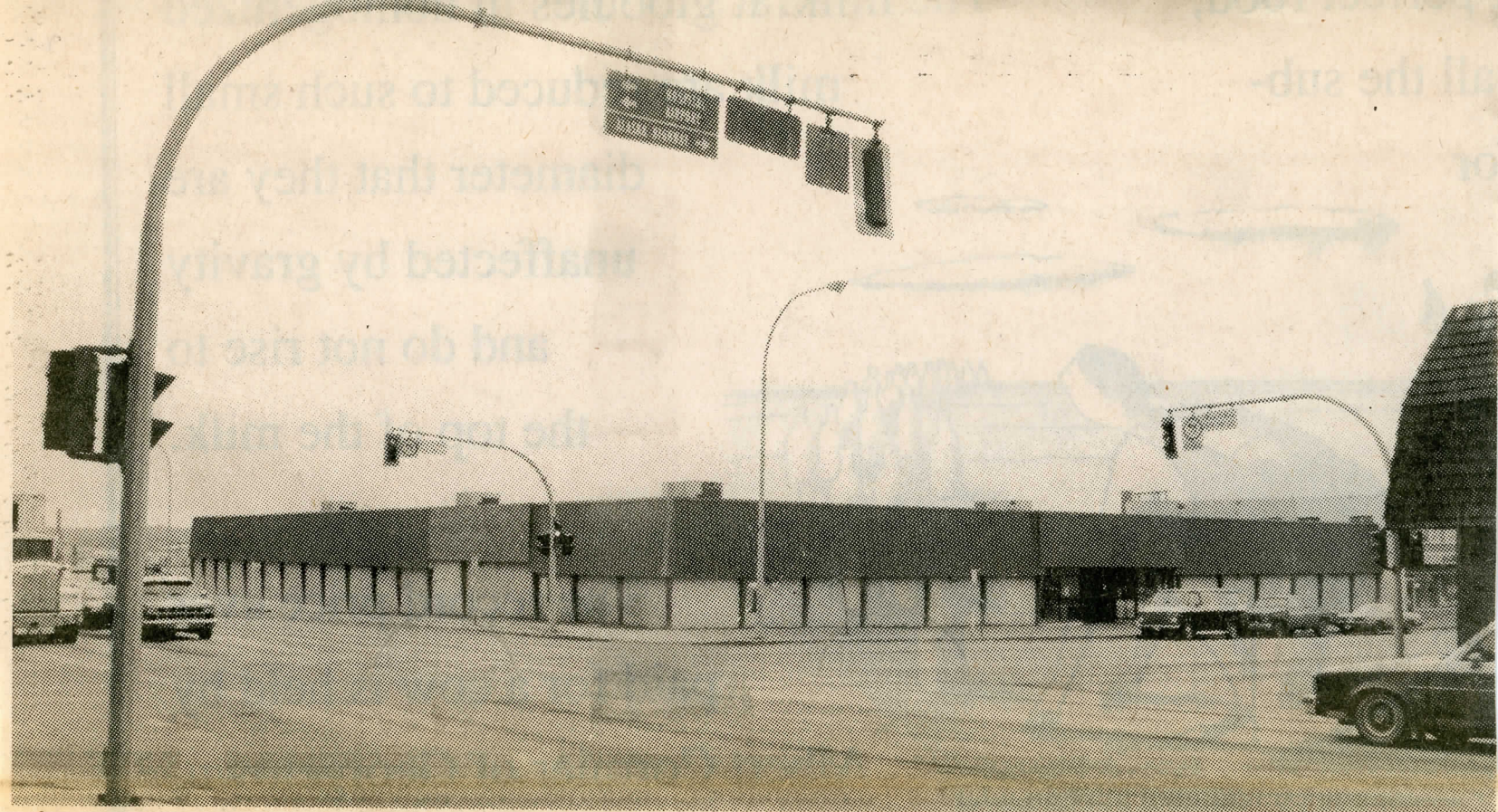




THE THEATRE design committee recently reviewed the preliminary theatre design for the new Arts Centre. Architects Howard/Yano/Brockington of Vancouver have been hired to produce final designs. The Library Board, Artspace and Art Society have worked on the remaining parts of the Centre which is scheduled to begin construction in the Spring. Fund-raising efforts have totaled nearly \$2 million and only \$770 thousand is needed to complete construction costs. Another \$700 thousand more is required to furnish the facility.

JAB 20, 1988



FUTURE ARTS CENTRE, the former Bay building, will begin to see changes soon. It is expected that tenders will be offered next month

for outside and structural work. The plans for this year call for outside work to be completed first.

Arts centre construction nears

APR 27, 1988

DAILY NEWS staff

Changes are in the works as construction on the future arts centre nears, the Chamber was told last week.

Sue Popesku told this week's Chamber meeting that tenders will be let next month for construction to begin in June.

Responding to a question Popesku said tenders will only be let for which there are funds "in the bank," and there is \$2 million in the bank at this time.

In the first stage of construction,

structural changes will be made to the roof and walls, exterior and relocation of inside services, creating the basic "shell" of the project. This should be complete by fall so inside work can begin.

The Expo Legacy committee will be a number of public presentations that week as well.

Information meetings about the theatre group in the future arts centre are planned as construction for the project nears.

On Tuesday April 26 at 8 p.m. a meeting will be held at the Before Stage in the arts building for anyone

who will be using or wants to be involved in the administration of the 426 theatre portion of the building. This will be the kick-off to a public awareness seek about the project.

On Thursday April 28 the committee will attend the regional district meeting.

Friday and Saturday April 29 and 30 there will be representations made at two arts events, the Art Auction on the 29th and Jellison Studio Recital at the Before Stage.

The committee will attend Chamber of Commerce and City council meetings Monday May 2.

Tuesday May 3 will see the committee at Taylor village council meeting.

Wednesday May 4 the Miss Fort St. John Talent show will be the scene at the Before Stage. Members will also be going to Charlie Lake to the community hall.

There is a "Nuts and Bolts" information meeting set for May 5 at the Pioneer Inn.

The committee will also be at the CKNL Trade Fair May 6/7. Meetings with community groups and clubs are also being considered.

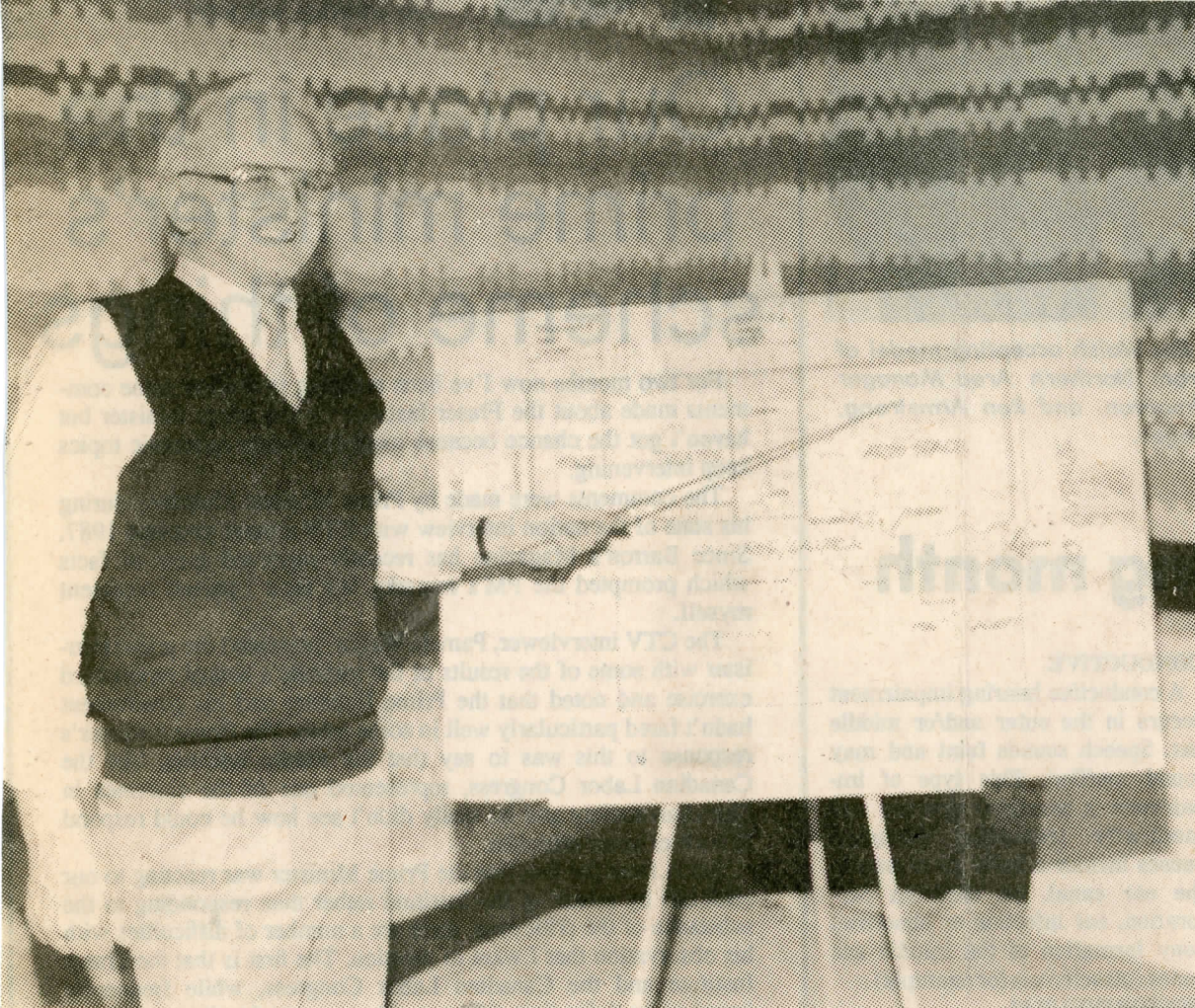


photo by Barry Michael

ARCHITECT Ron Howard explains working drawing of future Arts Centre last night. About

85 people attended meeting to find out about the project which goes to tender this week.

Council holds long arts centre discussion

By WENDY COOMBER
Daily News staff

What some thought should have been an easy motion for the aldermen to make turned into a heated hour-long debate over the Expo Legacy project.

But council finally voted to support in principle a letter for more funding for the project.

Mayor Pat Walsh asked council to pass a motion supporting a letter he had written at Sue Popesku's behest to Municipal Affairs Minister Rita Johnson. The letter asked for access

had been against rescinding the Downtown Revitalization Bylaw 1031 and now he wanted to use it to access the \$1 million available.

"Peter, you know I wrote this letter!" stormed Walsh. "It was written in a rush, requested by Sue who came up with a very clever idea to access grant money!"

"I am not responsible to baby you guys completely," said Walsh.

A motion to table the letter-sponsoring motion was defeated and the aldermen took a brief intermission to look at the letter.

Alderman Steve Thorlakson made a motion to support the letter in principle as long as it didn't interfere with any other facade grants.

"I don't want to see other groups lose out on this," said Thorlakson.

Bodnar asked them if they planned to ask the city for more money if they found themselves short of funds.

Dixon replied that they might but council could turn them down if they so willed.

to money granted under the downtown revitalization plan.

The grant could mean \$30-thousand for awnings and facades for the building.

GOOD LUCK

Alderman Peter Vandergugten wished the committee luck in their efforts but voted against when the rest of council voted to support the project in principle.

Bodnar, the downtown revitalization committee chairman, was upset that no one else had seen the letter, although Walsh told him that he had put a copy of the letter in his basket. The letter was written in haste, said Walsh, because Popesku was leaving for Victoria at once.

The building committee for the new arts centre introduced their architect, Ron Howard of Howard/Yano Architects, to city council last night to explain the phases the building will undergo and how much it will cost.

Alderman Dave Bodnar expressed a number of concerns he had about the project, mainly regarding the funding and how they could proceed without all the funding in place.

John Herron told council they had enough money to finish Phase I. Hopefully by the time Phase I was finished, they would have enough money to wrap up Phase II, he said.

"We're doing it in phases so no one gets hurt financially," said Herron.

Popesku said that she knew of many people who were waiting to see construction begin on the building before they would contribute any money. She said she was quite confident that all of the money they needed would be raised before this time next year.

Vonnie Dixon said the building committee didn't want to wait for inflation to eat into the building funds they already had, which they would be doing if they waited for all the money to be in place before proceeding.

Bodnar thought that a number of questions needed to be asked regarding this grant and whether other businesses could access it.

"I think we'd be foolish to go ahead with this when we don't know enough about it," he said.

Vandergugten accused the mayor of trying to secretly push the grant past the council because the mayor

JUN 3, 1988

Arts Centre work proceeds

By DAVID NAGY
Daily News staff

A tentative deal has been reached to fund the operating deficit, but not the operating costs, of the arts centre has been reached it was revealed yesterday.

Shirley Pomeroy, chairperson of the Peace River Regional District, told an Expo Legacy committee meeting that the district electoral areas B and C, the City of Fort St. John, and Village of Taylor have agreed verbally to carry any deficit of the operation of the arts centre. She emphasized this would not include basic operating costs of the centre.

Negotiations on this are still going on. The agreement will include any expenses under an operating deficit.

Word will be going out to all user groups to formulate ideas about how to operate the building when it is complete. Sue Popesku told the meeting that the building, now held by the cultural society under a charitable number, must be turned over to "someone else" with a charitable number when complete. It was pointed out that all the user groups should have charitable tax numbers.

The arts centre, located in the former Bay building downtown, will see actual construction begin later this month after tenders are awarded. The arts community (North Peace Cultural Society) took over the building last fall and has held dozens of functions in the building since that time. These have included plays, part of the music festival, the Miss Fort St. John pageant and other shows and displays.

An official ceremony to mark this the "raising of the roof" has been rescheduled to July 16. It had been planned for June 18 but Member of Parliament Frank Oberle had already made plans to attend the opening of the Extended Care Home Wing next month.

Vonnie Dixon of the building committee praised the efforts of Gene Blishen of North Peace Savings and Credit Union who arranged a line of credit for the society in order for then to get the promised federal funding (\$500-thousand) released in time for this year. Had this not been done, a year would have been lost and another

\$100-thousand been added to the building construction costs because of inflation.

Pomeroy and Blishen are also investigating the creation of a regional library out of the current library. This would mean more provincial funding for new books, and eliminate the need for user fees for the rural areas.

The theatre users are planning to make their temporary move to the former Pat's Home Furnishing building which is adjacent to the arts centre. The move is necessitated by the year-long re-construction stage that will convert the former department store into a theatre, library, artspace and art gallery.

Arts Centre gets grants

JUN 29, 1988

DAILY NEWS

staff

The Arts Centre has received a new Special Facade Treatment grant of up to \$26,350 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The Ministry also threw in another grant for trees around the outside of the building of 50 per cent of the cost to a maximum of \$5,000.

In her letter to council, Municipal Affairs Minister Rita Johnston said she hoped the grants would en-

courage others to "re-evaluate the revitalization situation and to undertake a downtown area project that will be ready for the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Highway in 1992."

The Minister added that she would like to be included in the art centre's official opening once the project is finished.

Reconstruction of the Arts Centre building is to begin next month.

Arts centre project swings into action

DAILY NEWS staff

A small gathering got in the swinging mood Saturday as the official conversion of the arts centre began.

\$1.3 million will be spent on the tendered project which will create the basic 'shell' for the arts centre. Hegge Construction of Dawson Creek is doing this work.

Taking turns swinging the 12-pound sledge hammer were Federal science and technology minister Frank Oberle, North Peace MLA Tonny Brummet, Mayor Pat Walsh, and the man most of the money came from, provincial Minister of Finance Mel Couvelier.

Couvelier really rolled up his sleeves for the job, handing his coat to his colleagues before hammering the wall a few times.

MON JUL 18, 1988

Linda Scarfo added a few final symbolic swings to get the project rolling.

Walsh paid tribute to Brian Palmer, who was also present, who as former mayor pushed for the start of the project. "That took a lot of guts."

Construction will begin this week with seven or eight workers starting to strip the interior of the former Bay building of fittings and remove some inside walls in preparation for the roof to be raised for the theatre, and other things.

Brummet gave a familiar talk about improving the communities tourist and convention amenities. He was confident the arts centre would be a big asset in attracting conventions, 95 per cent of which are less than 500 people.

Arts Centre steel arrives mid-month

The south end of the new Arts Centre will take on a dramatic change when the steel arrives in mid-October for the renovation project in the heart of Fort St. John. According to Hegge Construction, the Arts Centre contract is on time

and on budget.

The current work on the Centre includes extending the south quarter of the building to accommodate a stage with basement storage, scent shop and costume change rooms for a 400-seat theatre; raising the interior street roof for natural lighting

through glass siding; installing all doors and windows; and finishing the cladding on the building.

The colour of the building is red with silver and gray highlights. The warm colour scheme is designed to carry throughout the building.

^{OCT 17, 1988}
In December, when the current contract is complete, the building will look complete but will actually be far from finished. Contributions are still required to install the interior walls, lights, carpet and finishings.

Fundraising is continuing with only part of the local business and community fundraising goals achieved. Additional funding from outside sources look promising but no commitments have been made to date for the remaining \$1.6 million required to entirely complete the building. The North Peace Cultural Society invites contributions to the Arts Centre project to be dropped off at the Artspace.

Submitted article



Sue Popesku and Ted Maissonneuve, together again. Ted was presenting Sue with a cheque for \$10,000 from Canfor for the new Art Centre (the airy structure seen in the background). While they were traipsing around the construction site

they decided to cheque out the new stage, almost breaking into an impromptu rendition of something or other. Slowly but surely the funds are coming in and the new Centre is going up.

Oct 28, 1988

Arts Centre gets hard won approval from city council

By Wendy Coomber
Daily News staff

Getting the new Arts Centre constructed may seem like a continual uphill battle for the North Peace Cultural Society, but they gained a few more inches at last night's city council meeting with council's agreement to support another grant application.

The application is for a Growth and Opportunities (GO) B.C. grant from the provincial government totalling \$650,000 which will be used in Phase II of the building. Phase I, says fundraiser Sue Popeskue, is totally paid for and that part of the construction will be finished before Christmas.

Ald. Peter Vandergugten refused to vote in favour of the motion because "You said you would never go ahead (with the Centre) unless all the money was in place first," he told Popesku. "I have to vote against the city giving you an endorsement because it could put us in jeopardy for things we might want to pursue later on. You say we are not in competition, but we are. We have other projects we might like to pursue."

"I don't believe we're in competition," Popesku replied. "I believe we're in planning."

It was her feeling that the money in the GO B.C. fund were for projects that were in place and ready to go. Earlier this year Premier Vander Zalm announced the \$162 million fund from the B.C. Lotteries for community projects over the next three years.

Popesku told Vandergugten that if the building hadn't gone ahead, even though they did not have all the money in place to begin, they would have lost \$500,000 through inflation and added costs of labour and supplies and the \$1 million Expo Legacy money would have been in jeopardy as well.

SUPPORT THE PROJECT

Ald. Steve Thorlakson said he didn't know of any plans that were written in stone and went exactly as planned from day one. "We've got to quit sniping at it and get behind the project."

Ald. Jack Keough said he was a little disappointed because he would have liked to see the city apply for a GO B.C. grant for a new swimming

Nov 8, 1988
pool, but he agreed with Thorlakson that the Arts Centre was going ahead and they should all get behind it.

Ald. Dave Bodnar added an amendment to the motion of support saying that any other groups coming before council requesting support for a GO B.C. grant would be considered equally and on its own merit.

"There've been a lot of groups intimidated by this project (the Centre), and sitting on the sidelines" said Bodnar. He said after the meeting that the amendment was "a historic step" and "they're no longer number one."

Bodnar said for the past two years other groups have been hesitant to ask council for help because they felt the Arts Centre's requests came first.

"They're on equal footing with everyone else who wants a grant now," he said.

The motion of support passed with Ald. Vandergugten opposed.

Phase I of the building finished off the exterior shell. Phase II will concentrate on building up the interior. Phase III will be finishing it off and moving in.

Work on schedule for new Centre

DEC 14, 1988
Arts groups contributed \$64,000; businesses \$53,000. and private donors \$42,000.

The final touches to the outside of the Fort St. John Arts Centre, red and silver metal cladding, will go into place in early January, according to the project's building committee.

Its installation will mark completion of Phase One of the project--more or less on target and with nothing owing. At that point the centre will have cost just under \$2 million, more than three quarters of which came from provincial and federal coffers.

Phase Two will cost about the same amount and will focus on interior finishing. When it's completed the city will have a 400-seat theatre, a public library three times the size of the present one, a permanent art gallery and a home for the community's arts groups.

Of the money spent to date, \$405,000 went to buy the former Hudson's Bay building and land. Most of the rest--about \$1.375 million-- was committed for basic structural changes done by Hegge Construction of Dawson Creek.

Phase Two will see about \$1.4 million allocated for interior finishing and some \$420,000 for furnishings, the major item of which will be theatre seating.

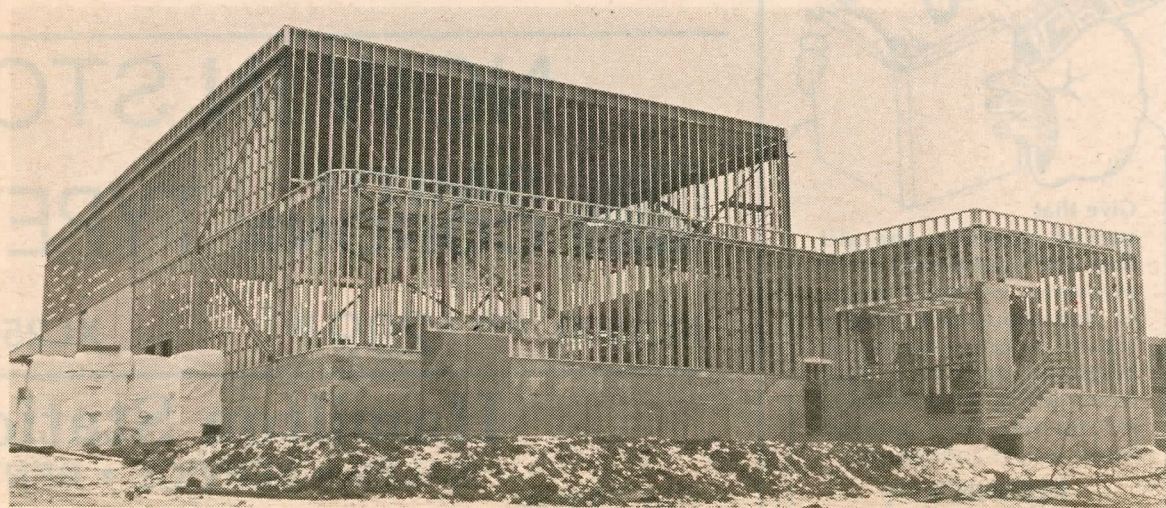
Fund raising for the next phase is already well under way. An application for \$650,000 in "GO B.C." lottery money has been made to the provincial government and will soon go to cabinet for consideration. Two applications have gone to the federal government: one for \$350,000 from the Community Initiatives Fund and another for \$102,000 from the National Galleries for climate control in the arts gallery.

The remainder will be sought from corporate and private donors, foundations and community groups.

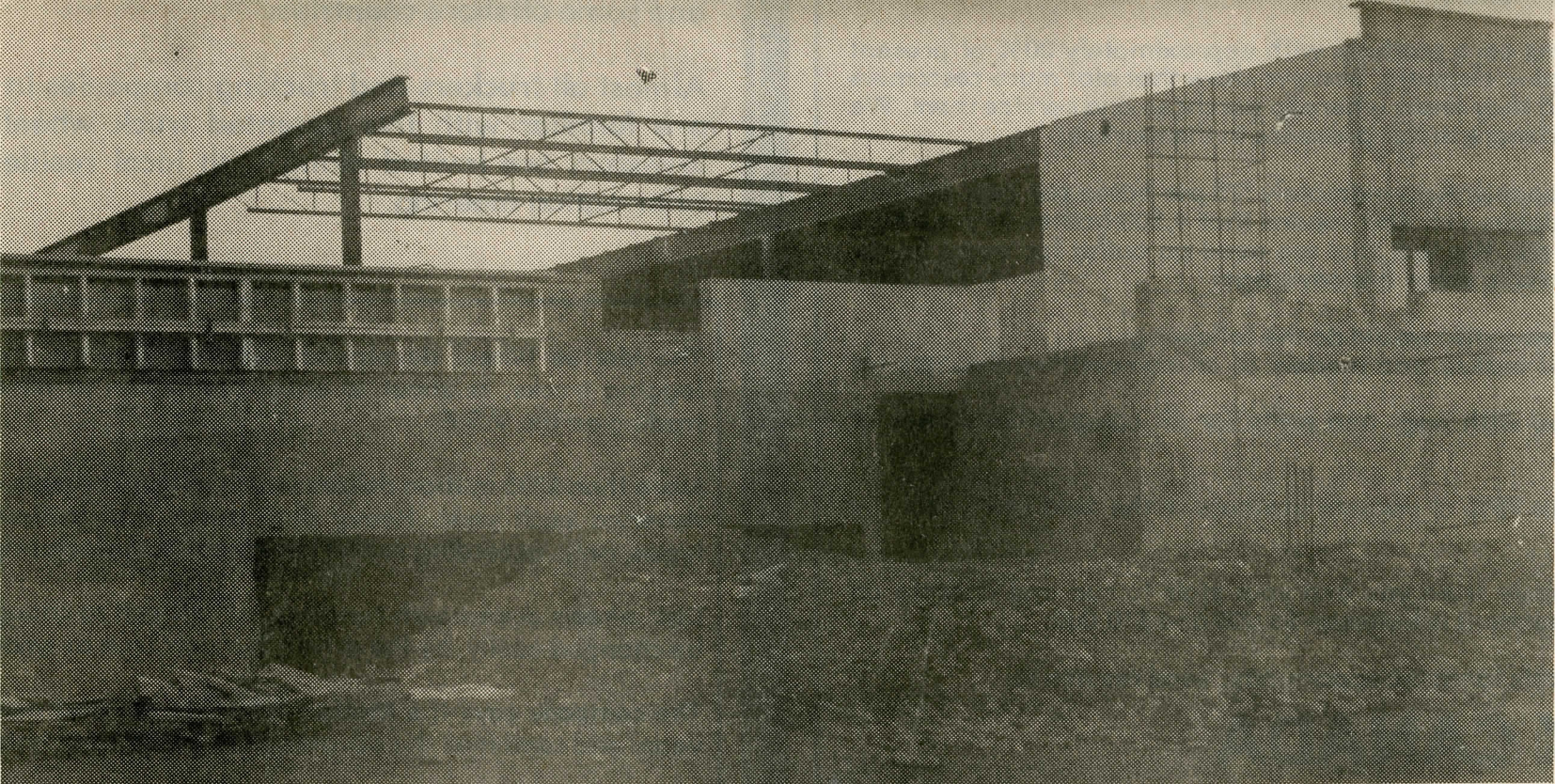
Corporations have already contributed substantial amounts to the Arts Centre. Petro-Canada and Westcoast Energy have each given \$70,000; ICG Utilities and Unocal Canada \$15,000. each; Peace Wood Products \$12,000; Canfor \$10,000. and B.C. Telephones \$7,500.

Lesser amounts have been given by Scurry Rainbow, Suncor, Mobil Oil, the Royal Bank, Mutual Life, Col. Sanders, Franklin Supply, Wintershall Oil and Czar Resources, for a corporate total of \$198,800.

The Arts Centre project is administered by the North Peace Cultural Society, a registered charitable society with eight directors: the mayors of Fort St. John and Taylor and representatives of Electoral Areas B and C and representatives of the groups to be located in the building--Friends of the Theatre, Fort St. John Public Library Association, North Peace Gallery Society and Fort St. John Community Arts Council.



The Arts Centre is gradually gaining more character as work progresses



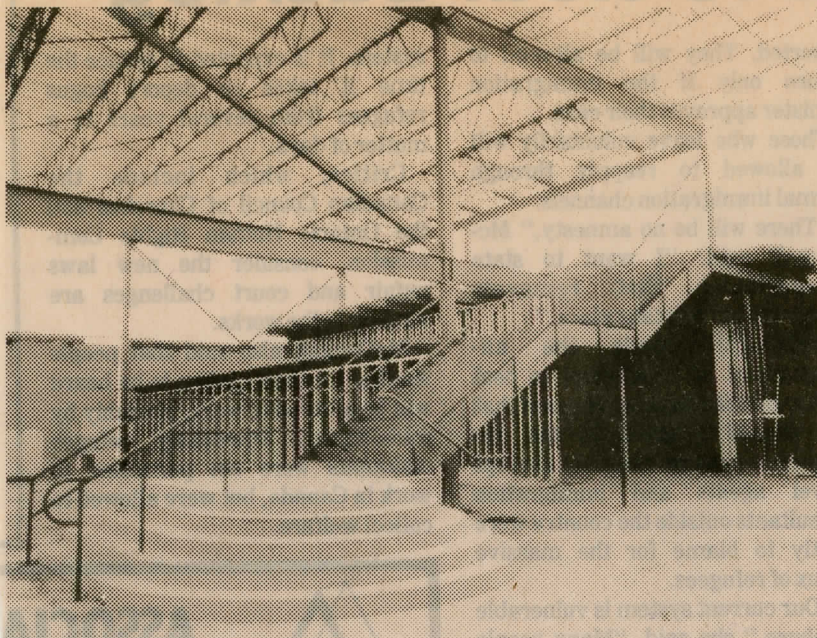
Photoby WendyCoomber

It hardly looks it now, but early next year this pile of bricks and debris will begin to resemble our new art centre. This part, in particular, will be the theatre. The design hasn't changed, but the colours have. The architects have decided on a "calmer exterior" are are changing it from blue and peach to a red and gray outside

face. They feel it will evoke a warm, rich image, more fitting for an arts building. The change will also help them save a little money on the paint, that they'll put towards other areas of the building. Phase 1, the completion of the shell, is supposed to be finished by the end of December.

1988

Arts Centre racing to raise funds



The Arts Centre construction is almost finished phase I.

By Scott Crowson
Daily News staff

As the first phase of the new Arts Centre nears completion, the project fund-raisers say they need an additional \$35,000 to take advantage of a plumbing bargain.

Fund-raiser Sue Popesku explained that if the North Peace Cultural Society can come up with the money by Jan. 31, the basic plumbing can be installed by the construction company currently working on the building exterior.

Otherwise, the water works will have to be done later at a much higher cost.

"The push is on for people and businesses to contribute because we have a chance to get the plumbing roughed-in at last year's prices," Popesku said in an interview Wednesday. "It will cost much less

if it's done now rather than six months from now or whenever the second phase begins."

Originally, the first phase of construction was to have been completed by this time. However, a shipping delay bumped the termination date to the middle of February.

The suppliers say the exterior cladding should arrive within the next two weeks. It will then take about a month for the construction crews to put the cladding in place, thus completing the exterior.

Popesku said Phase I came reasonably close to the original budget of \$1,767,000.

\$210,000 OVERRUN

The actual cost was \$1,977,000, an overrun of \$210,000.

The additional costs arose in three areas: the construction contract

(\$169,719), miscellaneous fees (\$22,152) and the feasibility study (\$18,440).

The task of raising money for the second phase of the project, the interior work, has already begun.

The budget for this phase is \$1.8 million, with \$1.3 million going towards construction. The remaining costs include equipment for the theatre (\$290,000), library (\$65,000), art gallery (\$34,000) and public area (\$30,000). Miscellaneous fees of about \$94,000 are also expected.

Popesku said the society is aiming to secure \$1.4 million before launching Phase II.

"The fact of the matter is we have the shell of the building in place, and now we need \$1.4 million to open the doors," Popesku said. "With that amount, we can at least move in with old equipment. It would be nice, though, if we had the additional \$600,000 for all the equipment and furnishings which are needed."

The majority of the Phase II funding is expected to come from the provincial and federal governments.

The society has made an application for \$650,000 from the GO B.C. program and has requested \$452,000 from the Government of Canada under two grant programs, Community Initiatives and National Galleries.

Approval of these applications is not guaranteed.

The society also hopes to raise \$350,000 in corporate contributions, \$350,000 in local donations and \$100,000 in foundation grants.

So far, approximately \$65,000 has been pledged.

"We're searching far and wide for

1988
support," Popesku said. "If we don't receive the government grants we're counting on, we'll just have to keep looking. It will get done one way or another."

The society will hold an "Ideas Workshop" on Jan. 12 to get the public involved in suggesting effective ways of fund-raising in the community.

Those who come up with ideas won't be required to sit on committees or volunteer their time.

The meeting takes place at City Hall, beginning at 7:30 p.m.