



Report to
DESIGN REVIEW & PRESERVATION BOARD
City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671
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STAFF REPORT
September 20, 2006

Members of the Design Review & Preservation Board:

Subject: Sacramento Memorial Auditorium Historic Structures Report. **M06-042**

Location/Council District: 1515 J Street / District 3

Assessor's Parcel Number: 006-0062-001

Designation: City Landmark and Contributing Resource to Memorial Auditorium Historic District; California Register of Historical Resources; National Register of Historic Places

Recommendation: Staff is requesting comments on the Memorial Auditorium Historic Structures Report, and possible options for a "Master Certificate of Appropriateness" based upon the Historic Structure Report.

Contact: Judy Goldbar, General Manager, Convention Center Complex, 808-5630
Roberta Deering, Preservation Director, 808-8259

Summary: Attached to this report is a copy of the most salient sections of the Memorial Auditorium Historic Structures Report, along with a CD of the entire report. The purpose of the Historic Structures Report is to document the intact historic features of the site, evaluate existing conditions, and provide recommendations for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the building. Staff is soliciting comments from the Design Review and Preservation Board on this report, and on the potential to develop a "Master Certificate of Appropriateness" based upon the Historic Structures Report.

This report contains the series of evaluations of building details that are used to prioritize the final summary recommendations for the building. *Architectural Evaluation*, beginning on page 18, describes building details rated by level of significance based on character-defining features, and on condition based on historic conservation standards. *Specialized Evaluations*, beginning on page 21, describes the conservator's survey of the decorative features and finishes rated for significance, condition, treatment, and priority.

Based on the understanding of the condition of the building materials and systems established in the previous sections, the *Recommendations* section provides a prioritized list of features, spaces, or items and their recommended rehabilitation

treatments according to their assigned ranking. This list is followed by prioritization and cost estimates for those treatments. It is important to note the ranking criteria: a) condition of the building; b) health and safety of the occupants; and, c) the conservation of the building and its contents. The *Recommendations* section also includes a maintenance plan.

Background Information: In February 2005, based on the recommendation of the Preservation Director, Convention Center staff hired Historic Resources Group, specifically Peyton Hall, FAIA, to prepare a Historic Structures Report for the Memorial Auditorium. The goal of the project was to have a template for how to preserve, and in some cases restore, the historic integrity of the Auditorium while allowing for the demanding and changing needs of a large meeting and event facility.

The report includes a detailed description of both the interior and exterior condition of the building, as well as recommendations for conservation measures, and typical repair and maintenance. One element of the report process was the formation of a Stakeholders Committee, which included City staff, preservationists, and building operators and users. This committee met five times between June 2005 and June 2006 to review the results of the building surveys and iterations of the report. Subsequent to review by the Design Review and Preservation Board, this report will be forwarded to City Council for their acceptance.

At the same time that Council approved funding for the Historic Structures Report, they also allocated \$500,000 for implementation of the items identified in the report. In addition, Council allocated \$6.3 million from the Community Reinvestment bonds to the Convention Center for further implementation of items identified in the report.

Under the Historic Preservation Chapter of the City Code, relative to City projects:

- A. General: Except as provided below, the provisions of this Chapter 15.124 requiring hearing(s) before the Board or the Preservation Director shall apply to Development Projects involving, or requests for demolition or relocation of Landmarks, Contributing Resources or Non-Contributing Resources which are owned by the City of Sacramento, including public projects within the Old Sacramento National Historic Landmark, Historic District; provided that the Board or Director shall make a recommendation to the City Council or other City decision-making body, entity or person, rather than issuing a decision. When acting on City projects, the City Council or other City decision-making body, entity or person shall apply the same standards, and make the same findings, required by this Chapter for private projects.

The preparation of this HSR for memorial Auditorium affords the City an opportunity to consider a "Master Certificate of Appropriateness" for Preservation Director or Board review of development projects. Work following the treatments recommended in the

HSR could be considered "approved" and would not require separate preservation review. Consideration of cumulative effects of projects affecting resources of tertiary significance could be addressed in the master document, perhaps involving preservation review work if a certain percentage of these features were affected. The Board's comments on the concept of a Master agreement is appreciated.

Environmental Considerations: This report is exempt under CEQA Sections 15261(a) and 15331.

Policy Considerations: This report is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan Goal of Promoting and Supporting Economic Vitality by allowing the Convention Center to remain competitive while providing a cultural venue to residents and visitors alike. This report is also consistent with the Preservation Element of the City's General Plan that seeks to protect and encourage the preservation of Sacramento's historic resources and ensure that the cultural heritage of Sacramento remains a vital asset to the City.

Respectfully submitted by: 
JUDY GOLDBAR
Convention Center General Manager



ROBERTA DEERING
Preservation Director

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I. Executive Summary

Following a substantial but partial rehabilitation in the 1990s, Sacramento Memorial Auditorium remains both a significant community landmark and a viable venue for a variety of meetings and presentations. Its preservation is the result of great effort by many agencies and individuals who established its historic significance, protected its authenticity, and saw it reopened to the public after a long vacancy. However, the building needs of a number of repairs in order to preserve its integrity over the long term. In addition, the facility would be more economically viable for users and presenters if some of its systems were improved.

When Historic Resources Group was retained to prepare this Historic Structure Report, the core concern about Memorial Auditorium was how to preserve and in some cases restore the historic integrity of the site while allowing for the demanding and ever-changing needs of a large meeting and presentation hall. This is an investigation and presentation that is, by definition, primarily concerned with historic preservation. Nevertheless, the concept of “rehabilitation” in historic preservation parlance takes into account the need to thoughtfully adapt historic landmarks in order to keep them economically and functionally viable for changing and evolving uses.

This report focuses on the physical condition of the building materials and finishes, from the roof down to the basement, and what is needed to maintain them, to prevent their deterioration, and in some cases to bring them back to good condition or former glory. This information is augmented by review and comment on a number of functional needs that were identified by the Sacramento Convention Center staff and a City of Sacramento-appointed Stakeholders Committee who contributed to this effort during a series of milestone meetings in 2005.

The recommendations in this report represent the effort to balance historic preservation with functional and economic imperatives. This balance is revealed by the fact that alterations and additions are proposed, but they are relatively small, and mostly invisible from the exterior of the building.

The Historic Structure Report is delivered as a narrative document with photographs, and also as a digital document that includes separate database files. The database files include more than 1,300 discreet searchable and updateable records of spaces and features in the building. This is “baseline” documentation that provides a point of comparison for configuration and condition by staff and future assessors. In addition, there are a substantial report and photographs of “decorative” materials and finishes by Architectural Conservation, Inc., that gives more particular analysis of the finer aspects of the architecture.

The list of recommendations for maintenance and rehabilitation provide a roadmap for staff and the City of Sacramento in their daily operations, and for longer term planning of capital improvements. Altogether, the detailed documentation of significant features and list of rehabilitation recommendations provide a ready reference for City of Sacramento staff who are making decisions and evaluating proposals and projects that impact the building.

Some of the conditions that need attention at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium are:

- Water intrusion over the front portico roof that is destroying the decorative cement plaster parge and damaging brick masonry
- Severe biological growth on exterior brick masonry walls
- Inadequate guttering and flashing that lead to severe leaking at the north and south walls of the auditorium during heavy rains
- Water intrusion through basement walls
- Damage to decorative concrete and glazed architectural terra cotta at the portico, front walls, and side balconies
- Deteriorating and inadequately restored decorative painting at the portico ceiling, lobby ceiling, auditorium ceiling, and little theatre
- Lack of a personnel elevator to take patrons from the main lobby level to the mezzanine, balcony, and basement levels
- Lack of space for an actors' crossover at the rear of the stagehouse
- Lack of adequate docking facilities for trucks at the stagehouse loading doors
- Lack of rigging and power locations at the proscenium and auditorium ceiling, leading to missed opportunities and damage by stage crews
- Lack of power and audio connections in the auditorium area, leading to damage from temporary installations
- Inadequate outdoor lighting and signage for safety and promotion of the building site