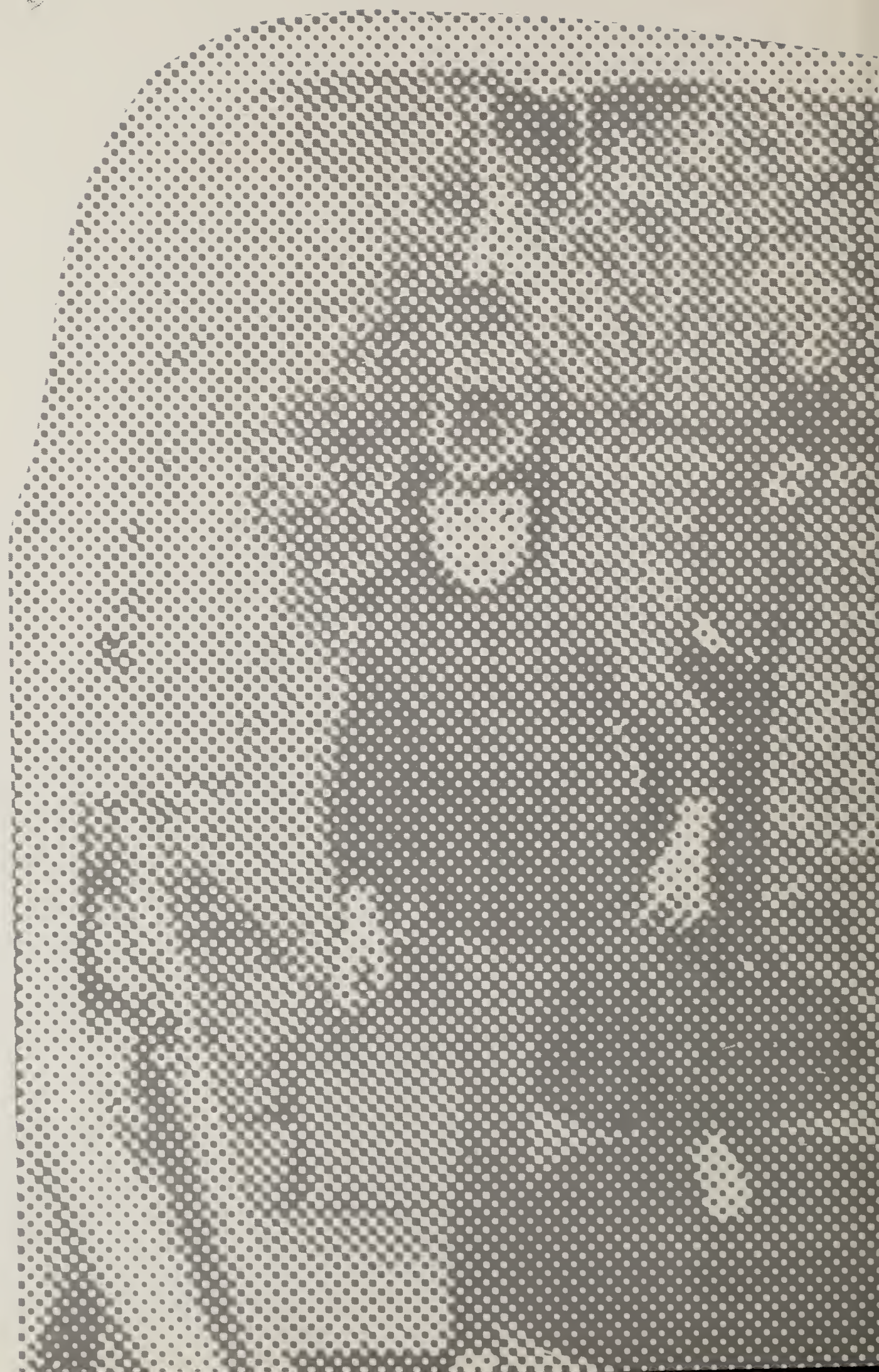


Dealing with Space

A Void
Once a store, a church, an old red barn, a hall
Gone — left only empty walls
Decaying light
A Dream
In search of space
Arms to spread
Life to share
A Void No More
P. J. Gibson



Dealing with Space

MEDIA ASSOCIATES INC.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

for

THE EXPANSION ARTS PROGRAM FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS



Preface

Surrounded by a few barren trees and the stubble of brown grass patches, a small boy is seen playing alone in an urban park. He laughs, runs, turns somersaults, contentedly absorbed in the private world to which he has been transported by the faster-than-light vehicle of imagination.

The boy sees a place filled with lush green foliage, including a huge grass carpet on which he can trip the light fantastic. He hears a symphony of sounds: flutes, drums and scampering animals. From the desolation of the park, the child has created an enchanted forest where he can spend hours enjoying the warmth of a brilliant sun which may shine only in his mind.

The effortless ability to transform spaces into whatever one envisions and projects on his mental screen is a unique province of childhood. But this innate imaginative talent is usually suppressed as the child acquires cognitive skills—the three R's and their extensions—designed to prepare him for participation in an increasingly technological society. No more flights of fancy; he is now grounded by a very literal perception of the world around him.

Sadly, the adult's ability to deal imaginatively with his environment is often permanently impaired by the limitations of societal conditioning. As the level of sophistication increases, the capacity to look beyond the surface into the potential for innovation seems to be diminished even further.

But the unsophisticated child is constantly redesigning his surroundings to fit a particular need or desire, for example: a tree and a few boards become a treehouse; a discarded crate and ball-bearing wheels become a skatemobile; an old rubber tire becomes a one-passenger sedan for sidewalk travel or, roped to a sturdy branch, doubles as a backyard swing.

When the inadequacy of space is an endemic factor in his environment, the creative instincts of a child are even more expansive. Witness the inventiveness seen in a Chicago ghetto as a young would-be Kareem shoots into a basketball goal formed by the arms of a friend.

Uninhibited by the shackles of what is, an active imagination explores freely the possibilities of what can be and then proceeds to transform them into a more functional reality.

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Introduction

The dynamic relationship between imagination and space, which has been examined from the perspective of a child, is the special focus of this primer. From the beautiful fantasy of an enchanted forest to a uniquely improvised inner-city basketball court, we have seen that children adeptly use imaginative skill to transform environmental spaces—mentally or physically—according to their own specifications.

We will now explore the translation of this concept, as well as essential technical considerations, into a useful reference for those involved in recycling spaces for arts use. While the information which will be presented is universally applicable, it is directed particularly to the constituency served by the Expansion Arts Program of the National Endowment for the arts—i.e., neighborhood-based arts programs in urban, suburban and rural communities across the nation.

Because of prevailing misconceptions about community arts, however, it will be helpful to define further the nature of the target constituency. The establishment of the Expansion Arts Program in 1971 reflected the Endowment's recognition and support, through matching grants, of programs which allow a broad cross-section of Americans to participate in creative expression. In essence, they are *people arts* programs which were literally born out of the diverse cultural traditions of neighborhoods, communities and regions long isolated from the established centers of mainstream culture in this country.

During the last decade the growth of indigenous arts programs—impressive by any standards—has profoundly altered the national cultural landscape. Their vitality cannot be attributed merely to the influx of federal support, for the percentage of those funded is proportionately small. Rather, the key factor behind this development has been the collective desire of a group of people to express artistically a common cultural or regional heritage.

A kaleidoscopic view of the so-called grass-roots-arts movement is presented in an exciting film produced by the Expansion Arts Program titled "A Coat of Many Colors." While surveying the spectrum of Expansion Arts-supported programs and regional festivals from coast to coast, the film highlights the diversity of the communities involved and the often ingenious ways in which they have made their projects work.

Similarly, the objective of this primer is to distill pertinent data from the experiences of those groups whose imaginative recycling of their spaces can offer realistic, workable, DO-ABLE guidelines for others. It is designed specifically to assist community-based organizations currently or prospectively planning to acquire facilities in which to perform, make or display their art.

But the guidelines presented here will not consist merely of neatly outlined, step-by-step procedures. Through the years organizers of community and neighborhood arts programs have learned that the rules for dealing with space—if any exist at all—are organic. They take shape and form as you confront the individual reality of each potential space and actually go through the process of selecting and recycling a new home for your project.

In order to make sound decisions, however, certain practical and technical advice is essential. You will find in these pages a collective wisdom of specialists in neighborhood arts, as well as organically derived information from projects in the field. There is a particular emphasis on innovative ways to tap money-saving resources, including key people from within the community.

The underlying theme is IMAGINATION—the kind of creative resourcefulness that has historically enabled residents of inner-city and rural communities to survive in spite of economic limitations. By skillfully recycling clothing, toys, housing and the like, their families' needs were always met. A similarly flexible and imaginative approach is required to meet the challenge of recycling spaces for neighborhood arts use.

But the use of adaptive space is no longer the exclusive province of any one arts constituency. With the current economic decline, a national trend toward renovating highly diversified properties for arts use has developed. An increasing number of arts organizations, including more established groups, are acquiring recently abandoned or otherwise available facilities in urban and suburban locations. Collectively, they are now called found spaces for the arts.

It has been observed that artists just might be the most successful of all community redevelopers. With limited budgets and unlimited imaginations, many arts groups have indeed revitalized their neighborhoods—physically, as well as culturally. The secret lies in VISION: the ability to explore the possibilities in what might initially appear to be the most unlikely spaces or circumstances for artistic expression.

A skating rink recycled to house a visual arts group and training program; a water tower converted into office and administrative space for several neighborhood arts groups; an old, unused public library renovated to serve as an arts center for children: all examples of an imaginative, visionary restructuring of space. Could you have looked at one of these buildings and envisioned the arts use to which it has been put?

Assessing the potential of an available space, be it an abandoned factory or a deserted mansion, poses insurmountable problems for many neighborhood arts groups. Thus, it is a good idea to recruit specialists—architects, designers, space planners and students—to help your group in acquiring and planning the renovation of your new quarters.

Technical professionals can be very valuable members of your Advisory Board. They can look at a space with your needs assessment in mind and determine how to restructure it to fit the requirements of your program. With their advice and help—knock down a wall, lower a ceiling, build additional partitions and add the legally required number of exists—a space which may have seemed hopelessly inappropriate at first can become your ideal new home.

With the assistance of Rice University architecture and design students, a decrepit cinema theatre in Houston became the new quarters for three neighborhood cultural groups. A visual arts co-op, a theatre group and a dance ensemble share the recycled space, which accommodates both their program and administrative space needs. The high-ceilinged lobby of the building worked out to be the best possible gallery for displaying the large sculptures and monumental paintings created by the members of the co-op. Vaudeville houses, old theatres and cinemas—many of which are located in redevelopment areas across the country—are buildings with tremendous recycling potential. While renovation projects on this large a scale are costly, the undertaking can be a manageable one for a consortium of arts groups.

As these examples indicate, the most important point to remember when looking to acquire space is considering all your options. You are limited, of course, by your budget and by the space requirements of your program. Nevertheless, a wide variety of choices are open to you.

Will you buy, lease or rent a space? Would your program be able to function within the constraints of a part-time or shared-space arrangement? Would exterior, rather than interior space best suit your needs and budget? Does it seem advantageous to keep your office and exhibit/performance space in the same building or to locate in two separate places? Have you considered free or minimal-rent spaces available through public resources or has your search been limited to commercial sites?

All across the country, neighborhood arts groups are tackling these questions and finding the right answers. Sometimes, their search for suitable quarters begins with seeking help from community and political leaders. In Baltimore, for example, project directors have successfully sensitized the mayor's office and city council to the needs of their groups. The time and effort they invested in this undertaking has paid off. The city provided an old dairy, located in an urban redevelopment area, for rehabilitation as a cultural center. In addition, several town houses adjacent to the dairy have been sold to an alternative theatre for sums ranging from \$1 to \$5; after renovation, these row homes will serve as office space for arts groups.

What is the situation in your area? Is the municipal or county government aware of your existence? Have you talked with local leaders and impressed upon them the positive effects of neighborhood arts on community development? If not, you should begin a dialogue with them as soon as possible. They can be instrumental in your efforts to secure a site for your program. Get them on your side.

There are many different kinds of spaces which can be had through public resources. For example, during the last decade changing population trends have left many elementary schools empty and obsolete; left deserted, these properties are often vandalized and become worthless. Thus, you may find that the authorities will be happy to give you the building for cultural and arts uses. Enterprising neighborhood arts groups have convinced local officials to set aside abandoned fire houses, court houses, libraries, bus barns and railroad stations for recycling. In all these cases, an added advantage is that public buildings tend to be centrally located and easily accessible to the community.

If you look hard enough, you will also find that many churches and synagogues have been affected by changing demographic patterns. Check it out. You may be able to rent or buy such an empty building, whose congregation has moved out of the area, for minimal cost. A burned-out synagogue is currently serving as storage space for one arts group while they raise funds for its rehabilitation.

Local universities and colleges may also be in the position to allocate some of their unused space for your group's use. For example, university officials agreed to let a theatre group convert an obsolete boiler house into performance space. The huge, round room proved to be a terrifically flexible, highly adaptable structure with which to work. The high ceilings easily accommodated a complex, multi-purpose light grid. Rather than building a permanent stage, the group was inspired by the space to construct large, movable blocks which they can arrange to create a traditional proscenium stage, a theatre-in-the-round or some highly unorthodox configuration specifically suited to the production they are mounting.

Performance- and exhibition-oriented groups have also been particularly successful in devising schemes for not only housing their projects, but also for bringing their programs to their audiences. Jazz Mobile, Dance Mobile and Theatre in a Trunk are but three examples of imaginative, viable mobile space arrangements. An experimental theatre group has equipped a van with collapsible tiers which fold out to create an interesting, multi-level stage platform. Museums-on-wheels and galleries have been traveling around the country in reconverted trucks, vans and old school buses. Would your group benefit more from a movable, rather than a fixed, space?

Or, finally, have you thought about using the outdoors, setting up in a park, a field or the woods? During the summer months a Chicago group uses the woods outside the city for workshops in wild crafts, environmental arts and solar energy projects. In the winter the program moves indoors into the schools. However, not only summer festivals and projects can take advantage of exterior space, which is often free.

If you are located in a region where the weather is clement for a major portion of the year, exterior quarters may be ideal for you. A project director in Houston, Texas was working out of a small gallery located in the city's redevelopment area. When the city raised the surrounding buildings to the ground, she had the idea of using the 10-square-block area for her project's workshops. Since the demolition left the trees in the area intact and the ground became overgrown with grass, the field became a very attractive site for all kinds of crafts workshops. All that was involved to set up the outdoor classes was putting up saw horses with boards across them for work surfaces.

As the examples we have described prove, money isn't everything. Think of unconventional, as well as pedestrian, prospects. Consider sharing space, rent and maintenance costs with other groups. If your budget is especially crimped, look into part-time or as-needed space arrangements. Find out about free space available within your community. Seek help from those who are in the position to assist you in finding the perfect answer to your space needs problems.

As you accept the challenge of dealing with space, approach it from a unique perspective of an artist. Remember that the site itself can be just as much an act of creation, an expression of art, as the work presented within it.



CHAPTER 1

To Move or Not to Move

EVALUATE YOUR PROJECT

Making the decision to move is itself an important first step for all community and neighborhood arts projects. Whether yours is a new group acquiring space for the first time or an established group relocating to larger or more suitable quarters, it is always wise to have a basic knowledge of your project's needs and available resources before going out to look for space.

A word of caution: if a realistic preliminary evaluation reveals that a move would be unwise or premature, then don't move. Unless there are unavoidable pressures, be patient; wait until you're ready or concentrate on improving your present space. Besides the waste of time, effort and money, an unsuccessful attempt at relocation may permanently disrupt the operation of your program.

Special circumstances, such as the gift of a space, can often prompt hasty, ill-considered decisions. No matter how tempting the availability of a free space might seem, it could present problems that far outweigh its usefulness: for example, prohibitively high renovation costs to accommodate the operation of your program. Again, the best advice in this case would be to stay where you are.

On the other hand, you must avoid an overly cautious approach toward finding a new space. Those good reasons for not relocating could be just plain fear or inertia. Strike a happy medium. If your program has outgrown its present quarters or was temporarily housed to begin with, then you know that the move is inevitable. Remember: nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Once the decision to move has been made, however, it should not be taken lightly. It certainly isn't just another fun thing for a spirited arts group to do. Many weeks of hard work lie ahead: needs assessments, planning, budgeting, looking, comparing, negotiating and, then acquiring a space and making it work.

But the process really isn't as formidable as it may sound at this point. Read on.

It cannot be overemphasized that the specific circumstances encountered in your project will ultimately determine the procedure to be followed in acquiring space. There are far too many variables in the spectrum of neighborhood arts programs to offer a precise model or to deal with absolutes on any level. As a point of departure, however, there are some basic factors concerning the project which you should consider at the outset:

- 1) Art discipline or disciplines to be housed: include auxiliary space needs.
- 2) Size, structure and leadership of the project: assess organizational stability.
- 3) Available and projected operating funds: make a projected or working budget.
- 4) Target constituency and group's relationship to neighborhood or community: anticipate services and level of support.

Its Focus

The wide range of possibilities are readily apparent. Is yours a single- or multi-disciplined program? Do you need studios for training in acting, dance, music, painting, sculpture, printmaking, graphic design, photography, television or film? Galleries to exhibit works of art? Workshop space for crafts? Or complete facilities for theatre production? The present and anticipated content of your program is a major factor in planning for space.

You will also have to consider other key space needs, such as rooms for administrative and clerical offices, storage, lockers, bathrooms, dressing rooms and other auxiliary space indicated by the nature of your program.

The kinds of people to be served in the program/space will affect your decision. Will the participants include children, youth, adults, senior citizens, handicapped



persons? What specialized adjustments, if any, will have to be made to accommodate them?

Its Organization

A realistic assessment of the organizational status of your project is essential. Because the acquisition of space commits a group to varying degrees of contractual liability, you will need to make sure that the leadership and structural roles, scope of operation and legal situation of the project are clearly defined and understood by all.

An unstable organization is clearly not ready to take on the responsibility of a new space.

Its Funding

The bottom line consideration is, of course, the financial status of your project—its available and projected funding sources. The simplest method of determining where you stand is to prepare a preliminary or working budget. With these figures on paper, you can see just how close what you want in a space comes to what you can reasonably afford.

Understandably, the formulation of such a budget will be more difficult for a new program than for an established one. Without the advantage of previous financial records on which to depend for figures, the new group must take special care to make realistic projections and take a more conservative approach. You could proceed in this manner:

- 1) Place in one column your actual or carefully estimated income—from admissions, subsidies, grants, in-kind services, fees, benefits, fund-raising drives, rentals, etc.

- 2) Place in the other column, as accurately as possible, your actual or estimated costs for salaries, operating expenses, equipment, overhead, maintenance, miscellaneous expenses, contingencies and, if presently in operation, your rent or interest costs.

- 3) Calculate the difference between the amounts in the income and outgo columns.

The figure thus obtained should give you a reasonable estimate of how much or how much more, if any, than your present rent you can afford to spend on space. It

will also indicate approximately how much additional funding you will need.

Armed with this information you might be persuaded to lessen the initial financial burden by phasing your projected development. This can be done according to an established system of priorities within your total space needs. It is unwise, however, to omit or postpone any expenditure for major building code requirements (which will be discussed in section two) in your initial planning, regardless of how limited the group's budget might be.

But don't become unduly alarmed by a seemingly bleak financial picture. Again, there are no absolutes. Community arts history is filled with cases of groups who practically ignored, or learned to work around the bottom line and yet were able not only to survive, but to thrive.

In fact, some feel that guts and imagination may be even more important than cost accounting. Of course, it is always helpful and essential, when dealing with funding sources to know where you are in terms of dollars and cents.

Prepare a preliminary or working budget.



Its Community Ties

The last preliminary consideration, but certainly one of paramount importance, is the project's relationship to the community. In this context, and to the Expansion Arts constituency, the community is defined as basically the neighborhood where creative participation takes place.

By extension, the community might also be the total ethnic population in an area. A project established on the basis of artistic expression reflecting a common cultural or regional heritage, especially in more remote areas, would be expected to serve all area residents who share this background.

In either case, space needs should be appropriately projected. Keep in mind that planning to involve neighborhood residents or the larger ethnic community to the greatest extent possible is not just good public relations. A cordial relationship between people and your program could yield a potential reservoir of talent, creativity and overall substantive support in the recycling process.

Although specialized arts training programs as opposed to cultural centers and similar projects will involve only a relatively few members of the community directly, outreach is still important. A reciprocal relationship exists in terms of potential audiences for your public presentations.

Where feasible, planning for the use of project space should also identify areas that could be made available to the community for social and civic gatherings, meetings and other needs as they develop. We will see later that an attractively recycled space can generate additional income through selected community rentals.

The message here is simply to avoid isolation. No arts program should exist in a vacuum. For any project which dares to call itself a community or neighborhood arts program to attempt to do so would be the kiss-of-death.



DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS

After making the four point evaluation, you should have a reasonably accurate profile of your project. This data will serve as the basis of a more specialized analysis of your space requirements—a kind of blueprint which can be used to guide you in the actual selection of a space.

Make sure you have a firm grasp of your real needs. Has your program expanded into different art forms that require special kinds of space? Are you starting a film or photo workshop which calls for a dark room? Do you need performing space to accommodate larger audiences? Will you require workshop facilities for a developing crafts program? Have your program and staff simply out-grown their quarters?

If yours is a brand new program you will need to consider both immediate and long-range needs. Informal research, as opposed to the extensive investigations often conducted by major arts institutions, can be helpful here. Although it bears repeating that no other project can serve as an exact model, a visit to a similar program

in the area can yield a great deal of useful information, including pitfalls to avoid in your planning.

If you cannot locate such a program, obtain a copy of *Grass Roots and Pavements*, the national directory of neighborhood arts programs compiled by the Expansion Arts Program. It will help you to identify those groups whose experiences may provide the insights or encouragement you need. The Expansion Arts staff can also provide some assistance.

The basic realities of your own program will nevertheless define the most functional framework for your plan of attack. The fundamental question in community and neighborhood arts is always: how can we get enough space at a price we can afford? Thus, even the most carefully laid out blueprint is often altered to accommodate the operation of the program within an available space which fits the size and price requirements.

If financial limitations come in conflict with the logic of choosing enough space, plan ways to expand as need and resources develop. It won't cost very much to keep up the unfinished space. In addition, a long-range plan can help you

make initial space allowances for projected growth and usage, as well as provide a sense of project stability and continuity that will make a favorable impression on potential funding agencies.

A tight budget can motivate you to incorporate income-generating uses into your plans for the prospective facility. For example, some groups rent studio space to local artists who need a place to work, teach or sell their art. Consider, too, that an attractively decorated gallery-type space could be rented by community people, at more reasonable rates than elsewhere, for special occasions—i.e., wedding receptions and similar affairs. Consortium arrangements with other groups can also keep more money in the coffers.

A word of caution: don't even think in terms of getting a larger space than your group can afford on its own unless you have a solid commitment from specific individuals or organizations to rent or sublease the extra space. Without this protection you could be stuck with a financial obligation far beyond your means.

GET A HEAD START — FORESIGHT AN ADVANTAGE

As we conclude the discussion on preliminary activities, there are two final pointers:

1) Begin early to identify and cultivate key people in the community who can assist you. These include real estate agents, architects, contractors, electricians, carpenters, painters and other craftsmen. Many groups have had the foresight to include persons by inviting them to serve on an advisory or administrative board. If you decide to take this route, be sure to emphasize reciprocal advantages—i.e., participation of the individual's family members or relatives in the program, contribution toward cultural enrichment for the community and other civic outreach for which he or she would receive recognition.

Establish personal contact with resource people at the outset.

At any rate, the important thing is to establish personal contact with resource people at the outset—however you go about it.

For example, an often overlooked reservoir of talent and skills can be found in nearby universities. Intermediate and advanced architecture and design students who need experience for their portfolios may be willing to volunteer their services. Check with department heads and faculty members to investigate this possibility.

2) At the same time that key people are being located and approached, you should initiate the actual search for potential spaces. Your efforts can be as simple as consulting newspaper ads and driving around looking at properties with for sale or rent signs on them; or your search can become as involved as seeing an unoccupied building without a sign, looking up its ownership at city hall and making inquiries about its availability.

Don't hesitate to ask some of the people with whom you've made contact. Realtors, of course, will have professional leads. But community leaders, especially older residents, are also very knowledgeable about property in their neighborhoods.

In addition, they will often be able to provide invaluable insights as to the desirability or undesirability of specific locations.

A final word: remember to begin your search for space as you will, hopefully, end it: with IMAGINATION. Cast your net wide enough to include what might at first appear to be unlikely choices, as well as the more likely ones. In the next section we will explore the process and challenge of selection.



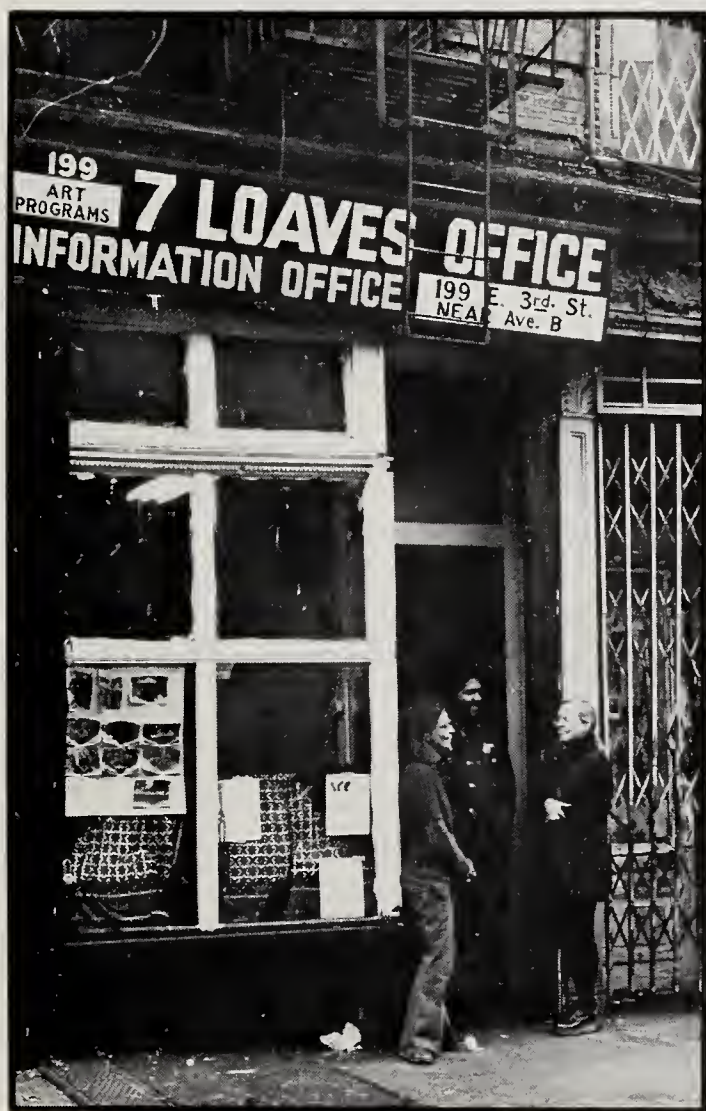


CHAPTER 2

The Process and Selection

You have evaluated your project and have made the decision to relocate or to secure your first space. Where do you go from here? It is important to consider the unique needs of your program when making space decisions. Although it is wise to observe other organizations, your choice must prove to be beneficial to your program's needs. Your concern in space must take into account such things as sound, lighting, seating, heating and cooling systems, storage, plumbing, parking and accessibility, to name a few.

More often than not, your neighborhood arts program survives on minimal subsidy. The acquisition of a new space is most probably beyond your reach. For little over a decade now, many arts groups such as yours have renovated unused spaces to house their projects. Such spaces have included; store fronts, small-scale commercial spaces, factories, churches, theatres, museums, barns, roller rinks, houses and mansions. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. It will be your administrative insight and creativity which will make your choice a successful one.



EXPERT ADVICE

During your space search it is wise to obtain the advice of professionals in the legal, architectural and construction fields. They can assist you in dealing with the myriad of major issues and minor details involved in the acquisition and renovation of your new space. It is advantageous to your organization if such persons are on your Board; their interest in your group will then be more personal and committed.

Both the purchase and the rental of a property have legal ramifications which must be given serious consideration. What types of unseen problems could arise? Will there be any zoning code problems with the building of your choice? What will be the cost of insurance and taxes? If you are not a nonprofit organization, you should consider changing your status. (Consult *Basic Management: The New Arts Project*, volume 1 in this series)

Build with those materials which provide the maximum in fire prevention.

There are many additional questions which must be asked before you proceed to finalize any decision on your new space. Keeping your projected budget in mind, consider the cost of the move, any necessary renovation and maintenance. Advice from experts in their given fields can alert you to any major and minor restorational needs. Unseen expenses have a way of surfacing after the move is underway; do not overextend yourself. Have you considered administrative space? Is there adequate rehearsal and work room? Have you enough space for your audience? Will there be too much unused space? What types of refurbishment must you make to meet building codes?

The following sections will attempt to assist you in making the right decisions in the acquisition of a new space. You can expect to encounter obstacles, but they can be met with clear thinking and creativity.



BUILDING AND ZONING CODES

You must make sure that you adhere to building codes when you secure your new space. It is advisable that you visit City Hall and obtain information applicable to your group. There are specific requirements and certificates for the use of a loft, theatre, museum or store; take the time to learn about the rules and regulations which relate to your situation.

There are strict building codes which you must acknowledge and act upon. Fire requirements are of the utmost importance. There are requirements which specify the materials to be used for construction based on the amount of time it will take them to burn. When renovating your new space it is to your advantage to build with those materials which provide the maximum in fire prevention.

Strict regulations are placed on exits of any public building. There must be at least two means of egress. If this stipulation is not satisfied in your new space, you must comply with the requisite. There are also specifications as to the amount of space per square foot which must be addressed in the event of fire. Sprinkler systems service a wider area of space and may be less expensive for you. If you are constructing stairways in your new space, consult the requirements on building codes before construction. Wood is highly flammable material, so you should consider a less dangerous one.

Zoning codes concern themselves with the building's external aspect, activity and the area which encompasses it. The code differs for nonprofit organizations. You should consult the specifications of the zoning code for your particular program and new facility. The time you spend obtaining this information and implementing necessary changes will ultimately benefit your group.

RENOVATION: REMEMBER YOUR NEEDS

You've found a nice store front on a major thoroughfare in the neighborhood. Should you take it? First, reassess your needs; don't rush. Moving is a time-consuming and expensive venture. Consider the size of your program today and, then, consider your long-term plans. Do you hope to expand the scope and size of the project? Will the space be able to accommodate this growth? Will you need additional space for workshops, exhibitions or performances? Will there be room? Where will the administrative offices be located? Store fronts are often quickly outgrown, yet are an ideal space for smaller arts projects. If you have access to the upstairs floors, the space may meet the needs of your group.

In the case of large spaces, such as factories or lofts, there is often a great amount of open space. Again, you must consider the requirements of your organization. You may have to partition off the room. You may have to construct permanent fire walls. Are there adequate rest room facilities?

In the event that your organization takes on a new shape and calls for a smaller number, what will you do with the unused space? You have an option to rent space in your building to other arts groups or community programs. Such an arrangement can establish an on-going rapport between your program and the neighborhood. Do not, however, anticipate rentals when obtaining your new space unless you have obtained definite commitments. Choose what you need and can afford.

In spite of the fact that renovating a space is costly, your creativity and ingenuity can limit the expense. Now your affiliation with the community is very important. You may be able to obtain volunteer services and donated materials from interested and concerned neighbors. Gifts can be quite helpful, but do not overlook building code regulations when accepting building materials. You must comply with all the legal requirements.

Remember, each arts organization has its own unique needs. Somewhere there is an available space which will best suit your program. Take time to find it. After you have done so, take time to consider how best to restructure the space to fit your needs. If your organization is performance oriented, look into the activity of the surrounding environment. Will performances be drowned out by disco music from the local cocktail lounge? Does the factory next door seemingly produce more noise in the evening than in the day? Does rain and thunder on the roof resemble a ritual of Zeus and the Greek Gods?

Installation of sound proofing may be expensive, but necessary.

Before purchasing or renting a space, be sure you have chosen new quarters which require the least amount of work and expenditure. Prior to making any commitments, thoroughly investigate the facility. Will heating or cooling the new site be too great a financial burden for your limited budget? Have you consulted an electrician? How much rewiring must be undertaken? Has there been any corrosion? Will there be future problems with the roof? Are there signs of leaks? Check your ceilings and walls. What is the condition of the plumbing in the new site? If you will be hanging large or heavy objects from ceilings and walls, consideration should be given to the materials from which they are constructed. You don't want patches of ceiling and wall falling from your new space. Devoting careful attention to such questions in the planning stage will ultimately prove beneficial to you and help you to avoid a great many problems in the future.



DECORATING YOUR NEW HOME

Visual excitement is the key to a unique and welcoming arts space. It should reflect what you do and what you are about—art. An imaginative and venturesome mind can turn a hideous building code requirement into an artistic expression. Protective measures against burglary—cemented and barred windows—can be skillfully disguised. The manner in which you decorate the interior of your new-found space is very important. Offices need not be traditional in structure or atmosphere. You hope that the people of your community, those you serve, will want to participate in your program. A creative, welcoming atmosphere is one very effective way of getting your community involved in your program.

ARE YOU EASILY FOUND?

Accessibility is very important. Are you located near public transportation? How frequently does this service run? Have you adequate parking space? Is the area safe for parking? Will you have to install floodlights in the parking area? Are you on a main thoroughfare or tucked away on a side street? These are some of the questions you must ask prior to obtaining your new home.

Transportation to your locale is very important if you are to have patrons. Your newly found space should be near bus, subway or trolley lines. Whether the environment is fairly safe during evening hours is another issue which should also be considered. You may find that a bit of landscaping must be done to provide sufficient parking. If your building happens to be hidden from view, consider an artistic means of directing people to your site.

Your space should be near bus, subway or trolley lines.

CONCLUSION

The decision to move into a new space is not a matter to be taken lightly. You must evaluate your project and be certain that it is ready for such a move. Finances, community involvement and careful choice of the new facility are the most important aspects of the decision-making process. Consider long-range plans when considering space choice. Remember, it is unwise to move your program if it is not ready for such an undertaking.

Your new building should reflect your program. You are servicing the neighborhood. Do not forget to include them in the planning and renovation process. They, too, can be of assistance, although you as the director must make final decisions. A good choice in Board members can be beneficial to your move. Persons with expertise can pinpoint projected problems and their resolution. A word of advice: do not use these individuals merely as means to obtain your ends—the new site. Include them in the artistic framework of your program and invite their family members to participate in your project.

Dealing With Space is intended to assist you, the program director, in your decision to relocate. This source is one in a series of four manuals designed to help neighborhood arts groups. It is sponsored by the Expansion Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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