

Kincardine Arts Centre facelift unveiled

By Liz Dadson



Melissa Stickl (L) and Paul Sapounzi of The Ventin Group Architects, outline the proposal to refurbish the outside of the Kincardine Arts Centre

Kincardine council had its first look at the \$1-million refurbishment of the exterior of the Kincardine Arts Centre (old town hall) in committee-of-the-whole last night (March 17).

Paul Sapounzi and Melissa Stickl of The Ventin Group Architects of Brantford, brought forward drawings and photographs, indicating what the building looks like now and how they propose to improve it. The project received two-thirds funding from the federal and provincial governments, through the Building Canada Fund, with Kincardine putting in the other \$330,000.

Sapounzi said the arts centre building has lost its face and its grace over the years, but it's a special building and a major part of the community's heritage. It also has a second floor which is difficult and expensive to build on to a structure, he said, and it's a marker between the park and the lake. "The changes proposed to the building will restore its face and it will be seen in a totally different light," said Sapounzi.

The majority of the work includes new historically-shaped windows, new doors, addition of the northeastern veranda, a redesigned main entrance, addition of the western gable, removal of the fire escape, and a brick replacement and repair program.

Deputy mayor Laura Haight asked about removal of the fire escape. "We did a code check and with minor modifications at the exit doors, the fire escape is not needed," said Sapounzi.

Haight asked if the bell would be put back in the new cupola once it is constructed on top of the building. She said the bell in front of the arts centre is not the original bell - it is at the public works yard.

Sapounzi said the original bell has been damaged and weighs about 600-1,000 pounds. The cupola will be built of lightweight material and will not hold a bell, he said. Haight asked if there are plans to move the bell which sits at the northwest corner of the building. Sapounzi suggested keeping it near the building because it is part of the history of the arts centre.

Councillor Kenneth Craig asked about maintenance of the structure once it is refurbished, given it is a heritage building and will require heritage-like materials.

"That's an excellent question," said Sapounzi. "We get asked that all the time. The cupola will have to be made of wood but it will last longer than the original because it's better wood, likely cedar. It will require painting so you will have to budget for that every 10 years." He said the windows are being replaced with high-end wood, thermal, double-glazed windows, without storm windows. "You could use high-end vinyl-clad wood," he said. "The only other alternative would be aluminum which is the same price. But it's difficult to do these windows in anything other than wood."

Artist's rendering of the renovated Kincardine Arts Centre



"We have great support to restore this building," said councillor Ron Hewitt. "Let's get on with it. It will look pretty nice in the end."

"I'm giddy with excitement," joked Haight. Council approved the plans later during the council session, with councillor Mike Leggett opposed. Councillor Randy Roppel was absent.

Staff will now put the project to tender and begin the construction phase as soon as possible, with a completion date prior to March 31, 2011.