

To: Township of Brock Council
Wayne Ward – Director Parks, Recreation and Facilities, Manager IT

From: Sunderland Lions Community Theatre Representatives:
Deb De Jong, Rick De Jong, Ann Gordon and Arlene Smith
Sunderland Lions Club Representatives:
Curtis Hadden, Don Gordon, Ralph Maleus, Stan Durward

Re: Proposed Sunderland Town Hall Permanent Stage Extension

Date: March 8, 2026

Purpose:

On behalf of the Sunderland Lions Community Theatre and Sunderland Lions Club and other user groups, the purpose of this report is to seek consideration and permission from the Township of Brock to install a permanent stage extension at the Sunderland Town Hall.

Abbreviations:

SLC Sunderland Lions Club
SLCT Sunderland Lions Community Theatre
STH Sunderland Town Hall
SL Stage Left – as viewed facing the audience from the stage
SR Stage Right – as viewed facing the audience from the stage

Background:

Now in its 11th production season, through its Production Team of approximately 20 volunteers and supported by the SLC, the SLCT has offered the youth of our communities the opportunity to be involved with musical theatre. In addition to the obvious presentation skills acquired through song, dance and recitals, since 2015 more than 200 young actors have acquired equally important life skills that include time management, positive team participation, flexibility, commitment and social responsibility. The three months that participating youth are intensely involved with each musical theatre experience has resulted in personal growth, improved self-image, and lasting friendships. There is no charge to participants to be involved with the SLCT program and ticket prices have been kept as low as possible. Any revenue generated is reserved for future productions and committed to enhancing the STH.

Because we maximize the number of musical theatre participants, a wooden stage extension was required, built, and installed to accommodate up to 55 participants. Each year, this temporary stage is brought in and removed by many volunteers. The stage extension is critical to our goal of offering many youth these unique theatrical experiences.

Proposed Stage Extension:

The stage extension proposal is founded on two principles:

- 1) That an engineering assessment be conducted on the STH structure to be sure that building code mandates are anticipated and met.
- 2) That a professional heritage architect be hired to develop plans that are consistent with (1) and with the structural and aesthetic heritage of the STH.

Consistent with the temporary stage that was used in each of the SLCT productions, the stage extension:

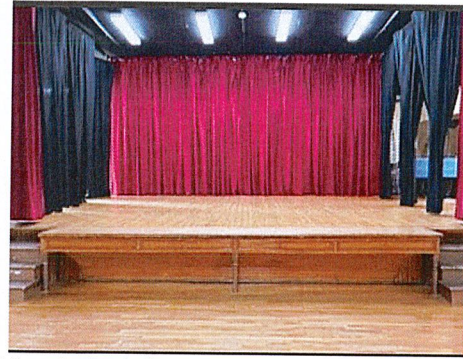
- would measure 37' in total length
- be 6' in width
- be 31 ½" in height
- start 3' from the existing west auditorium door

- stop 3' from the existing east auditorium door

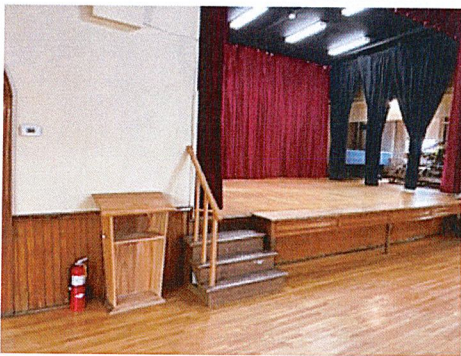
Attached are photographs and floor plans summarizing the proposed stage extension.



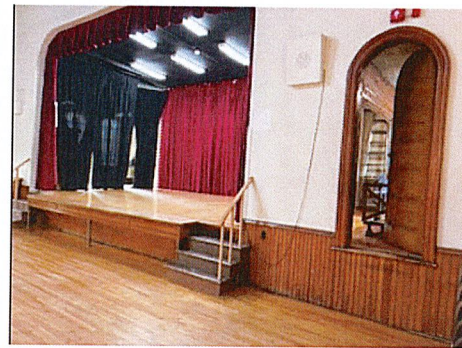
View 1 from the balcony of existing centre stage, stage left door, and stage right door.



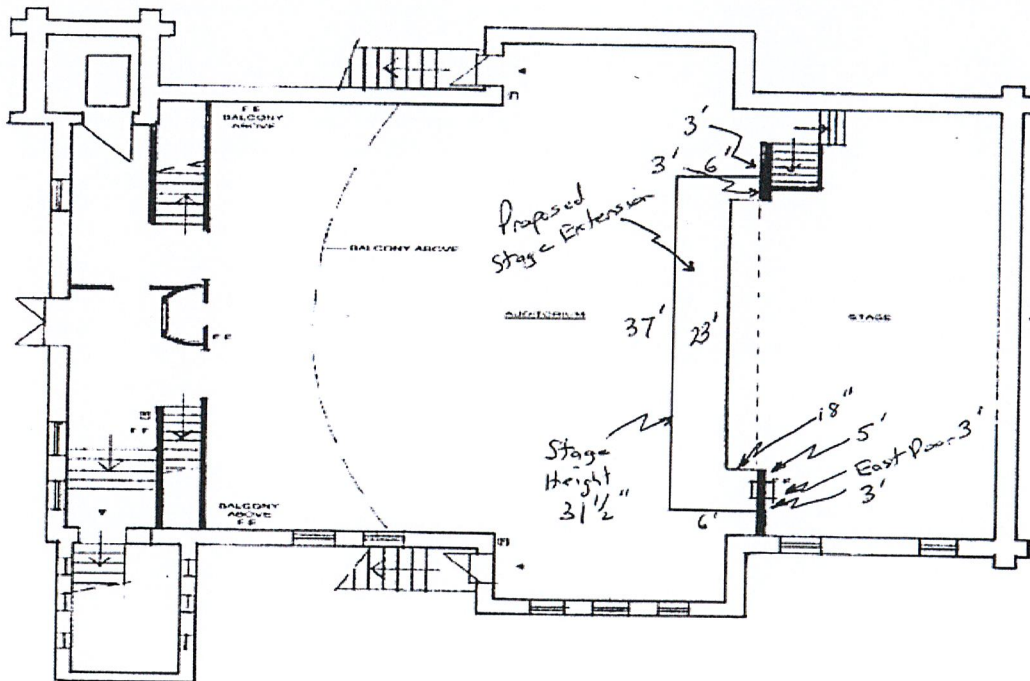
View 2 of existing stage showing existing stage extension measuring 17 1/2' x 18".



View 3 of the west side of the existing stage.



View 4 from the east side of the existing stage.



**SUNDERLAND TOWN HALL
SECOND FLOOR**

- LEGEND**
▲ EXIT
● FIRE EXTINGUISHER
■ FIRE ALARM PULL STATION

Rationale:

1) Our mandate as a non-profit organization, beyond providing unique and valuable musical theatre experiences for the youth in our communities, is to enhance our beautiful and historic building as evidenced by the following SLCT contributions and enhancements:

- improved electrical outlets – spent nearly \$3K in 2025 to install electrical outlets SL/SR and Balcony
- window coverings to darken the STH auditorium
- removal of the old stage flood lights at the front of the stage and the installation of an 18” stage extension
- Future plans to improve the stage lighting and possibly the balcony seating

2) A stage extension, with stage actors and participants being closer to the audience, would enhance the STH audience experience through improved sight lines and closeness to the stage performers. This extension would be consistent with other town halls who have already added to their original stages e.g. Port Perry, Beaverton.

3) A stage extension will provide more room for stage performers and presenters particularly beneficial to large choirs that often participate in the Sunderland Music Festival and with other community events involving large numbers of participants.

4) The stage extension would address the safety concern presently in place with the Stage Left door exposed to a significant, dangerous drop; as a result this access door must always be secured to avoid this safety risk and the potential liability the Township would face. A stage extension would allow safer access of this door by all user groups.

5) Now in our 11th year, the SLCT has managed the machinations of bringing in and setting in place the 10 stage platforms – with sincere thanks to the outstanding efforts of the SLC members and volunteers - but always with the fear that this necessary work may result in someone getting hurt or injured. With aging SLC/SLCT members and volunteers, the threat of someone falling or getting hurt in this demanding process is getting more acute! As well, there is a real fear that moving these platforms and other necessary equipment could damage this beautiful building.

6) The stage extension would provide additional STH storage for chairs, cleaning equipment, etc.

Funding:

Because the engineering report is critical to advancing this proposal, the SLCT is committed to the full cost of funding a structural assessment of the stage extension. It is anticipated that this cost will be approximately \$20K with our hope of having this report completed in 2026.

Although no final decision has been made, the SLC will likely provide supportive funding for this initiative as part of their commitment to enhance the STH and foster the work of the SLCT with the youth in our communities. This decision is expected to be affirmed once the engineering report and estimated cost of the stage extension have been determined.

Limitations:

There are three limitations to this stage extension proposal:

- 1) That there is a clear consensus amongst STH user groups in favour of this project.
- 2) From the results of the engineering report, should there be serious feasibility concerns where the construction cost is exceedingly high and prohibitive, the SLCT/SLC would look to another plan to have a temporary stage once again serve our performance and production needs.
- 3) Should the results of the engineering report conclude that a stage extension is feasible and that its heritage design and construction has the potential to be approved by the Township, based on the determined cost of the stage extension, it is proposed that funding for this project would be a shared responsibility between the SLCT, SLC, Township of Brock through its 2027 Budget, and through grants from various sources.

Timeline:

Noting that the SLCT/SLC would like to be part of each presentation to share details and answer questions, there are three timeline thresholds:

- 1) If approved, an engineering report would be sourced, completed, approved, and its results reported to the Township of Brock.
- 2) If the engineering report is positive, a heritage architect would be sourced, hired and the desired design(s) brought forth to the Township of Brock for consideration and approval.
- 3) From the engineering report and heritage plans, the costing would be brought to the Township of Brock and funding protocols discussed and approved. Once approved, tendering would be issued, approved and the stage extension constructed.

It is the goal of the SLCT/SLC to have the stage extension approved and in place by September, 2027.

Summary:

As well as acknowledging the many volunteers who support the SLCT/SLC and who make significant use of the beautiful Sunderland Town Hall, we wish to thank Wayne Ward and Chris Robinson for their insight and valuable contribution to this proposal. Together, we know that a stage extension would not only be a valuable enhancement of the STH, it will contribute universally to many other user groups and so is worthy of serious consideration and support.