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July 14th, 2008

Patia P. Ford
Commission Clerk

Date

MIAMI NEW YORK

Department of Community Affairs, Inc.
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-21002601
Attn: Ms. Paula Ford

RE: Petition for Declaratory Statement before the Building Commission

Dear Ms. Ford:

We are filing this petition to obtain clarification of the criteria used for calculating floor area to establish if a stage is greater than 1000 square feet. Please find referenced below Section 410.2 of the Florida Building Code 2004 version. This is the applicable code for the projects.

Florida Building Code Section 410.2 Definitions.

STAGE. A space within a building utilized for entertainment or presentations, which includes overhead hanging curtains, drops, scenery or stage effects other than lighting and sound. Stage area shall be measured to include the entire performance area and adjacent backstage and support areas not separated from the performance area by fire-resistance-rated construction. Stage height shall be measured from the lowest point on the stage floor to the highest point of the roof or floor deck above the stage.

The previous Miami-Dade County School Board Building Official issued a statement to clarify the Stage area should include the thrust portion of the stage on the audience side of the proscenium and stage curtain. The stages in question are less than 50 feet in height; therefore, a fire curtain is not required.

We disagree with this clarification for the following reason: the definition of Stage as shown in Section 410 of the Florida Building Code, clearly states that if a space within a building is to be considered a stage it must include "overhead hanging curtains, drops, scenery or stage effects other than lighting and sound."

This definition is consistent with the one found in the Florida Fire Protection Code. The thrust portion of the stage does not have overhead curtains, drops, scenery or stage effects. It includes only circulation space to access the stage and serves as a safety buffer to prevent a performer from inadvertently falling off the raised platform because they cannot see the vertical drop when the curtain is closed. Because the thrust portion has no provisions for curtains, drops or stage effects we believe it does not meet the definition a stage.

Consequently, this area should not be added to the area behind the stage curtain when establishing the area of the stage.

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Additionally, the size of the stage establishes if roof vents and fire department connections are required. The entire area of the stage is used to calculate the required roof vent area. If the thrust portion on the audience side of the proscenium wall were added to the stage area, at stages where roof vents are required, the roof vent size would be inflated. We believe providing an oversized roof vent is not the intent of the Florida Building Code.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools Building Official's interpretation creates an unnecessary financial burden on the District; by adding the thrust portion to the stage area at schools currently under construction, the following additional components would be required: fireman's connections or standpipes, roof vents, and sprinkler systems.

The programmatic stage area is established by MDCPS curriculum specialists is typically about 900 square feet. The MDCPS established thrust portion is roughly 400 square feet; thus, if the two areas are added together, as required by the Building Official, the total stage area would be calculated as greater than 1000 square feet.

We look forward to your response. Please contact me at extension #1150 if you have any questions.

Respectfully,
Zyscovich Architects



Joseph Valencia, AIA
Associate