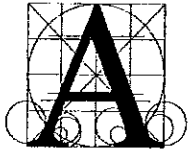


Architecture



Incorporated

October 26, 2010

Marcia Elkins
Historic Preservation Commission
Growth Management Department
City of Rapid City
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701-2724

Re: Dakota Middle School Theatre Project
Historic Preservation 11.1 Review

Dear Marcia:

Please consider this an application for a 11.1 Review for the Dakota Middle School Theatre project.

You will find enclosed a completed Historic Preservation 11.1 Review application form, copies of photographs of the building and auditorium room as well as a set of plans and specifications of the project.

Please find below a written description of the Dakota Middle School Theatre project as required under Item #6 of the Historic Preservation 11.1 Review submittal:

Adaptive Reuse.

Architecture Incorporated was interviewed and chosen to be the A/E firm to work with the City through the PAC Coalition, (which includes the Black Hills Community Theatre, A'Capella Showcase, Black Hills Symphony, Children's Choir, Dance Theatre and Dakota Artist Guild) it's recipient of the 2012 funding and the Rapid City School District in the redesign and adaptive reuse of the existing Dakota Middle School Theatre into a versatile and contemporary theatre that would support the programs of the PAC (Performing Arts Center) coalition and other community organizations that would use the space. We spent the winter and spring months of 2010 meeting with the user groups and the School District personnel and developed a program of spaces that reflected how the user groups envision using the facility and what type of spaces would be necessary to support their programs. We discussed typical audience size, the number of programs generally performed, off-stage needs and other subjects the user groups wanted to talk about in relation to this facility. We also met on several occasions with the sub-committee of the Historic Preservation Commission appointed by the Mayor.

Accessible aspects.

As background information, the lobby of Dakota Middle School and the floor of the stage are at the same elevation or level as one another. Our design of the theatre room makes it very friendly to people with accessibility challenges. On the floor plan you will notice that at the perimeter of the space under both balconies, we have created a walkway adjacent to the wall that connects the rear of the room (inside the doors from the lobby) to the stage, so a person can walk from the lobby to the stage within the theatre room without a level change. We also have created under the balcony two

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sound/light lock vestibules, a cry room, a lighting control room and a sound control room, all of which are accessible. At the mid-house, we have a level cross aisle that contains accessible and companion seating to ensure that accessible seating is available and dispersed throughout the theatre room, including the balcony. The theatre is accessible for audience, performers and staff.

Theater systems.

Our theatre will have two dimmer racks of 96 dimmers each for a total of 192 dimmable circuits, which represents a very flexible and functional theatre system. The theatre will have a fully functional fire sprinkler system when this project is completed. The theatre will also have a sound system capable of meeting the various needs of the groups who will perform in this room. Plus, we are installing a new heating, ventilating and air conditioning system into the theatre room, designed with very low velocity air flow so the acoustical impact of the system will be virtually non-existent. This plenum is below a new floor that will be created at virtually the same plane and slope as the existing floor. We have attempted to design all of these systems into the theatre room without a trace. We will be concealing most of the conduit and piped systems inside the plaster beam enclosures in the ceiling and the new HVAC system will be introduced into the room through an under floor plenum. Pipe grids will be visible in the space as pipe grids are the objects to which theatre light fixtures are attached. The room for the sound system and for the lighting control are centered on the proscenium opening and located at the rear of the room, under the balcony. Adjacent to these control rooms is a cry room and the two sound/light lock vestibules.

The seating of the theatre currently consists of the original wood seats which are too narrow and spaced too close together for people to comfortably use them. We will be installing, as a part of a future project, new seats in a seating arrangement which more closely relates to the audience expectations of the groups planning on using the space. For instance, the A'Cappella Showcase has an audience of about 200 that will be seated in the middle section of the seating centered on the stage. There was no user of the space that asked for more than the approximately 800 seats that will be available in this theatre. The 115 wood seats on each of the side balconies are planned to be refinished and left in place because they are wider than the chairs on the main level and are spaced far enough apart (back to back) to be comfortable.

Architectural space respected.

This project will not change the volume of the room and the appearance of the plaster details and the acoustical panels will be the same. The proscenium opening will look the same as will the plaster detailing housing the structural girders. As discussed above, we will be removing the existing floor and restructuring a new floor to create a plenum space for HVAC reasons but the new floor will be at virtually the same plane as the existing floor. We will be repairing the broken noses of the plaster medallions that have been damaged. The lobby of the theatre is not part of the scope of this project, but the PAC group will be fund raising with the goal of restoring the lobby of both first floor and second floor at some time in the future.

Exterior:

The principal façade of the building facing north will be unaffected by this project as it is outside the scope of the work and nothing will change as a result of this project. For the addition to the building to the south, we are using masonry with precast concrete panels in a manner similar to the stone, metal and terra cotta detailing on the main building.

From the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures memo we reviewed on October 15:
During our phone conference last week, we talked about several items contained in a memo from the State Historic Preservation Office that included the following questions and responses:

Statements from the guidelines:

Installing new mechanical and electrical systems and equipment.

Inserting a new floor that obscures interior spaces, features or finishes.

... changing a floor plan or interior spaces which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that the character is diminished...

Response regarding Dakota Middle School Theatre:

Yes, this project includes new mechanical and electrical systems and equipment, all of which we are installing in such a way as to be basically invisible from the audience chamber as outlined earlier in this letter.

We are removing the existing floor to create a plenum for delivering a low velocity heating, ventilating and air conditioning system into the audience chamber. The new floor slope will be within inches of the existing slopes where the main seats are located. The perimeter of the room, under the balcony will be a level area that links the stage and the lobby.

Our interior layout of the main level of the audience chamber is different from the original design for several reasons – 1) replacing the wooden seats with wider upholstered seats will require new row to row spacing, 2) we are using the area under the balcony adjacent to the lobby for sound and lighting control booths, a cry room and light lock vestibules, therefore not utilizing the center set of doors and 3) we are adapting this theatre to contemporary needs for the user groups and their audiences by placing the best seats in the center of the room, so we do not have a center aisle. We do not see this as diminishing the character of the theatre's volume and intricate plaster detailing.

Removing features and finishes...

We are not planning to remove any features that would be familiar in the space, including the chandeliers.

Removing paint, plaster or other finishes from historically finished surfaces to create a new appearance...

We are not planning to change any finishes and are planning to paint and repair finishes.

Failing to take new use patterns into considerations so that interior features and finishes are damaged...

We do not foresee patterns of use of the theatre room any different from the traditional use of the room, so the interior features or finishes should not be affected.

Dividing rooms, lowering ceilings and damaging or obscuring character-defining features such as fireplaces, niches, stairways or alcoves, so that a new use can be accommodated in the building....

In our adaptive reuse design of the theatre, we are closing the center set of doors into the auditorium and creating a band of enclosed spaces for light-lock vestibules, cry room, lighting control room and sound control room. These rooms are located in a narrow band under the balcony which will not alter the volume of the room while viewing a production nor would this space under the balcony be classified as a character defining space.

Installing permanent partitions that damage or obscure character-defining spaces, features, or finishes...

Same response as above.

Inserting a new floor within a building that alters the space.....

We are replacing the floor but with a new floor in essentially the same plane as the earlier floor as outlined earlier in this letter. We are planning to carpet the aisles on the main level and replace the carpet in the balcony.

Installing a new mechanical system so that character-defining features are changed....

We are installing a new mechanical system but it should be basically invisible and will not affect the appearance of the space or any features.

Installing vertical runs of ducts, pipes and cables in places where they will obscure features....

See response above.

Accessibility and Other
Special Requirements...

Based on this adaptive reuse design, the theatre will be fully accessible within the room from lobby to stage and scattered seating locations throughout the theatre will be available for wheelchair and companion seating. This also makes the theatre accessible for the user groups, performers and staff.

Health and Safety...

We will be installing a fire sprinkler system in the theatre and throughout all of the new construction. We are not planning to change any character defining features because of any health or safety reason.

Please review this information and if you have any questions or require supplementary information, please let Kristine Bjerke, AIA or me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Dempster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "D".

Alan Richard Dempster, AIA LEED® AP

Cc: Michael Kenton, Director of Support Services
Dr. Ron Reed, PAC