The Blackham Coliseum

Story — 1964 To 1968

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The university finally looked into the possibility of repairing the roof only, but found that it would cost about $150,000 and that the work could not be guaranteed, so decided to at full to demolish and expand the seating capacity as well. At that time, preliminary planning called for an expansion of the seating, pavers parking facilities, a laminated wood beam structural system, and other items to "draw up" the building, as well as a roof. At that time some $550,000 in building funds were requested from the state for the renovations but the university received only $100,000. Seeking an architect's report, the building boards decided to redesign the building.

The wood beam structural system, selected from cheaper structural steel, necessitated complete redrawing of the renovations — the parking facilities were thrown out, as were paved sidewalks around the building, and many of the "dress up" items to be jettisoned. Funds were pared to $440,000 some legislators sought more funds. They eventually were able to secure another $200,000 from the State Liquidation Board and $100,000 from corporate franchise taxes turned over to the State Board of Education. But during the two-year period, building costs had shot up at a rate of 12 to 15 per cent.

The renovations that had been pared to $440,000 some two years before would now cost about $600,000. All of the interior structural steel, lighting fixtures, brickwork and the roof Had to be redone. Additionally, lighting fixtures were included in the final contract for an expected cost of $50,000.

The plans were again reworked, bids were taken and the contract was awarded to Well Construction Co. of Lafayette at $811,750. To get the contract into the hands of the university, the architects had to rework all of the changes in the building, exterior and interior structural steel, paint- ing, interior concrete, concrete walks and curbs around the building area and the heating and ventilating systems expected to be pre pared to the present. The University approved a change order and agreed to do the painting in order to get equipment they deemed necessary to make the facility acceptable.

The renovations increased the seating capacity from 3,339 permanent seats to 7,028, an increase of 40 per cent. Addition of upper box seats will bring the seating capacity to 8,700.

Precast concrete slabs, walls and curbs were put into the plans. The building boards had decided that, had they not been able to build the new facilities, they would continue to use the present coliseum. They contend that, had they torn the building down and started from scratch, it would have cost in excess of $1 million to construct a facility equal to the present coliseum.

The Blackham Coliseum, the home of the University of Southwestern Louisiana basketball team, has undergone $811,000 in renovations to double the seating capacity and repair the roof. Precontraction Co. was awarded the contract for the repairs. The university approved a change order and agreed to do the painting in order to get equipment they deemed necessary to make the facility acceptable.

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