

The Marriott School Restoration Project: Marriott Cultural Arts & Community Center - One Page Summary

Located just off Route 360 on Rt. 721 at 396 Newtown Road, in St. Stephens Church, the Marriott Cultural Arts and Community Center would serve as a facility where residents and neighbors of all ages could come together to learn, socialize and be entertained through various programming. Possible functions to be housed at the facility include: management office, restored classroom/conference room, art studio classroom and gallery, music classrooms for piano and voice, technology classroom, gathering space for the elderly, office for “Meals on Wheels”, branch library, kitchen for food preparation and classes and a stage for performances. Proposed programming for the center includes a wide range of classes, workshops, exhibits and performances covering various topics such as art, music, cooking, gardening, hunter safety, health, and history and after school programming for children. A facility rental program will be developed offering a unique venue for social functions and programs.

The Vision

In 2003, the King and Queen Board of Supervisors granted permission to KQCD to develop the abandoned Marriott School as an amenity for county residents by establishing facilities that could contribute to the cultural and community life of the County. KQCD’s vision is to transform the deteriorating building with the renovation of the 15,000 square foot building and appropriate site development for parking, signage and congregation. The intent of KQCD in developing this project is to provide essential county services in a convenient location, community space for theater, arts, recreation and enrichment programs, and services that enhance family life. The Marriott Cultural Arts and Community Center will be a welcoming and vibrant place for all residents in King and Queen County as well as the neighboring counties of the Middle Peninsula. KQCD commissioned Commonwealth Architects to study the feasibility of reusing the abandoned and deteriorating Marriott School for a cultural arts/community center and continues to work with Commonwealth Architects to plan for the appropriate historic rehabilitation of the Marriott School. The King and Queen Community Development Corporation established an office in Walkerton, VA through an in-kind donation of a local donor in June 2007. The office serves as a meeting place for the board of directors and committees as well as an office for fundraising purposes.

The Marriott School Property

The Marriott School, a late 19th Century and 20th Century Colonial Revival, rests on 6.18 acres of land and offers approximately 12,000 square feet of usable space in the original building. The Marriott School’s history dates back over 230 years when property was conveyed to educate the poor and orphaned children of St. Stephen’s Parish through a bequest from the widow of Captain Obdiah Marriott of Bewdley, King and Queen County. The original one room school building was constructed on this property about one mile from the current school site. After expanding and moving and being destroyed by fire in 1937, a new brick building was constructed in 1938 at the current site. The Marriott School operated until 1992, when its operations were combined with Lawson, another public county elementary school. In February 2007 the Marriott School became listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register signifying its role in the history of rural public education in Virginia.

The Campaign

Phase One – Stabilization and Demolition – COMPLETE

Major stabilization of the site began in May 2007 in an effort to secure the site for the renovation phase including chimney repair, window replacement and the removal of 10 tractor trailer loads of trash and debris. In August 2008, the front roof was painted and debris from the rear addition was removed in preparation for the asbestos removal in the following month. Additionally, the non historic rear addition was removed; thus returning the building to its original footprint to complete Phase One. This phase was funded in large part by local donors with the support of a grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Phases Two and Three – Renovation and Equipping

KQCD will work closely with Commonwealth Architects to achieve the appropriate historic rehabilitation of the site while creating a community/cultural arts center that will help connect a county and its neighbors. These phases are estimated at \$2 million. Programming possibilities were explored with local residents and community organizations. KQCD is currently assessing equipping needs and is developing an estimated operating budget for year one at the Center. Fundraising efforts will be elevated through the coming months as KQCD seeks funding from local, state, and federal sources.