



## THE FUNDING EXCHANGE, INC.

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### Case for Support Sample

#### RECLAIMING OUR PAST: SAVING ALLEN MEMORIAL HALL

##### Introduction

The Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall was constructed as a gymnasium and classroom building for students at Sheldon Jackson School in 1910-11. One of six original campus buildings, the mixed-use design of the hall reflects the religious, cultural, and social interests of both the school and the city of Sitka. Designed by the New York firm of Ludlow and Peabody, the buildings compose the only formal campus in Alaska.

The hall was designed as the centerpiece of the college and is the central building in a quadrangle site plan based on Thomas Jefferson's scheme for the University of Virginia. The style of architecture and site plan chosen for the campus were indicative of the importance placed on providing cultural and educational opportunities for Alaskan residents in the early 1900s. Today the hall remains intimately linked to the community's history.

A treasured landmark in the community of Sitka, the hall is in danger of imminent demolition unless funds can be generated for restoration. However, the outlook for accomplishing the restoration is promising. The building was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. An architectural report also completed in 1996 determined the condition of the building to be sound. A local historic preservation group, founded to work in coordination with Sheldon Jackson College, has developed a plan to restore the building to a first-rate performance center and educational site for the college and the community.

This request to the Kreielshcimcr Foundation is for \$100,000 to match a challenge grant of the same size made by the City of Sitka to begin the restoration project. Together, these funds will complete the exterior restoration and a major portion of the interior work. The Foundation support is crucial to providing the impetus for completion of the fundraising effort.

Architectural significance of the Allen Memorial Hall The Richard H. Allen

Memorial Hall has been found significant, according to National Preservation Act criteria, for two reasons. One is its association with educational and cultural events that have made a notable contribution to the broad patterns of history in Sitka and the State of Alaska. The other is that the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of construction methods that represent the work of a master.

The hall, the central element in a six-building complex on the campus, is a compromise of various styles. The remote setting and the use of simple wood detailing, particularly the window trim, mud sills, and roof bracketing, reflect the influences of the Craftsman, Shingle, and Stick styles. These styles were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the hall is one of only a few buildings still standing in Alaska which embody this combination of styles.

The hall was originally constructed with a gymnasium/auditorium on the ground floor, and four classrooms and an office on the second floor. A colonnade, which has since been filled in, existed across the south elevation with the second floor overhanging. Covered walkways, which were later enclosed, were located on the east and west sides of the auditorium's exterior. The ground floor has been altered through the years. Exact dates of modifications are difficult to establish.

### **Previous Renovation Work**

A 1943 appraisal and condition report stated that the Hall was in need of substantial renovations. It noted that the roof trusses had deflected and the second floor, which the roof trusses support, was sagging noticeably. Renovation work took place in 1953, but the extent of that work is unknown. In 1958, another renovation effort commenced. Existing flooring was removed, and drive and beam joists were laid to carry the loads of a new raised floor. This floor exists today.

During the 1958 work, the hall stage was rebuilt and enlarged. Evidence of an earlier and smaller stage remains under the current one. A mezzanine was added to the southeast classroom on the second floor in 1978. It appears that the floor space under this mezzanine was used for administrative file and textbook storage.

In 1990, Campus Architect Ed Crittendon prepared drawings for a temporary bracing system for the second floor, which was installed later that year and is still in use. The building was closed to public use during that year.

For over 80 years, the Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall served as the heart of Sheldon Jackson College. Students, faculty and the community have played in its gymnasium, studied in its classrooms, met in the auditorium, and attended church services when it was used as a chapel. The building is currently not occupied, pending rehabilitation.

### **Project Description: Preservation of the Hall**

The need to renovate the hall is threefold. First, the preservation will save an irreplaceable historic landmark. Second, it will transform the building into a viable performing arts space allowing the community to maintain and develop its dominant industry, tourism. And third, it will meet the owner's primary need for additional educational space.

According to an engineer's report prepared in 1996, the hall appears to be in sound structural condition but does need significant renovation. Although the building has had little use in recent years, the structure is stable. Interior and exterior finishes are generally in poor condition, but there is little evidence of rotten wood or water penetration. The relatively recent addition of a new roof has been a significant factor in preventing further deterioration of the structure. The hall restoration project has been divided into three distinct phases.

Phase I includes structural and exterior restoration. Phase II includes interior restoration, including new public restrooms, exterior exit doors, and a new fire suppression system. Phase III includes additional structural restoration and window restoration. A well-defined fundraising strategy has been prepared for each phase of this project.

### **Phase I -Structural and Exterior Restoration**

Restoration priorities for Phase I include:

- repairing of the roof truss damage
- strengthening the column splices
- adding plate connectors to truss connections
- providing weather tight exterior wall enclosure
- removing standing water basement
- adding plywood to exterior wall studs
- adding first floor beam connections
- applying plywood to the roof
- strengthening the first floor beams
- adding exterior paint and new stain to match existing colors

## **Phase II -Interior Restoration**

Interior improvements include new wall, floor, and ceiling finishes on the first and second floors; refurbishing of existing doors, retiling, stairs, and railings to ADA requirements; and new wiring, lighting fixtures, public restrooms, and fire suppression system.

## **Phase III -Structural and Window Restoration**

Improvements include roof restoration for code compliance and removal, refurbishing, and resetting of windows; and installation of two new windows at the south end to bring the facade closer to original design.

Please refer to the attached document, *A Report 071 the Structural Condition and Feasibility of Renovation and Adaptive Re-use, Stephen Peters & Associates, Architects, 1996* , for a complete report with cost estimates.

**Adaptive Re-Use Plan and Benefit to the Community** The key to successfully restoring a historic building lies in the adaptive re-use of the structure. In this respect, the Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall project has a viable economic future because of the good condition of the building, the excellent track record of the local preservation group in securing funds, and the commitment of Sheldon Jackson College to coordinate restoration efforts. As the primary user and owner, the college will maintain the building as part of its ongoing mission to meet educational demands and community performance needs.

One of the major seasonal users of the newly renovated auditorium will be the Sitka Summer Music Festival, the only fully professional chamber music presenter in Alaska. The festival's commitment to lease space adds an important seasonal revenue base for the facility when the college is not in session.

This restoration project also complements the community of Sitka's overall economic development plan, which calls for increased facility development. Currently, demand for performance space during the tourist season far exceeds the capacity of existing facilities. **Budget and Timeline** The cost for the entire restoration project is \$650,000, of which \$590,000 is for labor, materials, permitting, new systems, and other related restoration costs. The additional \$60,000 is for project management, including capital campaign expenses and administration.

To date, \$100,000 has been contributed to the project by the City of Sitka (April 1997), with additional donations from the community adding up to \$15,000. Sheldon Jackson College is considering a significant contribution, as are several individual donors in the community, once Phase I is completed. The goal of this local campaign is \$200,000.

The statewide and national campaign efforts will focus on corporations and foundations including the Rasmuson Foundation (\$50,000), Shee Atika and SeaAlaska (\$25,000 each), Grand Circle Foundation (\$50,000), Murdock Charitable Trust (\$100,000), and the American Express Foundation (\$25,000). These groups will receive requests for support once Phase I funds are secured. Funds for Phase II (\$450,000) will be secured by midsummer 1998 so work can begin by late summer or early fall on the interior restoration. The remaining funds will be secured by early spring 1999 (\$100,000) to complete the structural restoration, including new windows, and to cover any additional, unforeseen costs.

The restoration project will be completed by fall 1999.

The purpose of restoring the Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall is to return the building to its historic use as an educational facility and performing arts center. By the year 2000, the Hall will once again be a cultural and civic landmark for the community of Sitka, providing a gathering place, performance space, and learning center for decades to come.

The local preservation group, dedicated to restoring the building in conjunction with Sheldon Jackson College and the City of Sitka, is in an excellent position to manage the restoration project and carry out their use plan for the building. As the cultural center of the Sitka campus, the Richard H. Allen Memorial Hall embodied the cultural hope of Alaska's earliest generation of artists and scholars who trained, performed, and visited in this hall before statehood. This tradition continues today with the preservation activists, university and local government officials, and members of the community who have come forward and created a unified plan to save this