well (30 to 50 yrs)	\$15,000	\$15,000
Carpeting (20 yrs)	\$4,000	\$5,500
Luxury Vinyl Tile (20 yrs)	\$16 to \$26 sf installed	\$7,050
Interior painting (10 yrs)	\$20,000	\$20,000
Plumbing Fixtures (25 yrs)	\$5,000	\$5,000
Foundation Repairs (review in 10 yrs)	TBD	TBD
Exterior Siding (wooden) 20 yrs)	\$2 to \$10 sf	\$2 to \$10 sf
Brick Repoint/Repair (30 to 50 years)	N/A	\$10 to \$30 per sf, \$40 to \$100 labor costs
Asphalt Roof - Review in 5-10 years	\$175 to \$550 per square installed	N/A
Standing Seam Roof (40 to 80 yrs)	\$800 per square installed	N/A
Current Tax Revenue from the Building	\$8,601	\$0
Tax Impact of Lost Revenue	An increase of \$0.04 per \$1,000 of evaluation (2021 tax rate) or +\$9.20 for a property valued at \$230,000	\$0

NARRATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Point of Comparison: Need/Issue	Cornish Library and Community Center	Renovated Stowell Library
ADA & Code Compliance	<p>ADA access at the front entrance and 2 ADA parking spaces closely aligned to the front ramp. The main library room will be on one level making wheelchair access easy and throughout the entire main floor. There will be access to 2 ADA bathrooms, access to a full kitchen, and to a multipurpose space. The new proposed space has an open mezzanine which is not ADA accessible but is allowed since it's less than 1/3 of the floor area. An accessible route isn't required if less than 3,000 sf. There are no stacks shown on the mezzanine since that would restrict access to the collection from people with disabilities. There will be no ADA accessibility to the basement which will be used for storage for Aging in Place. Finally, there is ADA accessibility on the north entrance to the multipurpose space for off-hour gatherings. No sprinkler system is required since the proposed size of the building is within the allowable area for its construction type and use (wood framed/assembly).</p>	<p>ADA access at the new front entrance is via an L-shaped ramp. There will be 1 ADA parking space closely aligned to the front ramp. The building would have three levels, with wheelchair access to the new main circulation area and via a wheelchair lift to the other levels. There will be access to 2 ADA bathrooms and the multipurpose room. Code compliance would require excavation for a covered walkway and a new door into the basement along the west wall, the installation of a wheelchair lift (and stairs) for access to the main floor and the basement at the south end of the building, the reconfiguration of the shelving, and reconfiguration of the windows/window openings of the back room. No sprinkler system is required since the proposed size of the building is within the allowable area for its construction type and use (brick/wood/assembly)</p>
Dedicated Children's area with story-time space	<p>The additional space gives ample room collections of books, toys, puzzles, and other objects as well as a special story-time area.</p>	<p>The space for the children's area would stay the same or increase slightly. There is no room for story time if the space stays the same. The children's space is not in the line of sight of the circulation desk. The area currently used to house non-book items is eliminated.</p>

NARRATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

New book shelving	Large increase in the area available for book stacks, easily accessible by the open floor plan. More room for children's materials, as well as storage for "library of things" items.	There will be additional shelving available in the basement, requiring removal of the historical books, documents and artifacts. Additional shelving will be possible in former window areas. Shelving in the current stack area will be reduced to allow for ADA access.
Seating area with periodicals and coffee/tea machine	Designated seating area near the periodical display and a coffee/tea machine near the Art/Cornish History display area	Coffee machine area near the circulation desk
Display areas	Special area for Cornish Art & History; new book display; donor wall	The tops of shelving would be the display areas.
Outdoor Space	The covered porch, the green triangle area, and the patio space outside the multipurpose space offer ample space for small or large outdoor programs, reading, and/or small gatherings whether formal or informal	The current front lawn space will be limited due to the front and side ramps. The new design pushes the building to the property line in many areas. The property bought for the septic tank and well might be suitable for some outdoor activities.
After-hours Access	The multipurpose room will be accessible after hours and will have a separate entrance that has access to the kitchen and the bathrooms. A lockable door will prevent access to the main library areas and will provide security.	The meeting room would be accessible after hours, but there is no dedicated outside entry; access to the meeting room and bathrooms will be through the main circulation area including the computer area, circulation desk, and coffee station.
Unique spaces/features	The new building offers an open floor plan, a display area for Cornish art and history, a kitchen, several comfortable soft-seating areas, a large green space for activities, a display wall for donor recognition, and a mezzanine for future space needs.	The Stowell building has a fireplace. It has vintage woodwork, most of which would remain after the removal of the attic and basement stairs.
Crafting Areas	The multipurpose room with a sink area and access to the kitchen would allow for multiple programs, including children's arts and crafts.	The basement area adjacent to the mechanical room would have a sink and allow for children's arts and crafts projects.

NARRATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Visibility	The new location is on the main street in Cornish Flat. It is assumed that, if it is more easily seen and identified as a library, more people will use it.	The current location is on a side street in Cornish Flat. A few citizens have remarked that they either did not know where it is or that they didn't know that Cornish had a library.
Programs and hours	Circulation and visits to the library continue to increase. Hours of operation will increase in response to demand regardless of location. The new spaces make it possible to increase and vary programming.	Circulation and visits to the library continue to increase. Hours of operation will increase in response to demand regardless of location. Programs in 2022 have drawn hundreds of citizens; however, all but a few have been and would have to continue to be held offsite.
Library Name	Cornish Library and Community Center. Named by donor. "Community Center" reflects the philosophy of a library as a center for everyone in the community. It also reflects the donor's original intention in purchasing the building in order to have a community gathering space. The donation intent involves both having a place where the community comes together, and having community activities/programs beyond what the Stowell building could offer.	George H. Stowell Free Library. Named by donor.
Mud room/foyer	yes	yes
Book sale cart	yes	yes
Heating, ventilation, AC	yes	yes
Car-accessible book drop	yes	yes
Possibility of solar energy	yes	no

THE IDENTIFIED SPACE/AREA NEEDS

-Developed by the Library Exploratory Interior/Exterior Subcommittee Members -
David Aguiar, Sue Chandler, Carla Boyington, Stephania McAndrew, Kathi Patterson, Caroline Storrs (chair)

A SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON USING THE ARCHITECTS' SCHEMATIC DRAWINGS

POINT OF COMPARISON	CORNISH LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER	RENOVATED STOWELL LIBRARY
Children's area w/room for story time	YES 476 SF	YES if in 357 SF in fireplace area NO if in 234 SF in the current location
New fiction/nonfiction shelving	YES (shelving in the main library space and the children's room has @1,574 LF. At an average of 11 books per linear foot that is space for 17,380 volumes.)	YES (shelving in the addition, in the main floor space, and in the basement has @1,268 LF. At an average of 11 books per linear foot that is space for 13,948 volumes.)
Tech center for 3-4 terminals	YES (a designated area for 2 public use computers with room for 6-8 more)	YES (a designated area for 2 public use computers with room for 1-2 more)
Meeting Room w/conference table for 6	YES (585 SF - seats 25-30 at tables)	YES (382 SF - will seat 10-15 at tables)
Seating area with periodicals and café (coffee station area)	YES (there is a coffee station and comfortable seating in the periodical area)	YES (there is a coffee bar and tables/chairs in the periodical area)
Mud room/foyer	YES (area footage not listed in Banwell plans)	YES (88 SF)
Book sale area/cart	YES	YES

	(Banwell plans show 2 units of single shelving in the main library area)	(MA+KE plans show a single-width bookshelf behind the tech counter)
ADA accessibility	YES (the porch, the entire main floor, and the multipurpose room entrance are accessible; code does not require accessibility to the mezzanine and basement)	YES (the front entrance and a wheelchair lift make the addition, the current main floor, and the basement accessible)
Building + life safety codes + standards	YES	YES
Staff work space	YES (189 SF)	YES (66 SF)
Furnace room	YES (in the basement)	YES (will share 230 SF in the basement)
Janitor's closet	YES (153 SF on the main floor in the Storage Room space)	YES will share 230 SF in the basement)
Storage room	YES (153 SF area on main floor)	YES (will share 230 SF in the basement)
Two toilets; one w/changing table	YES (both have changing tables)	YES (one with, one without)
Sight line in layout for supervision	YES	NO (3-levels will require video monitors; not included in constriction estimate)
Heating, ventilation, air conditioning	YES (assumes heat pumps)	YES (assumes heat pumps)
Car accessible book drop	YES	YES
Parking for 8 cars including 1 ADA accessible space	YES	NO

	14-18 Off-street parking for with 2 ADA spaces, as identified by Banwell	2 regular plus 1 ADA on-street in front of library; 4 on-street parking across from library in the Town's right-of-way, as identified by MA+KE (7 total)
Circulation desk	YES (181 SF in Banwell plans)	YES (SF not listed in MA+KE plans)
Systems analysis for energy efficiency - may include solar panels	YES	Unlikely No to solar panels on the slate roof; low probability on the land behind the building
2-3 display areas	YES 151 SF for an art and local history area and a donor wall	YES no separate areas designated in MA+KE plans
Area for outside children's programming	YES Porch, green, patio	YES land behind the building over well and septic field

PROPOSED DESIGN GOALS FOR CORNISH LIBRARY AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING ON SCHOOL STREET

- Developed by Larry Dingee, Exploratory Committee Member -

Provide running water and septic with at least one (1) ADA compliant bathroom	YES	The MA+KE design has two bathrooms as required by code
Create ADA compliant access to all three (3) levels of the two buildings by building a connector between them	YES	The MA+KE design provides a ramp and a wheelchair lift for access to the current main floor and the basement area for ADA compliant access
Increase book stacks space by 1/3	YES	- The MA+KE design adds @368 LF of shelving to the current 900 LF for a new total of @1,268 LF - 414 LF of that shelving is in the basement - book space @11 books per linear foot is room for @13,200 volumes
Provide for eight parking spaces and one wheelchair accessible parking space	NO	MA+KE plans provide 6 on-street spaces and one wheelchair accessible on-street space
If possible, have new roof design capable of accepting solar panels with a south facing exposure in the future	NO	New roof design not practical due to cost of installing solar panels on the slate roof

Cornish Library Exploratory Committee Final Report: Appendices

	<i>Note: Appendices 6-9 & 20 are hyperlinks</i>	
#	Title	Author
1	Committee Charge	Select Board
2	Letter of Intent	Colleen O'Neil
3	Sample Warrant	Dillon Gallagher, Heidi Jaarsma, Town Counsel
4	ADA Building Assessment Report	Thomas A. Ladd, MLS
5	Quotes and Plans [soft costs - 4 documents]	Dano Anderson, School Furnishing Director of Sales, A&D and Construction
6	Minutes, July 23 Open Forum	as approved by the Committee
7	Survey Results	Heidi Jaarsma, Susan Chandler, Kathi Patterson
8	Banwell Phase 1 plans & Presentation	Banwell Architects
9	MA+KE Phase 1 plans & Presentation	MA+KE Architects
10	Library as Community Center Report	Laura Cousineau, Cindie Heath, Crist Surunis, Stephanie MacAndrew
11	Community Room Polices	Laura Cousineau, Cindie Heath, Crist Surunis, Stephanie MacAndrew
12	Library & Community Room Benchmarks	Laura Cousineau, Cindie Heath, Crist Surunis, Stephanie MacAndrew
13	Non-Architect Questions Received at Forums	As noted on document
14	Environmental Considerations	Heidi Jaarsma
15	Operating Expense Comparison	Trustees
16	MA+KE Energy Cost email	Christopher Kennedy, MA+KE Architects
17	1910 Warrant	Town of Cornish
18	ADA Compliance	Heidi Jaarsma
19	Videos of Architect Open Forums (URLs) Banwell – General Store Renovation MA+KE – Stowell Renovation	Tasmin Orion and Billy Scharf
20	Questions and Comments	as compiled by Laura Cousineau