



**COTTRILL'S
OPERA HOUSE**

Cottrill's Opera House

Fall 2020

Newsletter



Our Mission

Our mission is to restore Cottrill's Opera House to its historic role: a performing arts venue, a community center and cultural hub — driving sustainable economic development for Tucker County and the entire Potomac Highlands region.

We're making great progress, and we want to keep you updated! This quarterly newsletter will share critical information and updates on our efforts. To find out more, visit cottrillsoperahouse.org; you can also email your questions, comments, and ideas to info@cottrillsoperahouse.org.

The View from Above

A note from the president of the Opera House board

Friends of Cottrill's Opera House,

Over the past few years, I've clambered into most of the nooks and crannies of the Opera House. But until recently, I had never ventured out onto the building's distinctive "camel-back" roof; it's fairly tricky to reach the exterior hatches that open onto the building's topside.

Last Friday, I stepped out onto the roof for the first time. The visit spurred two thoughts:



View from the top! Looking south down Front Street in Thomas from the roof of Cottrill's Opera House.

First, the roof is in surprisingly good shape. The rubber membrane, installed nearly twenty years ago, appears to be well-sealed and sound. **This is a testament to the tireless efforts of past volunteers, grantors, and donors.** Without their contributions, our beautiful building would have long ago succumbed to the elements.

The second revelation from my rooftop visit? I was struck by the beauty—yes, the beauty of the fall leaves, but also the beautiful buildings of Thomas! We are surrounded by amazing neighbors—businesses and residents who have made Tucker County their home. **The success of our revitalization project is inextricably tied to the broader success of our community.** We look forward to partnering with our neighbors to make the Opera House a net positive for every entrepreneur and resident of the county.

We hope that this newsletter gives you a “high-level” (get it?) view of what’s going on at the Opera House. As always, I would welcome you to contact me at any point! Thank you for your support of this project! ■

Matt Hauger

President, Alpine Heritage Preservation

Cottrill’s Opera House

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Live from the Opera House

Market study update

On October 6, 2020, the Opera House board hosted an online town hall. Dozens of community members joined us via Zoom, as we shared what we learned from last winter’s survey and the report prepared by Historic Theatre Consultants.

You can watch the event recording by clicking [here](#).



Visit us online!
cotrillsoperahouse.org

Watch the Opera House virtual town hall on Youtube!

The next installment of “Live from the Opera House” will take place this winter. We’ll send out information a few weeks before the live event; keep your eyes peeled for your personal invitation! ■

Progress Report

Conceptual design



Michael Mills and team members at the Mills Group. Photo courtesy of the Mills Group.

Thanks to our 2020 market study (see above!), we’ve managed to get our heads around what our community needs from this facility—and what sorts of

programming are most likely to keep the organization's budget balanced.

Conceptual Design

The next phase of the project is **conceptual design**. Because the building's use cases will vary significantly—from film screenings to standing-room-only concerts to wedding rehearsal banquets—we know that the architectural design must be *flexible*. There are hundreds of design problems to solve, each of them balancing historic authenticity with modern practicality.

We need an expert to help us tackle these thorny questions, and we are happy to announce that **we have contracted the [Mills Group](#), a renowned West Virginia architectural firm**, to develop a conceptual design for the renovation of Cottrill's Opera House.

Michael Mills and his firm are the perfect fit for this project. They have experience in preservation architecture, having worked hand-in-hand with the state's Historic Preservation Office. The Mills Group also has a proven track record with historic performing arts venue, in particular—their past work includes improvements to the Metropolitan Theatre in Morgantown.

This design work will be funded, in part, by a generous grant from the Tucker County Cultural District Authority, funded by the Benedum Foundation. It involves detailed scanning of the building (see below), in-depth conversations with the Opera House board, and a variety of essential deliverables, including floor plans, 3D renderings, and a preliminary renovation cost.

Funding

After the conceptual design phase, we will use the projected renovation cost to finalize our funding strategy for the building's renovation. We have already started the application process for historic tax credits, which are likely to be a major slice of the funding "pie." Grants will also continue to be a significant potential funding source. Finally, we expect that we will need the support of a broad community of future patrons—from those who live in (or love!) Tucker County.

You'll hear more about next steps in our next *'Live from the Opera House'* town hall, as well as in the next edition of our newsletter. Stay tuned! ■



With the hiring of the Mills Group, the Opera House has officially moved into a conceptual design phase!

Happening at the Opera House

Architectural scanning



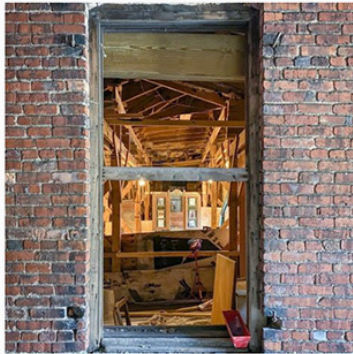
The Mills Group onsite last week, scanning the exterior of Cottrill's Opera House (note the Leica scanning unit, on a tripod near the sidewalk).

As outlined above, the Opera House board has engaged the [Mills Group](#) as our architect for the building's conceptual design. To kick off their process, on Friday, October 9, Michael Mills and his team scanned the entire Opera House

—inside and out, top to bottom—to generate a digital, 3D model of the structure. They will use this model to develop a design for the building’s full restoration. Want to learn more about the 3D scanning process? [Click here!](#)

Throughout this phase of the project, our board will meet regularly with the Mills Group, ensuring that the final design reflects the priorities and needs of our community. You can expect to hear much more in the months to come! ■

Follow us online!



Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) to see rare historic photos of the Opera House, progress updates, and a wide variety of other interesting stuff. **Click the icons below to check us out**—and to help us grow our online community!



Support the restoration of Cottrill’s Opera House

We need your generous support to ensure that Cottrill’s Opera House is restored to its full glory! Your contribution is fully tax-deductible and will be used

solely for funding the maintenance and redevelopment of Cottrill's Opera House; our organization is run entirely by volunteers.

[Donate](#)

Alpine Heritage Preservation, Inc. is the sole owner of Cottrill's Opera House and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit public charity. Contributions are tax-deductible under IRS code section 170; our tax ID number is 55-0596730.

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