



## **Spire Center for the Performing Arts**

The Spire Center for Performing Arts is a former Methodist Church built in 1884. Now a performing arts venue that hosts music acts, comedy shows, and more, the building was in desperate need of restoration. Prominently displayed in the downtown area of “America’s Hometown,” the Spire Center exterior certainly did not match the bustling, energetic energy that was going on within the walls. All white with peeling paint, dilapidated aluminum siding, disintegrated wooden trim, and a deteriorated steeple, the building needed a serious facelift. After all, thousands of tourists a year visit Plymouth to be immersed in its history and culture. Nearby restaurants benefit from the Spire Center’s events by bringing in the crowds for dinner, as well as the various shops and stores located downtown.

Spearheaded by President of the Spire Center Board, Bob Hollis, along with a group of dedicated volunteers, thus began the much-needed work on the building. A project that started in 2012 when the building was first acquired by the Town of Plymouth included necessary structural stabilization, a sprinkler system, electrical upgrades and restrooms. Continuing improvements were relatively minor but necessary, and once gaining a certificate of occupancy as a theater, the Spire Center began to prove itself as self- sustaining on an operating basis. After several years of planning, the restoration of the exterior envelope was then the highest priority.

This over \$3 million restoration project to restore the Spire Center back to its former glory began in late 2023. This project included much-needed structural stabilization of the steeple and removal of the aluminum siding – this was useful in understanding how much historic fabric remained and gave hints of what had been lost due to destruction. While most of the trim detail had been lost, surviving historic photos were used as the starting basis for restoration of the missing trim elements. Millwork catalogues of the late 19th century were consulted, as well as comparable historic buildings of this type, in the style what might be best called Victorian Carpenter Gothic.

Probably the most noticeable upgrade to the building is the dramatic change in paint color. Through more research and a comprehensive paint analysis, it was discovered that the original building displayed a remarkable color scheme. Instead of plain white, the building was

originally various shades of green, red and tan. These paint colors were matched and are now proudly displayed on the building. Additionally, a brand-new weathervane was built and placed atop the building on a bright day in June. Now, thousands can appreciate its historic architecture – while attending events or just walking by. Sometimes immersing oneself in history isn't just about attending museums, but by preserving buildings that showcased life from years ago.