Theater splashes into gym, replaces pool

by Bob Willis

Creighton's gymnasium will lose its swimming pool but gain a theater as part of a project to utilize space made available by the Kiewit Physical Fitness Center.

The theater will be built on the lower level of the gym's north side in a three-part project approved by the Rev. Joseph Labaj S.J., University president. It will replace the Eppey Little Theater.

The Rev. Carl Reinert S.J., Development Foundation president, said the project was recommended by the Campus Planning Council. Also approved, according to Father Reinert, are:

— THE CONVERSION of the pool area in the east gym to a central receiving area and mail room. Doors and an outside dock will be built at the east end to provide truck access.

— The transfer of ROTC offices to the upper gym, previously occupied by the athletic department.

Father Reinert said work can't begin on the theater until completion of the Kiewit Physical Fitness Center, which replaces most of the gym's facilities. He said the Kiewit plant should open in early October.

PRESENT theater space "will be doubled," according to Dr. Richard Passon, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The theater itself will have about 3,600 square feet, Passon said, and a work-storage area for props will add another 3,000 square feet.

He said the theater "will seat about 200. Eppey never seated more than 100."

The theater will feature outer and inner lobbies, adjacent classroom space for rehearsal, and movable chairs and stage.

The latter will give "a variety of configurations," Passon said, "so we can continue to be as flexible as possible."

HE SAID problems have been encountered with acoustics and load-bearing pillars in the seating area.

The sound problem can be corrected, Passon said, but the pillars, located in the south portion of the theater, will remain.

The theater will cost "about $46,000 to $47,000," Passon said, adding that both cost and specifications could be altered.

The total project which will be done in two phases to ease financial strain, will probably be "completed during the second semester," according to Father Reinert.

SPECIFICATIONS for the pool project have been finalized.

"It will cost $26,000 to fill in the pool, resurface it, and install dock," Father Reinert said.

He noted about "half a dozen alternatives" were considered before making a decision. Handball courts and additional classroom space were among the possibilities.

Father Reinert said no decision has been made on the use of the Eppey Little Theater.