

The Como Arts Project

A Unique Opportunity for a Shared Vision



Vision

- ▶ A new collaborative arts center
- ▶ Expanded options for an underserved area of the performing arts community
 - ▶ Small/medium venue in a very unique performance space
- ▶ Opportunity for theater companies seeking their own theater
 - ▶ Shared upgraded facilities for rehearsal or public performances



Benefits to the Twin Cities Theater and Arts Community

- ▶ This project could open up potentially two small venue spaces to the Twin Cities market
 - ▶ Sanctuary 80-120 seats
 - ▶ Possible flexible second performance area 60-80 seats



Benefits to the Twin Cities Theater and Arts Community

- ▶ Its intimacy makes it ideal for smaller productions and non-traditional performances
- ▶ Community support
- ▶ Prime location
- ▶ Strong proven neighborhood partner



Location, Location, Location...

- ▶ Geographically located in the center of the Twins Cities
- ▶ Near the U of M opens possibilities with working with students from all over the world
- ▶ East Side of Minneapolis benefits from a new quality small venue in an area with few options
- ▶ Como neighborhood and U of M district provide good nearby audience demographics
- ▶ Nearby Como amenities, include restaurants, bars, park...
- ▶ Transit access via several separate transit lines at stops one block from building

Benefits for Como Community

- ▶ Residents have expressed strong support to SECIA for this vision (preliminary public meeting)
 - ▶ Residents generated ideas for partnering on programming in a community arts center
- ▶ Southeast Como Improvement Association (SECIA) supports the preliminary vision for the Como Arts concept
- ▶ Como Arts would restore and adapt one of the historic buildings in the neighborhood



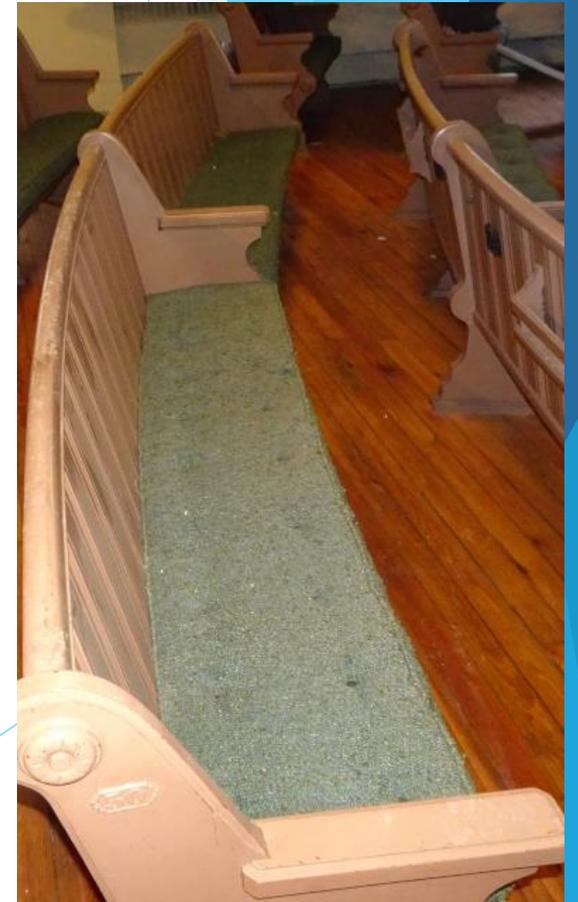
Benefits for Como Community

- ▶ With the right collaborative planning:
 - ▶ It will bring a new vibrancy to the community
 - ▶ Support growth of our local business nodes
 - ▶ Offer possibilities of shared community programming
 - ▶ Further build connections with our young, diverse and international populations
 - ▶ Provide participation and performance attendance opportunities to underserved communities

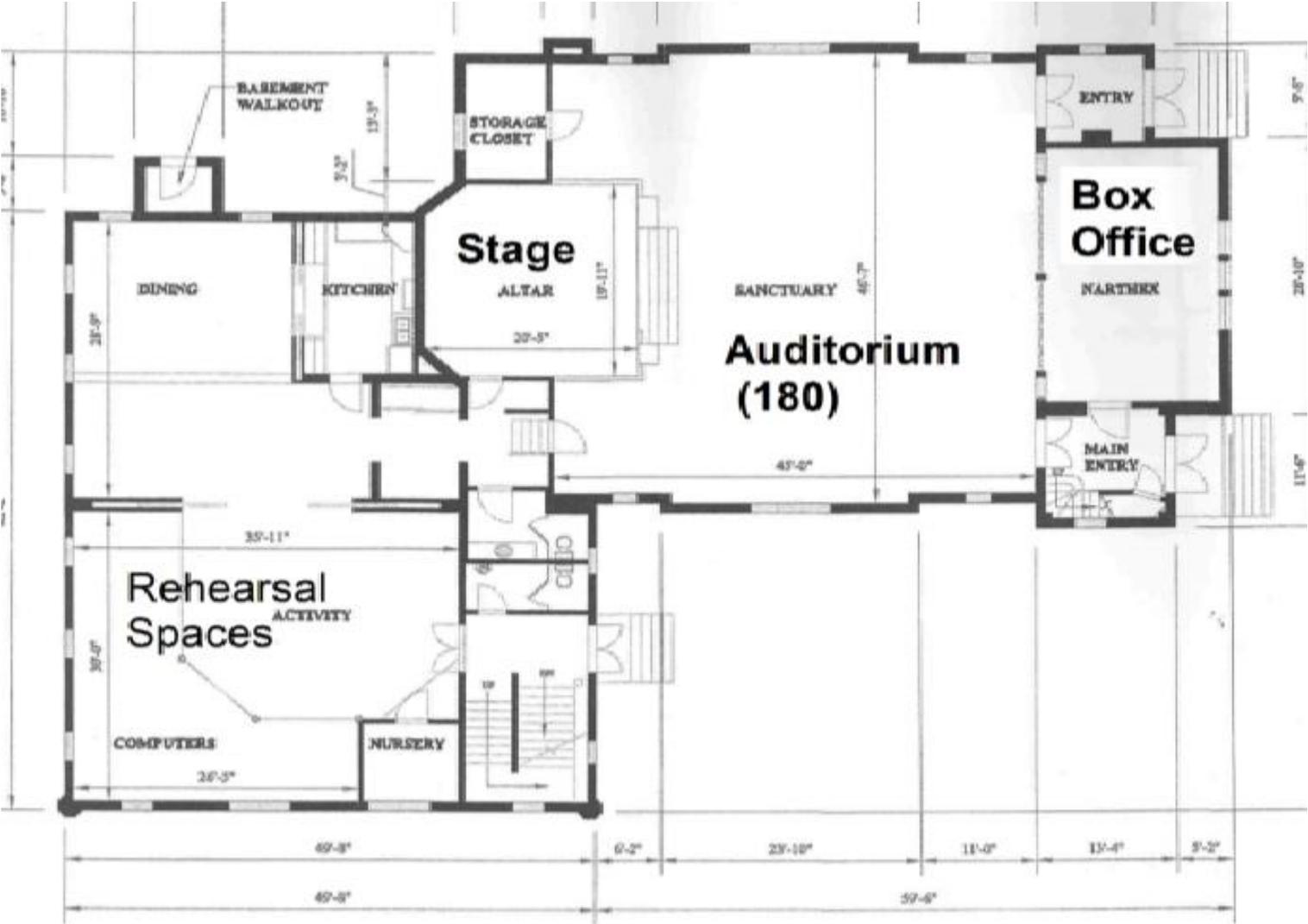


About the Building

- ▶ The church is an 1886 design by Charles Sedgwick
 - ▶ The architect of the Dayton's Department Store and Westminster Church in Minneapolis
- ▶ Still has an intact sanctuary space with sloped seating, pews, stage, good acoustics
- ▶ Space would allow for multiple uses and flexibility
 - ▶ Small to intermediate performance space(s)
 - ▶ Rehearsal space
 - ▶ Workshop space
 - ▶ Classroom space
 - ▶ Storage space



Floor Plans and Possibilities



Front



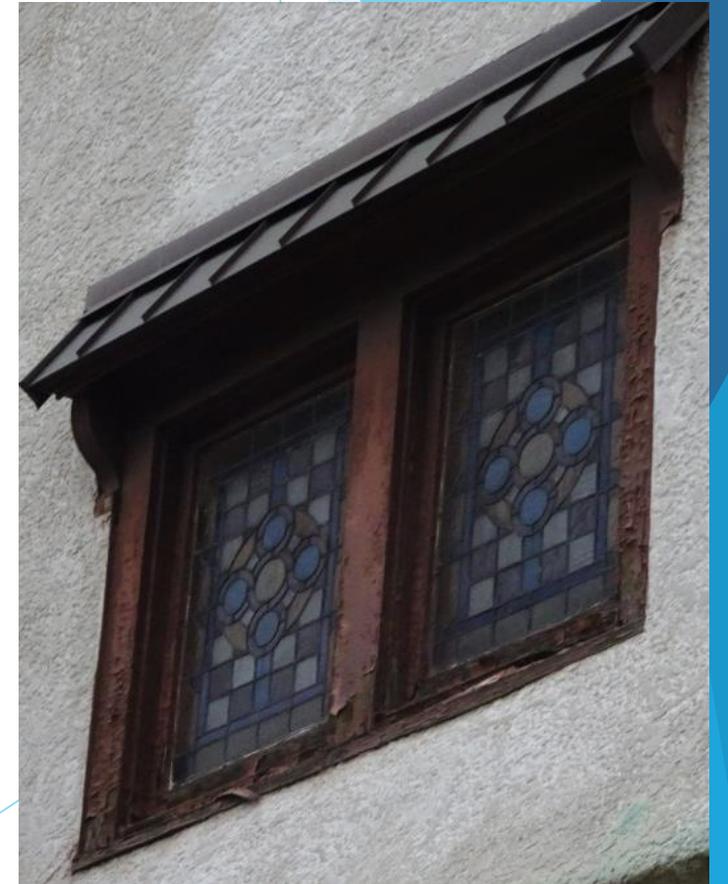
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Feasibility

- ▶ Como residents donated funds for two critical preliminary studies:
 - ▶ Robert Mack and Associates
 - ▶ Known for their work on historic restoration and adaptation
 - ▶ Reviewed physical condition, theatrical conversion, regulatory compliance
 - ▶ Building is "basically sound" and "lends itself" to theatrical conversion
 - ▶ Phases are possible so that theatrical use could begin before all phases are complete
- ▶ Landmark Environmental
 - ▶ Asbestos, lead and radon testing - No major issue found

Financial Viability

- ▶ Other possible sources of revenue
 - ▶ Performance space rental
 - ▶ Rehearsal space rental
 - ▶ Classroom space rental
 - ▶ Workshop/makers space rental open to general public via membership)
 - ▶ Unique weddings (e.g. Game of Thrones)(partner with a planning group)
 - ▶ Films (partner with Heights, Trylon, U film Soc)
 - ▶ Arts and Environmental Lecture series



Neighborhood Partner

- ▶ The Southeast Como neighborhood
 - ▶ An interesting and dynamic neighborhood near the U of M
 - ▶ A community of people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities
 - ▶ A proven and award winning history of community engagement, environmental initiatives, community gardens, student internships and public art support
 - ▶ Governor's award for Pollution Prevention
 - ▶ EPA presentation this past summer
 - ▶ SECIA is the Minneapolis recognized neighborhood organization and is a 501(c)3



SE Como's Work to Date on Como Arts

- ▶ Actively supporting the Como Arts concept by seeking partners
- ▶ SECIA voted to set-up a budget line to accept donations for this project
- ▶ Community members have already donated funds for the feasibility reviews
- ▶ Preliminary grant applications drafted to support general remodeling project costs and for component costs (e.g. window replacement)



Southeast Como Hopes and Realities

- ▶ We continue to hope that a single purchaser will be able to work with us on this project, and that any potential purchaser will be open to the planning, resource research and coalition building already well underway
- ▶ We are aware that this project will require multiple partners, City support, a coalition of potential users and an investor or investors with the same vision and we are actively working to build that coalition
- ▶ The success of this project needs to incorporate broader collaboration with the Twin Cities theater arts community and have started that outreach



An Idea: Three Collaborative Non-Profits

- ▶ Friends of Como Arts: a primarily SECIA controlled fundraising group, obtains grants and funnels money for adaption/maintenance of building, doesn't do any theatrical production
- ▶ Como Arts Center: acquires and holds building title, receives funds for physical plant projects from Friends nonprofit, adapts building, operates building -- insures, repairs, janitorial, etc., takes share of box office
- ▶ Como Arts Theatricals: a theatrical company cooperative, puts in collective funds to Como Arts Center for acquisition, equitably splits up performing schedules and facilities access/allocation among member companies, runs box office for events



Next Steps / What we Need from You

- ▶ We know that this projects needs a multi-company cooperative/partnership to come together
 - ▶ Examples show that theater companies can work out equitable distribution -- work and office spaces, performance scheduling, shared admin for efficiency and reduced cost
- ▶ How to do these?
 - ▶ Handling negotiations for pooling funds to acquire?
 - ▶ SECIA can't broker real estate, how can we help?
- ▶ Looking for recommendations and expertise to help move forward

