



# Case for Support

## January 2023

Download pdf at:  
[jesterartspace.org/help-jester-artspace](http://jesterartspace.org/help-jester-artspace)

Image: Hand-printed linocut design "Sea Talk" by Brandywine Hundred artist and musician Monika Bullette, who has been an active member of the Arspace Programming Committee and a workshop instructor.

## Saving the Past for the Future of the Arts

Jester Artspace, Inc. is working to complete the interior fit-out of the newly-restored pre-Civil War Jester Farmhouse. The house is to be used as artists' gallery, classroom, and workspace, for community benefit. We have made significant progress toward our goals since our founding and we are very hopeful that we have earned your assistance.

### Background

Jester Artspace, Inc. is a grass-roots organization founded in August 2015 to restore the 200-year-old Jester Farmhouse, for local artists of all disciplines and skill levels to use as meeting, working, and gallery space. We have partnered with the property owner, New Castle County, to restore the property and, in turn, we will operate the Farmhouse in a manner of direct benefit to the surrounding community, by serving as the only nonprofit art center in Brandywine Hundred.

The Jester Farmhouse has been deemed to be of significant historic value to the people of New Castle County. It is one of the few remaining modest pre-Civil War farmsteads that were once common in Northern Delaware. The house sits amid 26 acres of original farmland, now called Jester Park on Grubb Road, offering a special preservation opportunity.

We have signed a 20+ year lease with New Castle County for the farmhouse and 1.3 adjacent acres of the parcel. We will incur no rent or taxes, in exchange for our operations. Our demographic target includes all members of the community.



*Top: Completed Jester Farmhouse envelope, March 3, 2022.*

*Bottom: Jester Artspace Construction Chair, Suzanne Murphy discusses interior fit out with Brian Smith of BSS Contractors, October 21, 2021.*



The County declared their restoration of the building exterior to be functionally complete in April 2022 and they have turned over possession of the property to us to begin our work. Our interior fit-out is currently underway with BSS Contractors, using funds raised to date. While renovations are underway, we are providing arts instruction in alternate locations, including skills workshops and monthly model drawing.

Our 5-year outlook, after gaining a Certificate of Occupancy, is projected to have us serving 1,500 students annually. We expect this to entail unique skills-based workshops, ongoing fine art instruction, special events, and gallery shows.

### Purposes and activities

It is our intent to complete the Jester Farmhouse interior and give it a renewed purpose as artists' gallery and workspace as part of a culturally inclusive and enriching venue. This includes not only the visual arts, but also music, theater, and any other creative discipline that can find a local constituency. Our broad target demographic includes anyone with an appreciation for the arts. Visitors will spend time walking through our gallery exhibitions, workspaces, and sculpture park to see artmaking in action.

Since our inception we have worked with the community to define and establish a creative hub. We have delivered a series of off-site workshops that will become the foundation of our arts program. We have established strong partnerships with New Castle County, Brandywine School District, Urban Sketchers DE, Delaware Foundation for the Visual Arts, Pennsylvanian Guild of Craftsmen and Newark Union Church. Building strong partnerships and connecting with local families is a cornerstone strategy for our success.

Our offerings are designed for anyone with a sense of curiosity, from the novice to creative professionals. Our method has been to engage community members as early stakeholders so that we may involve them in the construction process. Targeted volunteer labor opportunities allow participants to claim "sweat equity" and a sense of community ownership.

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*Jester Artspace is hosting workshops at Buzz Ware Village Center and other locations while construction is underway. Costumed model Allison poses with sketch session attendees, March 19, 2022.*

Current and expected activities include:

- Appreciation of art in the local community
- Artist-run classes, lectures and workshops
- \* Professional development for art teachers
- Critique and creative discourse
- Collaborative projects
- Shared equipment and workspace
- Musical and theatrical performances
- Exhibitions and art fairs
- Outdoor sculpture garden

We have begun serving our arts-education goals with a series of recurring classes and one-time workshops in alternate venues. We have assembled a robust Programming Committee that is dedicated to finding and sharing unique media and techniques to expand our future classes.

Current workshops include:

- Professional development for art teachers
- Traditional crafts
- Digital art and animation
- Social media technique
- Life drawing
- Painting
- Printmaking
- Graphic illustration



### Governing group

Jester Artspace is a volunteer-led organization. We hire independent contractors for modelling and instruction. We have no full-time employees. Below are our Directors with occupation and professional affiliation:



**President**

Alan Baseden  
UX Designer  
Vanguard



**Treasurer**

Reneett Su  
Accountant  
BlackRock



**Secretary**

Melissa Zoladkiewicz  
Analyst  
BlackRock



**Board member,  
Construction Chair**

Suzanne Murphy  
Engineer  
Wohlsen Construction



**Board Member**

Susan Benarcik  
Artist  
Self employed



**Board Member**

Linda Majewski  
Teaching Artist and  
owner of Paper  
Greenhouse and  
Marvelous Makers



**Board Member**

Jamie Liberatore  
LMS Administrator  
InOutsource



**Board Member**

Colleen Conlin  
Arts instructor, Owner  
Inside & Out LLC

## Proposal details and priority

The restoration of the Jester Farmhouse for community benefit was the initial impetus for the formation of Jester Artspace. It remains our guiding purpose and our top priority. All other priorities are dependent upon its successful completion. The following lists a breakdown of construction responsibilities:

The County agreed to:

- Make site-wide utilities upgrades, with connection to public utilities systems (water, sewer, electric)
- Restore exterior envelope
- Assess and remediate hazardous materials (lead, asbestos, PCBs , etc)
- Structural remediation

Upon completion of the County's work, Jester Artspace agreed to perform the interior fit out:

- Make building systems upgrades to mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems
- Install ADA-compliant restrooms
- Install new partitions and doors
- Flooring, wall and ceiling finishes
- Lighting
- Furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E)
- Landscaping

Current status:

- In April 2022 the County declared its work largely complete and handed off the house.
- Jester Artspace is currently underway with our interior fit out. We have chosen to continue working with the County's vendor, BSS Contractors, with an expected Certificate of Occupancy later this year.
- We are now raising funds for interior needs such as gallery lighting and flooring, as well as exterior landscaping and sculpture garden.

## Major donors

Jester Artspace is very grateful for the generous support of:

- New Castle County
- Welfare Foundation
- Longwood Foundation
- Crestlea Foundation
- Crystal Trust



This organization is supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on DelawareScene.com.

## Building envelope

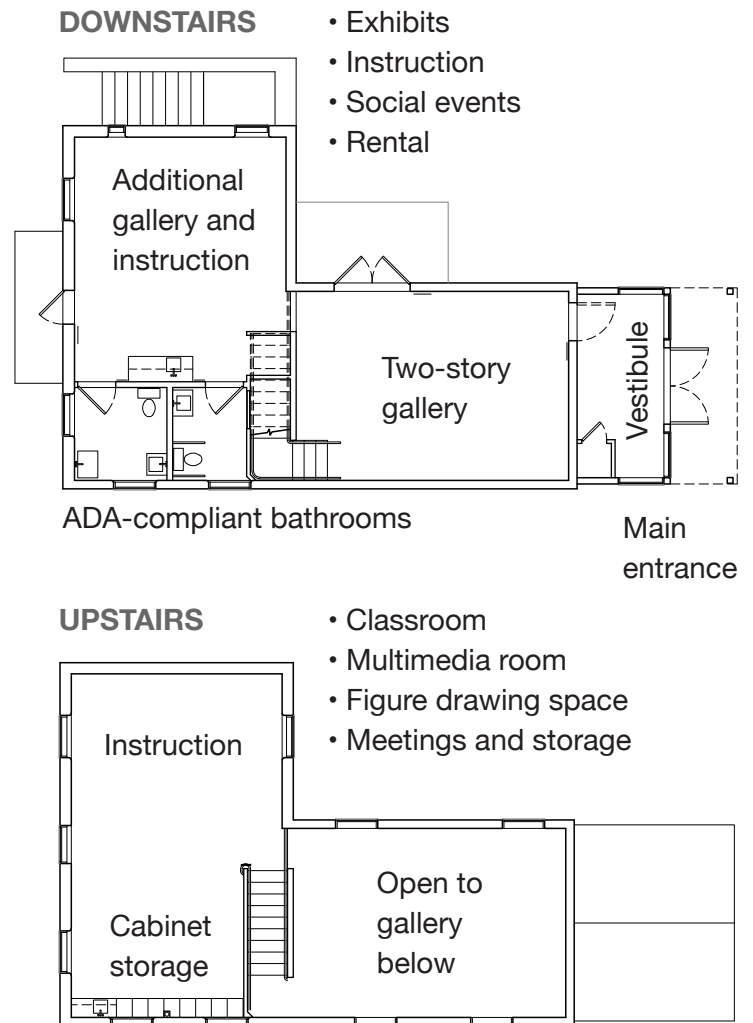
BSS Contractors have largely completed the County's exterior work and the house has been handed off to us. We have chosen to continue working with BSS for our interior fit out. Shown below is the house before, during, and after exterior work.



CREDIT: Top, Alan Baseden for Jester Artspace; middle, Michael J. Emmons Jr. for the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) at University of Delaware; bottom, Jamie Liberatore for Jester Artspace.

## Interior fit-out

Architect drawings show fully ADA-compliant interior space, expected to be completed later this year.



CREDIT: Ed Rahme, Architect

## Location

The Jester Farmhouse is one of the last of Brandywine Hundred's original farmstead homes. Its core structure is about 200 years old and sits on 26 acres of its original farmland.



Jester Farmhouse and adjoining Artspace leased property

26-acre Jester Park being developed by New Castle County