

PROGRESS REPORT ON

CITY OF MUNAWADING THEATRE ARTS CENTRE

David Gawler, Architect. March, 1983.

1. Research :

- (a) in 1978 the original concept of a centre at the civic offices site included -
theatre - 300 seats with sloping floor, orchestra pit, stage and dressing rooms
workshop of approximately 140 m²
sound shell (open air) of approximately 120 m², sharing backstage and workshop facilities.
two performance rooms - each 145 m²
rehearsal room - 100 m²
foyer, toilets, kitchen.

- (b) following discussions with Arts Council and many user groups the concept was developed (March, 1979) -
theatre increased slightly and rear access added
workshop - scene painting facility added
sound shell increased in size
dressing rooms - space and toilet facilities improved
performance rooms opened together with acoustic operable wall
rehearsal room increased slightly to match size of stage and changing facilities added.
foyer, etc. developed to give more office space, larger foyer

- (c) current proposal has been the subject of continued feedback from potential users and reference to a great number of theatres built up to the present time.

2. Objective :

- (a) to provide a venue in Munawading capable of housing the many local active arts orientated groups with the ability to adapt to changing needs and allow simultaneous use of the various parts.
(b) to create a building rugged and attractive in its own right (inside and out) without expensive materials or applied finishes.

3. The Proposal :

- (a) Theatre increased to 399 seats, including four positions for wheel chairs. The theatre can be reduced to 264 seats by back curtain. Full projection box is included and roof access stage lighting provided.
Stage tower is included to allow full theatre productions. Orchestra pit is capable of converting to thrust stage.

3. The Proposal cont'd

(b) dressing facilities include two dressing rooms, male and female toilets and showers, assembly areas to both sides of stage, laundry facility.

All is accessible to theatre, sound shell and performance rooms.

(c) workshop has truck loading door, scene painting trolley, and direct access to stage and to sound shell.

(d) props store - a storage area of 108 m² is provided over the dressing rooms.

(e) sound shell has been provided with operable doors and ceiling panel to allow conversion to an enclosed rehearsal area (160 m²) when not in use.

This provides security, and weather protection, simplifies chair-storage and would allow stage sets to be left in place between performances.

Sound shell has use of (b)(c)(d) above.

(f) multi-function room comprises 315 m² room with timber floor for ballet, dancing, displays, meetings, etc. Kitchen service is available.

The room can be divided with an acoustic operable wall. Storage lockers are fitted for main user groups. Foldaway changing rooms are included.

(g) rehearsal room is a smaller room with carpeted floor; again use is flexible and a store room would allow for stacking chairs.

(h) foyer has kitchen and kiosk service, administration/ticket office, two bi-sexual handicapped toilets, and toilet facilities well in excess of statutory requirements.

(i) plant room is located above male toilets and is thus central to theatre and surrounding spaces.

(j) general storage - the space beneath the theatre floor would provide approximately 150 m² storage for scenery, etc. with truck access on north-east side.

4. Construction :

While the original concept was for conventional steel frame, brick walls, etc. the use of "tilt slab" method has developed in Australia, and this offers the following advantages :-

(a) reinforced concrete walls cast flat and then lifted into position give greater strength and reduce problems of building movement, brick growth, etc.

(b) concrete walls 150 mm thick have high acoustic inertia and no "leakage" as with brick cavity walls with weep holes.

(c) finish on 'bottom' side can be off textured forms, or wave tiles, stone slabs, etc. cast in with wall, while 'top' surface can be finished smooth or textured as normal paving.

(d) cost of wall systems is approximately 40% cheaper than masonry.

(e) concrete walls carry roof loads (no columns) - roofs can be supported with steel or timber trusses, space frames, etc.

4. Construction cont'd

- (f) concrete wall panels require only footings at junctions, instead of continuous footings for walls, plus column footings.
- (g) erection time for tilt slab is faster than conventional construction.
- (h) in this particular project angles and raking walls are easily achieved and top edges are structurally superior to masonry.

The stage tower would be lightweight, built with 50 mm steel clad "foam panels" or steel deck with rigid insulated backing.

5. Finishes :

The objective will be to achieve rugged simple finishes to the concrete wall panels -

e.g. cast wall slabs on textured mat to give patterned face for interior of theatre, etc. (painted); finish top surface in pebble dash for natural maintenance free exterior; finish walls of service rooms steel trowelled for paint or tiles (in toilets), or left natural (in workshop, stage, etc.)

Floors - will be carpet in foyer, theatre, rehearsal, dressing; polished timber in multi function; masonry over timber deck to stage (to allow low cost patching); tile in toilets; concrete to sound shell and workshop.

Ceilings - will be 1200 x 600 grid in foyer and meeting rooms; plaster in theatre, nil in workshop; painted concrete in dressing rooms; motor operated plywood panel in sound shell.

6. Acoustics :

Considerable attention has been given to sound separation of the several venues. Performance acoustics of theatre and sound shell will be the subject of further research, before final shaping and finishes are determined.

6. Siting :

Site plan has been incorporated showing how adequate car parking can be developed, truck access provided and site grading achieved.

It should be noted that ample space is left at the civic centre for other buildings -

- (a) north of coffee shop
- (b) along Carter Avenue. both sides of easement
- (c) north of library
- (d) north of Arts centre

Such buildings would help contain the music bowl as a focal community area.

7. Consultants :

The following secondary consultants would be used :-

Structural - Alfred Colafella P/L., (used for pool project)

Mechanical and Electrical - W.O. Ross and Associates

Acoustics - H. Vivian Taylor

Quantity Surveyors - Rawlinson Forster and Partners P/L.
(used for pool project).

Final design and finishes may vary from the drawing, present model, and the above statement, through development of the brief and as a result of final discussions with potential users and the Council.

David Gawler.

