



Welcome to the **“Save The Hall, Y'all”** Campaign

Envision a self-sustaining, state-of-the-art performing and creative arts center that reflects the community we are. Informal, creative, responsible, caring.
The Heart of Southport.

THE PAST

Southport was the Brunswick County seat for more than 150 years. First located in Brunswick Town, then Lockwood Folly, county government operations moved in 1808 to what was then called Smithville. Brunswick County's legislative, administrative, public safety, and judicial activity remained there until 1977, when the county seat was changed to Bolivia by voter mandate.(1)

The first courthouse in Smithville/Southport was built on land set aside in the center of town. It was later replaced by a two-story brick structure that forms the core of the building still standing today at the corner of Moore and Davis streets.

Built in the mid-1800s, this historic Brunswick County courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, along with 161 adjacent buildings that make up the Southport Historic District, over half of which date from 1885-1905. The contributing residential, commercial, and institutional buildings comprise what is considered a fine example of a Victorian coastal town in North Carolina.(2)

The courthouse building became Southport City Hall in 1979, after the county government relocated to Bolivia. Municipal employees worked on the ground floor and elected officials met monthly in the large second-floor hall, where community events were held year round. In 2014, administrative operations relocated to the current city hall and the police department moved two years later, when the building was declared unsafe.

The City of Southport is committed to retaining ownership of the now-vacant building. A new roof was added a few years ago to stave off further deterioration to the historic structure, but no funds are currently budgeted to undertake additional capital repairs necessary for preservation and reuse.



Up Your Arts, a non-profit organization founded in 2017, is inspired by the building's history and its standing in the community, both for its prominent downtown location and for its status as a center of municipal life. We have developed a plan to restore the building as an arts-focused community center with a variety of sustaining uses, open to and operating on behalf of city residents and visitors . . . at no cost to taxpayers!

THE PRESENT

Large and small cities throughout North Carolina have demonstrated the positive effects a downtown arts center can bring to a community. Kinston, Siler City, Raleigh, Carrboro, Hendersonville, to name just a few, are among municipalities that have established thriving, sustainable centers that support themselves and add value to surrounding businesses, other creative ventures, and residents' quality of life.

Funding for the necessary renovations to the building can be achieved under the auspices of a public-private partnership between the City of Southport and Up Your Arts. Public money would be leveraged with federal and state grants that support historic preservation, Main Street development, and art-centered solutions for sustainable infrastructure.



Private funding for the building repairs would also be raised through corporate philanthropy, event fundraisers, and individual contributions to a capital campaign, similar to the successful model provided by a recent expansion of the Southport Maritime Museum.

Another local working model is Franklin Square Gallery, which the city has leased to the Associated Artists of Southport for the past four decades, in roughly ten-year increments at \$1/per year. In exchange, the AAS pays for building maintenance and upkeep, utilities and insurance. Up Your Arts seeks a similar arrangement to guide the future of the courthouse/city hall building and would transfer control of programming to an art center foundation after construction renovations are complete.

Some interesting facts about the building:

- Built in the mid-1800s
- Served as the Brunswick County Courthouse from 1854-1977
- Renovated in the 1960s – Exterior stucco and wings added, mechanical and HVAC systems upgraded
- Served as Southport City Hall from 1979-2014
- Renovated in 2016 - New roof and underground utilities installed
- Designated a threatened historical resource by the Historic Wilmington Foundation in 2016 (3)
- Approximately 10,000 square feet of usable floor space

(1) Source: Susie Carson (January 28, 1999). "Government Never Sat Still."

(2) Source: Carl Lounsbury (June 1980). "Southport Historic District" *National Register of Historic Places – Nomination and Inventory*. North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Retrieved 2014-08-01. <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/BW0008.pdf>

(3) <https://www.starnewsonline.com/news/20160626/city-to-renovate-historic-courthouse-in-southport>

Outdoor Seating & Sculpture Garden

To Moore Street

Outdoor Seating & Sculpture Garden

45' - 6" +/-

35' - 0" +/-

12' - 8" +/-

45' - 0" +/-

Rest Rm

Rest Rm

Welcome Foyer

Retail Gallery

Management

Mechanical

Non-Profit Resource Center

Rest Rms

Exhibition Hall

Private Studio

Co-op Studio

Private Studio

Private Studio

Private Studio

Private Studio

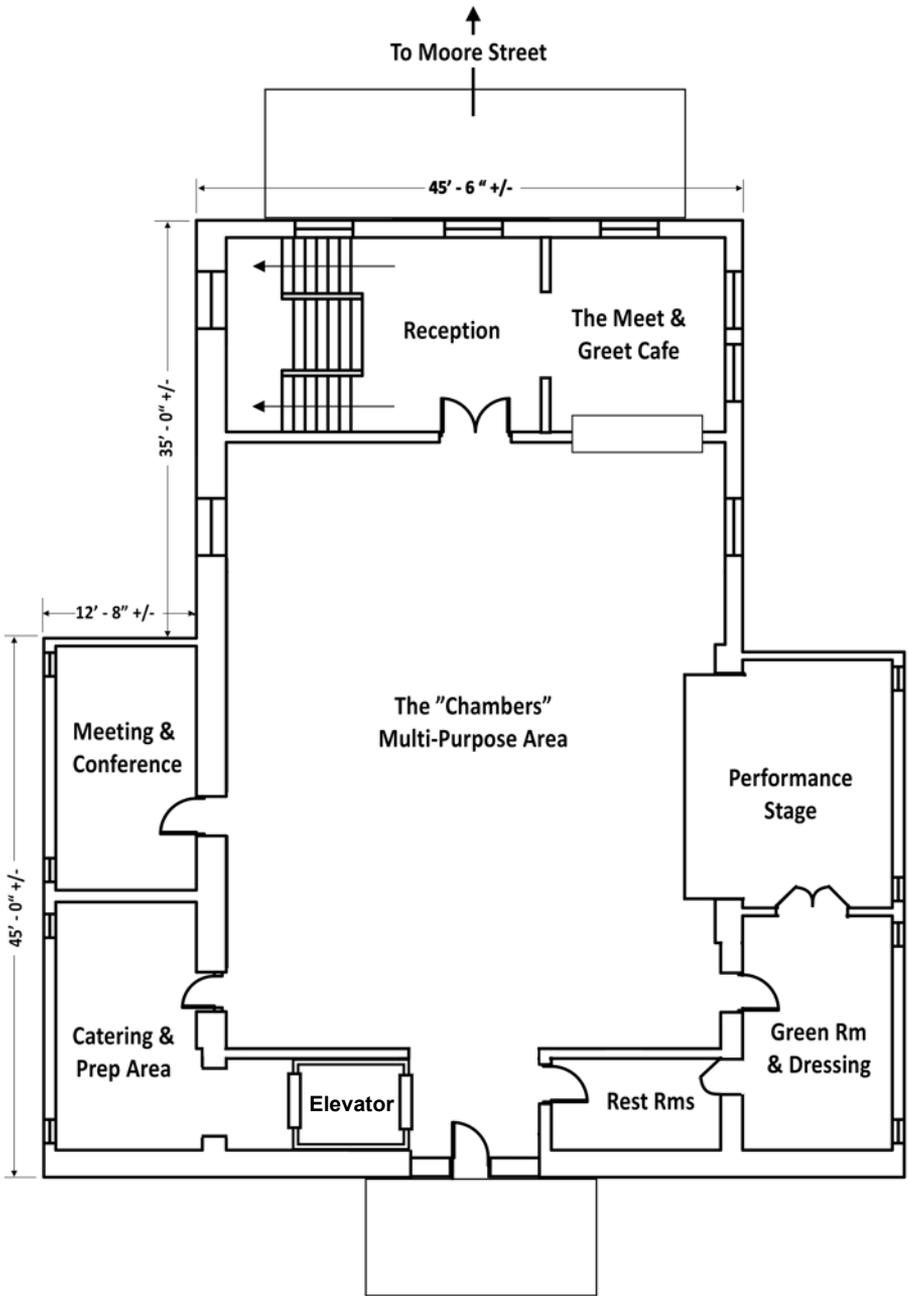
Catering Staging

Elevator

Co-op Studio

Co-op Studio

Proposed First Floor Layout



Proposed Second Floor Layout

THE VISION

Envision an arts center in the historic heart of Southport: an informal gathering spot for everyone in our community and a must-see destination for out-of-town family and other visitors.

In addition to creating space for visual and performing artists to work and exhibit, Up Your Arts proposes to renovate the grand hall upstairs for reuse as a public meeting chamber for the city's governing body. The center will also provide additional space for weddings and events when the Southport Community Building is booked to capacity. The hall is acoustically well suited to support a state-of-the-art, intimate venue offering a broad range of performance art: dance, choral recitals, chamber music, storytelling, theater, listening concerts, etc.

An outdoor sculpture garden, with seating and performance areas, will enhance the entrance from Moore Street. The first floor will house rented studio space to visual artists, private and co-op, and the wide, central hallway would function as an exhibition gallery. A welcoming foyer will provide information on all upcoming art and music events throughout the area and help promote existing art and community organizations.

A small retail shop would feature the work of local students currently engaged in arts-related instruction at the Brunswick Community College campus in Southport. The "Meet and Greet Cafe" would welcome visitors to informal and relaxed seating throughout the building. (Imagine enjoying a beverage and light fare while watching artists at work, or while listening to musicians perform in an outdoor sculpture garden.)

Up Your Arts also plans to dedicate space to be used communally by Brunswick County non-profit and community organizations, so that they may have a physical presence in the heart of Southport.

To sum it all up, we have a vision for a self-sustaining, state-of-the-art performing and creative arts center that reflects the community we are. Informal, creative, responsible, caring. The heart of Southport.

Major Design Features

State-of-the-art acoustical design, sound and lighting systems

Upgraded mechanical, security and audiovisual systems

Upgraded energy management systems

Upgraded signage and informal seating throughout

Historic elements maintained and/or restored as possible (I.e., windows, stair cases and tin ceilings)

100% ADA compliant with designated ADA parking, signage and access

THE PLAN FORWARD

Up Your Arts has generated community support for the conversion of the historic courthouse and former city hall into a state-of-the-art performing and creative arts community center in the heart of Southport. Scores of individuals have offered their time, effort and finances to help turn the vision into a reality.

Up Your Arts made a formal presentation to the Southport Board of Aldermen on October 10, 2019. We introduced our plan for a two-and-a-half year, two-million-dollar project to complete a total renovation of the building. Our proposal to the city's elected officials included a series of memorandums of understanding which clearly identify benchmarks and "fail safe" points necessary to ensure the success and long-term sustainability of the project.

In November 2019 our initial MOU was approved by the Board of Alderman. We are now working diligently to achieve the following by May 2020:

- Establish a supporting membership group: "Friends of the Arts"
- Contract architectural, historical, structural, mechanical, and civil engineering feasibility surveys
- Research code and usage requirements to determine capacities and design constraints
- Environmental mitigation, ideally to allow future public walk throughs
- Schedule ongoing public input/listening/feedback meetings
- Review lease agreements the city has with similar partners
- Establish preliminary construction and operating budgets
- Identify specific funding sources, i.e., grants, corporations, etc.
- Establish a community-wide fundraising group

At the conclusion of a successful six-month effort we will begin the design development phase. We will continue to generate community involvement and begin major fund raising efforts.

"Sign up. Show up. Celebrate and enjoy."

Become a "Friends of the Arts" member online at <https://upyourarts.org>. Share your ideas, thoughts and feedback with us. Spread the vision throughout our community. Attend Southport Board of Alderman meetings to show your support for our vision.

Make a one-time or recurring donation to the "Save the Hall, Y'all" campaign at upyourarts.org. Up Your Arts is charitable organization registered in the State of North Carolina with federal 501(c)3 status. Your donation may be considered tax deductible.



Up Your Arts is a non profit organization founded in 2017 to support and enhance the creative and performing arts throughout the greater Southport area.

There is much to promote. Live music, numerous galleries and shops, festivals and community events, established theater groups, a college campus focused on the arts, the quaint and picturesque location of numerous film productions . . . The southeast coast of North Carolina continues to emerge as a regional destination focused on the arts.

The mission of **Up Your Arts** is simple.

- We **promote** all of the artful, musical and theatrical events throughout the area.
- We **support** the mission of the Southport Center of Brunswick Community College to offer up the best hands-on learning opportunities in the arts.
- We **encourage** all interested musicians and artists in their entrepreneurial and educational efforts.
- We **promote** the creation of new and dynamic venues, events and festivals to round out the artistic offerings which currently exist.
- We **advocate** strongly for the art community, and pursue every opportunity for advocacy in the public realm.
- We **leverage** our membership in supporting associated community non-profit organizations.
- We **do the work** necessary to ensure the success of regional art, music, dance and theater.

Keep up with the happenings on our website, www.upyourarts.org, check out the **Up Your Arts** Facebook page, or join our Facebook group, **Southport Area Music and Arts**. Experience all that art has to offer in the greater Southport region.