

## **Recommendations**

### **Interpretive Period**

It is recommended that the 1940 civic auditorium space (east of the proscenium wall and west of the brick partition wall) should be restored to its Forties appearance but with one or more exposure window(s) where appropriate to view original Music Hall polychromatic stencil finishes.

There is enough archival and physical evidence of Music Hall remaining to understand much of the original 1879 appearance, identified as Phase One in the Architectural Synthesis section of this report. However, the original fabric of the structure is highly fragmented and in many instances is completely missing. As explained in the Architectural Synthesis section, a large portion of the original east end of the Music Hall building was partially razed and the original hall was radically altered when the 1940 Colonial Revival addition was added. Many other 1940 renovations greatly changed the original space. The remaining civic auditorium space is only half of the original Music Hall; the other half is occupied by office space constructed during the extensive 1940 renovations of the building. When the partition wall that cut the capacity of the hall by half was completed, the balcony was partitioned out of the auditorium space and consequently was completely removed. Also, the original fenestration was modified and the masonry walls were altered to accommodate shorter broader windows. The original heating stoves and their chimneys were removed and replaced by steam heat in 1940. The stage can no longer function as it had because the fly system and fly loft were permanently removed during the realignment of the reframed roof.

These changes greatly compromised the historic integrity of the original Music Hall. And yet, despite all of the extensive changes, a surprising amount of the 1879 Music Hall fabric still exists. Enough of the polychromatic wall stencil patterns survived behind the 1940 gypsum board walls to fairly accurately interpret the original finish. While the original ceilings had been removed from the auditorium, the ceiling stenciling is extant in the former Music Hall balcony area outside the auditorium partition wall. The original end brackets that were cut from the ceiling trusses in the civic auditorium can still be found penetrating through the drop ceilings of the adjacent offices. The 1879 round arch proscenium was not torn out, but was simply framed behind the lowered ceiling of the 1940 civic auditorium above a flattened elliptical proscenium arch. All of these scattered original elements taken as a whole can create a fairly vivid image of what the interior of Music Hall looked like 125 years ago.

Phase Two, the 1940s Colonial Revival makeover of the Victorian eclectic Music Hall, has a much higher degree of historical integrity than Phase One. The

architect Frank Ross did a remarkable job of completely changing the character of the building and transforming Easton's Music Hall into a new county civic building that conformed to contemporary aesthetic tastes. Ross' 1940 Colonial Revival addition replaced the original front façade of the former Music Hall. The highly modified original portion of the Music Hall blended almost seamlessly to form a subsidiary rear ell that harmonized with the new Colonial Revival construction.

While Victorian architecture has regained respect in recent decades, it was not the case in the Forties. Victorian Architecture at that time was viewed as being outmoded, vulgar and excessive. Many Victorian buildings in America, such as Music Hall, were "remade" into more reserved Classical or Colonial Revival structures. What is remarkable about the Music Hall is the present juxtaposition of two radically different architectural aesthetics. In spite of the complete reworking of Music Hall in 1940, enough of the nineteenth century fabric remains to interpret both historic periods. However, the original Music Hall space has been altered to such a degree that it would not be prudent to attempt to restore the space to its 1879 appearance. To do so would destroy the intact historic 1940 space in favor of a reconstructed interpretation of an earlier period. In accordance to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, "Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved." That is not to say that care should not be taken to retain as much of the remaining original fabric as possible. On the contrary, the Music Hall has provided a unique opportunity to observe both periods simultaneously. This should be a consideration in the preservation and rehabilitation plan for the space. It would be appropriate to provide some exposure windows to view intact preserved examples of the nineteenth century finishes. As a county building it would be particularly apropos to provide a small exhibit panel in a public space that describes the municipal history of Easton's Market/Music Hall and how it became the Talbot County Court House's south wing.

The History of the Music Hall has become a key part of the development of the Talbot County Court House. The Colonial Revival design of the 1940 Music Hall rehabilitation project is one of multiple Colonial Revival expansions of the Court House that drew inspiration from the original 1794 Court House. Already in 1894 architect Harry Brauns added an elaborate Colonial Revival pedimented doorway with elliptical fan light as one of his architectural enhancements during the renovation and expansion of the Court House. Architect Frank Ross continued the architectural homage to the Talbot County Court House when he redesigned the Music Hall for county use. Ross successfully met the goal to transform Music Hall into a new colonial style county building that harmonized with the Talbot County Court House and complemented the Town Square. Next, Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean, an architecture firm famous for their Colonial Revival projects, designed the hyphen additions to the Court House. The firm's 1958 Colonial Revival additions physically joined Ross' rehabilitated

Colonial Revival civic building to form the south wing of the Talbot County Court House. The Talbot County Courthouse complex is unified by its Colonial style architecture of which the Music Hall has become an integral part. Therefore, as part of the Court House complex, the 1940 Colonial Revival renovations to the Music Hall must, at the least, be preserved to the extent that the historical integrity of the entire complex is not compromised. For example, the 1879 interior appearance of Music Hall can not be faithfully recreated without removing the divided light windows and returning the windows to their original tall one-over-one configuration. However, to do so would seriously compromise the historical integrity of the existing Colonial Revival appearance of the Court House complex. Currently the 18<sup>th</sup> century courthouse building with its multiple renovations and extensive additions stands as a very fine example of Colonial Revival architecture.

### **Preservation Plan**

#### Recommended Use:

##### Option 1

The most sympathetic use for the civic auditorium would be to return to its use as an auditorium. Ideally, this would include not only the hall but also the stage and support area beneath the stage.

##### Option 2

The second best option is to divide the stage and support area from the hall for separate adaptive re-use. The hall should be kept as one large room. The space should be restored to its 1940 appearance from the proscenium to the Forties partition wall at the back of the auditorium. If the proscenium arch must be closed, it should not be closed off flush with the front of the proscenium wall but should be recessed to preserve the integrity of the arch.

In either of these two options the area above the stage will have to be addressed. Currently, the unused area above stage poses a health and indoor air quality hazard as it has a thick encrustation of guano. The board ceiling above stage appears to have been installed in the Forties from used tongue-and-groove boards salvaged from the renovations. However, it was never finished space and was not intended to be viewed by the public. Therefore, there is no need to preserve the ceiling configuration above the stage provided that the ceiling is not lowered in a manner that interferes with the sight lines through the proscenium arch.

#### Significant features that should be rehabilitated:

- Gypsum board on walls using existing studs
- Gypsum board on existing curved ceiling framing

- Cove lights (need not match existing fixtures or use incandescent lights)
- Wainscot restored/repared
- Apron restored/repared
- Missing column and bracket for proscenium arch replaced
- Missing window casing replaced
- Doors and re-hang the missing panel door in the proscenium wall
- Replace/repair footlights if stage is to be used
- Radiators
- Floor
- Paint according to Forties paint scheme recorded in the attached conservator's report

The following items should be removed:

- The stairs that were cut into the apron at the center of the stage should be removed and the apron repaired.
- The plywood decking covering the stage floor minimally should be removed from the apron as far back as the proscenium arch.

Care should be taken at all times to preserve as much of the original 19<sup>th</sup> century building fabric as possible, particularly the polychromatic stenciling on the original plaster.

### **Sustainability**

During the renovation and adaptive use of the music hall consideration should be given to sustainable/green design. Sustainable design strives to conserve energy, to reduce waste and to use only renewable resources, which themselves deplete only renewable resources. More and more municipalities and government agencies are advocating sustainable or "green" building design. The U.S. General Services Administration encourages efforts to reduce long-term facility costs and to become more environmentally conscious through a mandate that new and remodeled buildings meet a minimum level of sustainable design certification. The GSA has adopted the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. The GSA's guidelines Greening Federal Facilities encourages actions that include selecting nonpolluting materials, recycling, conserving energy and water, improving landscaping, and purchasing energy-efficient lighting, heating and cooling equipment.

The act of rehabilitating the Music Hall is by its nature green in that you will be continuing to use existing building stock rather than building new. Historic preservation is a form of sustainable conservation because historic buildings represent the objectified energy from past generations. Preserving historic buildings embodies conservation in every sense of the word. You can capitalize on this opportunity and create an exemplary space by making environmentally

responsible selections in design and material use that can lead to a healthier and more energy efficient space.

Toward this end, consideration should first be given to environmentally sensitive building materials. The National Park Service provides helpful information in Chapter 6, "Building Design" in Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design produced by the Denver Service Center, home of the NPS Technical Information Center. A list of building material considerations has been excerpted below.

#### ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE BUILDING MATERIALS

##### **Cradle-to-Grave-Analysis**

The complete life-cycle energy, environmental, and waste implications of each building material must be examined. This "cradle-to-grave" analysis is the tracing of a material or product, and its by-products, from its initial source availability and extraction, through refinement, fabrication, treatment and additives, transportation, use, and eventual reuse or disposal. This tracing includes the tabulation of energy consumed and the environmental impacts of each action and material.

- Source of raw ingredients (renewable? sustainable? locally available? nontoxic?)
- Raw material extraction (energy input? habitat destruction? topsoil erosion? siltation/pollution from runoff?)
- Transportation (most local source? fuel consumption? air pollution?)
- Processing and/or manufacturing (energy input? air/water/noise pollution? waste generation and disposal?)
- Treatments and additives (use of petrochemicals? exposure to, and disposal of, hazardous materials?)
- Use and operation (energy requirements? longevity of products used? indoor air quality? waste generation?)
- Resource recovery/disposal (potential for recycling/reusing materials? disposal of solid/toxic wastes?)

Two of the best sources [for data about building materials' environmental impact] are the American Institute of Architect's Environmental Resource Guides and the National Park Service's Environmentally Responsible Building Product Guide. As a subjective means of recording, tabulating, and reporting positive and negative environmental actions, report cards should be kept for each material or product in a development. The selection of materials for a sustainable design is then a matter of weighing of report cards for the lowest total environmental loss.

##### **Selection Priorities**

When their source is sustainable:

- Natural materials are less energy-intensive and polluting to produce, and contribute less to indoor air pollution.
- Local materials have a reduced level of energy cost and air pollution associated with their transportation, and can help sustain the local economy.
- Durable materials can save on energy costs for maintenance as well as for the production and installation of replacement products.

In selecting building materials, it is helpful to prioritize them by origin, avoiding materials from nonrenewable sources.

**Primary** - materials found in nature such as stone, earth, flora (hemp, jute, reed, wool), cotton, and wood.

- ensure new lumber is from certified sustainably managed forests or certified naturally felled

trees

- use caution that any associated treatments, additives, or adhesives do not contain toxins or off-gas volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to indoor air/atmospheric pollution

**Secondary Materials** - materials made from recycled products such as wood, aluminum, cellulose, and plastics.

- verify that production of material does not involve high levels of energy, pollution, of waste
- verify functional efficiency and environmental safeness of salvaged (recycled) materials and products from old buildings
- look closely at the composition of recycled products; toxins may still be present  
specify aluminum from recycled material; it uses 80% less energy to produce over initial production
- evaluate products containing recycled hydrocarbon-based products; they may help keep used plastics out of landfills but may do little to reduce production and use of plastic from virgin resources
- keep alert for new developments; new environmentally sound materials from recycled goods are coming on the market every week

**Tertiary** - man-made materials (artificial, synthetic, nonrenewable) materials having varying degrees of environmental impact such as plywood, plastics, and aluminum avoid use of materials and products containing or produced with chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) or hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) that deteriorate the ozone layer

- avoid materials that off-gas volatile organic compounds, contributing to indoor air/atmospheric pollution
- minimize use of products made from new aluminum or other materials that are resource disruptive during extraction and a high energy consumer during refinement

The potential benefits of choosing a sustainable/green renovation plan for the Music Hall include improving the environment, creating a healthier indoor air-quality, lowering energy costs, and even reducing maintenance.

Some of the advantages to consider while selecting a sustainable design plan for the Music Hall include:

- Providing a healthy environment for the workplace: good ventilation—strive for at least six air changes per hour as opposed to the traditional four; use of natural lighting, appealing work spaces; elimination of chemicals, airborne particulates, formaldehyde fumes, solvents, and volatile organic compounds. By avoiding conventional paints, paint removers and thinners that often contain toxic and cancer-causing compounds (VOCs), and by selecting the least toxic wall finish and flooring options, you can help avoid compromising indoor air quality.
- Selecting building technologies and materials that are green—use materials that are biodegradable, recyclable, and made from renewable resources and that have been manufactured in a way that has not damaged the environment; select replacement materials that have a high percentage of recyclable content; select long-lasting and low-energy use products, such as specialized light bulbs; retain materials in place to the extent possible; consider thermal glazing which can be added to historic windows.

- Consuming less energy in the new systems in the building than market standards—reduce ambient lighting and increase task lighting; use sensors, timers, and motion detectors to control energy use in fixtures; consider low wattage features, individual or zoned controls; use the most efficient energy system or alternative energy sources available, such as photovoltaic cells; keep systems and finishes well maintained to work at peak efficiency; consider use of low wattage bulbs to reduce office lighting from 4 watts/sq.ft. to less than 1 watt/sq.ft. which will have a direct impact on cooling requirements. The Music Hall's Forties color scheme is conducive to reduced lighting costs. The light off-white colors reflect light while the ample windows help to naturally reduce the need for artificial light.

### **Conclusion**

There is historical continuity and contrast between the Forties renovation and the rehabilitation work being contemplated now. The Forties renovation of the aging Music Hall reflected contemporary values using new technology and current historical sensibilities. The Music Hall was transformed into a well-designed Colonial Revival structure intended to enhance the Talbot County Court House and reflect pride in the local history. At the same time, the building was up-graded with state-of-the-art office space, an exemplary County Library and a well-equipped modern County Laboratory.

At present, the former Music Hall is poised at a similar point in its history. When the Colonial Revival renovations were made in 1940, the Music Hall was 61 years old; now, the Colonial Revival civic auditorium is 65 years old. Over the past 65 years Historic Preservation has evolved and become much more sympathetic towards the built environment. The aging civic auditorium can be renovated in a way that reflects today's values using both new technology and our current historical sensibilities. A sympathetic renovation of the Colonial Revival civic auditorium will enhance the Talbot County Court House complex and reflect pride in its history. The opportunity exists, as in the past, to up-grade the space using state-of-the-art technology and to address contemporary issues of environmental awareness. The history of the Music Hall and of the Court House complex is not static but is dynamic. Current renovations will become part of the building's evolution or the architectural synthesis of the site. Therefore, it is worth giving consideration not only to preserving significant features from the past, but also to make appropriate renovations that fulfill current needs while striving toward sustainable design that will affect the future in a positive way.