

**RE: ARTS CENTRE DESIGN CONCEPT**

**MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT the recommendation contained in the report from the Director Recreation & Cultural Services be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER DATE: 1989 FEBRUARY 28

FROM: DIRECTOR RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: ARTS CENTRE DESIGN CONCEPT

PURPOSE: The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the space requirements for the Burnaby Arts Centre.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

**REPORT**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 1988 December 12 Council adopted the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission that Hotson Bakker Architects and Henry Hawthorne Architects be retained to prepare a design concept for the proposed Deer Lake Arts Centre.

Council also requested that in establishing Terms of Reference for the project two categories be taken into consideration:

1. Short term goals - renovations to existing buildings
2. Long term goals - other related projects

**2.0 CURRENT SITUATION**

The Architects have been involved in a thorough review of needs for the new Centre. This review has included discussions with the Major Civic Building Project Coordination Committee, staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission and three meetings with representatives of the Arts Community, hosted by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

These discussions, particularly those with Arts Centre staff and the Arts Community, have led to some refinements relating to the proposed size of the community theatre and of the total square footage of the building.


Preliminary thoughts, prior to the public process, considered that a theatre of 300 seats (similar to the existing James Cowan Theatre) would be appropriate and that the total square footage of the entire complex would be approximately 75,000 square feet.

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Citizen input suggests that the theatre should be approximately 450 seats and that the total complex would be approximately 98,000 square feet.

The Major Civic Building Project Committee wished to bring these changes to the attention of the Commission and seek its concurrence in the changes.

A report on this subject was provided to the Commission at its meeting of 1989 March 01 and is attached for the information of Council.



for: Dennis Gaunt  
Director Recreation &  
Cultural Services

PL/seo  
Attach.

ITEM 1  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 20  
COUNCIL MEETING 89/03/13

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RE: ARTS CENTRE DESIGN CONCEPT

DIRECTOR'S REPORT NO. 5

COMMISSION MEETING 89/03/01

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to Municipal Council for information.

REPORT

Attached is correspondence from the Major Civic Building Project Coordination Committee. The Committee points out that as the concept programming for the Arts Centre progresses, refinements are being made based upon citizen input and identified needs which could lead to a larger building than originally envisioned.

The Committee makes two specific points:

1. The thinking about the theatre which had initially been expressed as a theatre of similar size to James Cowan (300 seats) seems now to be consolidating around the figure 450 seats.
2. The total square footage of the building initially quoted at 75,000 sq.ft. has increased to 98,000 sq.ft.

The Committee feels that it is appropriate to draw these factors to the attention of the Commission and Council at this time.

It is the opinion of Parks and Recreation staff that these changes are the result of a natural evolution as community needs become better known and are expressed in refined floor space programs. There are substantiated details which validate the evolutionary changes taking place.

Unless directed to the contrary, the Director would intend to continue with the process pursuing the concept plan to an ultimate conclusion for an optimum building.

Subject to Commission and Council approval, it is also assumed that eventually there would be a phased program adopted which would spread the construction over the number of years compatible with the community's ability to pay to achieve a quality community arts centre.

DG:hh  
Attach.

C.C.  
Chief Building Inspector  
Members of the Coordination Committee

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THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABCY

TO: Director Recreation  
& Cultural Services

1989 February 24

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SUBJECT: ARTS CENTRE PLANNING CONCEPT  
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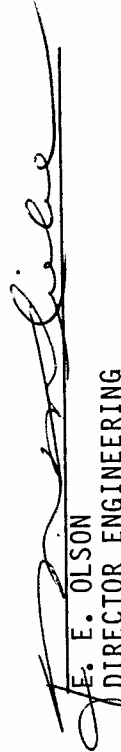
The Major Civic Building Project Co-ordination Committee has been pursuing the Deer Lake Arts Centre project, and at this time wishes to bring to the attention of the Parks and Recreation Commission, two areas of divergence which have been developed between the TERMS OF REFERENCE (02 March 1988) and the SPACE PROGRAM (08 September 1988), and to seek direction thereon.

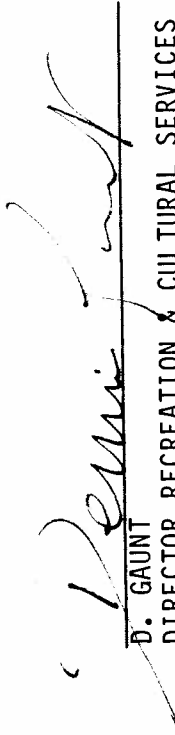
The first issue is the general item of total square footage. The TERMS OF REFERENCE indicated that "the suggested program presently envisions a theatre of similar size to James Cowan ... and 58,000 square feet of studio and administrative space" totalling approximately 75,000 square feet. The SPACE PROGRAM, based on recommended component sizes, yields a facility size of 98,000 square feet.

The second issue relates specifically to one of the components. As noted, the TERMS OF REFERENCE suggest a theatre similar in size to the existing James Cowan which seats 290 and occupies 17,000 square feet. The SPACE PROGRAM recommends a seating capacity of 450 people and a square footage of 23,450. The additional area is allocated to support spaces such as the stage, wings, scene shop, dressing rooms as well as the floor area required to accommodate the additional audience capacity. Attached you will find discussions of the Deer Lake Theatre size advanced by the Arts Development Officer (Appendix A) and by the Director Planning & Building Inspection (Appendix B), which fully detail the issue.

The Committee believes it is appropriate to bring these issues forward to the Parks and Recreation Commission at this time. The Committee request consideration and direction regarding the art centre size and theatre seating capacity, and that the conclusions be referred to Council for their information.

  
A. L. PARR, CHAIRMAN  
MAJOR CIVIC BUILDING PROJECT  
CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

  
E. E. OLSON  
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING

  
D. GAUNT  
DIRECTOR RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

WAG/jce  
Attach.

cc: Chief Building Inspector

DEER LAKE ARTS CENTRE CONCEPT PLANNING

JAMES COWAN THEATRE

REPORT

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The planning for a new Deer Lake Arts Centre had included the discussion of the size and sophistication of the theatre component, with consideration given to both its current and future use.

Appendix #2 in the attached staff report provides an analysis of theatre use in the 1986, 1987 and 1988 program years. The primary users are defined as Burnaby groups, Arts Centre groups and regional groups, each booking the theatre space for a range of differing purposes and each having access at differential rates.

As an "income facility" in the mix of Parks and Recreation Department facilities, the James Cowan Theatre generates a portion of the annual revenues of the Arts Division. Because of the reasonable rates and quality of support services, the theatre is attractive to both community and regional users and is booked heavily throughout the year, offering a balance of access based on demand.

The staffing and operation of the theatre (including the current level of subsidization), provides both a learning and performance opportunity for groups and audiences in Burnaby and the region. A modest expansion of the theatre has been recommended in the space plan for the new centre and has been supported by research in the field, an assessment of current demand, and by user groups in surveys and public meetings. The attached Appendix #1 summarizes the rationale for a 400-450 seat facility to serve the community into the next 20 years.

It is important to note that this recommendation is not based on any change in direction of the development program of the Arts Division. Since over half of current theatre use is by "regional" groups, without restriction of access by community groups, it is clear the facility performs a valued service to artists and audiences outside of Burnaby as well. This, in turn, provides a richer program for residents here, and an exciting mix of visiting talents to be shared with aspiring students and performers in Burnaby.

In the public meeting of February 16, 1989, user groups expressed their support for a larger, affordable theatre that still offers the intimacy and accessibility of the existing facility. As well, it was generally stated that a theatre of 600 seats or more would not be preferred at the Deer Lake Park location. In summary, a 400-450 seat theatre was the preferred choice by the public attending, for the new centre.

Research conducted for the Arts Centre space program shows that a modest increase in the size of the theatre would not affect the operation of a much larger facility proposed for another location. The proposed "booking theatre" of 750 seats or more would be suitable to host considerably larger commercially-oriented acts requiring significant box-office revenues. National and international class entertainers in this market would have little interest in a 400-450 seat facility at Deer Lake Park. Because of the structure of the

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APPENDIX A, PAGES A1-A15 HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY ARTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER -  
DENIS NOKONY

market, no "threat" to the "Metrotown Theatre" is foreseen by a minor increase in the capacity of James Cowan Theatre. While the Arts Centre has an established market base, the feasibility and ultimate scale of the "Metrotown Theatre" facility has yet to be determined. Since the "Metrotown Theatre" is not a planning priority, it is reasonable to assume the James Cowan Theatre will be the only community facility in Burnaby for the performing arts for the next several years.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on past research and recent public opinion it is recommended that the proposed space program, including a 400-450 seat theatre as part of the new Deer Lake Arts Centre, be accepted. It is understood that this recommended theatre size will be analysed by the architect team and further interpreted in the facility designs being prepared in the concept planning. It is further recommended that the terms of reference be clarified where necessary to accommodate the researched space requirements detailed in the space program (Sept. 8, 1988).

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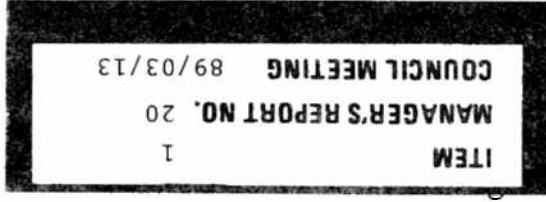
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*Appendix A3*

APPENDIX #1

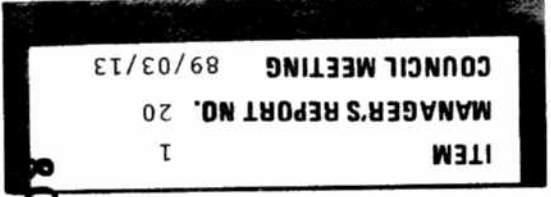


REPLACEMENT OF JAMES COWAN THEATRE: PROPOSED 450 SEATS

1. Need for larger acoustic space (which is governed by house size) for opera and symphony but still intimate enough for drama and chamber concerts.
2. To facilitate community groups such as Sweet Adelines and Maple Leaf Singers with larger audience and acoustic needs.
3. 450-seat theatre is still considered small and intimate with performing community.
4. Will create additional revenue potential to attract touring shows and to enhance Arts Division's own programming.
5. Will create an attractive size for dance companies who are searching for appropriate space. Dance has always been a strong emphasis at the Arts Centre/Theatre and there is a need for a theatre of this size with appropriate dance facilities in the Lower Mainland.
6. 400-450 is the number that continually surfaces when talking to community groups, theatre companies and professionals, dance companies and research material.
7. Support space would remain the same whether 300 or 400 seat theatre. We have specific needs for stage, dressing rooms, scene shop, lighting and sound equipment, wing space and support spaces which is not contingent upon the seating capacity .
8. 450 seats would allow us to continue to serve present groups, to enhance programming capabilities, and to accommodate community groups which are restricted by house and stage size at the present time.

s.g.

*Appendix AA*  
APPENDIX #2



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JAMES COWAN THEATRE  
 USER GROUPS/STATISTICS (1986-1988)

The attached statistics show the use of the James Cowan Theatre by Burnaby community groups, Arts Centre "groups", and regional groups. These user groups have been identified and placed in a particular category by way of the following characteristics:

- a) BURNABY groups are those based in the Burnaby community and which perform mainly within the community.
- b) ARTS CENTRE groups are either sponsored by the Arts Division to perform at the James Cowan Theatre such as those marked C.T.S. (Children's Theatre Series), or are in-house performances and rehearsals by Arts Centre performing arts students and resident company Jumpstart. All of the groups listed in this category did not pay a rental fee for the use of the theatre space. In this category it is important to note that many of the entertainers that appear at the Children's Theatre Series come from cities across Canada. For example, in the past several years, the Children's Theatre Series has sponsored performers from Halifax, Edmonton, San Francisco, and Toronto in addition to those from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.
- c) REGIONAL groups are those groups which are not based in Burnaby or do not perform solely in Burnaby. Several of these are, however, members of the Burnaby Arts Council and have varying percentages of Burnaby residents as members. Similarly, users such as the Coquitlam Music Festival and Kirkwood Academy have many young Burnaby residents as participants but the groups' studios and offices are located in other Lower Mainland communities.

The following chart shows a 3-year comparison (1986, 1987 and 1988) of performances, rehearsals and dark days by these community, Arts Centre and regional users:

	BURNABY		ARTS CTR.		REGIONAL		TOTAL		DARK * DAYS
	Perf.	Reh.	Perf.	Reh.	Perf.	Reh.	Perf.	Reh.	
1986	49	18	47	29	85	46	181	93	146
1987	56	18	41	28	121	40	218	86	116
1988	57	31	48	20	118	52	223	103	114

\*DARK DAYS - Please note that dark days does not necessarily mean that the theatre was empty; on many occasions this merely indicates that there was no performance. Many of the community and regional groups book on



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weekly basis which means that they are not required to strike their sets on days when they are not performing. However, the stage is then unavailable to other groups who may wish to book these 'dark days'.

Over the 3 year period from 1986 through 1988, the average percentage of performances by the three groups was:

Burnaby community groups	26%
Arts Centre groups	22%
Regional groups	52%

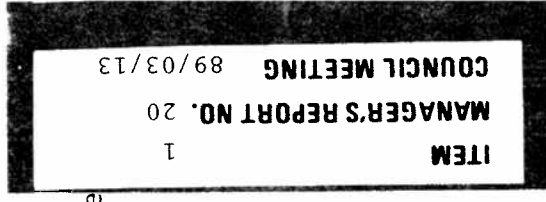
The statistics also show that in the same time period the total number of performances has increased by 23%. Conversely, the number of dark days has decreased by 22%.

Groups that have expressed an interest in booking the James Cowan Theatre but are restricted by its unsuitability include the Burnaby Sweet Adelines, Maple Leaf Singers, Northwest Opera, Betty McHardy Dance, Dance Factory and the Coquitlam Music Festival's honors showcases. These groups are restricted by the theatre's limited seating, small stage size and lack of wing space. The small physical size of the 290-seat house is acoustically insufficient for large musical performances. Professional touring companies such as the Arts Club Theatre often pass by the James Cowan Theatre due to the fact that the limited seating capacity reduces the ticket revenue potential. This also holds true for the Arts Division's sponsored performances; many groups are unattainable due to the inability to meet artists' fees through box office revenue. (Artists do not generally adjust their fees according to the house size.)

On average, current user groups could use additional seats approximately 30% of the time. Large festivals such as the 6-week Coquitlam Music Festival, the Scandinavian Festival, many ethnic group performances and the majority of the dance recitals fill the theatre. The Children's Theatre Series' performances are often filled to capacity, with 60% of the shows in 1988 being sold out. In these instances, potential customers have been turned away at the door. At least 100 additional audience members could have been accommodated without extra promotion, had the seats been available.

Other common problems associated with the James Cowan Theatre which are experienced by the majority of user groups include:

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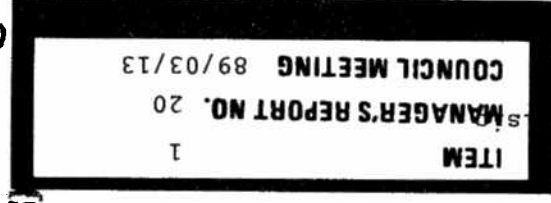
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- a) inadequate support spaces for groups with large casts
- b) narrow stage width which is inappropriate for dance and musicals
- c) severe lack of wing space which adversely affects many theatre, opera, music and dance performances, e.g. difficulty of stage exits and entrances for large groups; shortage of room to move without hitting curtains; lengthy scene changes as sets can not be moved into wings; and necessity of re-blocking choreography
- d) difficult access to facility and poor signage.

In spite of the theatre's shortcomings, many user groups return to James Cowan year after year. Group members value the educational, hands-on emphasis of theatre operation, the support and advice of technical staff, reasonable rental rates, the Deer Lake Park setting, and the ability to meet and rehearse in the neighboring Arts Centre studios. The current arrangement of these arts facilities within Deer Lake Park which mix together arts centre and theatre activities creates a unique atmosphere appreciated by all users.

shelley gipman  
february 19/89

DATE	BURNABY GROUPS			ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)			REGIONAL GROUPS			DARK DAYS	
	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal		
JAN. 1988	Ismatii Theatre	1	1	Jumpstart	3	4	First Impressions	3	7	6	1
				Young People's Dance	1	2	Actors' Theatre Group	4			
				Children's Theatre	1		Stage Fireann	1			
				Series: Robert Minden	1						
FEB. 1988	Gloria dei Chorale	6	4	Children's Films	3	4	Stage Fireann	4	1	1	4
	Heritage Musical Th.	1	1	Children's Theatre	1		Cecchetti Society	1	1	1	
	St. Thomas More Sch.	1	2	Series: Lynne Stones	1		Dance Factory	1	1	1	
				In Movement					2		
				Kirkwood Academy					1		
				Finlandia Club					3	1	
MAR. 1988	St. Thomas More Sch.	2	1	Children's Films	5	1	Kirkwood	1			2
				C.T.S.: Gumboot	2		German Cdn. Culture	1			
				: Graham Walker	1		Coquitlam Music Fest	20			
				Jumpstart	2		Spanish Association	1			
APR. 1988	N. Bby. Playschool	2	3	Children's Films	3	2	Kirkwood Academy	2	2		2
	Young Anon. Players	3	3	C.T.S.: Norman Foote	1		Coquitlam Music Fest	11			
	Cariboo Hill Band	1	1	C.T.S.: Carousal Th.	1						
	N. District Soccer	1	1	B.A.C. Piano Recital	1		Spanish Assoc.	1			
	Morley School	1	1								

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DATE	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	DARK DAYS
1988 EPT.				Chillean Comm. Assoc.	1		Kirkwood Academy	1		18
	Deer Lake Players	2		Children's Films	4		Van. Magic Circle	1		13
	Bby. Cleft Society	1		C.T.S.: Paterson Magic	1		Arts Club Theatre	8		
	Isma!l! Theatre	1		C.T.S.: Major Conrad	1					
				Stage & Screen		1				
				Jumpstart	2					
MEMBER 988	So La Mi Singers	1		Children's Films	3		German Theatre	9	4	9
	Isma!l! Theatre	1		C.T.S.: Kim & Jerry	1		Different Stages	1		
				: Charlotte Diamond	2		Spanish Association	2		
				Stage & Screen	1					
				Teen Jazz	1					
				Cable 4 filming	1					
CEMBER 988	So La Mi Singers	3		Children's Film	1		First Impressions	8	4	5
	Deer Lake Players	20								
	1988 Totals	57								
		31								
					48					
					20					
					1					
					118					
					52					
					114					

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DARK DAYS

DATE	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal
JANUARY 1987	R.C.M.P. Meeting	1		Young People's Dance	1		First Impressions	2	
	Environmental Health Meeting	2		C.I.S.: Toronto Dance	1				
				Children's Film	1				
FEBRUARY 1987	Calvary Comm. Church	1		Children's Films	3				
	St. Thomas More Sch.	3	2	C.I.S.: Gumboot					
							In Movement	1	
							Goh Ballet	1	
							Stage Etreann	8	
							Dance Factory	1	
							Kirkwood Academy	2	
MARCH 1987	Georgias Investments	3		Children's Films	7		Kirkwood Academy	1	2
				C.I.S.: Norman Foote	1		Coguitlam Music Fest	17	
							Van. Youth Symphony	1	
APRIL 1987	N. Bby. Playschool	2		Children's Films	3		Coguitlam Music Fest	21	
				C.I.S.: Carousel Th.	1		Spanish Association	2	1
							Van. Youth Symphony	1	
							Kirkwood	1	
							Young Anonymous Players	1	3

REGIONAL GROUPS

ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)

BURNABY GROUPS

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DARK

DAYS

DATE	BURNABY GROUPS			ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)			REGIONAL GROUPS			DARK	DAYS
	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal		
SEPT. 1987		Jumpstart	5	Children's Films	2		Intrepid Productions	9	3	13	
OCTOBER 1987	Heritage Musical Th.	1		Children's Films	3		Intrepid Productions	7			
	Isma!li Theatre	1		C.T.S.: Lois Walker : Pepper	1		Middle East. Dance	1	1		
							Kirkwood	1	1		
							German Theatre	3	4		
NOVEMBER 1987	Cable 4 Video	1		Children's Films	2		German Theatre	5		5	
	Heritage Musical Th.	11		Jumpstart	1		Zoe Uffindell Dance	2	2		
	Scandinavian Festival	1		C.T.S.: Major Conrad	1						
	Century Park Players	15									
DECEMBER 1987	Century Park Players	15		Choral Class	1		First Impressions	14	4	7	
	1987 Totals	56	18		41	28		121	40	116	

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DATE	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	DATE
JANUARY 1986	Parkcrest Sch. (film)	1		Children's Films	3		First Impressions	5		19
	Bby. Edmonds NDP	1		Kirkwood Academy	3		Comford Irish Dance	3		
FEBRUARY 1986	Bby. Cleft Society	1		C.T.S.: Goh Ballet	1		Kirkwood	1		
	Montecito Sch. (film)	1		Children's Films	3		Zoe Uffindell Dance	1		13
	St. Thomas More Sch.	3	1	Suzuki Workshop	1					
				Piano Recital	1					
				Jumpstart	2					
MARCH 1986	C A S I School	1	1	C.T.S.: Time Steps	1		Dance Factory	1		
				Arts Ctr. Dance Perf.	1	1	Kirkwood Academy	2		2
				Children's Films	4		Van. Christian Sec.	3		
				C.T.S.: Green Thumb	1		Coquitlam Music Fest	17		
				Young People's Dance	1					
PRIL 1986	C A S I School	1		Children's Films	3	2	Finlandia Club	2		7
				Young People's Dance	1		Coquitlam Music Fest	5		
				C.T.S.: Diva Prod.	1		Kirkwood	1		
				Stage Fireann	8					

REGIONAL GROUPS

ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)

BURNABY GROUPS

DARK DAYS

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DATE      Group Name      Performance      Rehearsal      Group Name      Performance      Rehearsal      Group Name      Performance      Rehearsal      DARK DAYS

		BURNABY GROUPS			ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)			REGIONAL GROUPS											
MAY	1986	Van. Chamber Players (Arts Council benefit)	1	Children's Films	3	Piano Recital	1	Finlandia	2	Van. Ballet	1	Young Anon. Players	3	Pacific Ballet School	1	Jumpstart	4	Young People's Dance	2
JUNE	1986	Darcelle Chan Dance	1	Piano Recital	1	Martinik School of Dance	4	Martinik School of Dance	4	Martinik School of Dance	3	Kirkwood Academy	3	Kirkwood Academy	1	Jumpstart	4	Children's Theatre	1
		B.C.I.T.	1	Jumpstart	1	Dance	4	Dance	4	Dance	1	Chaisson Dance	4	Chaisson Dance	3	Children's Theatre	1	Children's Theatre	1
		Gloria Dei Chorale	2	Children's Films	1	Legebokoff Dance	1	Legebokoff Dance	1	Legebokoff Dance	1	Legebokoff Dance	1	Legebokoff Dance	1	Children's Theatre	1	Children's Theatre	1
JULY	1986	Gloria Dei Chorale	11	Jumpstart	1														
		Auto Marine Electric	1	Jumpstart	1														
AUGUST	1986																		
		B.A.C. dance instructor	4	Jumpstart	4	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1	W. Coast Classical Ballet	1
SEPT.	1986	Bby. NDP mtg.	1	Children's Film	4														
		N.A.P.A.	1	Jumpstart	1														

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DATE	BURNABY GROUPS			ARTS CENTRE (in-house or sponsored)			REGIONAL GROUPS			DARK DAYS	
Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal	Group Name	Performance	Rehearsal
OCTOBER 1986	Scandinavian Fest.	1		Jumpstart	2	Children's Films	2	First Impressions	4	1	15
NOVEMBER 1986	Aga Khan Theatre	1	Children's Films	2	First Impressions	1	Jan Cooper	1	1	1	4
	Century Park Players	1	C.T.S.: Charlotte	2	German Theatre	6					
	Heritage Musical Th.	5	:Green Thumb	1							
DECEMBER 1986	Heritage Musical Th.	6									
	Century Park Players	8									
		4									
	1986 Totals	49		47		85		46			146

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Appendix B<sub>1</sub>

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY

TO: MAJOR CIVIC BUILDING PROJECT  
COORDINATION COMMITTEE

1989 FEBRUARY 22

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING INSPECTION

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SIZE OF THEATRE - DEER LAKE ARTS CENTRE

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ITEM 10

10/30/68

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1.0 BACKGROUND

The adopted performing arts theater program for the Municipality calls for the establishment of a booking theatre at Metrotown, usable by larger community groups and by regional user groups, and of a community-oriented theatre for local and amateur groups and smaller regionally-oriented groups as part of the proposed Deer Lake Arts Centre. A consultant engaged by the Municipality had indicated that the theatre at Metrotown should be sized in the range of 700 to 750 seats. At Council's direction, the acquisition of a 4-acre block in Metrotown to accommodate major civic facilities has been virtually accomplished in accordance with an Urban Design Study for the Civic Complex which also determined the location of a Performing Arts Centre component (Metrotown theatre) at a site on the west side of McKay Avenue adjacent the Metrotown primary core. The initial program for the Deer Lake Arts Centre called for a community theatre of the size of the existing James Cowan Theatre which has 290 seats.

Suggestions have now been made in conjunction with the urban design phase for the Deer Lake Arts Centre to increase the size of the Deer Lake theatre component to accommodate as many as 450 seats. A theatre of this size is not considered part of the currently applicable terms of reference for the Arts Centre and may conflict in its larger scope with the proposed Metrotown theatre.

2.0 CONCERNS RELATED TO INCREASED SIZE

If a theatre seating increase of 50% over the current 290 seat James Cowan Theatre is proposed, a number of concerns or points can be raised. Some of these comments are outlined as follows:

- 2.1 An intimate theatre is desired which will be attractive to Burnaby users, and particularly easily used by amateurs.
 

A larger theatre could incrementally become more complex and oriented to the professional, and therefore by its intrinsic design discourage easy use by amateurs. It is noted that 26% of the use of the current James Cowan Theatre is by Burnaby community groups. A reasonable objective would be to increase this percentage of community group use. The current general high use of James Cowan Theatre is a tribute to our arts centre staff but also suggests that a theatre even with poor seating, poor backstage space, a cramped lobby, and difficult access is attractive to users if it has an intimate scale and an accessible "hands on" feel.
- 2.2 Regional use of a Deer Lake theatre should not be overemphasized as it relates both to community use and to the greater regional emphasis of the proposed Metrotown theatre.
 

The current use of the James Cowan Theatre by regionally defined groups is 52%. The enlargement of the theatre to attract larger regional groups or to "afford" touring regional shows may further enlarge the proportional use by regionally-defined groups well beyond 50% and thereby hamper use or desirable expanded use by community-based groups. For example, there is a limited number of most desired show dates in a year whether by season or by days of the week (i.e. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays being the prime days) and these must be fairly allocated to all groups, especially community groups.

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2.3 A larger theatre will result in increased capital costs related primarily to larger seating capacity, larger lobby area, and additional parking requirements.

The cost of the theatre should be carefully managed related to the balance of the Deer Lake Arts Centre facilities. Specialized items such as even a partial flyloft could add appreciably to the overall cost. A balcony if proposed as part of a theatre of up to 450 seats would also affect the cost and complexity of the theatre as well as its ambience and intimacy.

2.4 A 300 seat community/recreation oriented theatre rather than a 450 seat theatre may be as appropriate within the context of various existing Lower Mainland theatres.

The following is a range of existing theatres not including the Orpheum or the Queen Elizabeth complex:

SEATS

Douglas College (New Westminster)	350 (with flyloft)
Gateway Theatre (Richmond)	561 (169 in balcony) 392 in orchestra)
Arts Club Theatres - Granville Island - Seymour	475 (with flyloft) 220 (review theatre) 210
Waterfront Theatre (Vancouver)	240
Firehall Arts Centre (Vancouver)	120 (proposed expansion to 200+)
Centennial Theatre Centre (North Vancouver)	718
Surrey Arts Centre	408

Centennial Theatre appears to be somewhat outmoded. A 450 seat theatre could clearly function as a regional theatre and may well detract from the viability of, say, a 600-750 seat theatre at Metrotown. A question is raised as to whether a Municipality the size of Burnaby should pursue or could reasonably afford two theatres of this scope.

2.5 The size of a theatre should not be sized to meet the needs of a few groups to the possible detriment of many other groups.

A theatre cannot necessarily be "all things to all people". The needs of recital groups, live theatre groups, orchestral groups, and large choral groups differ. The optimum size of theatre should be proposed to best meet the needs of the primary core groups. For example, it appears that large choral groups are suited to larger venues. The Metrotown theatre would be ideal for such a group and in the interim, the few large choral groups should look at appropriate alternate venues such as the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, Centennial Theatre Centre, Massey Auditorium, large churches, or halls with non-fixed chairs.

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2.6 A larger theatre at Deer Lake would narrow the size range options for a Metrotown theatre and likely delay the construction of a Metrotown theatre for many years.

A larger, up to 450 seat, theatre at Deer Lake would require that a theatre at Metrotown would have to be sized in the 750 + seat range precluding consideration of a smaller theatre option in the 600 seat range. It is our opinion that a 450 seat "state-of-the-art" type theatre at Deer Lake would likely delay the construction of a Metrotown theatre for, say, 10 years and possibly even preclude a Metrotown theatre.

2.7 Metrotown continues to have major attractive attributes for a Performing Arts Centre.

The Deer Lake Arts Centre is in one view an idyllic setting and in another an isolated location. The area is virtually totally dependent on access by vehicles and is poorly served by transit. Metrotown is well served by bus transit and by SkyTrain thereby attracting a wider range of audiences (including income attributes). Metrotown has a large number of complementary service facilities such as restaurants and a high and rapidly growing walk-in apartment population.

3.0 CONCLUSION

If the currently applicable terms of reference for the Arts Centre are proposed to be changed to accommodate a theatre of up to 450 seats rather than one similar to the existing theatre in the range of 300 seats, it would be necessary for the Parks and Recreation Commission and Council to approve this change.

The reasons put forward by the Arts Centre staff in support of a larger theatre are not without merit. However, the increased theatre size does raise a range of points and concerns which should be acknowledged and/or addressed by the Commission and Council.

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