

**Report To The Selectmen**  
**Canterbury Building Needs Committee**  
January 2003

**OVERVIEW:**

During its first year of meetings the committee was able to identify a number of needs that faced the town relative to its municipal buildings and functions. In our second year, prioritizing those needs and initiating solutions became difficult for three primary reasons:

- \*Many of the needs had been deferred for years and were equally urgent.
- \*Some solutions required initial action in other areas before they could be addressed.
- \*Sites, or combination of sites, were difficult to identify.

When the Robinson field became available in the fall, it opened many doors. The last large centrally located site that existed, the five-acre field was of sufficient size to house a Municipal Complex that would include the Fire Department, Police Department and Highway Garage, with room for expansion in future years.

With the three departments currently housed in the heart of the Town Center being removed to a new -- but still central -- Municipal Complex, there was an opportunity to reconstruct the current Highway Garage and Fire Station into a Library slightly larger than what had been proposed in the past. Space not immediately utilized for the Library could be used for storage or display of Historical Society archives.

The former Police Station could be refitted with little construction into a central meeting place for approximately 50 people, which would serve the meeting room needs of the adjacent new Library, the Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Planning Board, the Selectmen's meetings and meetings of the various town committees. The present meeting space in the Sam Lake House could be redeveloped, with Sam Lake funds, into offices for the Selectmen, Building Inspection/Code Enforcement and other town departments.

Many cost benefits began to emerge from studies of these possibilities. By combining these projects into one capital improvement project, we would save the expense of contractors having to return to the town year after year and gearing up for new, separate projects. Under this proposal a construction supervisor can move crews to locations where they will be most efficient and economical.

Following are the buildings that would be affected and the specific needs that would be addressed:

## **TOWN HALL:**

This is the oldest building in the Town Center. In former years it was a vital hub of town activities, both public and private. Historically, it has been used for Town meetings, the Canterbury Players, scouting, dances and other events. Restoration would allow for expanded meeting places, rental income, music concerts and similar events. Last year work was done to lower the building onto granite blocks, giving it a more historically accurate siting.

**We recommend** a new addition at the rear of the building with an ADA-compliant ramped entry, new bathrooms and a small kitchenette. During the past year the committee had been receiving and studying designs and costs for building such an addition to the Town Hall and implementing these improvements. The committee voted not to put construction on this addition out to bid in 2002 when it became evident that waiting to make these improvements part of the full capital building program would result in significant cost savings.

Additionally, the building should be fully insulated, energy efficient window treatment installed, and the basement cleaned, painted and secured for storage. The roof should be re-shingled with 40-year “architectural” shingles, similar to what is currently on the adjacent church. **Funds to initiate this phase of renovation have already been appropriated.**

## **MUNICIPAL COMPLEX**

It is the unanimous opinion of this committee that it is not in keeping with a vision for a more attractive and pedestrian-active center to have high-speed emergency vehicles and heavy equipment traffic originating from the center. The following departments currently affect the Town Center in this way, and have similar and overlapping needs or considerations. **The CBNC recommends** that a combined Municipal Complex be built to house all three departments so that savings may be realized by the absence of duplication. The following individual and combined needs of the Town Garage, Fire Station and Police station would be addressed:

**Town Garage:** Additional space is needed to properly house all maintenance vehicles and equipment. There needs to be a proper area for repair and upkeep of equipment. Facilities should be provided for showers, bathrooms and sleeping (which will be shared with other departments). Salt and sand sheds and outdoor storage of supplies should be properly screened from direct view.

The benefits of relocating to a new complex include the removal of heavy vehicle traffic and unsightly storage (including gasoline) from the Town Center. There will be a reduction of heavy vehicle traffic passing the Elementary School on the way to the Town Dump.

**Fire Department:** Relocating to a new Municipal Complex provides the opportunity to create additional space for Fire and Rescue vehicles and equipment and proper area to provide repair and upkeep. There would be space to allow communications between departments during emergencies. Room for meetings and training (shared with other departments), offices, and storage would be provided. A small kitchenette/eating area (shared with other departments) and shower, bathroom and sleeping areas (also shared) would be available.

Again, significant heavy vehicle traffic would be removed from the core of the Town Center.

**Police Department:** The present facility does not meet legal requirements for privacy of juveniles, and is deficient in areas of safety, evidence storage and work area. There is not room to garage all vehicles. There is no “detainment cell” or areas for proper interrogation. All of these needs would be met by including this department into the Municipal Complex. Additionally, the department has the shared availability of the common facilities, particularly important during town-wide emergencies.

### **TOWN LIBRARY:**

Significant work and study has been done by the Library Committee to identify needs and develop designs and costs for a new library. The CBNC agrees with the findings of that committee. There is substantial need for increased space for books, program/meetings, proper bathroom facilities, librarians’ work, computer and technology stations, children’s activities and much more.

**We recommend** renovating the current town garage and fire station to create a new and expanded Library. Such a building would be in the New England Style with a brick and clapboard exterior and a pitched roof at the front. A porch across the front of the building could be built to join the former police station, which can be easily renovated into a meeting space for approximately 50 people. This can also provide some of the meeting and activity areas of the Library. The Zoning Board, Planning Board and other Town Committees can also use it. **Parking for 42 cars** would be developed in the area surrounded by the new library, Town Hall, and Community Church.

The CBNC believes that relocating the library to the site of the former Town Garage will complement the newly revitalized Town Hall, will draw more attention to the historic Houser Museum, and revitalize pedestrian activity in a currently isolated and unattractive corner of the Center.

### **SAM LAKE HOUSE:**

**The CBNC recommends** that the foundation of the old portion of the Sam Lake House be stabilized and that the issue of moisture in the new basement be addressed. A new safety exit and new Town Clerk Counter/Window need to be created. With the removal of Board and Committee meetings to the new meeting space at the former police station, the current meeting space can be redeveloped into office/work space for the

Selectmen. These repairs and improvements can be accomplished out of Sam Lake Funds and are not included in the cost of the Center project.

### **HOUSER HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

After careful consideration and discussion, the CBNC agrees with the findings of the Historic Society that as part of the Town Hall/Library/Parking Area improvements, consideration be given to ways of improving access to the Museum by landscaping and providing access pathways. These additions will better tie it to the pedestrian center and allow for events to be held outside in proximity to this building. Benefits should be realized by virtue of its proximity to the improved parking and increased foot traffic in the area. The availability of a climate-controlled room for storing historical archives in the new library is also a benefit.

### **RECYCLING CENTER**

A variety of improvements and repairs to the Recycling Center have been suggested. These projects are currently being covered by the Recycling Center's own budget and are not included in the Center Project. Future plans for expansion of the facility and redesign of traffic flow at the Recycling Center will be addressed after certain State issues have been resolved. The removal of the sand/salt storage shed from the site to the new Municipal Complex removes some traffic from the site and provides additional area for improvements.

### **TRAFFIC – PARKING – LANDSCAPING**

A master landscaping and roadwork plan is proposed improve the center and increase parking for the Church, Library, and Town Hall, allowing for safe foot traffic through the center and creating a unified and attractive appearance to the Town Center.

### **SYNOPSIS**

The specific recommendations of the Building Needs Committee are as follows:

**Purchase** the Robinson Land on Baptist Rd.

**Approve a bond issue** of 2.5 million dollars for the design and construction of a Municipal Complex, Town Hall addition, new Library in the location of the present fire dept./town garage, creation of a meeting space in the present police station, and implementing landscaping and parking improvements in the Town Center.

**Utilize Sam Lake Funds** to do repairs and improvements to the building and create offices for the Selectmen in the new portion.

### **CONCLUSION**

A unique benefit of this plan is that there will be a dramatic change in efficiency and availability of town services into the next generation with an almost indiscernible difference in the face and character of the Town Center. Conceptual drawings and projected costs have been developed for these recommendations. The Committee is

unanimous in their enthusiasm for the substantial gains and benefits the Town will realize at a price substantially below what was anticipated for these projects if they were to come on line individually over a period of the next several years.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Canterbury Building Needs Committee**  
Kent Ruesswick, Chairman