



National Banjo Center
Eden, North Carolina

National Banjo Center Development Concept Eden, NC



Community



History



Education



INSIGHT Architects



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I. Introduction and Summary

Piedmont Folk Legacies, in conjunction with the North Carolina Arts Council, retained Insight Architects in October of 2008 to develop a conceptual design for the proposed National Banjo Center in the historic Spray textile mill complex in Eden, NC. The center is intended to emphasize the banjo and its effect on American music throughout the history of the nation. The scope of work included working with Piedmont Folk Legacies to determine a program for the center and to produce a conceptual design for the main building, the former Nantucket Mill.

The tasks associated with the pre-development plan included the following:

We conducted interviews and held public discussions to gather information and determine the needs of the community as they relate to a cultural center.

Those interviewed included educators, representatives of arts organizations, real estate professionals, local public officials, business owners, and other interested parties who contributed their ideas for the needs of the community and the cultural center.

We reviewed the site conditions and identified features and landscape elements within the immediate site of the building.

The team made site visits to analyze the building locations within the mill complex and determine possible space usage for the cultural center. The entire property was not included in the site analysis; however general recommendations are made as to overall site opportunities.

A partial architectural existing conditions assessment was performed during a walkthrough of the building.

A partial photographic inventory of the existing buildings is provided that identifies structures and their elements that contribute to the historic nature of the property. The existing conditions assessment also looked at space usage for the cultural center.

A building program was formed outlining the needs within the cultural center and diagrams were designed to define the organizational needs of the facility.

Conceptual plans for a cultural center within a portion of the existing Nantucket Mill building were designed that responded to the interviews and discussions and additional research.

A conceptual floor plan was designed, taking into account the program items discussed and determining the needs of the facility.



V. Evaluating Needs and Desires



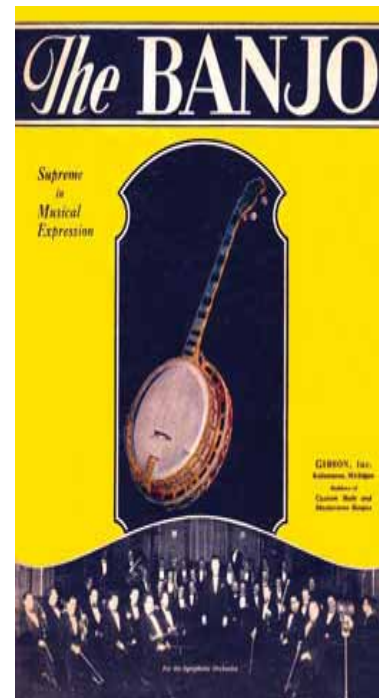
One key aspect to developing a conceptual design for the National Banjo Center in Eden is to evaluate the needs and desires of the citizens and the community. We conducted a discussion charette for the community to learn their opinions regarding the potential for revitalizing the historic mill buildings. Everyone from banjo players, local artists, civic board members, a real estate agent, and the NAACP director attended the event.

Based on our public meetings, the biggest need for the community was for a performing arts center, and a cultural center that focused on traditional music. There is also a strong need for large and flexible meeting spaces, both indoor and outdoor. Our research indicated a variety of specific needs and desires outlined as follows:



Banjo Museum Facilities

A large emphasis was placed on the importance of the banjo. This musical instrument is not only a special piece of Eden's history but a special piece of American history as well. Piedmont Folk Legacies would like to develop the National Banjo Center in the historic mill buildings, that themselves serve as part of the larger narrative. There is currently a National Four String Banjo Hall of Fame Museum in Guthrie, OK, that is being converted to the American Banjo Museum when it moves into the Bricktown area of Oklahoma City in 2009. The focus of this institution until now has been on the four-string banjo and its place in American jazz music. The new facility will expand its mission to incorporate other types of banjos as well. Piedmont Folk Legacies applauds this effort as it plans a facility that will help to preserve and promote the larger story of the banjo in America, and serve to educate and preserve a true American art form.

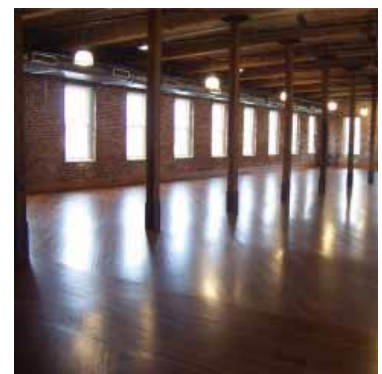


Piedmont Folk Legacies would like to expand on the success of the annual Charlie Poole Music Festival and devote space to the history of the banjo and Eden's legendary banjoist. The mission of Piedmont Folk Legacies is "to promote and preserve the musical and cultural legacy of the Piedmont region and to celebrate its influence on the development of American vernacular music, as exemplified by Charlie Poole." The National Banjo Center will serve as a "clearinghouse of banjo-related information and contain permanent and changing exhibits related to the banjo and American music, an archival repository for banjos and related materials and documents, classroom space for workshops and music instruction, a performance theater, and a recording studio." Other facets of the center will be decided and may include entities such as gift shops, restaurants and instrument manufacturers.

Source: *Piedmont Folk Legacies brochure*

Performing Arts Facilities

A centrally located performing arts facility would be a way to connect not only local artists, but also educational and youth programs. Small spaces can



V. Evaluating Needs and Desires (Cont.)



be dedicated for a number of activities including instructional performances and workshops for a variety of arts education. The small spaces should have the flexibility to open into a few larger rooms or even into one large space for special events. Depending on the final budget, these spaces could also be used as meeting and convention facilities. It was discussed that a performing arts facility can serve as a satellite facility for Rockingham Community College's or some other educational entities' arts programs.

Studio Space

In addition to performing arts spaces, the community has a need to accommodate a large local artist population. Spaces dedicated to training and practice of musical recording, dance and a variety of visual arts is an amenity that the community has indicated would serve as a great support to local artists. These studios need to be flexible and able to accommodate sound separation.

Meeting and Convention Facilities

Currently there are three facilities in the area that can hold, at most, 100 people. There is a strong need for a large meeting and convention facility that the community expressed would be widely used. A convention center that can accommodate 400-600 people would be able to host corporate events, church conferences, and a business information conference. The facility would also be used regularly for wedding receptions, high school proms and other social events in the community.

Generally, the community believes that a meeting or convention facility would prove to be greatly used in the community and even throughout Rockingham County.

Theater

The community expressed the desire to have a theater within the conceptual design. At this time, there is an outdoor theater located at Freedom Park in Eden and plans for a new theater in Wentworth, NC are under development and seeking funding. Both of these theaters are in close vicinity to the project site in Eden. The biggest need for the community is for a theater that can be an extension for the Charlie Poole Music Festival and any other large events related to the performing arts. Because of the nature of the historic mill buildings and the availability of land, an outdoor theater would be a possibility.

Instructional Programs

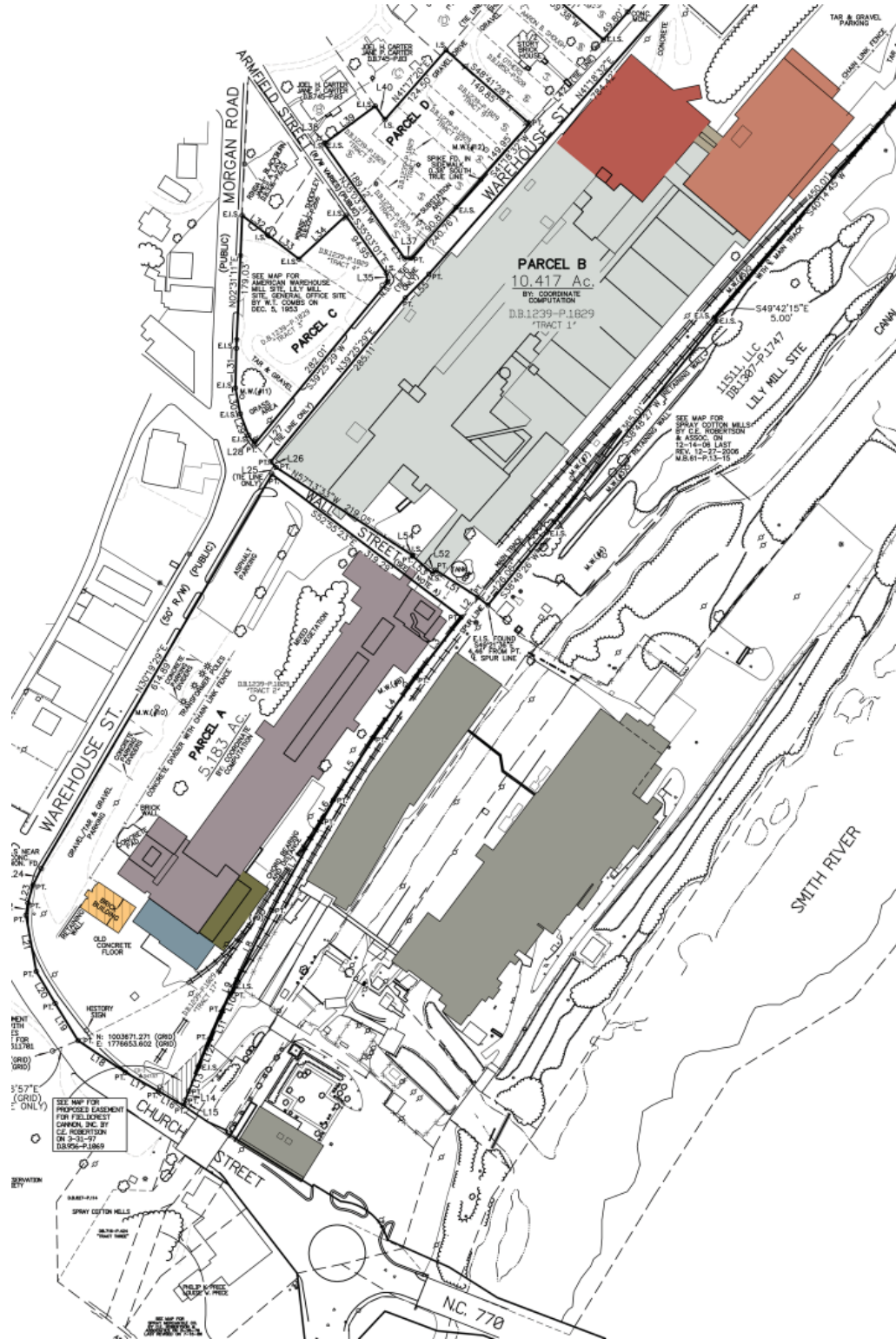
During our meetings one great need discussed was instructional programs in the community. A broad range of programs for all ages and backgrounds is needed. There is a desire to institute the JAM (Junior Appalachian Musicians) program or something similar within the community. Making after school programs of this nature available in this central location will add to the center's value and visibility.



VI. Existing Site Analysis and Architectural Assessment (Cont.)



Existing Site Plan



Site Plan Key

- Building A
- Building B (Demo)
- Building C (Demo)
- Building D
- Building E
- Building F (Demo)
- Bridge
- Demolished Mill
- Existing Mill Buildings

VII. Preliminary Space Requirements



When looking at the preliminary space requirements, we researched the existing opportunities available and the needs and desires of the community. We explored how these parts can come together into a unified concept that meets the needs of the community and its residents.

National Banjo Center

21,000 sq. ft.

The nucleus of the National Banjo Center will include three major components: the Banjo Museum, arts facilities, and convention and meeting facilities. These spaces should be designed to be flexible and maximize the potential uses of the building.

A. Banjo Museum

Exhibit Collections	3,200 sq. ft.
<i>Permanent - 2,000 sq. ft.</i>	
<i>Rotating - 1,200 sq. ft.</i>	
Listening Area	350 sq. ft.
Archives	550 sq. ft.
Gift Shop	450 sq. ft.
Office Suite	950 sq. ft.
Storage	500 sq. ft.
Snack Shop/ Dining Area	1,500 sq. ft.
Total Square Footage	7,500 sq. ft.

The Banjo Museum will serve as the main focus of the Center. The exhibit spaces will need to be flexible as they will need to house both permanent and rotating exhibits. An archive area will need to provide space for those interested in storing their banjo and other folk music instrument collections. While the legend of Charlie Poole will be highly emphasized, other banjoists will have their legacies displayed as well. Additional amenities can be added as the Banjo Museum's popularity grows.

B. Performing and Visual Arts Facilities

Performing Arts Venue (325 People)	4,500 sq. ft.
<i>Seating Area - 3,300 sq. ft.</i>	
<i>Stage - 500 sq. ft.</i>	
<i>Back of House (storage) - 700 sq. ft.</i>	
Studio Space (6 Studios)	3,500 sq. ft.
<i>Traning (4 studios at 650 sq. ft. each) - 2,600 sq. ft.</i>	
<i>Recording (2 studios at 450 sq. ft. each) - 900 sq. ft.</i>	
Storage	900 sq. ft.
Total Square Footage	8,900 sq. ft.

Adding a theater will provide challenges to the design based on the layout of the building. Auditorium spaces are designed to accommodate large audiences. They tend to have wide spans and are multiple-stories high in order to accommodate seating, sight line, and acoustical requirements. Raised stage floors and special lighting equipment are often required as well. Additional support spaces such as a lobby, projections and control room, and entrance vestibules are necessary. An outdoor theater needs to be centrally located on-site to provide easy access for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

VII. Preliminary Space Requirements (Cont.)



C. Meeting and Convention Facilities

Multi-Purpose Rooms

Large Rooms (2 rooms at 800 sq. ft. each) - 1,600 sq. ft.
Small Rooms (4 rooms at 500 sq. ft. each) - 2,000 sq. ft.

3,600 sq. ft.

Storage

1,000 sq. ft.

Total Square Footage

4,600 sq. ft.

The addition of a large meeting and convention space that can be used for various purposes will draw tourists, residents, and businesses to the site. The size should allow for large public events such as celebrations, community gatherings, and corporate functions. The facility needs to provide some well-defined programmed and non-programmed spaces for flexible uses including multi-purpose space for conferences, small group meetings, seminars, and educational outreach programs.

Circulation and Support Spaces

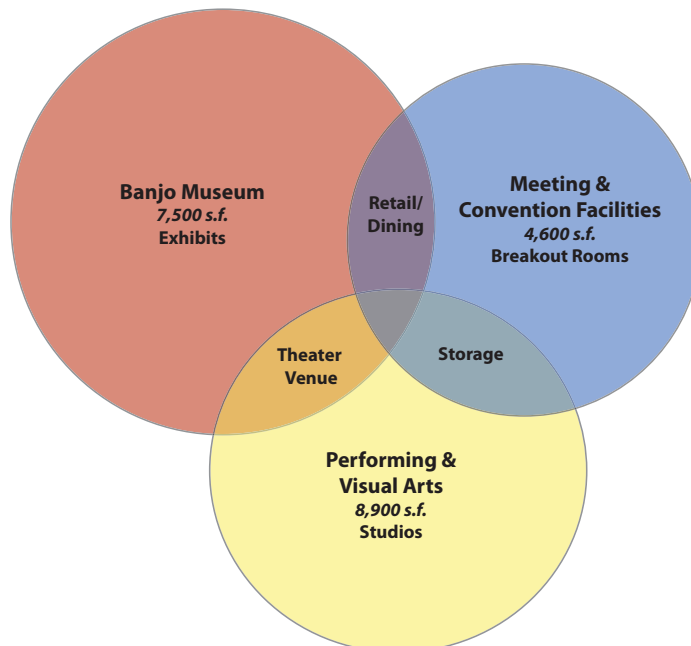
5,000 sq. ft.

Pedestrian circulation needs to be the primary focus of the site. The goal is to provide pedestrians an easy and safe way to move around the buildings. Restrooms and building maintenance areas should be clearly labeled and properly located throughout the buildings as support spaces to all major rooms. Providing a quality link between the parking, buildings, and access streets is a critical safety requirement.

Parking Visibility and Access

Adding well defined signage for on-site parking will increase the visibility of the parking areas. These areas need to be well lit, landscaped, and clean. Parking needs to be separated, where possible, to provide adequate traffic flow to separate building types and functions. The parking also needs to provide easy access to Morgan Road, Warehouse Street and Church Street.

Space Bubble Diagram





VIII. Architectural Concept Diagram

Based on the architectural assessment and after carefully evaluating the needs and desires of the community, we have looked into opportunities for a center that combines a banjo museum, performing arts venue, and dedicated multi-purpose and event spaces in the Nantucket Mill (Building A). These spaces will be accompanied by retail, dining and office spaces to provide support for the main areas. Mill buildings D and E have an opportunity to later be developed as housing and office space to support the main center.

Nantucket Mill Entry

As one approaches the Nantucket Mill, there will be two main entrances onto the site. One entry, from Church Street, will provide parking and pedestrian access to the rest of the site. Another entry, from the corner of Church Street and Morgan Road, will provide additional parking and serve as a major focal point at that intersection. Upon parking, visitors will be able to move throughout the site by various pedestrian pathways.

Upon entering the building, a central space will provide historical and tourism information for visitors. This space will serve as a check-in station and will display signage directing traffic to specific destinations within the site. The entry will provide easy access to the Banjo Museum, event center, and performing arts venue.

Banjo Museum

Locating the Banjo Museum on the ground floor of the space will allow easy access for the public. The proposed location for the museum is at the front of the building, as that will make it a strong visual anchor to the site. The large open area at the front of the building provides an excellent area for exhibit spaces. Additional museum spaces will be located on upper floors to offer more specialized areas. A gift shop and museum-related dining area will be located on the ground floor and near the main entrance points.

Performing Arts Venue

The performing arts venue will provide seating for just over 300 occupants. The interior columns of the mill buildings will create a challenge for designing one large auditorium space. We have determined that an outdoor theater on-site could provide an area for large performances and activities related to the annual Charlie Poole Music Festival. For indoor performances, the total square footage needed to accommodate over 300 people will be broken up into smaller stage areas with seating dispersed around the existing interior columns. These performance areas will be located on the ground floor to provide easy access to the general public.



The Banjo Museum will tell the story of the banjo and how it contributed to the American Story.



The museum will exhibit a wide variety of banjos, tracing the instrument's development throughout history.



Wedding reception facilities will increase awareness of the center's amenities.

VIII. Architectural Concept Diagram (Cont.)



Art Studios

Studios devoted to training for the arts will be located on the second floor. As the need for more studio space increases, more rooms can be assigned for this purpose on multiple floors. Special acoustical features will be designed for rooms that are for recording purposes. With the studios located on the second floor, the spaces will have the advantage of much natural light. These studios will be in close proximity to each other so as to provide cross-training for educational programs and for local art exhibits.



A performing arts venue will attract individuals and groups to the facility.

Meeting and Conference Center

Meeting and conference center spaces will prove to be a large asset to the development of the Nantucket Mill. All multi-purpose rooms will be designed for maximum flexibility to serve as meeting spaces for various local events and civic organizations. The provision of one large event area will enable accommodation of larger events such as wedding receptions and business conferences. The large space will be designed so that it can be partitioned off to allow for multiple smaller functions. These spaces will be located on the first floor for easy accessibility and access to the banjo museum exhibit space.



Conference and meeting facilities will add to the variety of functions for the facility.

Future Commercial Office

The third floor of the Nantucket mill provides the best opportunities for future office development from a marketing standpoint. The offices will have high ceilings and will maximize natural light into the individual units.

Mill Buildings D and E

One of the last items that can be included in the National Banjo Center development is the use of mill buildings D and E. The nature of these buildings will allow for a strong residential development. Additional office condos and artist studio spaces can be utilized in the buildings as well.

An additional use for either building is a bed-and-breakfast or overnight stay facility for visitors who would prefer to stay on-site. This facility can add to the overall experience of the historical nature of the development.

Support Amenities

In addition to a formal dining area, there will be a space for food preparation to service other areas of the building. A full kitchen will be located on the third floor to service the event spaces. A food preparation area will be provided for staging for any catered events in addition to the kitchen. These areas will be located near a non-public vertical circulation point so that delivery trucks unloading can be easily accessible.

Restrooms will be provided and centrally located for each major area of the development.

The circulation within the building will allow visitors access to any or all of the facilities with ease.



Music studios will be incorporated into the facility and can provide educational opportunities.

VIII. Architectural Concept Diagram (Cont.)

Conceptual First Floor Plan

The first floor plan provides the primary entry for the Banjo Museum and a secondary lobby for access to the meeting and convention center, as well as the second and third floors. There are two exit points in the Banjo Museum that direct traffic to the dining area, gift shop, museum offices, and the meeting and convention center.

