

Periods of Alterations of Beethoven Hall, 420 S. Alamo St. San Antonio, TX

- 1895: The original design was a neoclassical detailed façade of the Beaux Arts influence by Albert Beckmann. The main entrance was from South Alamo Street with a central entry in a formal high style. Documents from this period show a highly detailed auditorium with plaster finishes. The stagehouse was designed without a fly tower due to the major presentations being music and voice. The 1896 and 1912 Sanborn maps show the original front of house with the South Alamo right-of-way. The basement of the stage held a bowling alley. While the front of house had a club room and a billiard area with a bar. The remaining basement space below the current front of house has the remains of the old kitchen for the original bar, but it is only accessible through the crawl space. (Photographs from UTSA Libraries Special Collections)
- 1913: There was a fire on Friday October 31, 1913, which caused the loss of significant portions of the building. The new hall was designed by Leo M. J. Dielmann with Jacob Wagner supervising the construction. The original foundation and portions of the load bearing walls were reused to reduce cost and quicken the construction schedule. The fire destroyed the stage which completely collapsed, along with the roof over the auditorium and the front of house. The balcony structure of the auditorium that remained was reused by Dielmann in the 1914 reconstruction. These appeared to be the only original, interior elements remaining from the 1895 construction period. (Photographs from UTSA Libraries Special Collections)

Modifications to the structure following the 1913 fire required a complete reconstruction of the stage from the basement ceiling line up, and the front of house lobby spaces. The balcony's structure was retained, and the cast iron balcony railing was reused for the reconstruction, including the original cast iron columns. Dielmann's 1914 design for the reconstruction shows an extension of the stage house to have fly capabilities with a solid load bearing brick wall structure. Dielmann's design for the 1914 reconstruction did include a highly detailed plaster interior according to drawings and photographs. The plaster finishes from Dielmann's design were removed possibly during the 1980s renovation by the City of San Antonio. There are still remnants of the historic wood windows and walls on the second floor. (Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/beethoven-mannerchor>).

- 1920: Beethoven Maennerchor sold the concert hall in 1920. After the sale of the building the stagehouse was modified with installation of a full fly over the performance portion of the stage only. The building was used as a vaudeville, movie house, and rented out for various events during this time. The hall was substantially reduced in size in 1928 due to the South Alamo Street façade being removed to widen the street. The City of San Antonio purchased portions of the land in 1928 for widening the street. ("Archaeology at the Alamodome: Investigations of a 'San Antonio Neighborhood in Transition' by the Center for Archaeological Research, UTSA), (Bexar County Clerk Office). The 1914 façade was replaced with a yellow wire cut brick and the original windows from the 1914 reconstruction were reinstalled as part of the façade construction. (Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/beethoven-mannerchor>).

- 1951: The 1951 Sanborn's map shows the modified front of house with a South Alamo Street right-of-way which was widened to the building façade. This is the current location of the west façade.
- 1967: Photographs from 1960 to 1967 show there was still entry to the basement at the southwest corner. Photographs from this period also show that the main entrance was still from South Alamo St. until it was closed in the Hemisfair modifications in 1967. It is unknown if the decorative plaster shown in Dielmann's drawings were removed during these renovations. The entrances were moved to the south side of the building with a large pavilion built to provide a place for the ticket booth, concessions, and lobby area.
- 1972: A HABS Survey was conducted on the building. This report stated, "in its original form an excellent example of the style and period. In its present truncated form only utilitarian in style. Interiors are still rather handsome. Highly adaptable to reuse but high restoration costs have limited reuse". It appears from this that the interior decorative plaster from the 1914 renovation may have still been intact at this time, but this cannot be confirmed.
- 1981 to 1988: The building undergoes heavy modifications in the interior and exterior. All the interior floors to the lobby and auditorium were reconstructed to allow a slanted floor for raked seating. Also, stairs from the current lower lobby to the mid-level of the raked seating were added. Seating was reduced to expand the lobby. The current interior walls under the balcony were created during this renovation to create the concession and ticket booths. The historic balcony and cast-iron columns were painted an electric blue along with the other interior millwork from the 1914 reconstruction. New seats were installed to fit the new auditorium layout. Tivoli-style house lights were installed on the five newly exposed steel trusses after the historic plaster ceiling was removed. The side walls of the auditorium that were originally flat surfaces with plaster details from the 1914 reconstruction, were covered with lath and plaster walls to create scalloped shaped forms. The historic stage and proscenium were covered up with lath and plaster forms like the walls. The original wood ceilings in the lobbies were removed and replaced with acoustic tile dropped-in ceilings. Furthermore, exterior egress stairs were installed on the south and north facades. The building's windows to the auditorium and back of house were infilled with CMU and stucco coating. Pictures and other documentation showing that the windows were still open until this renovation. New entrances were created on the south façade with ramps, and the stairs from Hemisfair were removed. (San Antonio Express News articles, City of San Antonio Interdepartmental Correspondence letters).
- 1983: Designated a State Antiquities Landmark.

Property Ownership

- January 23, 1895: Herman Schultze to Beethoven Maennerchor
- February 10, 1920: Beethoven Maennerchor to I. Tobias
- August 18, 1926: I. Tobias and M. Scharlach to Jesse D. Oppenheimer and A.J. Swearingen
- May 31, 1927: A.J. Swearingen to E. B. Carruth
- July 18, 1928: E. B. Carruth to Lee W. Wilson
- December 29, 1928: Lee W. Wilson to City of San Antonio partial sale for expansion of S. Alamo St.
- February 15, 1929: Lee W. Wilson to Thomas H. Franklin, Leroy & Gilbert Denman
- 1957: Gus B. Mauermann
- January 13, 1958: City of San Antonio Appraiser noted the building had reached functional obsolescence.
- 1960: City of San Antonio ownership
- December 18, 2013: The City of San Antonio to Hemisfair Park Public Facilities Corporation