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IN THE

Perma Construction Spearheads Royal Theatre Restoration

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Royal Theatre Respectfully Restored By



Ken Johnson and
Innovative Structural Preservation Ltd.

3904 Landis Place Victoria, BC V8X 4C1
Phone: (250) 381-6180 Fax: (250) 361-1889
E-mail: kejohnson@shaw.ca

In appreciation to...
Perma Construction Ltd.

for teaming up with Boston Valley
Terra Cotta in the restoration and
replication of the terra cotta for the
Royal Theater in Victoria.

We look
forward to
working
with you
on future
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6860 South Abbott Road
Orchard Park, NY 14127
(716) 649-7490 1-888-214-3655

www.bostonvalley.com

By Martin Hunter

The Royal Theatre, Victoria's largest and most sumptuous performing arts facility, has stood at the corner of Blanshard and Broughton streets since 1913. It was built by the Victoria Opera House Company and was developed by prominent members of Victoria's business community to stand as the City's premier house. The theatre represented their faith in the city's future as well as their commitment to maintaining a cultured community. Today it is owned by the Municipalities of Oak Bay, Saanich, and Victoria and is held in trust by the Capital Regional District. Operation of the theatre is the responsibility of the Royal & McPherson Theatre Society.

In December of 2004, Perma Construction Ltd was successful in their bid to spearhead the reconstruction and upgrade of the Royal Theatre exterior. Specializing in projects that require micro management and precise scheduling, Perma worked hand-in-hand with an experienced team of consultants, trades companies, and suppliers to coordinate the complex project.

Max Josephson, president of Perma, says "It is exciting to witness the amazing amount of energy that comes together for a project. Our intention is to always become 'partners' with our clients and their consulting teams during the full process. This has been our key to success since 1976 and continues today with the Royal Theatre project." The Perma team has extensive re-fit experience with improvements and upgrades of both occupied and unoccupied facilities across Vancouver Island and remains one of the few union shops left in Victoria.

Innovative Structural Preservation Ltd owner Ken Johnson played a key role as part of the heritage team and acted as primary masonry consultant. His company has provided sensitive analysis, preservation and restoration procedures to heritage buildings in British Columbia. Johnson says "it is critical to get the right companies and workers on any heritage project. It often

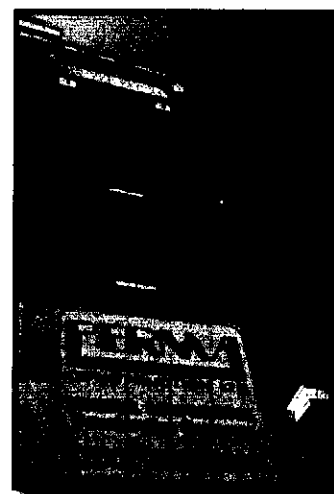


Royal Theatre Circa 1968 (Hallmark Photo)

is more like sculpture than standard masonry repair or refinishing." He added that most of the damage was from water, including corroded steel and mortar deterioration. The new upgrades will include stainless steel terra cotta supports, lead flashings, and high end Edison Coatings patch materials.

The current work includes cleaning and brick repointing of the front facade, repair of deteriorated terra cotta or the replacement of missing or badly damaged pieces. Portions of the front entrance arch had been replicated in fiberglass and will be restored to the original terra cotta material. Repairs to the existing damaged terra cotta required immense care in the selection of compatible materials and the application of skills commensurate with the original sculpture. The new terra cotta was supplied by Boston Valley Terra Cotta of Orchard Park, New York. Founded in 1889, this family-owned company has been producing clay products for over 100 years and is one of the leading manufacturers of architectural terra cotta for restoration and new construction.

The original Royal Theatre site was purchased in the fall of 1911. The architects were William D'Oyly Rochfort and E.W. Sankey and construction began in March of 1913 with an estimated budget of \$250,000. It eventually came in at \$400,000 with numerous overruns. The brick-clad, steel-and-concrete structure, whose footprint was originally about 90 x 150 feet, rises some 60 feet above Blanchard Street, with the stage house yet another 30 feet higher. The decorative scheme follows a version of the Renais-



Royal Theatre Under Construction 2005

sance Revival which drew on original French and Italian sources from the 16th to 18th century.

The Royal has hosted many stage performances throughout the years, but along the way ended up showing moving pictures. By 1946, the Royal was owned and operated by the Famous Players theatre chain which carried out extensive alterations to the front entrance and reduced interior seating capacity to 1455 seats. One interesting note, the Municipalities of Saanich, Oak Bay, and Victoria purchased the Royal from Famous Players in 1973 for \$250,000 - less than the cost of the original construction.

In 1988, with the addition of the east and west wings, the exterior of the Royal was enhanced and changed to reflect the intent of the original architects. When the current restoration is completed, the Royal Theatre will, for the first time in 93 years, reflect its original glory.

BUSINESS
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