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September, 2019

Concept submission to the Carmel Planning Commission

From: Pacific Repertory Theatre

Re: Golden Bough Capital Project, Phases 2-A & 2-B

Members of the Commission,

PacRep's Golden Bough Playhouse holds a unique place in the history and character of Carmel-by-the-Sea. The original building was located on Ocean Ave, where it became world famous as "the best equipped little theatre in America." Built in 1923, its fate was sealed in 1935, when the building burned down shortly after a performance of the drama, "By Candlelight."

Theatre operations then moved to its present Monte Verde St location, where this second Golden Bough flourished until 1949. Then, in a bizarre twist of fate, *the building burned down again*, and just like the first, *shortly after a production of "By Candlelight,"* which had just opened in a revival production with many of the same performers! The 3-level facility was rebuilt and opened in 1952, including the intimate 99-seat Circle Theatre, on the Casanova Street level.

In 1994, when the property was put up for sale and demolition, the board and staff of Pacific Repertory Theatre launched the "Save The Golden Bough" campaign, leading the community in a successful effort to purchase the aging movie theatre, transforming it back to a live theatre in 1995.

In 2008, PacRep launched a two-phase capital campaign to renovate the aging facility and its decades-old infrastructure. In 2011, **Phase 1** was completed, including significant electrical upgrades and earthquake retrofitting, a complete rebuild of the Circle Theatre, and the addition of revolving stages, technician's gallery, and projection systems to the 300-seat Golden Bough Theatre.

The **Phase 2-A** Golden Bough project completes the interior work, including full ADA accessibility, focusing on the aging main auditorium and seating, as well as the lobby, restroom and entry/exit areas.

In addition, the 2nd level Monte Verde offices are expanded to the east, and a small single-level lobby area is created to the west, immediately outside the Circle Theatre.

Finally, sound buffering hallways are created by enclosing the existing exit ramps, platforms and steps on the north and south sides of the building, closest to our immediate neighbors. As noted on page 2, the Circle Theatre lobby will also serve as an important sound/light/activity buffer to the neighborhood.

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Concept submission to the Carmel Planning Commission, continued

Accessibility: Throughout the Phase 2-A design, PacRep is addressing its recently completed CASP report, which identified all areas within the property boundaries that required ADA additions or improvements. The Phase 2-A design addresses each of these deficiencies.

Auditorium seating redesign: Presently, the main auditorium seating reflects the previous movie theatre design, with relatively flat seating designed to view a raised movie screen. The updated design takes advantage of the existing room height, transforming the old movie auditorium into a traditional theatre bowl or stadium style form. As a result, important public benefits include a fully accessible stage and auditorium (as per CASP), as well as improved sightlines and acoustics. Please note that due to increased access, wider aisles, and circulation requirements, the project reduces available seating by approximately 25 seats (9%). Although this loss impacts PacRep's earned income ability, the reduced seating will have a positive impact on neighborhood issues, such as noise and parking congestion.

Interior lobby expansion: The existing Monte Verde lobby has a capacity of 120 guests for a 300-seat auditorium, with patrons forced outdoors as a matter of necessity. And our 2013 women's restroom addition reduced this lobby space even more. By expanding the existing Monte Verde lobby approximately 20 feet to the east, ***directly under the raised auditorium seating***, we are able to provide more adequate audience space without expanding the building footprint. This area will also provide an additional family/unisex restroom.

Circle Theatre lobby expansion: The goal of this small lobby expansion is three-fold: 1) to create a sound and light buffer between the Circle Theatre and the neighborhood; 2) to provide a box office that is handicapped accessible; and 3) to move a number of outdoor activities inside – currently, Circle Theatre intermissions are held outside on the adjacent blacktop, exposed to the elements, and within earshot of our neighbors. Similarly, after our productions, this same area is where friends and family congregate, while waiting to see the performers. Both these activities would be moved inside the expanded Circle lobby, greatly reducing impact on the neighborhood, and providing a safe, well-lit space that is accessible to all our patrons.

Exit ramps and enclosures: Currently, the north and south exits from the main auditorium are open to the elements, and allow light and sound to escape directly from the auditorium into the neighborhood. By enclosing the exit pathways, a sound and light buffer is created between the main auditorium and our nearest neighbors, which will eliminate light bleed, and greatly diminish sound projection beyond the primary theatre space. The enclosure will also provide protection from the elements when leaving the auditorium, with safe, well-lit, accessible exits for all our patrons. Importantly, these new exit ramps are required to provide full ADA accessibility, as per our 2018 CASP report.

The estimated cost to complete this initial Phase 2-A project is approximately \$3 million. As a nonprofit with no government support, all improvements are supported entirely through private donations from individuals, foundations, businesses, and service clubs. In October 2018, an unanticipated transformational gift of \$2.3 million from Bertie Bialek Elliott accelerated plans to move forward on the initial Phase Two renovation, with an anticipated start date of mid-2020.

Concept submission to the Carmel Planning Commission, continued

Phase 2-B (future additions)

Since the original 2011 design, we have identified a number of on-going neighborhood and operational needs, resulting in several proposed additions to the project, a **Phase 2-B**, if you will. These final pieces of PacRep's Golden Bough renovation – once funding has been secured and permitting is complete – would include:

- Extending and expanding North and South sound buffers to completely encapsulate the main theatre, eliminating interior sound bleed into the neighborhood;
- Creating a second-level prop shop adjacent to the main stage without adding building coverage;
- Adding multiple gables and other exterior treatments to enhance the architectural aesthetics of the building, converting the existing warehouse/commercial appearance, to be more compatible with its residential surroundings, specifically:
 - a) East side: Cross gable with cat-slide roof above Monte Verde office wing
 - b) West side: Cat-slide roof with three (3) gabled dormers above Circle Theatre lobby.
 - c) North side: two (2) gables above sound-buffering hallway
 - d) South side: one (1) gable above sound-buffering hallway, and one gable with cat-slide roof above 2nd level main stage loading door.

We are asking for guidance and community input at this time so as the 2-B projects can be designed as an extension of 2-A, and in order to reduce duplication and eliminate unnecessary demolition. Until such time as a concept is approved and funding is secured, no anticipated project date is envisioned.

The ultimate goals of PacRep's Phase 2 projects are to leave Carmel with a fully equipped and functioning theatre arts center, largely self-sustaining, with an exterior design that complements Carmel's history and completes its cultural identity. It looks to the future, while also paying homage to that which came before, as originally envisioned by those unique and visionary Carmel Bohemians who started the city down its very special path.

It is our sincere wish that the Golden Bough Playhouse will be a facility which the city and community can be proud of - both inside and out!

We look forward to your comments and input.

Sincerely,



Stephen Moor, Founder and Executive Director
Pacific Repertory Theatre