

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan



Prepared for Grayson County
April 2021

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

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Brownfields Assessment grant through the Virginia Department of
Environmental Quality



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The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) is an outreach center in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech that assists communities, neighborhood groups and non-profit organizations in improving the natural and built environments. Assistance is provided in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, planning, and interior design. Working with communities, the conceptual planning and design provides communities with a graphic vision of their project that can then be used for grant applications and fundraising for the next steps toward implementation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CDAC team would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions throughout the project:

Tracy Cornett

Tourism Economic Development Director, Grayson County

Tom Revel

Board of Supervisors, member, Grayson County

Bill Shepley

County Administrator, Grayson County

Vince Maiden

Brownfields Program Coordinator, VA Department of Environmental Quality

Meade Anderson

VRP and Brownfields Program Manager, VA Department of Environmental Quality

and

Those who volunteered time for the betterment of the Grayson County and the Whitetop community.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site Background

The original four-room Mount Rogers Combined School was built around 1932 in Whitetop, which was mainly a farming community settled in the early 1800s. The 2,200 square foot building sits on approximately 5 acres of land and included grades one through eleven. The exterior of the original portion of the school is uniquely constructed from tumbled rocks. It is believed that the rocks were pulled in by horse and sled from a nearby creek. When the school opened, there were four teachers with an enrollment of somewhere between 80 and 100 students.

In the early 1950s a large brick addition was added, which included additional classrooms, a library, and a gymnasium. A cafeteria and indoor plumbing were added soon thereafter. Enrollment grew until the early 1980s when there were about 200 students. Thereafter enrollment declined and by 1990, Mount Rogers Combined School was considered the smallest school in Virginia. Enrollment and staffing continued to decline through the years. By 1997, there was one student in the senior class. The school closed in 2010. At that time there were nine teachers and about 88 students.

Today, the building is unoccupied. Though the original rock-portion of the school is in relatively good condition, the 1950s addition is in poor condition. There are a number of roof leaks in the 1950s addition that have caused substantial structure damage and environmental hazards such as black mold. The extent of damage to the 1950s addition requires that it be demolished.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

Given its structural integrity, historical architectural significance, and its contributions to the cultural heritage of the Grayson County/Whitetop community, there is interest in redeveloping the original rock portion of the school. This design process provides the community with a graphic vision for the redevelopment of the remaining structure.

There has been discussion among community leaders and community members that the Mount Rogers School, once redeveloped, would be an ideal facility to leverage various tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural heritage attractions that are nearby. Some of these include Mount Rogers and Whitetop Mountain (Virginia's first and second highest mountains), Whitetop folk festivals, traditions and celebrations associating with the growing/harvesting of Christmas trees, and Grayson Highlands State Park. In addition, there is a growing relationship between Grayson County and West Jefferson, NC that creates the potential for a community partnership surrounding outdoor tourism.

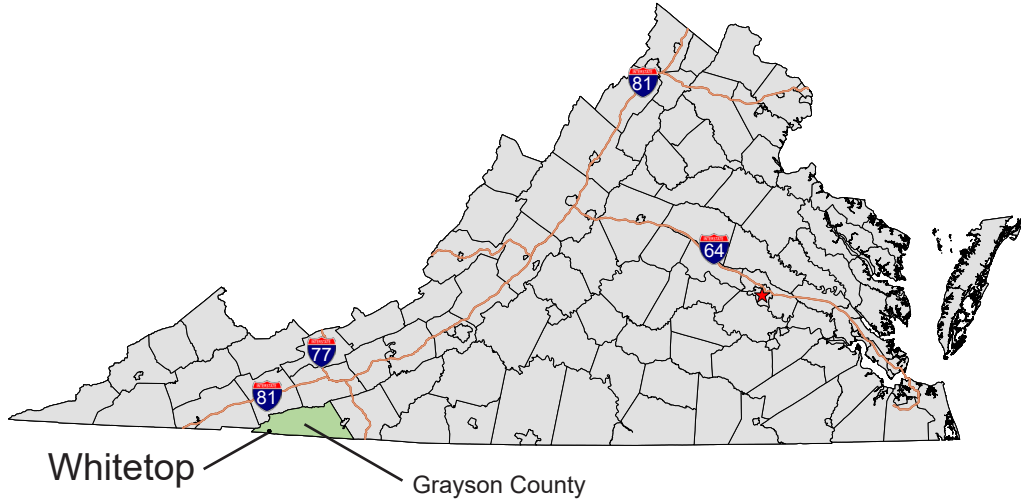
A recent report, prepared by Waukeshaw Development, provides a quantitative analysis of various redevelopment opportunities for the school that align with the tourism, outdoor recreation, and cultural heritage economic sectors. Highlights from the report include:

- There are several tourist attractions not far from the property.
- Mount Rogers School sits along the Crooked Road, which is a 300+ mile scenic route through Virginia highlighting local music and instruments.
- The School has hosted the well-known Grayson Highlands Maple Festival for two days each March
- Close proximity to, in part, Mount Rogers and Whitetop Mountain, Whitetop Festivals, Grayson Highlands State Park, Jefferson National Forest/Mt Rogers Recreational Area. Virginia Creeper Trail, Appalachian Trail (AT), and US Bike Route 76.
- Other types of destination tourism includes scheduled events such as music concerts and jams

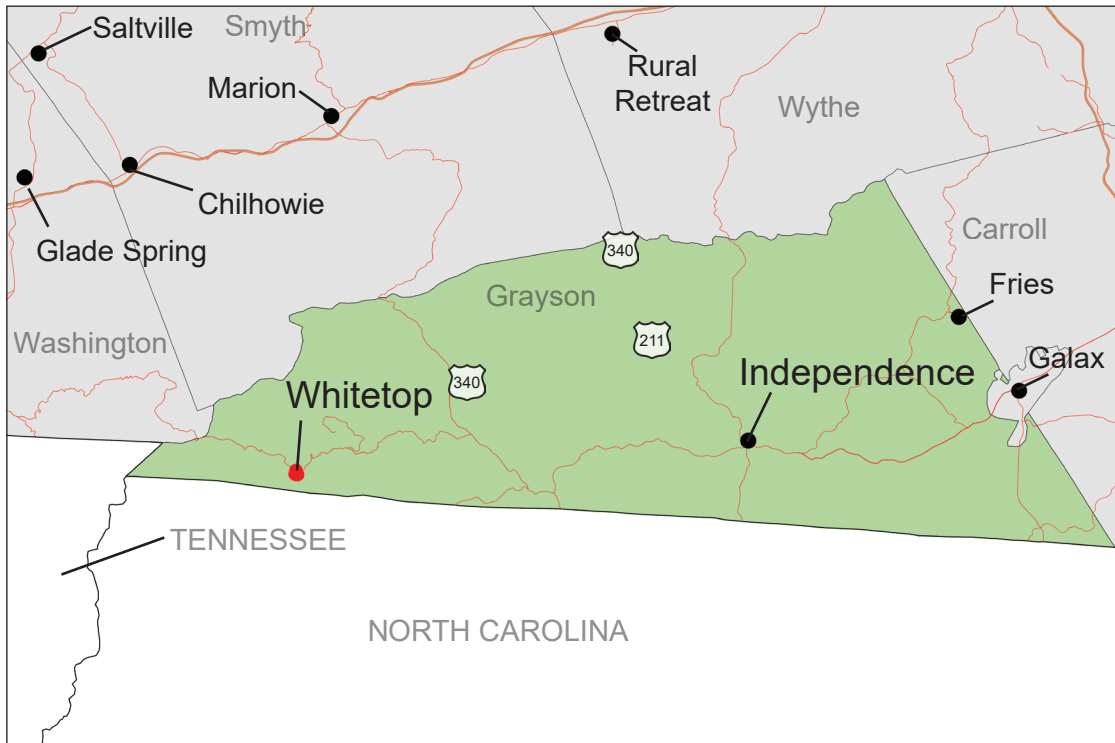
The Community Design Assistance Center worked with a Stakeholders Committee to develop a conceptual redevelopment plan for the Mount Rogers School and ~5-acre property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

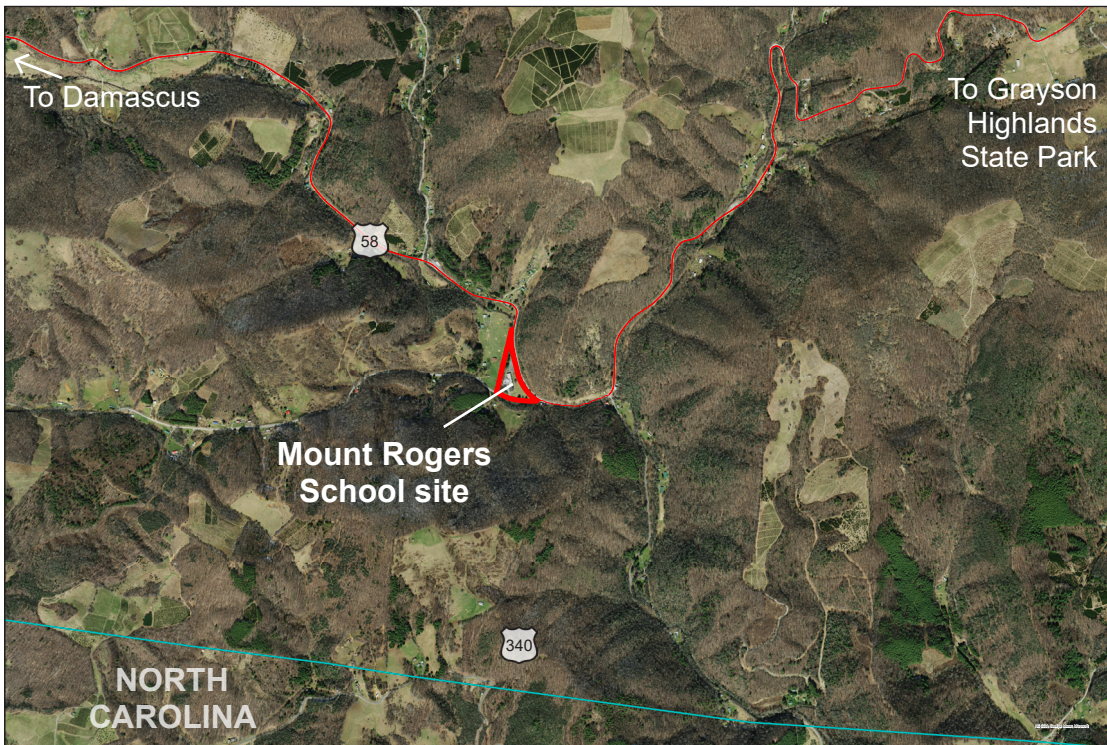
Project Location



Whitetop, VA is located in Grayson County in the southwest portion of Virginia (above). Whitetop is in a rural part of western Grayson County and is very close to the Virginia/North Carolina state line (below).



PROJECT DESCRIPTION



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The Mount Rogers School site is a key parcel in Grayson County related to tourism because of its close proximity to Grayson Highlands State Park and Rt. 58, a particularly scenic road (above). The site (red) is approximately 4.5 acres and is bordered on the west by Helton Creek (below).



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Design Process

The design process began with a site visit to the Mount Rogers School on October 8, 2020. Stakeholders from Grayson County gave the CDAC team a tour of the site and the buildings, including the original rock school, the 1950s school addition, and the auxiliary building that is currently used as a storage building. The site visit was followed by a stakeholder input session on October 16, 2020 via Zoom. During that input session the Grayson County stakeholders discussed their broad vision for the entire property and various initiatives associated with the County and Whitetop community. Input and site photos provided by the stakeholders created a comprehensive foundation that the CDAC team used to develop two preliminary conceptual site master plans for the Mount Rogers School property and two redevelopment plans for the original school building.

Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the design team presented the preliminary design concepts virtually on November 19, 2020. Following the presentation, stakeholders and community members provided feedback about what they (dis)liked about each design. Final design concepts were presented virtually on February 9, 2021 and a second time on February 11, 2021 to the Grayson County Board of Supervisors.

Meeting notes from the stakeholder input session can be found in the Appendix.



Tracy Cornett (right), Tourism and Economic Development Director, gives a tour of the Mount Rogers School property during a site visit on October 8, 2020.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

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PART 1: FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Site Master Plan

Design Description

The final design concept transforms the former school and surrounding property into a hub for community gathering, special events, tourist information, and environmental education. It celebrates the unique musical, cultural, and ecological heritage of Whitetop and the Grayson highlands. Some of the local heritage elements that are integrated into the final design include instrument making, the history of the Christmas trees industry, and heritage crafts such as quilting. Whitetop's deep musical heritage is also celebrated with new musical play equipment as well as new spaces for musical events. The community can leave a mark on the space by continuing the tradition of painting art on the flood wall and the planting of frasier firs each year. Lastly, a native planting area, rain barrel collection system, and the creek overlook provide spaces to learn and appreciate the natural beauty of Whitetop.

Parking

A two-way vehicle loop with angled spaces creates more efficient parking on the site. The parking lot has 33 total spaces and includes 2 ADA-accessible spaces and 4 that are horse-trailer compatible. There is extra space between the trailer spots to provide for easier maneuverability. A walking path is nearby for easy pedestrian access to the information center and playground. Standard parking spaces utilize permeable pavers which reduce stormwater runoff and potential negative impacts to Helton Creek.

Walking Path

There is a walking path that goes around the entire site. This quarter-mile path takes advantage of the site's flat topography to provide a public space for people to walk, run, or ride a bike. In the winter, the walking path could be used for special seasonal events such as hayrides during a fall festival or to see Christmas lights around Christmas.

Playground

The playground is adjacent to the event lawn. The playground expands on the existing play equipment with inexpensive natural, musical, and educational features.

Creek Overlook

A wooden walkway takes people up and over the berm and flood wall to connect with Helton Creek. While many of the elements on the site facilitate community and conversation, this is a quieter place for relaxation, contemplation, or environmental education. The walkway steps down near the creek for direct access for interacting with the creek or educational demonstrations.

Courtyard

The path around the site connects with a proposed courtyard that is located between the information center and the multi-purpose building (former storage building). Flagstone pavers and overhead lights create a space where people can gather. Tables and seating along the edges provide a great space for outdoor seating. This space can be used in conjunction with special activities, festivals, music events, or

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

simply to eat a snack purchased from the snack bar in the renovated school building.

Signage

'Welcome to Whitetop' and Virginia 'LOVE' signs greet people passing on Highlands Parkway. The 'Welcome to Whitetop' sign is oriented toward westward traffic on Highlands Parkway/Rt. 58, complementing a glimpse of the information center as travelers enter the western part of Grayson County. The Virginia 'LOVE' sign is more centrally located, visible from the road across the site's walking path. The path widens in front of the six foot lettering to encourage picture-taking. The character of the sign speaks to the history and culture of Whitetop and uses the unique architecture of the information center as an iconic backdrop.

Water Station

A water station is located adjacent to the parking lot. In addition to a traditional water fountain, there is also a water bottle filling spout. Below is an integrated dog bowl as well as a spigot to fill up water buckets for horses.

Stage Area

Tucked between the flood wall and the multi-purpose building is an outdoor performance stage. The covered stage directs sound toward the lawn where spectators watch. The stage is large enough to accommodate plays or ensemble performances, as well as festivals throughout the year. A back and roof structure provide additional acoustic support and double as a shade structure or shelter from rain. The wall of the storage building can be painted by community members seasonally or yearly as an effort to brand this destination when visitors share pictures of events on social media.

Event Lawn

A large lawn fronts the stage area. This lawn is a flexible space where blankets and lawn chairs can be set up. Food tents or tables can be set up along the path during larger events. In times when there is not a special event or performance going on the lawn can be a place for a picnic or passive recreation like throwing a frisbee.

Rain Barrels

Three rain barrels are placed on the north eastern side of the information center and collect rainwater from the roof during storms. The rain barrels are an interactive and educational element for children or school groups visiting the site. School age children could bring pails and buckets to water the surrounding plants or use the water to power user-control water play features.

Community Christmas Tree

Located at the edge of the event lawn and playground is a large community Christmas tree. The tree can be decorated each winter season and could be used to highlight the Christmas tree farm tradition that is so prominent in Grayson County. This tree can be a beacon of light for passersby and draw them in, as well as set a nice photo opportunity during a Christmas light festival or concert, all while speaking to the Christmas tree heritage in Whitetop.

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Native Sensory Planting

The native sensory planting area is an ecologically sensitive planting alternative to traditional grass. The planting contains a variety of native plants that require minimal maintenance once established. The native plants also serve as a habitat and food source for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. The plant palette features many that will flower and fruit, offering sweet scents and pleasing sights. Mowed paths and stepping stones allow for close up interactions and the opportunity for foraging for food, bouquets, or crafts.

The following pages contain the site master plan, exterior perspectives, and exterior precedent images.



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Key

- A Primary Vehicle Entrance
- B Marquee (Existing)
- C Parking (33 total spaces)
 - 27 Standard Spaces
 - 2 ADA Spaces
 - 4 Horse Trailer Compatible
- D Water Station
 - Traditional Drinking Fountain
 - Integrated Dog Bowl
 - Spigot To Fill Horse Water Bucket
- E Community Artwork Added to Existing Flood Wall
- F Event Lawn
- G 8'-Wide Walking Path
- H Expanded Play Area
- I Fraser Fir Plantings
- J Rain garden
- K ADA Ramp
- L Performance Stage
- M Multi-Purpose Building; Existing, Renovated
- N Courtyard With Outdoor Seating
- O Information Center/WG Music Center & Craft Museum; Existing, Renovated
- P Rain Barrel
- Q LOVE Sign
- R Native Sensory Planting
- S Creek Overlook
- T Dumpster
- U Secondary Vehicle Entrance
- V 'Welcome to Whitetop' Sign
- Design Extent
- ↗ Perspective Viewshed
- + Existing Tree

0' 50' 100'

**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
Site Master Plan
February 9, 2021



Perspective 1: Information Center, Walking Path, and 'LOVE' Sign
 The footpath offers people a flat place to walk, run, and bike in a quarter-mile loop around the property. Along the path and visible from Rt. 58 is a Virginia 'LOVE' sign. The sign celebrates the culture of Whitetop and provides a wonderful photo opportunity with the iconic information center in the background.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
 Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
 Perspective 1: Information Center, Path, and 'LOVE' Sign
 February 9, 2021



Perspective 2A: Event Lawn and Stage

As visitors enter the site from the parking lot, they experience a sweeping view of the green space in front of the information center, the information center, community building, stage, and open lawn. The mountains provide a beautiful backdrop. The open lawn and stage provide the perfect setting for community gatherings and events that draw tourists during the warmer seasons.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
Perspective 2A: Event Lawn and Stage
February 9, 2021



Perspective 2B: Event Lawn and Stage
 As visitors enter the site from the parking lot, they are greeted with a sweeping view of the information center and open lawn. A courtyard and multi-purpose community building are located to the west of the information center (at the right in the image above). This space has year-round attractiveness and can be used for holiday celebrations, complete with a grand Christmas tree sourced from a local tree farm.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
 Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
 Perspective 2B: Event Lawn and Stage
 February 9, 2021

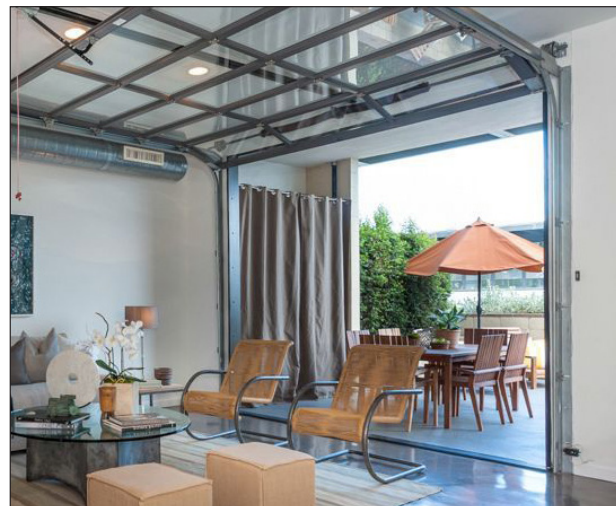


Perspective 3: Storage Building and Courtyard

A flagstone courtyard space connects the information center with the newly renovated storage building. Seating along the edges allows for people to continue through the center on the path. Aromatic flowers in beds sweeten the air and attract birds and butterflies. String lighting above allows the courtyard to be used day and night.



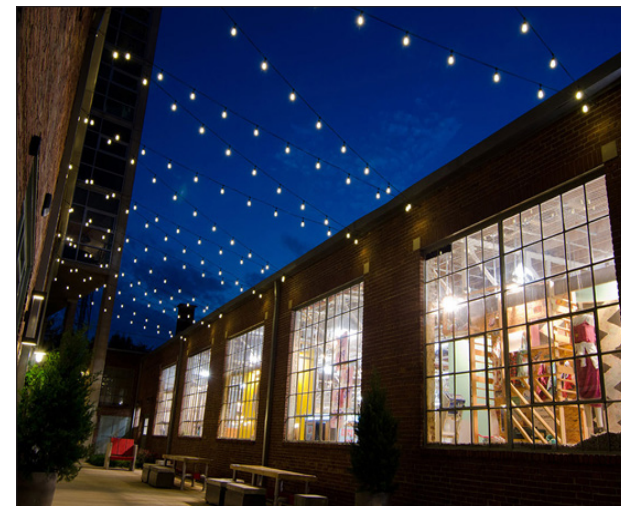
A metal sign with lighting that bears the Grayson County logo.



Opening the garage door allows events to filter both inside and outside.



Flagstone paving is a timeless way to create a comfortable public gathering space.



String lighting spans the two buildings and creates a comfortable overhead plane.



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Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
Perspective 3: Multi-Purpose Building and Courtyard
February 9, 2021



Rain barrels in a system such as this provide additional capacity to manage rainwater runoff from the building and give children a chance to learn about hydrology.



Rocks and stepping stones near the rain barrels allow for excess water to absorb into the ground while minimizing the potential for muddy conditions.



Permeable paving in the parking lot uses an interlocking system of concrete blocks that is durable and absorbs stormwater runoff.



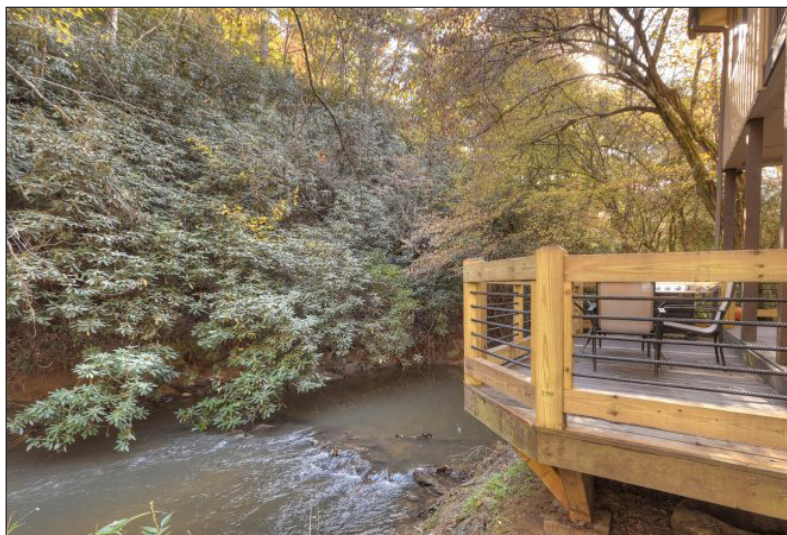
A watering station near the parking lot has a traditional water fountain as well as a spigot to fill up water bowls for dogs and horses.



Educational play features supplement existing playground equipment for a unique learning experience.



Naturalistic play features such as this provide an alternative to traditional play equipment and can be an opportunity to support local businesses or craftspeople.



A wooden creek observation deck is a peaceful place to enjoy Helton Creek.



Asphalt is a cost effective and durable surface option for many of the walking trails around the site that is universally accessible.



A cover can be added to the stage and can host musical performances or be a picnic area when not in use for special events.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
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Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan
Precedent Images
February 9, 2021

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Plant Palette: Pollinator Plants and Trees

Design Description

Pollinator Plants

Pollinator plants are interspersed throughout the site master plan in designated planting areas. The pollinator plant selection assists in boosting ecological variety and value throughout the site and, when located along walking paths, provide opportunities for wildlife observation. The selected plants are native and many self-seed and spread easily. While they require maintenance following initial planting, native plants/pollinator-friendly perennial plant species will soon establish and require minimal maintenance. Keeping a mowed edge will help contain the pollinator plants once they are established and provide a crisp edge condition.

Trees

Much of the tree cover shown in the final site master plan is proposed tree cover with the exception of a large shade tree near the school and mature pines located along the edges of the property. As trees are added to the interior of the site, it is important to select species that are appropriate for the site, mainly with the respect to mature size. New tree plantings that are proposed are selected for their ability to provide additional shade, are suitable near parking lots, have a small to medium mature size, and have potential to be environmental education opportunities through a partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry's area rangers or Virginia Master Naturalists.

CDAC strongly encourages the Grayson County leadership to work with representatives from the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). This office an excellent resource for tree species selection, placement on the site, tree protection protocols during construction activities, and long term management of mature forests.

Contact information for the VDOF Campbell County Senior Area Forester:

Chris Sullivan, Senior Area Forester
Virginia Department of Forestry
276-676-5488
1240 West Main Street
Abingdon, VA 24212

The following pages contain images and plant information for certain trees and pollinator species.

NOTE: Soil samples were not taken during this project. Soil samples should be taken prior to installing any plant material.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
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Lavender, *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Silver Frost'
Particularly hardy lavender variety. Very fragrant. Blooms bright purple June-August. Attracts butterflies and can be used for crafts such as potpourris.

Height: 2 to 3 feet
Spread: 2 to 4 feet
Bloom Time: June to August
Bloom Description: Purple
Sun: Full sun
Water: Dry to Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Herb, Pollinator Garden



Black-Eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*
Blooms June-September. Freely self-seeding. Tolerates deer, drought, clay soil. Attracts a variety of native pollinators, including butterflies.

Height: 2 to 3 feet
Spread: 1 to 2 feet
Bloom Time: June to September
Bloom Description: Yellow to orange-yellow rays
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Native Plantings, Pollinator Garden



Trumpet Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*
Very fragrant. Vine or unsupported groundcover. Good for arbors, trellis, or partitions. Resistant to deer and clay soils. Attracts birds, hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Height: 8 to 15 feet
Spread: 3 to 6 feet
Bloom Time: May to June
Bloom Description: Scarlet/Orange with Yellow Inside
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Native Planting



New England Aster, *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*
Suitable for rain gardens and does not require regular pinching. Bright pink blooms in fall. Attracts birds and butterflies.

Height: 3 to 6 feet
Spread: 2 to 3 feet
Bloom Time: August to September
Bloom Description: Deep Pink-Purple
Sun: Full Sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Native Planting, Rain Garden



Rough Goldenrod, *Solidago rugosa*
Self seeding, suitable for rain gardens. Showy yellow blooms August to October. Tolerant of deer, clay soils, and wet soils. Attracts butterflies.

Height: 3 to 5 feet
Spread: 1.5 to 2.5 feet
Bloom Time: August to October
Bloom Description: Yellow
Sun: Full Sun
Water: Medium to Wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Native Planting, Rain Garden



Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*
Easily grown in medium to wet soils in full sun. Surprisingly tolerant of average well-drained soils in cultivation. Plants have deep taproots and are best left undisturbed once established.

Height: 4 to 5 feet
Spread: 2 to 3 feet
Bloom Time: July to August
Bloom Description: White, Pink, Mauve
Sun: Full Sun
Water: Medium to Wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Native Planting, Rain Garden



Buffalo Grass, *Buchloe dactyloides* 'Sharp's Improved'
Tolerates drought, mowing and watering required infrequently, if naturalized will stop growing at 6" and not require mowing at all, avoid planting in wet and shady areas. Turns straw colored in winter, good for low maintenance lesser trafficked lawn areas

Height: 0.25 to 0.50 feet
Spread: 0.50 to 0.50 feet
Bloom Time: Non-Flowering
Bloom Description: Green
Sun: Full Sun
Water: Dry to Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Native Planting



Virginia Strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*
Perennial root system, attracts birds, butterflies and other pollinators, small white flower blooms April to June. Delicious fruit.

Height: 0.25 to 0.75 feet
Spread: 1 to 2 feet
Bloom Time: April to May
Bloom Description: White
Sun: Full Sun to Part Shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Ground Cover, Native Planting



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
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Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan

Plant Palette: Pollinator Plants

February 9, 2021



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Frasier Fir, *Abies fraseri*

Best grown in rich, moist, slightly acidic, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Best in full sun. Trees grow poorly in heavy clay soils. Trees are native to cool, often foggy, mountain climates. Desired in the Christmas tree industry.

Height: 30 to 50 feet
Spread: 10 to 25 feet
Bloom Time: Non-Flowering
Sun: Full Sun to Part Shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Landscape Tree, Christmas Tree



Virginia Pine, *Pinus virginiana*

Easily grown in average, medium, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions including both heavy clay soils and poor soils.

Height: 15 to 30 feet
Spread: 10 to 20 feet
Bloom Time: Non-Flowering
Sun: Full Sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Landscape Tree, Christmas Tree (Young)



Serviceberry, *Amelanchier x grandiflora*

Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Tolerant of a somewhat wide range of soils, but prefers moist, well-drained loams.

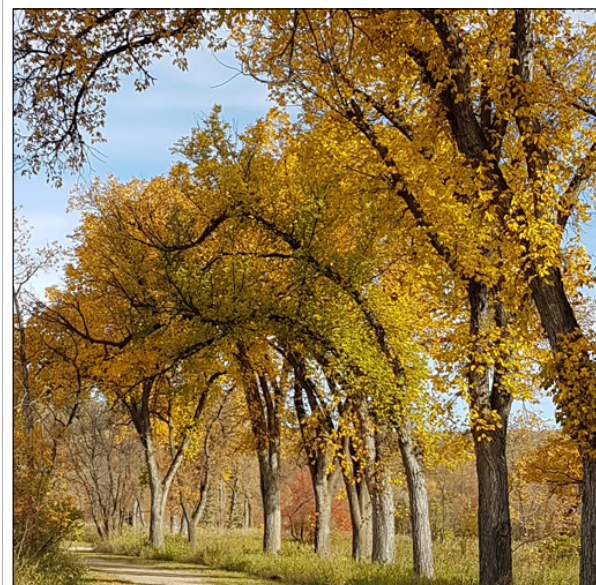
Height: 15 - 25 feet
Spread: 15 - 25 feet
Bloom Time: April
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Flowering Tree



American Hornbeam, *Carpinus Caroliniana*

A slow growing deciduous tree, The smooth, gray trunk and larger branches of a mature tree exhibit a distinctive muscle-like fluting. Attracts game birds, deer, foxes, and small mammals.

Height: 20 - 35 feet
Spread: 20 - 35 feet
Bloom Time: February
Sun: full sun to part shade
Water: medium
Maintenance: low
Suggested Use: Street Tree, Native Planting



'Valley Forge' Elm, *Ulmus americana 'Valley Forge'*

Excellent resistance to Dutch elm disease. Grow in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerant of light shade. Prefers rich, moist loams. Adapts to both wet and dry sites. Generally tolerant of urban conditions. Other hybrid and disease-resistant varieties available.

Height: 40 - 50 feet
Spread: 40 - 50 feet
Bloom Time: March to April
Sun: Full sun
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree



Red Maple, *Acer rubrum*

Easily grown in average, medium to wet, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Tolerant of a wide range of soils, but prefers moist, slightly acid conditions. Very cold hardy. New leaves, twigs, fruit, and fall color are all variations of red.

Height: 40 - 70 feet
Spread: 30 - 50 feet
Bloom Time: March to April
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium to wet
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Shade Tree



Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus florida*

Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Prefers moist, organically rich, acidic soils in part shade. Benefits from 2-4" of mulch which will help keep roots cool and moist in summer.

Height: 15 - 30 feet
Spread: 15 - 30 feet
Bloom Time: April to May
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Medium
Suggested Use: Flowering Tree



Eastern Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*

Easily grown in average, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun to part shade. Part shade is best in hot summer climates. Performs best in moderately fertile soils with regular and consistent moisture. Avoid wet or poorly drained soils. Multi-stemmed understory tree with rose-purple flowers.

Height: 20 - 30 feet
Spread: 25 - 35 feet
Bloom Time: April
Sun: Full sun to part shade
Water: Medium
Maintenance: Low
Suggested Use: Flowering Tree

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Site Master Plan

Plant Palette: Trees

February 9, 2021

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Information Center/Western Grayson Music and Craft Museum

Design Description

The concept and intention behind the design decisions in the interior came from the idea of layering. Christmas Trees have layers of branches, music is created by layering sounds, and communities are built upon layers of history. Visitors move through the rooms and learn about the various layers that make Whitetop and Grayson County so unique. Visitors begin at the information desk for an introduction before moving to the music and culture rooms for a more detailed experience. The multi-purpose building is an opportunity for the community to come together for special events and year-round music.

Information Center, Snack Bar, and Retail

The information center is where visitors come for general information, talk to a greeter, or purchase tickets for special events going on. Creek Side Snacks, a small snack bar located inside the information center, provides light refreshments for purchase. There is a chalkboard menu that features the Creek Side Snack logo, the day's specials, and menu item prices. The snack bar seats 5 people on stools and has additional seating at two cafe tables. A lounge seating area provides additional seating. A local retail display features items by members of the community such as books, ceramics, floral arrangements, quilts, and instruments. The instruments are hung on the wall as decor as well as a retail display. Tourism merchandise is also available for purchase such as information booklets, books about the area, mugs, stickers, and clothing items. Lockers repurposed from the original schoolhouse are used as a retail display.

Information Window

The wall to the left near the main entrance has an opening with a transom above to serve as an information window for visitors. This is the spot for visitors to ask questions or get information about the area.

Heritage and Culture Museum Room

The heritage and culture museum room highlights many of the rich traditions of the area. There are three display spaces, each equipped with its own description stand, display platform, and television screen to play informational videos. There are two tables in the center of the room to house loose items such as books, photo albums, artifacts, and handmade items. On the wall closest to the door, there is an "Our Common Threads" installation which features quilted squares made by people in the community.

Music Museum Room

The music museum room focuses on the musical history of Whitetop and Grayson County. This room has three display spaces, each of which are equipped with its own description stand, display platform, an television screen to play informational videos. There is a "Wall of Fame" display which highlights musicians and luthiers from the area.

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Topographic Relief Map

Western Grayson County is an exceptionally beautiful, mountainous region. An enlarged topographic relief map in the hallway highlights the topography of the area. This is in an interactive piece where visitors are encouraged to see and feel the drastic changes in elevation.




The following pages contain the information center floor plan, interior perspectives, and interior precedent images.

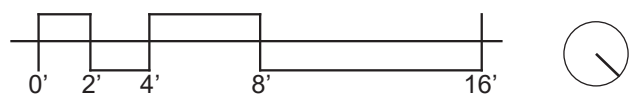
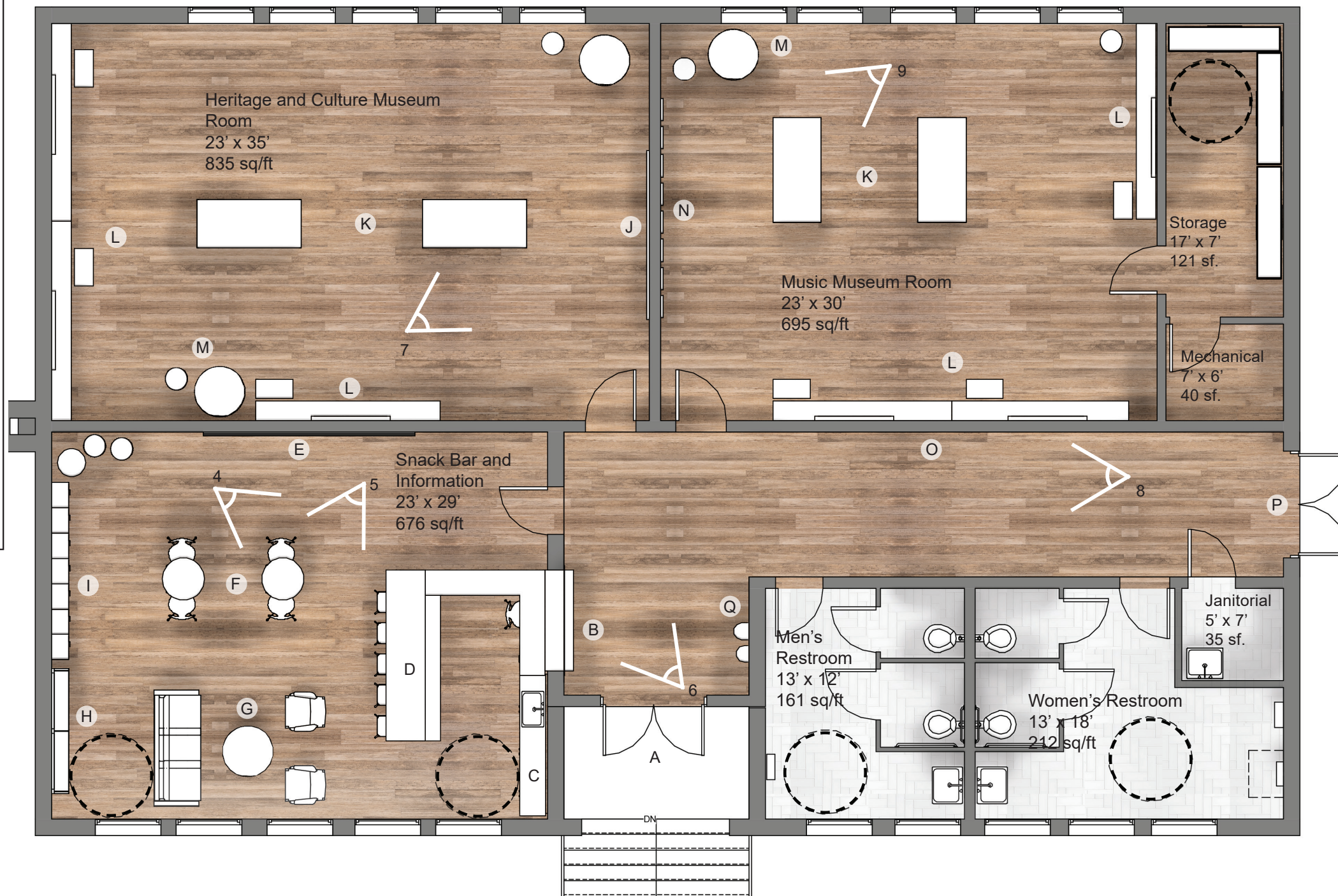


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- Key**
- A Main Entrance
 - B Information Window
 - C Chalkboard Menu
 - D Snack Bar
 - E Information Brochures
 - F Tables
 - G Lounge Seating Area
 - H 'Local' Retail Display
 - I Repurposed Lockers with Instrument Display Above
 - J 'Common Thread' Quilting Installation
 - K Display Tables
 - L Built-In Display Cases
 - M Moveable Stools
 - N Music 'Wall of Fame' Display
 - O Topographic Relief Map
 - P Secondary Entrance/Exit to Open Lawn, Stage, and Courtyard
 - Q Water Fountains
 -  Perspective Viewshed
 -  North Arrow
 -  5' Turning Radius



Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Information Center/Western Grayson Music & Craft Museum

Floor Plan

February 9, 2021



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Perspective 4: Snack Bar and Information Desk

The snack bar is the perfect place for visitors to relax and enjoy a bite to eat. There is a variety of seating options for visitors indoors as well as outdoors. The information desk is adjacent to the historic entrance of the building and is accessible through the wall opening.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Information Center/Western Grayson Music & Craft Museum
Perspective 4: Snack Bar and Information Desk
February 9, 2021



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Perspective 5: Retail Display

The retail displays include Grayson County merchandise, area information, and local artisan's creations. The local artisans are encouraged to partner with Grayson County to sell their instruments, pottery, quilts, and food items here.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Information Center/Western Grayson Music & Craft Museum

Perspective 5: Retail Display

February 9, 2021



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Information Center/Western Grayson Music & Craft Museum
Perspectives 6-9: Information Desk, Hallway, and Museum Rooms
February 9, 2021



Perspective 6: Information Desk
The information desk is adjacent to the historic entrance to the building. From here visitors can stop by the snack bar, shop in retail, or explore the museum rooms.



Perspective 7: Heritage and Culture Museum Room
The heritage and culture room celebrates Grayson County's past and present. Historical artifacts are displayed throughout the room while a patchwork quilt by the townspeople is displayed on the wall.



Perspective 8: Topographic Relief Map
Nature is an important piece of the culture of Grayson County and this wall piece shows that. This interactive piece depicts the topography of the area for visitors to see the rich landscape in a new way.



Perspective 9: Music Museum Room
The musical history in Southwest Virginia is a rich one, and this room celebrates that. A "Wall of Fame" showcases famous musicians and luthiers of the area.

FINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Multi-Purpose Building

Design Description

The multi-purpose building, formerly a storage building for the school, is transformed into a lively, multi-purpose space. The multi-purpose building provides additional space for special events, community gatherings, and a venue for year-round music.

Flexible Seating

The multi-purpose building is equipped with flexible seating and tables which can be rearranged to accommodate the community's needs. The tables and seating can be stacked up and stored in the storage rooms provided as needed. There is room for 50 seats in the event of a live performance or guest speaker. For an event such as a craft fair or festival, there is room for about six tables that can be set up as booths for sellers.

Stage

The open stage is a place where members from the community or visiting performers can gather to play music, put on performances, have guest speakers, or lead demonstrations. The wall of the stage is covered in felt to help with acoustics during performances. The wall is a perfect place for community branding or logos. The stage is accessible by the tiered steps or by an ADA accessible ramp.

Partition Wall

A partition wall is located between the main seating space and the restrooms. The partition wall is composed of a wood frame with a felt interior to help manage acoustics in the space. The top of the partition wall is glass encased in a wood frame to allow light to pass through the space.

Wall Mural

A wall mural is added at the entrance of the multi-purpose building. This is a great opportunity to showcase a local artisan. This mural can be repainted to feature a new artist periodically or it can remain as the same piece of art.

Glass Folding Sliding Door

The existing garage door is replaced by a glass folding sliding door, which can easily be opened up to seamlessly blend the interior and exterior spaces. This could be particularly useful during events such as a festival, farmers market, or craft fair where extra space is desired.

The following pages contain the multi-purpose building floor plan, alternative floor plan layouts, perspectives, and precedent images for various interior spaces.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan




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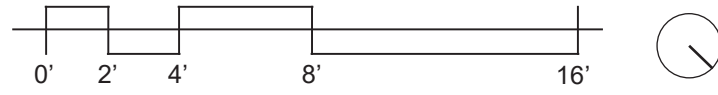
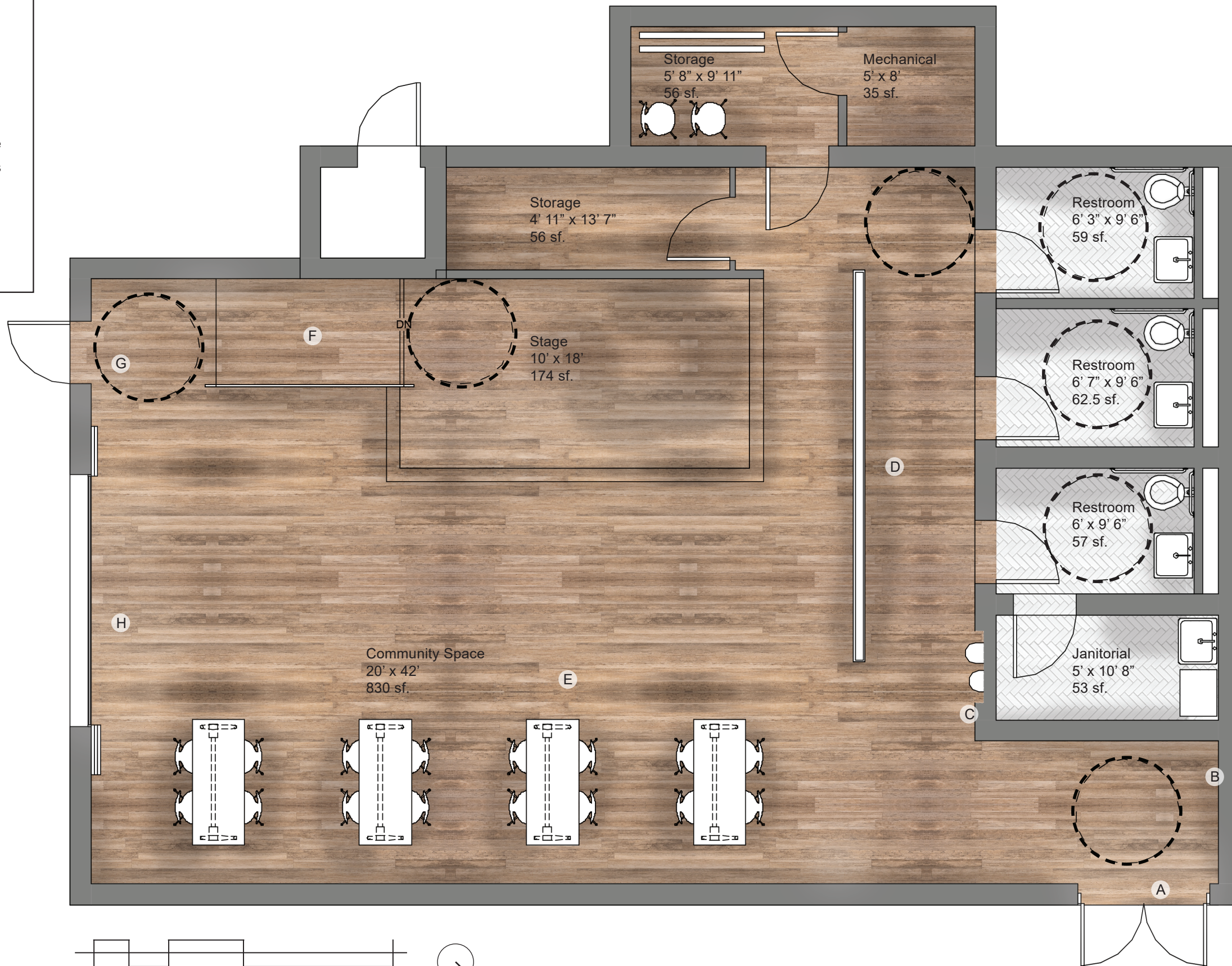


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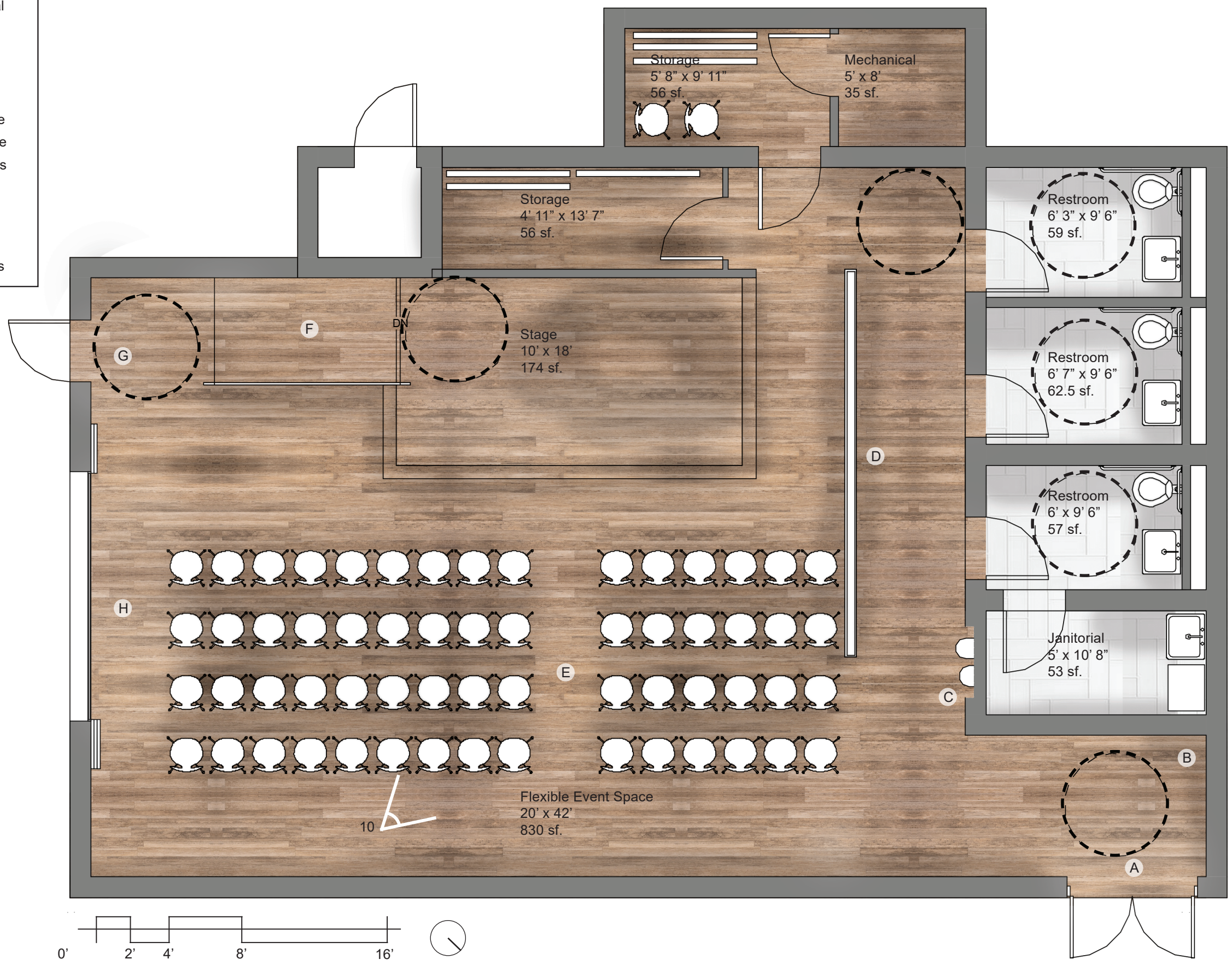
- Key**
- A Main Entrance
 - B Scenic Indoor Mural
 - C Water Fountains
 - D Partition Wall
 - E Tables
 - 4 Tables
 - F ADA Ramp to Stage
 - G Secondary Entrance
 - H Folding Glass Doors
 -  Perspective Viewshed
 -  North Arrow
 -  5' Turning Radius



**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Final Design Concept: Multi-Purpose Building
Alternate Floor Plan 1: Community Space
February 9, 2021

- Key**
- A Main Entrance
 - B Scenic Indoor Mural
 - C Water Fountains
 - D Partition Wall
 - E Audience Seating
-50 Seats
 - F ADA Ramp to Stage
 - G Secondary Entrance
 - H Folding Glass Doors
 -  Perspective Viewshed
 -  North Arrow
 -  5' Turning Radius



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**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Final Design Concept: Multi-Purpose Building
Alternate Floor Plan 2: All-Weather Music Venue
February 9, 2021



Perspective 10: Multi-Purpose Building As An All-Weather Music Venue
 The multipurpose space can be set up to support musical performances, guest speakers, or demonstration events. The stackable chairs can be stored if a standing room only event is scheduled. The back wall of the stage and the partition are treated in felt acoustic panels to help with the acoustics during these performances.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
 Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Multi-Purpose Building

Perspective 10: All-Weather Music Venue

February 9, 2021

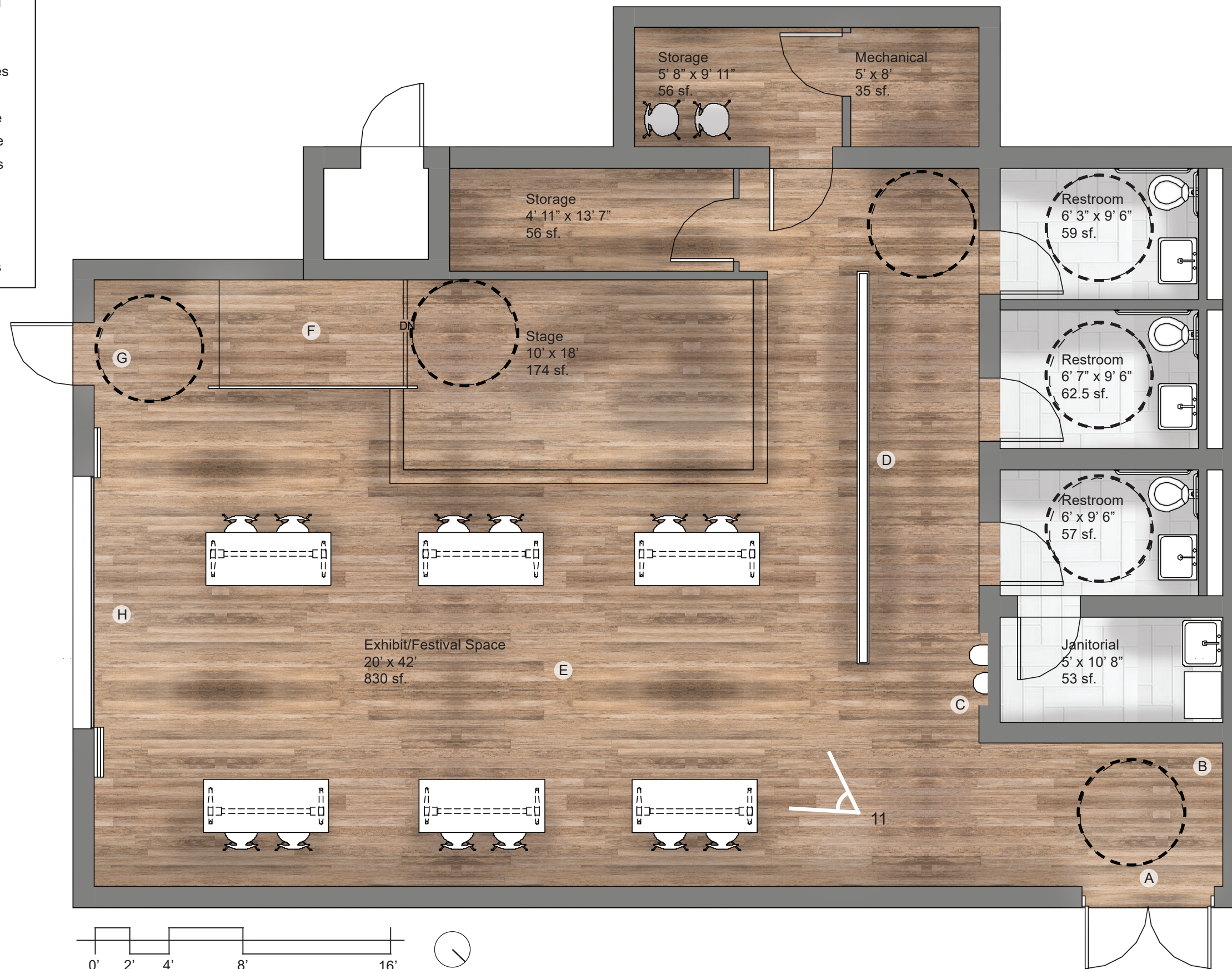


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- Key**
- A Main Entrance
 - B Scenic Indoor Mural
 - C Water Fountains
 - D Partition Wall
 - E Event/Festival Tables
-6 Tables
 - F ADA Ramp to Stage
 - G Secondary Entrance
 - H Folding Glass Doors
 - Perspective Viewshed
 - North Arrow
 - 5' Turning Radius



Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Multi-Purpose Building
Alternate Floor Plan 3: Festival Support Space
February 9, 2021



Perspective 11: Multi-Purpose Community Building As A Festival Support Space
 The multipurpose space can support events such as craft fairs or an indoor farmers market. The foldable tables can easily be stored if they are not needed. The glass door can be opened up if the event taking place needs to be both indoors and outdoors.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
 Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Final Design Concept: Multi-Purpose Building

Perspective 11: Festival Support Space

February 9, 2021

Seating:



Wayfair:
Araceli Sofa
Reception/Snack Bar Room



Wayfair:
Jarin Faux Leather Armchair
Reception/Snack Bar Room



Bernhardt Design:
Orbit Guest Chair
Reception/Snack Bar Room,
Multipurpose Space



Wayfair:
Lindquist Swivel Solid Wood Bar Stool
Reception/Snack Bar Room

Tables:



Uhuru:
Stoolen 36"
Reception/Snack Bar Room

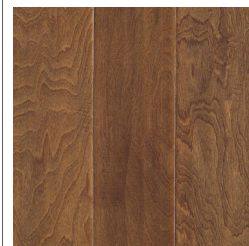


Wayfair:
Merrigan Dining Table
Reception/Snack Bar Room

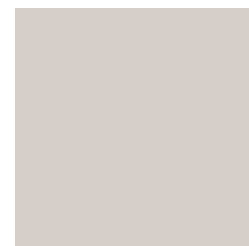


Modern Office:
Flip Top Training Table
Multipurpose Space

Finishes:



General Flooring:
Mohawk Flooring:
Engineered Hardwood
Burlap Birch



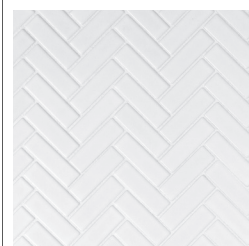
Wall Paint (Typical):
Behr:
Burnished Clay
PPU18-9



Partition Felt:
Filzfelt:
Aro Plank 6
732 Farn



Couch Upholstery:
Hashtag Home:
Emerald Green Polyester



Bathroom Flooring:
Daltile:
Restore Bright White



Wall Paint (Accent):
Behr:
Outdoor Oasis
S370-7



Stage Felt:
Filzfelt:
Aro Plank 6
200 Natural

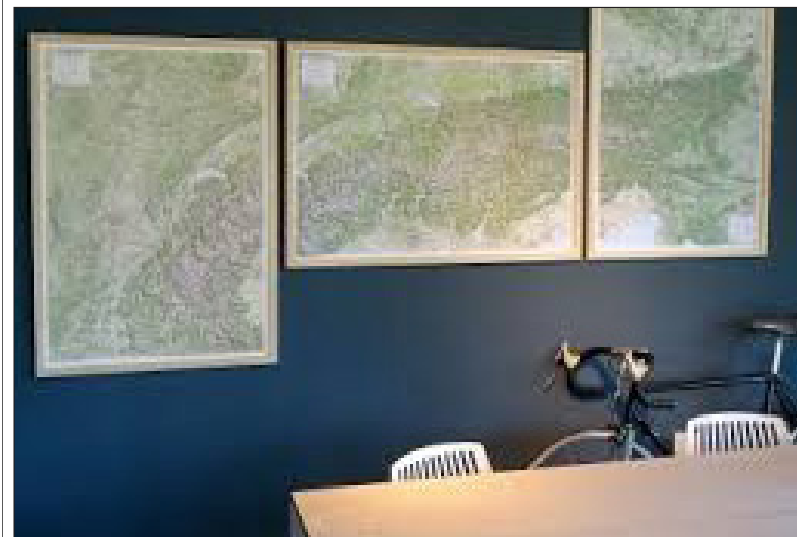


Lounge Chair Upholstery:
George Oliver:
Cognac Faux Leather

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Chalkboard menus allow for personalization and quick changes to the menu as product offerings come and go.



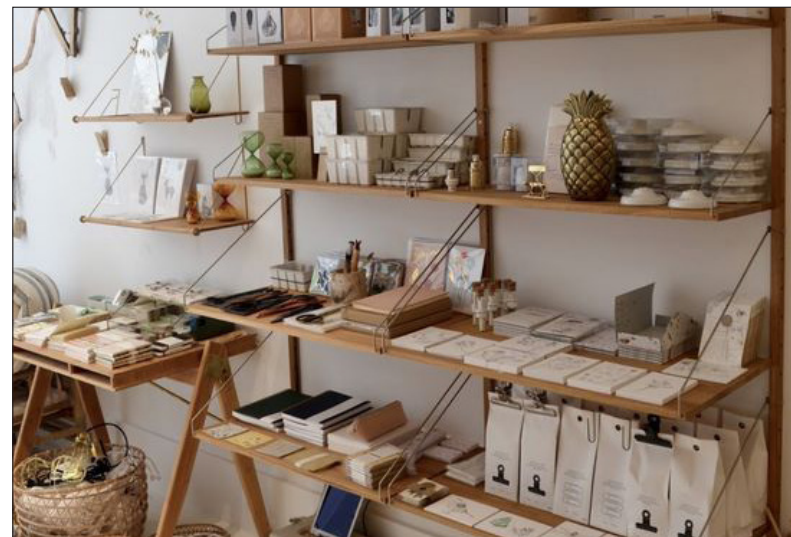
An enlarged topographic relief map mounted to the wall can be an interactive way to showcase the unique topography of the Grayson Highlands area.



A folding glass door added to the multi-purpose community building creates a seamless transition between interior to exterior spaces.



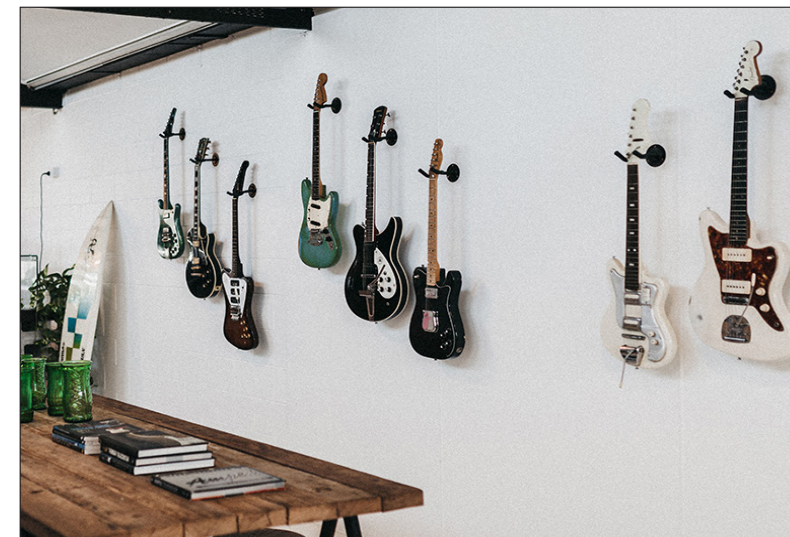
Original lockers from the school can be repurposed and used as storage or displays.



Wall mounted displays save floor space and draws attention to the items being sold in a unique way.



An opening near the reception area allows increasing visual access and interactions with visitors throughout the building. A transom is added to match the existing transoms found above other doors.



Instruments can be mounted to the wall as a decor piece or be offered for purchase.

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PART 2: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Site Master Plan

Inventory Description

The Mount Rogers Combined School sits on approximately 5 acres in Whitetop, VA, on the western end of Grayson County. While this region of southwestern Virginia is quite mountainous, the site is rather flat, bordered on the east by Highlands Parkway (Rt. 58), to the south by School House Road, and to the west by Helton Creek. There are two buildings on the site: the combined school and a concrete block storage building. The school has an original portion (visually defined by the rock construction) and a 1950s addition (visually defined by the brick exterior). For reasons explained later in this report, the brick portion of the school is planned to be removed while the original school building and the storage building will remain. Each of the following site features played an important role in the development of design decisions.

Parking Lot

The existing parking lot lacks traditional striping for vehicle spaces, which results in driver confusion, inefficient use of space for parking, and inefficient circulation. There is an opportunity to reconfigure, move, and expand parking into the land vacated by the demolition of the 1950's addition. The parking lot is currently very close to the playground. The location of existing vehicle entrances to the site should not be modified.

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Area Between School Structures and Storage Building

The 1950's addition currently encloses the space between the original school portion and the storage building. There is an opportunity to redevelop this space into an outdoor courtyard after the 1950s portion is demolished.

Flood Wall and Earthen Berm

There is a flood wall that runs between the site and Helton Creek along the site's western edge. Previous classes of the Mount Rogers Combined School have commemorated their graduation by painting the wall on the northern half of the wall. There is an opportunity to highlight this valuable community artifact and expand it with more community art. The southern end of the flood wall ends at a large, densely vegetated berm. If cleared out, stairs and a deck could take people up and over the berm in this area to enjoy the creek.

Playground

The current playground equipment is in very good condition and highly utilized by the community members. It is an important element to preserve in the proposed plans and could be relocated if necessary. The current location has it in a highly visible area from the road.

Original Schoolhouse

The original schoolhouse is in overall good/great condition. It is a striking structure and has a rich history in the Whitetop community. The interior has large windows as well with great views out to the front lawn and space between the school and storage buildings.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Aging Pines

Aging pines line both Highlands Parkway and School House Road. The community has a desire to replace the aged out trees with younger, healthier, locally grown fir trees. The tree replacements could include traditional Christmas trees, representing the prominent Christmas tree farm industry that has such a strong presence in this region. These trees could be planted cyclically to demonstrate the life cycle of the tree farms and could be decorated around the holidays to really capture visitors' interest.

Septic Field

A septic system is located in the southeast corner of the site. Future construction activity or vehicle circulation should avoid this area. Proposed design elements should consist of light hardscapes, lawn or shallow root system plantings, and light programming to account for the septic system.

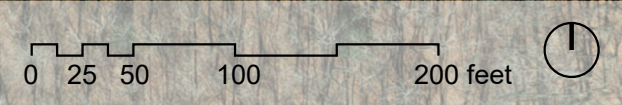
Field Corner

The southeast corner is home to the first glimpse into the site when traveling north into Whitetop. This makes for a good opportunity for signage and a multi-purpose stage/amphitheatre that the community desires.

The following pages contain a site aerial, existing site images, and site analysis.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

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Site Boundary

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**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Inventory and Analysis
Site Aerial
April 13, 2020



View of site from the main parking lot. Nice mountain view framed by building and foliage. The parking can be improved with traditional striping and site entrance formalized.



View out of front windows onto field. A portion of the field serves as a septic field, limiting certain types of development of that area.



View into "courtyard". Great contained space if storage structure remains. Potential for overhead design element such as a pergola to enhance comfort.



View out from "courtyard". Exists currently as a service drive. Function may limit paving and furniture choices. Located near both field and creek.



Natural planting aesthetic should be preserved and expanded upon in planning and cleaned up where needed.



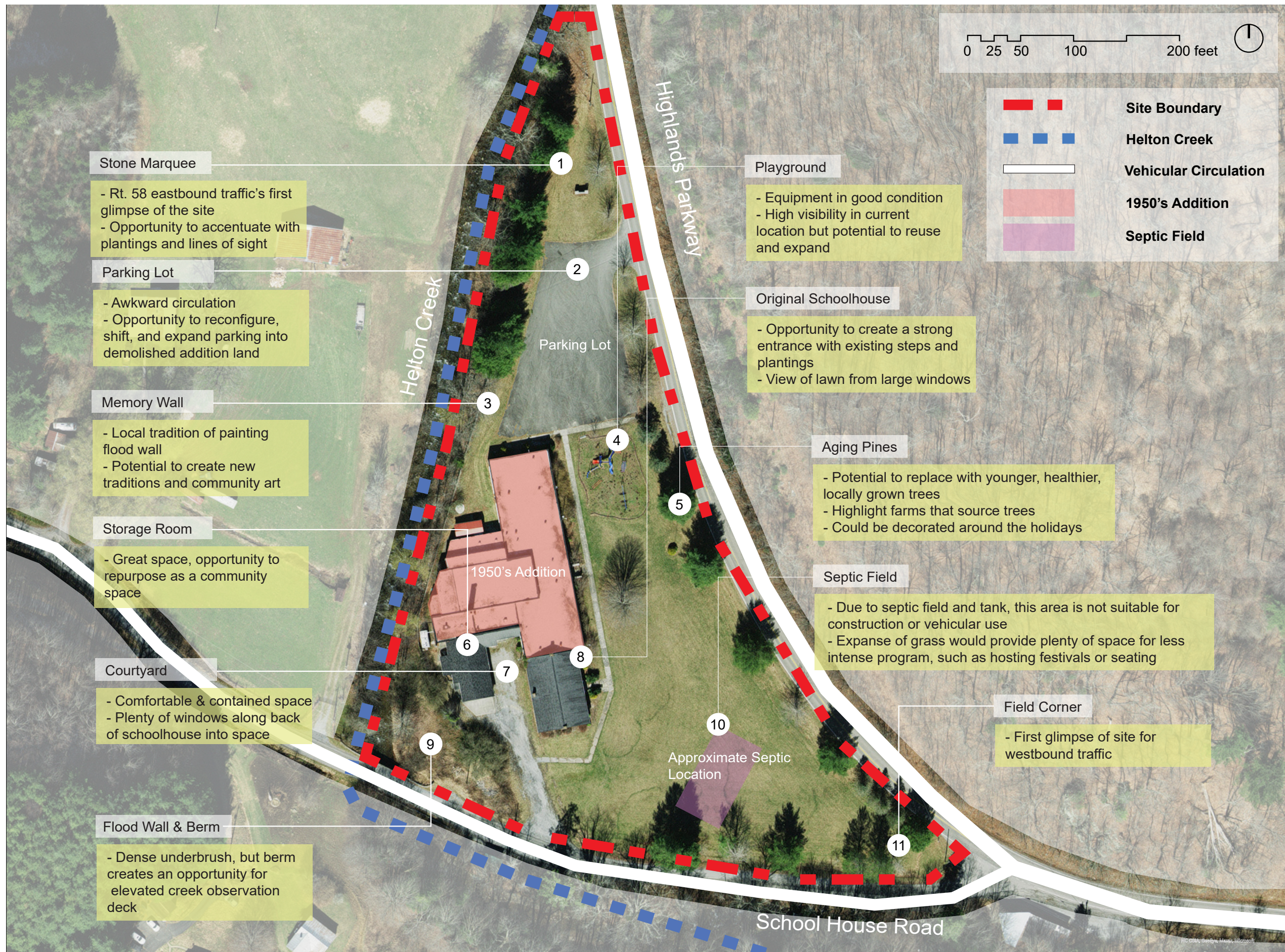
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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Inventory and Analysis
Site Master Plan: Site Aerial and Existing Conditions Images
April 13, 2020



Stone Marquee

- Rt. 58 eastbound traffic's first glimpse of the site
- Opportunity to accentuate with plantings and lines of sight

Parking Lot

- Awkward circulation
- Opportunity to reconfigure, shift, and expand parking into demolished addition land

Memory Wall

- Local tradition of painting flood wall
- Potential to create new traditions and community art

Storage Room

- Great space, opportunity to repurpose as a community space

Courtyard

- Comfortable & contained space
- Plenty of windows along back of schoolhouse into space

Flood Wall & Berm

- Dense underbrush, but berm creates an opportunity for elevated creek observation deck

Playground

- Equipment in good condition
- High visibility in current location but potential to reuse and expand

Original Schoolhouse

- Opportunity to create a strong entrance with existing steps and plantings
- View of lawn from large windows

Aging Pines

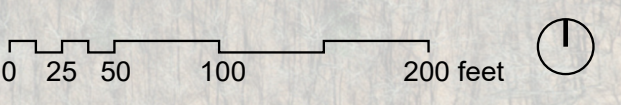
- Potential to replace with younger, healthier, locally grown trees
- Highlight farms that source trees
- Could be decorated around the holidays

Septic Field

- Due to septic field and tank, this area is not suitable for construction or vehicular use
- Expanse of grass would provide plenty of space for less intense program, such as hosting festivals or seating

Field Corner

- First glimpse of site for westbound traffic



Site Boundary (Red dashed line)

Helton Creek (Blue dashed line)

Vehicular Circulation (White line)

1950's Addition (Pink shaded area)

Septic Field (Purple shaded area)

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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Inventory and Analysis
 Site Master Plan: Site Analysis
 April 13, 2020

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Building and Interior Spaces

Inventory Description

The Mount Rogers Combined School, located at the intersection of Highlands Parkway (Hwy 58) and School House Road in Whitetop, Virginia, was built in the 1930s and later expanded in the 1950s. The site is one of the few flat plots of land in the area. This original portion of the school is well loved by the community and special consideration should be taken to honor its history.

Original Portion of the School

The original building is in overall good condition and was constructed of locally-sourced rocks. It has four primary rooms and formerly had a restroom that has since been removed. The roof is corrugated metal. The exterior façade is in good condition, with the majority still containing the original rock material. The north façade of the building currently connects to the 1950s addition and will need to be reconstructed once the addition is demolished. On this north façade, ADA accessible doors will need to be added, as the existing main doors are only accessible from stairs. These existing main doors are on the east façade of the building. There are two chimneys, one on the south façade and one on the west. The original windows in the school house are in decent condition, providing large amounts of natural light into the building.

The interior is in good condition. The interior spaces receive ample natural light from the large windows on the east and west facades. There is existing plumbing infrastructure in the northeast corner of the building, where the clinic of the school was previously located. The walls are in good condition. The ceiling is an acoustic tile drop ceiling and is not original to the building. The flooring is not original and should be replaced. The original doors are present and include transoms above them, incorporating even more natural light into the space.

1950s Addition of the School

An addition to the school was added in the 1950s and included additional classrooms, library, gym, and cafeteria. This portion, constructed of brick, is in very poor condition. There are several significant roof leaks that have contributed to several structural and mold hazards. Vandalism has caused damage throughout the 1950s portion though the original portion remains unharmed. It is recommended that the 1950s portion be demolished but the original rock portion of the school be retained for redevelopment.

Storage Building

There is an existing storage structure behind the rock portion of the school and is in good condition. The building is constructed of cinder block walls and a corrugated metal roof. There is existing plumbing in the building. There is a garage door on the south wall of the building. The building has two small fixed windows on the east façade.

The following pages contain an as-built drawing of the original rock portion of the school and existing site images of the building's interior and exterior.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

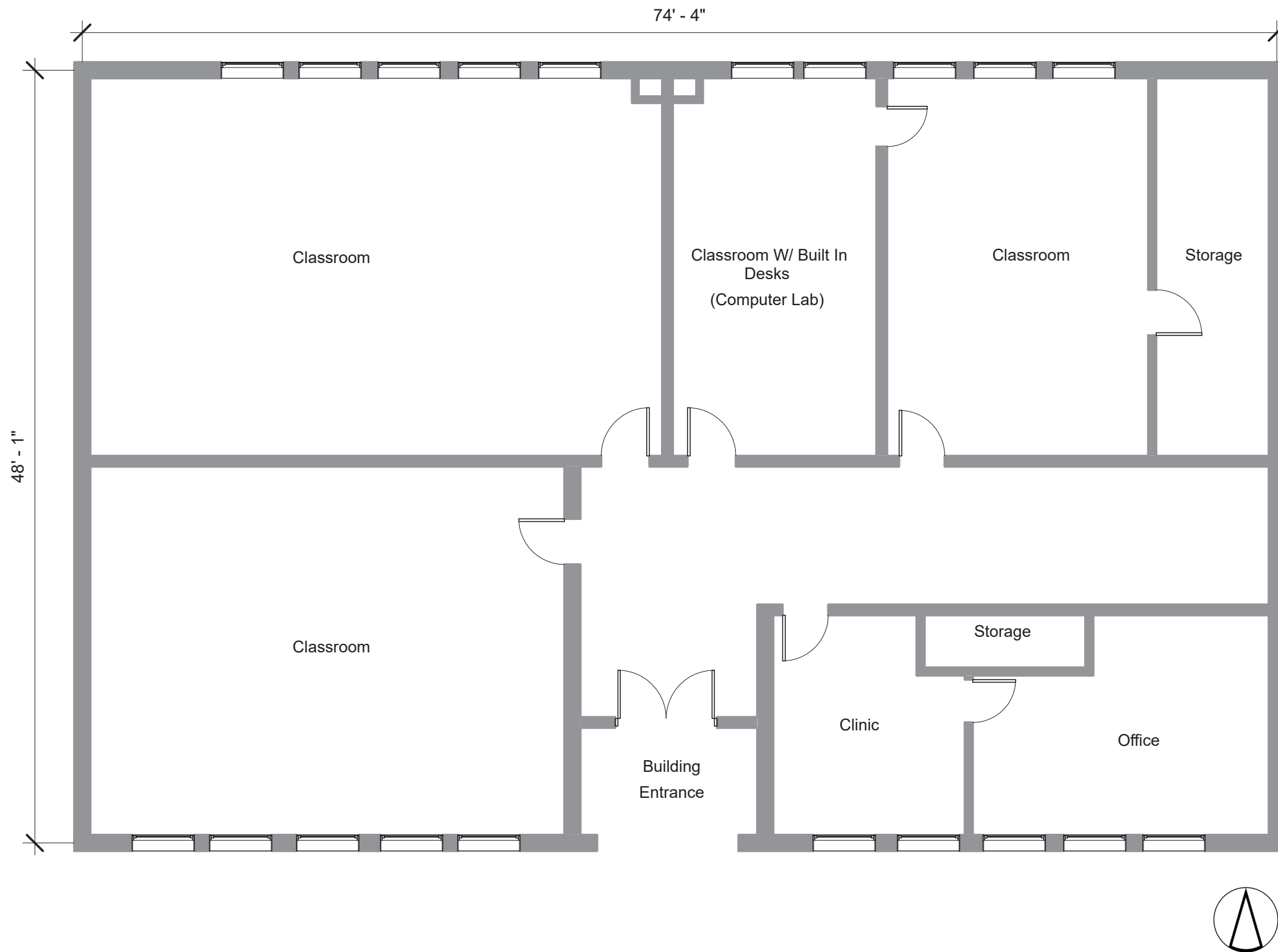
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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Inventory and Analysis
Buildings and Interior Spaces: As-Built Drawing
April 13, 2020



The stone schoolhouse entrance is in good shape, but only accessible by stairs without hand railings. The plants on either side of the entrance are overgrown.



The windows appear to be in good condition with the exception of some chipping paint and need for general cleaning.



The original stone and mortar joints of the building appear to be both in great condition.



A view of the roof line and chimney details. The roof of the old stone school portion appears to be in good condition with no water damage visible on the inside.



The storage building is located behind the original rock school. It is in better condition than the main brick building and has the potential to be included in the redevelopment planning process.



An entrance to the brick addition. The 1950s-era addition is in poor condition with several known water leaks. The County plans to remove this portion of the building.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Inventory and Analysis

Buildings and Interior Spaces: Existing Conditions Images (1 of 2)

April 13, 2020



The view from the stone building into the brick addition.



The schoolhouse has high ceilings, measuring 11' 8". A wall mural still remains in the school.



Large windows are in great condition and found in all classrooms/rooms. The windows provide lots of natural light and views to the scenic landscape outside.



Original built-ins and shelving in the classroom to the left (when entering the front door). Shelving is in good condition.



A view through the ceiling panels of the dropped ceiling to the original. Height of original is 11'8" and there is an opportunity to expose them.



An original solid wood desk remains in good condition in what was used as the computer lab.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Inventory and Analysis
Buildings and Interior Spaces: Existing Conditions Images (2 of 2)
April 13, 2020

**PART 4:
PRELIMINARY
DESIGN CONCEPTS**

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Site Master Plan; Heritage

Design Description

Concept 1 focuses on the rich history of Grayson County and transforms the former Mount Rogers Combined School into an official visitor center. The mountainous terrain that surrounds the site provides a scenic backdrop to highlight the area's unique agricultural, geologic, and hydrologic history. This concept uses recreation and relaxation, conversation and contemplation, to tell the story of Grayson County to visitors and locals alike.

Walking Path

The program is organized around a path that takes visitors around the entire site. In a region with dramatic topography, this quarter-mile path takes advantage of the site's rare, flat nature to provide a public space for people to walk, run, or ride a bike. Wide enough to accommodate the occasional vehicle, trucks or tractors can make seasonal programs such as hayrides or Christmas light experiences possible.

Playground

The existing playground equipment is reorganized to take children on a journey as they move from one attraction to another, guided by natural elements such as native plantings or tree stumps. An artificial dry creek bed meanders playfully near the playground, prompting curiosity about water and natural systems.

Rainwater Channel

A rain barrel is located near the visitor center and collects rainwater from the roof. Once enough water is accumulated it can be released into a narrow impervious channel that weaves through the play space. The channel empties into a rain garden, mimicking the journey of Helton Creek which borders the site. Grass plantings, creek stones, and interpretive signage can be arranged around the channel as an environmental learning opportunity.

Frasier Fir Plantings

As the walking path runs alongside the road, a set of frasier fir plantings highlight the regional importance of Christmas trees. The frasier fir plantings follow the seven year growth cycle of marketable frasier firs. Every year for seven years a new tree will be planted along the path by a different local farmer, creating a visible succession of growth. The oldest tree will be the year's official Christmas tree, replaced the following year by a new sapling, leaving the place of honor to the next tree. This allows for annual Christmas decoration as well as ceremonial tree planting events and becomes a visual exhibition of the cultural importance of these trees.

Signage

A Virginia 'LOVE' sign and a 'Welcome to Whitetop' sign both greet people passing on Highlands Parkway. The 'Welcome to Whitetop' sign is oriented toward westward traffic and has a clear view of the visitor center behind it. The 'LOVE' sign is more centrally located, visible from the road across the site's walking path. The path widens in front of the six foot lettering so people can stop to take pictures with the visitor

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

center in the background.

Pavilion

A pavilion is situated at the corner of the site nearest the convergence of School House Road and Highlands Parkway. Westward traffic into Whitetop first catches a glimpse of the old school through this direction, and the open pavilion obstructs this view as minimally as possible. The pavilion creates a performance space visible from the road and from the large event lawn. The path runs around the pavilion, allowing for vehicles to easily transport sound equipment. When not in use for performances, the pavilion becomes a shaded place to play and picnic.

Creek Overlook

A wooden walkway takes people up and over the berm and flood wall to connect with Helton Creek. While many of the elements on the site facilitate community and conversation, this is a quieter place for relaxation and contemplation. The walkway steps down near the creek to let people run their hands through the water and feel the rocks.

Courtyard

The path around the site makes its way between the visitor center and the multi-purpose building (former storage building). Tables and seating along the edges of the path allow people to leisurely gather. People walking visiting the courtyard can play cards or eating refreshments from the visitor center.

Parking

A one-way vehicle loop with angled spaces creates more efficient parking. There are 28 total spaces. There are 3 ADA-accessible spaces. The path going around the site runs adjacent to the lot for easy pedestrian access to the visitor center and playground.

The following pages contain the preliminary design concept 1 site master plan, exterior perspective, and exterior precedent images.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Heritage
Site Master Plan
August 27, 2020



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A small channel diverts collected stormwater into a rain garden, encouraging curiosity about local geology and hydrology.



The orientation of the play equipment takes children on a journey along the water channel and memory wall.

Perspective: Performance Pavilion from Rt. 58
As you enter Whitetop, you are greeted by a view of the visitors center framed by the performance pavilion. A path allows people to walk around the site, bordered by Fraser fir and wildflower plantings.



A wooden creek overlook helps people over the berm to engage with Helton Creek.



When not in use for performances, the pavilion becomes a shaded place to play, sit, and gather.



Seasonal activities such as hayrides take advantage of the wide path that makes its way around the site.



Fraser fir plantings along the path allow for Christmas light experiences on the site and from the road.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Heritage Exterior Perspective and Precedent Images
August 27, 2020

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Building and Interior Spaces; Heritage

Design Description

Concept 1 focuses on transforming the original/stone portion of the school building into a visitor destination focusing on local heritage. The school building itself has an abundance of importance and history, making it the ideal location for a visitor center with supporting features.

Information Desk

An information desk is located in the first room on the left upon entering the building from the main entrance. The information desk provides visitors with the opportunity to ask questions, get directions, or learn about popular attractions nearby.

Snack Bar

A small snack bar is proposed in the same room as the information desk. The snack bar is similar to an old fashioned soda counter and has casual seating at a bar. Customers could sit at the bar with stools or order items to-go to be enjoyed outside. The close proximity between the snack bar and information desk allows both areas to be staffed by a limited number of employees.

Mixed Retail/Museum

The retail space would be primarily devoted to local products from businesses and vendors. There are many unique traditions in Grayson County, such as maple syrup making and Christmas tree farms. Products associated with these industries could be sold in the retail space. Above each retail display would be a corresponding museum display that educates people about the origin or significance of the products. Most displays would be against the existing walls to allow for a circulation/walking path around the checkout desk at the center of the room.




Demonstration Space

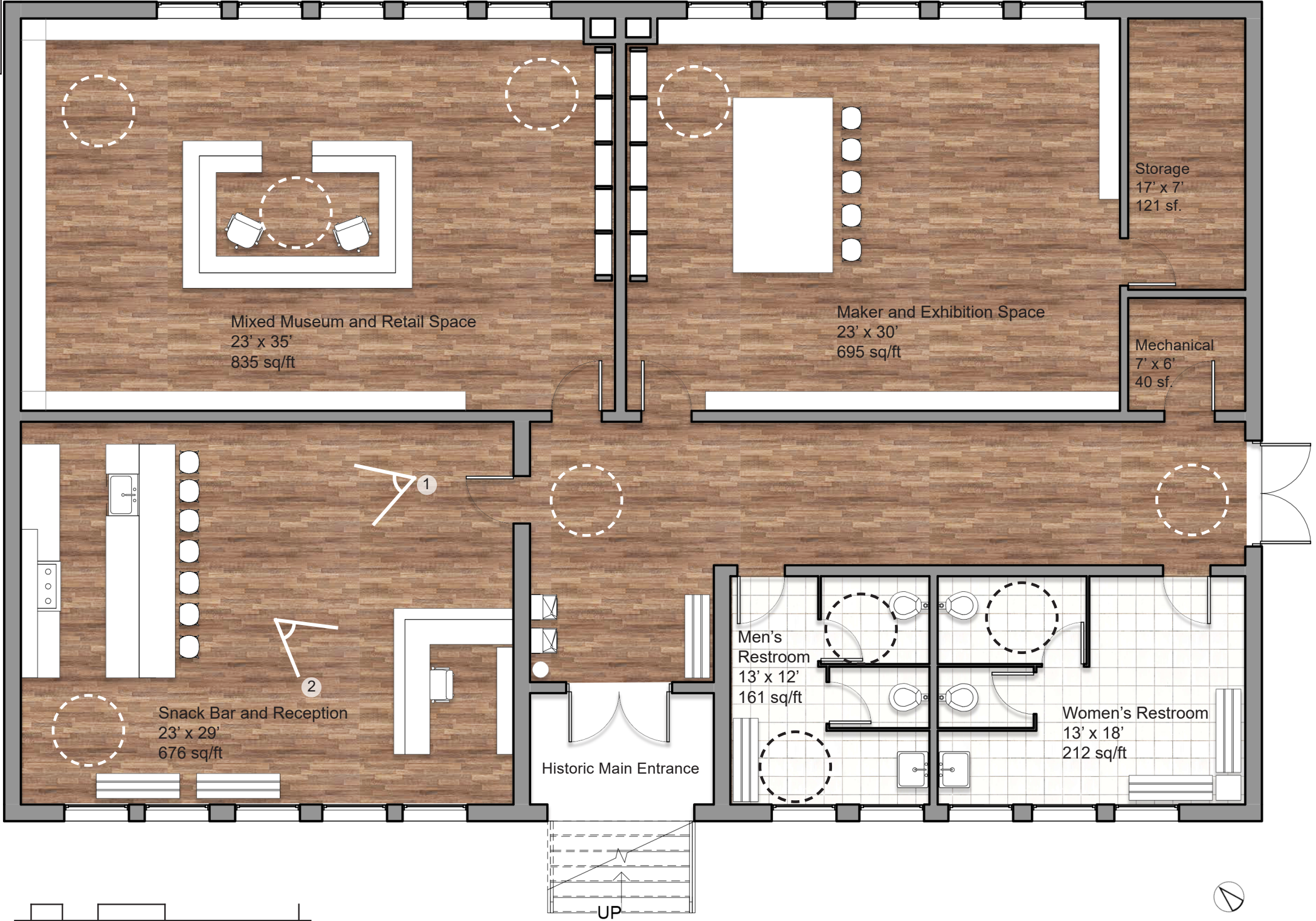
The demonstration space provides as space for local artisans or craft people to display their work and products for viewing or sale. This room would also be ideal for workshops, with movable tabletop spaces and the flexibility to add chairs and stools. The walls of this room have expansive shelving for supplies and finished products. Materials selected for common surfaces would be easy to clean and care for to accommodate a variety of activities.

The following pages contain the preliminary design concept 1 floor plan, interior perspectives, and interior precedent images.

Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

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- Legend:
-  Perspective viewshed
 -  North arrow
 -  5' Turning radius



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Heritage
 Interior Floor Plan
 August 27, 2020



Perspective 1: Visitor Reception Area
 Visitors come across the reception desk inside the door of the first room on the left upon entering the building. This feature provides visitors with information and guides for their visit, while also helping to inform them about the space and all it offers.



Perspective 2: Snack and Refreshment Bar
 This snack and refreshment bar draws inspiration from old fashioned soda counters. It's a spot for visitors to stop in for food to go, or to sit down at a stool and enjoy lunch during their stay. It shares a space with the visitor reception across the room.



This image shows an old fashioned soda counter, which was seen as a gathering space that allows for a break.



The shape, color and growth pattern of the Christmas tree branches inspired the tile detail that is seen in both the snack counter and the reception desk.



Light, open shelving that could be used in all spaces. Allows for the original walls and details of the building to remain visible.



A maker space demonstration table inspiration that would allow for visitors to gather around and observe.



An older dining counter, used to compare how they have changed over time and how they could be interpreted today.



A museum shop with an abundance of wall display space, and adds informational displays into the retail space.



Built-in storage and vertical wall display inspiration for the maker space/exhibition Space



An image of a 1940's schoolhouse, helping to inform future material, fixture and detail specifications to honor the original use of the building.

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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 1: Heritage Interior Perspectives and Precedent Images
 August 27, 2020

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Site Master Plan; Music

Design Description

Concept 2 focuses on creating a musical and sensory experience for the Whitetop community. Whitetop and western Grayson County are famously known for its mountain music and network of instrument makers. The site master plan provides unique sensory experiences such as a playground with music-based equipment, a large music and event space, areas for passive recreation and sensory exploration, as well as environmental education opportunities.

Stage Area

Tucked in between the flood wall and the multi-purpose building is a wooden covered stage. This location takes advantage of both the adjacent building and the flood wall in order to project sound toward the lawn where spectators are gathered. The stage has a simple wooden floor, accessible by ramp on the back and stairs in the front. There is a small area in front of the stage covered with pavers and can be used for dancing. There is access along the back side (west) of the multi-purpose building and stage for equipment trucks to drop off sound equipment. The walls of the building and flood wall can be painted by community members seasonally or yearly, continuing the tradition of painting the flood wall.

Event Lawn

A large lawn is located between the stage and the parking area north of the school building. This lawn is a great space for spectators to gather during an outdoor performance. It can also be a flexible space to sit on blankets or lawn chairs on nice days. Food vendors or tables can be set up along the path for special occasions. When a special is not going on, the lawn can be a space for passive recreation.

Courtyard

The space between the multi-purpose building/year-round music venue and the information center has overhead lighting and a patio. This space can be occupied with movable furniture as well as food trucks/tents.

Walking Path

Historically there was a walking track around the perimeter of the old school for exercise. This concept restores that path to take advantage of this generally flat site to go for a walk, bike, or run. The overall path is about 0.2 mile in length. Parents can enjoy the path while kids play on the playground or walking clubs can visit weekly. The path also serves as an ADA-accessible connection to each of the various site elements.

Parking

Parking is proposed generally in the same area as the existing parking. The proposed parking has enhanced striping that improves overall vehicle circulation and creates 40 parking spaces. There is oversized spaces for a bus or oversized vehicle such as a recreation vehicle (RV). A majority of the parking spaces use permeable pavers so that water runoff can be minimized. The central planting area can also be graded

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

to collect and cleanse water flooding here. Finally, 2 ADA and 11 regular spots are oriented towards the stage area, to allow for tailgating style set ups for movie screenings and concerts.

Creek Overlook

A creek overlook platform is proposed at the edge of the event lawn and parking, set in an area where the tiered deck can allow for a more elevated view of the stage or creek below. There are additional environmental educational opportunities on a lower, second tier, which takes the visitor over the flood wall to have a view of the creek and interpretive signage. This area can teach visitors or school groups about the area's unique geology, wildlife, and native plantings in Whitetop.

Play Area

The play area is adjacent to the event lawn. The play area expands the existing play equipment by adding additional musical-based play equipment. This musical equipment can allow for both children and adults to experiment with making new sounds and music; a fun connection to the music heritage of the area.

Rain Collection

A rain cistern is located on the northeast corner of the information center and collects any water runoff from the roof. This water can be utilized to water adjacent planting areas or can be diverted periodically down a channel and into the play area. This channel can be made with a material like corrugated tin or another metal to provide interesting acoustics when water goes through, or even when empty, that children can experiment pitch with pebbles and sticks. The channel goes beneath a small bridge. The rain channel can end at a pebble pit where water can infiltrate while also creating more sound.

Community Christmas Tree

Located at the edge of the event lawn and play space is a large Christmas tree which can be decorated each season. This tree can be a nice backdrop during a Christmas light festival or concert.

'LOVE' Sign

A 'LOVE' sign is placed at the intersection of Highlands Parkway and Old School Rd. to attract vehicles going by. The design of the sign speaks to the history and culture of Whitetop and uses the school building as a nice backdrop, creating the perfect image that can be shared on social media.

Sensory Garden

Native planting zones can be created as a low maintenance yet interesting planting solution that promotes interaction with the plant material. These can be accessed up close through mowed/cleared paths to promote curiosity and exploration.

The following pages contain the preliminary design concept 2 site master plan, exterior perspective, and exterior precedent images.



Key

- A Main Entrance and Parking
 - Expanded to include 40 total spaces
 - 2 ADA Spots, 1 bus space
- B Rain Garden/Stormwater Retention
- C Visitor Center
 - Includes museum, making space, and bathrooms
- D Performance Building
- E Outdoor Stage
- F Event Lawn
- G Creek Overlook
- H Main Christmas Tree
- I Musical Play Space
- J Rain Barrel
- K Welcome to Whitetop Sign
- L LOVE Sign
- M Sensory Planting
 - Supplemented by mowed paths and interpretive signage
- N Service Vehicle Entrance
- O Courtyard Space
- P Garbage Can Area
- Q Marquee (existing)



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**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Music
Site Master Plan
August 27, 2020



Perspective 1: Outdoor Music and Event Space
The storage building's new program of music and event space pours out into the landscape and has outdoor seating. The walking trail flows through this space and brings visitors to the stage area, community mural, and large lawn.



Perspective 2: Parking Lot with Permeable Paving.
The new parking lot can utilize permeable paving within the parking stalls to reduce stormwater run off and minimize the migration of pollutants into the nearby creek. The redeveloped visitors center and outdoor performance area can be seen in the background.



A main Christmas tree can be decorated to create a marvelous display seen from the road, drawing more visitors in.



The 'LOVE' sign is placed at the intersection of both roads and has the Visitor Center in the background. The sign can incorporate instruments, christmas wreaths, or lights.



Permeable pavers offer an environmentally-friendly surface alternative for low-traffic vehicle areas. Permeable paving minimizes stormwater run off and reduces pollutant migration.



A large music instrument sculpture can be a fun and interactive photo opportunity for visitors when they come to the area.



Interpretive signage have the ability to engage with and educate visitors on the unique geology, wildlife, and native plants.



The play area can be expanded to include equipment that the adults and children get to experiment with to make a range of new sounds.



Sensory planting can be used throughout the site to engage visitors and let them experience a range of different plant types.



A community art wall is a great opportunity for a community engagement project that brings vibrant color to the site.

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**Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan**

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Music
Exterior Perspectives and Precedent Images
August 27, 2020

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Building and Interior Spaces; Music

Design Description

Concept 2 focuses on the music and craft-making aspects of the community's history. This concept transforms the original portion of the school into an information center, museum, and demonstration space. This concept also includes the former storage building and transforms it into a year-round music venue. These spaces work together as one to serve as an interactive way for visitors and community members to experience the rich history of the area's music and instrument production.

Information Center and Retail

At the front of the original school is the information center, which includes a designated retail space. The retail space includes a featured local display for artisans, craft people, artists, and farmers to display and sell their goods to visitors and the local community. The retail space also carries merchandise for Grayson County, Grayson Highlands, Whitetop, and the year-round music venue. The retail space also includes wall space for musical instruments to be displayed as decor or for purchase. As a requirement to become a certified Virginia Tourism location, information on the site, surrounding areas, and other tourism locations is displayed. To accommodate this, an entire wall is designated to this, with wall shelving displays being combined with low floor shelving to give options for display.

Museum

The museum space is devoted to sharing the rich history of music and music instrument production in the area, both past and present. There are three exhibit displays, each including a screen, information plaque, open wall space for hanging displays, and floor displays. In the center of the room are floor displays for visitors to pass around and interact with what is being displayed on those. One wall in the museum is devoted to a "Wall of Fame", with photos and plaques designated to famous artists and luthiers from the area, both past and present.

Demonstration Space

The demonstration space serves as a place for visitors to watch and engage with luthiers as they finish their instruments. The space can also support demonstration classes for luthiers to instruct visitors and members of the community on how they create their famous instruments. This space allows visitors to the site to be immersed in the culture and heritage of the area. The demonstration space contains lower and upper cabinets around the perimeter of the room. There are seating height and standing height tables. One wall has a plywood peg board and can be rearranged however the guest demonstrator pleases, whether it be to store tools or display their work. To the right of the room is a storage closet for additional storage.




Existing Storage Building as Flexible Event and Performance Space

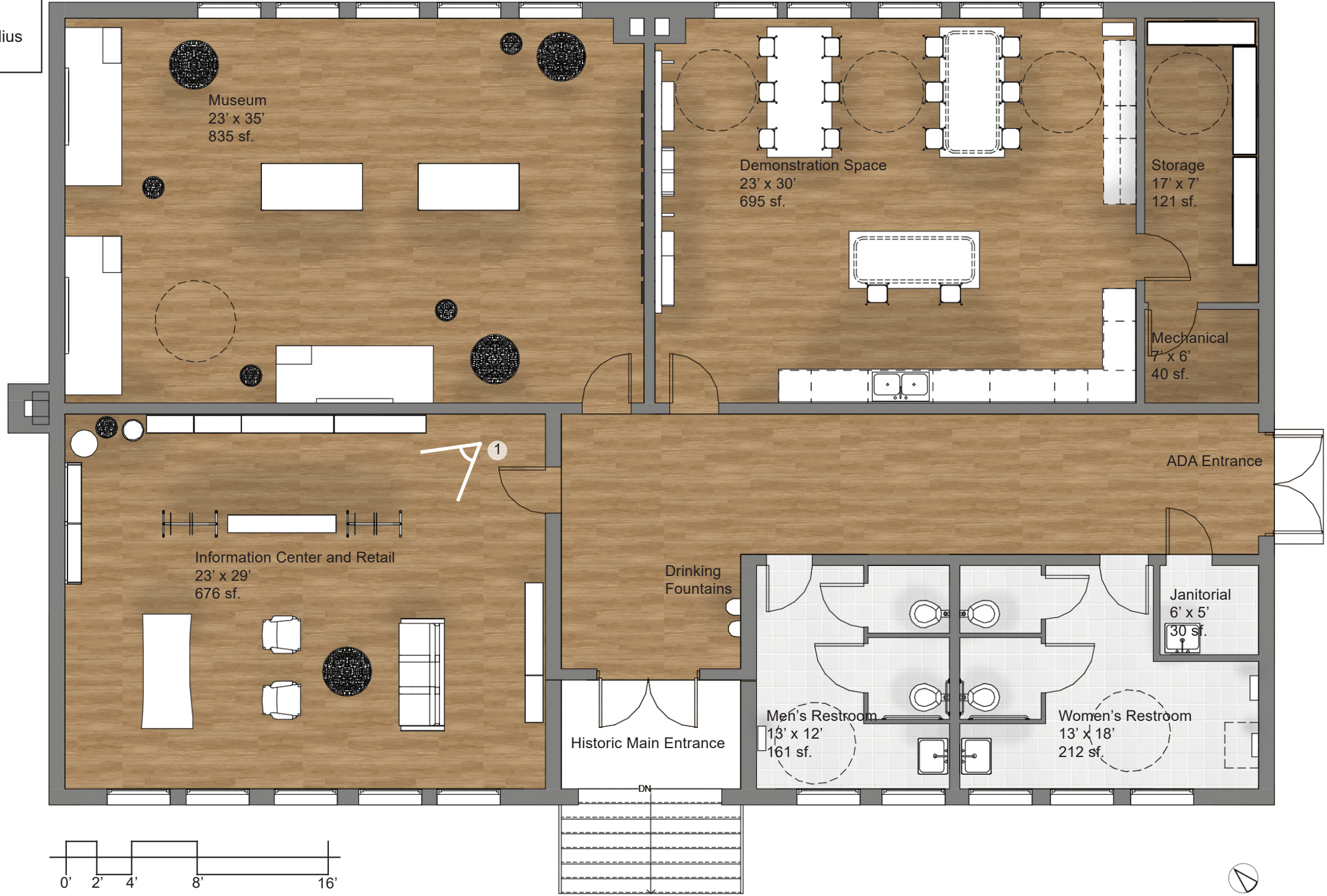
Re-branded as "Schoolhouse 58", the existing storage building behind the school building is redeveloped into a year-round music performance venue for concerts, jam circles, dancing, along with various other events. There is flexible seating that can be easily moved out of the way, along with additional seating being stored. Lounge

PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

seating is also included to create a comfortable atmosphere in the space. The stage is a raised platform, around 9" high, with a ramp to comply with ADA standards. The stage is fitted with an acoustic ceiling as well as a wood and acoustic material combination on the wall surrounding the stage to deal with acoustic quality. The south wall of the building has a garage-type door that can be opened up on warmer months.

The following pages contain the preliminary design concept 2 floor plans, interior perspectives, and interior precedent images.

- Legend:
-  Perspective viewshed
 -  North arrow
 -  5' Turning radius



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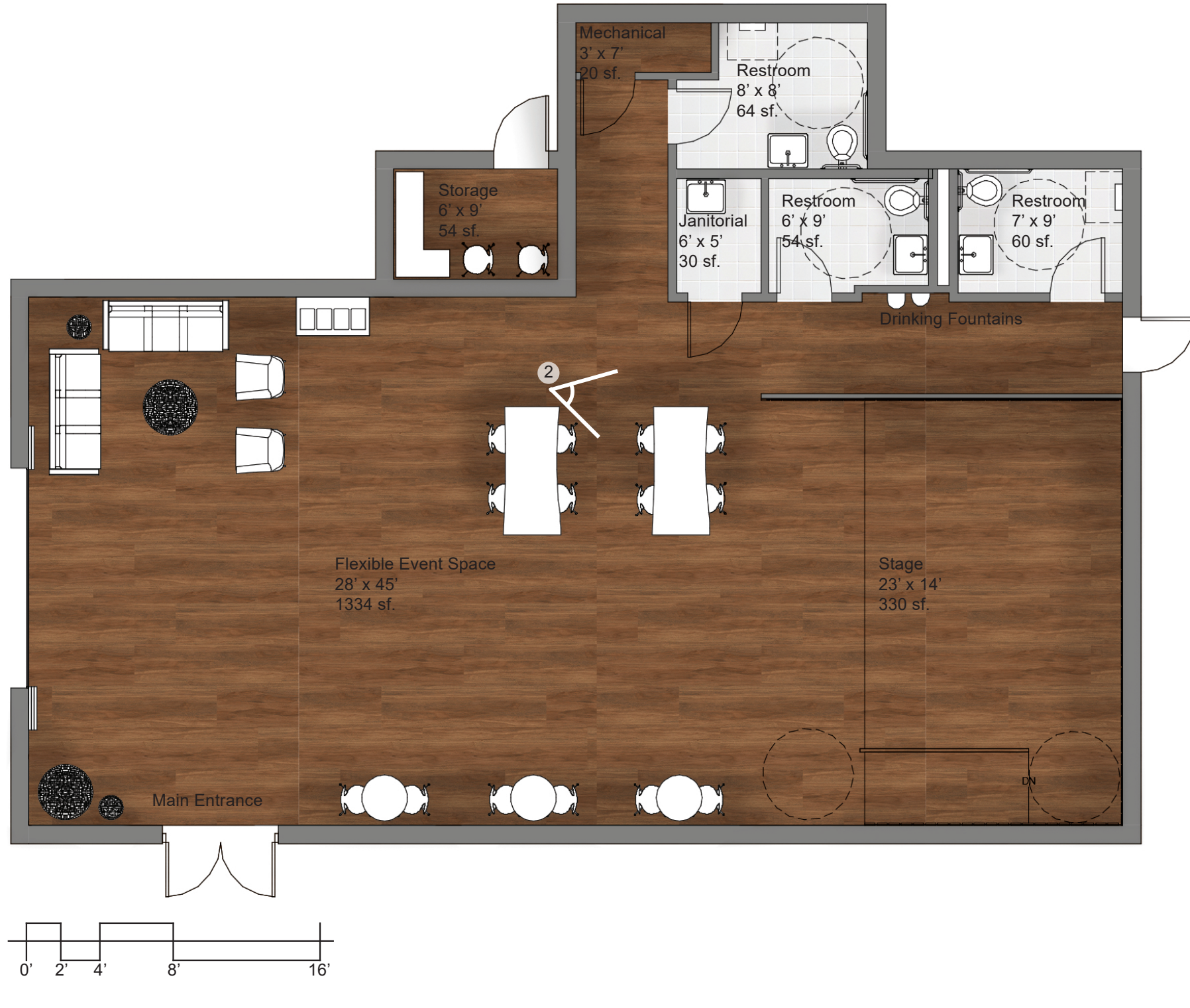
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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Music Interior Floor Plan (School Building)
August 27, 2020

Legend:

- Perspective viewshed
- North arrow
- 5' Turning radius



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Music Interior Floor Plan (Storage Building)
 August 27, 2020



Perspective 1: Information center and retail room in the redeveloped schoolhouse
Local merchandise can be sold in a way to highlight local artisans and instrument makers. Instruments for sale can be hung on the wall (right) as a form of decoration. There is a small seating area (left) that overlooks the front field.



Perspective 2: Indoor Performance Space
Schoolhouse 58 is the on-site concert venue. It can accommodate seating and standing room concerts. Additional chairs are available in storage. Garage doors on the south wall of the building encourage the space to be opened up and for concerts.



The layout of the demonstration space will utilize storage around the perimeter of the room, leaving the middle of the room open to have island workstations. The walls of the demonstration space will have space for storage of various tools as well.



The local products available for purchase are displayed on wall shelving to distinguish them from the rest of the merchandise.



Instruments are used as a decor element in addition to being displayed for purchase.



The stage is a raised platform, 9" inches front the ground to accommodate ADA requirements.



The open floor space allows for standing room concerts, as well as dancing room.



Jam circles can be accommodated in the floor space intentionally left empty for these occasions.



To create a comfortable atmosphere, lounge seating is incorporated in the space. This gives visitors a choice of seating while enjoying the music in the venue.



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Whitetop, VA: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan for the
Mount Rogers School and Conceptual Site Master Plan

Preliminary Design Concept 2: Music
Interior Perspectives and Precedent Images
August 27, 2020

PART 5: APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Meeting Notes

Stakeholder Input Session

October 16, 2020; 12:00-1:00pm

Online meeting via Zoom

Initial Design Ideas

- Cultural heritage tourism efforts
 - Traditional music
 - Outdoor performance area
 - Performance of mountain music
 - Production of instruments
 - Craft-making
 - Christmas tree farming
 - Demonstration plantings sponsored by local Christmas tree farmers and planted on 3-year rotation
 - Museum
 - Maple syrup museum; see how it's made; premiere festival in the area
 - Molasses festival
 - Apple butter
- “A capitol of heritage”
- Grayson County Visitors Center
 - “Welcome to Whitetop” sign; intersection of School House Road and Rt. 58
 - The official center for Grayson County
 - Some known requirements to become an official visitor's center
 - ADA access; open 7 days a week during the season
 - WIFI access
 - Opportunity to include a “LOVE” sign; VTC partnership
 - Would be great that people can still get information even when it is not staffed
 - Could be a scenic spot that is shared heavily on social media
- Snack bar/concessionaire/coffee
 - Precedent-Store at Maybry Mill
 - Local craft, handmade goods
 - Connection between inside and outside
- Is there a need for an on-site catering kitchen?
 - There is a new commercial kitchen that is being built
 - May not be the best use of design resources at this time
- Creek
 - Observation deck of the creek
 - Would like to have the additional opportunity for people to actually get in the water

APPENDIX

- Environmental education opportunity

Preliminary design concepts

- Concept 1: Utilize the existing footprint of the old stone portion of the school
- Concept 2: Explore opportunities to expand the footprint of the old stone school that will allow for a more comprehensive program structure; addition should be historically consistent with the original portion of the school both in architecture, material choice, and scale

APPENDIX

Meeting Notes

Preliminary Design Presentation

November 19, 2020; 5:00-6:00pm
Online meeting via Zoom

Likes

- Information center
- Outdoor stage and lawn area
- Expansion of the playground in its current location
- Environmental education design elements
 - Rain barrel
 - Connections to creek and creek observation deck
 - Permeable paving

Revise

- Site Master Plan
 - Expand for more cars and spaces for large vehicles/trailers, etc.
 - Keep the landscaping maintenance low. The County is working with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation on a grant to get the pathway provided. The Virginia Department of Forestry could be an additional resource for tree/plant identification and signage.
 - Relocate the 'LOVE' sign not in the southeast corner of the property but a little more north on the eastern edge of the property.
 - Locate a low-profile "welcome to Whitetop" sign in the southeast corner of the property.
- Building/Interior Spaces
 - Look into removing a portion of the wall to the left as you enter the building to create a more open area/space for a greeter. This may not be possible if it's a load bearing wall.
 - Incorporate other cultural heritage besides just music i.e. maple syrup, quilting, etc. This could be achieved by providing community event space in the multi-purpose building (formerly the storage building)
 - Reconfigure the retail spaces so that one person can serve the snack bar and information center.