

FORT ST. JOHN COMMUNITY & COLLEGE CENTRE

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared for the Fort St. John Community Centre Committee

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Summary Report has been prepared for the benefit of the Community Centre Committee and pertains as much as possible to community involvement and participation in the project. Reference is necessarily made to the involvement of Northern Lights College, the other participant in the venture.

The report includes sections on:

- Site consideration
- Design constraints
- Facilities Descriptions
- A summary of space requirements and proposed sharing of facilities between the community and the College
- A preliminary estimate of development costs
- A proposed schedule for design and construction

Information contained in the report has been drawn from the "Fort St. John Community and College Centre Facilities Program" dated August, 1977, Northern Lights College Regional Plan & Facilities Program, and from minutes of meetings and correspondence occurring during the past year.

It is understood that Northern Lights College has now expressed a desire to locate its facilities on the "Recreation Centre" site in conjunction with community facilities. It is also understood that the School District no longer wishes to participate in the development of the project.

Assuming that suitable arrangements can be worked out with the City of Fort St. John for the use of part of the "Recreation Centre" site, the following three locations are possible:

1. The north-west corner of the site to the west of the existing swimming pool. This location would place the Centre as close as possible to present and future "downtown" shopping areas and would be the preferred location for the Public Library in particular. If this location is selected the property presently occupied by the A & W drive-in should be purchased and included in the site; also some redesign of Centennial Park will be required because the proposed 5.8 acres would infringe on the existing park.
2. The south-west corner of the site between the Park and the privately owned land to the south on 93rd Avenue: This site is only about 2 acres in area and is quite narrow; its use would require changes in the Park configuration and the use of land around the existing Health Unit. Alternatively, the privately owned land to the south could be purchased and added to the site.
3. The south-east corner of the site across 93rd Avenue from the proposed shopping centre: While this location is the least encumbered, it is relatively remote and should not be seriously considered unless the shopping centre becomes a fact, creating the public activity desired for the Centre.

The location first listed, at the north-west corner of the Recreation Centre site, is recommended.

### 3. DESIGN CONSTRAINTS

The following recommendations were developed from various meetings with the Community Centre Committee and the College and are guidelines to be followed in the design development of the Centre.

#### 3.1 General

The Centre should be a place which makes it easy for people to get together to learn, to work together or to enjoy performances. Architecturally, the Centre should complement the activities it shelters; it should be a building to be proud of and a building that welcomes its users.

#### 3.2 Image and Scale

The Centre should be highly visible. Its design should be imaginative and attractive and should suit the "spirit" of the north. Because it is a building to be shared by various groups it should be identifiable by all and not dominated by one. The Centre's design should express its multi-use character and the "coming together" of the Community.

The Centre must be, and must appear to be, a place of warmth and shelter. It will be a large building in the context of Fort St. John but it should be scaled down to reflect its use --- a place where many small groups of people can feel at home. The building(s) should be low (one or two storeys), set into the site rather than dominating it. Low ceilings and warm materials such as natural wood should be used wherever possible.

#### 3.3 Entrances

From the entrance driveway and the parking lot, the main entrance to the "Centre" should be obvious and should offer immediate shelter. A porte-cochere or a large covered area, sheltered from the wind, should be featured at the entrance.

#### 3.4 Circulation

The foyer/gallery, called the "Public Square", should be the focus and the "heart" of the Centre. Once through the main entrance and into the Public Square one should be immediately aware of most of the activities occurring in the Centre. The

"Square" should be a large area with a high ceiling, brightly decorated and featuring displays of local art and crafts. The "Square" should in itself form a large part of the circulation of the building (the traditional corridors). Large notice boards should announce coming events and the current activities of the Centre and the College. Waiting areas and lounges are to be defined not by walls but by trees, shrubs and changes in floor level.

All major facilities should front on the Public Square. These include the Library, the Theatre, the College administration, the Centre administration, the College lounge, the Multi-purpose Hall, etc. Secondary or more passive activities should be on a few well defined "side streets" leading off the Square.

### 3.5 Energy Conservation

A building the size and nature of the Centre can be expected to serve the community usefully for sixty years or more. The Centre's activities will require considerable energy for heating, cooling, illumination, equipment and machinery. Given present concerns for the future availability of traditional energy sources, it behooves the designers of the Centre to look into all possibilities of reducing energy in the building, referring not only to current costs and availability of fuels, but considering also the projected situation fifty years hence.

Some considerations are obvious --- such as reducing heat loss and heat gain to minimums, in season. Other considerations require more thought and research; these include:

- the use, or the design for future use, of solar and wind energy
- the design for use of alternative fuels in the future (ie. coal)
- the intensive consideration of "passive" energy conservation measures such as using areas of solar heat gain to supplement general heating and burying building elements below grade or behind earth berms.

The building design budget should allow for adequate consideration of energy conservation by the mechanical engineers and for advice from available "experts" in this field.

#### 4. FACILITIES DESCRIPTION

The following descriptions of facilities are summarized from the August, 1977 Facilities Program and pertain primarily to those facilities used for Community Centre activities. Reference is made to the additional facilities required by the College to give a complete inventory of the Centre.

##### 4.1 Facilities used wholly or in part for Community Centre activities

###### 4.1a Public Library

As recommended by the Library Board, a facility of 10,500 sq. ft. gross area and based on the following relationship diagram.

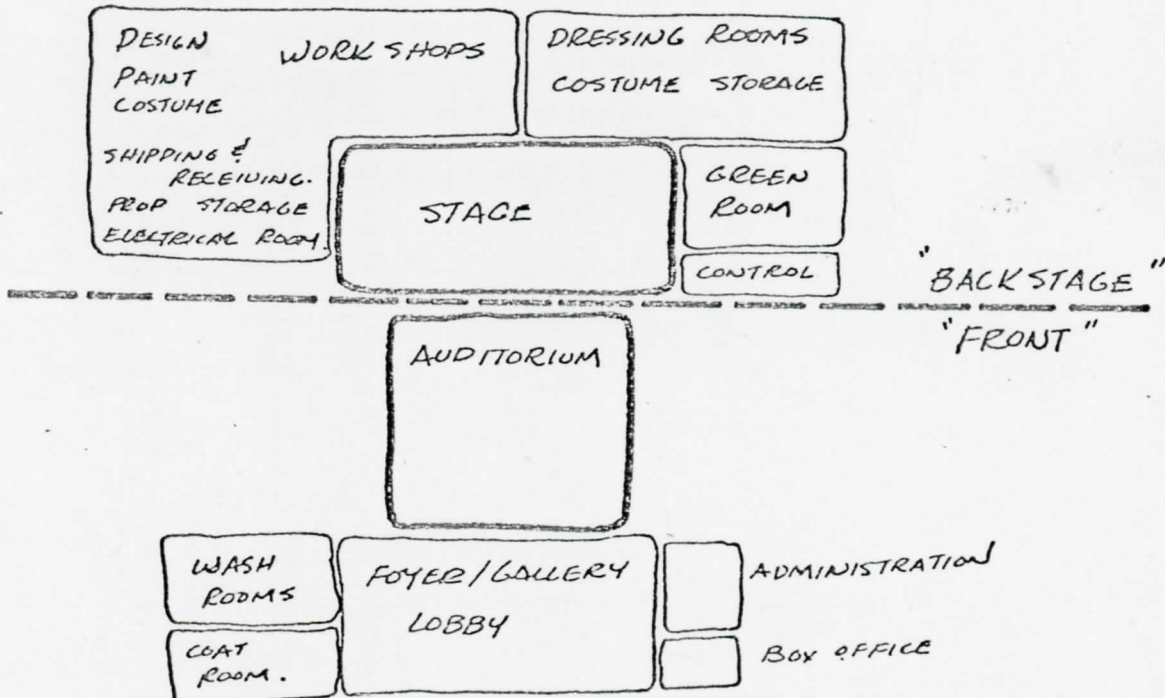


Design factors:

- Provide for easy expansion in the future, either into existing adjoining space or into additions to the structure
- The entire facility should be on one level and easily accessible to the handicapped
- Provide only one entrance/exit facility for the public; additional required exits to be fitted with alarms
- Exhibit and display space should be at main entrance
- Divide book (stack) areas into:
  - a. Adult and young adults
  - b. Children's
  - c. Reference
- Create a variety of reading areas
- The library should be a warm and inviting place creating strong visual interest

4.1.b Theatre

This facility is to be a multi-purpose, 450 seat proscenium type theatre. The following diagram indicates the basic intent.



#### Design Factors:

- Use part of proposed "Public Square" as theatre foyer, closing it off during performances for control
- Use orchestra level only for seating; a balcony is not considered to be a requirement
- Provide a useable stage area of about 1,800 sq. ft. to accommodate, when required, a full symphony orchestra
- Provide a flexible forestage arrangement to serve as expanded stage space, additional seating, or as an orchestra pit
- Provide side stage areas equal in area to the stage proper; a loft is not considered necessary or consistent with the budget
- Particular attention should be paid to acoustical design, allowing adjustments to be made for the various types of performance. For instance, consideration should be given to the use of a portable shell for musical performances

#### The projected use of the theatre includes:

- Evening concert series sponsored by Community Arts Council
- Evening adult and children's plays by the Workshop Players
- Secondary School dramatic productions
- Special school concerts
- College drama and music productions
- Occasional large lectures (College)
- Annual talent show
- Festival week
- Public meetings
- Travelling concerts, ie. Victoria Symphony
- Movies; travelogues, ski films, etc.
- Conventions
- Religious festivals
- Auctions and other commercial uses

#### 4.1.c Multi-Purpose Room

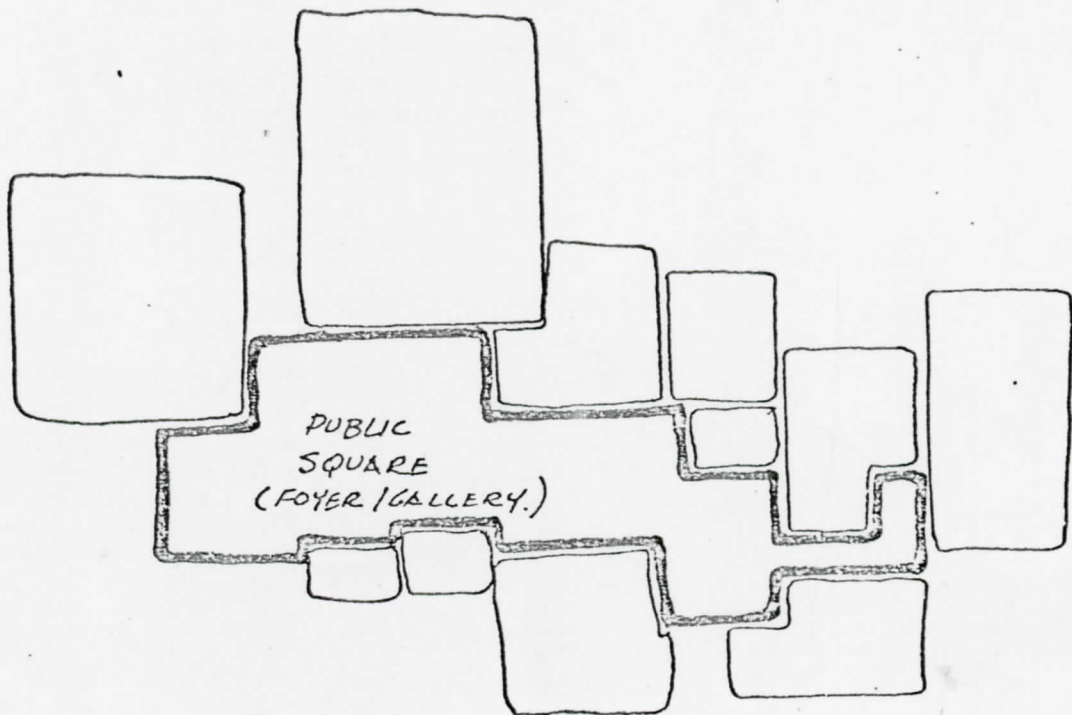
This facility will be used primarily by the College for its Performing Arts programs but will be available for community activities on an occasional basis. The room is intended for large lectures, drama, dance and music instruction, rehearsals and recitals. It can also be used for special displays, workshops, and fairs and Christmas markets.



#### 4.1.d Public Square

Otherwise known as the foyer/gallery, this space is intended to be the focal point of the Centre. All major activities should be located off the Public Square and be visible from it.

The Public Square should serve as the theatre foyer, as a lounge and gathering place, as an information centre, and as a major display area for local artists and visiting shows. The design intent is described in the following diagram:



#### 4.1.e Art Studios

A large, combined Pottery/Ceramics, Painting/Textiles studio is proposed. The space would be shared between the College and Community Centre programs.

Design Factors:

- Provide practical and serviceable finishes
- Divide work spaces with storage units
- Provide several project storage rooms to facilitate use by different groups

- Various material storage rooms will be required as listed in the Facilities Program

The projected uses of the studio include:

- Continuing education art programs
- College credit programs in the visual arts
- Weekend and summer workshops
- Potter's Guild membership use
- Arts and Crafts Fairs production

#### 4.1.f Photography Facility

A small "teaching" darkroom is proposed. The room should be adjacent to a small lecture room allowing demonstration of developing techniques.

The facility would be used for community education programs and for numerous weekend and summer workshops.

#### 4.1.g Nursery

A small area is proposed, possibly within or adjacent to the "Public Square". This would not be a day care centre but a self-supporting activity which would allow parents to leave small children for limited periods while attending a lecture, workshop or performance.

#### 4.1.h Miscellaneous

The following facilities are to be provided mainly for College use but would be available to a lesser extent for use in conjunction with Community Centre programs.

1. Seminar Rooms
2. Physical Education facility (mini-gym)
3. Locker Room

### 4.2 Facilities used only by Northern Lights College

- 4.2.a College Administration
- 4.2.b Faculty Offices
- 4.2.c College Library
- 4.2.d Lecture Rooms
- 4.2.e Student Services
- 4.2.f Science Laboratory
- 4.2.g Community Care Workers' Laboratory
- 4.2.h Secretarial Room