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Stateside Construction and Catalano Architects near completion of 15,000 s/f Dreamland Theatre on Nantucket

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Construction of the new Dreamland Theater on Nantucket is nearing completion after 18 months of construction and years of planning. Considered one of the oldest theaters in America, planning and fundraising for the construction of a new facility started 8 years ago when the Dreamland Foundation acquired the property and determined the building needed to be replaced. The Foundation's board of directors is comprised of Island business, community and philanthropic leaders including Wendy Schmidt who is acting president; Jonathan Burkhart, Lesley King-Grenier, Maureen Hackett, John Johnson, Philippe Laffont, Bill Liddle, Chris and Kathleen Matthews, James Pallotta, Kathy Penske, Charley Polachi, Angela Raynor, Charles Ryan, Burwell Schorr, and Barry Sternlicht. The Foundation's executive director is Patty Roggeveen.

Designed by Catalano Architects and constructed by Stateside Construction Group, this \$11 million project is slated to obtain a LEED Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). This is one of the first projects in Nantucket's Old Historic District to reach such a distinction.

The original Dreamland Theater building has a long and rich history which will be honored throughout the new facility. Originally built in 1835 as a Quaker Meetinghouse located on Main St. near Fair St., it was moved to Brant Point in 1883 where it became the center portion of the Nantucket Hotel. When the hotel was sold in 1905 the Meetinghouse portion of the building was purchased by the Improved Order of the Red Men. It was disconnected, placed on a barge, and floated across the harbor where it was relocated to its present site. The first floor of the building functioned as a moving picture theater with the second floor being a lodge room and dance hall. A large addition constructed in 1922 increased the theater's seating capacity to 600. The building functioned as a theater until 2005, and following several redevelopment schemes for the building, it was purchased by the Dreamland Foundation in 2007. Following a lengthy study which deemed the building structurally unsound, the Foundation decided that renovating the existing building would be impractical. Plans were put in motion to raise funds and construct a facility whose design would honor its heritage through the re-use of some of the old building's parts as architectural features.

This new 15,000 s/f multipurpose facility includes a 320-seat Main Theater, a Studio Theater with a capacity of 140, and the Harbor View room and Terrace which can accommodate up to 80 people. Equipped with a digital projection system, the Main Theater will show current blockbuster movies as well as host theatrical productions and other performing arts. The Studio Theater will also be able to show main stream movies, smaller theatrical performances, comedy shows and music events. During demolition of the original historic meeting house, heavy timber wood trusses were salvaged and incorporated into the new construction of the Studio Theater. The Harbor View meeting room and Terrace, with adjacent catering kitchen, provides additional meeting space and boasts spectacular views of Nantucket Harbor.

The construction of the new theater building was quite complex. Construction began in January 2011, and because of a long-standing requirement in Nantucket's Historic District, the entire exterior shell needed to be completed by June 15th 2011. Interior construction continued throughout the summer and into early 2012.

The close proximity of the site to the harbor required the entire site to be surrounded by a cofferdam and dewatering system to allow the excavation to remain dry during construction. The building footprint is mere inches from the property line on two sides and resides approximately four feet from an existing building on the third side. This presented many logistical challenges during construction, including the need to completely shut off one of the adjacent streets during construction to allow access for a crane. Additionally, the salvaged wood trusses required restoration and coordination with the steel erection in order to integrate the trusses into the new steel structure. Once construction is completed this month, the Nantucket Dreamland, with new and old design elements coupled with premier technologies, will continue its historic legacy well into the future.

The Foundation continues to make a final push with their fundraising efforts as they close in on their \$32 million capital campaign goal.

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