

THOMAS MEMORIAL LIBRARY Facility Assessment and Improvement Scenarios

Cape Elizabeth, Maine
March 2, 2009



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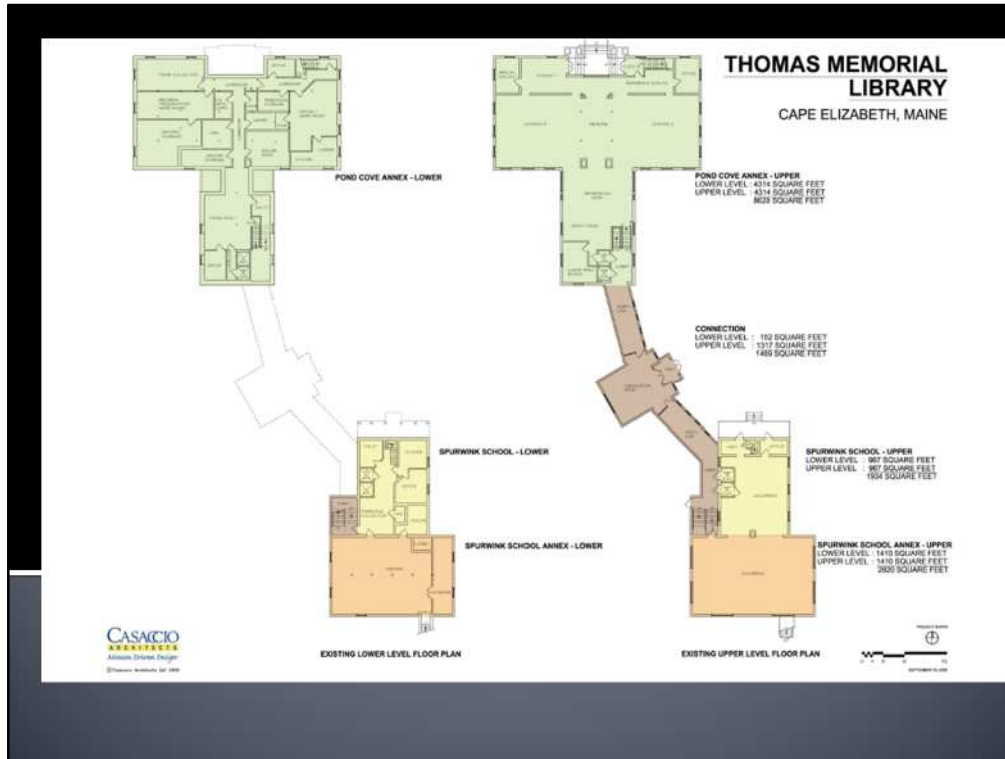
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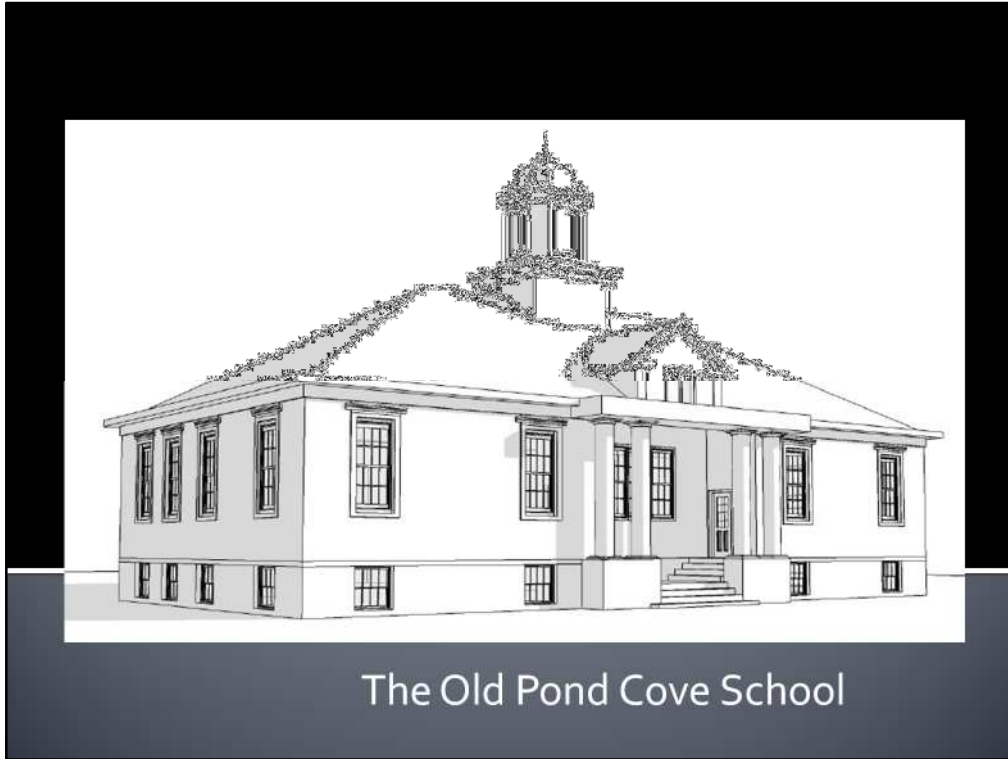
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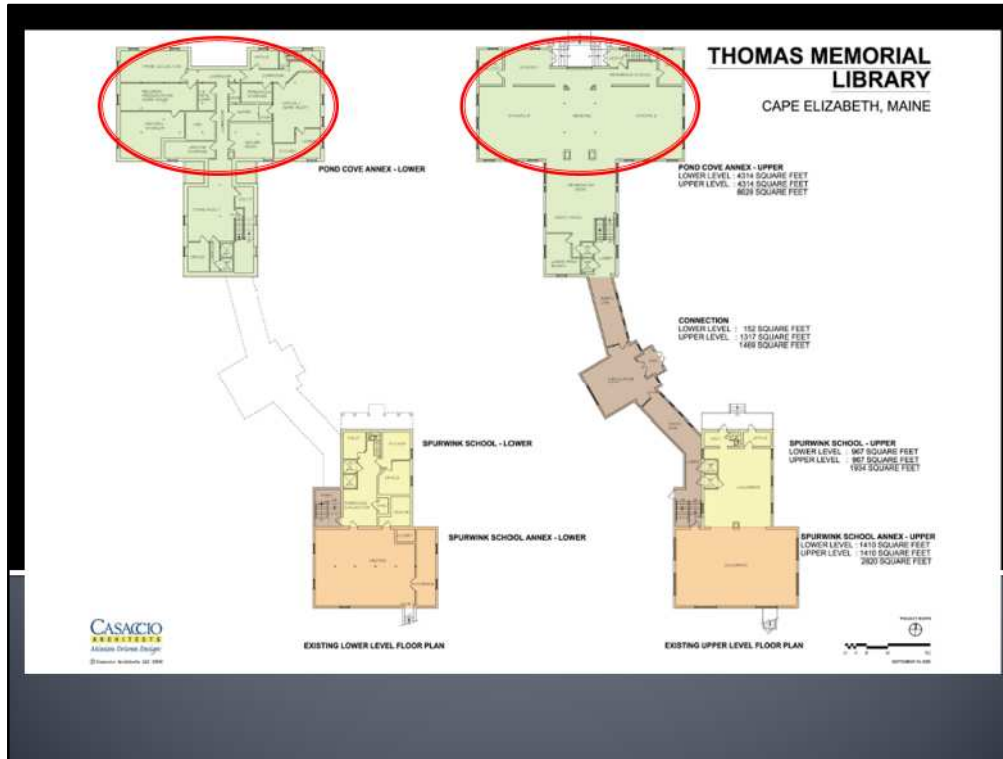
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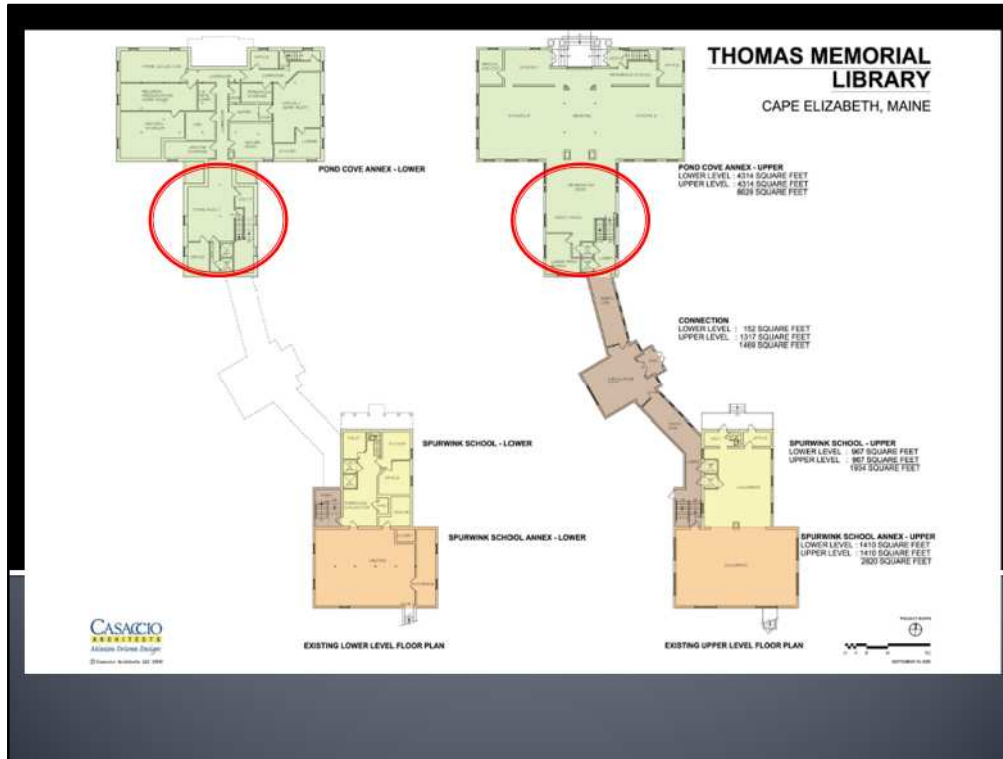
The existing Thomas Memorial Library is composed of multiple structures strung together. While it is not small compared to other libraries serving similar populations, it is extremely inefficient because it is so fragmented. The drawing above shows the various structures that make up the Library facility. The green section is the old Pond Cove School.



The Pond Cove School section of the Library is actually composed of two buildings. The first is the very recognizable two-story portion of the building that faces Scott Dyer Road...



This section of the building houses most of the adult collection, the Poetry Room, and the Library Director’s office. The basement of the main portion of the school houses the Maine Room, materials owned by the Historic Preservation Society and some Library office space (primarily Technical Services – a fancy name for cataloging and processing). Two restrooms (the only restrooms at this end of the building complex) are located in the basement of this portion of the building. This portion of the Library is structurally sound; however it does have some shortcomings.



The second portion of the Pond Cove School is a two-story section that houses the stairs up to the Adult Services area of the Library and down to the Young Adult section. This portion of the Pond Cove School building also houses the “lift” that was designed to provide handicapped access to the three levels (the “main” or Adult Services level, the at-grade “connector” level and the basement level). The Young Adult section of the Library is located in the basement and the reference desk, audio-visual materials and the “large print” collections are located in the upper level of this section of the building. This section of the building shares many of the same characteristics as the “front” portion of the Pond Cove School structure. It was originally a standalone school building located nearby. While it isn’t really an “annex” to the recognizable old Pond Cove building, we’re going to refer to it that way.

Pond Cove Upper Level Shortcomings

- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor air circulation
- Has sub-standard floor loading capacity
- Has no restroom facilities on the upper level
- Has a high ceiling that's hidden and damaged
- Has aisle spacing that is not ADA compliant
- Has no central air conditioning

The upper level of the Pond Cove building is:

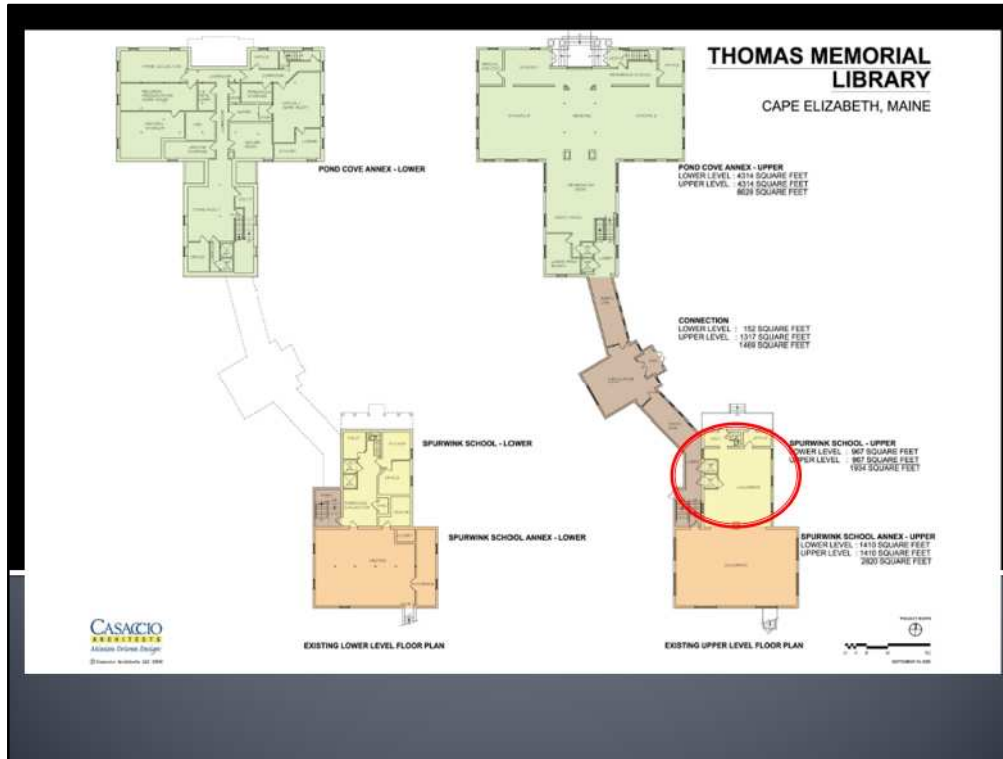
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- Has poor air circulation
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- Has no central air conditioning

Pond Cove Lower Level Shortcomings

- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor air circulation
- Has very low ceiling heights
- Has exposed pipes
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is at or near capacity
- Has some moisture/humidity concerns

The lower level of Pond Cove:

- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor air circulation
- Has very low ceiling heights
- Has exposed pipes
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is at or near capacity
- Has some moisture/humidity concerns

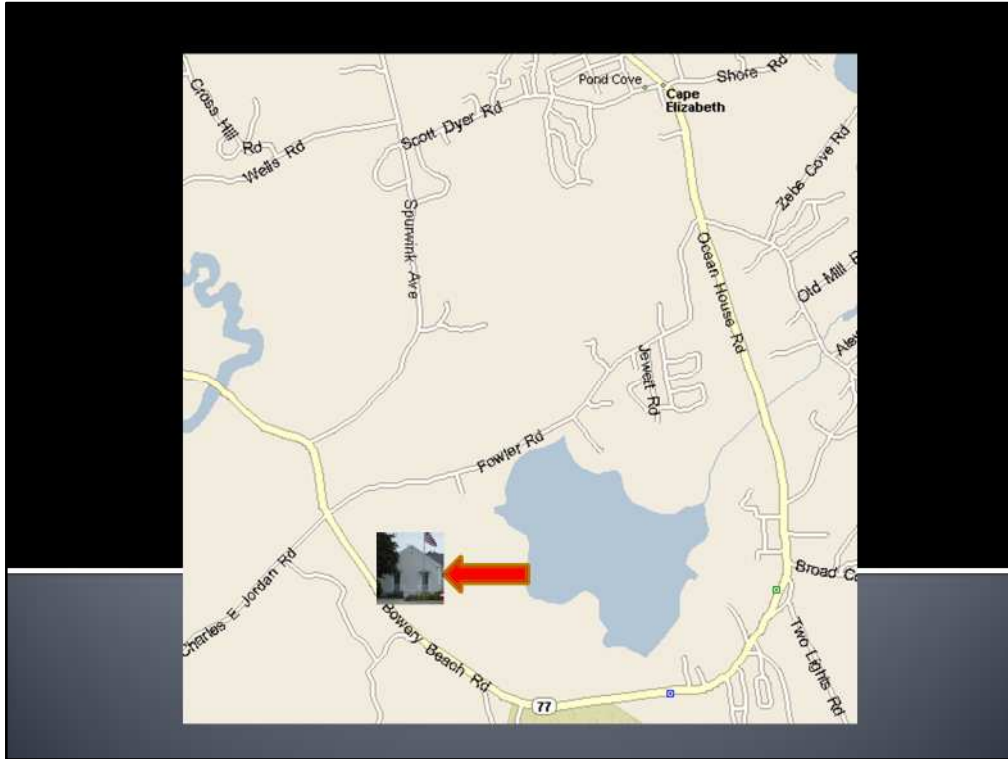


Another historic portion of the Library is the upper level of the “Spurwink School.” What stands today is a remnant of the original building that William Widgery Thomas Jr. donated to the Town in 1919 to serve as a library. The school was built in 1849 as a one-room school house on Bowery Beach Road, about a quarter mile from the intersection of Fowler Road. Thomas was a teacher at the school in 1857. This section of the building houses the Library’s materials for young children and a very crowded staff office. The front façade and one side of the building are the primary remnants of the original school. The rear wall was removed when the annex portion was added and the wall adjacent to the connector was significantly modified and the mechanical lift was added at the time the connector was built. The upper level (the original school) sits on a foundation that was built in the 1940s. This section of the building has quite a history.

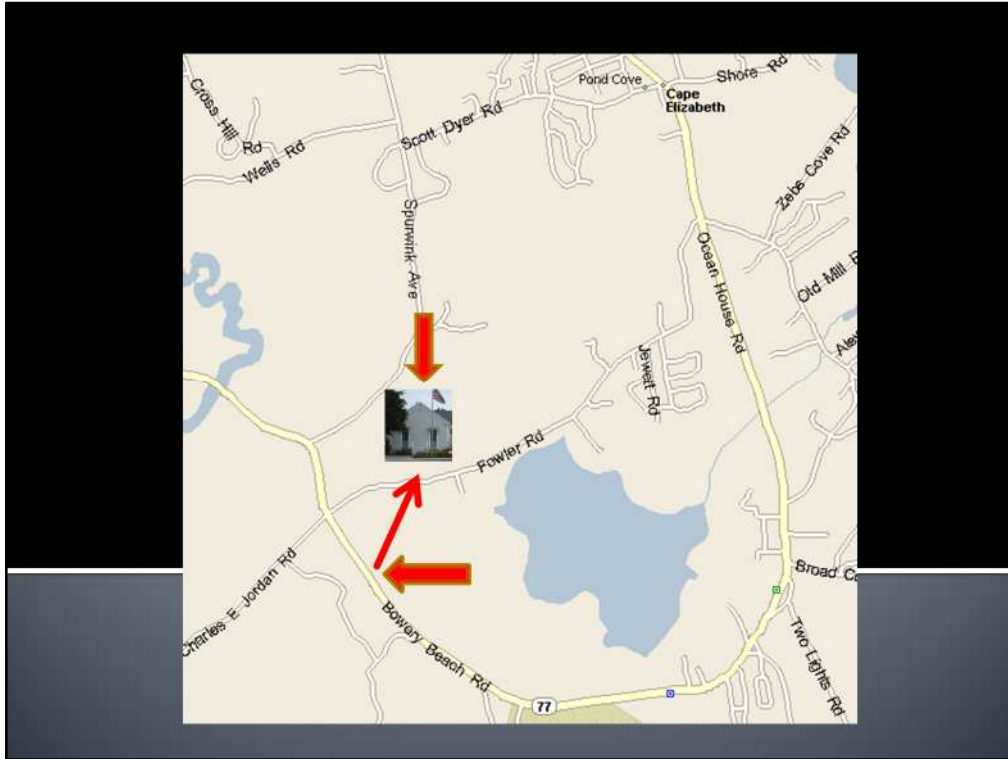


Spurwink School

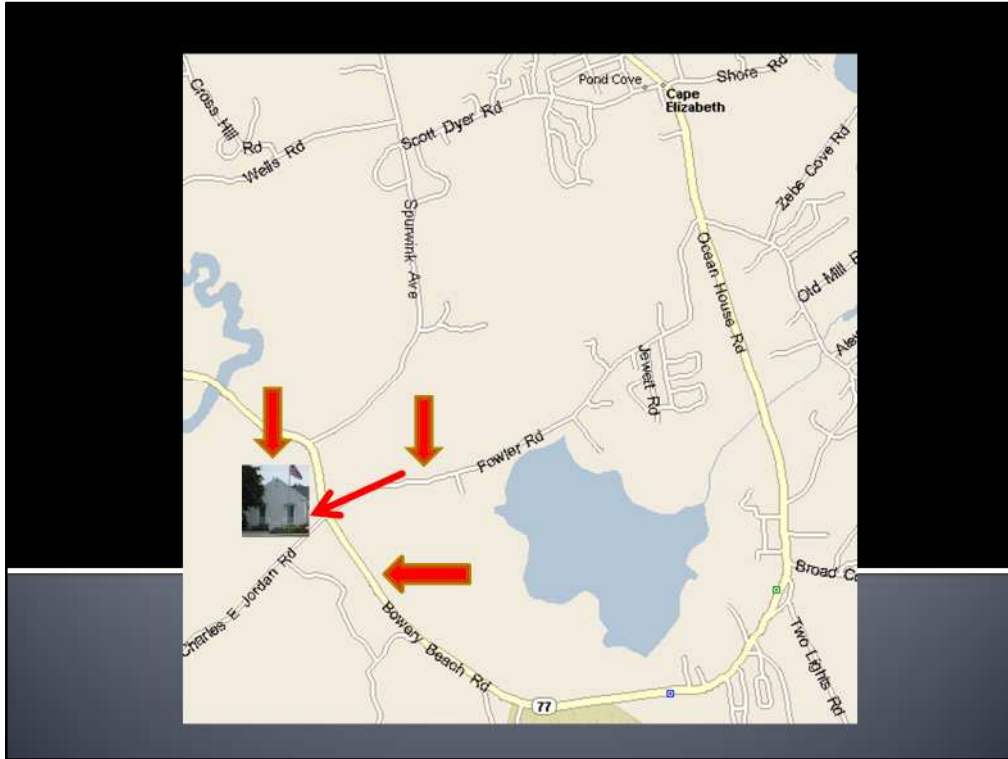
The building has been on no fewer than five sites and has traveled somewhere in the neighborhood of 3 – 4 miles during its history.



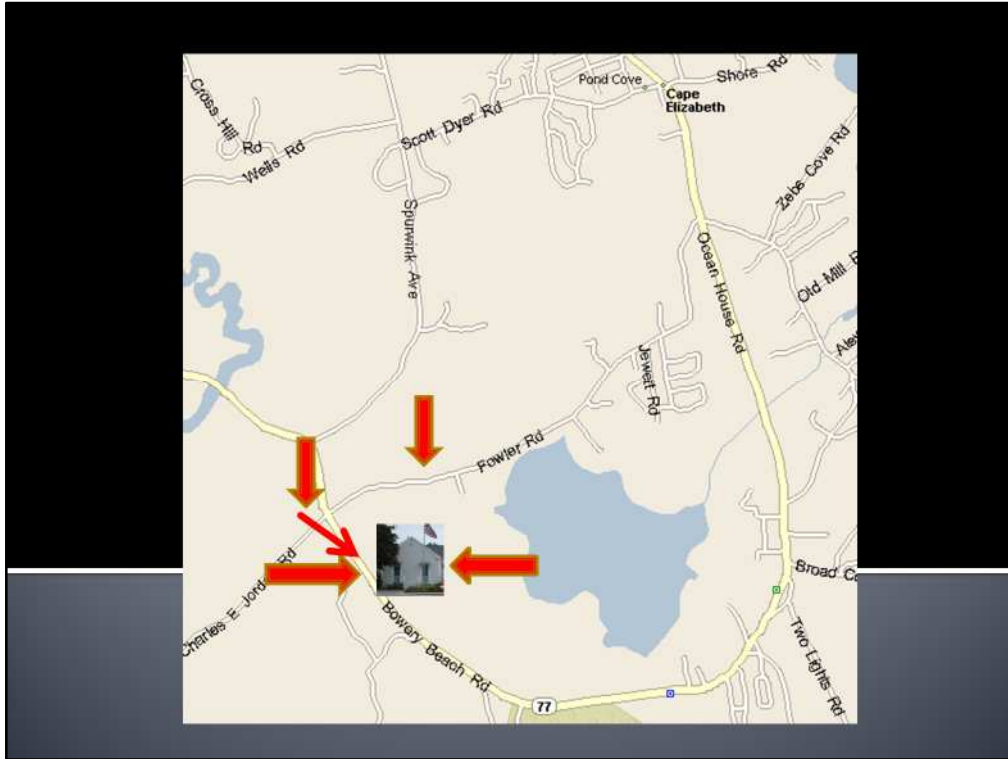
The first site was on Bowery Beach Rd.



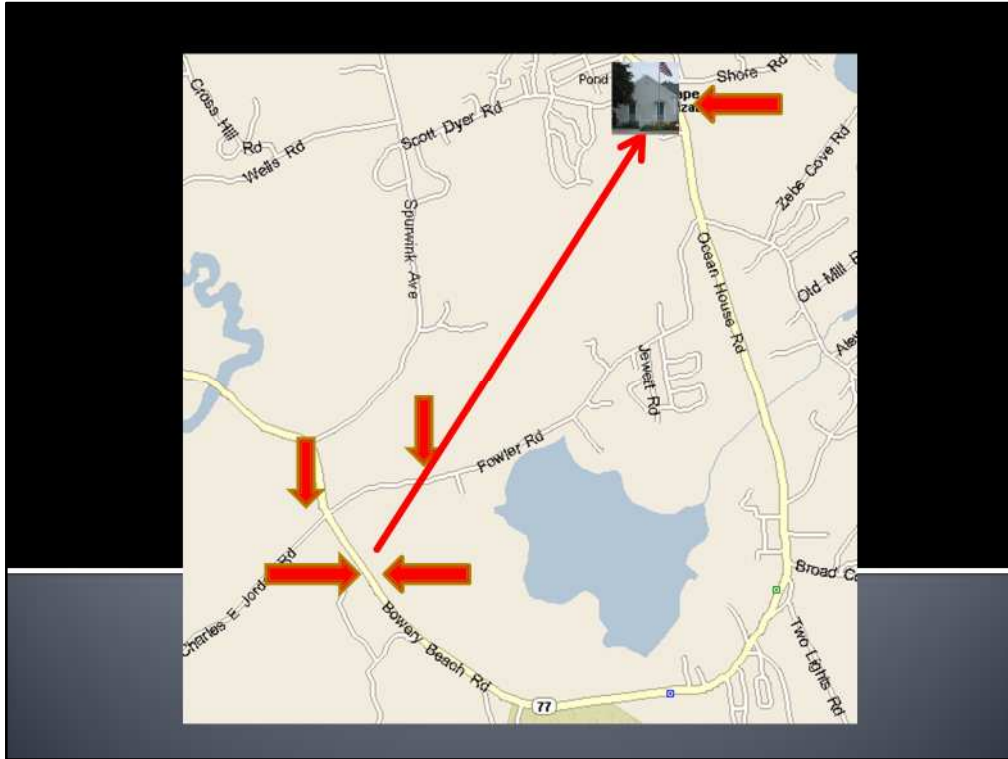
It was then moved to a site on Fowler Rd.



It nearly became a pigsty at its next site.



But William Widgery Thomas rescued the building and, after some renovation, gave it to the community to be used as a library.



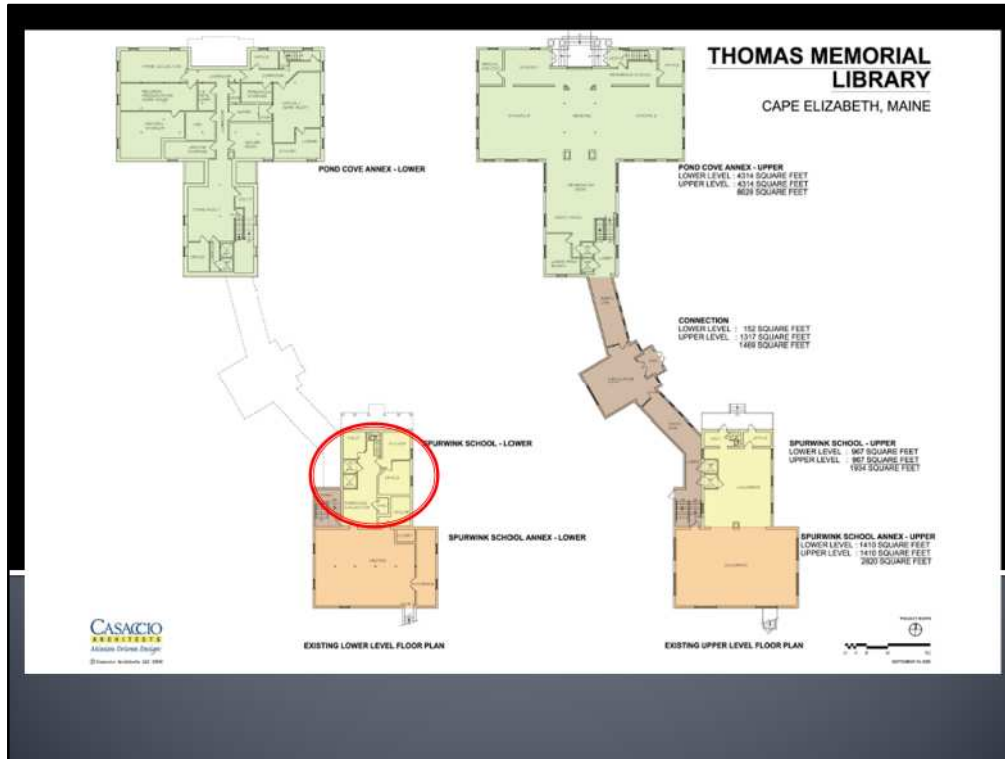
The Spurwink building was moved to its current location in 1944 although it had already served as the library for many years.

Spurwink Upper Level Shortcomings

- The historic character has been diminished
- Has no restroom facilities on this level
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is beyond capacity
- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor ventilation
- Has sub-standard floor loading capacity

Some of the shortcomings of the upper (original) level of the Spurwink School are:

- The historic character has been diminished
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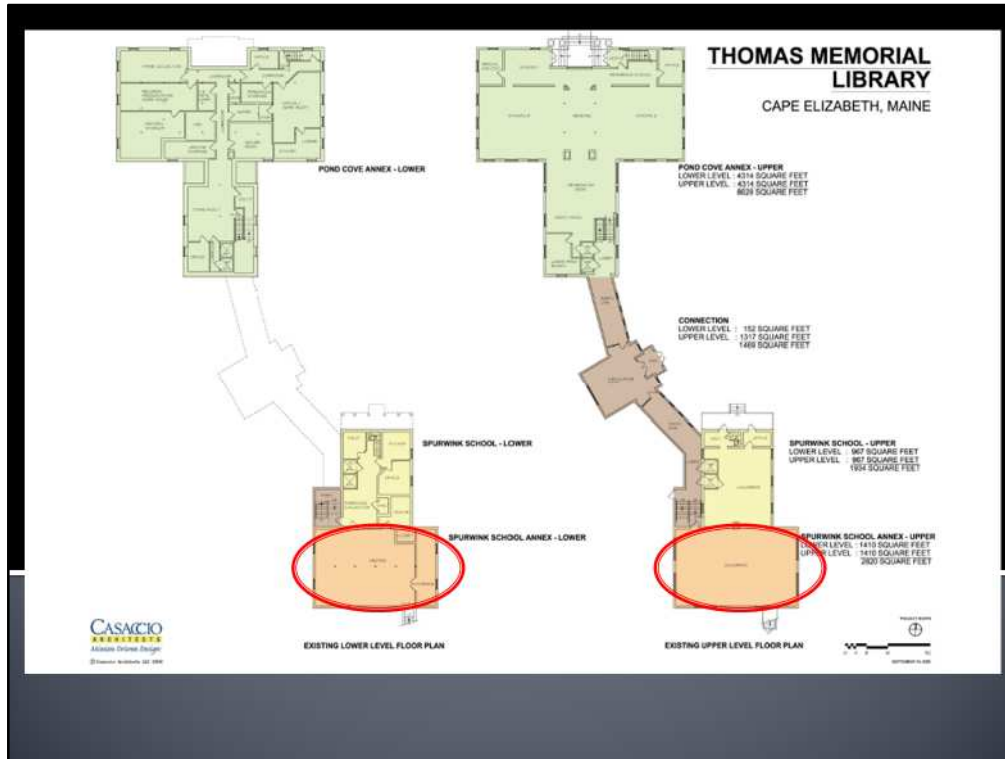
The foundation and basement of the Spurwink School dates from 1944 when the school was moved to the present site. This area of the facility houses one office, the staff break room, the parenting collection, and the only restroom at this end of the Library.

Spurwink Lower Level Shortcomings

- Has very low ceiling heights
- Has exposed pipes
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is beyond capacity
- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor ventilation

Shortcomings this area are similar to the shortcomings of the Pond Cove basement. The Spurwink lower level:

- Has very low ceiling heights
- Has exposed pipes
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is beyond capacity
- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor ventilation



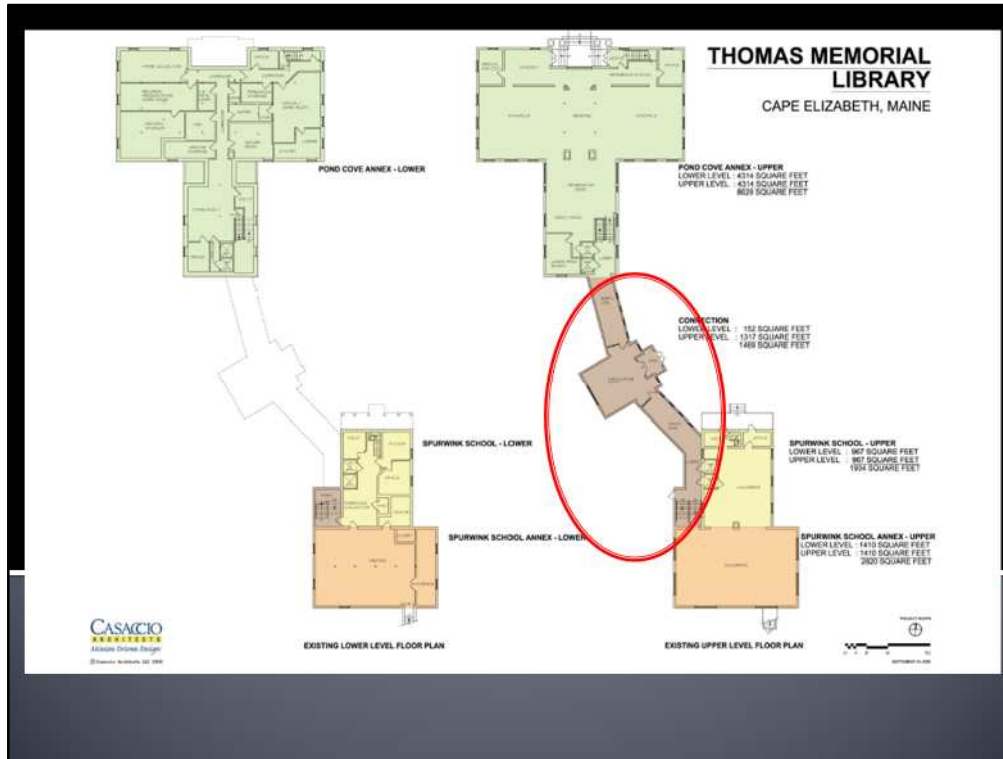
An addition (the Spurwink School Annex) was built in 1958 (fifty-one years ago) and the basement space was first used for public purposes (as the children’s room) in 1967. The upper level now houses the Children’s Services desk and the collection of materials for primary and intermediate-aged children. Both the upper and lower portion of this part of the Library have *serious* shortcomings.

Spurwink Annex Shortcomings

- Has very sub-standard floor loading capacity
- Has very low ceiling heights in lower level
- Has exposed pipes in lower level
- Has an outdated/inefficient heating system
- Has an electrical system that is beyond capacity
- Is accessible only by stairs or ineffective lift
- Has poor ventilation
- Exhibits significant moisture issues (mold?)

Some of the Spurwink Annex shortcomings are that it:

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- Has very low ceiling heights in lower level
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By 1978, the Library Trustees noted that the Library again needed more space. An addition to the Library was designed in 1980; however, this addition was never built. In 1981, the Town considered razing the Pond Cove School structure. Instead, a committee was formed that looked at the reuse of the Pond Cove building as Library and community space and at the construction of a “connector.” This project was authorized in 1984 (25 years ago). The connected buildings (with Adult Services moved into the upper level of the Pond Cove School and the Children’s Library moved from the basement to the upper floor of the Spurwink School) opened in 1985. The center portion of the connector houses the entryway and the circulation desk. The “wings,” which were originally designed as gallery space now serve a dual purpose as gallery space and as areas to house new materials. The stairs to access the main level and the basement level of the Spurwink School and the Spurwink School Annex are also in this portion of the building.

Connector Shortcomings

- Is a serious traffic bottleneck
- Is on a separate level from most shelving areas
- Is subject to extremes of temperature
- Has inadequate space for its function(s)
- Creates library patron/delivery conflicts

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Engineering Assessment “highlights”

We don't want to drag this out too long but here are a few comments from the engineering assessment:

Original school buildings are being used to support loads heavier than originally intended

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Low headroom in both basements
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Existing heating and control
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Physical layout and construction of structures would make it difficult, if not impossible, to provide a replacement system that would meet standards

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There is water damage in the
Spurwink School Annex
basement and there is possible
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Technology Assessment “highlights”

A couple of comments from the technology assessment are also telling.

Facility lacks a structured
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consequently is inefficient to
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Inadequate electrical capacity
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Summary

While the report details dozens of shortcomings of the TML facility, six issues stand out above the rest.

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Summary

1. Poor access to multiple levels
2. Outdated and inefficient mechanical and electrical systems
3. Inadequate floor loading capacity
4. Moisture/Mold concerns
5. Inefficient workflows due to fragmented design
6. Lack of space to expand collections and services

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Demographics

Cape Elizabeth's demographics are very favorable for public library use.

- Well-educated
- Higher than average income
- Older than average

First, Cape Elizabeth's demographics are very favorable for public library use. Cape Elizabeth residents are:

- Well-educated
- Higher than average income
- Older than average

All of these characteristics are positively associated with library use.

Usage

The Thomas Memorial Library is well used by the community but not at as high a rate as might be predicted by the community's demographics.

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The Library does reasonably well when compared to most other Maine “peers” but only fair when compared to national “peers.”

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Public Opinion

Many Cape Elizabeth residents are pleased with the Library and the service it provides.

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Public Opinion

At the same time, people responding to a question on the telephone survey overwhelmingly said that they they thought it was very important for the Library to:

- Be compliant with ADA Guidelines
- Be energy efficient
- Maximize staff efficiency

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Public Opinion

The people also said that they wanted:

- More books (deeper collection)
- Better meeting facilities
- Exceptional, inviting children's area
- Comfortable, quiet areas to sit and read

Some also wanted "amenities" such as a café.

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Public Opinion

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Conundrum

Many people want the library to be something that it can't be given its existing facility.

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The current facility limits the ability of the Library to serve the community. Thomas Memorial Library is a good library but not the *GREAT LIBRARY* that it could be.

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Option 1 DO NOTHING

Not really an option

- Physical plant needs attention
- Building is inefficient
- Building is not fully accessible
- Existing facility precludes expanded services

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Not really an option

Physical plant needs attention – mold, possible structural damage (Spurwink Annex), floor loading could become problem

Building is inefficient – Staffing inefficiencies add up – Over time could be as costly as an addition

Building is not fully accessible – Not acceptable that some people can't/don't use the building because of accessibility issues

Existing building precludes expanded services – recipe for becoming irrelevant

Option 2 "BAND-AID"

Arguably a Poor Option

- Potentially expensive
- Gains would be marginal
- Poor investment
- Expanded services still precluded

Option 2 – Band-Aid

Arguably a poor option

- Potentially expensive (BOTH CAPITAL AND OPERATING) – elevators, replacement of foundation on Spurwink Annex, small addition could top \$ 1 M
- Gains would be marginal – accessibility could be better and might address crowding at circulation
- Poor investment – Most of what would be spent could not be recovered if expansion happens in future. At best, it would limit expansion scenarios
- Expanded services still precluded – Doesn't address things like technology infrastructure, room for additional materials, quality meeting space, etc.

Option 3

Major Renovation and *Expansion*

A Realistic Option?

- Expensive
- Would meet long-term efficient
- Would maximize Town's investment
- Would allow for expanded services
- Would contribneeds
- Would be far more energy ute to creating a "To

Option 3 – Major renovation and expansion (with an emphasis on expansion)

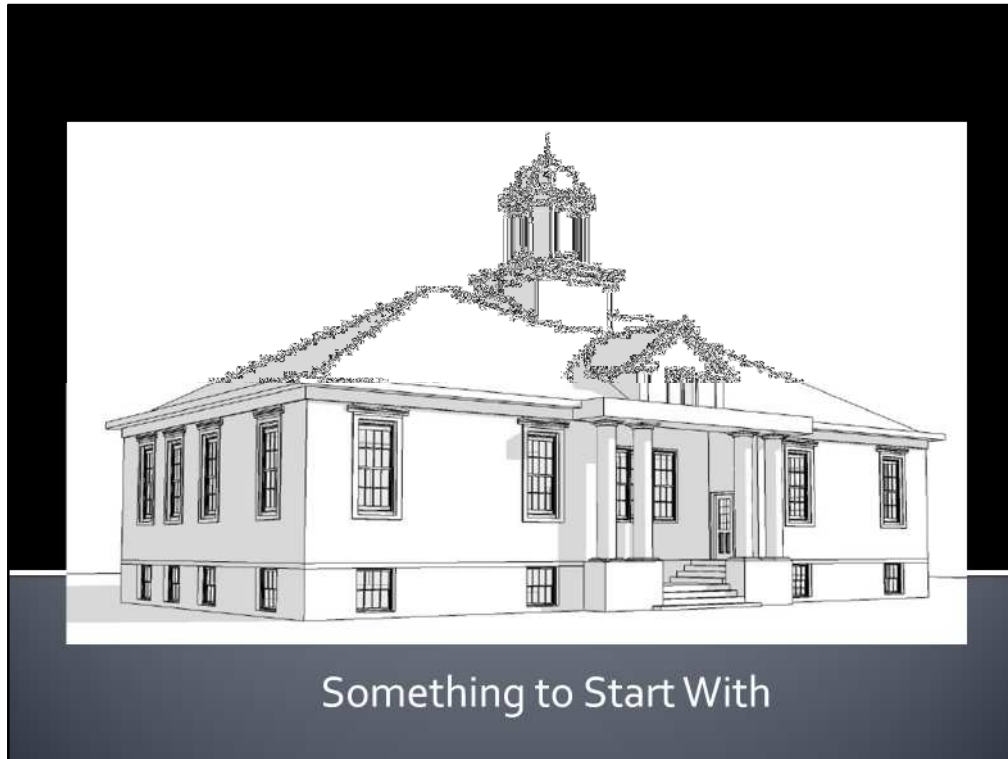
A realistic option?

- Expensive (CAPITAL BUT LESS COSTLY FROM AN OPERATING STANDPOINT) – Might cost between \$ 4.5 million - \$ 7 million (capital) However, staff would be used much more efficiently
- Would meet long-term needs – Adaptability of new design could allow for changes of service delivery mechanisms in the future
- Would be far more energy efficient
- Would maximize Town's investment – More people would use the Library, the materials would be used more, and staff would be used more efficiently
- Would allow for expanded services – Would allow for desired additions asked for by the public such as more programming, a larger collection of materials, and comfortable, quiet reading spaces
- Would contribute to "Town Center" efforts

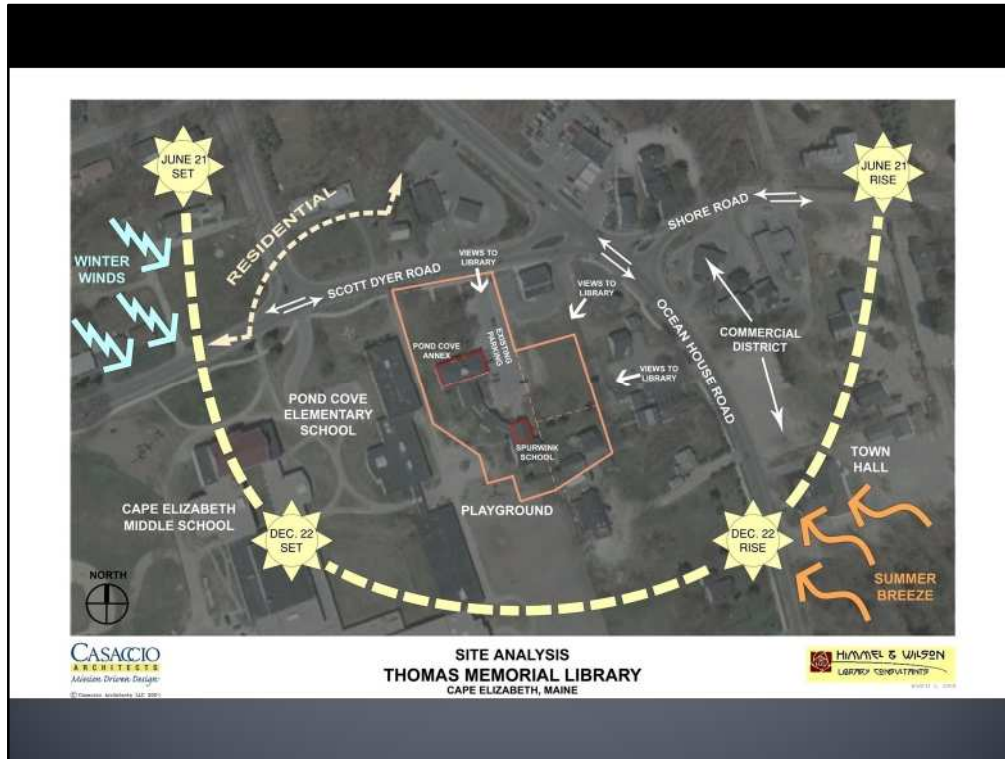


Let's look at the expansion option in greater detail.

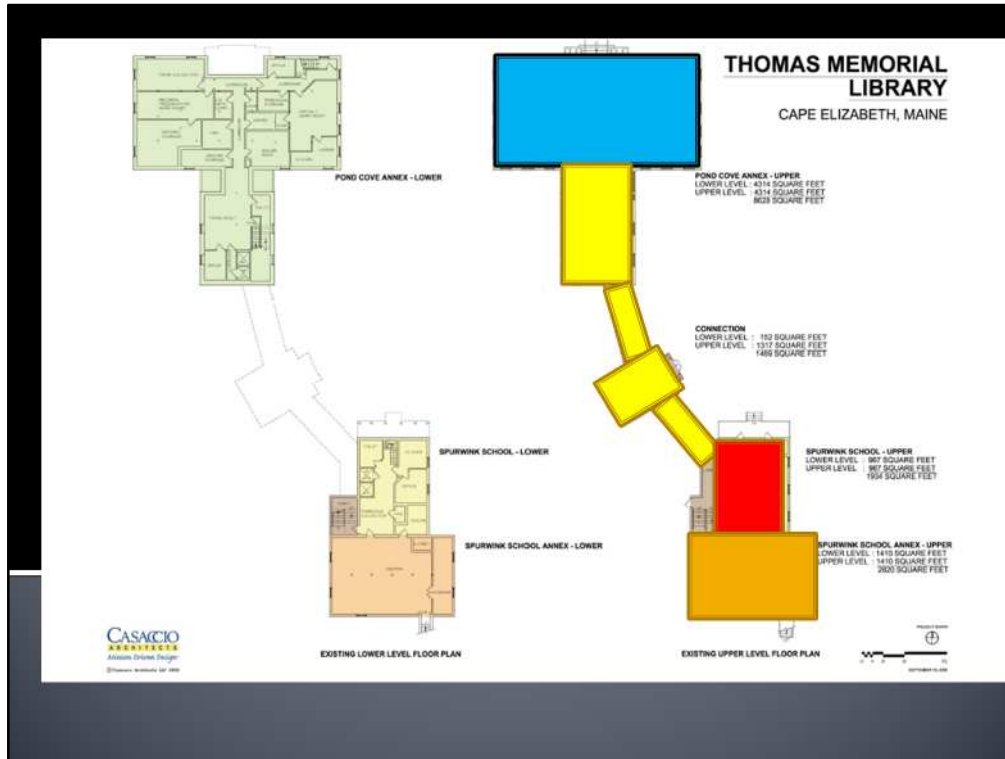
Let's look at the expansion option in greater detail. The options we're presenting are only a starting point. They will undoubtedly be refined and altered as the result of the charrette to be held at the Library on March 3.



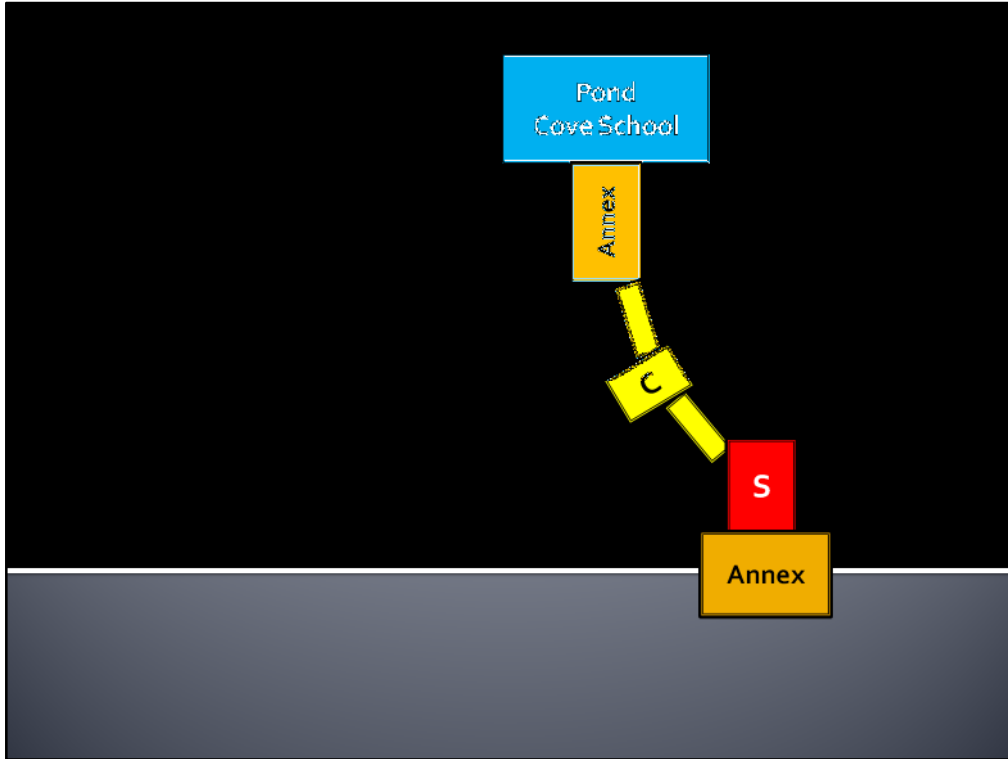
Talking about new library space doesn't necessarily mean that the community has to abandon its historic structures. The historic school structures provide the Library with something good to start with. They are aesthetically pleasing and represent the rich history of the community and of the Library. There is significant public support for incorporating the school buildings into the Library's design. Our team believes that this is both desirable and plausible. However, incorporating the historic structures also comes with a price. Building an "all new library" would be less expensive. The community will need to be the final arbiter of whether the additional cost of incorporating the historic structures makes sense.



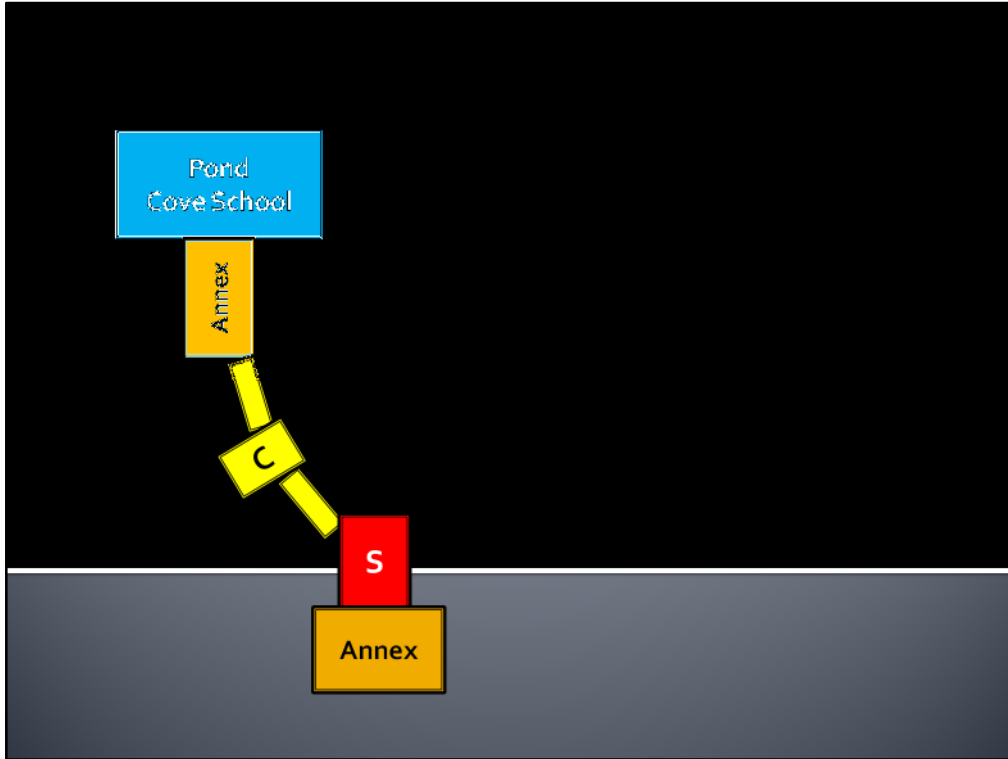
Here's an aerial view of the Library and its site. The site is approximately 1.8 acres in size. The lot line is quite irregular and the frontage on Scott Dyer Road is very limited. The location of the old Pond Cove School means that access to the bulk of the property from Scott Dyer is restricted to a relatively narrow strip of land.



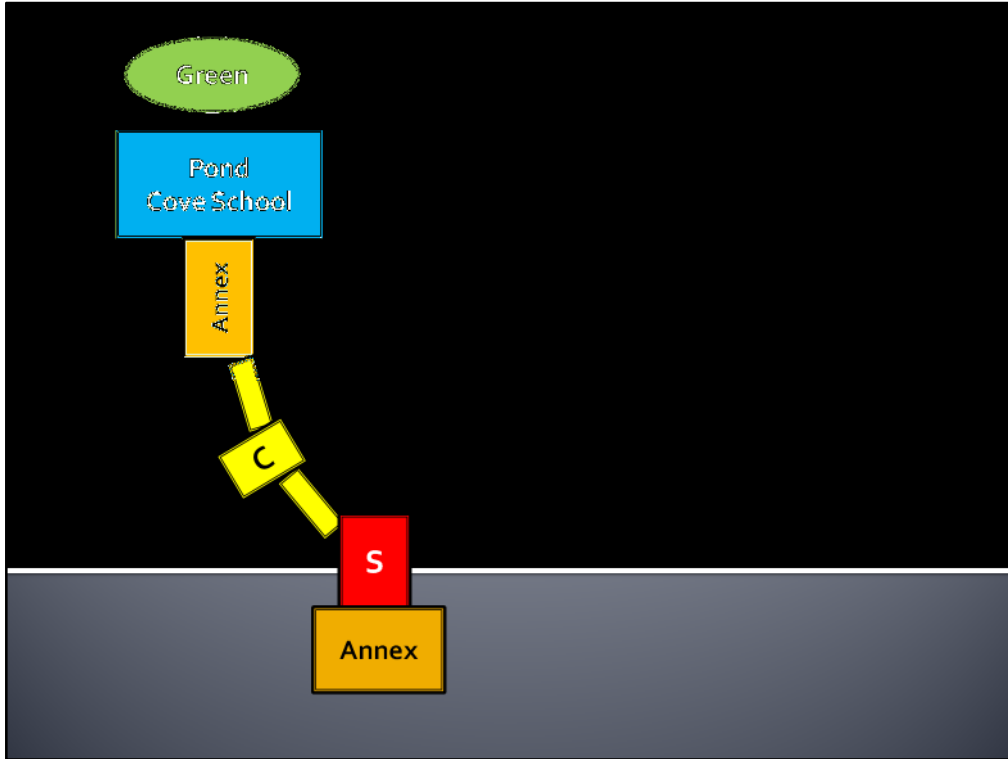
Here's a representation of the existing complex of buildings converted to a modular form. Let's explore the way in which the historic structures could be used in creating a library that would meet the community's long-term needs.



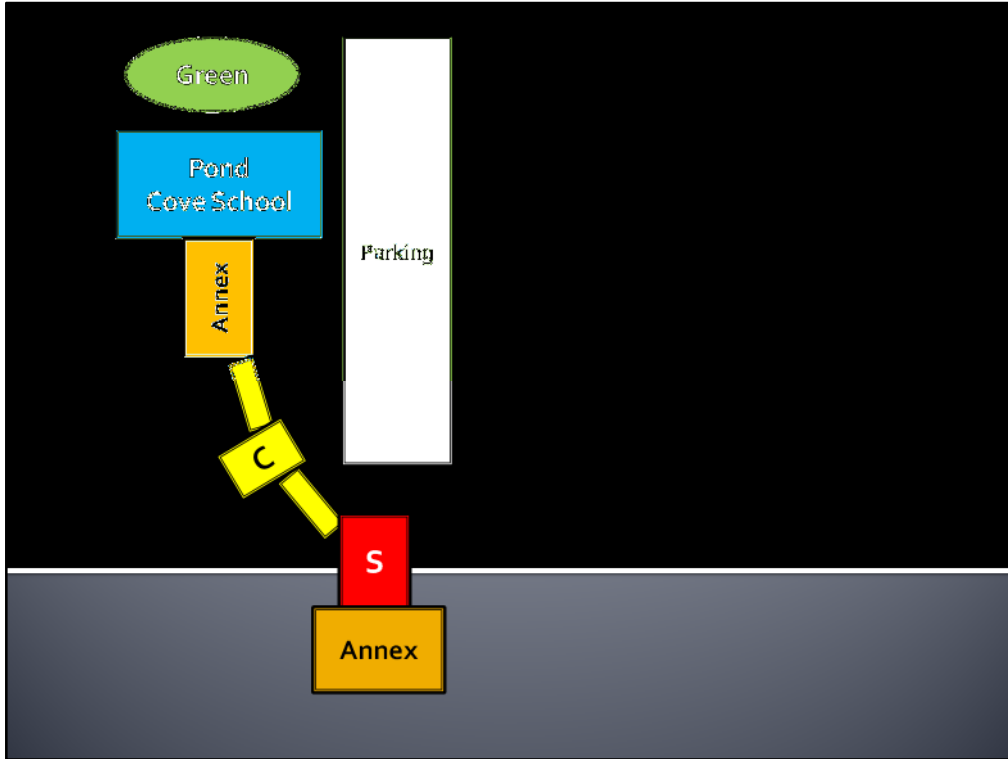
We're going to refer to the main portion of what is known as the Pond Cove School "Annex" as simply the Pond Cove School. It's really the "old Pond Cove School." We'll call the back portion of that building (originally a separate structure) as the Pond Cove Annex.



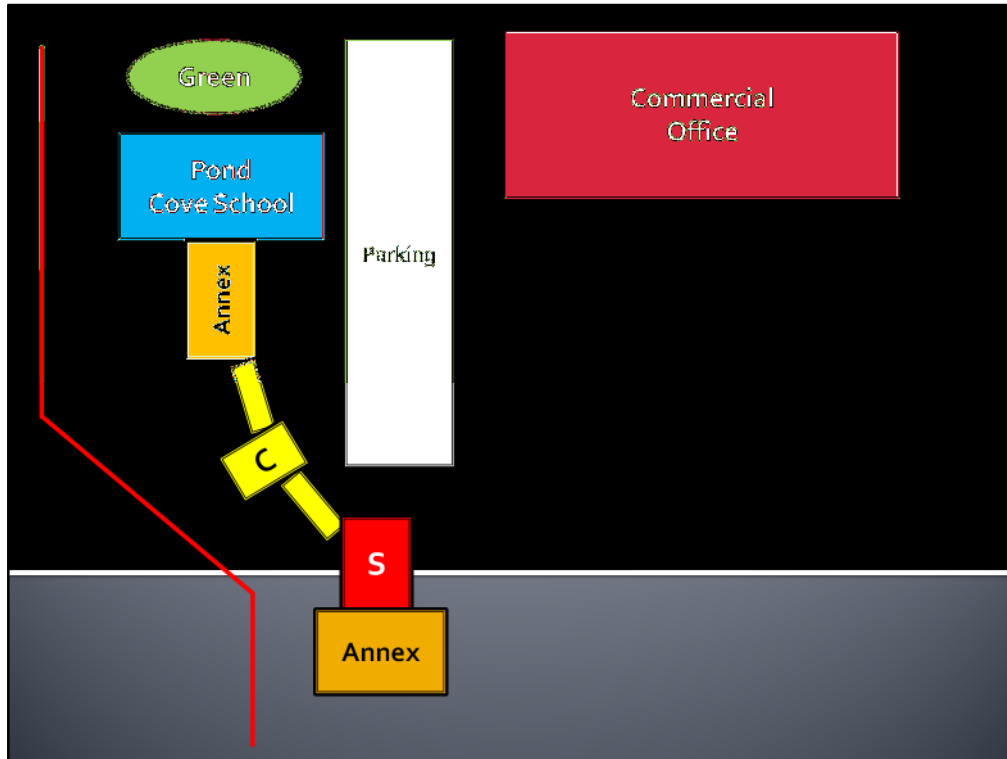
Let's move the block of buildings over on the screen so we can look at the overall site.



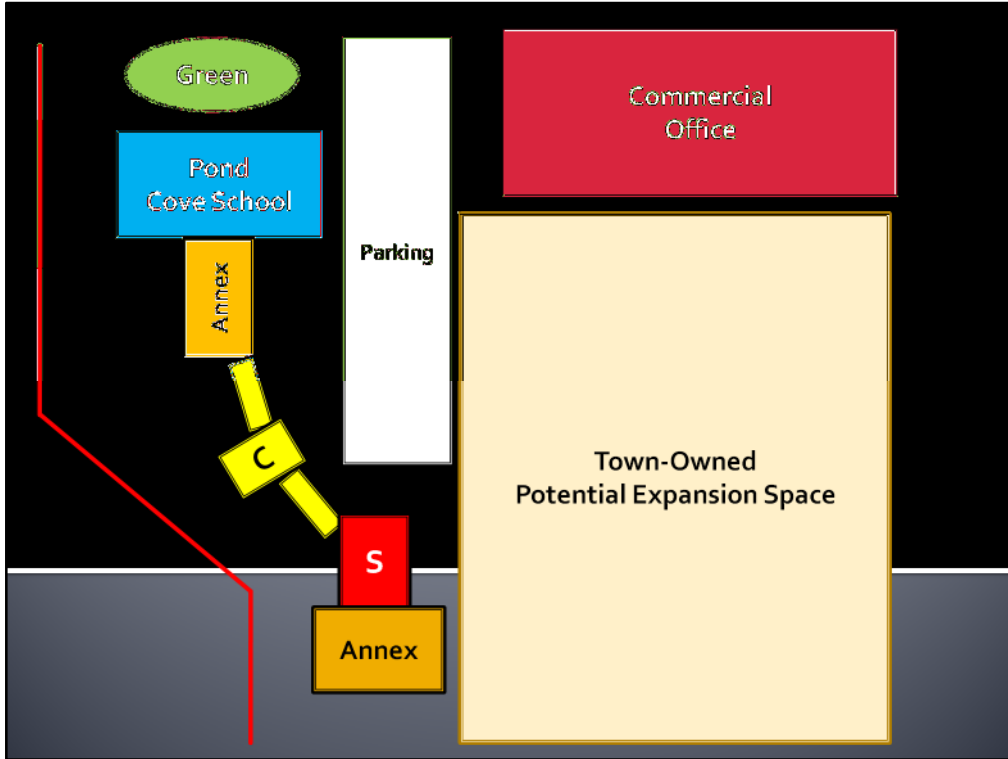
There is a considerable amount of green space in front of the building. This diagram only represents the location of the green space, not its size.



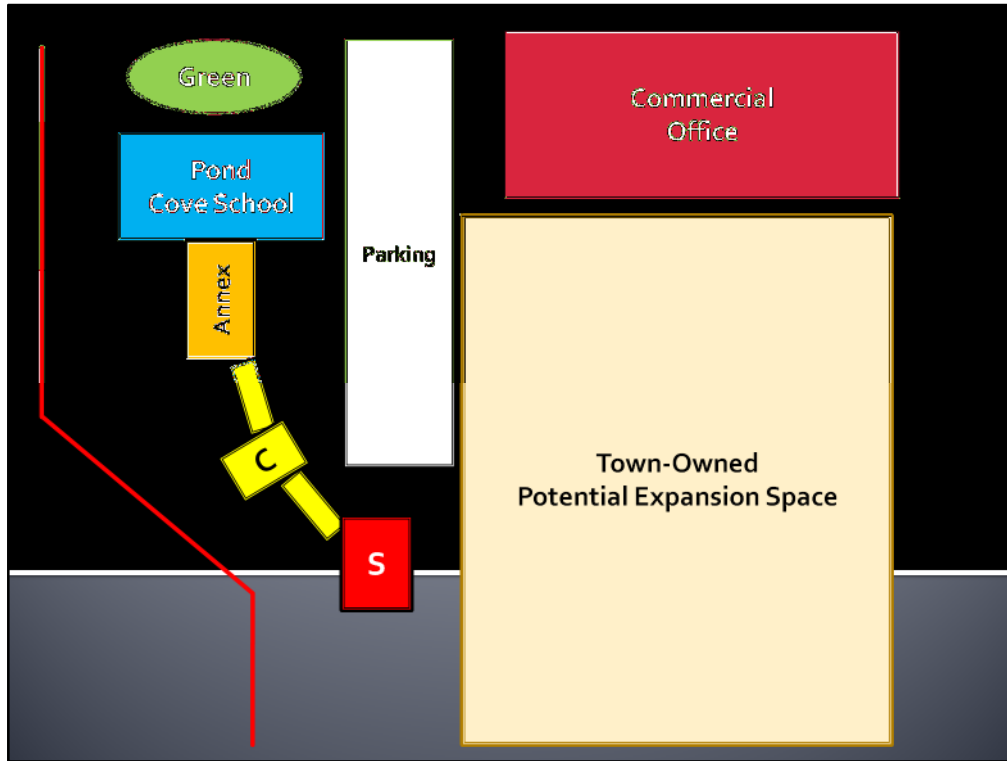
Parking is currently located to the east of the complex



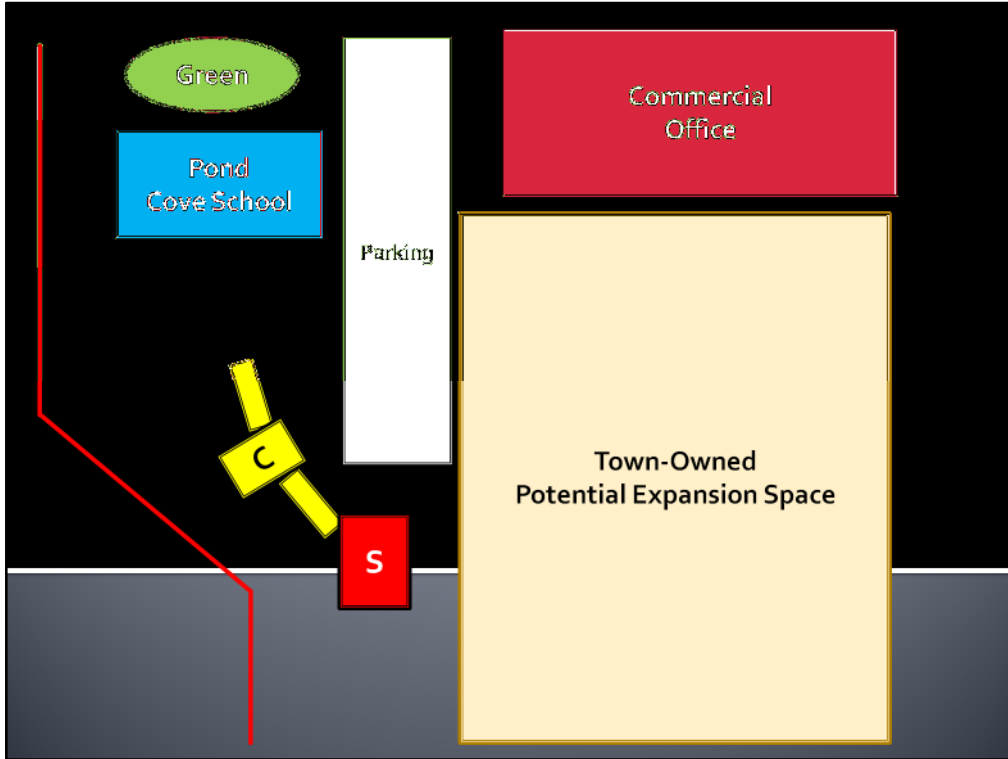
A building housing a dentist's office and some other businesses is located to the northeast of the library and is on property that is not owned by the Town. The red line shows the property line to the west in the direction of the elementary school. Note the irregular lot line and the narrow strip available to Access the property between the old Pond Cove School building and the commercial office property not owned by the Town.



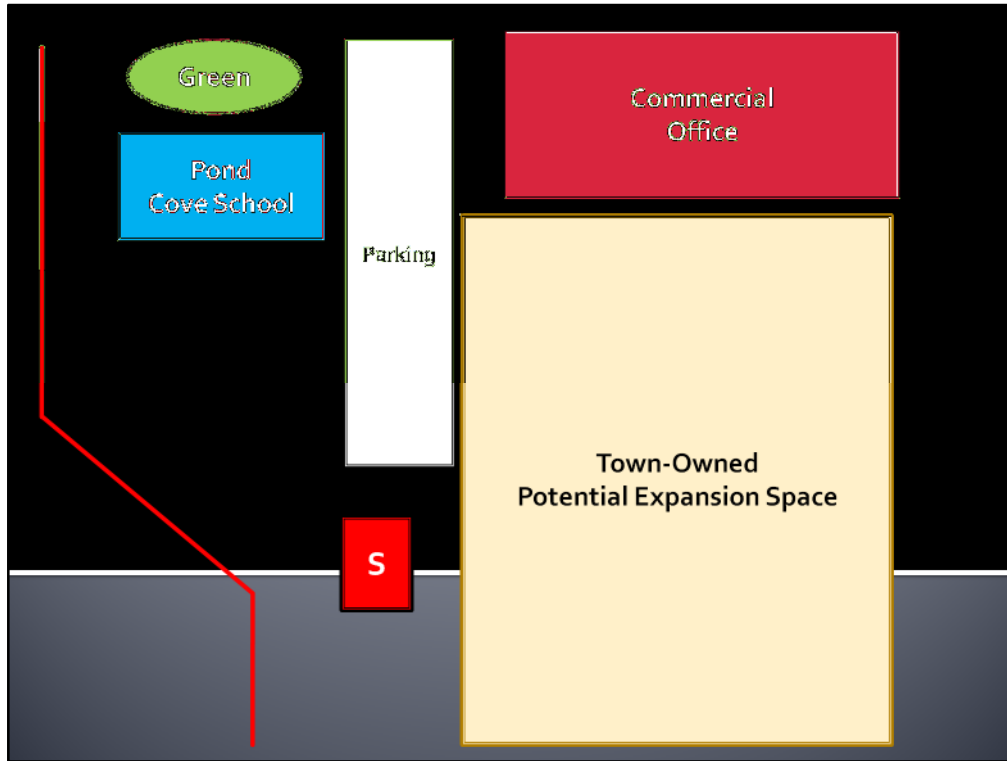
The Town owns space to the east of the building complex that lies behind the commercial property.



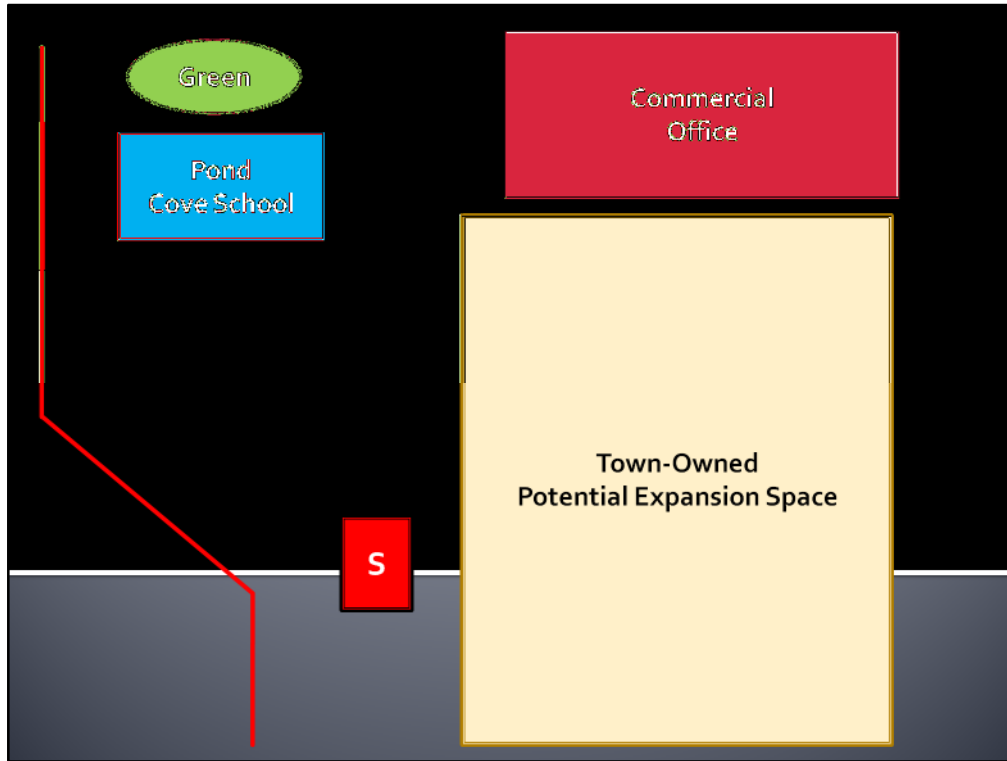
The expansion scenarios we're about to present are based on the following assumptions. First, the annex to the Spurwink School would be razed. This structure is in the worst condition and has the greatest deficiencies.



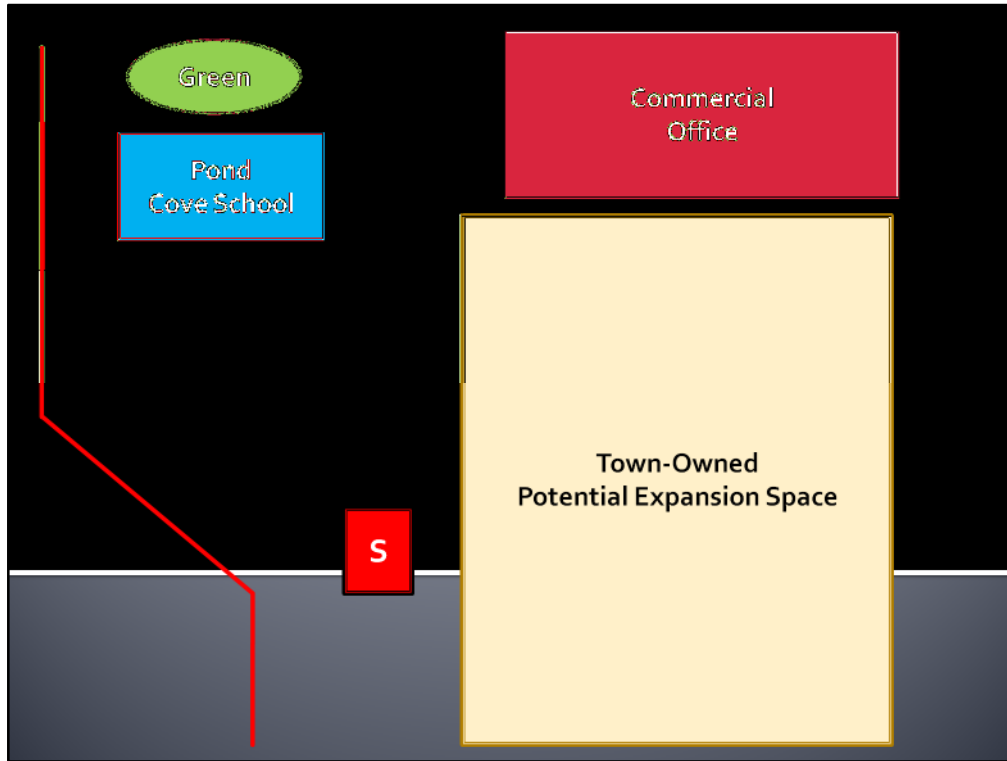
What we have called the “annex” to the Pond Cove School would also be removed.



The “connector” structure would also be removed. Although this section has the fewest structural deficiencies, it also contributes greatly to the inefficiency of the building.



The expansion scenarios that use the two historic structures assumes that parking could be located somewhere else on the site.



...and that the original portion of the Spurwink School could continue its wayfaring tradition and that it could be placed anywhere on the site.

Limitations of the existing site

Less than 2 acres

Oddly shaped property

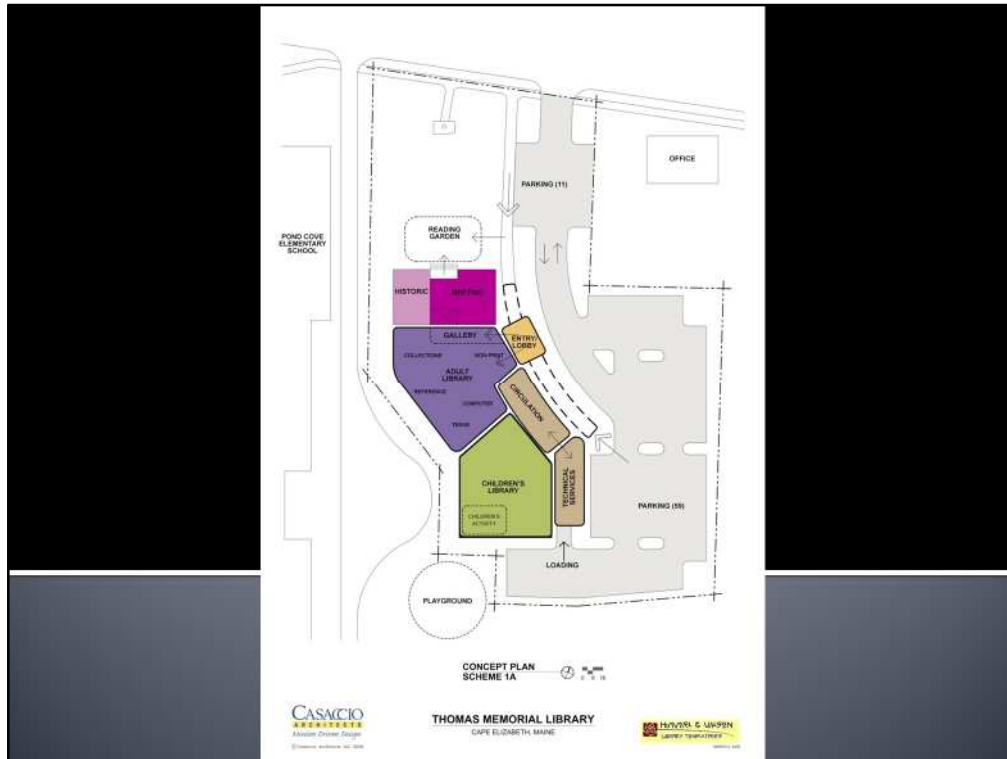
Less than ideal vehicular traffic access

Less than ideal siting (in terms of taking advantage of solar heat gain)

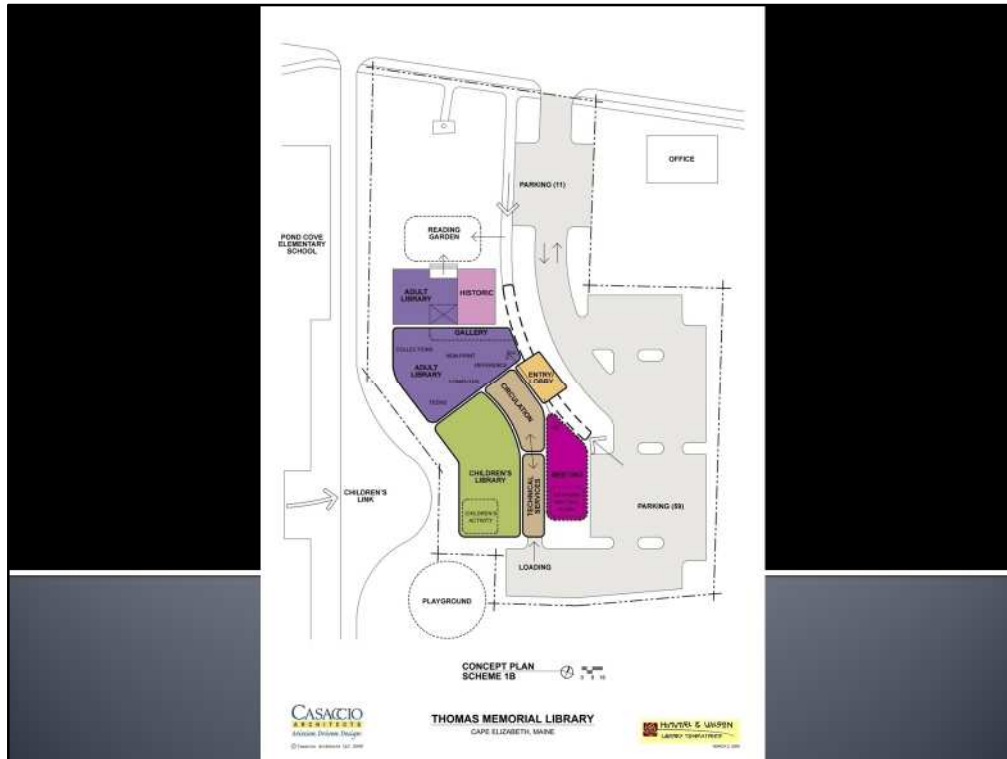
There are definitely limitations to the existing site. It consists of a bit more than 1.8 acres. However, as we already noted, it is an oddly shaped property and has limitations in terms of vehicular traffic access. The siting of the existing building is poor in regard to taking advantage of solar heat gain in the winter.

Let's look at a few alternative scenarios that would work on the existing site

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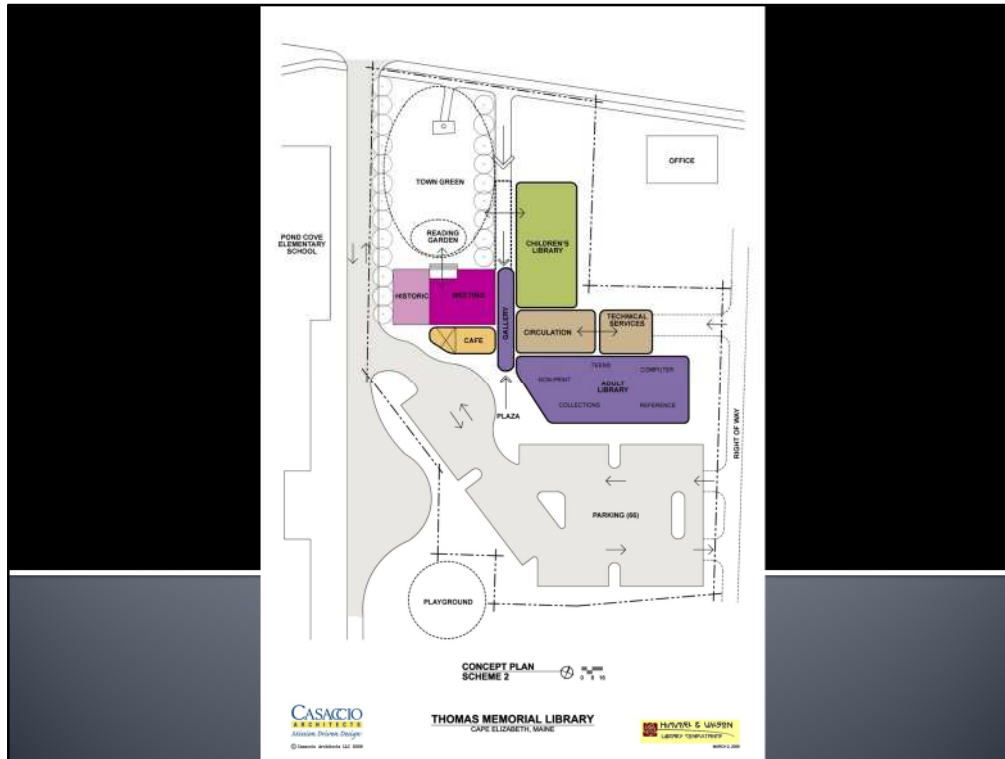
The first three alternatives are variations on a single theme. The old Pond Cove School remains at its current location and a new single story structure that would house the majority of public library services would be built (at grade) “behind” the school structure. Parking would occupy most of the additional Town–owned property that is available. The existing green space in front of the old Pond Cove School is preserved.



In each of the first three scenarios, the façade William Widgery Thomas' Spurwink School could be reconstructed as a children's program area INSIDE the new building. Another possibility would be to use the two original walls of the building as facing on the exterior of the new structure in an area designed to be a community meeting space. The existing library meeting space is very poor.



In each of the three “variation” scenarios, access to a loading area is provided. This access is poorest in the third scenario because it depends on the use of the fire access road that serves the elementary school (the NEW Pond Cove School).



Another scenario that uses the old Pond Cove building would relocate the entry/exit drive to the west between the old and new Pond Cove buildings. While this scenario addresses lots of problems (places the entry on a southern exposure, orients the entry toward the elementary school, minimizes the visual impact of the expanded parking area, focuses attention on the green, helps to build a Town Center environment, etc.), this plan relies on the use of school owned property and places a busy drive in closer proximity to small children. Many other scenarios are possible, especially if the old Pond Cove building is either removed or relocated elsewhere on the property. We invite all of you to ask questions and to participate in the design charrette that will be held March 3 at the Library.



QUESTIONS?

Are there any questions?

Bill Wilson

Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants

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