

Capitol Theatre Expansion Project



CAMECO
CAPITOL
ARTS CENTRE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A CONSTRUCTION PLAN was approved, and construction began in September 2019, that will :

- Enclose the existing patio
- Expand the main floor reception area for year-round use
- Create a much-needed rehearsal facility on the second floor above the new reception area
- Add a storage area to accommodate our extensive 8000 piece costume, props and sets inventory
- Add a kitchen for catering and events needs
- Expand the ladies' washroom facilities to enhance the visitor experience

RATIONALE

WHEN COMPLETE the project will include improvements to make the Capitol Theatre function better as a performing arts venue and also provide an even better theatre experience for patrons.

Main Floor Expansion – The expanded main floor will allow more patrons to enjoy the refreshment facilities, mingle with their friends and free up much needed space for volunteers to deliver the popular Capitol Theatre experience, year round. Anyone who has attended the theatre on a day when weather keeps people inside, (typically eight months of the year), will understand the need for additional space in the bar and gallery areas.

Expanded Ladies Washroom Facilities – Five new stalls will be added. This is a critical need, as more shows are sold out, with over 380 patrons attending many performances. This expansion will definitely improve the guest experience.

Second Floor Rehearsal Facility – As a community theatre, the Capitol Theatre is one of the few places in the county that can seat 380 people for an event. The main

theatre itself is fully utilized with plays, musicals, concerts, community events, TIFF movies, HD opera and rentals. Currently, the Sculthorpe Theatre is the only space available for rehearsals. As a result, it is tied up for eight months of the year and only available to the community for the other four. A new Rehearsal Hall will address that problem and free up the Sculthorpe Theatre for year round use.

Additional Storage Space – The facility currently rents storage space in three different locations, resulting in increased costs. Those spaces would be consolidated on site with the new storage area.

The new storage would meet the growing need to store production-related items like props, set pieces, costumes, accessories, general tech supplies such as lights, speakers, special computers, and concession stock used by Volunteers. The theatre also houses a growing library of media and historical artifacts related to its recent designation as a national historic site.

At present, the theatre also destroys or releases items that would otherwise be stored for future use (including rentals to one of the five other theatres in the area).

BACKGROUND HISTORY TO PRESENT DAY ROLE

THE CAPITOL THEATRE was opened in 1930 by Famous Players as an "Atmospheric Theatre" built specifically to accommodate talking movies. It closed in 1987, and in 1993 community supporters in Port Hope formed the Capitol Theatre Heritage Foundation to restore the theatre to its previous glory. The Theatre now operates as a year-round, community-focused arts facility and movie theatre, and an anchor of the town and region's economic and social well-being.



In 2003 a major state-of-the-art building addition was completed to include a spacious box office, licensed reception area, and a studio theatre on the second floor. The Capitol was made completely accessible for physical access, and a hearing-impaired system was installed.

The Capitol Theatre has benefited from the commitment of both a small management and staff team, supported by over 200 volunteers and a volunteer Board of Directors. Much has been accomplished over the past five years, including:

- Doubling of annual ticket sales to 65,000
- Achievement of a role for the Capitol as the leading regional institution for both professional and amateur entertainment, and community events which totaled more than 300 in 2019
- Designation as a National Historic Site
- Expanded use of the facility by a multitude of community groups, broadening the impact well beyond the Capitol Theatre itself
- Balanced the budget and doubled operating revenue
- Hiring new artistic leadership in winter, 2019
- Hiring new managing director in winter, 2020

The Capitol Theatre is an important and engaged partner of local business, community groups, and regional tourism marketing organizations in building a stronger profile for both Port Hope and the region. Events at the theatre generate significant activity in Port Hope for its merchants, the hospitality sector, and other visitor attractions in and around the town.



THE CAPITOL THEATRE IN THE COMMUNITY

THE CAPITOL THEATRE PLAYS a central role in the cultural, artistic and economic life of the community — Port Hope and throughout Northumberland County. The theatre provides professionally produced and performed productions such as *Mamma Mia*, *Singing in the Rain*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and many more, coupled with popular amateur productions utilizing talented local performers. In addition, it is home to Live From The Met Opera, Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) movies, and a multitude of community events responding to local needs, guaranteeing constant activity at the theatre and in Port Hope.



The importance of children's programming and education is fundamental, and has resulted in hundreds of young people participating in Capitol Theatre and partners' events annually. These include summer performances featuring young people, as well as the annual pantomime catering to young and old alike, playing to full houses. In 2018, the theatre mounted a per-

formance of *Peter Pan* with a cast of 55 young performers. More annual productions featuring young actors are in the planning stages.

The theatre's reputation as a superb arts and entertainment venue today draws 60% of its audiences from beyond a 50 km radius of Port Hope. This in turn creates an economic spin-off to the community estimated to be \$2.5 – 3 million per year: a significant impact for a small but growing town like Port Hope. Its proximity to Toronto, serviced by a variety of transportation options, coupled with its affordable real estate and vibrant arts community, provide solid reasons to consider for potential newcomers. The Capitol's appeal and impact is used by local recruiters to promote when hiring new employees.



In 2017, Parks Canada designated the Capitol Theatre as a National Historic site, an achievement of which we are immensely proud. The goal is to ensure that the Capitol continues to be a proud reflection of Canada's built heritage for the next 90 years, as it has been for the last 90 years.

It is critically important that the Capitol Theatre continues to benefit the community in many diverse ways if the institution and the community are to survive and thrive. The Board of the Capitol is committed to fulfilling this goal.



THE SCULTHORPE THEATRE

THE SCULTHORPE THEATRE is, as the secondary and smaller performance space, a highly desirable venue for events in the community requiring seating for up to 125 people. We currently turn away requests for weddings, private parties, dance groups, piano recitals, concerts, film shoot holding areas and off-site meetings for local companies.

As part of ongoing strategic efforts, management will program the Sculthorpe Theatre with additional professional presentations, and events to showcase the local community's wealth of talent. For example, the space would allow for

- children's musicals with all acting and production crew roles filled by local talent
- readings of plays by Canadian authors and read by a mix of professional and local talent
- concerts (jazz, classical, etc. in cabaret format)
- art exhibits
- educational speakers
- stand-up comedy acts
- variety shows
- workshops
- smaller plays
- youth camps
- cabaret style concerts with talented local performers

There are additional plans to create educational classes, including acting, directing, and set design, under the direction of the Artistic Director. These classes could utilize new space in the Sculthorpe Theatre generated by the redesign.

It is anticipated that these new programming initiatives will generate over \$50,000 in net revenue in year one and would grow to \$60,000 by year three.



OUR REQUEST

A MAJOR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN is underway, seeking support from individual donors, public and private foundations, local businesses, service groups, friends of the theatre, and the three levels of government. The goal is \$1,750,000. It is important that those funds and more, if possible, be raised to cover the cost of the construction project, to outfit the new facility, equip the new servery and pay associated expenses.

We look forward to discussing, in more detail, the various options available for you to support the vital role the Capitol Theatre plays in the culture of our community and region.



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