



# BUILDING BLOCKS

Mills Group Newsletter

### In This Issue..

- [Highland Avenue Residence](#)
- [Preston Co 911](#)
- [NCWV Home Show and Sustainability Fair](#)
- [The Value of Architectural Salvage](#)

[Find us on Facebook](#)

### Quick Links

- [The Mills Group Website](#)
- [The Firm and Staff Profile](#)
- [Newsletter Archives](#)
- [Other Projects](#)
- [Loma Vincent Center](#)

Welcome to another issue of Building Blocks and our connection to you on the news and events of the Mills Group. We are finding the schedule for the spring and summer with many new residential and commercial projects and looking forward to the completed restoration of the Metropolitan Theatre in Morgantown, WV and the construction of the Preston County 911/OEM Center wrapping up this fall.

You will find this issue sharing with you a project profile of a new residence in Morgantown, WV, an update on the 911/OEM Center in Preston County, a look at some events around the area that we were honored to be a part of and our technical article this issue on Architectural Salvage.

We look forward to your comments and input with our newsletter.

Michael J. Mills

## PROJECT PROFILE

### Highland Avenue Residence - Morgantown, WV



A new construction 3600 sq.ft. residential project sited on a ridge that offers amazing vistas of downtown Morgantown and the Monongahela River. The modern house design takes full advantage of the breathtaking views Morgantown has to offer.

The house occupies three city lots in the Wiles Hill Neighborhood and posed design challenges with a steep slope. Many sustainable design features were incorporated in the house to include geothermal heating, integrated solar shading with the windows, a metal roof, concrete counter tops and concrete siding.

The project is under construction and is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2011.

### Preston County 911/OEM - Kingwood, WV



The Mills Group designed the new Preston County 911/Office of Emergency Planning Center to be a secure location from which to provide county residents with consistent and exemplary service and protection.

Planned with an eye towards security and environmentally sound construction, the resulting structure balanced tested methods with an interesting and aesthetically pleasing design. The 6,200 square foot, single story structure will make abundant use of precast concrete sandwich panels. This will provide savings to the client in the form of reduced construction costs and heating bills. Designs call for a mix of fixed and operable windows that will benefit occupants with natural ventilation and a great deal of daylighting to all parts of the facility. State of the art technologies will finish the building's interior with a professional look that avoids 'sick' building syndrome due to interior décor selections combined with the natural light and ventilation.

This is the first project slated for completion on the Preston County Farm redevelopment. It will act as an example of design and hopefully a catalyst for the further development of Preston County. Additionally, this is the first new building that the county has constructed since the courthouse over 85 years ago.

### North Central West Virginia Home Show 2010



Mills Group recently participated in the Morgantown Home show, held March 12 and 13 at the Mylman Events Center. The event was well attended by members in the building industry as well as members of the greater Morgantown community. Such event was an opportunity for Mills Group to showcase its recent projects in architecture, planning, and preservation, both in the commercial and residential sectors. Active participation created an opportunity to communicate with members of the building community regarding current trends and issues in the industry, which was most beneficial as the firm progresses in 2010. For photos of the event, please visit the Mills Group Facebook Page.

### West Virginia Sustainability Fair at Davis & Elkins College



On April 16 and 17, Mills Group was invited to speak and represent the building industry at the Second Annual West Virginia Sustainability Fair, held at Davis and Elkins College. The presentation was titled "Historic Preservation and Sustainable Design" and detailed the inherent sustainable elements in historic preservation. Local examples of Mills Group preservation projects, including the historic Delmonte Hotel and The Kump House, were used as case studies to engage the regional attendance and college community with the local activities. Ongoing partnership with the Randolph County Housing Authority was also highlighted, as it has yielded the opportunity for Mills Group to model energy consumption in a greenfield development site. The project has in turn yielded the importance of natural energy sources such as the sun and wind in their interaction with site placement and orientation-both key elements of historic design that become uncovered in preservation projects.

Throughout Saturday April 17, the firm administered an exhibit display that was situated just inside the Eshleman Science Center. Such display captured elements of sustainable design that were incorporated into recent Mills Group projects; it was a great opportunity for the firm to informally educate the attendees on the importance of sustainable design, as well as its evolving history.

More information regarding this event can be found at: <http://sustainablelivingforwv.org/>

## TECHNICAL ARTICLE

### The Value of Architectural Salvage

by Michael J. Mills

I must admit that as a ten year old boy I started my career as a "dumpster diver" at the lumber yard next door, where I pulled out expired product catalogs. I have convinced myself that this influenced me for life, provoking an interest in the objects that composed our built environment and developing a knack for reusing the left behind treasures of others.

Many architects shape their careers to focus of the creation of edifices that celebrate their personal good on architecture. My perspective is that we as edifices have a social responsibility to be good stewards of the planet that we populate and the built environment we shelter within.

The existing built environment provides cultural footprints of the past-components that compose the structures form the artifacts. These artifacts represent craftsmanship and production efforts of their respective time periods and have pre-conceived end uses. In the society of today, many have the mentality that newer is better and the items of the past prohibit progress. Furthermore, the concepts of green design and sustainable practices are starting to permeate our culture and a social consciousness is developing.

I am a firm advocate that material reuse and adaptive reuse of the current building stock is the most sustainable incorporation an architect can practice. Construction waste management and recognition of embodied energy of the products produced are guiding principles of sustainable design.

Our office is diligent in assessing the cultural and material resources of our existing building projects. We are always looking for ways to conserve materials for reuse in the same structure or look at salvage and repurposing uses elsewhere. I'm against dissecting historically significant buildings and selling off the parts, but if it is done intelligently by understanding the origin and intended uses of the materials, they can be properly salvaged and reused in functional fashion.

The Mills Group studio is just one of many examples citing reclaimed materials for functional use. The conference room table (raised panel doors from two clients), the reference table (a copper clad door from the historic Metropolitan Theatre in Downtown Morgantown), the shallow wall cabinet that provides storage for our material samples and a header for administrative workspace (from the City Pharmacy building), and a door hood from a home on Spruce Street that forms the back drop for a pharmacy, are all examples of reclaimed materials put use.

In our own back yard, we have vendors that support this market such as Habitat for Humanity's Restore (Greenbag Road, Morgantown, WV; <http://moncountyhabitat.org/>), and Construction Junction (North Lexington Street, Pittsburgh, PA; <http://www.constructionjunction.org/>), that both re-sell salvaged goods from both existing and former building stock. So before you purchase new items for your home or office improvement project, re-think the idea of salvaging what is already available to be, or look into adopting new products that no longer have a home. In the end, this will be the "greenest" product you can purchase.



[Forward email](#)

[SafeUnsubscribe](#)

This email was sent to [mmills@millsgroup.com](mailto:mmills@millsgroup.com) by [mmills@millsgroup.biz](mailto:mmills@millsgroup.biz) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)™ | [Privacy Policy](#).

