

# ESSAY INVESTIGATES CHURCH PURCHASE

Many questions coming from students, faculty, and staff alike, have risen about the recent purchase of the Church of Christ on South Main Street behind NCSA. As is often the case, misconstrued notions and misunderstandings have developed since the purchase was made public, so the N.C. Essay went straight to Sam Stone, director of the N.C. School of the Arts Foundation, and got the story of the Church of Christ purchase directly from the office involved.

It seems the Church of Christ building was purchased in mid-November of 1972. The facility happened to be up for sale because the congregation had outgrown the physical plant of the church. Also most of its members no longer lived in this locale and community. The Church of Christ building was

purchased with funds from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, at a price of \$150,000. That amount sounds quite tremendous, but when one considers the cost of constructing a building of comparable size, plus the near-acre of real-estate that the church rests on, the price is a real bargain in today's sky-rocketing, real-estate market.

The Church of Christ facility became available in August, 1972, as NCSA was negotiating with the Catholic School (located behind NCSA on Sunnyside and S. Main) for the purchase of its physical plant. The reason for the needed acquisition of a new building for NCSA was not for classroom use but for a future-planned program in Film and Television. The decision was in favor of the Church of Christ building

because its sanctuary (45' 60' and two stories high) was larger than the gymnasium in the Catholic School and would more readily adapt itself to being renovated into the needed sound studio. Also in the picture was money. The greatest amount offered by NCSA for the Catholic School was \$325,000.00 and that was not enough. With these assets being possessed by the Church of Christ facility, NCSA decided to go ahead with its purchase, at a savings of at least \$175,000.00.

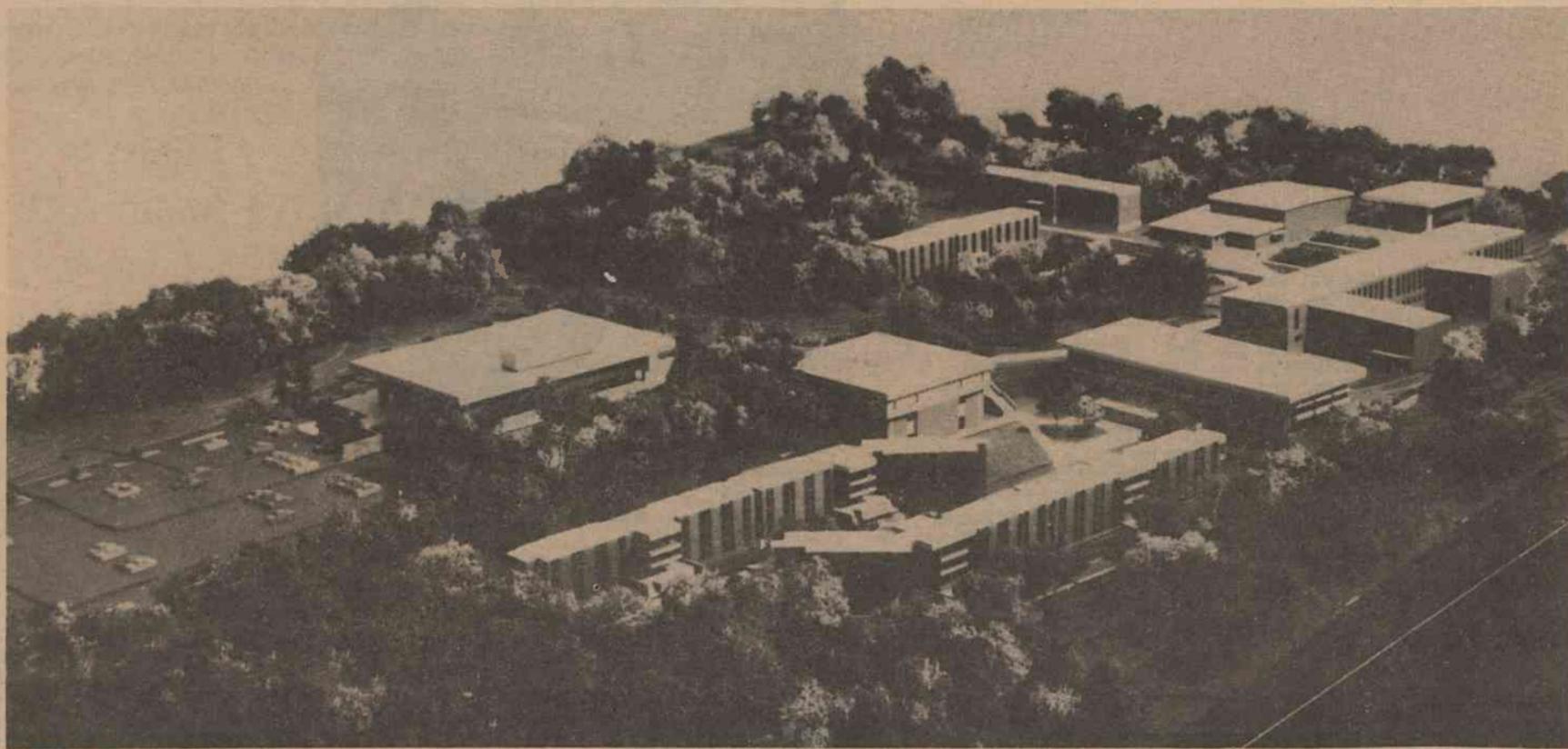
Currently NCSA uses the Church of Christ building as a rehearsal and recital hall - a use which will become rather convenient as graduation students must give recitals in the Spring, sometimes as many as two or three a day. This, in itself, is a savings to NCSA because until the recent acquisition of the church, NCSA had to pay rent for

the use of the recital and concert halls at Salem College. The congregation of the Church of Christ presently uses the facility three times a week, (Wednesday evening and Sunday morning and evening) until they get their new structure completed.

NCSA is still interested in the Catholic School property and also is keeping an eye on the South Fork Baptist Church property for possible future expansion. But Mr. Stone says these are only speculations.

Hopefully such information helps to clear the air of the Church of Christ purchase, although it does nothing to soften the straight-backed, hard wood pews. If there are any other issues, events, or questions that you might wish to know more about, please write a letter to the editor, or contact a member of the N.C. Essay Staff.

-Randy Jones



WERE WE REALLY TO LOOK LIKE THIS?

## Design & Production Woes:

# WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS

At a time of construction and architectural planning throughout the campus, some deep consideration should be given to the School of Design and Production facilities.

Across from the campus on Waughtown street lies an old garage-warehouse type building. Unlikely as its appearance seems, the building is an essential part of the school for it houses the D & P faculty offices, classrooms, scene shop, properties shop, tools, paints, materials and all those other vital things which go into the making of a show.

Some students are familiar with the building, others simply know it as the place that "techies" disappear to for days at a time. At any rate, the building is in need of repair and improvement. The shop is increasingly overburdened with the building of several productions simultaneously, storage space and a good sized student body. Up until recently the roof

seemed to open whenever it rained, dumping generous amounts of water. Not long ago a scrim for the "Misanthrope" production was stretched out on the floor in the process of being painted. Later that night the rains came down and nearly ruined it - an example of just one of the many situations which have risen from the dusty old building.

The lighting in many areas is inadequate for the work that has to be done.

Electrical power is also insufficient for tools and equipment during a heavy work load, which is more than often every day.

Classrooms consist of a back studio and a room in the front of the building with the exception of practical classes which are held right in the shop. But the need for classroom space often pushes some classes out into the shop amidst the whining table saws and other building activity that simply can't stop because a class is being held.

At times the heating is inadequate and uneven leaving you sweating in one place from a blast of hot air and grabbing for your coat in the chilly cold twenty feet away.

These conditions aren't the worst which technical theatre has had to contend with past and present. Sets and props are still being produced and students are still learning and progressing. Spacious, well equipped scene shops don't necessarily produce excellent, well built shops, but in most cases they do add to any degree of quality.

Quite often part of a student's time is spent on maintenance work around the shop, though this turns out to be a necessity under the circumstances.

Max Devolder, a member of the faculty, gave me several recommendations for improving conditions after we talked about them for a while. They are:

(1) Purchasing the building would be a start in the right direction as it is presently being rented.

(2) Painting the walls and ceilings would make the environment a little brighter as would skylights in the wood and paint shop.

(3) A resolution to the crowded, noisy classrooms would be to add a second story over existing classrooms.

(4) Another critical area are the loading and unloading spaces on Waughtown street. These could be rebuilt with a more efficient floor level loading dock.

(5) Air conditioning and ventilation would ease the discomfort of chemical fumes and the ever present sawdust.

A student in D & P will spend a majority of his active time in the shop pursuing one thing or another and should have adequate facilities and working conditions for learning and working, very often late into the night, day after day. Improvements in general would not only benefit the student but also the school as a whole in future productions.

- Bob Gambrill