

Chamber

There are four methods by which the Middlesex Theatre can be restored and developed as a major community resource.

The first involves the attraction of a theatrical producer who would rent the theatre for half the year. With support from other institutions, this method could result in saving the Middlesex Theatre at no capital cost to the City. In fact, it would provide a rather large credit for future redevelopment programs.

The second method, which is more likely to come about, would involve an investment by the City with a partial return of the investment, and the use of a redevelopment credit.

The third method, like the second, involves a larger partial return of investment to the City, provides a redevelopment credit, but involves a much more elaborate program of development. This development is subsequently described under the heading entitled "New Outlook Program". It is suggested only as a possibility, and is in no way fundamental to the success of retaining the theatre.

The fourth method assumes a private rental.

It should be emphasized, in this respect, that if the City requires an urban renewal credit for the development of the north end of town, it is quite possible that the entire development cost of the theatre would be granted as a credit, just as the parking garage became a full credit under the first redevelopment project. Thus, because the City must provide either cash or credits, the refurbishing of the theatre would, in fact, cost the City very little, if anything, if a future credit is needed. It would have the theatre, and it would have its urban renewal credit.

Restoring the Middlesex Theatre would cost less than \$500,000. This is the architectural estimate for the project - a report financed by a \$3,000 grant by HUD. Demolition costs for the Main Street building would be picked up by Urban Renewal grants, and hence does not represent a charge to the City.

The City would, therefore, be required to take down refurbishing costs at a rate of \$25,000 a year, on a 20 year basis. The projections in the addenda show how the theatre might be financed under four programs, one without a professional theatrical group (although one might be persuaded to come in upon being shown the newly re-done theatre); a second presumes that a group would use the building at least half a year. A third assumes the existence of a local or-

ganization which would book in various shows and events, but assumes no "New Outlook Program", a fourth assumes private rental.

It should be noted that Plan Four is the most desirable procedure because it provides the largest amount of recapture of funds by the city. It is also possible that variations of all four plans can be developed by the operating commission.

Most important is the insurance provision under the general financing plan submitted by the Chamber of Commerce. This provides that while it is anticipated that the City will recapture at least \$250,000, the financing or repayment of the entire program would not be endangered by a failure to recapture. The cash flow of the Plan is sufficient to carry the program.

The Middlesex Theatre represents a community resource which could be obtained by the City of Middletown from the State of Connecticut at a cost of \$15,000 to \$20,000.

As a public facility it would be eligible for maximum write-down, and the funds paid by the city for its acquisition and refurbishing would become a local credit (to the extent it served people in the urban renewal area).

Although total refurbishing has been set at \$500,000, the degree of refurbishing can be segmented or reduced. The development of a theatre program could go forward with the use of federal and state funds under Title I, II and III of the National Defense Education Act, the state CDAP program, and through financing under programs administered by the OEO.

In the winter season, it is estimated that live theatre would be produced at least once a week. The break-down -- using existing programs would be: community concerts, four performances; Junior Matinees, four performances; Wesleyan, six performances; Community College three performances. All these programs are now actually scheduled or being held in the community, but in most cases more seating is necessary. (Both Junior Matinees and Community Concerts are consistently oversold). It should be noted that Middlesex Community College has just begun its dramatic program (last spring) and has given only one performance so far. On the other hand, it is clear that the existence of this resource would lead to further uses, extending the present number of weeks (17) that the shows would be produced.

Beside live performances, the theatre could be used by the library for a film program, by the City for public meetings, by local firms and organizations for conferences (AEP, IFF, Raymond, EIS, Pratt & Whitney), by labor unions, schools in the mid-state region, elderly organizations, and as a resource center in the field of education, activities for the elderly and the disadvantaged.

This multi-organizational effort would be called "The New Outlook" program.

"New Outlook" envisions extending the horizons of the youth and citizenry of the Mid-State Planning area through the establishment of a unique program utilizing a variety of new audio-visual and educational tools.

The program would be centered in the New Middlesex Theatre and would be budgeted at \$50,000 a year, a portion of which may be currently available from a \$107,000 grant

to the public schools under Title III. All schools and citizens in the Mid-State area would be invited to attend and communities would be asked to make up some of the funds. About \$15,000 would be supplied by the City of Middletown; it seems quite possible that CAGM would pick up a share of this. A program involving Middlesex Community College should also not be neglected.

"New Outlook" would provide facilities for children's plays organized in all Mid-State schools, would provide symphony and opera performances in conjunction with Wesleyan University (one performance for school children, one for the community at large), would make possible performances by university groups for children and the community, and would be a performing arts center for the area. Various props and costumes from Broadway shows would be made available to area theatre groups, the new Russell Library would produce a series of "Little Cinema" shows for the area (the theatre would be sub-dividable), and the new center would develop a series of unique rehabilitation methods for educable children, those involved with speech or reading programs, based around a program of theatre, music, dance and audio-visual approaches. (Appropriate federal funds in the educable children and special reading assistance acts could be used.)

Appropriate programs for the elderly would be developed, using their talents as prop, lighting and artistic custodian services (keeping track of scenery etc.) used in plays to be presented by the children, a community or organization. This group would be called the "New Outlook Citizens Corps" and would involve engaging the elderly in the problems of youth in the community. The existence of elderly housing in one place would facilitate the creation of the Corps.

In addition a variety of rehabilitation services would be centered in the "New Outlook" building, built around the concept of doing things, and engaging in many cases, in non-verbal communication as a springboard to the more usual form of communication.

"The New Outlook" would involve the centralization of many new teaching approaches for all grades, running from the Community College down to Headstart for the Mid-State region. In addition, grants would be applied for on a regional basis for Title II aid (audio-visual materials and books) and aid for disadvantaged children under Title I. These two Titles are such that money is forthcoming easily, whereas under Title III, funds are harder to get.

A number of other possibilities present themselves:

1. As the State Commission on the Arts becomes more heavily funded in the years to come, and as further federal support for the arts develops, it is expected that the subsidization of theatrical and musical events in smaller communities will increase. This would be especially true for those communities which have made the effort to provide facilities.
2. It is likely that as the City grows, Middletown will undertake a fund-raising effort for the combined cultural events in the City. Most of the spade work is now being done by such an organization in Hartford, and this is gradually accustoming industry and business to the concept of support for the arts.
3. The program might also involve a five-year grant from Wesleyan which would allow the creation of certain theatrical events, supporting funds from the City of Middletown, and commitments by various businesses to underwrite certain adult or student events. Wesleyan would be able to use the facilities at its option.

MIDDLESEX THEATRE

In considering the four methods detailed here, it could be assumed that the Middlesex Theatre would cost \$499,000 to refurbish. It would be operated and owned by a commission much like the library board, but with provision that no individual could serve more than four consecutive terms. The mayor would make all appointments, drawing one appointment from the library board, one from the school board, and one from the Redevelopment Agency. The commission would retain ownership of the theatre and the land it is situated upon, and would operate in this respect much like the parking authority. This would also allow it to collect rentals.

METHOD ONE

(No permanent rental - No Foundation or Wesleyan support.)

(Presumes recapture by City of half its investment.)

Income:

Rental appropriation under "New Outlook" program, from Titles I, II, III, CDAP, CAGM	\$ 5,000
Inn Rental (conference)	1,000
Community Rentals	2,000
Restaurant Rental	1,200
Land Rental Main St. Property	5,000
Parking Income	<u>2,000</u>
	\$16,200

Note: Insurance and heat, light and janitorial service is budgeted at \$16,000 for full year.

Under this plan, the City would recapture \$250,000, but would require to supply \$21,300 in operational support.

Middlesex TheatreMETHOD TWO

Middlesex Theatre (with rental to a theatrical group)

Capital reduction per year	\$25,000
Income: Theatrical group rental 176 days	\$18,000
Rental appropriation under "New Outlook" program from Titles I, II, III, CDAP, CAGM	5,000
Inn Rental (conferences)	1,000
Community Rentals	1,000
Restaurant Site Rental	1,200
Land Rental of Main St. Property	5,000
Parking Income	2,000
Wesleyan Rental or Foundation Support	<u>2,000</u>
	\$35,200

Note: Insurance and heating for the half year is budgeted at \$8,000, janitorial services \$3,000. Under this program, the recapture by the City would slightly exceed \$250,000 and would require no operational support.

Middlesex TheatreMETHOD THREE

(No Permanent Rental - No Wesleyan or Foundation Support --
No "New Outlook Program" - presumes existence of local group
booking in shows.)

Income:

Rental of theatre provided
by local group booking in shows \$ 4,000

Everything else the same as
METHOD ONE.

Total \$16,200

Note: Insurance and heat, light and janitorial services
are budgeted at \$15,000 for full year because of
less usage.

Under this plan the City would recapture \$250,000
but would require to supply \$12,300 in operational
support.

Middlesex Theatre

METHOD FOUR

(Straight Rental)

The Middlesex Theatre would be rented to a private developer for \$12,500 a year, under lease conditions which allow community use at a cost which would be appropriate and financially feasible for local organizations.

Income:

In addition, the City would receive:

Restaurant Site Rental	\$ 1,200
Land Rental Main St. Property	5,000
Parking Income	<u>2,000</u>
	\$ 8,200

Note: Under this program, the recapture of funds by the City would be \$414,000 out of \$500,000 expenditure.