

## Update on the Capital Campaign *continued*

Faculty housing is another urgent need, as retaining a larger engaged faculty has led to residential challenges. Construction on six planned faculty units will commence just as soon as funding is secured. A new Alumni & Development Center is also on the drawing board as the school's two main income-producing offices—admissions and development—are bursting at the seams in Callard House. Looking to the future, both offices will require expanded space to do their work and to warmly welcome our large number of visitors to the unparalleled beauty of the campus.

Meeting our ambitious goals to become an even more vibrant, respectful, and healthy community continues to be our primary focus. Having facilities in

place that add to the daily experience that students enjoy on campus will help to sustain and ensure a bright future for the school.

As we look at the goal to increase Millbrook's endowment to \$50 million and beyond just as soon as possible, we seek gifts to support our faculty's professional development, to increase access to Millbrook through financial aid to families who qualify for our assistance, and to maintain our large and growing physical plant. There are numerous opportunities to honor or memorialize current and former faculty and alumni. Please contact a member of the development team if you would like to discuss this topic further. Onward to \$65 million!

# BETTER BY DESIGN:

## An Academic Environment Tuned Perfectly to the Teenage Life



### AN INTERVIEW WITH

**Daniela Holt Voith,**  
*partner at Voith & Mactavish Architects*

Daniela was recently excited to share that her firm, Voith & Mactavish, has nominated Millbrook to the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art for the prestigious Arthur Ross Award in the category of patronage. She has asked them to look at and consider Millbrook's accomplishments in building and design under Drew Casertano's leadership over the past 26 years. Here she shares a brief history of her work with Millbrook and the thoughtful design process behind campus improvements made over the past two decades.

### **Q.** *How and when did you first come to work with Millbrook?*

My first project at Millbrook was the Holbrook Arts Center, and we started that in 1998. The school had retained Andropogon landscape architect, a phenomenal and very forward-thinking environmentally-focused firm in Philadelphia, to do a landscape master plan for the school the year before. A principle leading that effort, Carol Franklin, recommended me to the school. At the same time, Gil Schafer had recently been elected to Millbrook's board of trustees. I knew him tangentially through a Haverford College and Bryn Mawr connection. He also threw my name into the hat. So, the recommendation came from two disparate sources.

We were competing against three other firms including Robert Ames Stern Architects—Bob Stern had just been made the dean of the school of architecture at Yale—and Hammond, Beeby & Babca—Tom Beeby had just rotated off being the dean of architecture at Yale. We were in pretty amazing company.

### **Q.** *Were there any challenges that you faced coming in?*

From the beginning we have been concerned about how to build buildings with much larger footprints than the Millbrook buildings that were designed by Edward Shepard Hewitt in the 1930s and early 40s. We have always been concerned about how to relate to those very fine and kind of delicate buildings the school has—like Harris, the chapel, Prum—in a way that supports those buildings and doesn't overshadow them. We've





**ABBOTT HALL, 2002**



**ABBOTT HALL and the DURAND QUAD, 2015**



also been concerned from the start about making the buildings really relate to outdoor space. Because the campus is centered around the Flagler Quad, a leveled flat plane, we took the opportunity to present lower facades to the quad side and tuck the volume and mass of the new buildings into the landscape.

**Q. How does your work help relate indoor spaces to the outdoors?**

The complete redo of Abbott Hall, which was phenomenal, is a perfect example of that. The before and after was pretty extraordinary. It gave us a chance to make a landmark anchor that sits almost on axis with the chapel spire. Following that we started to complete the exterior space between Harris and Holbrook to form the Durand Quad. So we really created that outdoor space as a secondary quad. As the school grows, we've been thinking about these secondary landscape places that are formative. The indoor space and the outdoor rooms, if you will, that are created make the experience of going through the campus one that is one of discovery, an unfolding of beauty. You learn by engaging with the campus, which is exactly what a Millbrook education encourages.

**Q. Does the design of our buildings and outdoor spaces really enhance the student experience?**

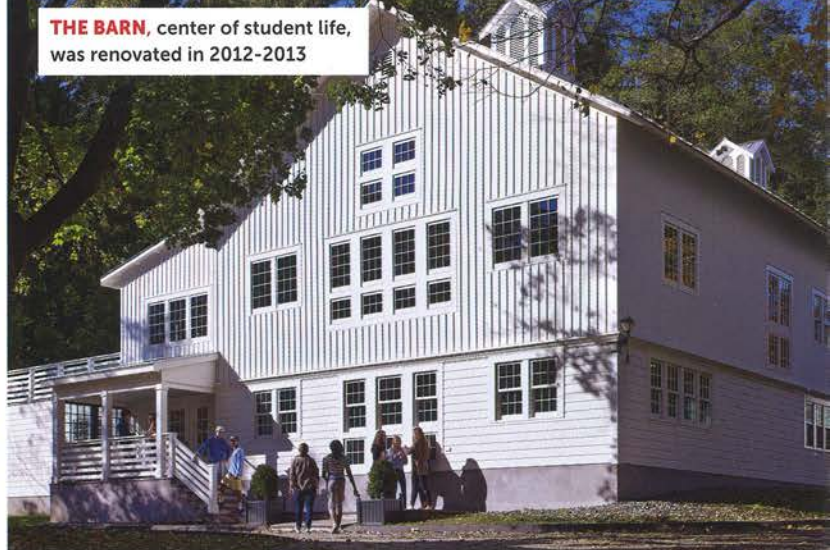
Living in an environment that is beautiful actually matters. And beauty has a lot of different aspects to it. It's not just what something looks like, but how it works, how it functions, how it supports every day life. Every aspect of the buildings that we have designed has been thought through from a social and interactive perspective as much as trying to get the right colors or curtains in the spaces. We've sought to make the teaching environment both supportive and challenging, so that students feel grounded as they are making the academic leaps that they need to. We're designing classrooms in which every person can see every one else.

I think that students at Millbrook are happier because their environment is so well tuned to what they need to do as teenagers. They need to learn how to grow into adults from a moral, social, and intellectual point of view. Clearly, the school is engaged in having students understand that life is not just about them, but about living in a larger community. The buildings are built to support that.

**Q. In what ways was your first project, the Holbrook Arts Center, an important project for Millbrook?**

Drew knew that Millbrook needed to be more competitive at that time, and from the beginning he was focused on making a very clear road map for where the school needed to go. A new athletic center was his first move. The

**THE BARN, center of student life, was renovated in 2012-2013**



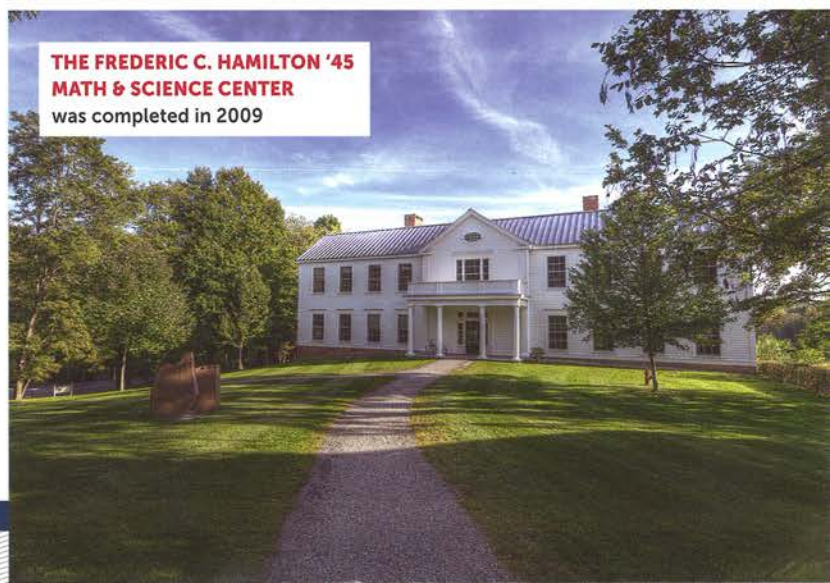
**THE HOLBROOK ARTS CENTER was completed in 2001**



**WEST HALL, a new girls dorm, was completed in 2014**



**THE FREDERIC C. HAMILTON '45 MATH & SCIENCE CENTER was completed in 2009**





arts center was his second. The really exciting thing about Holbrook was that the building was the culmination of years of Bill Hardy's dreaming about what would make a fabulous art center. As a client representative and head of the Art Department, Bill was so thoroughly engaged. Every aspect of that building we thought through—where paper would be stored, where pencils would be stored, all of the process of making art and how that would happen. It was a great thing to have as a partner on the design side. *We established a programming committee made up of faculty, trustees, students, and administrators as we began the design process, and we subsequently did that with every other building we have built on campus. There is this consensus that is built around this joint process—the idea of careful listening to a higher purpose and coming to a mutual agreement among a group of people is very, very powerful.*

**Q. How has Millbrook's academic program been strengthened through new facilities and facility updates?**

In the mid-2000s we did a master plan update, Pulling Forward, with a focus on academic facilities and the idea that the school needed to look at and understand the facilities implications of the growth of the student body. In 1998 the enrollment was hovering at around 200. Several years thereafter we looked forward and considered if we had 250 or 280 students, how many classrooms of each sort are we going to need, and where should they go?

At that time there was no true academic presence except for Schoolhouse—every other classroom on campus was in the basement of a dorm. The Holbrook Arts Center became the first true academic building—starting with the strong brick façade in the front—and included two classrooms, the lecture room with tiered seating and a seminar room next door.

From 2008-2009 the master plan for academics consolidated departmental spaces, and Millbrook's academic facilities, in one fell swoop, rose to the top. This began with renovations to classrooms in Schoolhouse, and then the lower level of Harris Hall was completely renovated during the summer of 2008 to become the new Harris-Kenan Language Center. The math & science center construction started in 2008 and was completed by 2009, which allowed Schoolhouse to become the dedicated home for the humanities.

**Q. How have you been involved in developing a plan to improve student life on campus?**

In 2010 we turned our attention to the student life master plan, which has focused on the residential life experience and how to make that as meaningful as possible. Boarding schools are a home away from home, so a boarding school campus needs to support that mission as well.

The first project that came out of this plan was the Barn and student center followed by renovations to dorms and the construction of a new girls dorm, West Hall. Other improvements in Case, Harris, and Prum will happen, and Guest House and Clark have already had some beautiful updates.

Improved dining facilities and enhancements to the chapel to accommodate the larger school population are ongoing. *If the dining hall is the center of communal life from a family point of view, then the chapel is the center in terms of both spiritual and important academic moments. Those two spaces have central importance in the beautiful ebb and flow of a Millbrook week.*

**Q. During all of this growth, how have you found a partner in Millbrook's board of trustees?**

Millbrook's board of trustees is highly, highly functional. They really understand their roles and responsibilities, the individual committees interact well, and what's been terrific, and I think why the planning has been so important for the school, is that it allows Drew to say, "We really looked,



we've done our homework. We've done our strategic plan. We know where we want to go, what kind of school we want to be. These are the steps that we need to take to get there." At other schools, someone says, "Hey, I think the school needs a new hockey rink." Then suddenly, there's a new hockey rink. It doesn't happen in such a considered, holistic way.

Drew is an incredible leader, and he trusts in other strong personalities. Trustees are expert in their areas, for example, Gil Schafer in aesthetics, Chris Holbrook in terms of getting things done. Chris is amazing at being focused on the process and knows a lot about construction. Gil is arguably one of the best residential architects in the country. There's a huge amount of skill and knowledge that he brings to the table.



Holbrook Arts Center program planning committee in 1998

Not to forget the people who are responsible for the financial side, Millbrook has had a number of great business managers. Del Shilkret was a joy to work with, and Bob Connolly has now picked up the reins in term of presenting a strong front. The trustees on the finance committee—Paul Solomon and Rick Stuckey—have been so powerful as well, really looking at the school's financial health. The buildings, how they are built, how sustainable they are, what the energy consumption will be...all those things come together when you start to look at a spreadsheet. It's not just beauty—it's also a rigorous look at how a school functions.

**Q. Your thoughts on working to transform Millbrook over nearly two decades?**

Having an 18-year relationship with one school, as a design professional, is very unusual. Interestingly, Pulling had a very strong relationship with Edward Hewitt, who likewise had a two-decade long relationship with the school. In modern day architectural relationships, it's not necessarily one and done, but this one has been, and continues to be, very, very special.