

EDGAR L. HARDEN PAPERS-PRES. RECORDS

Scrapbook of Newsclippings

Performing Arts Center

1978

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# Arts Center start set

By W. KIM HERON  
Staff Writer

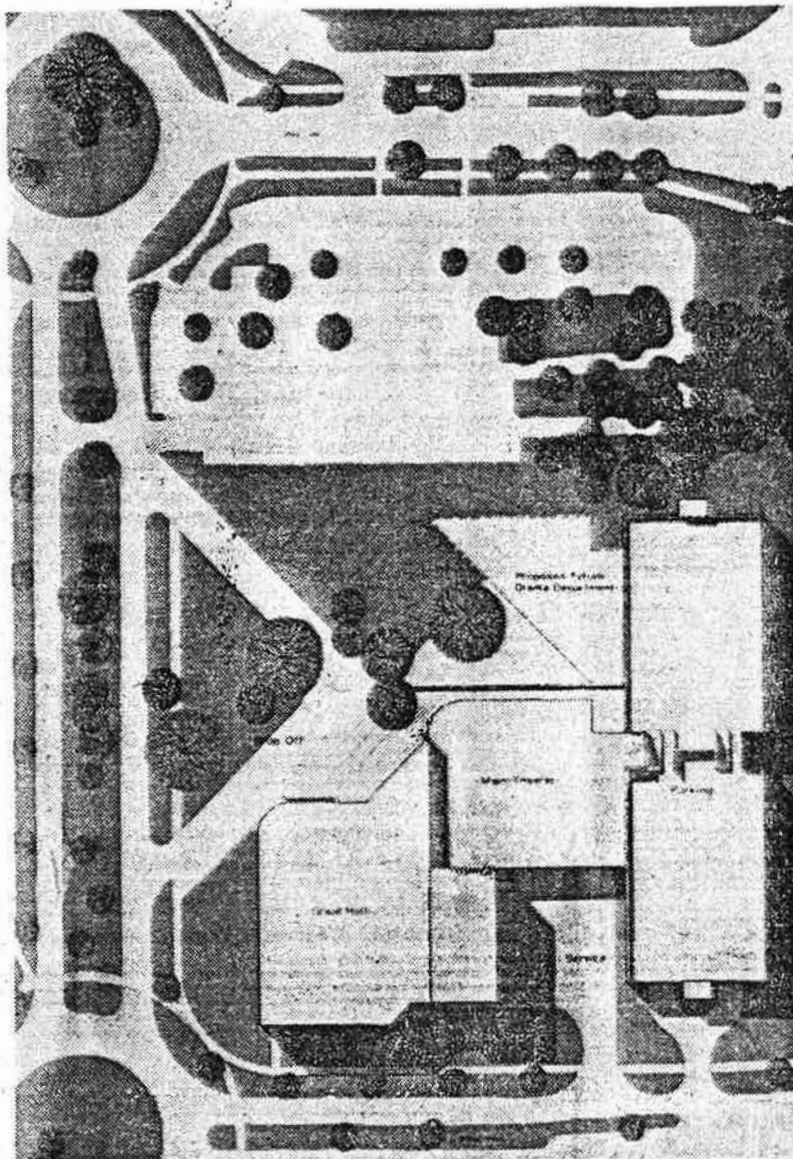
With \$7.6 million down and \$4.9 million to go in the fund-raising drive, officials at Michigan State University are shoring up plans for a spring ground breaking for the proposed performing arts center.

Wednesday afternoon, the final plans for the facility were unveiled to groups of Mid-Michigan fund raisers during a luncheon and dinner at Kellogg Center. Completion of the \$12.5 million facility is expected in 1981.

"WE HAVE made a definite commitment to build the performing arts center," said MSU President Edgar L. Harden. "While our capital enrichment program must still be pushed vigorously, we believe that progress to date permits the formulation of a construction schedule."

Les Scott, MSU Vice President for Development, said that he expected donations to pick up again after Labor Day and continue through the end of the year. Scott said that the fund raisers are looking for about six major donors in the six-figure bracket."

"We need about \$3 million in very large gifts, not that we're not going to accept the smaller ones," Scott said. Although about 95 percent of the donations have come from the State of Michigan so far, Scott said the next thrust of the program will place more emphasis on the out-of-state alumni groups in states like California, Florida, Texas, New York and the Washington, D.C., area.



Architect's sketch of proposed performing arts center at MSU

**THE FINAL** plans drawn by the Houston firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, include a number of changes from the previous one although the two main performance areas remain intact.

The new design also includes provisions to build an adjoining wing for the theater department when funding is made available by the state Legislature. When that will be is "uncertain," according to University Vice President for University Relations Robert Perin.

The announcement that the theater wing would not be built at the same time as the rest of the structure provoked complaints from a number of individuals who had been involved in fund raising for the project earlier this year.

"I THINK most people would want a more definite commitment in terms of time," said Alan Suits, chairman of the Lansing Opera Guild. Suits and others said that the university gave the impression in the past that the now controversial wing would be built at the same time as the rest of the structure.

In the new plans, the center, which is to be faced with red-brown brick, has been moved

slightly south on the previously-selected site on Bogue Street so that it is now closer to the intersection on Wilson Road. According to the architects, the move will permit the center to take full advantage of the stand of mature trees already on the site, with only one existing tree expected to be lost in construction.

The new design is also more compact than the earlier version. Ken Beachler, who chairs the university "users" group for the center, said the new design is "aesthetically

**WITH ITS** rounded exterior contours, the center will be a focal point through the trees. In turn, a scenic view will be presented from the elevated lobbies of the theaters.

Both theaters will be approached through a common vestibule on the ground floor, but each will have its own separate lobby on the second level. The building will also house a ticket office, making it easier for the public to make advance purchases of tickets.

Features of the Great Hall, capacity 2,500, will include acoustical columns to enhance the sound

quality of symphony, opera and ballet productions, a full proscenium stage and a 90-foot loft. Seating will be continental style, no aisles with entry from the sides of the auditorium.

**THE SMALLER** 600-seat Theater-Recital Hall, designed for dramatic, recital and chamber performances, will have a thrust stage fanning out into the seating area.

A ramp, with a project cost of \$2.7 million, is not included in the center funding plans. Possible arrangements for funding the ramp are being explored by the university finance office.

The new center will replace the outmoded Auditorium and Fairchild Theater as the location of MSU Lecture-Concert Series events and many theater and music department productions. It also will provide a new home for the Lansing Symphony and Lansing Opera Guild.

**BUT THAT** doesn't mean that the older facilities will go unused once the center is built, Beachler, MSU Lecture-Concert director said. "We've got so much demand for facilities right now that we can't meet it," he said.

## MORE DONATIONS EXPECTED

# 'U' still planning PAC

By DANIEL HILBERT  
State News Staff Writer

Plans are going ahead for the construction of the new Performing Arts Center and fundraising is expected to pick up, University officials said.

Kenneth Beachler, director of lecture concert series, said fundraising had effectively stopped because of changes resulting from exclusion of the theater wing from the center's plan which forced alterations in the building's design.

He attributed the halt in fundraising to the fact that after the theater wing was dropped from the original plan, the fundraisers couldn't tell potential contributors

what the redesigned building would look like.

Current pledges for the PAC building stand at \$7.5 million of the \$12.5 million needed for completion, said Leslie Scott, vice president for University development.

Overall pledges for the \$17.5 million Enrichment Program stand at \$10.5 million, said Scott.

Scott attributed the slowdown in fundraising to former President Clifton R. Wharton's departure in January, as well as the forced redesign of the building.

Both men were confident that pledges would increase.

However, Beachler added the University

still has no picture or artist's conception of what the new building will look like.

Robert L. Siefert, University Architect, outlined the changes of the redesigned structure and said the outside would look different than the original model, but the interior would remain the same.

"Designing the building is a long, drawn-out process," said Siefert.

Beachler said ground could be broken for the center possibly in May or June of 1979.

He said it would probably take the design architects, who are currently meeting with University officials, about three months to finish plans for the building.

The plans will next go to another architectural firm which will draft the construction documents and may take about six months.

Next the project will be opened up for bids from contractors and subcontractors, which Beachler estimated might take about six weeks.

That would make the ground breaking in May or June, 1979, and with an estimated two-year construction time would mean the PAC could be opened for the 1981-82 school year.

However, Beachler warned that because of possible delays and shortages of materials the opening could be delayed until the middle of the 1981-82 school year.

The wing of the center housing the theater department was excluded from the plans when the University decided not to immediately pursue an additional \$6 million state allocation.

Original plans called for MSU to go to the state Legislature when it had raised \$11 million of the \$17 million required to complete the enrichment program and seek the final \$6 million.

Jack Breslin, MSU executive vice president, said the University decided not to ask the legislature for matching funds this year because of urgent building needs in other areas.

The wing to house the theater department will be built as soon as the University gets the money to pay for it, explained Siefert.

"We have available space for it, but have no actual authority to design it until we have the finances," Siefert said.

# Harden on the arts:

By MSU President Edgar L. Harden

Recent decisions regarding the performing arts complex on the MSU campus have resulted in some concern and confusion in the Lansing-East Lansing community.

This is unfortunate, because it tends to detract from very positive steps that will greatly benefit the community as well as the university.

The fact is that a magnificent new performing arts center will be built on the campus, and it will keep faith with commitments made to contributors to the University's \$17 million Enrichment Program. The understandable concern

arises because of the need to reassess the original plan that included an academic component in the proposed structure.

It is important to keep the facts clearly in perspective.

The performing arts center project was conceived initially to achieve two separate but related goals: the construction of two modern theaters for public and University use, and a wing to house the Theatre Department and its activities.

The two theaters were to be financed by the private gifts to the Enrichment Program, while the Theatre Department wing, as an academic unit, would be built with public funds sought from the state.

The goal was to privately raise \$11 million for the performing arts component and to seek \$5 million from the state Legislature for the Theatre Department wing. Plans were drawn accordingly, but the fund-raising campaign literature carefully drew the distinction between the two elements.

The \$17 million Enrichment Program was launched to raise the \$11 million for



Harden

the performing arts center (and \$6 million for a museum, library strengthening and endowed faculty chairs). Meanwhile, for the past four years, the University's capital outlay request to the state Legislature has contained a \$5 million item for the Theatre Depart-

ment segment.

Planning to meet the present and future instructional needs of MSU students, and to accommodate critical research projects, is a complex and difficult process, especially in an era of very limited resources. Many hard decisions must be made as to where available dollars are to be directed.

Thus, it essentially was an academic decision that other University needs were more critical at this time than putting state funding of the Theatre Department wing at the head of our priority list with the state Legislature. Any suggestions that the University was subordinating it to a new basketball arena or similar structure are totally false.

The question became one of whether to postpone the entire performing arts project until such time as the \$5 million might realistically become available, or go ahead with the major portion of the center that could be financed with private gifts.

Neither alternative was highly desirable, since the needs and concerns of all the interests were real and deeply

felt. Those involved with the Theatre Department understandably would be greatly disappointed by any move that would postpone realization of their recognized needs.

At the same time, thousands of individuals as well as corporations and foundations have already contributed \$7.5 million toward the performing arts center goal. To postpone the center indefinitely could have a devastating effect on MSU's first major fund-raising effort and raise serious questions of credibility.

As a matter of fact, a number of major contributions were predicated on an MSU acknowledgment that construction of the performing arts center was not dependent on the Theatre Department wing and its \$5 million state appropriation.

Furthermore, any delays would certainly result in even higher construction costs. Already, the original estimated cost of the privately-funded center has risen from \$11 million to \$12.5.

After weighing the alternatives, the decision was made, in consultation with the MSU Performing Arts Committee,

to go ahead with the final planning for the performing arts center, without the Theatre Department wing. This will require some redesign of the structure, but the architects have been instructed to indicate how the Theatre Department could be added at a later date.

In the new plans, the two main theaters will remain intact, as will the major support spaces for them. These theaters, the 2,500-seat Great Hall and the 600-seat Theatre-Recital Hall, will serve not only University performance needs and the popular Lecture-Concert programs enjoyed by thousands of mid-Michigan residents, they also will be available for use by the Lansing Symphony and the Opera Guild.

The theaters will follow the earlier plans in all essential details, particularly the careful attention given to comfort, acoustics and theatrical design features.

Thus, in all respects, the State Center for the Performing Arts will fulfill its original goal of being a major community asset. But even this objective is not yet fully assured, and it cannot be unless all those concerned with the University's excellence and the performing arts support the effort.



# Theater faculty respond to cutbacks

By REGINALD THOMAS

"Disappointing."

That was the remark made by members of the Theatre Department when they first learned of the University's plans to alter the Performing Arts Center.

The center was originally planned to include classroom space for the theater department.

But because of administrative priorities the administration eliminated the classroom structure.

The department has been trying to obtain additional

space for classes for many years. The department had thought their request for additional space had been answered when former president Clifton R. Wharton Jr. announced plans to build a new center that included classrooms.

The Theatre Department began to expand its program in preparation for its move to the

new building, said department head Frank C. Rutledge.

Rutledge added that they are now exploring the effect the new alteration will have on the department.

"We are exploring what cutbacks will have to be made," he said.

The department has been housed in the cramped inadequate facilities of Fairchild Theatre and the MSU auditorium. The department has had problems finding adequate space to hold classes.

"We have to turn down half

of our classes because we have no room," said professor John Baldwin. He added the University is talking about converting Fairchild into a lecture hall.

Baldwin added the department has problems holding classes when the auditorium or Fairchild is in service. He said there is no facility to hold master directing and design.

Professor Donald Treat said good material is sometimes wasted because of inadequate storage space. He said good props have been destroyed because they could not store them, adding to production costs.

Treat said some members of the department expected the

building to be built without classrooms. He added it was not an unexpected shock.

"Some of us had the feeling it would be built without the classes," he said. "It came as no big shock."

Baldwin added that the amount of money spent for the facilities is a drop in the bucket compared to what is lavished on other projects in new building, said department

"It seems that since this is one of the greatest universities in the world that we could have more than one (performing) auditorium," he added.

## Other Opinions

THE STATE JOURNAL  
May 8, 1978



### Point of View

## Performing Arts Center alive

Edgar L. Harden is president of Michigan State University.

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This is unfortunate, because it tends to detract from very positive steps that will greatly benefit the community as well as the university.

The fact is that a magnificent new performing arts center will be built on the campus, and it will keep faith with commitments made to contributors to the university's \$17 million Enrichment Program. The understandable concern arises because of the need to reassess the original plan that included an academic component in the proposed structure.

It is important to keep the facts clearly in perspective.

The performing arts center project was conceived initially to achieve two separate but related goals: the construction of two modern theaters for public and university use, and a wing to house the Department of Theater and its activities.

The two theaters are being financed by the private gifts to the Enrichment Program, while the theater department wing, as an academic unit, was to be built with public funds sought from the state.

The goal was to privately raise \$11 million for the performing arts component and to seek \$5 million from the State Legislature for the theater department wing. Plans were drawn accordingly, but the fund-raising campaign literature carefully drew the distinction between the two elements.

The \$17 million Enrichment Pro-

gram was launched to raise the \$11 million for the performing arts center (and \$6 million for a museum, library strengthening and endowed faculty chairs). Meanwhile, for the past four years, the university's capital outlay request to the State Legislature has contained a \$5 million item for the theater department segment.

But any large-scale undertaking such as this always is based on hopes, expectations and assumptions that may not be fully achieved, particularly in an institution with a great many unmet needs.

For example, over the past two years, MSU was faced with federal and state requirements to install anti-pollution devices on its power plant smokestack at a cost of \$6.5 million, of which \$4.3 million would be state funded. The Communication Arts Building, a priority since 1965, finally was approved for state financing and will cost \$18.3 million. Planning money has been released by the state for a \$17 million plant and soil science building, also a priority of long-standing. Large amounts to meet safety and handicapper access laws must be obtained.

Planning to meet the present and future instructional needs of MSU students, and to accommodate critical research projects, is a complex and difficult process, especially in an era of very limited resources. Many hard decisions must be made as to where available dollars are to be directed.

Thus, it essentially was an academic decision that other university needs were more critical at this time than putting state funding of the theater department wing at the head of our priority list with the State Legislature. Any suggestions that the univers-

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Neither alternative was highly desirable, since the needs and concerns of all the interests were real and deeply felt. Those involved with the theater department understandably would be greatly disappointed by any move that would postpone realization of their recognized needs.

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## ***'A human resource we can ill afford to lose'***

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**By BARBARA HURRELL**

As one who "earmarked" her contribution for the theater wing of the proposed State Center for the Performing Arts, I am unhappy to learn of the revised plans which eliminate that particular wing, even though the new plans are expected to include an enclosed parking structure. In my "dream" University, instructional and cultural facilities would have priority over enclosed parking, but let that pass. The loss of the theater wing has received a great deal of news coverage, but I am even more concerned about another loss that seems to me of more significance, and yet very few even know the loss has been suffered.

Dr. Sears Eldredge has been on "temporary" appointment to Justin Morrill College for the last seven years. During those years he has been instrumental in producing, with the help of his classes, some of the best theater to be seen in this area. As a director, his theatrical sense and taste are sure, and as a teacher, he has inspired unusual effort and devotion on the part of his students. "Freed" from all the problems involved with the possession of stage facilities and a large budget, Dr. Eldredge and his students have

managed to present authentic and moving drama in empty classrooms and cavernous kivas.

Because of various retrenchment policies and procedures, the elimination of Dr. Eldredge's always precarious position has become an accomplished fact, and all efforts to provide some alternative position seem to have fallen on deaf ears. As we all know, even a "great" university manages to retain hundreds of faculty, staff and administrators who are mediocre at best and inept at worst. How ironic that a university of this size could not find a way to retain the services of this brilliant young director and teacher, particularly in view of the present state of theater on the MSU campus. At this point, Dr. Eldredge has accepted a position at Earlham College in Indiana. Its gain is our loss, and this loss should not go unnoticed.

Administration, faculty, and students, we have lost a human resource we could ill afford to lose. When and if a decent theater is built on our campus, what will we put on its stage? Amateur night at the Bijou? Ah, well — at least covered parking will be available!

*Hurrell is an Assistant Professor of American Thought and Language at MSU.*

# Group launches fight for center

By JIMSMITH  
State News Staff Writer

In an effort to convince MSU administrators not to alter floor plans of the State Center for the Performing Arts, an ad hoc committee of Lansing-area arts groups was launched Tuesday night.

At a hastily-called meeting held at Edgewood United Church in East Lansing, members of the MSU faculty and private contributors expressed their anger at MSU's decision to lop off the academic theater wing of the center.

Opinions on the reasons for the switch in the center's plans included the season's success of the MSU basketball team, a lack of commitment by MSU's top administrators, the departure of former MSU President Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. and the Michigan Legislature.

Speakers suggested tactics ranging from meetings with MSU President Edgar L. Harden and individual members of the MSU Board of Trustees to a letter-writing campaign directed at legislators.

Alan Suits, an area business leader and president of the Opera Guild of Greater Lansing, said threats to withdraw grants for the center or bring a lawsuit would be "negative maneuvers" and should only be

used as a last resort.

In suggesting the meeting with Harden, several speakers agreed with Lansing attorney Raymond R. Joseph that more facts are needed about reasons for the decision, which was officially announced last week.

Paul Conn, associate professor of political science, said it was his opinion that the decision to redesign the center was inevitable after Wharton left MSU.

John J. Baldwin, professor of theater, said members of the Theatre Department were told two weeks ago not to talk to anyone about the change in plans.

Baldwin said the "news blackout" was ordered by Robert Perrin, vice president for University and federal relations, through Theatre Department Chairperson Frank C. Rutledge.

Rutledge said Baldwin had misconstrued what he had said to the theater faculty.

"Bob Perrin said 'don't blab this all over,'" Rutledge said. "Mr. Perrin said not to get excited until more details were worked out."

Perrin was in Chicago and unavailable for comment Wednesday.

The planned redesign of the center would make future classroom additions impossible, Baldwin said.

Other speakers were disturbed because they said they viewed the decision to change plans as a breach of promise.

"They (MSU administrators) weren't 'iffy' about the \$5 million in any literature I got," Joseph said.

Max Palouman, president of the Lansing Symphony Association, said, "people in the arts don't speak up enough. I think we're wrong if we are passive about this."

Some speakers suggested the University's desire for a new field house, sparked by the success of Earvin "Magic" Johnson and the MSU basketball team, may have played a role in moving the center down the list of priority building projects.

"Imagine the pressures if they tried to cut out part of the field house," Palouman said.

The loosely-formed ad hoc committee is composed of members of the opera guild, the symphony association, a member of the ASMSU Programming Board, a representative of the Theatre Department, MSU Faculty Associates and interested individuals.

## COUNCIL CRITICIZES DESIGN

# *Original PAC plans urged*

By MICHELLE CHAMBERS  
State News Staff Writer

Academic Council voted Tuesday to urge MSU administrators to complete the performance portion of the State Center for the Performing Arts as originally designed.

A resolution, which was passed without dissent, also asked administrators to allow for future expansion of the initially-planned academic facilities.

The rules of order were suspended so Dan Jones, ASMSU Student Board president, could address the council.

Jones said he had seen the revised plans for the performing arts center and emphasized that they do not resemble the original concept.

"What essentially happened was that what were solid plans are now liquid plans," he said.

Matters such as acoustics and space in the center have become "open-ended" decisions for the MSU architect, Jones explained.

Other major changes for the center include one lobby to be shared by both the planned performing auditoriums, no provision for rehearsal rooms and no identified ticket areas, said Jones, who has been involved with the Lecture Concert Series.

"The idea of a shared lobby is worse than what we have now," Jones said. "Noise control will be almost impossible."

He added that by not providing rehearsal

rooms, potential performers will be eliminated. He cited as examples the Lansing Symphony and the Opera Guild.

"When all the people who donated money to this find out how many corners were cut, I doubt if they'll want to give any more money to MSU fund raisers," he said.

Jones said donating money is a form of an agreement and by changing the original plans, administrators are breaking a contract.

The original plan called for the construction of three separate facilities: the Great Hall, a thrust stage and facilities for the Theatre Department. The three buildings

could be built 10 years apart, according to the original plan, he said.

However, the revised plan does not adhere to the theory of the original plan, he added.

Provost Clarence L. Winder said administrators had to choose between a delay in the construction of the center or a change in design. They decided on a modified plan, he said.

He agreed with various council members that wider consultation might have been appropriate, but the judgment had been one of "high certainty" on the part of administrators.

Ralph Taggart, associate professor of botany and plant pathology, said he felt it was inappropriate that a decision was made in "what seems to be a short time."

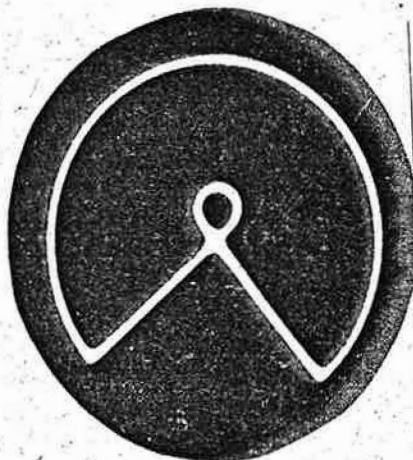
Michael Chial, associate professor of audiology and speech sciences, said the council should support the original plan as a "moral commitment to an implied contract."

In other business, Winder announced he had received a verbal comment from the Michigan Employment Relations Commission that an election will be held by the end of the month for an appropriate composition of a faculty collective bargaining unit. He said licensed physicians would also be included in the bargaining unit.

# Capital fund drive a planning failure

Over a year ago former MSU President Clifton R. Wharton Jr. unveiled a grandiose plan: the University would raise money to pay for construction of classrooms and other facilities on campus. Christened the \$17 Million Capital Enrichment Program, the fund-raising drive was the apotheosis of planning that dated back to 1974. Things have changed a great deal in one short year. Wharton is gone, and an interim president — widely respected for his legislative acumen — is in the saddle. Last Wednesday it was revealed that the Capital Enrichment Program is, for all practical purposes, a thing of the past.

The \$17 million goal will not be met. A casualty of this financial shortfall will be the Theatre Department. Original plans called for raising \$11 million from private donations, a portion of which would be set aside for construction of a Performing Arts Center to house three theaters. The Univer-



The new PAC logo reproduced above is a forward-looking symbol belied by a cloudy future.

sity would then lobby the state legislature for an additional \$6 million, which would be used to establish classrooms, offices and other Theatre Department facilities within the PAC.

That \$6 million is no longer a priority to be pursued. The PAC is still scheduled to be built, but without the Theatre Department addition.

The University claims it has revised its priorities and now deems funds for other educational purposes and classroom facilities more important than financing a refurbishing of the Theatre Department. There is merit in that argument, although few knowledgeable persons question the dismal state of Theatre Department facilities. Unfortunately, it seems that anytime money gets tight, the arts must suffer.

In this case, it may be more pertinent to examine the dreary state of MSU's long-range planning exercises. The PAC has been in the planning stages for four years; now everything has been revised. The Capital Enrichment program was much ballyhooed as a promise that would be kept; now it has been broken. Under the circumstances, what confidence can the University community have in MSU's commitments? How can MSU promote long-range planning as a concrete process, when that concrete always seems made of quicksand?

# Arts center plans altered

By JIM SMITH

State News Staff Writer

A significant portion of the proposed Performing Arts Center has been abandoned by University administrators in favor of legislative financial support for higher-priority projects.

Original PAC plans called for three theaters to be built from \$11 million raised from private donations in former MSU President Clifton R. Wharton Jr.'s \$17 Million Capital Enrichment Program.

The additional \$6 million was to be sought from the Michigan Legislature to finance educational portions of the building to house offices and classrooms for the Theatre Department.

It is the \$6 million state allocation which MSU has decided not to pursue.

MSU administrators confirmed Wednesday that new plans were being developed which would re-design the PAC minus the Theatre Department addition.

Jack Breslin, MSU executive vice president, said that due to urgent building needs in other areas, such as communication arts and plant and soil science, the University decided not to ask the Legislature for matching funds.

"Our priorities have changed substantially since 1974," Breslin added, referring to the formulation of the PAC project.

Breslin said MSU had a commitment to raise its \$11 million share of the PAC before requesting matching legislative funds.

"We're a long way from getting the money," he added.

## *Education complex dropped*

"We made a commitment to go ahead with the facility . . . We have to complete this project," Breslin said in explaining MSU's rationale for going alone on the project.

Breslin said rising construction costs would have probably required more than the planned \$17 million.

"It's probably closer to \$20 million now," he said.

Theatre Department Chairperson Frank C. Rutledge declined to comment on the reasons for MSU's shift in priorities but conceded, "it is a major disappointment."

University architect Robert L. Siefert said a parking facility, financed with

University funds, is being considered in connection with the revised facility.

Pledges and contributions tied to the PAC currently total approximately \$7.5 million, said Leslie Scott, vice president for development.

Ground for the facility could be broken early next year if the PAC fund reaches at least \$10 million, Scott added.

Siefert said completion of the facility is projected for the end of 1981 if all plans go as scheduled.