

NEWS

Making history: Si View Community Center remodel starts with historic designation



Ballet class, normally in Si View's hardwood-floor social room, goes on as usual in a temporary location. — *Image Credit: David Hamilton/Staff Photo*

by CAROL LADWIG, Snoqualmie Valley Record Editor
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The timing was comical. Just days after the Si View Community Center in North Bend was named to the National Register of Historic Places, crews began a remodel that will close the building down for months.

Staff was nearly moved out by early February and all of the Si View Metropolitan Park District programming that is normally housed in the 77-year-old building had been set up in its new locations.

“Oh, look, there’s the last piece of furniture to be moved out,” said Si View’s recreation programs supervisor Minna Rudd, on a recent tour of the building. A lone wooden desk sat along the wall of the otherwise empty room on the tour.

“It’s a little bit strange, this building is always so full and now you can hear every footstep.”

Rudd walked through the planned \$1.7 million renovations, which includes: More classroom space; new flooring in the gym and lobby; changes to the stage area to allow for splitting the space, and separating it from the gym with a sliding wall; plus fire safety improvements; and, where possible, a return to some of the early layout of the building, such as one of the double-door entrances to the gym.

“That was the original function (of the building), a fieldhouse,” Rudd said.

In recent years, though, the classrooms have also gotten a lot of use. The social room was home to most of the district’s popular dance classes, and the fireside room — its name will change since it won’t actually be fireside at the end of the project — hosted preschool classes.

Most of the programs, except the pool, were relocated for the duration of the remodel. Programs are taking space in the Sallal Grange, North Bend Depot, Snoqualmie American Legion post and many other facilities.

“We’re a little bit all over the map,” said Rudd, but on a positive note, she adds, “We have not had to cancel any activities.”

This remodel, expected to be complete by summer, won’t see any effect from the building’s recent status change, but the building could become eligible for new revenue from historic restoration and preservation grants, said Si View’s director Travis Stombaugh.

“It does open us up for some federal grant funding, also some state funding,” he said, but “the coolest thing is that it highlights a piece of the area’s history.”

The Si View Community Center was built in 1938, one of the Works Progress Administration projects that put people to work during the Great Depression, and one of only eight buildings constructed for King County Parks. All labor and construction costs were funded by the WPA, while King County paid for the materials.

Built in the “service rustic” architectural style, the Si View Community Center retains its original look today. Its preservation is a priority for staff, and may be a valuable chance for anyone who might work on it.

Stombaugh said the hired contractors were excited about the building, adding, “It’s probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a carpenter to work on a building that’s all wood.”

The building’s footprint has not changed, and the district’s staff has worked diligently through projects of the past 10 years, to preserve the historic feel of the interior.

“We have always been focused on preserving the community center,” said Rudd.

Only materials that were in use at the time of the building’s construction are approved for maintenance and replacement work, and that includes what is probably the biggest portion of the current remodel, the gym floor and walls.

Gaps in the walls, caused by the boards shrinking over time, are marked with sticky notes, and the floor boards have been sanded down to the nailheads from their installation in many spots. Still, Si View has required the contractors to “keep as many boards as they can,” Stombaugh said. “I think we’re trying to use part of the floor on part of the countertop.”

The slate flooring planned for the building entry is also from the same time period, it’s just a more expensive material than was originally used in the building.

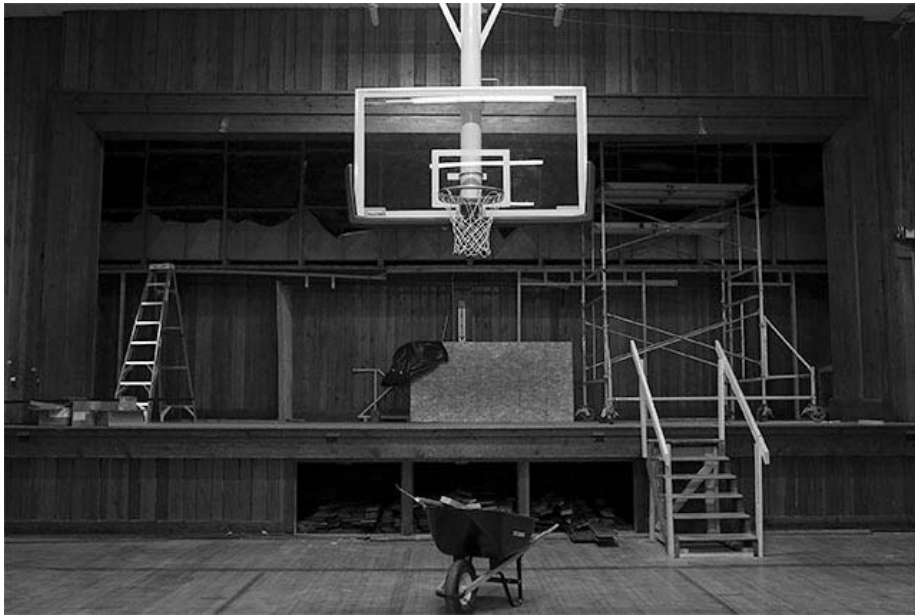
All of the work is expected to be complete by June 15, well in time for the start of the farmers market and camp seasons and, of course, the Festival at Mount Si.

“We want to be open for all our summer programming, and have our camps here,” said Stombaugh. “The magic happens here in the summer.”

For more information about the Si View Metropolitan Park District, visit www.siviewpark.org.

Renovation work begins in the gym and stage area.

Children play dodgeball at the Si View after-school program, hosted by the Sallal Grange during a final phase of renovations at the Si View Community Center.





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