

PLANNING STUDY
for the
THORNE MEMORIAL BUILDING
FINAL REPORT

Presented to the Village of Millbrook, New York
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Conducted by:

Adelaide Camillo
Nonprofit Planning and Development

in collaboration with:

Kristin Lancino, Performing Arts Consultant
and
John G. Waite Associates, Architects

SECTION I

Introduction

The Thorne Building Planning Study was commissioned by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Millbrook to assist them in determining their options for revitalizing the Thorne Memorial Building (hereinafter referred to as the Thorne Building).

This study was made possible through the generosity and foresight of an anonymous donor who is a resident of the Town of Washington. The Village Board approved the study at their May 2003 meeting and engaged Adelaide Camillo, a Nonprofit Planning and Development Consultant and also a Town of Washington resident, to conduct the study. Ms. Camillo worked with Kristin Lancino, a programming arts consultant, and John G. Waite Associates, an architectural firm with extensive expertise in historic restoration of municipal buildings and specific prior experience with the Thorne Building.

This planning study was recommended to the Village Board by the Thorne Building Revitalization Committee. The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee, a grassroots community group appointed by the previous Village administration in March 2002, advocated the continued use of the Thorne Building for educational and cultural purposes. The Committee's first established priority was to renovate the Thorne Building in an historically sensitive manner, appropriate to a building listed on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places.

The initial focus of this study was to engage John G. Waite Associates in the summer of 2003 to approximate the costs of renovating the Thorne Building. They separately submitted their Existing Conditions Assessment Update and Feasibility Study, dated November 14, 2003, to the Village Board. The architects' report analyzes the current conditions of the Thorne Building, recommends needed repairs, and provides a preliminary analysis of renovations suitable for supporting a significant cultural center in the Thorne Building. That report was given to the Mayor and Village Board in November 2003 to facilitate the development of strategies to begin early phases of renovations with currently available funds.

In 1896, the Thorne Building, built as a tribute to Jonathan and Lydia Thorne by their children, was officially given to the Village of Millbrook. The original deed states that the building was given to the Village "for the purposes of a public school under the control and supervision of the Board of Education" and "generally for all purposes of education and the diffusion of knowledge, by the giving of lectures, concerts or otherwise." One hundred eight years later, the community of Millbrook hopes to continue this tradition.

To assess the goal of housing a cultural center in the Thorne Building, this study extensively explored the community's interests in cultural and educational programs to determine the viability of supporting cultural programs in Millbrook. The cultural

environment of Dutchess County was also thoroughly studied for the purpose of conceptualizing programming that would complement existing offerings in the region.

This report synthesizes information gathered from over fifty personal interviews with leaders in Millbrook and the Town of Washington, professional arts and programming consultants, directors of cultural centers in the Hudson Valley, marketing professionals, and community members. The purpose of this study, from the start, was to explore cultural programming in the Thorne Building as a potential route for energizing and supporting the revitalization of the building.

Like all studies of this kind, a substantial portion of its value derives from the *process* of the study, which, at its core, was designed as a vehicle to spark analysis and dialogue among the disparate stakeholders in the Thorne Building's future. The ultimate value of this study is the development of a base case proposal to guide continued *action and planning by the Village Board.* The study was commissioned to provide a basis for resolving the renovation of the Thorne Building in a manner that respects the building's historic status and reflects the community's interests in cultural and educational programming. Starting from this base case, the Village Board will engage in the wide-ranging analysis that should lead to ultimate concrete decisions regarding the Village's goals for revitalizing the Thorne Building.

Renovating the Thorne Building to appropriate historic standards will cost approximately six million dollars for a first-rate renovation. The Village Board hopes to raise most of the funds privately to avoid the need for bonds ultimately paid by the taxpayers. This level of funding for a Village project is unprecedented and will require focused leadership by the current Village Board and many months of hard work and planning by a dedicated group of highly qualified and committed volunteers.

Renovating the building is the highest priority since its current usability is highly compromised. While the building has always been used as a community and cultural center, and indeed was designed to be such, the viability of a formal cultural center organized as a distinct nonprofit organization is completely dependent on the ability to raise funding for such a project and is a long-term ultimate goal. That funding potential is also dependent on the capacity of the Village Board to attract the necessary volunteer leadership to manage that process and ultimately govern a cultural nonprofit entity. Building any successful nonprofit organization could take as many as three to five years. Fundraising for the building renovation alone, could take equally as long.

Again, this level of fundraising is unprecedented in Millbrook. While there is evidence that potential new funding is attainable in this community, this study was not intended as a fundraising feasibility study, which is typically focused on a fully conceptualized and defined project.

Private fundraising, at any substantial level, will require the full commitment of the Village Board and the cultivation of many *new and additional* relationships throughout

the Town of Washington. The handful of generous benefactors who have always stepped in for the Village and the Town will not be enough for a project of this size, nor should they be expected to fund the entirety of any Village project.

This project must be lead by a team of highly respected volunteers whose expertise in nonprofit fundraising is extensive and whose leadership capacities are unquestionable in this community. Only when this team is brought to the table and committed to the project can the details of a potential capital campaign begin to unfold. Ultimately, however, the Village Board, ideally with the Town of Washington's leadership, must openly commit to renovating and revitalizing the building by historic standards for cultural and educational purposes. Their clarity and commitment to these goals must assure volunteer leadership that the elected officials of Millbrook and the Town of Washington will resolutely support the project going forward and that its success is not tied to a political cycle, but to an established vision of the community's goals.

Design of the Study

Planning and feasibility studies for fundraising purposes vary from project to project. No single formula can be applied to every situation. This study is unusually broad, yet complex, and is more typical of a planning study than a feasibility study.

Feasibility studies for fundraising purposes generally involve an existing institution, a defined project, and an identified pool of potential donors in which the feasibility of a project is tested. Prior to initiating this study, a project for developing a cultural center in the Thorne Building was only broadly and inadequately defined and very few potential supporters were identified. As a result, this study necessarily encompassed both the conceptualization of a cultural center in the Thorne Building, as well as a preliminary analysis of the potential to fund, develop and run such a cultural center.

Given the extensive physical degradation of the Thorne Building, the renovation of it is the top priority. The architectural assessment of the Thorne Building was the first step taken in this study.

This study was designed in consultation with the community-based Thorne Building Revitalization Committee, as well as the Mayor of Millbrook and the Village Trustees. It includes three distinct components conducted simultaneously:

- I. Architectural Conditions Analysis;
- II. Analysis of Community Interests and Attitudes; and
- III. Conceptualization of a Cultural Center;

Methods of the Study

I. The Architectural Conditions Analysis

The Existing Conditions Assessment Update for the Thorne Building was conducted by John G. Waite Associates, architects specializing in historic restoration of municipal buildings in New York State. These architects had previously prepared a conditions report for the Thorne Building in 1995 when the Millbrook Board of Education was considering updating the building for use once again as a school. Mr. Waite arranged to place the building on the National Historic Register during that period and is a specialist in historic preservation. It was, therefore, logical to engage Mr. Waite's firm to re-evaluate the building, particularly since a major goal of the Thorne Building Revitalization Committee was to protect the building's historic status. The value of the building as a cultural center, as well as a capital asset, is much greater if it is historically preserved.

The Existing Conditions Assessment Update was conducted based on three basic assumptions: 1) all changes to the building should be made with deference to the historic status of the building; 2) the building should be restored to its original state with

appropriate code and safety updates; and 3) the auditorium stage and backstage areas should be studied for purposes of supporting future performing arts activities.

After extensive discussions with Adelaide Camillo and Kristin Lancino, the architects assessed the building's condition and estimated costs for renovating the building for educational and cultural purposes. An architectural report and preliminary cost estimates were submitted as a separate report to the Village on November 14, 2003. In their report, the architects concluded that, despite the significant deferred maintenance of the Thorne Building, the building can be readily adapted for use as a community arts center.

II. Analysis of Community Interests and Attitudes

A major goal of this study was to adequately understand the community of Millbrook and to identify the community's interests with regard to the Thorne Building. Every effort was made to personally interview a broad cross-section of people representing a multitude of opinions concerning possible uses of the Thorne Building. Many government leaders in both the Town of Washington and the Village of Millbrook were interviewed because any successful development of the Thorne Building will require the cooperation of both entities.

Most interviews were arranged through a letter from the Mayor introducing the study and the consultants. Later, Ms. Camillo made follow-up calls to arrange appointments. Most interviews took at least one and one-half hours and frequently lasted two hours or more. A list of interviewees, as well as the questionnaire used to direct the interviews, are included as Appendices A and B.

III. Conceptualization of a Cultural Center

Programmatic analysis for the Thorne Building was conducted in cooperation with Kristin Lancino, a performing arts professional who was the Artistic Administrator of Carnegie Hall for seventeen years and is now a consultant to performing arts and educational institutions. Over the course of several weeks, Ms. Lancino and Ms. Camillo met with leaders of arts and cultural institutions in Dutchess County, art and music teachers in Millbrook's public high school, the architects, and a stage and facilities consultant. The results of this programmatic research are discussed extensively in this report.

SECTION II

Historical Background

History of the Thorne Building, 1894-1963

The Thorne Building was built in 1894 as a tribute to Jonathan and Lydia Thorne by their children. Original details and architectural records of its creation are scant. It was suggested recently through the work of local historian David Greenwood and a *New York Times* architectural critic that the architect was most likely William Beardsley, a prolific Poughkeepsie architect who built schools and municipal buildings throughout New York State.

In 1896, the building was officially given to the Village of Millbrook, which was incorporated expressly to receive it. The original deed states that the building was given to the Village “for the purposes of a public school under the control and supervision of the Board of Education” and “generally for all purposes of education and the diffusion of knowledge, by the giving of lectures, concerts or otherwise.”

The deed further states that in case the Village “should cease to be a corporation capable in every way of carrying out the objects and purposes of the trust hereby created,” then all rights of the Village “under this conveyance shall forthwith terminate and the title of the said property shall thereupon revert to the parties of the first part” or the Thorne family heirs, except if the Village should be reincorporated or become a Town or City. It was signed by the grantors, Phebe, Samuel, Jonathan, and William Thorne, and for the Village of Millbrook by Oakleigh Thorne.

The building functioned as Millbrook’s high school until 1963 when the Millbrook Central School District abandoned it for the current high school site. Local stories contend (again, records are scant) that the School District wanted to sell the building to the Village only to discover that, indeed, the Village already owned it. Apparently, the Village did not even know it owned the building until the departure of the school in 1963.

The building, listed on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places in 1996, sits on 3.6 acres in a high density residential and historic neighborhood in the Village of Millbrook and comprises approximately 19,000 square feet of usable and gracious historic space.

The Thorne Building: 1963 to the Present

Since 1963, the Thorne Building has housed many educational institutions. The Village’s records of tenancy in the Thorne Building are incomplete. Consequently, the history is sketchy. We do know some of the major tenants that have occupied the building for many years: Dutchess Community College, BOCES, and Duane Lake Academy. The

third floor has been unoccupied and unused for many years. (It is significantly damaged from water infiltration and failing roof conditions.)

Dutchess County Community College ran a satellite program in the building from 1982 to 1996. They left the premises due to decreasing credit enrollment coupled with the deteriorating conditions of the building that were becoming too costly to repair. Many of the college's credit students came from Dover Plains, and it was difficult for the College to entice them to drive to Millbrook. Noncredit courses, such as craft classes and computer classes, apparently were more successful than credit enrollment.

The Millbrook Central School District Board of Education has been in and out of the building a few times since 1963. The Board of Education most recently returned to the building in 1998 and is currently renting space there. Duane Lake Academy, a home schooling organization, has been a tenant in the Thorne Building since 1986.

Various community groups have used the auditorium over the years, including the Millbrook Arts Group, the Millbrook Hunt, the Boy Scouts, and the Millbrook Antiques Show. The auditorium today continues to be used for Millbrook's public school holiday concerts, dance classes, senior exercise classes, youth groups in the surrounding area, and many other activities.

It is apparent from the history of the Thorne Building that, after the Millbrook School District left the premises in 1963 and no longer maintained the entire building for its own purposes, the Village of Millbrook was hard-pressed to manage the building on its own. Maintenance was inconsistent and deferred and the building's condition continually declined over the years.

In 1996, after Dutchess Community College vacated the building, the Mayor appointed a group of citizens to determine a course of action for the Thorne Building. This group will be referred to in this document as the Initial Thorne Building Committee. The Initial Thorne Building Committee met for approximately five years and made several recommendations for maintenance in interim reports. In 2001, their final report to the Village recommended that the Village move its offices to the second and third floors of the Thorne Building, sell the Village Hall to the Town of Washington, and move the Department of Motor Vehicles into the basement of the Thorne Building. It also addressed other capital needs of the Village, such as increased space for the Town's Recreation Department in the Village Hall.

The renovation proposed by The Initial Thorne Building Committee triggered inquiries in April 2002 from the Preservation League of New York State who had apparently provided several thousand dollars for earlier studies to rehabilitate the building in an historically sensitive manner. In the League's opinion, because the Thorne Building appears on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places, a SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) review was required prior to any public referendum for financing renovations. According to the League's letter, the applicable

“environmental factors” of SEQRA include resources of “historic or aesthetic significance” together with “existing community or neighborhood character.”

A referendum on the Initial Committee’s proposal for a \$1.25 million bond issuance was brought to public vote in December 2001. The referendum was defeated by 17 votes (90 yes v. 107 no). A heated public exchange ensued at Village Board meetings and in the local press. As a result, the Mayor called for another committee to be formed and requests for volunteers were made in the Village’s water bills that were mailed to all residents. This second committee, organized in March 2002, was called the Thorne Building Revitalization Committee and their stated mission was: “To revitalize the Thorne Building, maintaining its architectural integrity and preserving its educational purpose for the benefit of the community at large as a self-sustaining, vibrant cultural center that occupies a prominent position in the community and enriches the lives of the people.”

The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee was comprised of a broad cross-section of local residents including town and village employees and small business owners. Together, they launched a grass-roots campaign to advocate that the Thorne Building be used for continued cultural and educational purposes, as was originally intended by the donors, and restored to standards appropriate for a building on the National Register of Historic Places. (See Appendix D for a list of members of both committees.)

The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee made several presentations to the Village Board recommending an historical architectural analysis of the building and requesting further professional study of the use of the building for educational and cultural purposes. They met with leading members of the Initial Thorne Building Committee in an attempt to establish a collaborative working relationship. They also conducted informal public opinion surveys on Millbrook’s Community Day and during a Thorne Building open house resulting in more than 200 completed survey forms that indicated a strong interest by a majority of respondents in cultural and educational activities at the Thorne Building.

Unfortunately, a productive working relationship could not be established between the two committees and many months of a heated public debate ensued. This resulted in the “politicization” of the Thorne Building, which ultimately became an issue in the political campaign for Village leadership in the March 2003 elections.

Both committees, in distinctly different ways, from very different perspectives, were trying to revitalize the degenerating Thorne Building. The specific differences between the committees revolved around a number of significant issues that were never productively aired between the committees: the extent to which historic preservation should drive the renovation and use of the building; the importance of the originally designated purpose of the building; the type of funding involved for the renovation (public bonds vs. private donations); the extent to which the historic preservation should drive the renovation and use of the building; and the extent to which the community’s cultural interests should be reflected in the uses of the building.

Architectural Assessment of the Thorne Building

The architects, John G. Waite Associates were hired by the Millbrook Central School District in 1995/96 to conduct a conditions analysis of the Thorne Building for adaptive re-use by Millbrook schools. The architectural firm has a notable reputation for renovating historic municipal buildings in New York State and was selected to be part of this study because of this specialty. Indeed, Mr. Waite placed the building on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

For this study, the architects were asked to update their 1996 report, revising it for compliance with recent building code changes and accessibility requirements and to reflect the use of the Thorne Building for cultural purposes.

The architects' *Existing Conditions Assessment Update and Feasibility Study*, dated November 14, 2003, was submitted separately to the Village of Millbrook. Numerous recommendations about the condition of the building, particularly with respect to the significant water infiltration problems, are included in the report. The architects' report addresses repairs to the roof (a slate roof, like the original, is recommended and estimated to last another 100 years) and replacement of all mechanical systems, including heat, electric, and ventilation throughout.

The architects concluded that the building was readily adaptable for use as a community arts center. It has a compact and logical floor plan that groups elegant classrooms in the main section of the building and a performance space in the auditorium wing. The building is well-oriented to take full advantage of natural daylight and features huge palladian-like windows. The classrooms have large expanses of windows making them readily adaptable to a number of additional uses, including visual art or dance studios and performance practice rooms.

By replacing the large existing steam boilers with smaller units, space in the basement can be used for other art-related purposes such as printmaking, photography, or ceramics studios. Expansive corridors can readily be adapted to exhibition space.

Costs, excluding architectural fees, approximate \$5.25 million for a first-rate renovation of the Thorne Building that is historically appropriate and that complies with all revised New York State building codes and environmental (SEQRA) requirements for buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. These costs include approximately \$1 million for back-stage enhancements for a cultural facility.

SECTION III

Findings: Attitudes About the Thorne Building

Almost everyone interviewed in this study agreed that arts and educational programming in the Thorne Building would be beneficial to the community. As one prominent political official in the Town of Washington stated, “how can anyone not agree with that.” Parents must now drive over one-half hour to get their children to private music or arts instruction and many complain of the lack of “things to do” in Millbrook. Because many people in Millbrook graduated high school from the Thorne Building, emotions are stirred by the state of the building and hopes for its renovation.

Some interviewees spoke of the days when Bennett College provided a variety of cultural activities. A local movie theatre thrived and Franklin Avenue was bustling with people. Today, shops generally close by 5 p.m., there is a lack of entertainment and cultural activity for all ages, and local residents frequently leave town for a movie or cultural event. Even the small number of community members that admitted they did not care about the Thorne Building responded positively to the potential for cultural and educational activities in the Village.

The overriding concerns of most interviewees were the costs of operating the Thorne Building and the potential additional costs to the taxpayers. Of course, it is particularly important to devise a thoughtful fundraising plan for any cultural entity at the Thorne Building. It is also important to devise a plan for continued rental income in the Thorne Building for long-term stability and maintenance of the Thorne Building generally.

The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee documented local interest in cultural and educational activities at the Thorne Building with a survey they developed and implemented on Millbrook’s Community Day in September 2002.

The survey (Appendix C) was completed by 194 people and the responses were overwhelmingly positive regarding the prospect of cultural and educational activities in the Thorne Building. While this survey was informal, it was thoughtful and relevant to the project. Most importantly, it captured a large portion of the community. The survey asked individuals to list their interests in arts and cultural programming. Among the responses, 79% requested visual arts activities (i.e., gallery and classes); 71% requested community activities such as teen or senior programs; 74% requested continuing education classes; 67% requested crafts classes or shows; 74% requested dance classes or other dance activities; 78% were interested in music performances or classes; and 61% were interested in local history courses.

The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee also held a well-attended open house for the Thorne Building on November 10, 2002 that attracted over 300 people. Visitors included residents of Millbrook and the Town of Washington, but also, remarkably, residents of Clinton, Poughkeepsie, Dover, Stanford, Union Vale, La Grange and

Amenia. The response to the Open House and the wide range of visitors clearly indicates notable interest in furthering cultural activities in Millbrook. A selection of comments from the visitors who filled out survey forms at the open house can be found in Appendix C.

Findings: Cultural Opportunities in Millbrook

Millbrook, compared to many other Hudson Valley villages and towns, is relatively undeveloped when it comes to arts and cultural opportunities. In a report written by the Downtown Improvement Task Force in August 1990, the development of an “arts center” was listed as the second most important of the top 15 priorities that were recommended (the first priority was the establishment of municipal parking lots) for revitalizing the business community. A “visitor service center” was listed as an additional second priority. However, an “arts center” was never developed. Additionally, in this Task Force report one of the goals for promoting “excellence of design” was the “preservation and restoration of historic buildings.”

The Downtown Improvement Task Force was a partnership between the Millbrook Business Association, Village Government, and civic organizations that were concerned about enhancing the economy of downtown Millbrook. In this report, four major events were associated with Millbrook’s “lost market share”: 1) the development of regional malls (1965-1980); 2) the closing of Bennett College (1977); 3) the closing of a “national grocery chain” market (1987); and 4) the development of strip shopping centers (1982-1990). Today, many of Millbrook’s business owners have the same concerns and would welcome opportunities to bring more retail customers to downtown Millbrook.

While the Millbrook Arts Group and the Merritt Book Store do a fine job of providing occasional cultural opportunities in Millbrook, most people travel at least 30 minutes to cultural events, particularly in the evenings. Quality exhibitions and performances are held locally at the newly built Holbrook Art Center at Millbrook School, which features spectacular spaces for arts classes, an art gallery and a fine auditorium. While events at Millbrook School are open to the public at large, they are designed primarily for the student body and most local residents do not attend these events. A recent addition to the community is Mary’s – a pub featuring blues, jazz, and other musical performances in the evenings. It has a robust following that demonstrates an interest in live music in Millbrook.

Many cultural events in Millbrook are privately organized, often by dedicated volunteers. For instance, a local chamber music society presents a series of chamber performances often held in private homes. A small group produces Shakespearean plays for children, another organizes a youth orchestra, and yet another recently organized a film festival held in the reception area of the Thorne Building. These groups do not advertise widely or have official staff, offices or venues, and are, therefore, unknown to many local residents. Many of Millbrook’s cultural activities are informal community events organized casually.

Given the lack of cultural events in Millbrook, many residents interviewed leave Millbrook to spend their dining and entertainment dollars elsewhere. Furthermore, Millbrook does not capitalize on the tourist traffic that now flows throughout Dutchess County, particularly most recently, between the newest and hottest cultural destinations in the mid-Hudson Valley – the Fisher Center at Bard College and DIA in Beacon.

Findings: Cultural Audiences in Dutchess County

The Hudson Valley, home of the Village of Millbrook and the Thorne Building, is one of the most picturesque places in the world and features a bounty of historical and cultural riches. Pivotal events in American history occurred in the Valley and surrounding New England. The Hudson River School of American landscape painting put American artists on the map internationally in the mid-1800s and the American landscape in art history was defined in Millbrook's backyard.

Dutchess County, centrally located in the mid-Hudson Valley, was home to President Roosevelt, the Vanderbilts, and many other American notables. Today, less than two hours from Manhattan, the county continues to be a refuge for artists and a community in which there is great appreciation for cultural activities and the arts. It also holds a wealth of historic sites, which according to the New York Preservation League and the Travel Industry Association, translates into a lucrative travel market.

One of the most significant growth industries in the Hudson Valley is arts and culture and many economic models for community development are based on tourism and visitorship. When it comes to visitorship, the arts play a leading role. According to a Marist College poll conducted in 1999 on the "Economic Impact of the Arts in Dutchess County," there is a high value placed by residents on the arts and scenic beauty in Dutchess County. The report estimates that residents spend from \$11.5 million to \$28.7 million per year in arts expenditures. As more of these dollars are spent at home, there is a multiplier effect within the local economy through visits to local restaurants and shops in conjunction with arts-related activities.

Unfortunately, approximately 70% of respondents in the Marist poll reported attending arts events *outside* Dutchess County. The main reason cited for not attending local events was lack of information or marketing. Visits to New York City were cited by 52% of Dutchess County residents. Thirty percent of respondents reported a willingness to spend \$10 to \$20 more for arts events.

A new study from the Travel Industry Association (TIA) and Smithsonian Magazine published in *Historic/Cultural Traveler, 2003 Edition*, shows a remarkable 81% of U.S. adults, or 118 million people, who traveled in the last year are considered "historical/cultural" travelers. They tend to extend their visits to experience history or culture at their destinations and spend more than the average traveler. According to the Arts & Business Council and the New York State Council on the Arts in their May 2003

press release announcing tourism grants in New York State, “cultural tourism has emerged as a critical element in the effort of arts groups to generate new revenue for their bottom line as well as bring in tax revenue to their partners and the region they serve. Pooling resources to attract new visitors increases economic activity.”

Findings: Cultural Institutions in Dutchess County

Millbrook is situated in the midst of some of the most prominent cultural institutions and historic sites in the Hudson Valley. Among the newest cultural sites are DIA in Beacon and the Fisher Center for the Arts at Bard College. According to a recent Poughkeepsie Journal article, DIA’s visitorship has far surpassed their expectations for their first year bringing over 100,000 visitors in the first six months of operation. Artists are flocking to Beacon, a progressive waterfront is being developed, art galleries are becoming abundant, and local business owners and residents are hopeful about the future. The Fisher Center, designed by prominent architect, Frank Gehry, draws visitors from outside the region as well.

There are numerous other arts organizations and historic sites surrounding Millbrook. Among the many historic properties are the Roosevelt, Vanderbilt, and Mills Mansions situated along the majestic and scenic Hudson River, and approximately one-half hour’s drive from Millbrook. In Poughkeepsie, The Bardavon, an 1869 Opera House and the oldest continuously operating theater in New York State presents major “showcase” entertainment in Poughkeepsie, ranging from the Hudson Valley Philharmonic to Asian drumming. Their range of styles is broad and not focused on any particular theme. Because they need to sell large quantities of tickets to fill the house, they cannot experiment with lesser-known performers, or performances that might not be “popular.” Also in downtown Poughkeepsie, the Barrett Art Center, offers a limited selection of arts classes in small classrooms in an historic townhouse. Barrett Art Center, at one time, held art classes in Millbrook at the Town Hall.

Vassar’s Powerhouse Theater produces the finest plays and readings that the Mid-Hudson Valley has to offer. They partner with New York Stage and Film in New York City and run a summer series operated by theater majors in the colleges’ theater department. Also at Vassar is one of the area’s finest art museums, the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, designed by world-renown architect, Cesar Pelli, and opened to the public in 1993. The museum’s teaching collection is comprised of 12,500 objects, from antiquities to contemporary art.

In Tivoli, approximately 45 miles from Millbrook, is Kaatsbaan International Dance Center, a dance center dedicated to the advancement and preservation of dance. In Sharon, Connecticut, the Tri-Arts Theater produces equity-quality performances, mostly musicals and popular productions that appeal to local audiences and weekenders. The Rhinebeck Performing Arts Center is a community theater drawing local audiences from across the county.

There are a number of well-respected chamber and classical series in the area, including the Howland Chamber Music Circle in Beacon, the Pawling Concert Series, and Music Mountain in Lakeville, Connecticut. Music in pubs or bars is relatively abundant if you are willing to drive throughout the county. The Towne Crier in Pawling has been drawing crowds for over 20 years with a variety of top folk, acoustic, blues, and jazz performers. Rosendale has a local pub with a strong following as well. And now, Mary's Pub in Millbrook has become a popular spot.

What the area lacks most is arts instruction both in music and visual arts (painting, drawing, and sculpture). Barrett Art Center's selection is limited and its location in downtown Poughkeepsie makes it a difficult destination in the evenings. While Dutchess Community College offers classes, most are offered on the weekdays and most local residents must travel at least thirty minutes to attend classes. The Woodstock School of Art is approximately one hour from Millbrook. Because the Thorne Building is an ideal venue for arts instruction, it could fill a significant void in the region's arts instruction offerings.

While there are a variety of cultural opportunities in Dutchess County, they are all a significant drive from Millbrook, which offers only a bare minimum of cultural events. And, county-wide, there is still significant opportunity for improvements or additions. For instance, with the exception of Vassar's Powerhouse Theater, serious theatrical productions (on a small scale) or literary readings (plays, poetry, and essays) are almost nonexistent in the area and would be ideal at the Thorne Building. The small stage and lack of backstage at the Thorne Building make it suitable for small productions with minimal sets or props.

Many of the best institutions in Dutchess County are affiliated with colleges or private schools, and consequently, are not focused on the average Millbrook or Town of Washington resident. The Marist College study on arts audiences confirms there is strong interest in the arts and cultural programming among Dutchess County residents, yet most arts dollars are spent *outside* the county. Much of that is attributed to a lack of awareness about cultural events that are occurring in Dutchess County. Dutchess County arts organizations do not adequately coordinate marketing efforts, and due to lack of funding and marketing expertise, many organizations are not getting their mission and message to the marketplace.

With good planning and the right leadership, arts and culture programs can thrive in the Hudson Valley. The abundance of Hudson Valley cultural activity indicates that cultural activities in Millbrook can draw on other audiences from the surrounding areas if the programming is thoughtfully coordinated with competing events. Given its proximity to New York City and its location in New England, the Hudson Valley is abundant with artists and performers, as well as cultural tourists and culture consumers. The potential for creating dynamic and successful programming is superior to most other rural American destinations.

SECTION IV

The Conceptualization of A Cultural Center at the Thorne Building

Background and Benefits of Cultural Programs

One of the goals of this study was the articulation of a cultural “concept” for the Thorne Building. This section discusses the conceptual design for a cultural center at the Thorne Building and potential programming and benefits.

The mission of cultural/educational institutions is to provide communities with opportunities for intellectual, creative, and spiritual growth. Cultural institutions are magnets for learning, entertainment, the exchange of ideas, and a source of lasting community pride. Cultural institutions also bring educated and enthusiastic consumers into a community enhancing the local businesses that surround them. Cities, towns, and villages are vastly enriched by their cultural institutions that “brand” them as places of interest, learning, and excitement.

Some of the most important benefits of arts and cultural activities are the positive ways they impact young people and families in the community. Arts programs help students develop a better understanding of the world around them and build a school climate of higher expectations, discipline, and rigor. According to the Americans for the Arts, young people who participate in the arts (compared to their peers):

- Attend music, art, and dance classes nearly three times as frequently;
- Participate in youth groups nearly four times as frequently;
- Read for pleasure nearly twice as often;
- Perform community service more than four times more often.

While this study was not intended to address specifically the benefits of arts education, it is clear that arts education and cultural opportunities would benefit Millbrook. All the arts educators and administrators I spoke with at the Millbrook Central High School enthusiastically supported the potential for after school programs to supplement the arts curriculum. For example, in the visual arts, the arts teacher cannot teach life drawing, a basic and critical drawing technique, in the Millbrook schools. In the area of music education, there is apparently significant interest in private music lessons, but teachers lack venues to provide supplemental instruction.

In addition, while Millbrook High School has a great jazz band, it does not have an orchestra and does not provide instruction in stringed instruments. Like so many public schools, Millbrook is strong in athletics, but not as strong in the arts. Weaknesses in Millbrook’s public schools’ arts programs could be ameliorated with supplemental programs at the Thorne Building.

While this study focuses on the development of arts and cultural programming at the Thorne Building, it is important to maintain the community aspects of the Thorne Building when conceptualizing other cultural uses for the building. For example, continuing activities such as senior exercise classes, youth activities, and other community events such as the antiques or craft fairs would enhance the usage of the building and allow the building to serve the community in the broadest of ways.

Structure and Budget of Cultural Nonprofit

Cultural and educational institutions are, generally, not-for-profit corporations that rely heavily on private funding to operate. For this reason, nonprofit entities are enormous undertakings requiring dedicated and sustained efforts on the part of their professional staff, as well as volunteer leadership and philanthropists. The financial strength of the nonprofit is a direct function of the organization's Board of Directors. Each and every board member plays a role in meeting fundraising goals and in managing the financial stability of the institution. These governance functions require serious time commitments on the part of the board members, and also require an array of skills and experience. The more experienced the board members are, the easier it will be for the nonprofit organization to raise funds consistently and to operate at a high level of quality. The first critical step is to identify a small group of leaders who advocate for the project and, because of their compelling commitment, become its "founders." Board membership is a gratifying responsibility and immensely important to the success of any nonprofit organization.

A modest, but first-rate, cultural center directed by an experienced executive director and support staff will *ideally* operate on an annual budget ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000. Quality productions and cultural programming are expensive when done professionally and to the highest standards. This budget does not include initial capital expenditures for items such as a kiln for ceramics classes (\$50,000) or easels for painting studios (considerably less). Typical operating budgets include personnel, artists' fees, house expenses such as rental of space, stage crews, lighting and sound engineers, sound and equipment rental (pianos and tuners), marketing costs (season brochures, ads), educational programming costs, and many other administrative expenses.

Of course, all programming in Millbrook will be directly dependent on the amount of private funding that can be raised. These budget estimates are an ideal goal, but it is far too soon to predict what might actually be available in the long-run. It may be necessary to implement very modest programming on a much smaller budget, at least initially.

Usable Space in the Thorne Building and Rental Potential

The total usable space in the Thorne Building, including the auditorium, corridors, basement storage, restrooms, mechanical rooms and kitchen is approximately 18,590 square feet. The potential rental space (classrooms and/or office space) is approximately 8,475 square feet. (In the architectural study performed in connection with this report, the large boilers and oil tanks are repositioned opening up significant usable space in the basement.) The grand corridors of the building, including on the third floor, comprise a total of over 4,100 square feet. However, the primary usable corridors for exhibition or gallery space are on the basement and first floor level and total approximately 2,700 square feet. The auditorium is 3,090 square feet and comprises almost one-half of the first and second floors.

The auditorium and classrooms of the building are ideally suited to performance activities. The classrooms are also ideal for studio arts activities or, of course, any number of educational lectures. The wide corridors in the basement and first floor entry hall are readily adaptable to gallery space.

One local realtor estimated that commercial monthly rental income from the Thorne Building, once it is renovated to the standards appropriate for an historic building, ranges from \$17 to \$25 per square foot. Of course, the Village may deem it appropriate to provide a reduced rent to a nonprofit cultural entity in the building that serves the local community and attracts income to the Village.

Today, between the two main tenants in the building, rental income is approximately \$45,000, which seems to be only slightly higher than recorded expenses for the last few years. An estimate of \$10,000 to \$12,000 for special event rental income is reasonable to anticipate. There is a Thorne Building trust that was donated with the original transfer of the building to the Village and today yields approximately \$5,000 annually. However, these numbers must be verified and the Village should conduct a thorough budgetary review of all Thorne Building activity. Additionally, the Village must analyze the budgetary implications of the proposed renovation and the potential changes in tenancy in the building.

Physical Adaptability of the Thorne Building

The Thorne Building was originally designed as an educational and cultural facility. In fact, the side entrances were separately designated: one entrance for the school and another for a box office leading to an auditorium for performances and lectures. The discussion in this section on the adaptability of the physical aspects of the building for arts purposes is based on input from not only the performing arts consultant, but also a stage and facilities manager, Jim Nomikos, whose facilities management experience includes Carnegie Hall and Martha Graham Dance Company.

One of the most stunning aspects of the Thorne Building, aside from its auditorium, is the gracious and elegant classrooms. Surrounded by large windows, the classrooms are flooded with natural light. One need only to walk through the gracious interior of the building to understand why there is great public enthusiasm for preserving the building's educational and cultural legacy. Classrooms flooded with natural light, high ceilings, and substantial ventilation makes the building ideal for studio arts activities.

The auditorium within the building, which seats approximately 200 to 250, is elegant and welcoming. It is one of the most beautiful historic auditorium spaces in Dutchess County. It was originally built as a school auditorium, and the Thorne bequest intended it to be used for the "diffusion of knowledge, by the giving of lectures, concerts or otherwise." The auditorium has the distinct advantage of being built without fixed-tiered seating, which creates desirable flexibility for theatrical performances. The theatrical professionals consulted in this study praised the space for its flexibility, apparently hard to come by in the theater world where fixed seating is more common. Performers can use the stage or configure the chairs on the main floor to create a "stage" or theater-in-the round.

While there is no backstage or wing space in the current auditorium, limiting its functionality substantially, it can be readily used for lectures and one to four-character plays or readings with minimal props or staging (significant props require backstage storage, as well as special technical built-ins, etc.). Musically, the current stage is ideal for one to four instruments and acoustical performances. The acoustics would be less desirable for large groups or heavy brass. Soloists or small ensembles will work best. To maximize usability of the venue for performances, practice and warm-up rooms should be built into the basement.

The lack of sufficient wing space and total lack of backstage space presents many challenges. For example, it would be impossible to keep a piano onstage permanently. In the stage's current configuration, a piano would have to be moved onstage (and perhaps rented each time if storage is not available for a suitable instrument) for every performance that requires one. If the space became a serious musical venue, a piano would be required often.

Piano rental also raises the question of loading docks. There is no loading dock in the building, which presents challenges for the delivery of large instruments or props. Likewise, it also is inefficient for caterers. Currently, Tom Rose of Slammin' Salmon says he docks a truck on the Maple Avenue side of the building and does his warming and staging from the truck since the kitchen in the basement is unusable. In addition, the extremely narrow existing stairway to the basement, with a landing and a turn, is dangerous and inefficient.

The lack of backstage or wing space also raises the issue of storage space for the 200 or more chairs and multiple round tables needed for special events. Of course, it would be infinitely more efficient, in terms of time and manpower, if at least some of these items

could be stored on the auditorium level, as opposed to the basement. Adding storage under the stage would provide an excellent solution; however, given the limitations of this study, the architects have not yet determined if that is possible. A new backstage and additional wing space would provide some storage. However, it is inevitable that the basement would need to be used much more strategically, necessitating an appropriate service elevator.

Many people interviewed, including Village Trustees, did not think parking was a problem for large events at the Thorne Building. Although this study did not address this issue, previous proposals by a local architect (in connection with the Initial Thorne Building Committee proposal) planned for additional parking spaces created from the lawn adjacent to the driveway. The issue of parking should be considered more formally in connection with further development plans for the Thorne Building.

Programming Potential

In evaluating potential programming for the Thorne Building, the consultants spoke with a number of arts organizations throughout Dutchess County and one in Columbia County to determine programs that would complement existing offerings in the surrounding area. The following program ideas are the result of this research and Kristin Lancino's programming knowledge based on many years of experience, including substantial experience programming family-oriented arts education events at Carnegie Hall. These ideas are a starting point for discussion, and will not all be possible to develop initially.

The development of cultural programming at the Thorne Building, like many other complex and subjective endeavors, will require knowledgeable leadership. The key to success is a professional staff capable of evaluating and marketing programs and adjusting programming to the needs and interests of the community. That does not mean programming designed on a lowest common denominator basis. Any new cultural center should feature quality programming that is flexible and varied and, at times, stretches the capacity of the audience, inciting new experiences and providing opportunities for growth.

The possibilities are endless and largely depend on the imagination, resourcefulness, and professional experience of the cultural center's leadership and the resources of the institution. It would, however, be wise initially to keep the programming simple, offering three to four high quality musical series that are distinct and unique to the region. It is important to concentrate on developing or "branding" a new institution with a narrow focus that is high quality. A new cultural organization will need to grow into a full range of programs.

The following sections describe specific programming suggestions organized by artistic medium for purposes of presentation.

Visual Arts and Gallery Space

Visual arts education at the Thorne Building would fill a major gap in arts programming in Dutchess County. Instruction in drawing, painting, watercolor, photography, and printmaking are generally unavailable within 25-30 miles of Millbrook. The Thorne Building's large classroom spaces flooded with natural light are ideal for painting or drawing. They are spacious and would generously accommodate students and easels. The ventilation system must be adequately equipped to vent oil and paint fumes, and there is already substantial window ventilation in the building. Of course, sinks and clean-up areas would be required.

Many local Millbrook residents spoke fondly of the time when Barrett Art Center held classes in Millbrook at the Town Hall. Indeed, several interviewees were thrilled with the thought of taking arts classes in Millbrook. Today, most people in Millbrook are unwilling to drive 30 minutes to downtown Poughkeepsie to go to Barrett.

The other major centers of arts instruction in the area, Woodstock School of Art in Woodstock, New York and the Brookfield Craft Center in Brookfield, Connecticut, are both approximately one hour away. The local colleges are also approximately 30 minutes away. Additionally, there are many topics and art techniques, such as life drawing, *not* taught at Millbrook High School that the Thorne Building programs could supplement.

Besides weekday or weekend courses in the visual arts throughout the year, two to four-week workshops or residencies, particularly in the summer, might work well in Millbrook. Many professional artists live or pass through the Hudson Valley and would welcome the opportunity to teach locally in an intensive residency setting in Millbrook. This type of study could provide the community with exposure to major artists from New York City as well as professionals from around the country in an intimate setting that facilitates in-depth study.

The large entry halls and the basement corridor of the Thorne Building could easily be adapted to exhibition and gallery space. Total corridor and exhibition space on all four floors is approximately 4,185 square feet. The most suitable corridors for exhibition space are on the first and basement levels totaling 2,700 square feet. A well-curated series of shows might include local painters, photographers and printmakers, NYC artists, and local history exhibits. The spaces might also be used for annual juried exhibitions of student work from Millbrook's public schools.

The basement of the Thorne Building is particularly adaptable to ceramic studios, photography, or printmaking. According to the Director of the Art Center at the 92nd Street Y in New York City, ceramics is one of the most popular arts classes. Ceramics was mentioned enthusiastically by interviewees in this study, along with painting and drawing.

Music Instruction and Performances

The music teacher at Millbrook High School was very enthusiastic about the prospect of additional lessons for students who would benefit from after school or weekend instruction in music. The teacher has frequent requests for private study, but lacks the venues for private lessons. I spoke to many parents frustrated with driving 30-45 minutes to get their kids additional music instruction. It was a strain on their time. Small intimate spaces could be made available for private music instruction on the third floor of the Thorne Building, which provides an ideal “conservatory” setting for instruction in piano, flute, guitar, etc. Lessons can be offered in instruments that are not taught in the public schools (e.g., stringed instruments). Additional instruction at the Thorne Building would significantly enhance the development of young musicians in Millbrook and can be coordinated with the arts teachers and curriculum at Millbrook’s schools as described below.

Working with Kristin Lancino, a host of *sample* ideas for music programming were developed after extensive discussions with community members and local arts professionals. These events will not only complement existing local programs, but also offer new opportunities in a market that lacks a diversity of programming.

Some concert series can be enhanced with artists’ talks about the music, composer, or originating cultures featured in the series. For example, a series can focus on a single composer, or a single musical style, creating depth in the programming. The intention should be to make audiences relaxed and comfortable. It should be fun and enjoyable to come to the Thorne Building. The following series are *sample* ideas for programming in the Thorne Building.

- ❖ World Music and Folk Festivals : A four-concert series scheduled on Friday or Saturday nights featuring folk music from the United States and Central America. Imagine concerts that include barrel house piano, piedmont blues, cowboy poets, bluegrass bands, gospel ensembles, and old-time country picking. Consider ensembles with Hispanic Caribbean roots including bomba and plena, Cuban *son*, Hispanic string and accordion music, dances, and story-telling songs including Puerto Rican jibaro, or Dominican Meringue, the national dance of the Dominican Republic. A festival such as this also offers the potential for partnering with exciting and progressive organizations such as World Music Institute in New York City, specialists in non-western musical cultures.

Other ethnic or cultural themes that can be explored include authentic American genres such as blues, bluegrass and Native American music. To reflect the historically prevalent cultures in Millbrook’s population, music from Ireland and Italy would also be interesting to explore.

There is a rich selection of Celtic music that has enjoyed a well-deserved renaissance in the last several years. There are also lesser-known performers in Italian music that would provide a very new and fresh experience for Millbrook audiences.

- ❖ Classical Sunday Afternoons: A four-concert series scheduled on Sunday afternoons after church or brunch. Instrumental ensembles including string quartets, piano trios, and duos. These events can be planned as a 70-minute (no intermission) concert with a coffee/tea reception afterward to facilitate interaction with the artists. These concerts, followed by a social gathering with the artists and concert-goers, will provide a community event suitable for all ages. To give these concerts more depth and interest, they might be organized around a specific theme or composer, such as Italian chamber music, or Spanish composers, or the music of Mozart, Haydn, or Bach at Christmas. Interesting stories about the artists' lives can be integrated into the evening through program notes and discussion. Perhaps music professors from Bard or Vassar can be engaged to help curate and present these series in a light-hearted, non-academic setting.
- ❖ Jazz/Cabaret/Singers: A four-concert series on Friday or Saturday nights of instrumental jazz and song. The great American songbook sung by leading artists will provide Millbrook with great evenings of romantic torch singers accompanied by piano and drums as well as “cool” jazz straight from NYC clubs. Given Millbrook’s historic and extensive Italian population, and strong local interest in classical music, it might be interesting to explore the possibility of opera soloists.
- ❖ Family Fun and Fetes: Families come to the Thorne Building for four specially created concerts on Saturday mornings. The 60-minute performances will be led by classical artists, folk artists, or others creatively adept at teaching children. They will be animated and fun-filled educational activities. The families will “meet the instruments” in an environment that is lively with lots of “concert-talk” before, after, and during the performances. Themed series, such as Caribbean or Flamenco music, can include entertaining “fetes” or lunch feasts that feature food from the country or culture explored in the concerts.
- ❖ Theatrical Readings: The Thorne Building auditorium is ideal for readings of all types -- theatrical as well as literary (e.g., poetry and short stories). Powerhouse Theater at Vassar produces intimate play readings during their summer series in their small theaters. Hearing a play read, without props or costumes, focuses the audience on the words, ideas, and character development. It is a wonderful theater

experience that is relatively casual and would be easy to produce at the Thorne Building.

Millbrook, blessed with many celebrity actors in its midst, has the potential to invite them to the Thorne Building stage for special events. Ideally, the space could provide opportunities for artists to develop or rehearse new works. Of course, these types of events would require an appropriately skilled Executive Director that can handle all details with confidence.

- ❖ K-12 Education Projects: Educational programs at the Thorne Building can enhance existing curriculum in Millbrook's public schools with after-school programs and other supplemental experiences for students. Programs should be designed in collaboration with teachers to develop annual themes that enhance and strengthen existing classroom instruction. The Thorne Building could become a musical/visual arts partner to Millbrook public schools, as well as outside communities if possible. Links could be made with the PTA and incentive packages created for families to attend concerts at the Thorne Building. Sample programs include:

- For primary grades – lecture demonstrations that combine classroom or auditorium presentations in the school with concerts at the Thorne Building.
- Middle and upper grades – Master classes, readings, jam sessions.
- Make Thorne Building available twice annually for school performances.

Lectures and Continuing Education Opportunities

Lecture series at the Thorne Building can be designed around topics relevant to the community, such as local history, the Hudson River School of painting, other areas of art history, American history, or related New York history. These events are not difficult to present and provide great benefits to the community.

The Millbrook community is rich in experts in a variety of fields. With its proximity to Vassar College, Bard College, Marist College, and Dutchess Community College, Millbrook should be able to attract any number of professors for continuing education courses or weekend lecture series. The Hudson Valley is also home to many writers, artists, and experts in various fields. The Fountains has many residents who are retired economists, professors and actors, as well as residents who are avid consumers of cultural activities (175 residents). The Director of the Fountains was excited by the possibility of local opportunities for cultural events or lecture series because residents often travel great

distances for quality events. (The Center for Lifetime Studies at Marist organizes classroom study at the Fountains.)

Lectures or workshops on health and fitness (i.e., yoga, nutrition, stress reduction, etc.) would complement the dance and exercise classes that currently exist in the building. These could be coordinated with the health and fitness experts that appear at nearby Omega in Rhinebeck or Kripalu in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Other Program Possibilities

Outdoor programs would be logical for Millbrook because of its location in the Hudson Valley and the seasonality of tourism. Innovative collaborations with institutions in the surrounding area, such as Storm King Art Center in Orange County, an outdoor sculpture park with an international reputation and a stellar collection, could bring outdoor sculpture exhibitions to Millbrook's Green, the Tribute Garden, or the Thorne Building lawn. Of course, the Thorne Building Bandshell provides a potential venue for small outdoor music series or day-long festivals.

The Thorne Building previously hosted a very fine small craft fair on Thanksgiving weekend. Unfortunately, the fair was discontinued to the dismay of many loyal resident customers and several artists who would love to see it return. Craft fairs or the return of the Millbrook Antiques Show to downtown Millbrook would be a major boost to the local economy.

Several people interviewed expressed interest in film series at the Thorne Building. A group of local residents has organized a small series of films that are viewed in the entry hall area and apparently attract 30-40 people. Many in the Village are interested in family films that are suitable for children. Perhaps a themed festival, such as animated short films, would be successful in Millbrook. As part of this study, I spoke with the Woodstock Film Festival, but was not able to meet with them while they were in session. However, conversations with a formally organized professional film series might be beneficial in the future. More discussions would be required to better assess the potential for adapting the auditorium space for this purpose.

Community Space, Special Events, and other Rental Opportunities

Many people note the lack of attractive and practical meeting space in the Village. The Village Trustees themselves complain of needing quieter space for their own meetings. In a renovated Thorne Building, there may be multiple opportunities to develop conference potential, either in the auditorium or the classrooms.

In addition to meetings and conferences, the Thorne Building auditorium would be ideal for weddings and catered events. Many people expressed an interest in special event uses for the building. One local event planner thought that the Thorne Building would be highly marketable for weddings (a minimum of \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year in event

revenue is a modest projected estimate based on these conversations). However, some interviewees noted the ultimate challenge with large-scale event planning in Millbrook is the lack of overnight lodging in the immediate vicinity. In addition to rental of the auditorium for weddings or catered events, the theater space can also be rented by theatre organizations.

SECTION V

Challenges: Fundraising for a Cultural Entity in the Thorne Building

While this study attempted tangentially to begin identifying potential supporters and leaders for the development of a cultural entity, there is still substantial work to do on this front. The Thorne Building Revitalization Committee established that residents of Millbrook have a strong interest in expanded cultural programming in the Village. But it was premature for that committee to identify or cultivate potential board members or donors who could lead such a project forward.

Launching an independent cultural nonprofit is an enormous undertaking that is unprecedented in Millbrook. Thriving nonprofit cultural institutions require actively engaged and experienced board of directors who can support and direct the mission of the institution, and, most importantly, lead it to financial strength through proactive fundraising. Successful nonprofits require strategic fundraising plans that are most effective when capable donors take leadership roles in the fundraising. Leading donors make or break a major fundraising campaign and set the standard. If the standards are set too low initially, it is much harder to raise the standards later, particularly in times of need.

For much of the twentieth century, a handful of local affluent families have been the major benefactors to Millbrook. When needs arise in the community, these same few are approached for their support. While fundraising campaigns for capital projects have taken place for local churches or for the library, even the largest campaigns have been fairly modest in scale (\$2 to \$3 million) relative to the funds required for a full-scale revitalization of the Thorne Building. There simply are no clear models for large-scale fundraising projects in Millbrook.

There is little evidence that potential supporters, particularly relatively new residents in the area, have ever been appropriately asked to get involved. Because there is so little history of cultivating major gifts from a broad base of private donors, general confidence in raising substantial private funding in Millbrook is rather low.

Fundraising for a cultural center at the Thorne Building will require the development of a group of *new and additional* supporters for the project – supporters who would come from all corners of the Town of Washington and beyond. These relationships will take significant time to cultivate creating one of the major challenges of the Thorne Building project: the urgency of repairs verses the time a private fundraising effort requires.

Over the course of a few years during the Initial Thorne Building Committee's deliberations, the Tribute Garden had generously donated approximately \$375,000 in grants money specifically for the Thorne Building renovations. However, after the defeat of the public referendum for the bond issuance in December 2001, those renovations were put on hold while the new committee, the Thorne Building Revitalization

Committee convened. Today, the money remains unspent in the Village's accounts awaiting current decisions on renovations of the building and deliberations between the Village Board and the Tribute Garden.

According to Waite Associates, Architects, because of the Thorne Building's municipal and historic status, the project will be eligible for several state funding sources, many potentially in the multi-six-figure range.

Challenges: Competing Projects for Funding in Millbrook

The Village of Millbrook is at a critical juncture in its development. Several major projects in the community are in flux. Each of these projects is an enormous undertaking in its own right and all require expansive vision and coordination with the master planning processes in both the Village of Millbrook and the Town of Washington to resolve them successfully.

The following projects make the prospect of raising millions of dollars from private sources for the Thorne Building more difficult since the competition for funds for each of these projects is substantial.

- ❑ The Millbrook Central School District recently passed a bond for a new school in the face of strong opposition.
- ❑ The Town of Washington Recreation Department is a growing successful Town program that seeks more space in the Village Hall property.
- ❑ The Village Hall is in critical need of repair. Planning that coordinates these repairs with an overall vision for capital projects would be advisable.
- ❑ Both the Town of Washington and the Village have expressed an interest in additional space, particularly for storage. Meeting space in both the Town and Village is frequently inadequate.
- ❑ The Library, after completing a \$2 million capital campaign for an enormous addition recently passed a library tax.
- ❑ The Town of Washington is conducting a property tax re-evaluation causing taxes to rise significantly for some homeowners. The last tax re-evaluation was in 1972.
- ❑ The Fire Department is anticipating increased need for funding as they face growing pressure to enhance and maintain a first-quality progressive fire and emergency service.

SECTION VI

Conclusions

- I. The Thorne Building was the impetus behind the incorporation of the Village of Millbrook in 1896. The deed transferring the building to the Village from the Thorne family specified that the building be used for educational and cultural purposes and the building has long been used in this manner. The Thorne Building, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996, represents over 100 years of Millbrook's history and promises to play a prominent role in the future history of this historic village. The community's emotional reactions to the building speak to the importance of preserving it with care and in a manner that reflects the values of the community.
- II. Because the Thorne Building is in urgent need of restoration, the Village leadership must act promptly to raise the necessary funds to renovate the building in accordance with historic standards appropriate to a building on the National Register of Historic Places. The nature of the renovation will be based on the amount of funds available. A first-rate renovation that maximizes the building's potential as a cultural and educational venue will cost up to six million dollars. It is important to remember that the ultimate value of the building will be directly proportionate to the quality of its renovation.
- III. Millbrook, the geographic center of Dutchess County, is rich in cultural resources. The area has enormous resources in artistic talent and an abundance of cultural tourists. Yet, most residents spend their cultural dollars outside the county and outside of Millbrook.
- IV. The potential for arts and cultural programs to survive at the Thorne Building is strong. The building was originally designed for educational and cultural purposes and is readily adaptable to these programmatic uses. There is substantial documented enthusiasm among local residents for bringing expanded educational and cultural opportunities to Millbrook.
- V. It is well-known that arts and culture create positive economic impact by encouraging cultural tourism and attracting active retail customers to a community. Consumers of arts and culture are an appealing market for any economy. The local economy of Millbrook would substantially benefit from high quality cultural events in the Village.
- VI. Notwithstanding the strong local interest in expanded cultural opportunities, the potential viability of a cultural center at the Thorne Building is potentially hindered by the politicization of the building. Opportunities for open discussion, and opportunities for creative vision for the community, are essential to the success of any attempts to reinvigorate the building. The leadership in Millbrook

must build trust and hopefulness about the future to move projects forward like the Thorne Building in a manner unencumbered by politics.

- VII. Much, if not most, of the private funding required for the renovation of the Thorne Building as a cultural center will come from residents of the Town of Washington, as opposed to Village, residents. Furthermore, audiences for the Thorne Building will also come from both the Town and the Village. Therefore, any project for the Thorne Building will succeed only in collaboration with the Town of Washington.
- VIII. The development of a new cultural institution is a complex project dependent on cultivating major donors and a board of directors. The success of such a project will also require the emergence of a “founder” or group of “ambassadors” who take ownership of the project as soon as possible. These efforts are independent of the physical restoration of the Thorne Building, but may, and should, proceed simultaneously. Fundraising, at the level necessary to operate a successful cultural center on an annual basis, is unprecedented in Millbrook and will require substantial dedication and commitment from the leadership that is recruited to direct the endeavor. The fundraising potential in the Millbrook area is significant, but relatively untapped, particularly for projects in the Village. New synergies and a spirit of collaboration, including collaborations with part-time residents, will benefit the entire community. The ultimate positive impact of a cultural community center is a very compelling case for support.
- IX. Many of Millbrook’s local residents, particularly those in influential positions, believe the possibilities for change in the Village are very limited. Moving community projects forward, such as a cultural center at the Thorne Building, requires visionary leadership that leads the community to action. As one prominent arts professional stated, for any arts organization to be successful, there needs to be two essential ingredients: “community will and vision.” A cultural center must emerge from the will of the community that is developed and cultivated by visionary leadership with interest in success.
- X. Competition for funding in Millbrook is significant. Many major projects are on the table in both the Village and the Town of Washington and decisions regarding the Thorne Building must be made in this context. It would be prudent that all planning for the Thorne Building coincide with, or at least reflect, the Town and Village’s master planning processes. Ideally, decisions about the building should be made within the context of the overall big picture and long-term goals.

Recommended Action Steps

- 1) The Village Trustees should read and thoroughly discuss this report, as well as John G. Waite Associates' *Existing Conditions Assessment Update and Feasibility Study*. The Village Trustees should meet with the architects and Adelaide Camillo to discuss their reports and to plan any formal presentations.
- 2) Because of the urgent condition of the Thorne Building, the Mayor and the Village Trustees should take immediate steps to seek and confirm commitments from donors for private funding to renovate the building. The renovation of the building may progress separately from any potential development of a cultural center.
- 3) The Village Trustees should prepare and analyze budgets of all Thorne Building expenses and rental income based on existing uses (last five years) of the building and projected uses, including the potential occupancy by an independent cultural institution. Projected commercial rental income should be discussed with a commercial real estate broker to assess income from potential tenants that would be compatible with the development of a cultural center and to assess rental rates in a newly renovated building on the National Register of Historic Places.

Additionally, operating expenses for the Thorne Building as a professionally managed building should be projected in consultation with appropriate experts in building management.

- 4) The Village Trustees should determine their level of commitment to moving forward with a renovation of the Thorne Building for purposes of supporting expanded cultural activities. If the Trustees are committed to this process, the Board should take steps to identify and form a leadership committee of residents who are both deeply committed to the development of the Thorne Building and capable of supporting the fundraising efforts for the project. When fundraising leadership is committed, The Board should adopt a formal resolution in support of their actions.
- 5) The Village Trustees should meet with the Village's attorney to discuss any legal matters relating to the project, including the substantial fundraising activities related to the building.
- 6) The Thorne Building has deteriorated from many years of neglect, despite an ongoing rental revenue stream. It is imperative that, going forward, the Village Trustees devise a system of monitoring expenses and revenue at the Thorne Building so that capital needs can be met as necessary on an ongoing basis. A system of building management must also be devised to avoid further deterioration of the building. To this end, the Board should hold discussions with

building engineers and management experts to assist the Village in developing a long-term plan for maintaining the building.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED AND INTERVIEW FORM
THORNE BUILDING PLANNING STUDY

Dutchess County Arts Institutions

Benjamin Krevolin, President	Dutchess County Arts Council
Jeep Johnson, Executive Director	Barrett Art Center
Chris Silva, Executive Director	Bardavon
Beth Fargis-Lancaster, Executive Producer	Powerhouse Theater Program, Vassar College
Lou Trapani, Director	Center for the Performing Arts at Rhinebeck
Jo Ann Feigenheimer, Executive Director	Cuneen Hackett Art Center
Marianne Gurreiero, Executive Director	Northe Pointe Cultural Center, Kinderhook, NY
Sara Pasti, Executive Director	Beacon Cultural Foundation
Pamela Chassin, Executive Director	Tri-Arts Sharon Playhouse
Michael Berkeley, Artistic Director	Tri-Arts Sharon Playhouse
Deb Jones	The Fountains, Millbrook
Albert Shahanian	Albert Shahanian Fine Art, Poughkeepsie

Individuals Interviewed

Mary Alex	Town Clerk and past Village Trustee
Elizabeth Baravalle	Thorne Building Revitalization Committee
Thomas Beaumont, D.M.D.	Town Planning Board

Appendix A (continued)

Judy Bondus	Millbrook Youth Symphony and Millbrook School Board
Don Briggs	Mayor of Millbrook
Theodore Briggs	Town Supervisor
Carol Burns	Ran program for Dutchess Community College at Thorne
Drew Casertano	Headmaster, Millbrook School
Andy Ciferri	Deputy Mayor, Village of Millbrook
Anne Collins	Town Planning Board
Reverend Karl Esmark	Federated Church
Reverend Douglas Fisher	Grace Church
Craig Fryer	Millbrook Music Teacher
Ann Gifford	Millbrook Arts Group
Bob King	Village Trustee
Marni Kennedy	Village Trustee
Robert Krall	Millbrook Arts Group
Deirdre Lowry	Dance Instructor, Thorne Building
David MacDonald	Town Councilman
Edye MacDonald	Special Events in Millbrook
W. Michael Mahoney	Superintendent of Millbrook Schools
Kathy Manzi-Doro	Village Trustee
Laurie Sepe Marder	Dance Instructor

Appendix A (continued)

Jeff Matteson	Principal, Millbrook Central High School
Stephanie Mauri	Historic Research Survey for the Town of Washington (CAC) (works with David Greenwood)
Hamilton Meserve	Running Battle Antiques
Naomi Morris & Carol Stanley	Duane Lake Academy, Thorne Building tenant
David Murray	Conservation Advisory Commission
Debra Papageorge	President, Millbrook Business Association
Florence Prisco	Deputy Supervisor
Allan B. Rappleyea	Town Councilman
James Shequine	Town Planning Board
Elizabeth Shequine	Town Justice
Antonia Salvato	Millbrook Antiques Mall
Mike Spross	Art Teacher, Millbrook Central High School
Catherine Trott	Citizens' Facilities Committee for Millbrook Central School proposal
Stephen Turlletes	Town Councilman
Joseph Warner	Chief Administrator, IES Conservation Advisory Commission
Joseph Warner, Clive Jones, Mike Pace, Dave Strayer	IES Scientists and Village residents group discussion
David Whalen	Recreation Commission
George T. Whalen, Jr.	Chairman, Bank of Millbrook
George T. Whalen, III	President, Bank of Millbrook

Appendix A (continued)

Architects and other Facilities Professionals

John G. Waite and Rob Petito	John G. Waite Associates Architects
Kristin Lancino	Performing Arts Programming Consultant, NYC
Jim Nomikos	Stage and Facilities Consultant NYC and Columbia County
Tom Rose	Slammin' Salmon Caterer's, Millbrook
Dan Kish	Culinary Institute of America

THORNE BUILDING PLANNING STUDY

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
JUNE-DECEMBER 2003**

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE:

TITLE/POSITION/AFFILIATION:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

PROFESSION:

TIME IN MILLBROOK COMMUNITY:

NONPROFIT AFFILIATIONS:

PERSONAL AFFILIATIONS WITH THORNE BLDG:

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH THE THORNE BUILDING?

WHICH CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS/ARTS ORGANIZATIONS DO YOU OR
YOUR FAMILY VISIT IN THE AREA?

WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE
MILLBROOK AREA?

Appendix B (continued)

WHAT SHOULD BE THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR CULTURAL AND ARTS ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION IN THE MILLBROOK AREA?

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE SCHOOL'S CAPITAL PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS? WHAT SHOULD THEY HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

WHAT DO YOU VIEW AS THE OBSTACLES TO THIS PROJECT IN THIS COMMUNITY? WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SUCCEED?

THIS PROJECT WILL CONCEIVABLY COST SEVERAL MILLION DOLLARS TO UNDERTAKE? DO YOU THINK THAT IS POSSIBLE HERE IN MILLBROOK?

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD TALK TO ABOUT THIS PROJECT? COULD YOU GIVE US THEIR CONTACT INFORMATION?

IF THIS PROJECT MOVES FORWARD, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO:

Participate in a fundraising campaign?

Accept a volunteer leadership role?

Willing to use your influence to encourage others to give?

Willing to donate to such an effort?

Appendix C

Results of Survey Conducted by Thorne Revitalization Committee

Among 194 surveys tabulated:

79% of respondents requested visual arts activities (i.e., gallery and classes)

71% requested community activities such as teen or senior programs

74% requested continuing education classes

67% requested crafts classes or shows

74% requested dance classes or other dance activities

78% were interested in music performances or classes

61% were interested in local history courses

(Copy of Survey separately attached.)

Appendix C (continued)

Sample Quotes from Surveys Completed at the Thorne Building Open House November 10, 2002

“I hope that the Thorne Building will continue to be used for its original purpose as a cultural center and for education. It would be a great loss to the community if it would be used only as office space.”

“Let’s make sure the Thorne Building grows to become the cultural center of Millbrook, a place to gather, to learn, to share, to educate, to inform and to entertain us all.”

“It’s a great space for instruction and performance. The proximity to the town and the grandeur of the building lend itself to antique and garden shows as well as movies and theater performances. Keep it strictly for education and culture.

“We hope the building will become a center for cultural events and activities – music, local theatre, art exhibitions, lecture series, ballroom dancing and movies.”

“Residents are traveling to other villages and spending money there for community services. We need something in Millbrook.”

“This is a great space with wonderful possibilities.”

“It is very needed for young people to be able to safely use and enjoy this center.”

“Whatever use it should respect the historic designation of the building. The village government in the past has proposed physical changes to the building, which would destroy the historical integrity of the site. All renovations should respect the historic designation of the building so as not to make the building ineligible for state and federal funding.”

“Millbrook needs a community center and the Thorne Building is the ideal site for concerts, adult classes, shows, and exhibits.”

Appendix D

List of Thorne Building Revitalization Committee

Elizabeth Baravalle, Chairperson, local resident and business owner
Debra Coddington, Vice Chairperson, local resident and business owner
Andy Ciferri, Village Trustee
Veronica Lilley, local resident
Kenneth Lilley, local resident
Lydia Binotto, local resident
Frank Grasso, local resident
Alexandra Marshall, local resident
Ilana Papele, local resident
Antonia Salvato, local resident and business owner
Donald H. Briggs, local resident

List of Initial Thorne Building Committee Members

Oakleigh B. Thorne, Co-Chairperson; Member of the Board, Bank of Millbrook,
and President, Millbrook Tribute Garden
George T. Whalen, Jr., Co-Chairperson; Chairman of the Board, Bank of Millbrook and
Treasurer, Millbrook Tribute Garden
Ron Mosca, Village Trustee and Senior VP of the Bank of Millbrook
Skip Ciferri, President RW Ciferri Inc.
S.P. Griffin, Auditor, Bank of Millbrook
Florence Prisco, Town Councilwoman
Allan B. Rappleyea, Attorney
David Sloan, Millbrook School Board
Bob Knapp, Millbrook Superintendent of Schools
Ed Loedy, Architect
Catherine Shanks, George T. Whalen, Inc.
Steve Turletes, Town Councilman
John Gifford, Town Attorney
David Greenwood, Village Historian
Jack Cina, D'Arcangelo & Co.
Amy Sloan, Dutchess Land Conservancy

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Appendix B – Interview Questionnaire

Appendix C – Survey done by Thorne Building Revitalization Committee

Appendix D – List of Members of the Thorne Building Revitalization
Committee and the Initial Thorne Building Committee