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# Village of Saranac Lake

Saranac Lake, NY

## **Performance Venue Facilities Assessment** for the Village of Saranac Lake Arts and Cultural Master Plan

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December 11, 2017

To: Jamie Konkoski, AICP  
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Ref: Village of Saranac Lake Arts and Culture Master Plan, Facility Analysis

Fisher Dachs Associates (FDA) were engaged by AMS Planning & Research to participate in the Village of Saranac Lake (VSL) Arts and Cultural Master Plan by contributing a Performance Venue Facilities Assessment. The intent of a facilities assessment is to understand the objectives of the organization, how the current facility responds to those needs, and to recommend changes to the current inventory to better serve the needs of the organizations and community.

Facilities applicable to the effort were identified by VSL. As part of the assessment of these facilities, our process included:

- A written survey distributed to the venues. The survey requested information about:
  - Presenting season – programs, quantity, type
  - Cast(s) and crew(s) – people and accommodations
  - Facilities and type – existing and ideal
  - Audience
- A tour of the venues, as well as a meeting with administration or leadership of the venues (where applicable and depending on availability) to better understand the physical spaces, in addition to expanding on the written responses to the survey:
  - What events are ongoing in each of the venues on a weekly, seasonal, and yearly basis
  - What events work best in each venue and why (in terms of acoustics, stage equipment, logistics, operations, support spaces, etc.)
  - What events do not work well in each venue
- A review of any materials (tech riders, plans, etc.) from each venue that was helpful in the facility review phase.
- A physical, acoustical, and technical assessment at the onsite meeting to validate the data provided and document the venues' capabilities and limitations, especially with respect to sightlines and acoustics.

- An assessment of the existing stage equipment for each venue, including stage rigging, lighting, and audio and video systems.
- Identification of the performance categories that are best suited for the venues without regard to current usage. It was noted that many spaces are used for performance types where the physical attributes of the space are not well suited.
- Recommendations for improvement, as applicable, to make the venues more effective, and suggested facilities types that would satisfy any perceived needs in the facilities' inventory.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 FDA was onsite to conduct the facilities assessment. The following 21 spaces are included in this report, although not all spaces were available at the time of the onsite survey.

- BluSeed Studios
- Pendragon Theatre
- Dance Sanctuary
- Lake Placid Center for the Arts
- Hotel Saranac
- John Black Room
- Cantwell Room
- Bitters and Bones
- Left Bank Café
- Waterhole Upstairs
- Anderson Bandshell
- Berkeley Green Bandshell
- Town Hall Auditorium
- Middle School Auditorium (\*)
- High School Auditorium
- Paul Smith's College Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC)
- First Presbyterian Church (\*)
- United Methodist Church
- St. Bernard's Church
- Will Rogers (\*)
- Dewey Mountain Stage

(\*) could not visit and/or no survey information to provide an analysis. If enough information was available, the facility was included.

## **SUMMARY**

After our review and assessment of the performance venues and associated shops and storage areas, we made some general conclusions:

- The arts organizations in the area are not necessarily competing for audience, but rather with the natural environment (in the summer season)
- The arts organizations are seeing steady growth in attendance
- Suitable rehearsal space is limited
- Several organizations responded that their current administrative or office space is insufficient
- Reasonable performer support spaces (dressing/changing rooms that support cast sizes, restrooms, access to the stage, access for those with disabilities) are lacking in most facilities
- Systems and technology enhancements are suggested to make facilities welcoming and accessible to the modern public, as well as efficient for upkeep and maintenance
- There is a significant amount of live music in the area and a large diversity of venues
  - Live music is flourishing and doesn't appear to need direct village intervention to continue to do so
  - The diversity of venue type and size seems appropriate to the acts that are being booked. Nothing of note has been turned away due to facility limitations.
  - The addition of the renovated Hotel Saranac to the local inventory will only increase opportunities
- Dance programs are currently education-oriented with a limited number of presentations
  - The Dance Sanctuary is doing very well in their first year in a new downtown space
    - The facility has limitations, such as columns in the studio and limited support spaces due to the nature of the found space. As the program grows, a more suitable space would be advisable.
  - The Lake Placid Center for the Arts also has a dance education program with studio space, but doesn't appear to be competing with the village's market
    - While cooperation between the programs is possible, scheduling conflicts and, more importantly, the location of LPCA are likely to make this a difficult partnership
- Pendragon, the professional theatre organization in the area, appears to have the greatest challenges from a facilities standpoint
  - The existing facility may have served the organization in the past, but it is now holding back this growing company

The matrix below illustrates the primary and secondary uses of the facilities, as well as tallies the uses. From this matrix, one can see the clustering of types of accommodation.

		Amplified Live Music	Acoustic Live Music	Drama	Musical Theatre	Opera	Spoken Word	Dance	Chorus	Worship	Visual Arts
Arts Organizations	<b>BluSeed</b>	■	■	■	■		■				■
	<b>Pendragon</b>	■	■	■	■		■				■
	<b>Dance Sanctuary</b>							■			
	<b>LPCA</b>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Rental	<b>Hotel Saranac</b>	■	■				■				
	<b>John Black Room</b>	■	■				■		■		■
	<b>Cantwell Room</b>			■			■				■
	<b>Bitters &amp; Bones</b>	■	■				■				
	<b>Left Bank Café</b>		■				■				
	<b>Waterhole Upstairs</b>	■									
Municipal	<b>Andersen Bandshell</b>	■	■								
	<b>Berkeley Green Bandshell</b>	■	■								
	<b>Harrietstown Town Hall</b>			■	■		■	■			
Educational	<b>Middle School Theater</b>	■	■	■			■		■		
	<b>High School Theater</b>	■	■		■		■	■			
	<b>Paul Smith's College VIC</b>	■	■	■			■		■		■
Worship	<b>First Presbyterian Church</b>	■	■	■			■		■	■	
	<b>United Methodist Church</b>	■	■	■			■		■	■	
	<b>St. Bernard's Church</b>	■	■				■		■	■	
Presenters / Other	<b>Will Rogers</b>	■	■	■			■				■
	<b>Dewey Mountain Stage</b>	■		■			■				
facilities within category		18	16	12	5	2	17	4	9	3	7

■ Indicates primary use  
 ■ Indicates secondary use

VENUE	PENDRAGON THEATRE
Current Activities	Producer and presenter of professional and amateur works Drama / Musical Theatre, and music incl. some space for visual arts presentations/visual arts displayed in lobby
Qty of Programs	6 summer + 3-4 year round
Qty of Performances	12-15 per production, 130 total
State of the Facility	Facility is a repurposed barn / carriage house that is proving ill-suited to the work of the organization. While Pendragon has done very well with this found space for the past four decades, the facility provides little support or opportunity for the organization to flourish and grow. Lack of insulation and type/age of heating systems lead to high ongoing utility costs.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Endstage configuration works well for performance style, but lack of wing space severely limits production possibilities for actors, as well as stage designers. Audience seating is adequate with reasonable sightlines, however limited access into and out of the theatre. A constrained lobby size, and only two restrooms for 125 people, mean that many patrons choose to stay in their seats during intermission.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> It is difficult to imagine improving the existing facilities, as the problems are fundamental to the building and would require significant reconstruction to address. The organization has outgrown the facility and should be seeking a replacement. Additionally, the seat count, stage size, and lack of wing space work against the institution's ideals of becoming a regional theatre, as co-productions with peers are a mainstay of this form.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> BOH area is limited. Dressing room is co-ed with a single restroom for all cast. No rehearsal space. Single office is located in theatre wing. No sound and light locks to stage. Scenic, lighting, and costumes facilities are onsite.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> See above.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Performance space has minimal accommodations, but does provide ramped access to the auditorium, lobby, and restrooms. Dressing rooms and restroom are at a different level than the stage without an accessible connection. No accommodations for disabled technicians (such as control booth access) exist.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Per above, significant reconstruction would be required to address the lobby and performance space. Dressing room level could be raised to match the stage with ramped access to this level. However, this would have an impact on useable area. Technician access would require adding an elevator to access the booth and costume shop currently located in the attic.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Limited rigging capabilities. Dead hung pipes overstage and over the audience, primarily for stage lighting. Stage lighting system consists of portable dimmer racks in the attic with soft cabling to the fixtures. A/V systems are similarly soft cabled. Most equipment is rented seasonally.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Rigging capabilities suit current production style, but existing locations should be inspected by an engineer. Long term upgrades to the lighting system should include a migration to LED (vs incandescent) fixtures to save energy/ongoing costs. Already the facility has replaced over half of their lights with LED; grant submitted for new sound system. A/V technology changes rapidly and rental is a good option. Technical upgrades should be put in the context of a facilities replacement per above.</p>

## PENDRAGON THEATRE



Stage and audience area



Dressing Room

VENUE	BLUSEED STUDIOS
Current Activities	<p>BluSeed is a visual arts workshop (papermaking, printing, bookbinding, letterpress, ceramics) providing classes and facilities for students and professionals. They occupy a historic railroad warehouse that also contains a performance and presentation space on the second floor. They currently present mostly live music, sometimes for rehearsals and for dance or drama, but also use the space as a community room for weddings, baby showers, and retirement parties. There is also an outdoor area, adjacent to a proposed rail trail that has been used for open air events.</p>
Qty of Programs	15 different programs per year
Qty of Performances	8 - usually 4 plays, 4 concerts
State of the Facility	<p>As a historic structure, BluSeed has had to work around many aspects of the building, but the primary structure/the bones of the building are in good shape. The lower level contains the visual arts studios and is reconfigurable, as the partition walls are not load bearing. The upper level performance space is mostly open with a few open web riveted columns dividing it.</p>
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The upper level performance space is a flat-floor venue, which allows for the multiple uses listed above. Due to its flat, long nature, sightlines to the stage can be difficult, especially with a standing room audience. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all hard surfaces causing some concern about acoustic intelligibility and harshness.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Seldom have there been complaints about seeing within the space, so the audience is accepting of the sightline issues. Although, these could be addressed for seated performances with some portable risers or platforming for a limited number of rows of seats (limited due to the head height available). The hard surfaces in the room, which likely work well for acoustic music and the spoken word, could be tempered for amplified events by adding temporary absorptive materials on the two long walls.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No stage support spaces can be accessed from the stage. An artist's apartment is also used as guest artist accommodations and is located opposite the stage.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Future plans were discussed to add a stair behind the stage to connect to the lower level and provide some stage support spaces. Barring this idea, a simpler alternative might be to relocate the stage and use the artist apartment spaces as the backstage area. The current location of the primary access stair might complicate this idea.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> No elevator or ramped access to the upper level. Stage is an elevated platform for sightlines that is not accessible.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> A capital projects plan was shared that includes the addition of another stair tower with elevator to address both able-bodied emergency egress as well as disabled access.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> A modest package of sound reinforcement and lighting is owned by the facility.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Upgrades to the technical systems did not seem to be a concern, with the assumption that if an act or rental required something greater it could be rented.</p>



**BLUSEED STUDIOS**



Upstairs event space with art exhibit, stage in the right corner



A recent exhibition opening at BluSeed Studios. Photo by Shaun Ondak

Same space used as a gallery

VENUE	DANCE SANTUARY
Current Activities	Somewhat recently leased and renovated space has reinvigorated the dance scene in the Village. Currently teaches classes, some of them culminating in a recital, but no formal performances as of yet. Location on Main Street across from café drives foot traffic.
Qty of Programs	Classes daily
State of the Facility	Newly renovated
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Facility consists of the main dance studio, waiting room, changing rooms, and an office. Studio is a somewhat asymmetrical, with columns in the room, a constrained ceiling height (for dance), and insufficient length for some styles of dance. The space works well for the types of programs currently on offer.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> As the space has been recently leased, it is unlikely to be modified in the short term. In the long term, the organization should be on the lookout for a space with a more suitable footprint in the neighborhood of 40x60', column-free.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No separate BOH facilities. Studio is not set up for performance.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Nothing in current space, due to limitations of the building.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Studio is on the second floor up a steep flight of stairs. No elevator access.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Concerns about accessibility include both patrons and students with disabilities. If dance performance is desired, an alternate space should be sought at the end of the lease term.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> No permanently installed stage lighting, rigging, or A/V. Musical accompaniment provided by portable equipment.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> No lighting or rigging is recommended for current use. Strong points would be beneficial for certain dance and movement work such as aerials or silks, but those are not in the current program. Portable audio system is typical of dance studios and easier to upgrade than permanent infrastructure, so no changes are necessary.</p>

### DANCE SANCTUARY



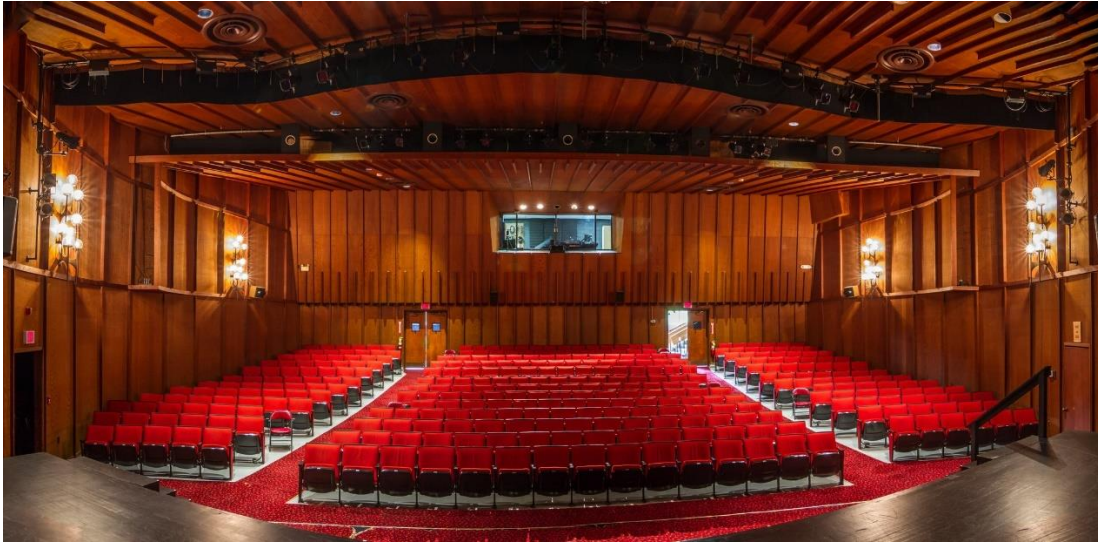
Looking South



Looking North

VENUE	LAKE PLACID ARTS CENTER
Current Activities	LPCA is a visual and performing arts center that provides classes and rentals. They present popular music, symphony, drama, choral, and chamber music, as well as professional and amateur musical theatre.
Qty of Programs	125, but not all with performances
Qty of Performances	Approximately 100 days/year
State of the Facility	Well-kempt and maintained facility with adjacency to VSL. However, being located in Lake Placid, there is limited overlap between programming at LPCA and VSL's organizations.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The facilities include a 355-seat proscenium theatre, a dance studio, as well as an array of visual arts spaces and artist housing. The theatre is a bit large for the programming presented and would likely benefit from a reseating plan to reduce quantity and increase patron comfort (row-to-row spacing). The acoustics of the space are fixed and so do not cover the wide variety of events, which range from amplified bands to acoustic music and the spoken word. The facility would benefit from a variable acoustics system as is now typical in most modern facilities.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Not part of VSL inventory, included for comparison so no recommendations other than observations above.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> Formal dressing rooms and green room are available for performers. Stagehouse is slightly too low for some aerial work that has gained popularity in the past few decades; however, raising the stagehouse height is a substantial undertaking and not recommended unless ROI from aerial events makes this feasible.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Not part of VSL inventory, included for comparison so no recommendations other than observations above.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> The facility is approximately 4 decades old and therefore does not have adequate disabled access. Performer areas are a particular concern, but the facility does its best to accommodate needs when they arise. The public facing spaces have been addressed piecemeal with plans to include ADA restrooms in the near future.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Not part of VSL inventory, included for comparison so no recommendations other than observations above.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Stagehouse with counterweight fly system in the proscenium theatre. System is generally in decent shape, but the age of the system means that yearly safety inspections are mandated. Stage lighting has recently been supplemented with LED fixtures. A/V systems are available for amplification and presentation of HD video content.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Not part of VSL inventory, included for comparison so no recommendations.</p>

## LAKE PLACID ARTS CENTER



Auditorium



Stage

VENUE	HOTEL SARANAC
Current Activities	The hotel is currently undergoing renovations and was nearing completion at the time of the survey/site visit
State of the Facility	Currently incomplete. Hotel is a high finish property leveraging the historic hotel, and including food and beverage as well as retail spaces in addition to guest rooms and event space. Spaces appear to be an attractive, upscale addition to the Village's inventory.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The Grand Ballroom, The Great Hall and outdoor Terrace are available for rentals. In terms of performance, the rental spaces are most likely to be used for amplified music, with other functions possible, but not directly accommodated.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, typical of a ballroom rental</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> Some ancillary rooms can be rented in addition to the main spaces and can serve as waiting or staging areas, but there are no separate changing or other more typical performance BOH areas.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, typical of a ballroom rental</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Renovations include upgrades to egress and making all spaces fully accessible/compliant.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Up-to-date A/V is scheduled to be provided.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, typical of a ballroom rental</p>

## HOTEL SARANAC



Event Room (rendering)



Great Room (rendering)

VENUE	JOHN BLACK ROOM
Current Activities	This space is a community room typically used for lecture or presentation, but occasionally used for small live music.
Qty of Performances	Unknown, no survey materials
State of the Facility	Appears to be well-maintained in a historic building.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The space is one medium sized room for +/- 40 people in folding chairs. Provisions for any performance are temporary in nature.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, meets audience expectation for community room with historic atmosphere.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> While the building was unavailable for a tour, it is understood that no additional BOH spaces exist.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, meets audience expectation for community room</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<u>Existing:</u> The space was unavailable for tour and the parties accompanying the tour did not know if the space was accessible.
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> No stage lighting or rigging, A/V is portable equipment.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> It was difficult to tell, but the space did not appear to have permanent overhead lighting, which would seem to limit usage. With the stated use for presentation, blackout shades (vs the visible solar shades) would be a prudent upgrade, as would dimmable lighting.</p>



Looking in through the window



VENUE	CANTWELL ROOM
Current Activities	This is a library community room accommodating about 120 people on the lower level, used for cultural and educational events.
Qty of Programs	Used nearly every day of the year.
Qty of Performances	Not typically used for traditional performance.
State of the Facility	Reasonable condition, well-kempt. Columns limit configurations.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> No audience amenities, but meets most expectations for a community room.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No performer amenities, but meets most expectations for a community room. Includes adjacent kitchenette.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Lower level is accessible via elevator. Flat floor means no barriers.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Sound system, projector, and smart board are available.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>

**CANTWELL ROOM**



Looking West



Looking South

VENUE	BITTERS AND BONES
Current Activities	The facility is a bar that occasionally presents live music.
Qty of Performances	Approximately 2 per month
State of the Facility	Modern renovation of the facility into its current form, which is well-kempt.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Atmosphere suits live music. As a bar, patron amenities are typical of this.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> Nothing specific for performers when onstage. Did not visit “upstairs” or “downstairs” spaces on tour, but it is mentioned in the survey for performer accommodations.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None recommended for current use.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Performance area is in the back, up a set of steps, prohibiting disabled access. However, music fills the bar.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Facility should evaluate accessibility - simply relocating the performer for certain events maybe the least intrusive solution.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Amplification provided</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> It was noted on the survey that a lighting upgrade would be welcome.</p>



VENUE	LEFT BANK CAFÉ
Current Activities	Café space that serves food and wine, with occasional live and acoustic music and spoken word events.
Qty of Performances	Unknown
State of the Facility	Modern renovation that is well-maintained
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<u>Existing:</u> Performance “area” in the middle of the space with baby grand piano.  <u>Recommendation:</u> None, fits expectations for café with light entertainment
Planning: Back-of-house	<u>Existing:</u> None  <u>Recommendation:</u> None, fits expectations for café with light entertainment
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<u>Existing:</u> Accessible from the street for patron or performer access.  <u>Recommendation:</u> None
Technical Systems	<u>Existing:</u> None apparent. It is unknown if a sound system is present.  <u>Recommendation:</u> Current use does not indicate technical needs.



VENUE	WATERHOLE UPSTAIRS
Current Activities	This is the music room of a bar on Main Street. The bar presents local and regional amplified live music.
Qty of Performances	Weekly
State of the Facility	Upstairs space is in reasonable shape, but bears the wear and tear that bar patrons can have. Facility was inaccessible at the time of the site visit, but visible through the windows.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The performance area is a large flat floor with L-shaped balcony above and a raised stage. The flat floor makes it possible to use for other types of events, but these are not common.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> No changes are suggested as the current configuration appears to work well for the acts and facility.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> Unknown, but no specific areas mentioned.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, stage area only is typical for a bar.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Unknown if an elevator exists in the building, as a site visit was not possible. The performance space is located upstairs. Stage is raised.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Verify conditions.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Limited permanent lighting, no rigging, it is understood that the sound system is provided by the act.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> A modest lighting system upgrade would be an improvement, but not a necessity.</p>



Looking East

VENUE	ANDERSON BANDSHELL
Current Activities	The bandshell on the lower tip of Lake Flower is used during the temperate summer months for outdoor music, as well as part of various fairs and festivals.
State of the Facility	Mostly wooden structure is exposed to the elements year-round and so has seen some weathering, but appears reasonably maintained.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Stage area is enclosed by the bandshell and partially protected from the elements. Audience seating is entirely on the adjacent lawn, with no protection other than what people bring themselves.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Arrangement works well for existing uses.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No back of house or staging exists within a structure. Events are staged in the area behind the bandshell. It is understood that rental portable toilets are available.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, no concerns about the current conditions were expressed.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Lawn is accessible from the street. Bandshell is raised with steps from the lawn.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The raised stage would require a ramp for disabled performers, and adequate space appears to exist for the ramp to be added on an as needed basis.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Power only, no lighting, rigging or A/V provided.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Use of the shell could be extended into the nighttime hours by including a modest system of lighting, if desired. Rigging does not appear to be a concern and audio is provided by the act.</p>



VENUE	BERKLEY GREEN
Current Activities	The facility consists of an open-air pavilion adjacent to a paved area and tiered lawn seating. The green primarily hosts live music or spoken word events. When not used for performances, space is used for public gathering, picnicking, as well as housing the 6er Challenge Bell.
Qty of Performances	Unknown, but used seasonally during temperate weather
State of the Facility	Structure appears to be in good condition with lawn and pavers well-maintained.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Slightly raised stage as part of covered pavilion structure provides modest protection from weather.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None, functions as intended and expected.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> None</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Audience seating area is accessible from Main Street sidewalk. Stage is raised by a single step, but is currently not accessible.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Ramp could be added to stage in a temporary or permanent manner.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Power provided, but no lighting or A/V support. Portable equipment seems to suit the informal character of the space.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>



VENUE	HARRIETSTOWN TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM
Current Activities	The Town Hall Auditorium is used for any rental opportunity that thinks it can use the space – from traditional performances of drama or dance to craft shows and exhibitions.
Qty of Programs	Unknown, but reportedly events weekly during summer months and sporadic during the colder months.
State of the Facility	Well-maintained auditorium within the town administrative office building.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The flat floor in the auditorium is the feature that allows its use for non-performance events and in that way is an amenity. However, it does compromise the sightlines to the event on the stage. The original designers of the space took this into account with a highly raised stage. Unfortunately, this high stage makes certain events, such as dance, difficult as being able to see a dancer's feet is considered a prerequisite. The balcony does not have that concern.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The stage height and sightline concern is original to the structure and would likely be untenable to modify.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> It is understood that no back-of-house spaces specific to the auditorium exist, but that some spaces can be pressed into service when necessary. Stage access is difficult.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The sense was that the users' needs for the limited number of performances could be accommodated within the existing inventory of rooms.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> The town hall building has an elevator access to the various levels including the main audience level and the balcony. However, the stage is raised from the audience area and not accessible. Portable stairs are used to connect the audience to the stage, but an equal means of access was not available.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> A portable wheelchair access lift should be considered by the town to satisfy accessibility to the stage.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Permanent speaker locations were noted, as well as stage draperies in the stage area, but there did not appear to be stage lighting from the front-of-house to the stage.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The primary users of the auditorium have modest technical requirements, so the town purchasing equipment is not advised. Permanent hanging locations for stage lighting should be considered.</p>



## TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM



Auditorium



Stage

VENUE	HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
Current Activities	The high school auditorium is a workhorse of the school and the community, presenting a wide variety of events, including drama, dance, ballet, musical theatre, opera, symphony, chorus, chamber music, recitals, and contemporary music events. Its 933 seated/standing capacity is the largest of all the venues surveyed.
Qty of Programs	11 school related
Qty of Performances	15-20 / yr
State of the Facility	As an educational facility, the auditorium is built with durable materials, so it appears to be holding up well to the wear and tear of the student body.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Stage size adequately covers the current uses by the student body, as well as outside groups. The tiered seating in the audience has decent sightlines to the stage and the chairs are in good shape and reasonably comfortable. There are no sound and light locks into the audience chamber or the stage, making entry/exit during a performance noticeable to others.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> While it would be ideal to add sound and light locks, the physical area required would be difficult or impossible to incorporate into this existing building.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> There are no dedicated dressing or holding rooms for the auditorium. When a production requires space, negotiations with the music department to make practice rooms, storage rooms, and/or offices available are necessary. Storage of stage equipment appears to be in the stage wings.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None. Providing rooms as needed is reported to work well for the school and balances classroom needs with the auditorium.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Stage and auditorium are accessible via corridors. Control booth is not accessible.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> An in-the-house control position could be used if a technician with a disability were part of the student body.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Newer audio and projection equipment is an excellent amenity and in good working order. 20-year-old stage lighting system is in need of refreshing (fixtures and controls). Onstage rigging consists of dead-hung pipes, although space exists to allow a modest fly system if ever desired. Student use argues for simple and safe systems, hence omitting a manual fly system, although this would certainly enhance productions.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Plan for lighting system upgrades within the next half decade utilizing LED fixtures for energy efficiency, as well as exposure of current tech to students.</p>

## HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM



The audience chamber with students meeting veterans



A view of the stage from the first row of the house

VENUE	PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE VISTOR'S INTERPRETIVE CENTER
Current Activities	The theatre at the VIC is used daily when the museum is open for film screenings. It is also available for community uses such as meetings, films, live music, and drama.
Qty of Programs	Daily museum events
Qty of Performances	Approximately 20 outside events per year
State of the Facility	Very well maintained by dedicated staff and college facilities department
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Modern, straightforward hall with decent sightlines and comfortable seats.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None. Current facilities meet users' expectations.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No back of house. Control booth in the theatre.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None. Current facilities meet users' expectations.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Ramped access from museum lobby to audience seating. Stage is a raised platform with level or ramped access from the audience. Stage is accessible via door leading directly to the outside.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The current building code does not allow for separate routes for able-bodied (stairs within the room) and disabled access (outside entry) to the stage. A portable wheelchair access lift may want to be considered for full compliance.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Limited stage lighting, no stage rigging, but well-equipped A/V with provisions for distance learning and live-streaming of presentations.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None. Current equipment appears to fit the needs of the various users' expectations.</p>



VENUE	UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Current Activities	Main Hall of the church is used by musical, choral, and drama groups throughout the warmer months. During winter, congregation moves downstairs to the fellowship hall, which is typically not used for performance.
Qty of Performances	Sporadic, but generally events every other month
State of the Facility	Aging historic facility is struggling with upkeep, but is generally in fine shape for performance.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Congregation hall has typical pews and built up deus/altar that makes performance a challenge. Main hall has larger seat count with balcony section, but this is in disuse and fairly remote/disconnected from the deus. Raised deus has good sightlines, even though main floor is flat, but most performances use the non-raised area in front of the deus, which is sightline constrained. Downstairs fellowship hall has a raised stage, which is shallow, but appears to be better suited to presentation/performance than the main hall.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> No changes to the physical structure, but some renters should be directed to the fellowship hall, which might better serve their needs.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No adjacent back-of-house spaces to the main congregation hall, but the fellowship hall has a large catering/pantry area for events.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> No recommendation that would not be disruptive to the primary use of the church</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> Elevator provides disabled access to the main congregation hall and the fellowship hall.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> None</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> No apparent systems were in place. Tour guide did not know extents of systems, but PA system was assumed in both halls</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Renters should supplement the space with temporary equipment as needed</p>

## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Main Hall



Downstairs Meeting Hall

VENUE	ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH
Current Activities	This large (~600 seat) modern church is also used for performances for choirs, school concerts, and other musical events.
Qty of Performances	Unknown
State of the Facility	The facility appears well-maintained.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> The raised deus/altar makes staging events challenging. The large open space above the bema and the lower planar ceiling above the audience make the acoustics particularly challenging. Lots of natural light and large open space make the room attractive for events.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Engage an acoustical consultant to provide feedback on modest treatments to the room that could improve the acoustics of the space for more functions.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> The only performer-specific facilities are the choir room. Restrooms are used for dressing and there is no staging area.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The primary use as a place of worship makes permanent performance specific accommodations unrealistic. "Pipe and drape" could be used to define performer areas, if needed.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> "Stage" area is raised on steps making disabled access impossible without temporary ramping. Restrooms used for dressing, as well as choir room and chapel (used as a performers lounge), are at a different level than the audience or stage.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Permanent disabled access provisions would be a benefit to both the worship function as well as any renters.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Amplification is provided, but no stage lighting or rigging.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Nothing specific to the facility. Rental equipment could provide any missing support.</p>

## ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH



Bema



Seating



VENUE	WILL ROGERS
Current Activities	A variety of performance (mostly music and spoken word), as well as visual arts, are presented to the residents of this retirement community.
State of the Facility	Unknown, could not visit during tours
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	It is understood the facility's Great Room is used as multi-purpose space. Seating is ad hoc.
Planning: Back-of-house	It is understood that no back-of-house exists, including no performer accommodations, but it meets the majority of users' expectations.
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	It is assumed that the facility is fully accessible, considering its resident population.
Technical Systems	It is understood that the facility has limited technical infrastructure, but meets the majority of the users' expectations.



Understood to be the meeting room used for performance.

VENUE	DEWEY MOUNTAIN STAGE
Current Activities	Built as a joint venture between Pendragon and Dewey Mountain. The stage was initially built for A Midsummer Night's Dream, performed by Pendragon, but is in continuous use by Dewey Mountain for its summer programs including live music and summer camp use.
State of the Facility	The Dewey Mountain Stage is a bare-bones outdoor venue, making use of the beautiful surroundings to accentuate the performance. While in reasonable condition at the moment, aspects will deteriorate quickly over time with exposure to the elements.
Planning: Performance Space & Audience Area	<p><u>Existing:</u> Stage consists of an elevated platform. Audience seating are rough bench slabs without backs. No facilities are present for intermission gathering or restrooms.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Stage timber should be treated and sealed against the elements to keep it in good repair against the ravages of the elements.</p>
Planning: Back-of-house	<p><u>Existing:</u> No back-of-house exists. Actors are exposed for entrances to the stage.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> It is not known whether a desire for better back of house facilities is necessary, as the stage is understood to meet current needs.</p>
Disabled or Limited Mobility Access	<p><u>Existing:</u> While the path to the seating is "level" from the parking area, the path is a woodland trail. It poses significant difficulty for those with mobility impairments.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> The facility should carefully consider this stage's use when open to the public.</p>
Technical Systems	<p><u>Existing:</u> Technical support was provided for the single production, with the majority being removed afterwards. A string of houselighting was left in place, presumably with other electrical service.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u> Temporary accommodations based on the specific needs of the production.</p>



## **CONCLUSION**

The Village has a flourishing arts scene, punctuated by a lively and widespread presentation of live music. Many spaces support a wide variety of programming in addition to their primary uses. These multi-use spaces are valuable community assets, but often do not support the physical needs of performance.

Many of the facilities surveyed support their primary uses well — and sometimes secondary uses, too. There are some exceptions, and these excepted facilities present traditional performance such as theatre and dance. These are the organizations most in need of better physical space, as well as appropriate technical support. While space and technology does not in and of itself make for good performance, it does facilitate the art and that is the primary function of any building — to facilitate its users. As per the report, there are some facilities that currently do not successfully provide their primary function.

With regard to accessibility and barrier-free access, in general the performance spaces in the VSL area were built in an era that was not accommodating to persons with disabilities. As patrons demand greater levels of accessibility not just for persons with disabilities, but for the elderly or those with a temporary condition (cast and crutches, for instance), facilities should be constantly working to improve overall accessibility. Small changes can make big differences to the patron experience and that's what makes for repeat audience members.

The intent of this assessment is to provide a high-level report of certain physical aspects of the performance facilities in the VSL area. Further detailed study and refinement of the recommendations is advised.