

PUBLIC CIVIC PROJECT: FINALIST

Historic concert hall makes modern-day debut

'The renovation will bring the Civic back to its glory days of the past as a concert venue.'

- Bill Sherry, Team San Jose

BY ELIZABETH KIM

A venerable Spanish Mission-style venue in San Jose has undergone an \$11 million transformation into a modern downtown concert hall.

Built in 1934, the San Jose Civic Auditorium has hosted an eclectic mix of events over the past seven decades, including everything from conventions and sporting events to concerts and dance competitions. Originally christened the Municipal Auditorium, the Civic cost \$500,000 to build

SAN JOSE CIVIC AUDITORIUM

PROJECT COST:

\$11 million

PROJECT DETAILS:

Seismic upgrades, new sound/video system, new and upgraded restrooms, concession stands and new loading docks

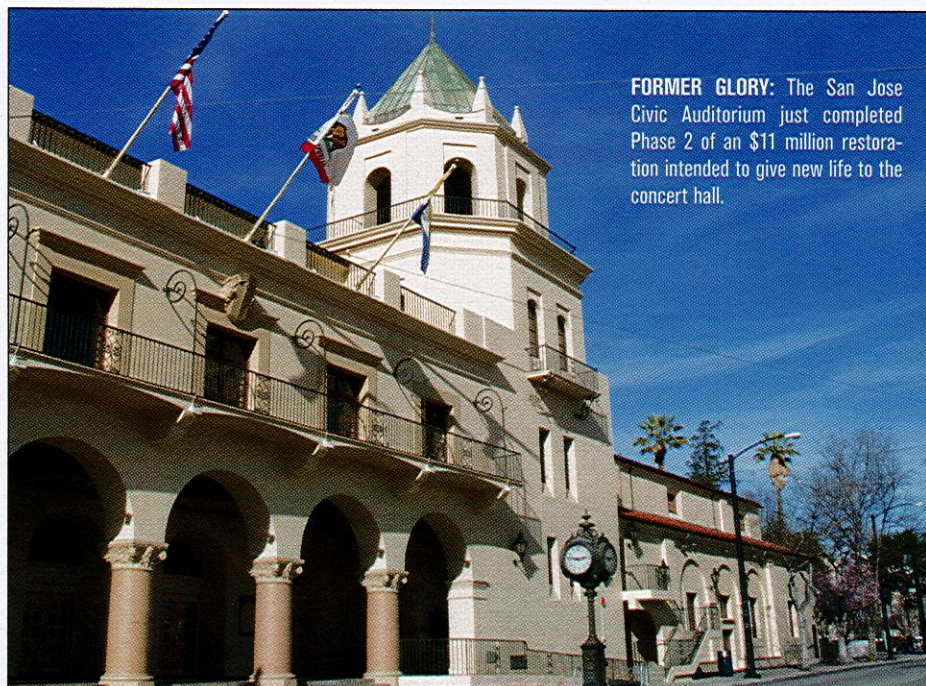
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and quickly became an iconic gathering place on the West Coast.

Now, civic leaders are hoping exterior and interior renovations will restore the site to its former glory.

Bill Sherry, who heads Team San Jose, said funding for the \$11 million renovation came together through a unique partnership between the San



FORMER GLORY: The San Jose Civic Auditorium just completed Phase 2 of an \$11 million restoration intended to give new life to the concert hall.

DONOVAN FARNHAM

Jose Redevelopment Agency, the city of San Jose, Team San Jose, and the San Jose Theater Preservation Inc., a nonprofit group lead by local arts leaders. The majority of the funding was

provided by the San Jose Redevelopment Agency and the city of San Jose.

The initial phase of restoration to the historic downtown building, which was completed in 2010, included new

exterior LED lighting, new concession stands, new restrooms, refurbished hardwood floors and a \$1 million sound and high-definition video package. Phase 2 improvements, led by general contractor Garden City Construction, includes new fixed and portable seating, structural and seismic upgrades and new concession areas and equipment.

"The renovation will bring the Civic back to its glory days of the past as a concert venue," Sherry said.

The venue, which seats 3,000 people, was once a major concert tour stop for world-renowned artists such as the Rolling Stones and The Who. The Civic also hosted prize fights with Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis and Max Baer.

As the popularity of some events dwindled, supporters of the Civic looked for ways to reposition the venue.

Before the makeover, Nederlander Concerts launched a six-month series with more than 13 events that attracted about 22,000 visitors. Sherry said those visitors spent about \$400,000 in San Jose.

"Ultimately, what we want is for the Civic to be a premier concert venue. The Civic will create economic impact for downtown," Sherry said.