

Atherton Library
Arts and Heritage Focus Group
5/17/11

Kathy Page and Clarice Lusky met with representatives of the Atherton Arts Committee and the Atherton Heritage Association to give these community organizations an opportunity to share their space needs, should the design for the new library be able to accommodate some or all of those needs. Betty Ullman, Ted Ullman and Marjory Wilson represented the Arts Committee. Marion Oster and Phoebe Rowles represented the Heritage Association. Ginny Nile, ALBSC member, sat in on the meeting.

Kathy also asked the group, as Atherton residents, to comment on the Library's space needs in general.

Arts Committee

Currently, the Arts Committee coordinates art exhibits at the Library, such as the display of children's art now mounted on the far wall. These displays are well received and the Committee hopes they will continue in the new building.

The Committee now has space in the basement of the Main House in Holbrook Palmer Park. Ideally, the Committee would like the new Library to include a dedicated space for art exhibits and activities. An open room of approximately 1,000 square feet is needed, with the flexibility to accommodate art exhibits, art workshops and possibly studio space for local artists. In addition, enclosed storage space is needed for supplies, mobile exhibit racks and other art program needs. Betty estimated that 160 square feet of storage space would be sufficient.

Other art-related suggestions for the new library included:

- Murals of historic imagery
- Art sandblasted on glass walls
- Space for visual collections – art works and historic photographs
- Programs targeting the arts

Heritage Association

Prior to the meeting, Marion and Phoebe walked Kathy and Clarice through the Heritage Association's existing space and provided a list of existing and additional needed furniture and equipment.

Marion summarized the Heritage Association purpose and scope, which is to focus on printed or 2-dimensional materials that illustrate Atherton's history and heritage. The collection consists primarily of records and documentation, including photographs, of the history of the town and its residents. Several docents volunteer and work on a regular basis (1 day per week) in the Heritage Room located in the Atherton Town Council Chamber. Conditions are extremely crowded. Volunteers often work in the Council

Chamber so they can spread out the materials they are working with. The public can visit and use the collection only when Marion or docents are present so access is limited to one day per week. Many materials are valuable and unique so secure space is required. The collection does not circulate and must be retrieved for visitors by volunteers – the public cannot access the materials without assistance.

Space needs include:

Display cases

Work tables for volunteers and a desk for core workers

Research space for visitors

More shelving for growing archives collection

More photo storage (file cabinet)

Programming space for events about Atherton (could use the Library's programming space)

A detailed list of existing and needed items is attached.

Marion mentioned the Portola Valley Library as an example of an inadequately sized local history space and asked that the Atherton Library designers incorporate the Heritage Association's space needs early to avoid the space problems that Portola Valley faces.

General Comments about the Library

- Improve the Library's ability to host programs by including a separate, enclosed meeting room
- Create flexible multipurpose space to make the most of the square footage available
- Consider 3-dimensional art (e.g., sculpture) both inside and outside
- Connect the Library to its surroundings – a sculpture garden, nice indoor/outdoor space for children's programming — a great place to introduce children to a library
- Provide more children's books
- Make the Library a cultural center, with announcements of events going on in the community. Make it serve as a gathering space for the community, community focal point. It should be as much a community center as a library
- Provide lots of multipurpose space for events
- Retain the intimacy and human scale of the current Library
- It should fit comfortably into its site, either at the current site or in the park
- Retain its warm, encompassing atmosphere, which is special and comfortable
- Ensure plenty of space to expand and grow with changes
- Excellent lighting
- Emphasize the indoor/outdoor feeling with reading patios, outdoor space for children, connection to outside, covered space, open space, views
- Consider a café or coffee shop
- Include a modest kitchen area/catering kitchen for events, associated with the enclosed meeting room
- Organize the space so Library staff has its own restroom
- Consider staff areas on a second floor in order to reduce the footprint
- Do not make the multipurpose meeting space too large, so that it sits empty and unusable for long periods of time

- If the park site is chosen, incorporate the pavilion architecturally so that it can host even larger gatherings (in a phase 2 project or if additional money is available in the current phase – this is a secondary consideration)
- Offer programs and resources to let people know about the Library's digital resources – keep the library relevant as more electronic services become available
- Consider automated returns and sorting machinery
- Make the building adaptable to future uses/needs – minimize building components that are permanent
- Consider incorporating permanent works of art within the building – including pieces suspended from the ceiling as well as wall-mounted. Art can enliven the interior spaces in many ways. And use art as a way of creating spaces and separating spaces

Space Needs Summaries (Prepared by Kathy Page Following the Meeting)

	Quantity	Sq Feet	
Atherton Arts Committee			
Multipurpose room for classes, activities + exhibits		900	
Storage space		160	
Net Assignable Square Feet			1,060
Gross Square Feet			1,413
Atherton Heritage Association			
Vertical file cabinets - existing	3	45	
Vertical file cabinets - new	1	15	
Bookcase, open, wooden - existing, 6' L x 1.5'D	1	24	
Clipping/microfiche cabinet - existing	1	15	
Map case on low file cabinets - existing	1	30	
Work desk with computer - existing, 5'w x 3' d	1	30	
Shelving, 82"h x 36"w, for acid-free box storage - 6 boxes/shelf - existing + new	5	51.5	
Shelving, supplies - existing	1	10.3	
Bookcases, existing - 36"w	2	20	
Display case, triangular	1	20	
Shelving, industrial, for framed art storage - new, 24"d x 4'w	2	30	
Map, framed, wall-mounted 56"h x 84"w	1	28	
Work table, 8' x 3', with 6 chairs	1	40	
Bookcase, wooden - new, 6' L x 1.5'D	1	24	
Work desks with computer - new, 5'w x 3' d	2	60	
Bookcase, open, wooden - new, 6' L x 1.5'D	1	24	
Net Assignable Square Feet			467
Gross Square Feet			622