The Sterling Opera House Commission

Presents

Restoring Derby’s Pride

A Play in Four Acts to Bring the Sterling Opera House Back to It’s Former Glory
The Playbill

Cast

The Project Coordinator – DNS Associates
The Team – Sterling Opera House Commission
Supporting Roles – The Mayor and Alderman
The Architect – Yet to Be Cast
The Audience – The People of Derby, The Valley, and All Those Who Love Theater
Diversified Nonprofit Services' Role

✓ Since 1985, Diversified Nonprofit Services has served over 1,000 nonprofit organizations in communities of all sizes.
✓ More than $1 Billion Dollars has been raised through capital/endowment campaigns, annual campaigns and special events.
✓ Hundreds of organizations have made strategically-important decisions based on DNS' studies and strategic assessments.
✓ DNS has trained thousands of nonprofit staff, board members and other volunteers.
✓ DNS has agreed to serve as the project consultant to the Sterling Opera House Commission on a pro bono basis to position the commission to create an effective project plan and position it to raise the necessary funds to complete the project.
Why!

From 1971 to 1975 I worked on the Derby 300th Birthday Celebration as one of the key Chairs. During that time, I fell in love with the idea of restoring the Sterling Opera House to its rightful place of pride for the City of Derby.

I have offered the opportunity to work with me to every Major since the 1990’s none have chosen to accept my offer.

I am about to retire from actively running my business and will be turning it over to my daughter. I have the time, the energy, the enthusiasm, and the commitment to make this work.

If we don’t do this now it will never get done!
The Sterling 124 Years of History

- Derby hires prestigious architect Henry Edwards Ficken, one of the creators of Manhattan’s illustrious Carnegie Hall.
- He is charged with creating a 1,200 seat state of the art theater, which opens in 1889.
- The building is so striking it was the first building in all of Connecticut to be added to the National Register of Historic Places on November 8, 1968.
- The Sterling attracted many world-famous performers:
  - Harry Houdini
  - Red Skelton
  - George Burns
  - Gracie Allen,
  - Milton Berle
  - Bob Hope
  - Bing Crosby
The Sterling 124 Years of History

- The theater features a large auditorium with a striking proscenium arch framing the stage.
- The seating arrangement allows every member of the audience to enjoy unobstructed views of the stage.
- Its acoustics rivaled those of New York City’s Metropolitan Opera House; even a whisper could be heard at the back of the theater.
Return on Investment

In communities where historic theaters have been restored the return on investment is $2 to $3 dollars per dollar spent on tickets.

Example:

Ticket Price: $75.00
Number of Seats in Theater: 1,200 = $90,000 in Ticket Sales
Return on Investment at rate of $2.50 Average Per Dollar Spent.
Return on Investment to the Community: $250,000

The Theater when restored will make Derby into a destination city for theater goers. It will stimulate restaurant growth, jobs, bar income, parking, and eventually through redevelopment retail sales focused on the arts and culture.
Funding Opportunities / Budget

- Finalize 501c3 Status for the Sterling Opera House Commission.
- Application to the Valley Community Foundation requesting funding for a grant writing position for the project:
- Develop a preliminary budget to initiate the planning process:
- Secure insurance rider to indemnify the City for granting commission access to the Theater.
- Develop priorities for use of the State Funding currently being administered by the Center Stage Theater.
- Secure Aldermanic Approval for the Project
- Identify potential special events that will showcase the theater and serve to raise in initial funding. (i.e. Phantom of the Opera Gala; Masquerade Ball, ?)
- Meeting with local legislators to help in submission of a State Bonding Grant application to seed phases one and two.
- Review list of Foundations developed by DNS as potential sources of planning funding and initiate grant preparation and submission.
Act One

Facility Analysis and Projected Immediate Needs

- Petition Board of Alderman: for immediate and ongoing access to the property on an at will basis;
- Set up visit with Robert Pfaffmann and Associates, Pittsburg, PA to create initial architectural overview for the restoration of the entire building. (Currently shooting for a February 2024 visit)
- Evaluate the current status of the building floor by floor to determine the scope of the repairs needed to restore the entire building
- Develop a floor-by-floor project budget to be used in initial funding applications, this should be based on the highest and best use.
- Dictate a sequence of work that needs to be completed immediately in the Theater to ensure there is no further deterioration and to preserve all historical artifacts
- Develop a timeline for the initiation of the construction formula
- Determine ADA Requirements for the Theater
Act One: Continued

Facility Analysis and Projected Immediate Needs

Construction Formula:

- Development of Initial Floor Plans and Renderings of the completed project to be used in initial fundraising and to create a gift naming analysis
- Analyze potential tenants for the completed space.

Theater Role in Redevelopment

- Identify Role of the Theater in the Overall Redevelopment of Downtown Derby
- Develop game plan based on how the Theater Restoration can serve as the anchor for the redevelopment of the downtown area as an arts and culture center
The Sterling Opera House Commission

Presents

Turning A Liability Into An Asset
The Sterling Today!
What Could Be!
The Historic Virginia Theater: Champaign, IL
Apple Tower Theater

Boston Opera House
The Sterling Opera House

The Cornerstone of Making Derby a Destination City

Stage One: Restoring the Opera House and Improving the Derby Green as an ancillary event space.

Stage Two: Redevelopment and restoration of Elizabeth Street from the theater to Main Street

Stage Three: Creation of An Historic Waterfront Village – Like Port Jefferson, Savannah Georgia, Mystic Village, and New London Heritage Park along the river front and to take advantage of the work currently being completed on Route 34.
Presenting Harry Connick, jr.

Performing “Amazing Grace” in the Historic Sterling Opera House
Deby, CT
The Final Question!

The final question is not whether we can afford to restore the Sterling Opera House ---

The real question is:

Can We Afford Not Too!
Thank You for the Opportunity To Address the Board

Questions