

By Sam Bennett / Daily Journal of Commerce Staff

## Wing Luke will tell story of West Coast immigrants

Rick Sundberg gathered ideas from a lot of sources for his design of the Wing Luke Asian Art Museum. He heard from the client and from the Seattle's Chinatown/ International District community.

He also consulted a specialist in feng shui — the art of arranging spaces to create harmony.

“A feng shui master reviewed our drawings to make sure we were doing things as properly as we could,” said Sundberg, a partner with the Seattle architecture firm of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects. “We had been doing projects in China, so we had a workable knowledge of feng shui.”

Renovation has begun to turn the International District's East Kong Yick Building into a new home for the Wing Luke. The 60,000-square-foot museum will have historic exhibits on several floors as well as classrooms, meeting rooms and a small theater.

“The new venue will establish Wing Luke Asian Museum's status as a focal point for the community and give them an opportunity to expand their programs,” said Sundberg.

The East Kong Yick was built in 1910 at King Street and Eighth Avenue South, and has served as a gambling house and hotel for Chinese, Japanese and Filipino immigrants.

Ron Chew, executive director of Wing Luke, said the remodeled museum will be loosely based on New York's Lower East Side Tenement Museum.

“With the opening of our new museum, we have the opportunity to create a West Coast version of the immigrant story, rooted in the Pan-Asian Pacific American experience,” Chew said. “The community wants a museum that is not simply about preserving a dead space that celebrates what once was. The new museum respects the past, but looks to the future at a community that is growing and becoming much more diverse.”



*The East Kong Yick Building is being renovated to house the Wing Luke Asian Museum. Image courtesy of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects.*

Chew said the museum raised 85 percent of the \$23.2 million needed for the project. Construction should be finished in December, and the museum will open in spring 2008.

Sundberg said the building will have flexible exhibit spaces that are easily changed.

Sundberg's firm has a long history of designing spaces for art — including the Whatcom Art & Children's Museum in Bellingham, Sun Valley Center for the Arts and an exhibit project at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

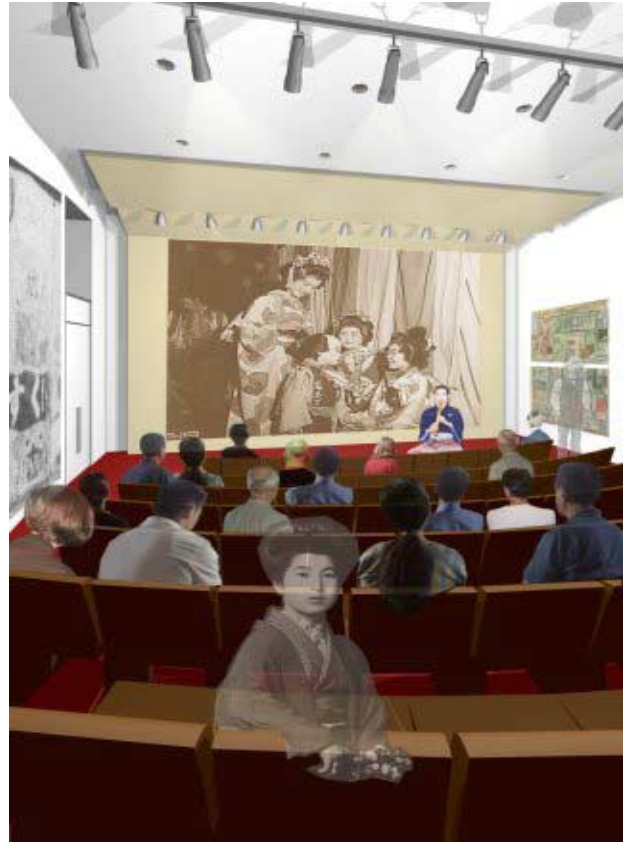
The firm also has been doing residential projects in China.

“It's safe to say that China is quickly become quite Western,” he said, referring to clients asking for Western-type kitchens and other features.

But feng shui is still a popular theme, whether in China or the United States.

“A lot of it is common sense,” said Sundberg. “It's about making sure people are seated in office areas in proper ways and getting the entries in the right places.”

The Wing Luke's general contractor is Marpac Construction, and the structural and civil engineer is Coughlin Porter Lundeen.



*The 60,000-square-foot museum will have exhibit space, classrooms, meeting rooms and a small theater. Image courtesy of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects.*