

Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center

Built: 1914
Renovated: 1985
In Operation Through: 2005

Dimensions: 396 feet long by 196 feet across.
Floor area currently: 214,969 on 4 levels including the full basement
Parking Spaces: 200 total - 185 in north lot and 15 angled along east side driveway

Historic Designations: 1) Designated City of Oakland Historic Landmark A1+
2) California Register of Historic Resources

Structural: The building has a steel frame and reinforced concrete structure. The arena is covered by lightweight three-hinged-arch trusses. The exterior is clad with granite veneer on its northern façade (facing Lake Merritt) with terra cotta trim. The remaining elevations are cement-plaster clad concrete. The building foundation rests on wood piles approximately 60 – 70 feet deep. The roof over the theater and around the perimeter of the Arena is concrete slab construction. The original skylights at the roof over the Arena, Ballroom and Gold Room have been replaced with sheathing panels.

Design: The north elevation features seven monumental niches, each containing a sculptural relief designed by Alexander Stirling Calder (father to the famous artist of mobiles and large abstract sculptures). The existing historic skylights could be restored to bring light into the interior.

Theater seating: 1,899 seats – 866 Orchestra, 489 First Balcony, 544 Second Balcony
Theater area: 36% of first floor

Arena seating: 3,723 fixed seats, 764 folding box seats, up to 1,500 folding chairs on the arena floor.
Arena area: 64% of first floor

Basement level: 79,975 s.f. Currently used for storage
First Floor Level: 75,931 s.f. Arena and Orchestra level seating for the theater
Second Level: 38,240 s.f. Theater Mezzanine, Arena corridor, seating, and concessions, and the Olympic Room
Third Level: 22,643 s.f. Theater Balcony, Ballroom and Gold Room

Olympic Room: NW corner of the 2nd floor. 2,000 s.f.
Ballroom: NW corner of the 3rd floor. 3,100 s.f. main floor and 800 s.f. balcony. 320 s.f. stage.
Gold Room: SW corner of the 3rd floor. 3,100 s.f. main floor and 800 s.f. balcony.

Elevators: Seven total. Two Public Elevators, 3 Freight Elevators including one in the floor of the arena, a Concession Traction elevator, and an Orchestra Pit Elevator. There is also a Wheelchair Lift.

Seismic Upgrade: At the Arena portion of the building, the wood piles were not driven to adequate depth. As a result, the structure settled prior to the 1940's. Because the stability of the roof is dependent on resistance to outward thrust, cables were added across the building to resist this thrust and remove these forces from the piles. In 1985 a renovation was completed to seismically strengthen the arena side of the structure and upgrade cosmetic finishes. Seismic upgrades were intentionally limited to contain costs. They did not bring the building into compliance with the codes in effect at the time.

Current Occupancy: Not allowed per Fire Inspector from report in 2008. Problems include low pressure in the fire sprinkler riser which may indicate a leak. Also, the fire alarm panel needs to be reset and the basement needs to be cleared.

Heating and Cooling: Existing 6M BTUH Boiler (steam). Two chambers in a CMU housing. The boiler feeds low pressure steam at roughly 12 psi to steam coils located in 3 adjacent fan rooms and several steam wall furnaces on the 1st and 2nd floor. One of the two tank chambers is not operable. The rest of the equipment appears to be in working condition but lacks seismic bracing and requires continued maintenance. Replacement is recommended. Forced heating air system was in working condition in 2008.
Air Conditioning – none currently.

Ventilation: Arena outside air capacity is 41,170 cfms from two mechanical fan rooms and the basement fan rooms. Theater outside air is supplied by the fan rooms. Ballroom and Gold Room have a combination of designated supply fans and the basement fan room outside air supply. There are six rooftop exhaust fans.

Domestic Water: There is a new domestic water heater located in the basement.

Electrical: Utility power is provided to the site via a PG&E transformer network and a 4000 amp, 208/120V switchboard. Major distribution loads include 3 lighting power panels, 2 motor control center, 1 building power panel, along with separate panels for the stage loads and arena loads. The existing stage and arena panels are rated at 600 amps each.

Generator: 100kW Generator will likely need to be replaced but the existing fuel storage tank could be reused.

Sources: Report of Fire Inspection IS-108-3322
September 30, 2008

Critical Engineering Group Report
October 28, 2008

Feasibility Study of the Adaptive Reuse of the Kaiser Arena as a New Main Library
June 2006

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