



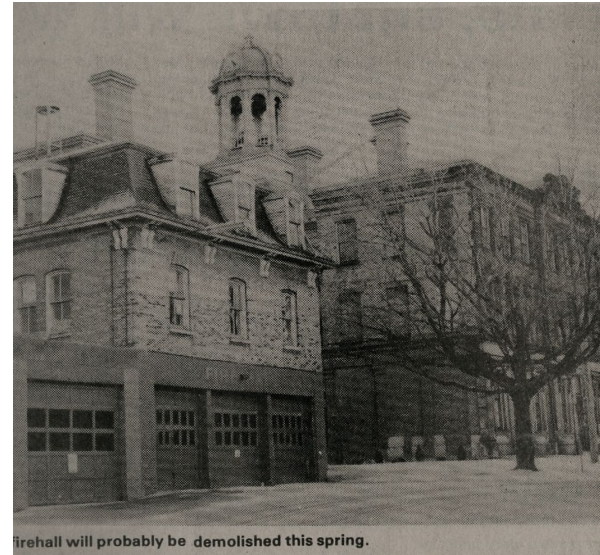
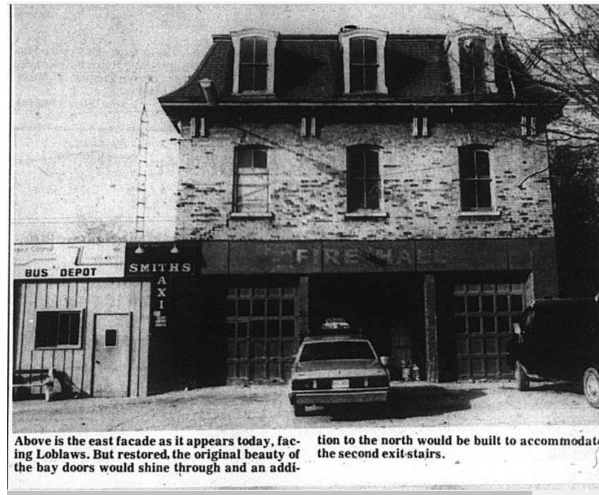
Firehall Theatre Extension Take Two





The Fire Hall of Yesterday

1913



Letter of Support



Cobourg DBIA
15 King St E
Cobourg, On. K9A 1K6

December 12, 2024

Cobourg Mayor, Lucas Cleveland, Deputy Mayor Nicole Beatty and Council

Re: Northumberland Players Firehall Theatre expansion project proposal

We are writing to express our unanimous support for the proposed expansion of the Firehall Theatre in downtown Cobourg. As members of the downtown business community, we believe that expanding the theatre will not only enhance the cultural fabric of our town but also bring lasting economic and social benefits.

The Firehall Theatre has long been a cornerstone of downtown, providing a venue for artistic expression, community engagement, and entertainment. By expanding its capacity and offerings, we can create a vibrant cultural hub that attracts a wider audience, including residents, tourists, and families. This expansion would allow for more diverse and accessible programming, enriching the local arts scene and further establishing downtown as a destination for cultural experiences.

Additionally, the economic impact of this project cannot be overstated. A larger, more accessible theatre will likely drive increased foot traffic to local businesses and foster further investment in the surrounding area. It is an exciting prospect for downtown revitalization and growth.

We firmly believe that the expansion of the Firehall Theatre is a vital step in ensuring that our downtown remains a vibrant, thriving place for current and future generations. We strongly hope you consider the positive impact this project will have on our community and support its successful realization. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further insight or support in this matter.

Sincerely,

Keith Herrington
Chair, DBIA Board of Management



**NORTHUMBERLAND
CENTRAL** CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
TOWN OF COBOURG • HAMILTON TOWNSHIP • AINSWICK/HALDIMAND TOWNSHIP

November 28, 2024

To: Cobourg Mayor Cleveland, Deputy Mayor Beatty and Council
cc: Jackie Tinson, Northumberland Players
Re: Northumberland Players proposed expansion of Firehall Theatre

Mayor Cleveland, Deputy Mayor Beatty and Council:

The Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce (NCCoC) is respectful and appreciative of the heritage character of Cobourg's downtown, and absolutely supports the adaptive reuse and reinvention of existing structures to further elevate and enhance the commercial viability, appeal and accessibility of the downtown core.

Council's original decision to endorse the proposal of repurposing the obsolete Firehall as a live theatre venue has proven to be remarkably successful for both the Town of Cobourg and the Northumberland Players. After more than four decades, the Northumberland Players has a bold vision to literally and figuratively build upon that proven success, and the NCCoC is supportive of that vision and the long-term benefits it will bring to the traditional business district.

Well preserved heritage buildings have the power to inform us about the culture, history and values of the past; while modern structures can invigorate a neighbourhood and inject energy and optimism in a community. Combining the two reflects a bold, innovative and forward thinking approach that has been implemented on a grand scale in renowned arts spaces around the world - the ROM Michael Lee-Chin Crystal is one example.

The Northumberland Players' proposed addition respects the design and scale of the original Firehall, but adds a vibrant new architectural component to the Market Square - as an even more viable arts venue that will attract even more visitors to the downtown core. The NCCoC urges Council to give serious consideration to this generous investment in Cobourg's future.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ward
President & CEO

Alison Lester
Chair of the Board



15 King St. E. Cobourg, ON. K9A 1K6



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downtowncobourg@gmail.com



Let's Review the Origins of our Request

The Fire Hall is a designated building under the Ontario Heritage.

The building was renamed in 1985 as the Firehall Theatre after a major restoration project by the Players to save it. The town showed a great deal of trust in the Players and the partnership started with a long term lease.

The Town of Cobourg has gone to great measures to maintain and preserve the exterior of the building and important aspects such heating and electrical work.

The town's tenant The Northumberland Players has completely renovated the interior to meet its theatrical needs. They continue keeping the building clean, safe and up to date.



There are two capital projects we will need to address in the next few years

The Elevator

And

The heating system



The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) (**AODA**) is a law that sets out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards.

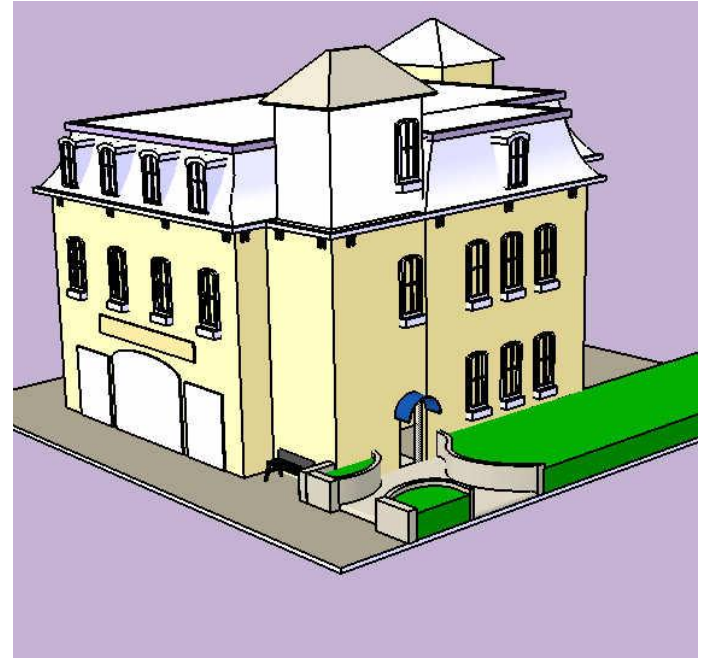
Persons with disabilities and industry representatives work together with the government to develop the standards.

Under the AODA, the government is responsible for creating accessibility standards that organizations must follow. Implementing and enforcing these standards will help us work together to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive by 2025.

[Home Government Accessibility in Ontario](#)



The Players tackled this idea in 2022

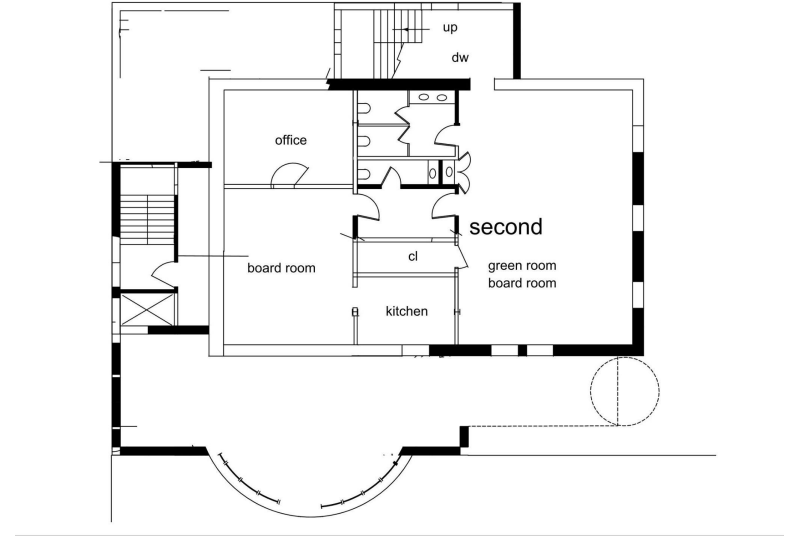
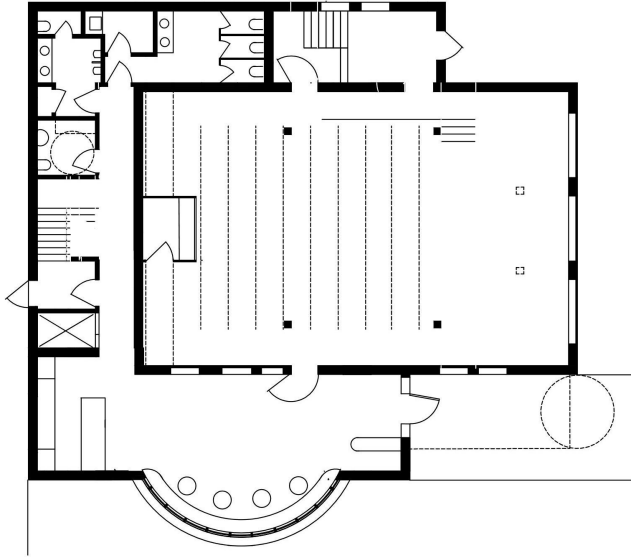








Another version with out a basement





Enhancing the Experience

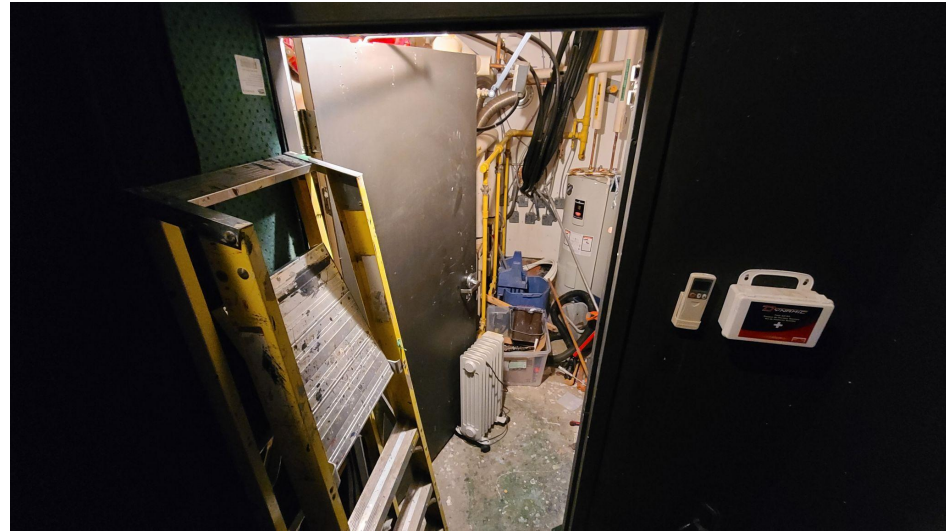
What is the town's position in helping us find a solution to making the Firehall Theatre meet **AODA** standards on all floors.

Meeting the required standards will enhance our ability to engage a wider audience and participant base. At this point the Players recently were able to apply a Trillium grant to make the exterior doors and two washrooms accessible.



Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Our current Heating system:





One of the boilers is currently
now not working.





Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Our current Air Conditions systems





A Better Greener Way

There is a better greener way for the Firehall to maintain heating and cooling.

A geothermal heat pump system using the water table below the parking lot will provide a more environmentally friendly alternative to the current system. This will allow for the removal of the AC farm on the east side of the building and consolidate under a one BAS (Building Automation System). This would have a greater long term environmental impact and savings.



The Land

Will the Town allow/permit us to reuse the land? The request is 31 feet deep by 55 feet wide along with a buffer zone into the west parking lot about 1650 square feet. This will repurpose the current loading zone and about four parking spaces.



The Lease

We wish to remain the Tenant of the building:

To make this feasible we will need to renegotiate our Lease to a longer term that works for both parties.

This is about our partnership. In order to raise funds we need a long term lease of 25 years minimum.

Partnership also involves the town maintaining the shell of the entire building and the Players maintaining the interior.



The Scope

An accessible external elevator along with a updated, greener HVAC system is estimated to be over the one million dollar mark.

Seeing the concept drawing of Market Square and the desire to have a lobby we thought; Let's give the the Northumberland Player and the Town of Cobourg something that is accessible, efficient, attractive and respectful of the heritage that surrounds the square. For another 1.5 million.



The Leap into the future

Having a dynamic building that ties the Park area to the downtown core will be a draw to the area . Not only does it allow The Players to expand programming into the main theatre and the reception/small glassed in performance area ,it will be a visibly beautiful Performing Arts Building . We could support Performing Arts Festivals and attract tourists to the town. This will kickstart the Cultural Plan which at this point has not been implemented.



We humbly suggest to Council that failure to embrace this opportunity to bring light, colour, and buzz into the heart of the downtown - in a building made accessible to all - would represent a missed opportunity for Cobourg. This view is amply supported by both the Chamber of Commerce and the DBIA. The Players can, of course, continue to perform and prosper in the Firehall as it currently stands but it wants to meet the future head on.

Asking for Clear Direction

We require an agreement in principle that this Firehall Extension is a viable and desirable project. With this in hand we will start our detailed cost analysis and Fundraising phase:

Requirements:

The town agrees to allowing the Players expand the footprint as indicated in the plans. (Approx. 55' by 31'.)

The building is made totally accessible.

A long term lease of a minimum of 25 years be negotiated.

We would like to meet and work with the Town on a regular basis to navigate the project and to satisfy the needs of both parties.

We can mutually set targets, keep the Town informed and engaged in the project. As tenants this collaboration is essential to ensure that both the Town's needs and ours needs are aligned.



Tour the Firehall

We would like to offer town staff an opportunity to see the Firehall Theatre.

Some of the staff may have not seen the inside of the building or know what we are all about.

This would be an informal tour of the building and a chance to meet your neighbours.

The timing would be towards the end of January over lunchtime and there would be of course some light refreshments and snacks on the second floor.





The Firehall of Tomorrow



