

# ...While Building for the Future



## ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in The State of Connecticut is an organization of women whose mission actively promotes our colonial and revolutionary heritage through historic preservation, education, and patriotic service. In 1919, the NSCDA-CT acquired the Joseph Webb House in Old Wethersfield, Connecticut, and opened it as a museum. In 1957 and in 1959, it acquired the Stevens and Deane Houses and undertook their restoration. Today, the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum comprises three historic houses (two National Historic Landmarks), a Colonial Revival period garden, the Webb Barn, and eight acres of grounds. The Museum welcomes over 20,000 visitors annually including 3,000 students from across the state who are engaged in fourteen separate hands-on programs. The Museum has a professional staff of six and twenty-five guide/educators. In 1973 it became the first NSCDA property in the nation to be accredited by the American Association of Museums. It has been reaccredited three times, most recently in 2012. In 2016, the NSCDA-CT Board of Managers created a new board that includes members from Wethersfield and the greater Connecticut community to broaden participation in museum operations and programs. As the organization continues to grow and evolve, it is gaining more and more recognition as one of the State's leading cultural treasures.

## THE COURTYARD

The project also includes the redesign of the present courtyard and main entrance. As the first impression visitors have of the Museum, it is currently an eyesore. The new design redefines the image of the Museum as an important institution and as an attractive and friendly place to visit.



The entrance to the Museum has long been a problem because the flagstone pavers are uneven and slippery in inclement weather, posing a danger to visitors. They will be replaced with historic brick pavers in a blended color combination to create a welcoming entrance that can also be used for special events. The same brick will also be used on a low profile handicapped entrance ramp and stoop. New planting beds and a crushed stone maintenance strip will surround the paved courtyard. Historic plant materials will be selected to provide color and drama in a style appropriate to the colonial exterior of the Webb House.

## THE FUTURE

The proposed Education and Visitor Center will enable the Museum to increase its programs and staff in order to become a vital regional resource for history and culture in the heart of Old Wethersfield's Historic District. Changing exhibits, expanded meeting and event space, more educational programs for schools and adults, and a new library and research center will greatly enhance the Museum's overall program as well as attract more visitors and support. The new building will also allow for holding programs during the winter months when the Museum is now closed to the public because of insufficient heat.



## Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

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# Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum

## Education and Visitor Center Capital Campaign



# Preserving the Past...

## WHAT IS THE NEED ?

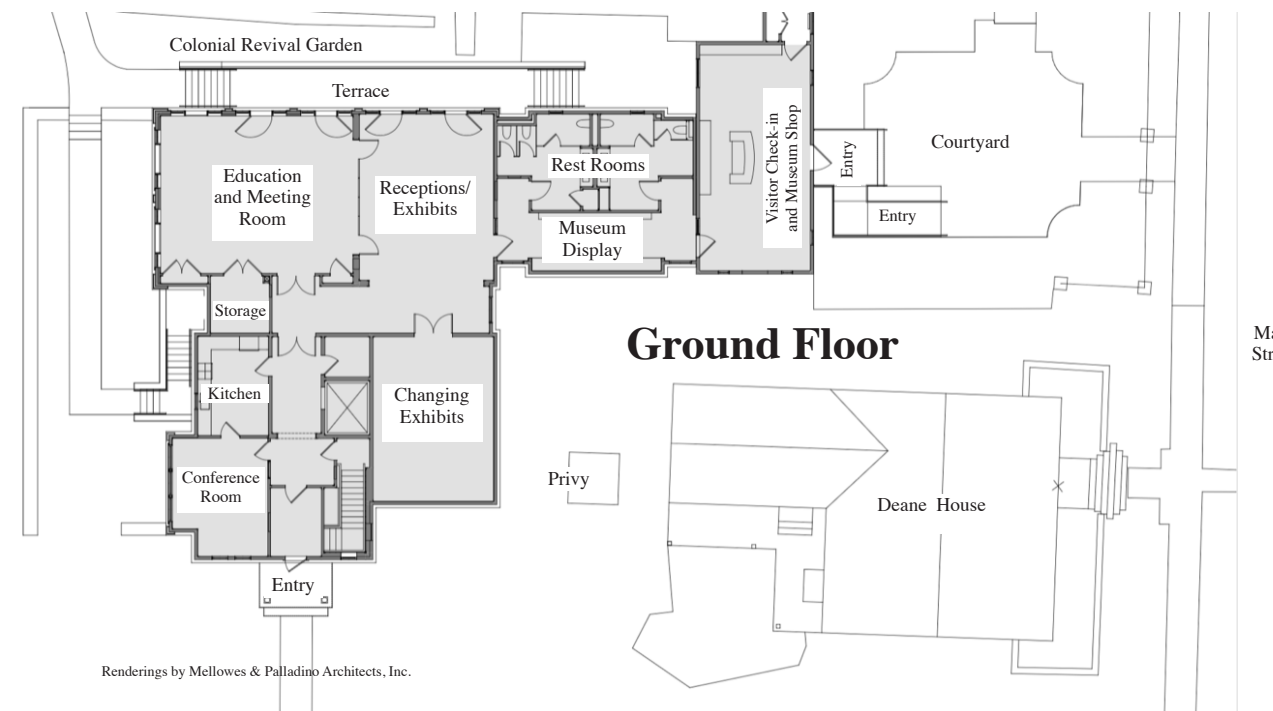
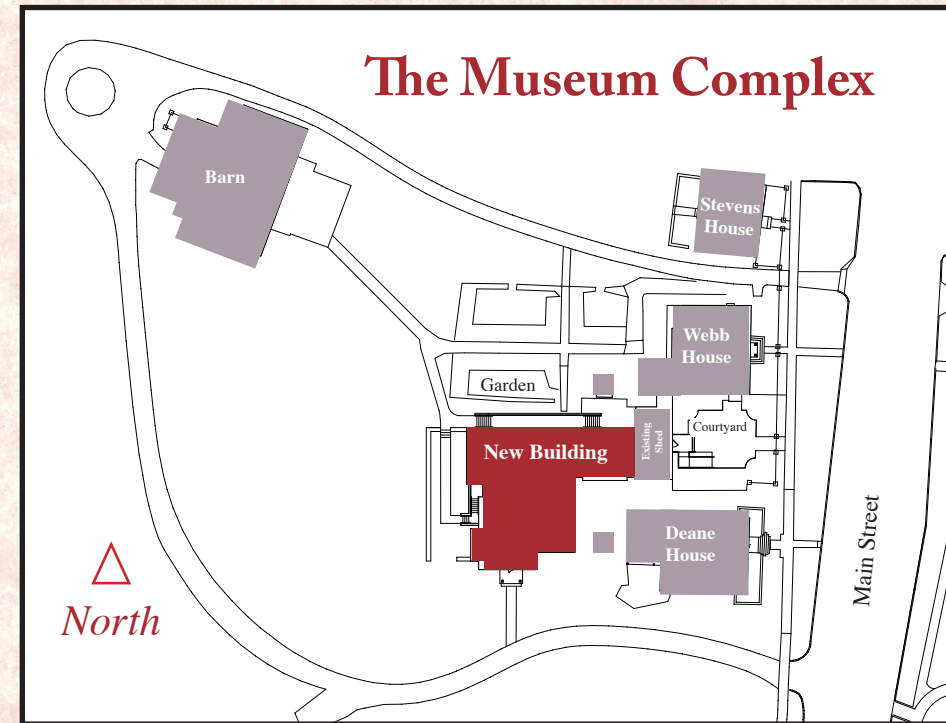
As an anchor in the Old Wethersfield Historic District, the Museum over the past decade has invested in the improvement of its historic buildings and grounds. It has updated the interpretation of its historic houses and increased programming, special events, and visitation. However, due to the lack of space and outdated physical facilities, the organization has been unable to move to the next level.

There are a number of improvements that need to be made to make the Museum more attractive and welcoming to visitors and to meet professional standards. The current facilities are tired, overcrowded and lack proper heating and air conditioning. The education room accommodates only twenty-five people making it inadequate for large public gatherings. The Museum has outgrown its current research library and archival storage. Moreover, there is no place to mount changing exhibits or to share stored treasures with a larger audience.

The NSCDA-CT and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum have raised an impressive amount of money to construct a splendid new Education and Visitor Center that addresses these needs. A total of 8.2 million dollars has been raised, including 4.7 million

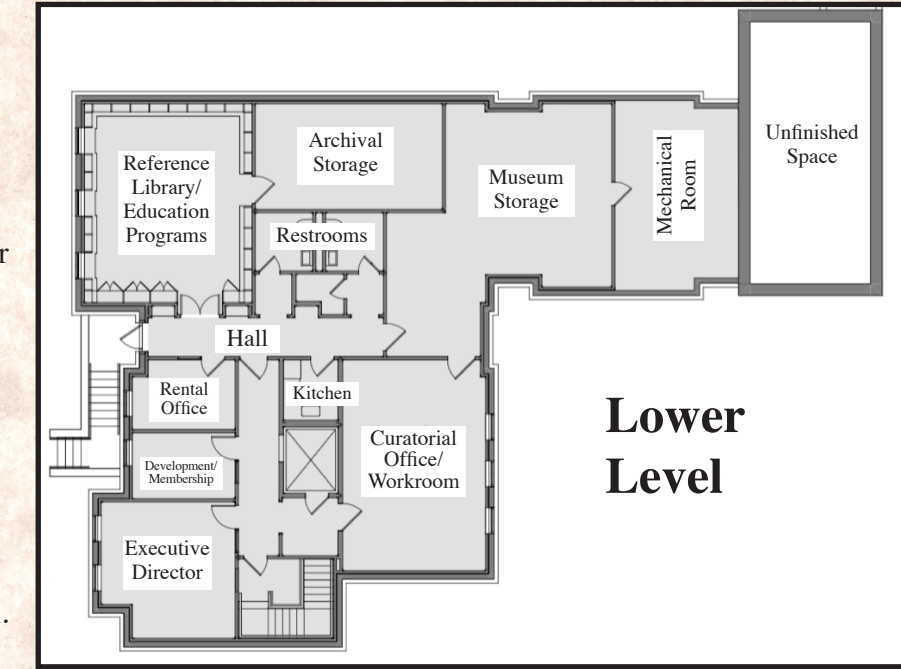
dollars dedicated for construction and 3.5 million dollars for an endowment fund to help support the increased operating costs for the new facility. Donations have been received from a wide variety of sources, including individuals, corporations, foundations, and a generous contribution from the State of Connecticut of 1.7 million dollars that recognizes the cultural importance of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum.

We are now in our final phase of fundraising for the new building and are reaching out to our membership and the community to raise the remaining 1.5 million dollars needed to complete the project. Construction will start in 2019 and is expected to be completed in 2020.



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The planned 9,200 square foot Education and Visitor Center will be attached to the rear of the present education room which once served as a woodshed. Facing Main Street, the exterior of the historic structure will be preserved as the new public entrance to the Museum. The interior will be modernized as a welcoming visitor reception area and shop. The new building is designed in an architectural style that complements the adjacent historic houses and Colonial Revival Garden.



## The architectural design for the new facility includes:

### Ground Floor

- A handicapped accessible entrance with a welcoming reception area and desk for visitors to check in.
- A museum shop area with ample space for books and other items related to our mission.
- Orientation exhibits and videos to introduce visitors to the history and significance of the site.
- A display area for recently unearthed archaeological artifacts dating from the period of the first English settlements in the colony through the early 20th century.
- Restrooms that are handicapped accessible and conveniently located near the public entrance.
- A large gathering space for receptions and exhibits.
- A multi-purpose education and meeting room seating up to fifty people. Floor to ceiling windows on the north and west elevations will provide views of the historic Cogswell garden, the Webb Barn, and the picturesque landscape at the rear of the property.

- A gallery for changing exhibits that will generate publicity, attract new audiences and give the public another reason to visit.
- A modern conference room for smaller meetings and functions.
- An up-to-date kitchen.

### Lower Level

- A reference library that will also be used for educational programs.
- Secure temperature and humidity controlled storage for archival and museum collections - including artifacts, paintings, prints, manuscripts, genealogical records, and valuable books.
- Modern office and work space for staff, volunteers and interns.
- A large curatorial workroom.