


Vitality of the Performing Arts

Nicholas J. Bernardi
Masters of Architecture
The University of Detroit Mercy
School of Architecture
Studio AR510 & AR520
Professor Karen Swanson
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Food for the Soul: It's more than Soul Food

Urban areas can dissipate into virtually nothing for a number of reasons including, economic decline, de-industrialization, war, and natural disasters. These instances all share a common theme, which is, the restriction of what is completely necessary to humanity's being: contentment. When people fail to be satisfied with their urban surroundings, it encourages them to disperse and seek that which satisfies their need to thrive. Consciously or subconsciously they seek out what builds their motivation for existence and feeds their souls.

Depopulated and blighted urban areas seem to lack these human sources of "soul food". If an urban area is compared to or dealt with as if it were a living organism, it can be said that without proper means of nutrients, this organism could never flourish. So it is important to seek by what means struggling urban areas can be fed to help communities become sustainable. However, it cannot simply be a matter of "feeding" or developing areas with a 'build it and they will come' attitude. Rather it is important to understand that these introduced programs will be based on reason and integrated into the community to provide what it takes to stimulate growth and ensure the stability of a community. In other words, it is important to seek out and investigate what proper "nutrients" or cultural aspects are essential to the survival of urban spaces and the human existence within in order for areas to flourish.

This project will deal with the investigation of what is necessary to help the sustainability of urban spaces based on human needs for suitable existence. From this social investigation it will be possible to determine the proper approach in dealing with the redevelopment of a depopulated or blighted urban area. This investigation will seek out what will serve as a catalyst for the energy and further development of urban areas and the culture within them.

Project Summary

Under the original theme of Urban Impact | Aftermath, this thesis project seeks to explore the vitality of the performing arts and how they can be used as a tool to animate the human aspect of a city and become a catalyst for blighted urban areas. Detroit is an excellent example of a city with a once prominent urban landscape. The after effects of the urban impact relating to an economic downfall have left many neighborhoods of Detroit to fall from grace. This being the case, the aftermath and blighted areas of the city are the focus of this project. Beginning with an exploration of Cass Corridor, a Detroit neighborhood once known for its money and activity, a look at abandoned buildings will assist in the development of the thesis. This study will assist in the selection of an existed building within the devastated neighborhood that can be converted and become an urban stimulant. Once selected, the project involves the discovery of what can be done to salvage the remains of the space to preserve the memory of once was while installing new experiences. The project intends to uphold the neighborhood's tradition and (re)introduce what is necessary for the human standard of contentment. Operating under the premise that the arts have served as a catalyst for blighted areas, the mission is to introduce architecture that can provide to the community at a human scale. By creating a building type that engages people of the community, it will be possible to nurture the neglected area. With the execution of these ideas, the objective of the thesis is to create a foundation for the further development of a sustainable community in the Cass Corridor area.

Thesis Position

Feeling, Thought, and Action

A soul can be defined as the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans, it has been regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body, and commonly held to be separable in existence from the body; the spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part. The existence of this duality begs the question of how one side interacts and works with the other side. Humans can nourish the soul through physical means, while the soul projects spirituality in physical form. Since the soul exists through feelings, thoughts, and action, it is safe to say that humans must engage in activities that invoke those topics.

Traditionally, flourishing cities evoke the soul through their cultural attributes. In order for an urban landscape to be sustainable, it must be able to provide the cultural needs of humanity. In other words a city must be able to provide what is needed for people to flourish within it. Infrastructures of cities and communities are based on these cultural needs: schools, churches, libraries, park districts, transportation, housing, businesses, and areas of amusement. These elements all house sustenance within and evoke feelings, thoughts, and human actions and reactions. These buildings encapsulate emotions, suspense, excitement, hopes, inquiries, and laughter. All these elements supply and create human gratification and develop a culture that is essential for urban fabrics.

Proven through the on going presence and prestige of the arts, it can be said that art is certainly a form of “soul food” and provides sustenance to humans. Performing arts, specifically, seem to have a profound impact on society. Through performing arts it is possible to comment on any topic and evoke feelings and thought while displaying both. Performing arts allow for an action and a reaction at any given time. It creates a sacred moment between the thoughts and feelings of the performer and the audience. In his book, *Architecture Actor & Audience*, Iain Mackintosh discusses the sacredness of the relationships involved with a performance. Beginning with the process of arriving at the performance, he brings up the topics of the mind set of the social atmosphere of which individuals will form. He goes on to discuss the interactions of space with the users. Topics arise of how space communicates to the audience, how performers are set apart from the audience, and the relationships formed. Unlike any other art form, the physicality and spirituality come together to create a sense of sacrosanct within live performances. This performer/audience relationship can be seen as the most potent art for engaging the users because it encapsulates feeling, thought, and action.

The human response to stimuli is an essential element in nourishing the connection of physicality and spirituality. For the performing arts, this stimulant is most apparent in a physical form through the response of laughter. Aristotle said, “A baby becomes ‘human’ around the fortieth day when he or she begins to laugh.” (Horton 5) This quote acknowledges the idea that laughter is an essential element to life. Laughter can be perceived as the soul interacting with the worldly stimuli. Laughter is not the only response that provides a connection to spirituality, but is the one that can most directly promote happiness or contentment.

Historically, the performance arts have provided life to communities and supported making the surrounding cultures sustainable. Performance can keep people’s feelings and thoughts filled with inspiration. Dance and music can be beautiful and awe inspiring. The perpetual writings of parodies and satires of everyday life keep people aware, educated, and humble. History has also shown the importance of performance and comedy within the political scene. Often jesters could make a jest at controversial topics without repercussions. This act would not only entertain and educate, but through performance and laughter people could engage in feelings of contentment. Without going into a full exploration about the history and theory of the performing arts, one can still acknowledge the success and important role played throughout the history of humanity. Through exploitation of this understanding, it may be possible to see the performing arts as a tool to revitalize a struggling and blighted community.

A City of Blight

Detroit, Michigan, was at one time nationally recognized as a top five city for its cultural scene and theater districts. As the city’s economy and population fell, inevitably the cultural luster would fall with it. As theaters and businesses closed, no longer was Detroit a top five city for entertainment. The once prominent city filled with people, money, manufacturing, and eminent American culture dwindled. Struggling to rebuild, Detroit, is left with seemingly endless neglected symbols and monuments that represent the character of a once thriving city. These symbols are everywhere in the city and some are being preserved while others are torn down for redevelopment. These leftovers are the result of the urban impact of a successful Detroit and now the aftermath of blight. *Hudson’s* department store, an example of the leftovers, once stood as a business icon for Detroit. Its accomplished repertoire did so much for the prestige of the city until its closure in 1983 for economic reasons. In 1998 the building was imploded for the development of Ford Field. Although the buildings demolition would lead to positive development, there are a number of cases where significant buildings are forgotten or lost in the blighted landscape. The often photographed and portrayed Detroit house nicknamed “*Old*

Slumpy” was one of the first commissioned homes by Detroit’s famous architect Albert Kahn. This house after abandonment was left to rot and eventually torn down in early fall 2007. More examples of this lack of preservation include: The *United Artists, National, and Adams Theater*. These were all top theaters for large productions in Detroit’s prime and now sit abandoned and in decay. Continuing in the leftovers list, the *Michigan Central Station* closed for good in 1988 and now stands as a symbol of the depopulated city. These forgotten buildings, while just a few among many, all symbolize what once was magnificent, but now convey the loss of people, money, and industry of Detroit.

It is imperative to recognize that Detroit provides these types of leftovers, not as objects to be torn down, but as potential tools to rebuild. The neighborhood known as Cass Corridor is one such area that offers adequate potential for rebirth. This historical neighborhood, located north of I-75 from downtown and west of Woodward Avenue, was at one time a prestigious district and served as a cultural hub for Detroit. Its location is crucial to the further development of the city. The area sits as a link between downtown activity and the largely active existing cultural district/Wayne State University. Currently, the area stands as a depopulated area in need of economic revival. The Cass community is a diverse and vibrant one historically known for its cultural additions to Detroit. The neighborhood has produced a number of top performers, but as of late remains in a dilapidated state in need of renewed activity. Currently, there are some renovations occurring in the area that involve returning some old Detroit buildings back to their former splendor, mostly in the form of urban lofts and some small businesses. With this area, it is important to rebuild with a focus on the type of culture that once made this community prestigious. It begs to be rebuilt as an area that cultivates the spirit of the people within it.

A Hopeful Neighborhood

If Cass Corridor can once again become a cultural hub, building off the positive remains (meaning harnessing potential of abandoned structures and upholding its legacy), it is feasible that this urban landscape could once again become a sustainable community and provide the cultural needs of the neighborhood. Under the rational of arts oriented facilities serving as urban catalysts, it is possible to say that the installation of a performing arts center could reintroduce the activity and the legacy that Cass once had. A community based performing arts center can provide the cultural attributes that not only connect to the people in the community, but also bring people, money, and business back into the area. The development of such a building type as a revitalization tool is not uncommon. Art centers, specifically performing arts centers, have been

noted for their ability to spark a catalyst of development in blighted neighborhoods. The following case studies are all renovation projects that initiated and promoted the development of communities and their cultural art scene.

St. Lawrence as a Case

St. Lawrence Arts & Community Center, in Portland, Maine, was once a vigorous community church built in 1854. As the demographics of the area changed the church congregation slowly dwindled and in 1986 the deteriorating church was closed. Because of St. Lawrence's landmark status on the National Register of Historic Places, the building was not torn down and sat unused until proper funding could be attained to revitalize the space and give it back to the community.

In 1993, developers provided St. Lawrence Church with the proposal to renew the building as an arts and community center. In 1996, *Friends of the St. Lawrence Church*, a non-profit corporation, was formed by several neighborhood residents with the mission to save the historic St. Lawrence Church. From 1997 to 2001, The St. Lawrence renovation vision became comprehensible as funding, grants, and donations were obtained. In 1998, significant work began on the rebuilding of St. Lawrence. And on May 10, 2001 the old church was opened after being converted into two separate intimate performance spaces. Presently, the St. Lawrence Art & Community center is acknowledged by the community as a revitalization tool:

“The St. Lawrence Project creates a mutually dependent model by which these disparate social needs and interests support each other. The arts and community center gives the obsolete historic landmark a constructive and economically viable use while in turn the restored structure provides an aesthetically pleasing and affordable venue perfect for artistic expression. This model is designed to be long-term and self-perpetuating. The initial capital investment in historic preservation goes on to support the arts in providing not only an affordable artistic venue, but also an income-producing asset as theater revenues currently cover a large percentage of the St. Lawrence organizational expenses. This capital investment subsidizes the theater operation and makes it possible for St. Lawrence to realistically offer the venue at affordable rates and to a diverse collection of artists and performers for well into the future.” (St. Lawrence)

Today the Friends of the St. Lawrence Church have a 3-part mission:

- **Arts and Culture:** creating an affordable and accessible venue for diverse offerings of performance arts – theater, dance, music, film, meetings and workshops;
- **Neighborhood and Community:** adding activity, entertainment, cultural enrichment, social interaction, renovation and investment that serve both the surrounding low-income neighborhood of Munjoy Hill as well as the residents of Greater Portland.
- **Historic Preservation:** rehabilitating this local and national landmark with the adaptive reuse of an arts and community center. (St. Lawrence)

Emerson Center as a Case Study

The Emerson Center for the Arts & Culture is a thriving community center located a block from historic downtown Bozeman, Montana. The building was originally an elementary school built in 1918, but closed in 1991. In 1992, the building was facing demolition, but a grassroots coalition of community members, dedicated to historic preservation and celebration of the arts, formed a non-profit board, raised funds, and bought the building from the city. From there their intent was to turn it into an arts and cultural center to provide for the needs of the community:

“We’ve been renovating this 1918 building ever since. Thanks to over one million dollars in generous private donations and grants, we’ve renovated the lobby and ballroom, created a secure art storage space and swapped out the vintage wooden theater chairs for comfortable, cushioned seats in the Crawford Theater...and updated the stage lighting and sound systems. In 1995, the Emerson merged with another local arts organization, the Beall Park Arts Center. Together, the Emerson and Beall have received state-wide recognition as an exceptional presenter of contemporary art and art education programs. In the summer of 2006, we began renovations on the first floor, creating space for the new secure, climate-controlled Jessie Wilber Gallery. The renovations were completed in the fall, and the Jessie Wilber Gallery, Frances Senska Community Pottery Studio, and a dedicated art classroom, all moved from Beall Park Arts Center facility into the Emerson.

The Emerson now offers a wide variety of art education classes and workshops to people of all ages and abilities. We work with local and regional artists to curate thought-provoking, museum-quality exhibits. The Emerson also is proud to invigorate arts education in the Gallatin

Valley, hosting over 1,000 public school students, their parents and teachers for docent-led tours and hands-on activities in our galleries throughout the year.

The studios and arts businesses in the building are alive with creativity – work in the process of being produced or performed. We also host many free community outreach events such as weekly summertime concert series *Lunch on the Lawn*, Friday night Art Walks, *Halloween Open House*, our annual *Garden & Home Tour*, and gingerbread house making and the *Holiday Bazaar* at Christmas Stroll.

The Crawford Theater hosts many local and national performances. Hundreds of individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations rent our public spaces for conferences, fundraisers, meetings, classes, dances, and church services.” (Web Site Citation here)

The Emerson houses a versatile cultural center including art, dance, music, and photography studios, galleries, performance spaces, cafes, a restaurant, retail galleries, and offices for professionals including graphic designers and an architectural firm. This multi-disciplinary, mixed commercial and non commercial use facility is ideal for sustainability and establishing a creative environment.

Artspace, Inc as a Case Study

Artspace, Inc., located in Salt Lake City, Utah, is the driving force for positive change in one of the city’s most blighted downtown commercial districts. Stephen A. Goldsmith, a local Utah sculptor, was the brain child of this establishment. Artspace, Inc. is a non-profit real estate development company whose mission is the adaptive reuse of historic buildings as arts and cultural facilities. Goldsmith states, “Our role is to advance arts and culture through the process of urban redevelopment.” (Villani 9)

“Artspace creates affordable live and work space for artists, cultural organizations, non-profits and others to revitalize and promote stable, vibrant and safe communities.

Artspace is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1980. Artspace’s mixed-use projects incorporate affordable housing, cultural amenities, and commercial spaces. These projects are catalysts for revitalizing the neighborhood and spurring further development.

Artspace projects contribute to the arts and culture of the community by providing affordable artist studios, apartments and galleries. The projects also create synergy between the adjacent artists, nonprofit agencies and residents.” (Artspace, Inc)

Artspace has completed four of these community based art projects since 1980. These projects are all geared toward redevelopment of blighted areas to establish low income housing and art studios for artists. In 1997, Artspace won Award of Excellence from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. Goldsmith states, “At their core, these adaptive reuse projects are not art projects-they are a real estate development strategy and a revitalization tool.” (Villani 10)

Inspiration for Art Based Community Development

“*Monographs*” is a journal published by the Americans for the Arts. The August 2000 issue dealt with adaptive reuse of buildings and conversion of historical structures into cultural facilities. The idea is to transform the no longer thriving parts of urban fabrics and architectural legacies into esteemed and vibrant assets. It is a strategy for developing important elements of a community. Not only does this type of development preserve the history of a once prominent community it also taps into the cultural scene to give a community new life. These projects aren’t intended to be the glamorous multi-million dollar performing arts centers producing Broadway shows, rather they are intended to house the “nuts-and-bolts” functions of the arts. These developments provide affordable studios, rehearsal spaces, and centralized administration facilities for the artists or non-profit organizations.

“...it’s these types of projects that exert a great impact on the determining rate at which a local art scene grows audiences and develops strong artistic identity... Increasingly real estate developers now grasp the tremendous potential these projects have in serving catalysts for urban neighborhood revitalization efforts...places that originally were schools, warehouses, manufacturing plants...have been turned into arts-related facilities. They make bottom line sense to those who have witnessed the powerful economic impact exerted on their surrounding neighborhoods.” (Villani 2)

Financing is of course the major issue with projects like this. “When government and private business partner up in the development of arts and cultural facilities from historic buildings, they can make use of a wide variety of financing vehicles to get the project completed.” (Villani 2) For example, historical revitalization projects can allocate the government to issue up to 20 percent of project costs in the form of tax credits. Those tax credits can then be sold to a third party for project funds. Tax credits often become the most important factor in funding these adaptive reuse projects. The rest of the funding can be attained through grants, donations, and private investors or come through non-traditional sources. These types of

projects if scheduled properly to meet their financial obligations while extending a positive economic impact on the surrounding neighborhoods often have the greatest opportunity of receiving proper funding.

Cass Corridor and the Surrounding Area

An intervention within Detroit’s Cass Corridor could allow an application of those previously stated adaptive reuse principles to one of its many devastated structures. A project of this nature could be established as a vehicle for urban revitalization. In this process, it will be important to build from the positive remaining aspects of the neighborhood and amplify them with an adaptive-reuse community based building. This new building will intensify the historical culture of the area and provide an urban catalyst for community development and sustainability. Because of Cass’s current condition and its history of producing well known performers, the proposal for a community based performing arts and education center seems like a viable institution. This building would not be a multi-million dollar venue, rather a center for the “nuts-and bolts” of art. It would be an intimate place for both the artist and the viewer. It would be a facility for the artist to grow while engaging with the community and allow the facilitation of the community to grow. Since this neighborhood is located between other renowned cultural centers and venues, including Fox-town and Wayne State, this community based project would become an intimate extension of the already existing Detroit cultural hubs. With the installment of such a redevelopment tool it could be feasible that this dilapidated urban neighborhood could once again become a strong vibrant area.

South of Cass Corridor is downtown Detroit, which is developing with the construction of new buildings and flourishing businesses. This area, often referred to as Fox-town, currently stands as a cultural hub containing sports stadiums, multiple theaters, restaurants, bars, casinos, and the like. North of Cass Corridor, on Woodward, sits Wayne State University’s campus and the Detroit Cultural District. This area is also full of life and activity. Between these two vibrant areas, somehow Cass Corridor falls short of the same strong urban activity. The linking of the Cultural District and Downtown through means of an animated Cass Corridor is vital to Detroit’s development.



Conclusion

This thesis proposes to establish a community based performing arts center to become a catalyst for development in a bighted area. Based on the human and spiritual value of performing arts and the validity of the case studies provided, it is viable to see how such a facility can serve the community in a positive manner. As seen in the case studies, these types of projects can support and assist in the (re)development of urban areas that lack the proper means to provide what is necessary for human and community contentment. Based on the vitality of the performing arts, by introducing this facility into Cass Corridor it will become a source of life and animation for the area. Once established, this urban stimulant can grow and spread throughout Cass Corridor uniting the existing Cultural District/Wayne State University and Downtown Detroit. Not to say that this one proposal will accomplish this task, rather the intent of this project is to propose a strong starting point and let the community grow from within.

PRECEDENT I

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

by Rafael Viñoly Architects

Building

This project includes the construction of Verizon Hall, a 2,500-seat concert hall, custom-made as the home of The Philadelphia Orchestra; Perelman Theater, a 650-seat recital theater for performances including chamber music, dance and drama, and Commonwealth Plaza, an active, welcoming civic space.

Location

The project occupies one full block of Center City Philadelphia, fronting on the Avenue of the Arts (Broad Street). The site is at Spruce Street; five blocks south of City Hall, one block south of the Academy of Music, immediately north of the University of the Arts and four blocks east of the Curtis Institute of Music.



Design Strategy

The two major components, Verizon Hall and Perelman Theater, are treated as complete, free-standing buildings. Perelman Theater, with its curved façade, is placed off-axis toward the front of the site on Broad Street, while Verizon Hall, with its polygonal exterior, is centered at the far end. These two buildings are entirely enclosed by a surrounding structure of glass, steel and brick, so that the irregular spaces between and around them become a kind of indoor plaza with restaurant and gardens, top-lit by day through an immense, glass-and-steel barrel vault roof.

Project Size

Footprint: 100,075 square feet

Gross program area: 429,085 square feet

Building & Land Costs

\$235 million

Project Leadership

- Willard G. Rouse III, *Chairman, Regional Performing Arts Center*
- Tom Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania
- John Street, Mayor of Philadelphia
- Edward G. Rendell, former Mayor of Philadelphia

Architect

Rafael Viñoly, AIA
Rafael Viñoly Architects PC
New York, London, Buenos Aires

Theater Consultant

Richard Pilbrow and David I. Taylor
Theatre Projects Consultants
Norwalk, CT

Acoustics Designer

Russell Johnson, FASA
Artec Consultants Inc.
New York, NY

Groundbreaking

November 12, 1998

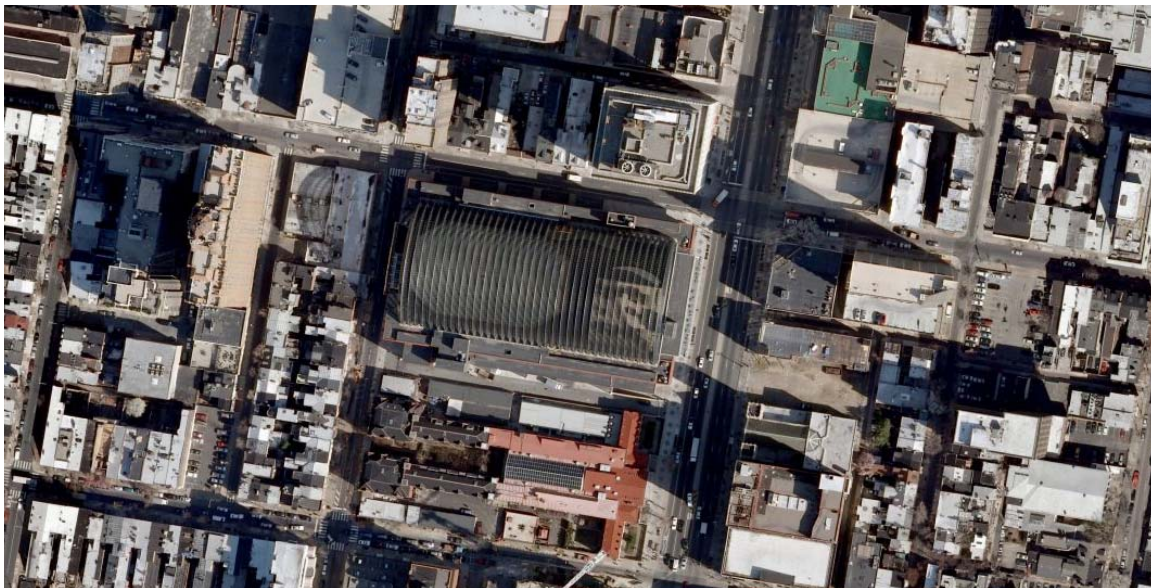
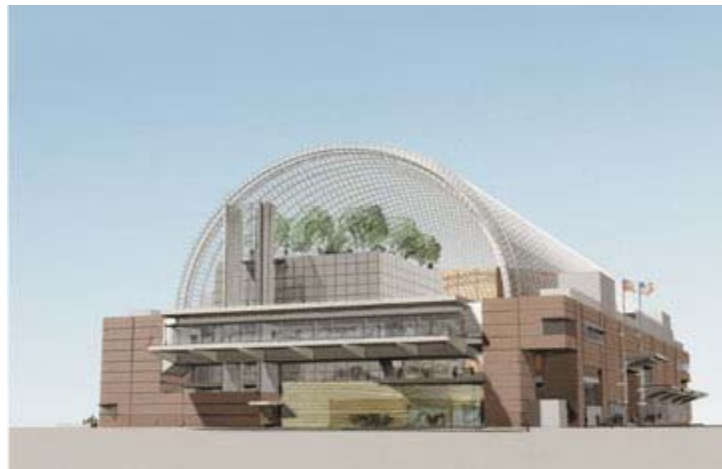
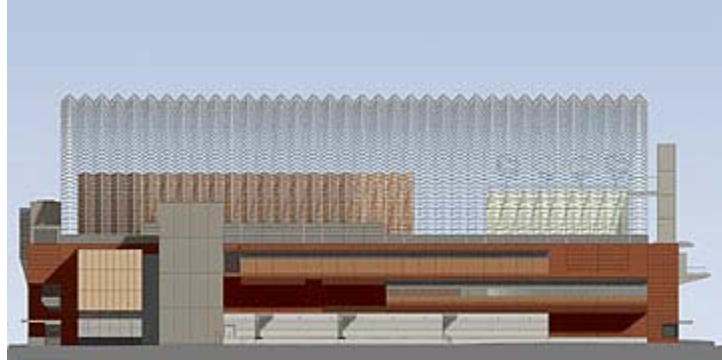
Opening

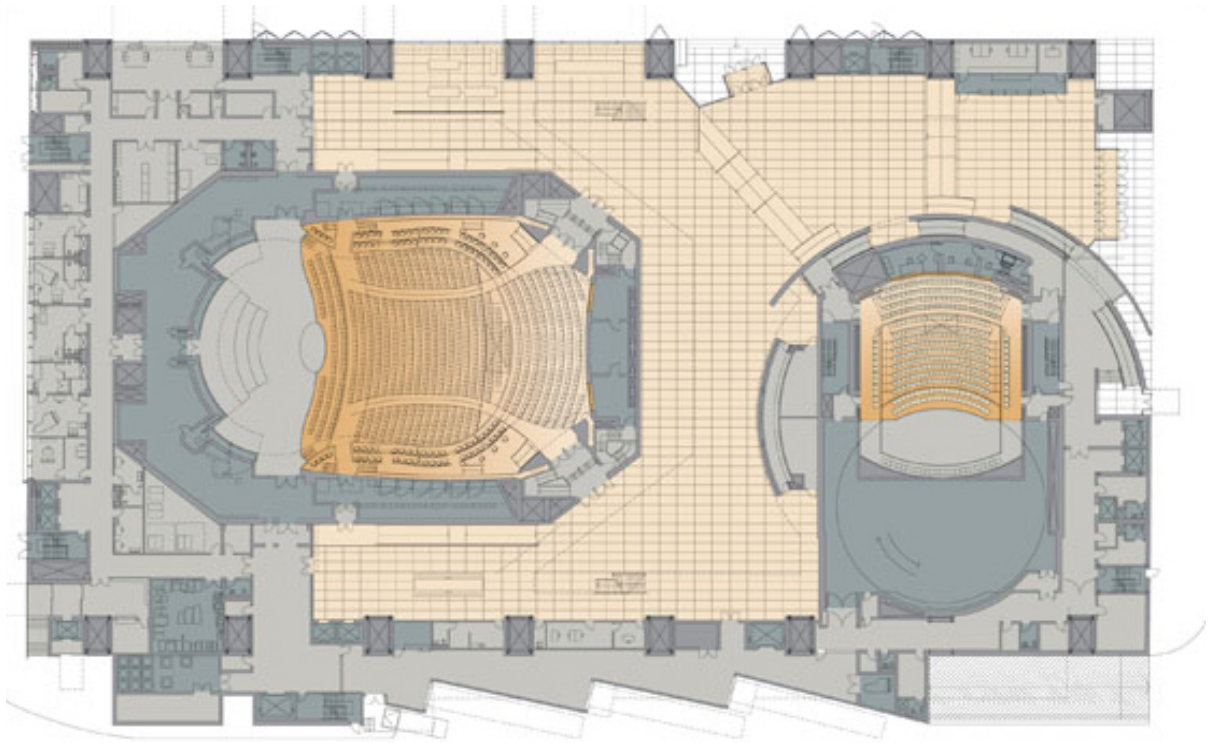
December 16, 2001

Principal Design Features

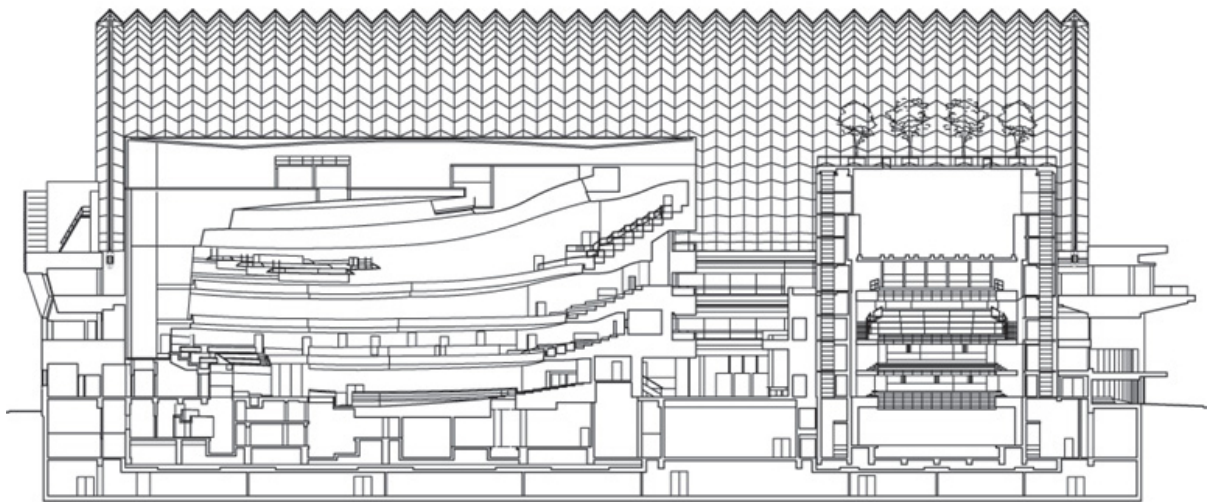
Perimeter Structure

The envelope for The Kimmel Center is constructed of glass, steel and brick. The façade along the Avenue of the Arts (Broad Street) is largely transparent at street level, allowing passersby to see into the public plaza. To maintain the scale of the surrounding residential and cultural buildings, the brick walls rise approximately to the height of the neighboring University of the Arts. The building is surmounted by a transparent, folded plate-glass barrel vault that extends the length of the structure and ends on both sides in a colossal glass arch. A pair of glass-encased elevators at the front of The Kimmel Center allows access to a restaurant on the third floor and to a rooftop garden above the Perelman Theater.





Floor Plan



Section

About the Center

Kimmel Center, Inc., a charitable, not-for-profit organization, owns, manages, supports and maintains The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, which includes Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater, Innovation Studio and the Merck Arts Education Center. Kimmel Center, Inc. also manages the Academy of Music, owned by the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and the Academy of Music serve as home to eight Resident Company performing arts organizations, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, American Theater Arts for Youth, PHILADANCO, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Peter Nero and the Philly Pops®. Kimmel Center, Inc.'s mission also includes arts in education, community outreach and a rich diversity of programming through its Kimmel Center Presents and Cadillac Broadway at the Academy series of performances.

Mission Statement

Kimmel Center Inc.'s mission is to operate a world-class performing arts center that engages and serves a broad audience from throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

The principle means by which the Kimmel Center achieves its mission include:

1. Operating and maintaining world-class performance venues including the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and the Academy of Music.
2. Providing state-of-the-art venues and support facilities for its resident companies and a broad range of other regional performance groups at below costs.
3. Presenting artistic programming of the highest quality that serves diverse audiences and brings world-renowned artists to Philadelphia.
4. Providing vital arts education and community programming to serve the interests of a broad and diverse audience.

- ▼ Verizon Hall
- ▼ Perelman Theater
- ▼ Restaurant / Cafe
- ▼ Arts Education
- ▼ Common Plaza
- ▼ Media Center
- ▼ Interior Garden

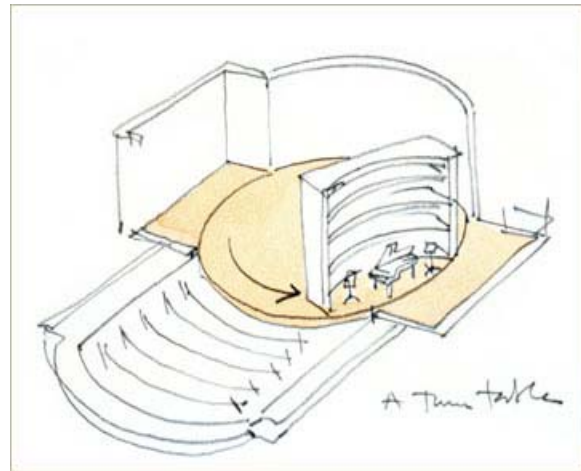


History

Kimmel Center, Inc. began to take shape in 1996 when two projects came together: The Philadelphia Orchestra's ongoing plan to build a new home for itself, and a plan of then-Mayor Edward G. Rendell to provide a much-needed venue for some of Philadelphia's most prominent performing arts companies and for touring presentations. With the generous consent of the Orchestra, which had acquired a property at Broad and Spruce Streets, the two plans were merged under the supervision and management of a new organization, the Regional Performing Arts Center (RPAC). Today, Kimmel Center, Inc. incorporates public amenities and two major venues: The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts -- Verizon Hall, a 2,500-seat concert hall and Perelman Theater, a 650-seat recital theater; and a renovated and upgraded [Academy of Music](#) (2,900 seats located in the adjacent building), which is owned by The Philadelphia Orchestra and operated by Kimmel Center, Inc.

Perelman Theater

The Perelman Theater is the primary focus of this precedent study. It is the smaller of the two theaters and was designed as an intimate multi-purpose recital hall to accommodate an audience of 650 for the conventional or experimental theater, music and dance performances, and other events and functions. Its innovative turntable stage enables the theater to be transformed from a conventional proscenium configuration to a smaller arena configuration with a concert shell and wrap-around seating. The proscenium side is ideal for dance and theatrical productions. The smaller concert shell is ideal for musical performances.



Preliminary Sketch for Perelman Theater's revolving stage



Construction of the radius for the Perelman Theater's revolving stage.



The first layer of the revolving mechanism for the Perelman Theater's turntable stage



Final layer of the revolving stage's mechanism. The stage itself is installed atop the I-beams.

In contrast to the handcrafted, curving, organic forms of Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater is designed as a metal-clad transformable space within the orthogonal form of an 87 foot cube. Finished in light woods and warm-colored fabrics with metallic highlights, the interior of the auditorium complements its soft gold exterior.

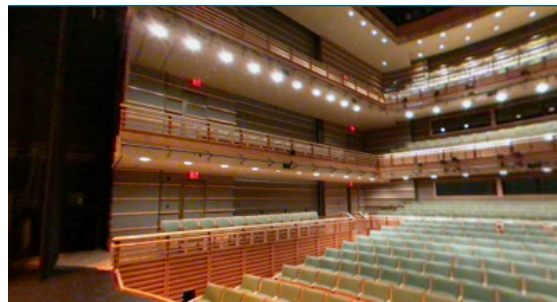
Size: 27,000 square feet (most of which is the stage)

Stage Specifications

The turntable stage is a 37' radius-revolve equipped with a fixed "end of room" element that is housed within the stage house atop a 2' thick concrete slab. In drama/dance mode, the Perelman Theater's proscenium, which is 38' 4" high by 58' wide, frames a sprung wood floor stage measuring 83' wide by 40' deep. A gridiron is located 74' 6" above the stage with a continuous counterweight rigging slot and technical galleries running the full depth of the stage at various levels above. With its modern sound, lighting and rigging equipment, the Perelman Theater can properly host any multi-media event or performance.



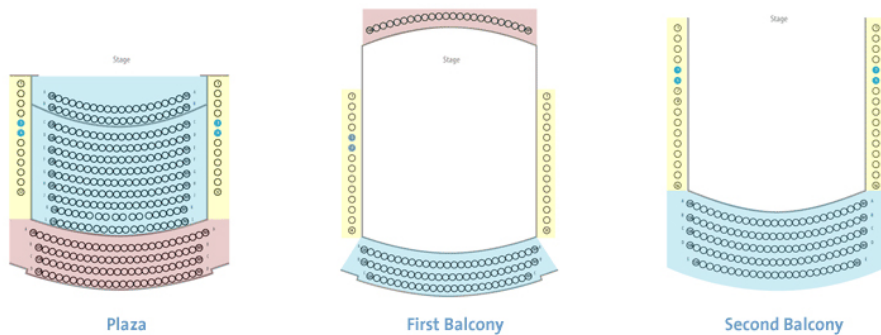
Above, the Perelman Theater stage "end of room" element -- the divider that separates the two sides of the rotating



In the above-left configuration, the stage and "end of room" element are set for a recital. The acoustic shell shown here creates the ideal sound conditions for chamber music, ensembles and vocal recitals. The above-right is set for large stage performances.

Seating

The Perelman Theater contains three levels of seating including two balconies, one of which contains wrap around seating, but is only used when the stage is rotated and set for smaller concert shell performances. (Pictured Above Left) Additionally, the entire parquet seating section on the first level is mounted on hydraulic risers that make it possible to remove the seats and flatten its pitch to create a ballroom floor or banquet hall. This flexibility makes for an ideal setting for a variety of uses and performances. A design strategy of a flattened seating area without permanent tiers or fixed seats also allows for cabaret performances involving tables and chairs for the audience members.



Acoustics Design Elements

The primary machinery to provide flexibility of the acoustics environment is the turntable that occupies most of the floor area of the theater. The mounted concert shell on the turntable serves not only for different seating arrangements, but also is the key acoustical element for recitals, choral concerts and performances by small chamber orchestras.

Other Relevant features of the Kimmel Center:

Indoor Garden

The Perelman's roof – one of the most distinctive element in the entire complex – is an elevated garden featuring 16 trees and striking views of Verizon Hall, Commonwealth Plaza, and the city beyond the barrel vault roof. This interior green space, although located high within the glass atrium, serves as an excellent plaza for down time while provoking feelings of nature's serenity from within the buildings structure. This element serves as a peaceful area among the other more active functions of the Kimmel Center. The rooftop garden above the Perelman Theater is directly accessible by elevator from Broad Street.



Commonwealth Plaza and Circulation

The Commonwealth Plaza is the main civic space that ties all the Kimmel Center elements together. Access to Commonwealth Plaza is provided through two glass-enclosed vestibules located on Broad and Spruce Streets. The floor throughout the plaza is covered in quartzite. Along the curved back wall of the Perelman Theater is the naming wall and "Society of Founders" donor wall are made of black granite. The PECO café is open to the public during daytime hours. Circulation within the facility consists of seven public elevators, two freight elevators, one service elevator and two backstage elevators. Verizon Hall is accessible by the public via bridges at the upper levels and is directly connected to the support spaces for performers on the west side of the complex.

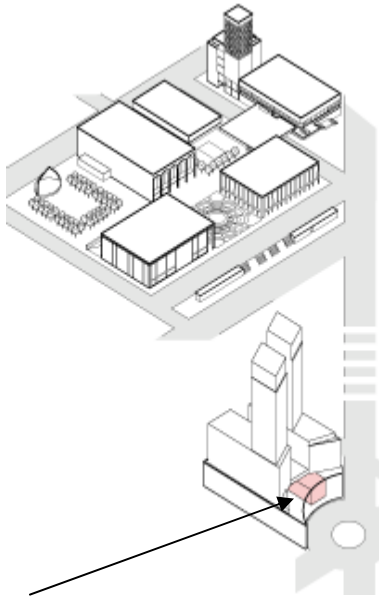
All images and text provided and/or verified by the following sources:

*The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts
Rafael Viñoly Architect*

PRECEDENT II

Frederick P. Rose Hall (Jazz at Lincoln Center)

Located within the Time Warner Center, New York, New York
by Rafael Viñoly Architects



Jazz at Lincoln Center is the world's largest not-for-profit organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of jazz. The institution's new home, Frederick P. Rose Hall, located within the Time Warner building at New York's Columbus Circle, is the first facility designed specifically for the performance, education and broadcasting of jazz. The program, headed by Marsalis, leads in jazz performance and music education, sponsoring numerous programs throughout the year.

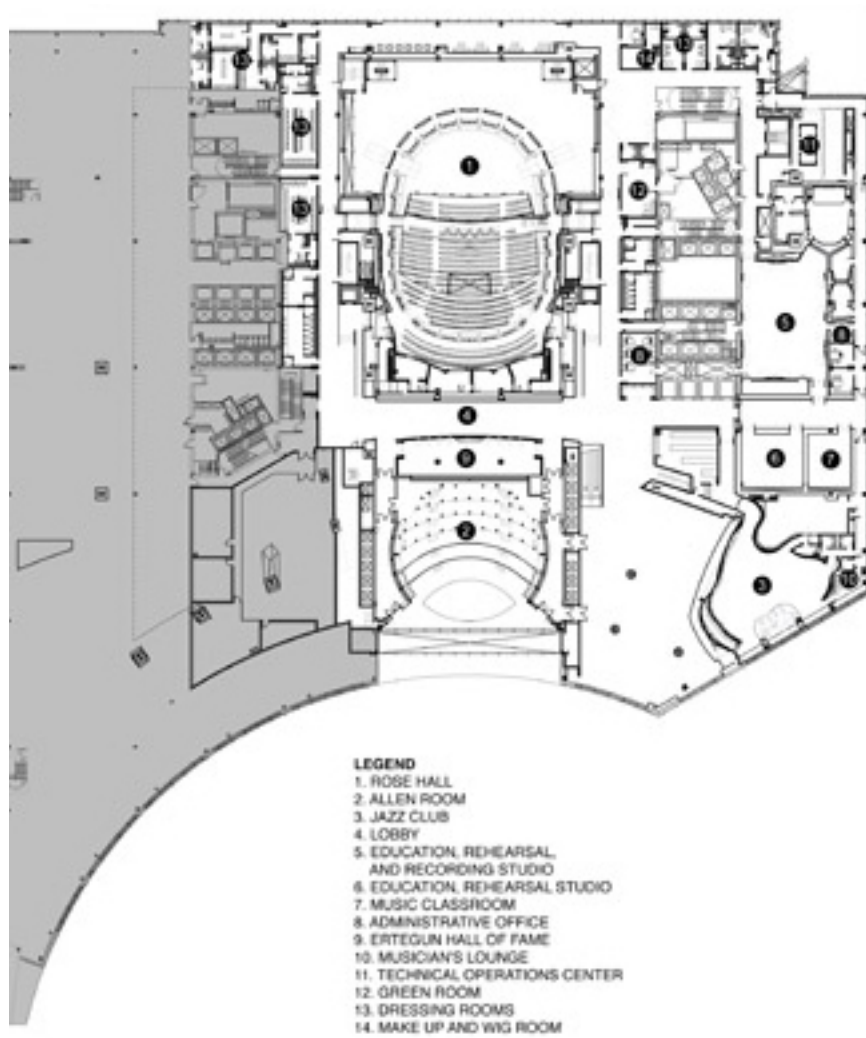
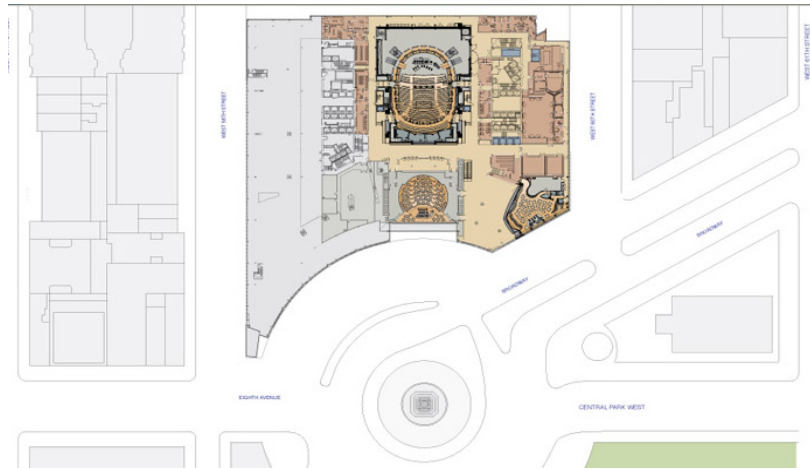


The Space

This 157,000-square-foot facility features three performance spaces, ample rehearsal space and facilities for broadcasting events worldwide. Although constrained by the technical requirements of a performance hall and its location within another structure, the facility is highly flexible, allowing interaction between the audience and the musicians and creating an experience informed by the unique, often improvisational, sound, function, and feeling of jazz. This complex has world renowned as one of the best



The jazz performance venue, which opened in 2004, is part of the Time-Warner Center complex, at New York City's Columbus Circle. Facilities within include the 1200-seat Rose Theater, 600-seat Allen Hall, and the more intimate, informal Dizzy's Club; Ertegun Hall of Fame as well as fully equipped recording studios, classrooms, and offices.



Areas of Focus:

Allen Room

The Allen Room, a 600-seat performance atrium with moveable tiered seating and a 57-foot-high transparent glass wall behind the performance space, provides an informal, flexible setting for small ensemble performances, dancing and educational activities as well as one of the most dramatic views of Manhattan. With the skyline as a backdrop, the performance space seems to place the performers into the city. The space takes advantage of the expansive view of Central Park below, with the placement of the high glass wall situated behind the performers. In the evening, car lights reflecting off the glass from the street below are coupled with sounds of jazz to provide a unique portrait of New York City's nightlife.

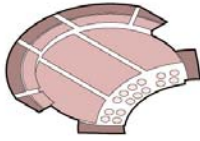


Loose seats are positioned on steep angle risers, providing sightlines that convey a warm and intimate atmosphere during ensemble performances. Every other riser row is equipped with a lift that allows the rows to be raised or lowered to alter riser/seating configuration. This unique system allows the seating layout of the room to be adjusted for larger dancing and dining areas. (Artec)

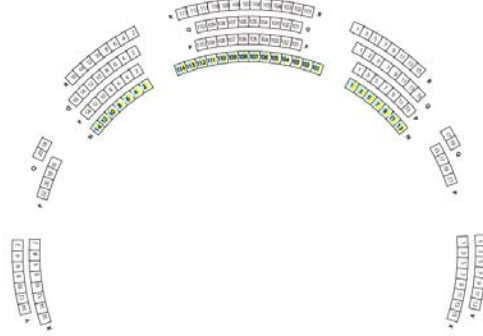
This theater space offers both traditional riser and treads seating as well as the opportunity for some cabaret theater setting.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
Allen Room

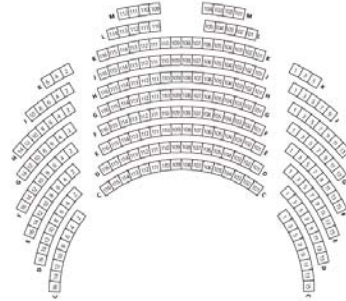
Capacity: 463



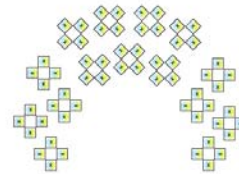
Mezzanine
Capacity: 149
Wheelchair and Companion seating: Section N



Orchestra
Capacity: 254

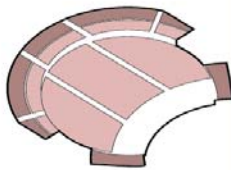


Tables
Capacity: 60
Wheelchair and Companion seating

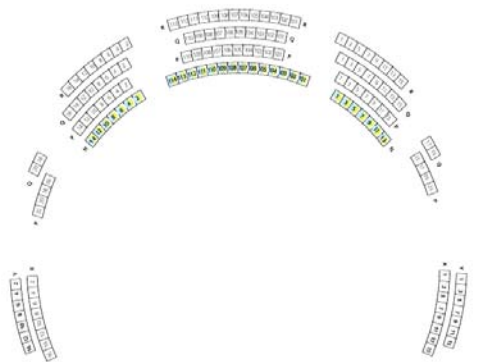


Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
The Allen Room

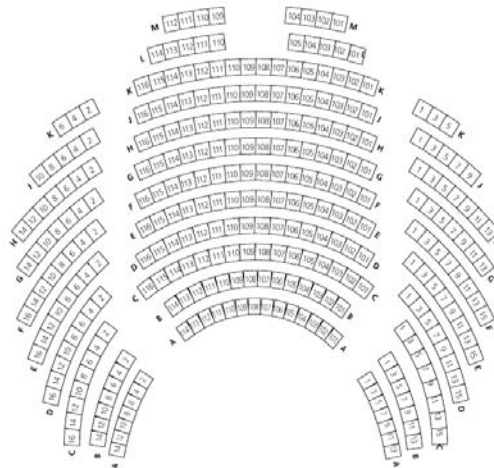
Capacity: 459

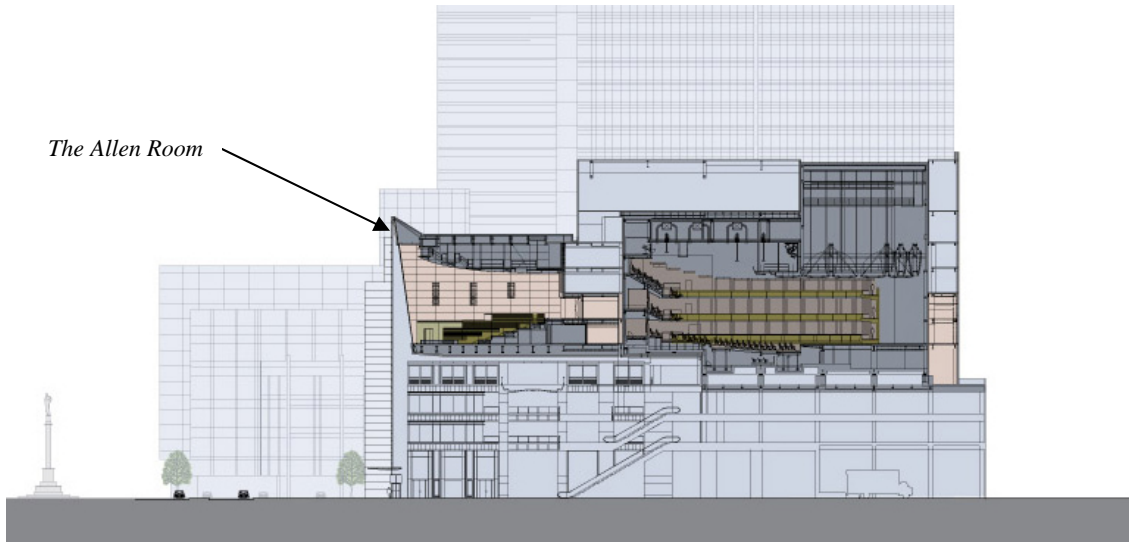


Mezzanine
Capacity: 149
Wheelchair and Companion seating: Section N



Orchestra
Capacity: 310





Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola

Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, 140-seat jazz club, is an irregularly-shaped room hosting small events like ensemble performances, educational programs, seminars, and informal gatherings. Jazz education is further served in the facility by the Diamond Education Center with two rehearsal studios and one classroom. The Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame, a multimedia installation, provides an interactive history of jazz for all groups. (Rafael Viñoly Architects)



"Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola is designed to entertain people in the spirit that 'Dizzy' had...very welcoming," Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director and trumpeter, explains. "We just want people to have a good time. We want the musicians to feel comfortable to play. We want people to come in and have a memorable experience. This whole facility is designed for international participation. This is a hall of integration...to bring everything together." (Jazz at Lincoln)

Irene Diamond Education Center



The Irene Diamond Education Center houses rehearsal, class rooms, recording, and practice spaces. This portion of the Fredrick P. Rose Hall is often booked and used for lectures, education seminars and instructive purposes.

Publication

“PRESS OFFICE

Date: Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Former Coliseum Site to House AOL-Time Warner Headquarters,
Jazz at Lincoln Center, and 2.1 Million Square Feet
of Office, Retail and Entertainment Space...

Joseph B. Rose, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, said, "This project, at a site that was once a symbol of frustration and inability to get things done, will now instead be a great asset to its community and the City a whole. It is a welcome addition to the world's most spectacular skyline."...

Jazz at Lincoln Center, which will house the first and only performance spaces in the world created specifically for jazz. The new spaces include a concert theatre of 1,100 seats, a 600-seat performance atrium, and a 140 seat jazz cafe, recording studios and classroom space..." (Wired New York)

All images and text provided and/or verified by the following sources:

*Artec
Rafael Viñoly Architect
Jazz at Lincoln Center
Wired New York*

PRECEDENT III

MIT Laboratory for the Performing Arts

Located in Boston, Massachusetts

by William Rawn Associates, Architects



The Laboratory for the Performing Arts brings together the teaching and rehearsal spaces of music and theater arts. Rehearsal studios and performance spaces are the equivalent in the Arts to the role of the laboratory in science and engineering, of which MIT is known for. This will be a place of testing, innovation, entrepreneurship. The design for the MIT Laboratory for the Performing Arts celebrates the variety of activities in the three primary teaching spaces by featuring them as discrete urban scaled objects.

The Choral Rehearsal Room is a projecting glass cube reaching out to Massachusetts Avenue and serving as a symbol of the creative energy which occurs throughout the building. The Black Box Theater, also visible from Mass Ave, is a bright metal object set back from the face of the building. The art of stagecraft is celebrated by providing views into the crossover space. The Instrumental Rehearsal Room is a metal volume on Albany Street, flush with the surface of the wall and animated by a large ground floor window.

LOCATION and SITE

The MIT Laboratory for the Performing Arts will be located on Massachusetts Avenue between the Railroad tracks and Albany Street. This location offers many opportunities for this facility and for MIT.

1. Provides strong connection to MIT's performance spaces in Kresge Auditorium
2. Gives Music and Theater Arts a strong presence within the Institute
3. Celebrates the Arts at MIT - in a public way
4. Energizes Massachusetts Avenue and strengthens urban connections between MIT & Central Square
5. Emphasizes Albany Street as a Gateway to Recent and Future Expansion of MIT



This Laboratory for the Performing Arts contains the "academic heart" of the Music & Theater Arts section. The building is comprised of three main teaching spaces (each 30 feet tall or higher):

2500 SF Black Box Theater (35'tall)

3000 SF Instrumental Rehearsal Room (35' tall)

1800 SF Choral Rehearsal Room

Additionally the building includes a Dance Studio Classroom, Theater Studio Classroom, 2 Chamber Rehearsal Rooms, a Percussion Rehearsal Room and ancillary "back of house" spaces. The Laboratory will be built on Massachusetts Avenue near student residential areas that are themselves fast-evolving. And, like any facility devoted to creativity, it will be as much about the learning process and trying new things as about presenting finished works. Thus, key features include:

- "black box" theater
- large instrumental rehearsal room
- large choral rehearsal room
- theater rehearsal room
- dance rehearsal room
- chamber rehearsal rooms

The Laboratory, though, won't be just "space." An innovative structure designed with MIT's performing arts capabilities and priorities in mind, it will be an ideal locale for the experimentation, hard work and group interaction that is at the core of much true creativity – and thus in the great tradition of MIT labs through the decades.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

To guide the conceptual design of the new facility, 6 architectural design concepts were developed:

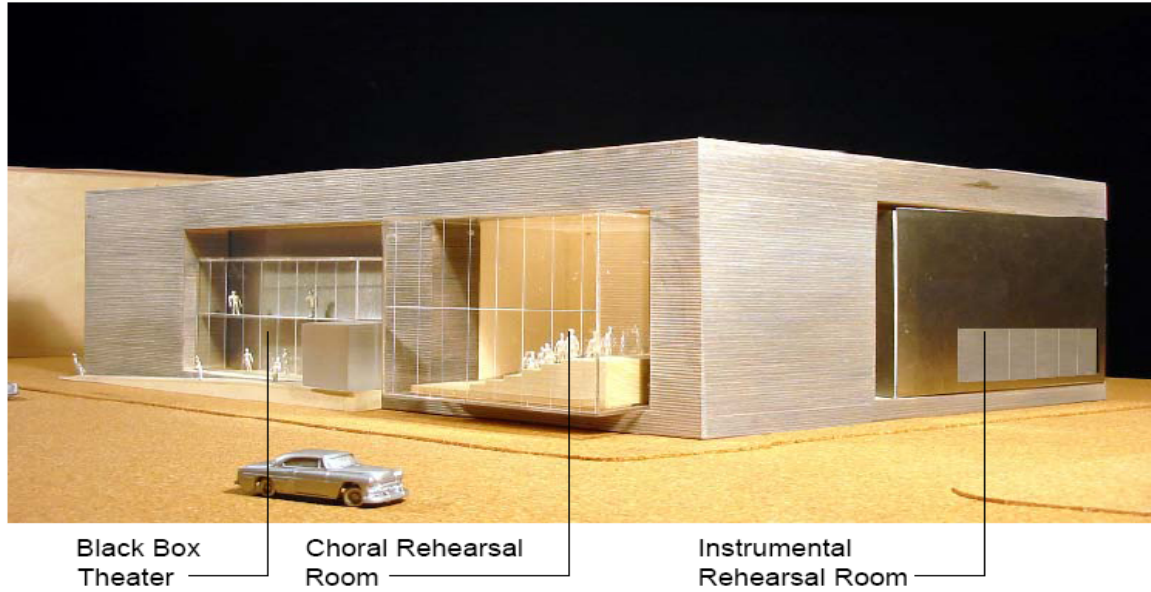
1. Create a Singular Elemental Form Standing up to the Scale of Massachusetts Avenue and MIT:

The design employs a singular, strong 50' high wall of stone to allow this building to embrace this context and in fact stand up to the scale of adjacent buildings.



2. Celebrate the Three Primary Teaching Spaces at an Urban Scale:

A conventional performing arts building celebrates the lobby as the place of human gathering, energy and community. Here we have also celebrated the rehearsal spaces. Our design presents these 3 large teaching spaces to the city, expressing them at an urban scale.



3. Present the Three Teaching Spaces as Objects against a Simple Elemental Form:

The Three Teaching Spaces are set off against the wall of stone allowing the volumes their own identities while creating a building that is more than the sum of its individual parts. The scale of the objects as the only penetrations in the wall provides a degree of monumentality appropriate to the site and the building's role as the "Academic Heart" of Music and Theater Arts.



4. Provide each of the Three Teaching Spaces with a Unique Quality of Openness, Transparency and Luminosity Appropriate to Their Function

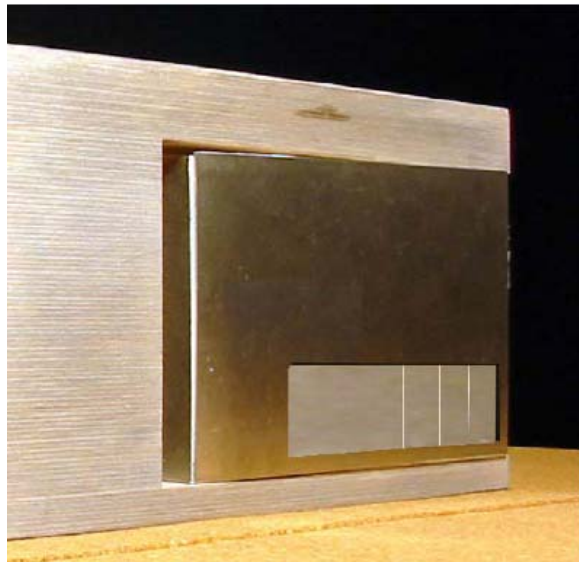
The **Black Box** is set back from the face of the wall and celebrates the stagecraft through a transparent "crossover" corridor which allows glimpses of actors and technicians during and in preparation for performances.



The **Choral Room** is a transparent light-filled volume reaching out to the street as a symbol of the creative energy which occurs throughout the building.



The **Instrumental Room** is a metal volume on Albany Street which is flush with the wall and has a large window to energize the street.



5. Emphasize Albany Street as a Gateway to MIT Expansion

The wall of stone turns the corner at Albany Street, acknowledging the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Albany Street as an important gateway to MIT's current and future westward development. A large window into the Instrumental Room animates Albany Street, giving pedestrians a sense of the activity occurring within.



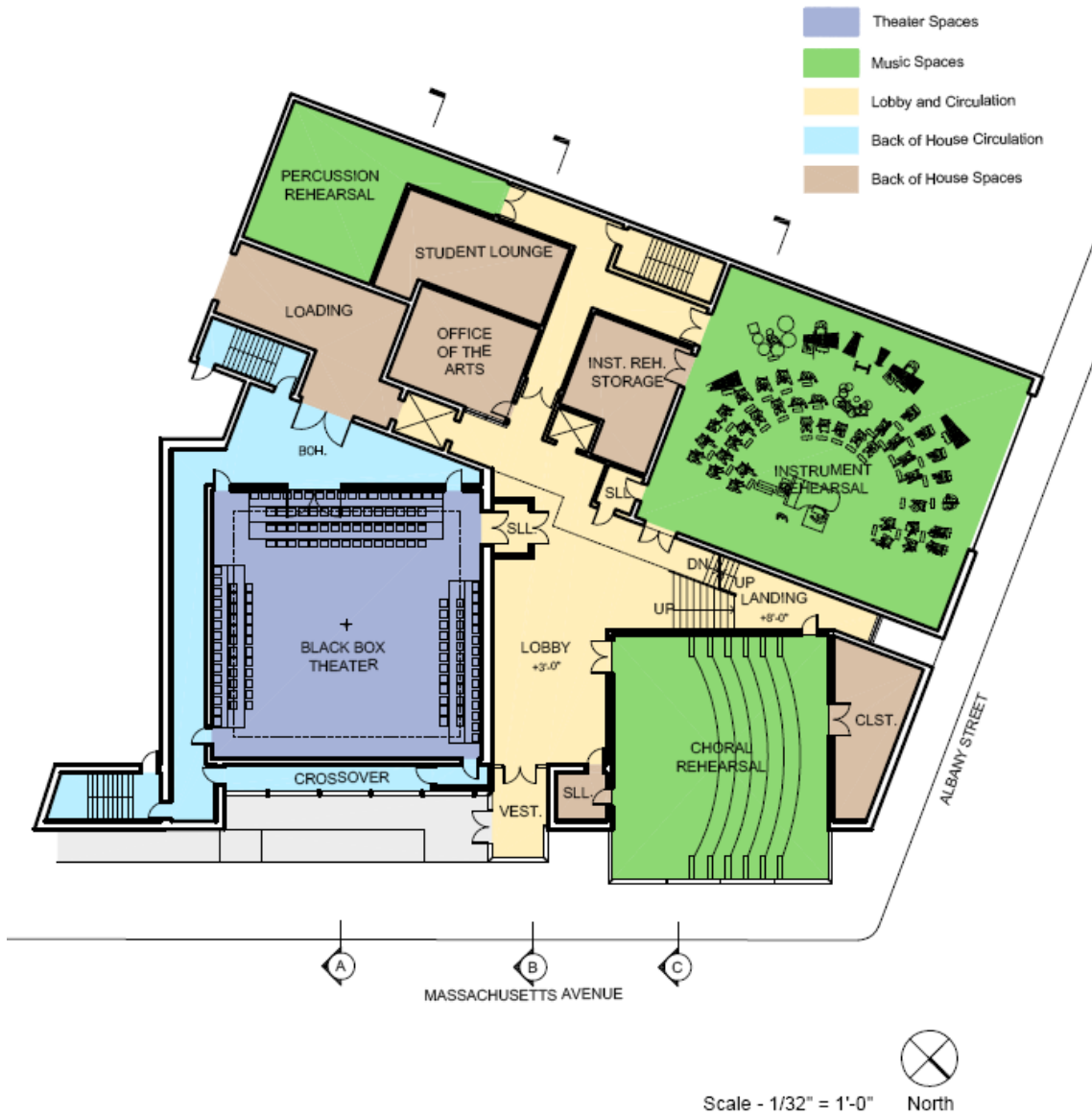
6. Create a Dynamic Entry Which Inflects Back Toward Campus

The Main Entrance is on Massachusetts Avenue and has been designed to inflect toward campus. A ramp points toward Vassar Street, heightening the arrival sequence with a change in grade. This 3' difference between the sidewalk and the ground floor allows for a degree of separation between the transparent spaces and the activity of the street. The entrance is within the monumental opening formed by the Black Box. This opening is of a scale realizing a proscenium, thus the building invites the city to participate in the activity within.



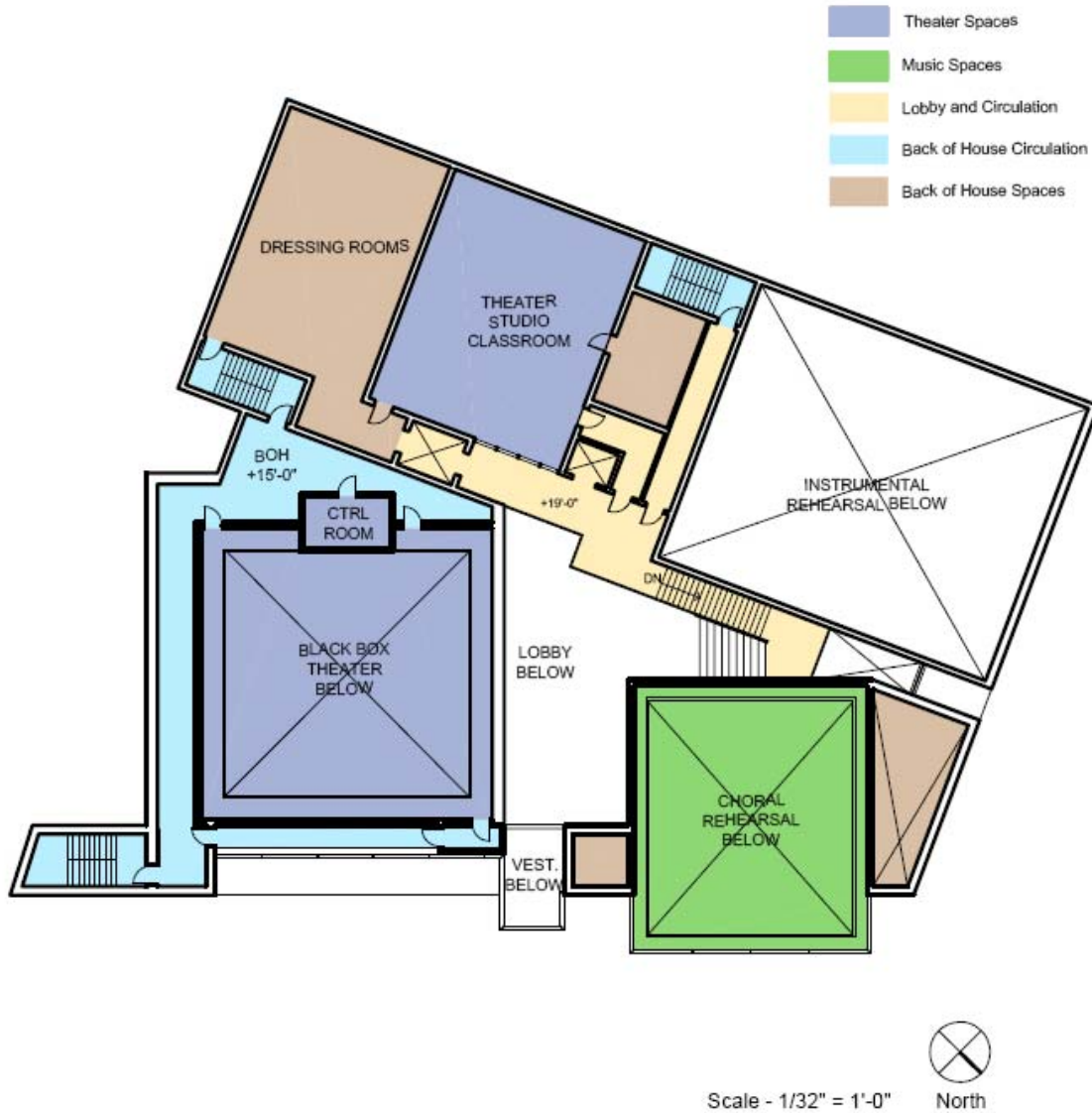
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

The Black Box Theater, Instrumental Rehearsal Room and Choral Room are located together on ground floor to engage the lobby, entry and the street. A strong sense of collaboration between Music and Theater Arts students is encouraged by mixing Music and Theater spaces on the main level. The main rehearsal spaces have been located with buffer spaces between them to ensure acoustical isolation. The Black Box Theater has been designed to offer flexibility for a number of different stage configurations and can be accessed by technical staff and actors at each of its four corners. Loading is accommodated on the east side of the building facing the railroad.



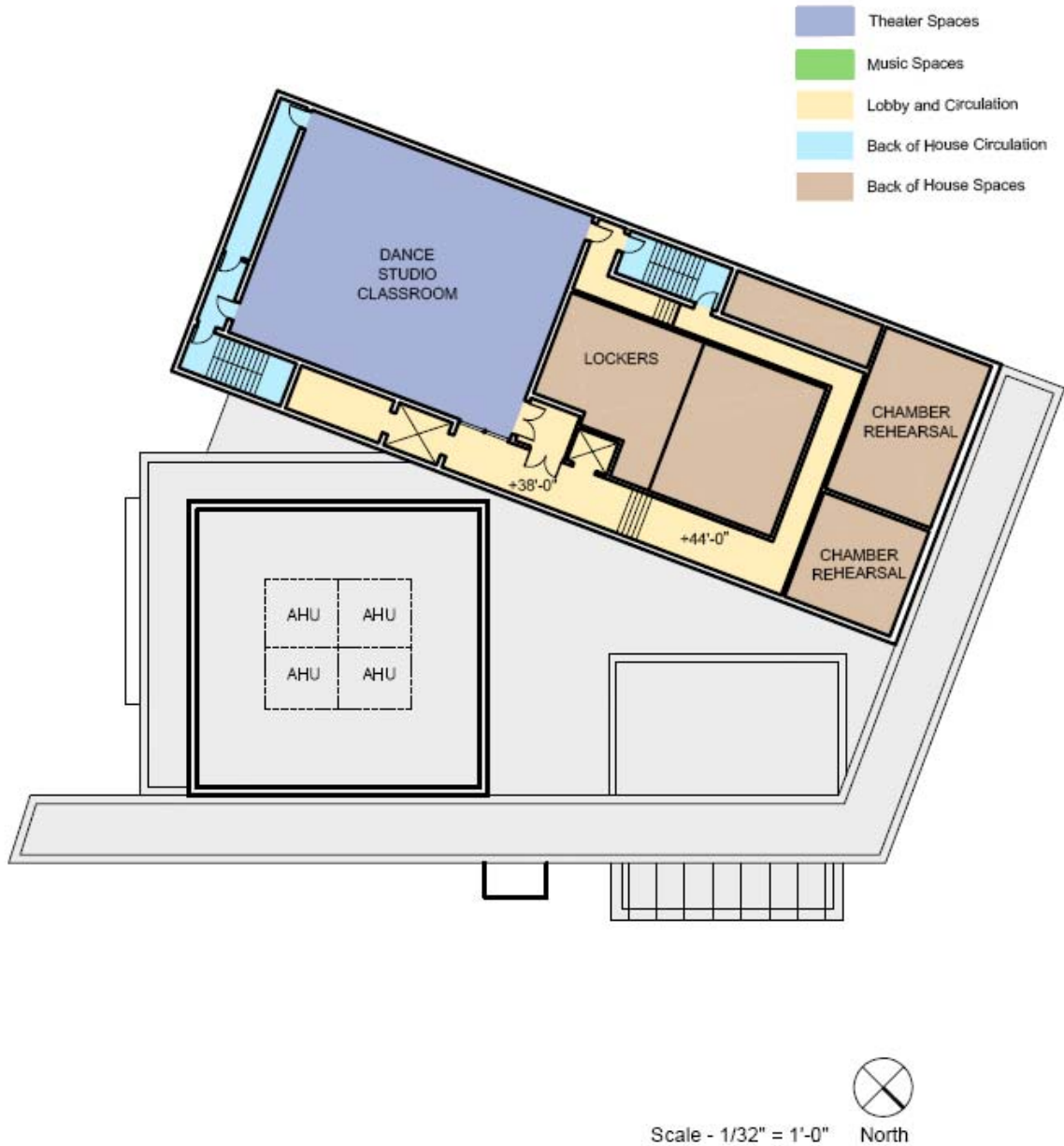
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

The second floor can be reached by a stair leading up from the double-height lobby. The Theater Studio Classroom has an internal window visible from the lobby and directly across from the entry. The Dressing Rooms are immediately adjacent to the Theater Studio Classroom and one floor away from both the Black Box on the Ground Floor and the Dance Studio Classroom on the Third Floor. A crossover space provides second level access around three sides of the Black Box Theater and to the Control Room.



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

The Dance Studio Classroom is located on the third floor, accessed by elevator. A south facing window brings light into the space above the back of house corridor. The Dance Studio Classroom can be accessed at each of the 4 corners, and has back of house access to the dressing rooms located on the second floor. Chamber Rehearsal Rooms are located over the Instrumental Room with access to natural light.

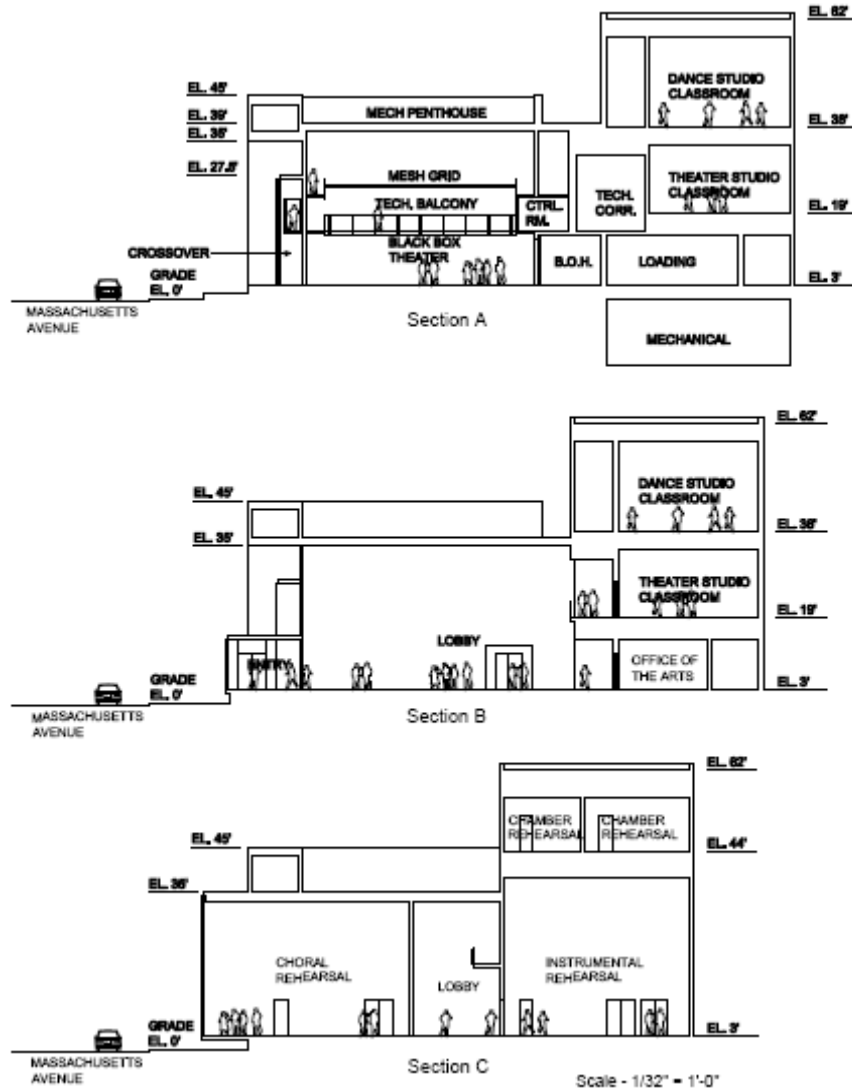


BASEMENT

The small basement contains a mechanical room that is about 2000 SF located in the south corner of the building

SECTIONS

The ground floor is elevated three feet above street. The Black Box Theater, Instrumental Rehearsal Room and Choral Rehearsal Room are located together on the Ground Floor to engage the lobby, entry, and the street. The Theater Studio Classroom is located on the second floor overlooking the double high lobby. The Dressing Rooms are on the Second Floor where they are one floor away from both the Black Box and Dance Studio Classroom. The Dance Studio Classroom is on the Third Floor and has abundant access to natural light.



PROGRAM SUMMARY

- General Program (Left)
- Detailed Program (Below)

100	Public Spaces	2,065	
200	Performance Spaces	2,940	
- 210	- Auditorium/Performance Spaces (Black Box)	2,600 (50' x 50')	
300	Stage Support	625	
400	Performer Support	1,650	
500	Rehearsal Spaces	11,300	
- 610	- Theater Studio Classroom	1,400 (35' x 40')	
- 620	- Dance Studio Classroom	2,000 (40' x 50')	
- 630	- Instrumental Rehearsal Room	3,000 (50' x 60')	
- 640	- Choral Rehearsal Room	1,800 (40' x 45')	
- 650	- Chamber Rehearsal Room	600 (20' x 30')	
- 651	- Chamber Rehearsal Room	400 (20' x 20')	
- 660	- Percussion Rehearsal Room	600 (20' x 30')	
600	Production Support	1,200	
700	Offices	750	
800	Services	700	
TOTAL		nsf	21,230
		q/h	1.7
		gsf	36,091

Rm #	Name	Net sq. ft.	Height
100	Public Spaces	2,065	
101	Public Lobby	800	
102	Public Circulation	800	
121	Box Office-Workroom/Office		
190	Public restrooms (male)	135	
191	Public Restrooms (female)	330	
192	Family Assist Restroom		
200	Performance Spaces	2,940	
210	Auditorium/Performance Area	2,500	35
211	Auditorium sound & light locks		
230	Grid/Catwalks		
270	Lighting & sound control board	240	
276	Dimmer Room	120	
277	Sound Rack Room	80	
300	Stage Support	625	
320	Scenery Dock/Storage	625	
330	Electric Shop & Storage	0	
370	Rigging shop & Storage	0	
400	Performer Support	1,650	
411	5 Person Dressing Room	1,200	
460	Performer's Lounge	300	
430	Wardrobe maint. & laundry	150	
431	Laundry		
500	Rehearsal	11,300	
510	Theater Studio Classroom	1,400 (35' x 40')	15
511	Rehearsal Room-Storage	140	
520	Dance Studio Classroom	2,000 (40' x 50')	20

Rm #	Name	Net sq. ft.	Height
521	Rehearsal Room Storage	200	
530	Instrumental Rehearsal Room	3,000 (50' x 60')	35
531	Rehearsal Room Storage	300	
540	Choral Rehearsal Room	1,800 (45' x 40')	30
541	Rehearsal Room Storage	180	
550	Chamber Rehearsal Room	600 (20' x 30')	12
551	Chamber Rehearsal Room	400 (20' x 20')	12
552	Chamber Rehearsal Room	0	12
560	Percussion Rehearsal Room	600 (20' x 30')	
570	Music Library	300	
580	Central recording room	180	
590	Restrooms (male)	100	
591	Restrooms (female)	100	
600	Production Support	1,200	
610	Student Lockers - Music	750	
620	Student Lockers - Theater	200	
630	Council of the Arts/Freshman seminar lounge	250	
700	Offices	750	
710	Office of the Arts & Satellite faculty	500	
711	Facility management	250	
800	Services	700	
810	Building Services	200	
813	Custodial equip. storage & wet closet	160	
814	Dry trash room	100	
820	Loading dock (scenery dock)	exterior	
821	Truck dock (scenery dock)	exterior	
840	Hub comm. room (IT)	120	
841	Main comm. room (telcom)	120	

Total Net Square Feet	21,230 NSF
Gross Building Area	36,091 GSF

All images and text provided and/or verified by the following sources:
 William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc
 MIT Theater Arts & Dance

Site Analysis I

Old Cass Tech High School



The old Cass Tech building stands as a historical landmark in the city of Detroit. The former high school has produced a number of outstanding persons including people now involved in the professions of the performing arts. The site is on Grand River avenue and adjacent to I-75. This area is ideal for capitalizing on the natural traffic patterns of the urban area. Located within the Cass Corridor, the site sits between the current “cultural center” located north on Woodward Ave near Wayne State University and Detroit’s downtown’s cultural scene. The existing structure offers a number of benefits for an adaptive reuse project, including a large performance theater known for its excellent acoustics that was once used for recording by the Detroit Symphony. Since this area is currently going through some early stages of redevelopment, especially with new loft projects underway, it seems like an ample location for a Center for the Arts which can engage the (re)growing community. Just south of the site across I-75 sits the recently built MGM Grand Casino, of which plans to generate people and money in the area.

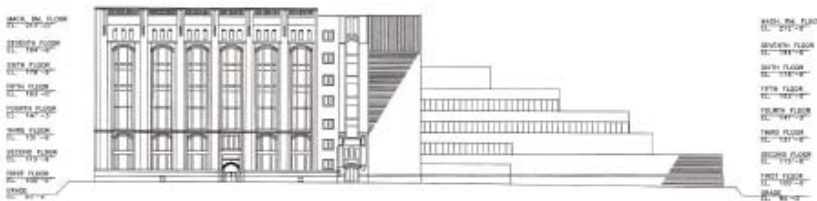
This massive 7-and-a-half-story building is divided into two parts. The eastern half of the building maintains the historical character and beauty of the structure. The stepping west-side of the building is an unsightly addition added in the 1980s that offers some useful spaces, but will need to be dealt with as a serious aesthetic issue. Also some of the athletic facilities do not apply to an arts center and would need to be converted into more arts oriented spaces.



East Elevation



- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE

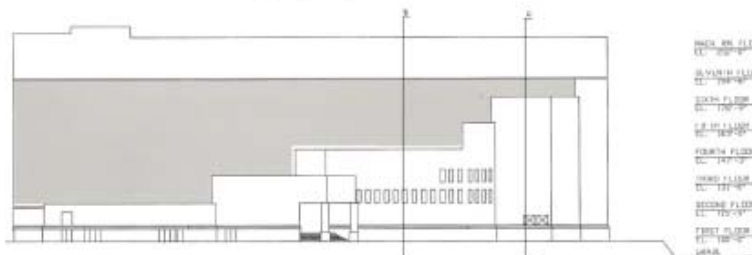


NORTH ELEVATION



- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE

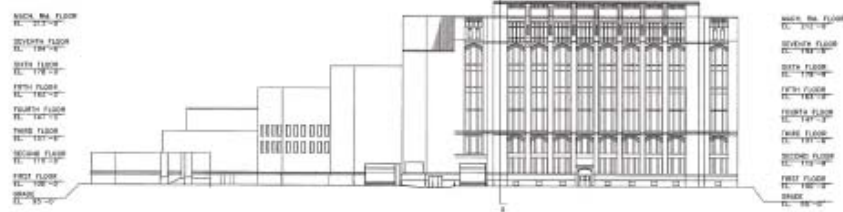
- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE



West Elevation



- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE



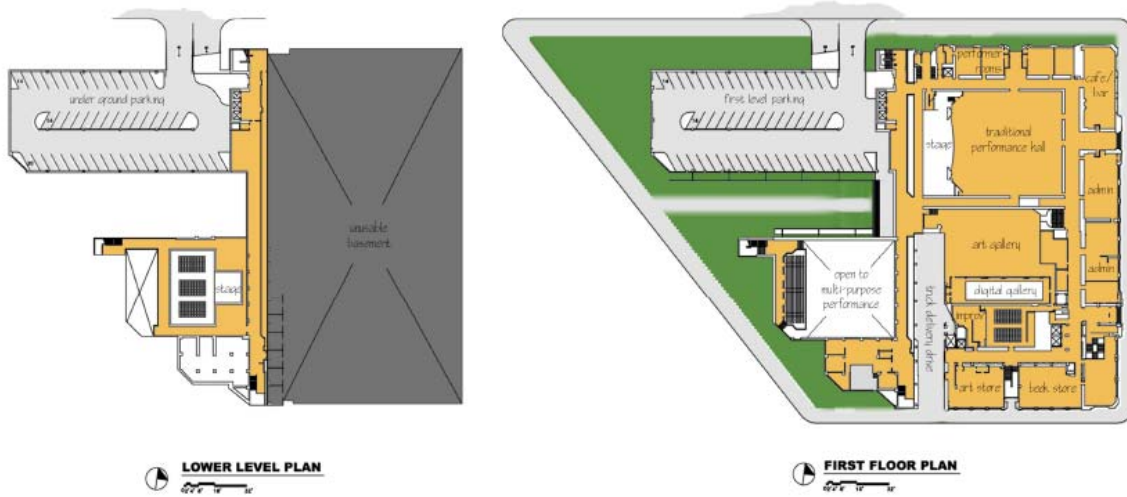
SOUTH ELEVATION



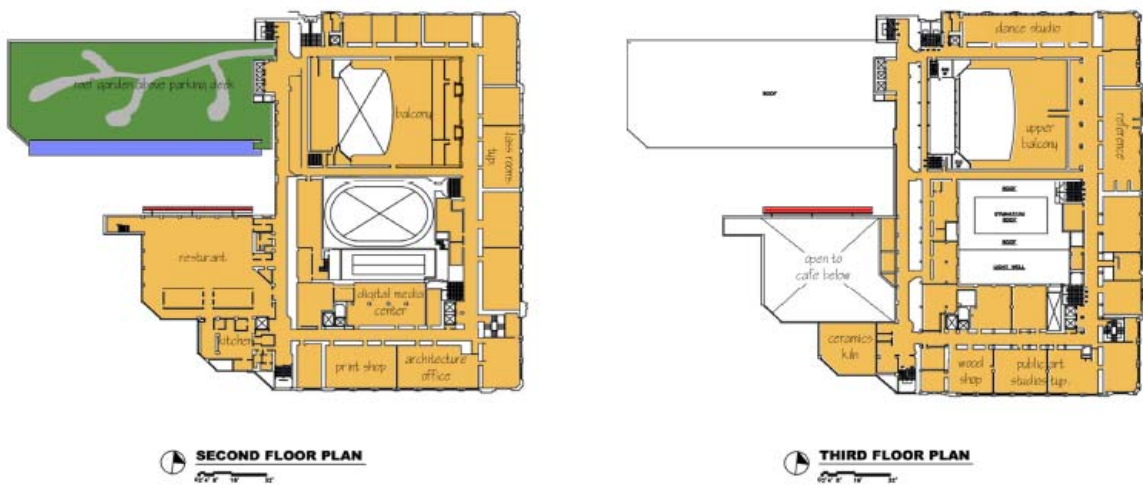
- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE

- ROOF 00' FLOOR
- SEVENTH FLOOR
- SIXTH FLOOR
- FIFTH FLOOR
- FOURTH FLOOR
- THIRD FLOOR
- SECOND FLOOR
- FIRST FLOOR
- GRADE

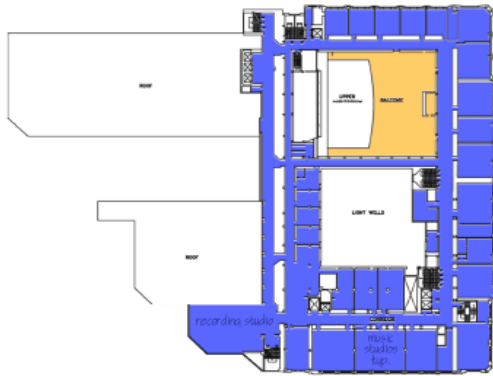
The following images are approaches that could be taken to convert Old Cass Tech High School into an arts center by dealing with the existing conditions:



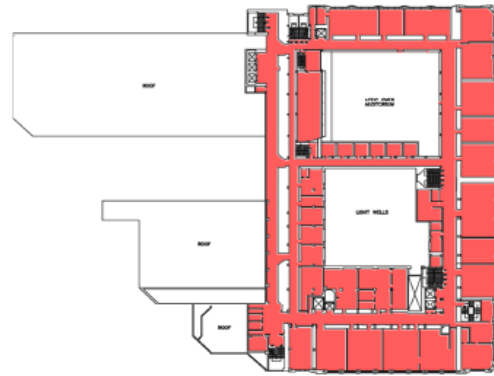
As far as dealing with the lower level and first floor, the existing gymnasium could be converted into a much needed parking garage for a facility of this caliber. These plans also show the removal of one of the existing teeth elements to create a more street friendly court and as well as a more elegant approach to the building. Some of the design ideas include converting the existing swimming pool into a multipurpose performance space, first floor street frontage businesses, small theater for intimate performances, conversion of old gymnasium and lap pool into gallery spaces, and the refurbishing the existing auditorium.



The second and third floor could be a continuation of public spaces including a restaurant taking over the existing school cafeteria and a roof garden on top of the parking garage that can be accessed from the court created below. Also the introduction of studio spaces and class rooms will begin on this level.



FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

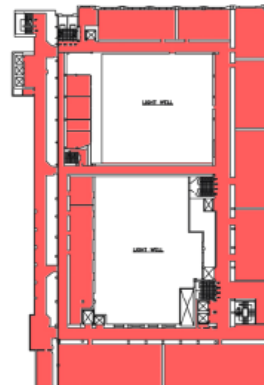


FIFTH FLOOR PLAN

The fourth floor can begin to incorporate privately rented spaces including musical studios, recording studios, artist's studios, practice spaces etc. The fifth through seventh floor can be converted into affordable and privately owned home/studios for artists.

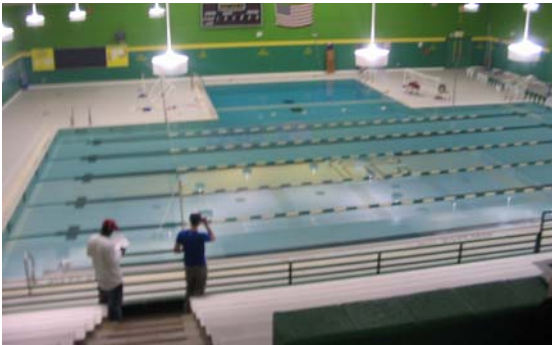
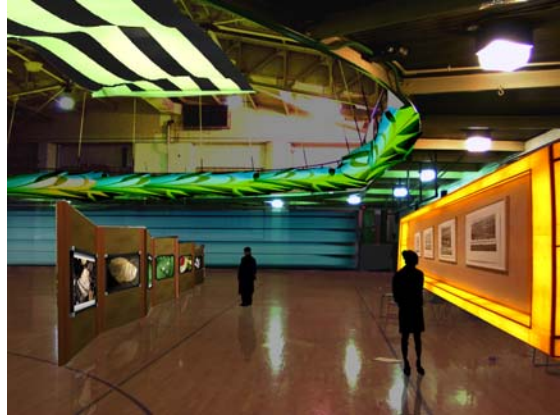


SIXTH FLOOR PLAN

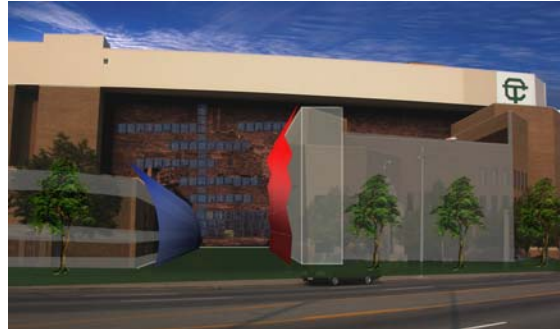


SEVENTH FLOOR PLAN

When dealing with existing conditions it is important to conceptualize how the spaces within the facility can be utilized to fit the proper programming needed. The following pages will explore possibilities of interior spaces being remolded for an art facility. The following images include before and after shot of a gym being converted into an art gallery, an abandoned pool being converted into a digital media center or gallery, the large natatorium being converted into a performing arts space and an old classroom being converted to a dance studio.



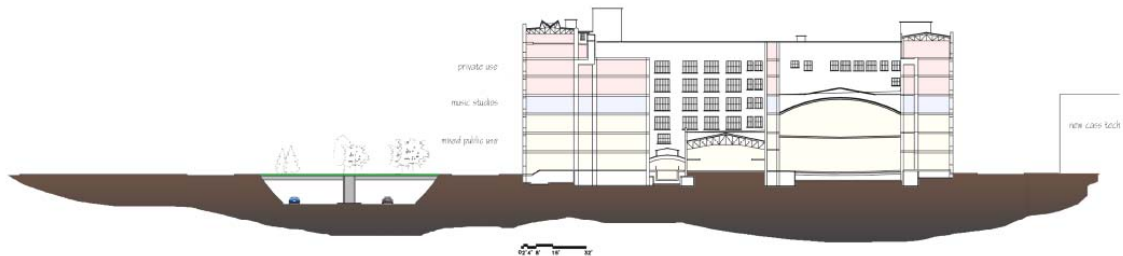
The two images below are dealing with design issues of the site. The schematic design elevation shown below is addressing the connection to of the building to Grand River Boulevard. By creating a court of green space and addressing the pedestrian traffic the building is much more welcoming.



The image below on the left is an image of I-75 and how the Cass Tech site connects to downtown. The image on the right is a proposed greenway to better forge the two entities with a more human oriented space.



Below is a section through the proposed building type that shows the breakdown of public and private space as well as the green bridge way connecting to downtown Detroit spanning I-75.

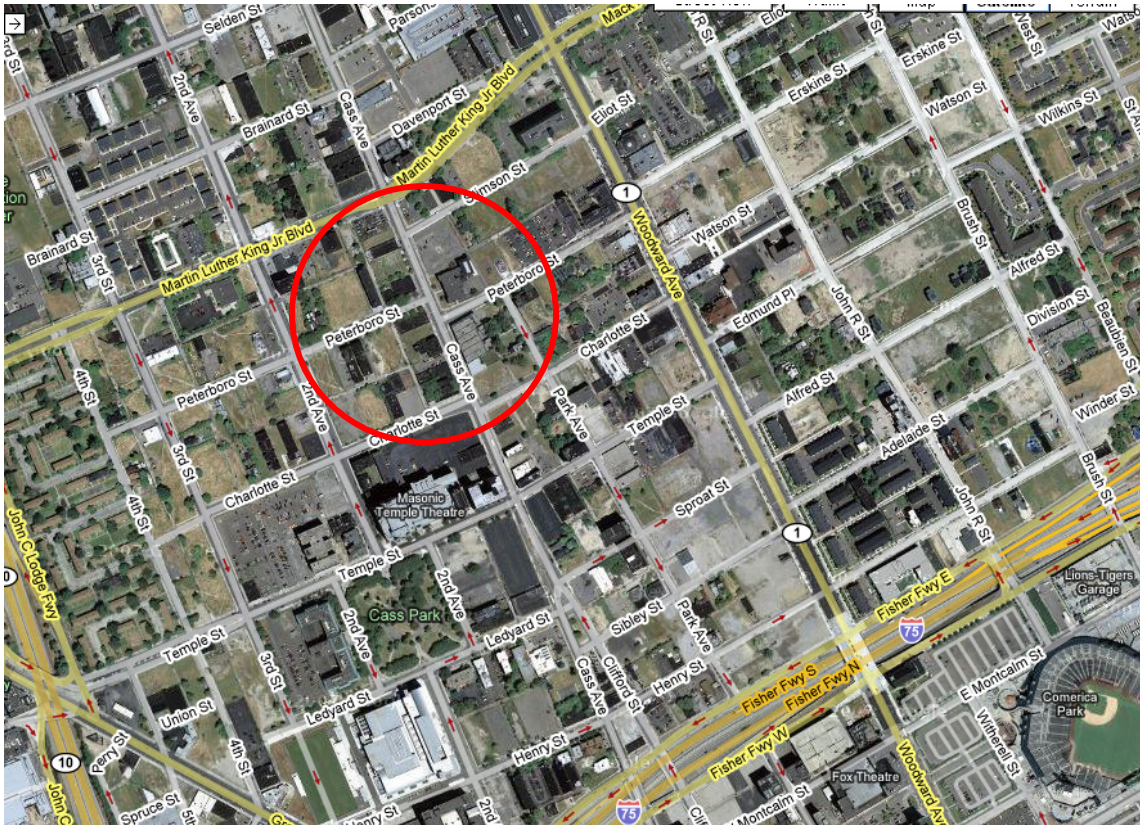


As this site sits, there seems to be an abundance of potential for great utilization of this abandoned building. However, a proposal of this size in this neighborhood seems to lack grounding as a feasible project. Although abandoned schools have often made great re-use projects, especially as community centers, Old Cass Tech is too large to bring the intimacy of performance into the community. As discussed in the thesis position community based design is the key for arts related facilities success in being a catalyst. This proposal for a mega Cultural center at Cass Tech is the antithesis of what the project is trying to accomplish. The project seeks to be community oriented and human scaled facility that can be run by a small group of people. A smaller scale site selection within Cass Corridor will be more fitting for the intent of the project.

Site Analysis II

A Look at Cass Corridor

Although this thesis will eventually focus on one building type that is fully developed, it is vital to be aware of the surrounding context and potential. In its conclusion, this thesis intends to promote expansive development, because of this it is important to look at the neighborhood of focus from a broader perspective and indicate potential development projects of various leftover buildings. This section is a compilation of research of the area, before I made my final decision on site selection.



The old James Scott Mansion was a massive home built by Detroit's renowned wealthy playboy James Scott. The home has been abandoned for some time and sits between Cass Avenue and Woodward Avenue on Peterboro. This gorgeous building contains the potential to house practice and educational spaces. Including the basement, the home contains 4 floors and the adjacent vacant lots allow for ample space for further development of an intimate performance venue and additional parking. At one point, it was converted into an apartment building. Falling into decay and gutted by fire, it was abandoned in the early seventies and then gutted by fire again.

Although this building is a better scale for a community based project, this site is buried between Woodward Avenue and Cass Avenue and would not get as much foot traffic as a building on Cass Avenue or another major street in the area. However, this building does provide an opportunity as one of the near by buildings

to be developed after the catalyst of this project begins. There are plans to turn this building into apartments or lofts; however there is not enough money or activity in the area to speed the process along. This could be one of the many buildings eventually affected by this thesis.



Provided by Google maps

The following sequence of images is the views along Cass Ave. The buildings circled in the pictures are possible development opportunities for the area. The buildings are either abandoned or in need of remodeling or redevelopment. The image below is a view of Cass Ave south of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. facing southeast toward downtown Detroit. It depicts three buildings: Burton International School on the left, the Mantra thrift store and pawnshop on the right. These buildings as of late are not being used to their full potential. The Burton International School, currently being used to tutor students, needs to become a stronger pull to the community. It can become either a stronger academic pull to the community or converted into a multi use community facility. The shops on the right need to be remodeled and address the street in a more appropriate and elegant way. These buildings can remain retail stores but should be more appealing to the neighborhood.



Provided by Google street views

The image below is further south east down Cass Ave. On the left sits an unutilized office building with rooms above. This can be converted to street front offices with residences above. On the right is an abandoned building that used to offer street front shops and offices above. This building can be revamped or tuned into a music store on the base floor and private music studios above. This will help build off the theme of performing arts oriented development.



Provided by Google street views

These two images below were provided by *DetoritYes.com*. These two abandoned buildings sit adjacent to each other off of Cass Ave. Chung's Restaurant used to be a popular place to eat along Cass, but has since been closed. Reopening this restaurant will add to the activity and development of the area. The house adjacent to the restaurant is an example of a few of the abandoned homes nearby. These once beautiful homes can be restored and add to quality of life the area. The restoration of these homes can provide either living quarters or more opportunities for shops, theaters, studios, or galleries.



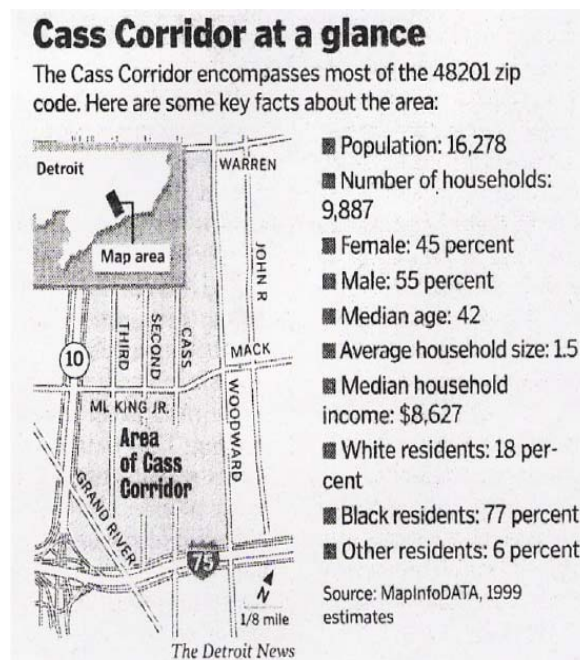
The following image is the reverse view from the previous ones of its kind. This is a view northwest on Cass from the corner of Charlotte and Cass. This view shows three buildings that have not been well kept, but can serve as development pieces. The far left building circled is what used to be the Charlotte Lounge, a once popular café in the area. The redevelopment of this building type would help add to accent other development opportunities discussed. Behind the Charlotte Lounge is a three story abandoned double wide residential unit. This building has a fairly large front and back yard and would serve nicely as either a public building with green space. Or private studios that share green space with the public street front. The building on the right is a small CMU street front building that could be remolded into more street front shopping. This will help promote the activity of the area.



Provided by Google street views

Since this area and these buildings have a strong history, it is important to recognize the importance or reusing these spaces. As Cass Corridor develops with these ideas the demographics to the right will change for the better. Population will increase as well as household income and so on. These individual factors will all add up to positive results.

As for the building the thesis will focus on, it sits in the middle of all of the above buildings discussed. After this broad overview of the neighborhood, the most significant building to thesis proved to be the Gold Dollar Bar. This building has the strongest performing arts history in this strip selected. The analysis and restoration of this building will follow in the next sections.

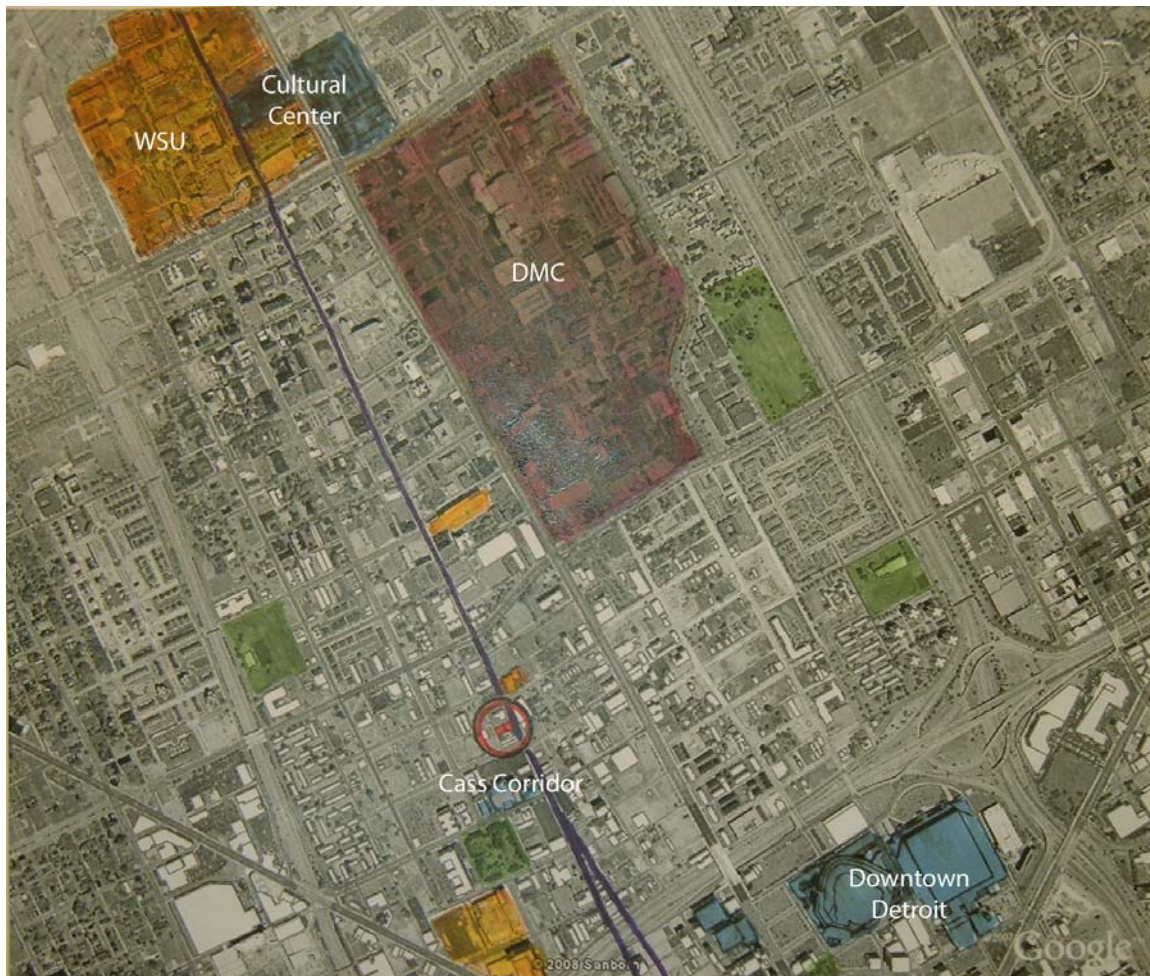


The above image is from a 1999 estimate of the Cass Corridor demographic done by the Detroit news. Since then, Cass has been evolving and should begin aiming development toward a younger generation

Site Analysis III

Gold Dollar Bar

After looking at the potential buildings in the Cass Corridor area, this building became the focus of this thesis project. It is located between the buildings discussed in the previous section. The Gold Dollar bar was open between 1996 and 2001. It is located on Cass Avenue in that heart of Cass Corridor. This bar was illustrious for great music shows on the weekends, but due to the owner's lack of interest to continue his endeavor, the bar was closed on August 18, 2001. In its short lifetime, 1996-2001, the Gold Dollar became Detroit's legendary musical home. Filling a void that had been vacant since the closing of Bookies' Club 870, the Dollar provided a space for the Detroit music scene. The Gold Dollar was an excellent start-up bar and was the first venue for the now successful bands *The White Stripes* and *Electric Six* (MotorCity 1). Although this venue is small when compared to the downtown theaters, it offers a nice human scale to the community and there is ample parking in the adjacent lot.





Provided by Google street views



Provided by Google street views

The Gold Dollar Bar is attached to two other buildings. One used to be divided into two street front retail units. The other appears to have been a warehouse or a work shop in that back. This complex of buildings was built long before the last known use from 1996-2001 as the Gold Dollar Bar, but the previous users of the other two buildings are unknown. Previous to the 96-01 running, the bar portion of the building served as a female impersonator bar. Although this might not be the best social stigma to maintain, the building still poses a strong reputation in the area.



Provided by Google



Community Based Performing Arts and Education Center

This project acknowledges the positive effect of the performing arts, on blighted or borderline communities while engaging the community. Within the realm of the theme, “Urban Impact | Aftermath”, this project seeks to be an adaptive reuse proposal which will house a newly designed community based performing arts and education center. The Architecture intends to reach out to the community both by programming and design. The theater will be an intimate setting to involve the community and performance goes as well as the performers. At this level, a more personal experience can occur and provide to the community much need animation, stimulation and sustenance.

- Parking Lot (7600SF)
 - Existing lot to be re surfaced and modified to allow angle parking traffic to exit towards ally

- Public Space and Circulation (1800SF)
 - Lobby will connect the café/bar and the theater space. The entry will look out to the patio/garden where evening light will filter from. The soft look of greenery with some interior plantings will tie both the inside and outside spaces.
 - Other circulation will include access to rehearsal/studio rooms.

- Café/Bar/Patio (980SF) (780SF)
 - Café will open to the street front, but will also connect to the patio/garden. It will serve as a full service restaurant and will assist the theater in ongoing social stimulant. When performances are not occurring the Café/Bar can run all day.

- Kitchen (1 x 400SF) (1x 60SF)
 - Commercial Grade Kitchen support Café/Bar and Patio spaces
 - Pantry for dry storage

- Performance Space (110 person standing max) (900SF)
 - Intimacy with the audience and performers is crucial to this project. The only way a facility like this can truly serve as a community developer is by creating relationships to people of the community.
 - A small theater is sometimes more attainable for nontraditional theatergoers. Disadvantaged youth can conceive of being in or producing a small theater show

more easily than a large Broadway production. With small theaters, the audience comes to know the actors. In fact, Blue Hill Troupe audience members often eventually become players. ([Shapiro](#))

- Multi-Purpose layout for a variety of small theatrical uses including black box, traditional and cabaret theater styles, as well as street performing capabilities. (Theater will convert from 60 to 110 without seats and street performing allows a variety of options)

- Stage Support (2 x 150SF) (+/- 1 x 390SF)
 - This will include both behind stage spaces and storage for light scenery, equipment, costumes, etc.
 - A service/public hallway will be involved as well.

- Performer's Support (220SF)
 - Dressing room and bathroom.

- Multi-Purpose Studio Room/Performer Workshop (2000SF)
 - Utilized for education and rehearsal spaces for music, dancing, acting, etc.
 - Programs available for all ages with a focus on young adults.
 - Space can also break down into smaller rooms (2 x 650SF) + (2 x 350SF)

- Administration/Box Office (1x 130SF)
 - Office will be used for ticket sales and organization. This office can serve as a tool for operation as well as organize events, such as fund raisers, or galleries in the multipurpose performance space or studio rooms.

- Tech Room (120SF)
 - Tech room will be located behind the theater which can be used for multimedia use: recording CDs/DVDs of performances, film editing, etc.
 - This can be used for educational purposes at a small scale.

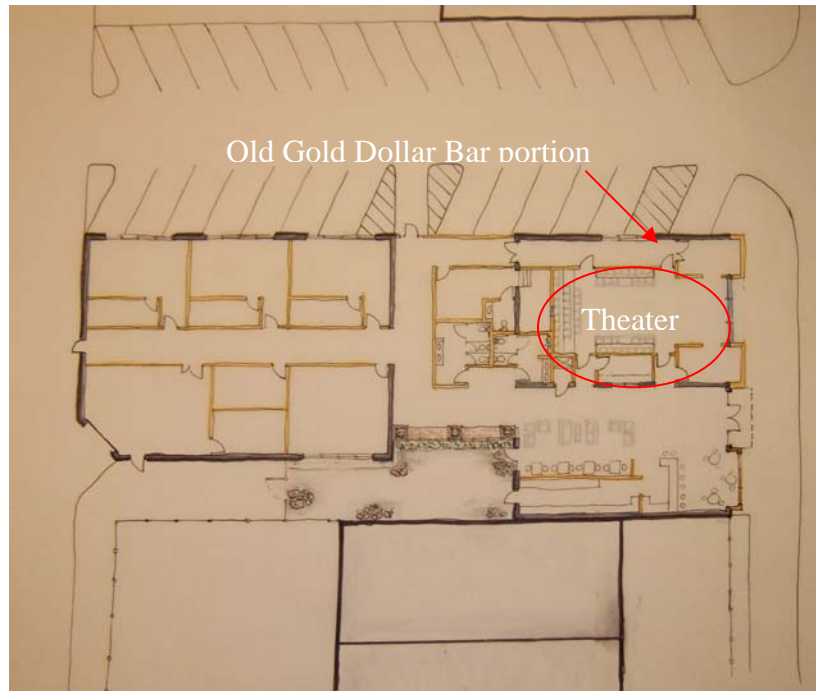
- Restrooms (2 x 170SF) (1)
 - 2 with access from Lobby and a private bathroom for performers.

- Utilities (1x500SF) (1 x 140SF) (1 x 600SF) (1 x 30SF)
 - Building services, delivery, truck bay, and garbage removal
 - Mechanical, Storage, Janitor Closet

@10,000 SF Building

Design Process

This design process began by looking at the reusable structure of this building. The intent is to salvage as much of the building as possible, while creating a new architectural element for the street front. By doing this, not only will the buildings memory be preserved, but the new features will allow for a stronger connection to the community.

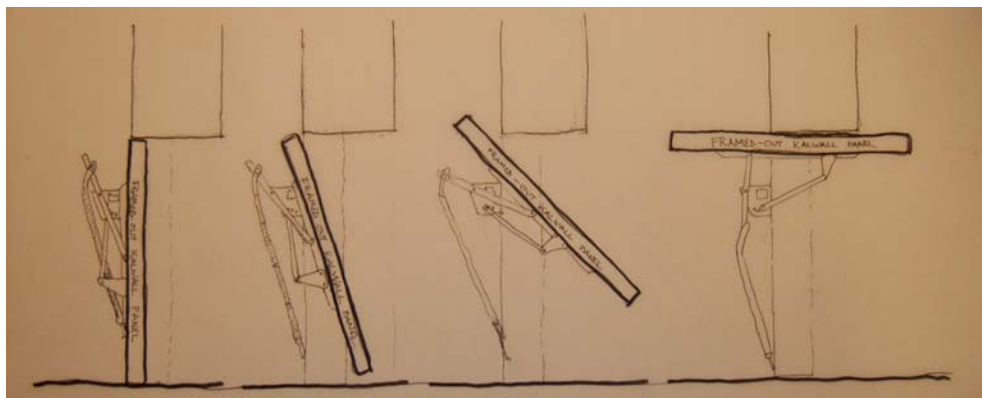


Beginning with the placement of the theater, this design immediately addressed the street front. Rather than place the theater in the more-open warehouse portion of the building, I opted to place it in the former Gold Dollar Bar corner. This placement would allow a relationship to the street while preserving the remains of what used to serve as a performing arts venue. Another theater feature that was incorporated was flipping the theater orientation 180 degrees. Typically stages in theaters are at the far end of the street. By reorienting the stage, there is a relationship formed from street walker and performer. The relationship will be enhanced by material separation between the two. When dealing with materiality and relationships based on connection, glass or the like is the first material that comes to mind. Glass provides a visual connection and is often used as an operable material, such as framed out doors and windows. For the backdrop of the stage I selected to use a panel similar to that of a Kalwall panel to allow light to filter from either side of the material and depending on the time of day allow silhouettes to cast two sides of the material. This “frosted” panel will provide the necessary privacy from inside to outside but allow the connection to remain strong.

In order to make the theater translucent panel prominent from the street, I chose to frame out the stage back drop with wood siding. The mitered corners can read like a frame around a piece of artwork. Below is a model of how the street side of the theater portion of the building would appear.



Going beyond the materiality aspect of connection, I wanted the theater to become a more integral part of the Cass Avenue street front. By making the translucent panel operable like a tilt up garage door, the backdrop of the stage from the inside can become a canopy for an outdoor sidewalk performance.

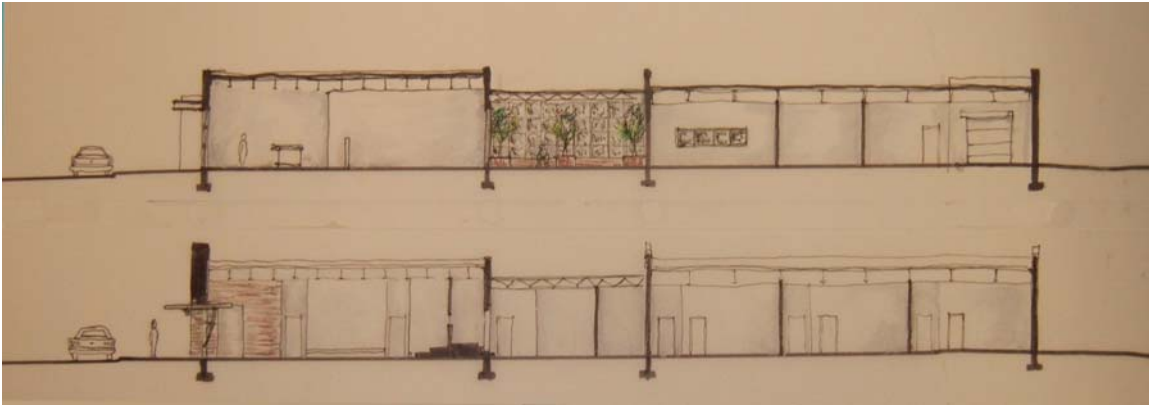


Continuing the theme of glass as a connective material, I designed the remaining street facade with a play on glass. The café will sit opposite the theater and be connected by the shared entry/lobby. My original design for the café was to simply have a 3 foot jet out from the existing façade to help distinguish the entrance and give the café extra square footage. Playing of the operable theme of my theater “door”, this café expansion would eventually become an operable design element in my final plan.

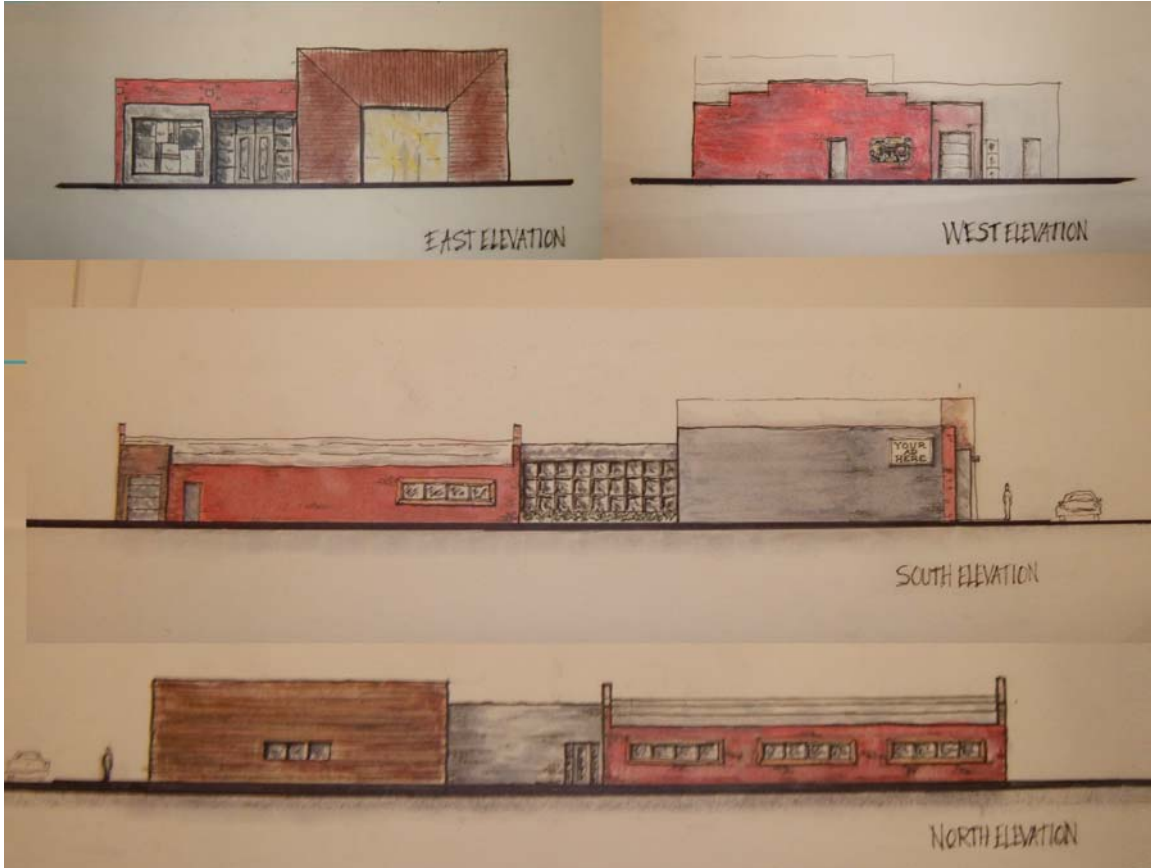


Next the design of the inside would be addressed. The inside of the theater would be a black box set up with three stage arrangements: one in the center of the space, one against the panel backdrop and one on the sidewalk. The seating levels along the sides will be operable to create more floor space when needed.

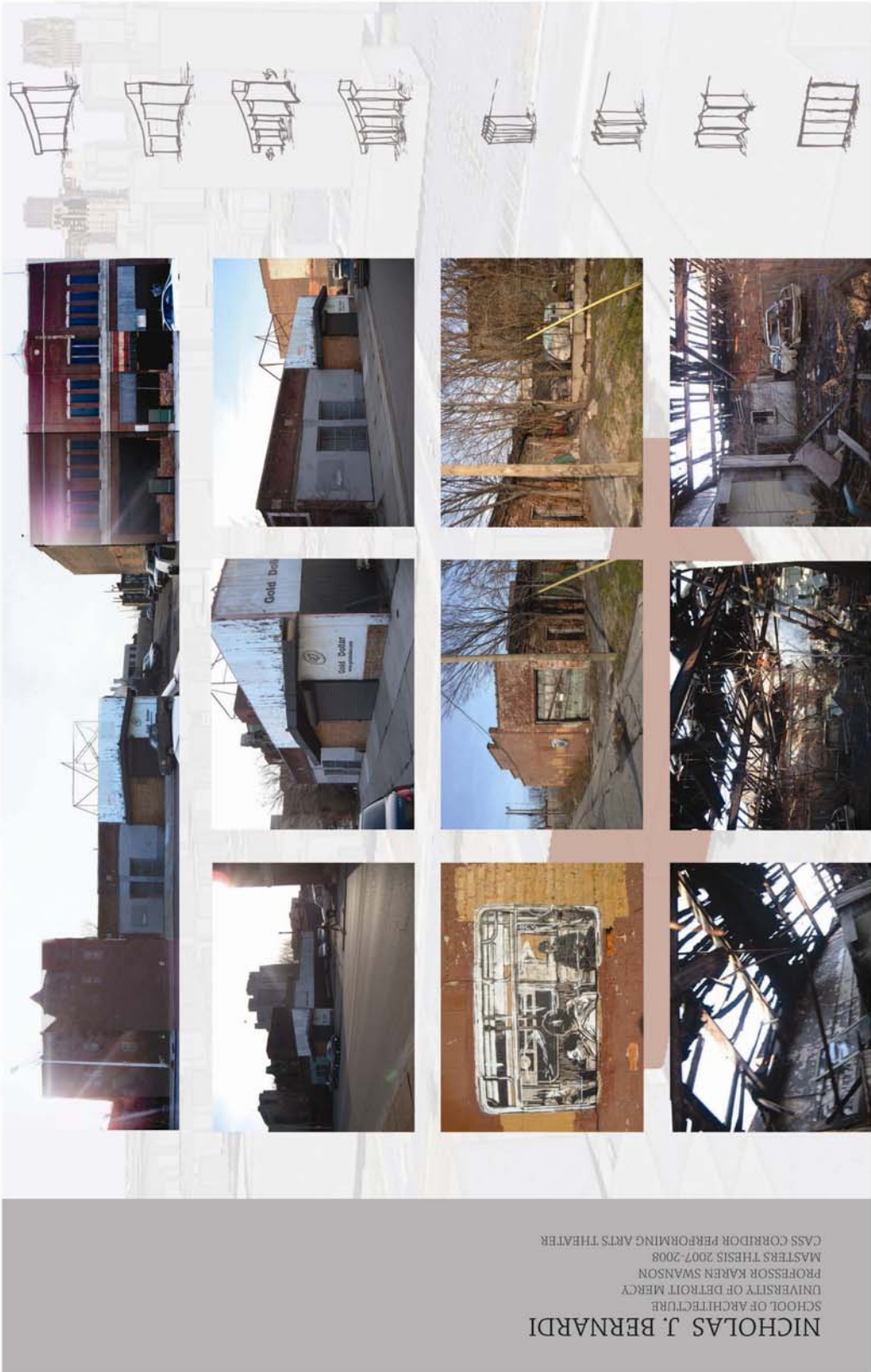
The main entry/lobby will serve as access to both the café and the theater it will also line up with the back patio/garden, giving the entry a strong view back to the outside. Again trying to following in the theme of connection to the outside the patio doors will consist of 4 framed out large poly-carbonate swivel doors allowing views to the outside, natural airflow when opened, and another implication of blurring or connecting the inside and outside.



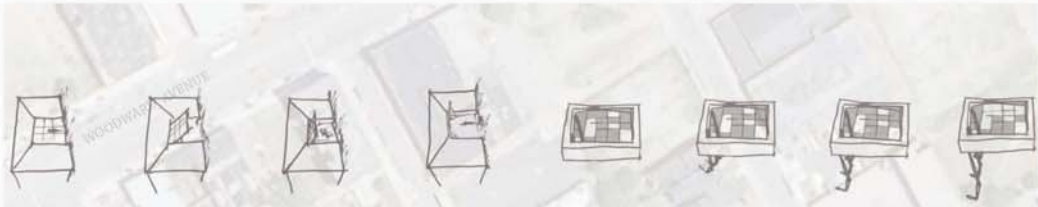
As per the program written for this building, the old warehouse portion would be designed to serve as the building utilities and the more private multipurpose/practice studios. The original design shown in these development stages would eventually change from rigid walls to moveable acoustical panels. This option would allow for a variety of more uses and also again play on the theme of openness. These panels could allow collaboration of artists or simply allow one big multipurpose room for a large group to gather. A lot of these design issues will be shown in the next section where I display the final design boards.



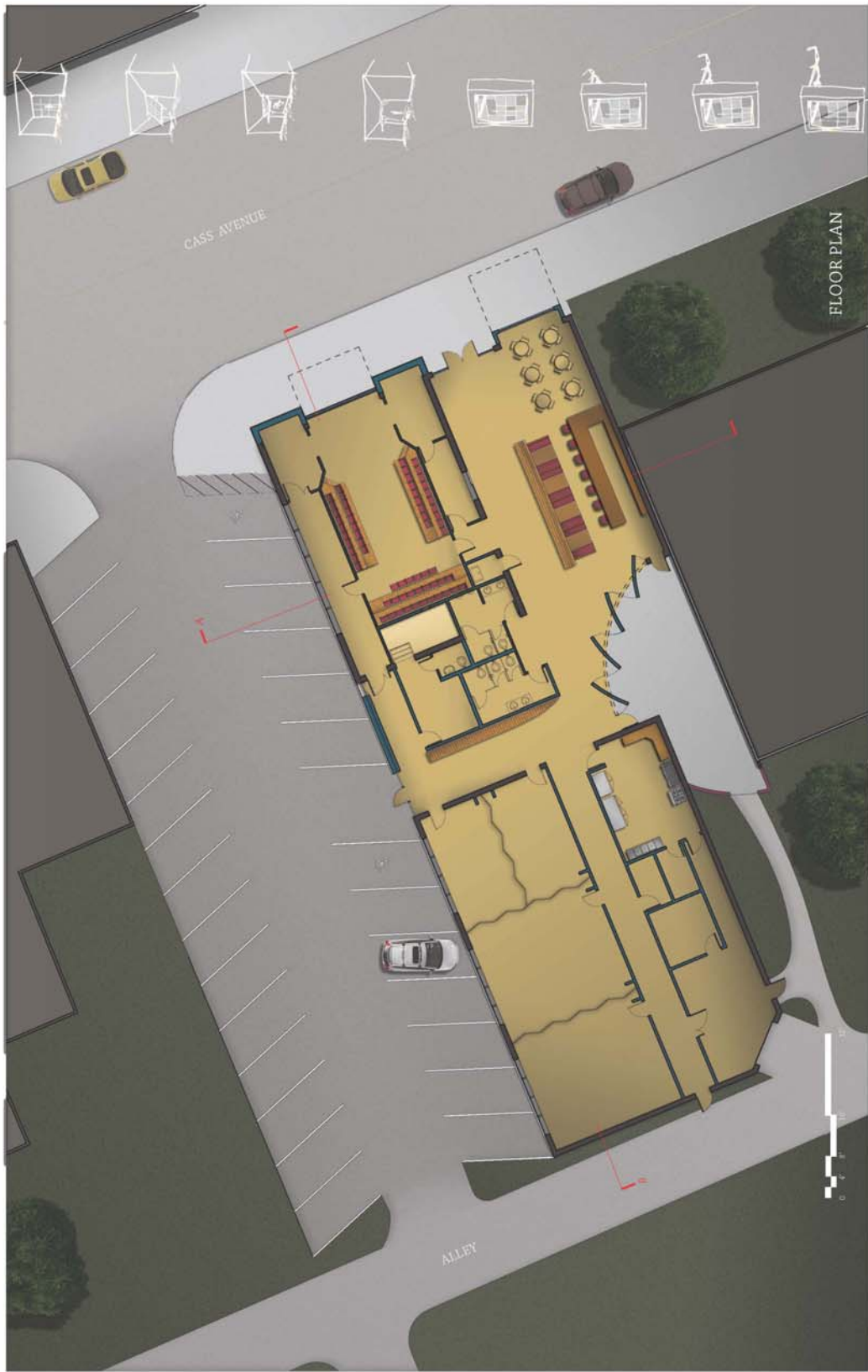
Design Documentation



NICHOLAS J. BERNARDI
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY
PROFESSOR KAREN SWANSON
MASTERS THESIS 2007-2008
CASS CORRIDOR PERFORMING ARTS THEATER



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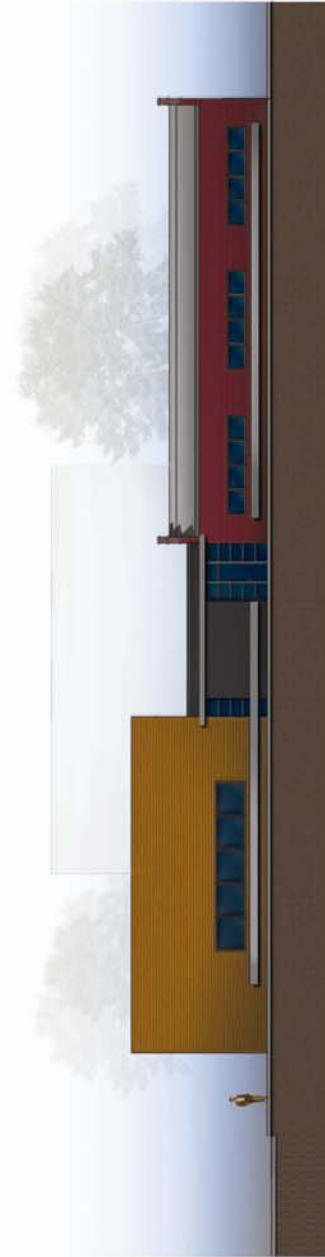
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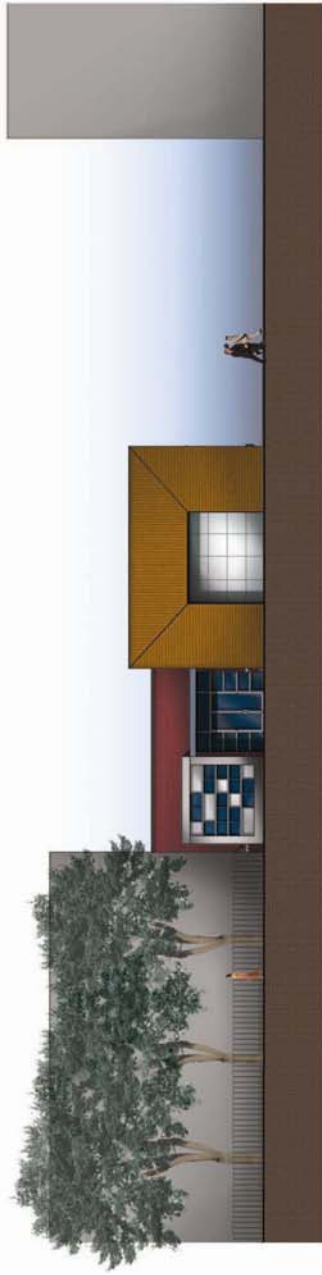
SECTION B



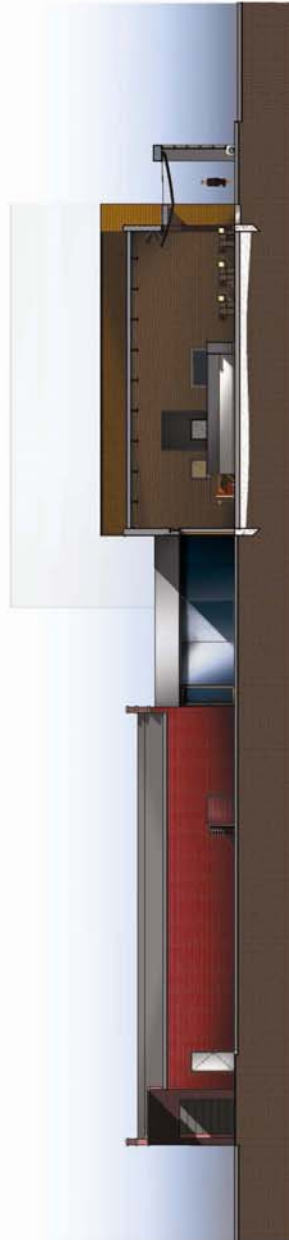
WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



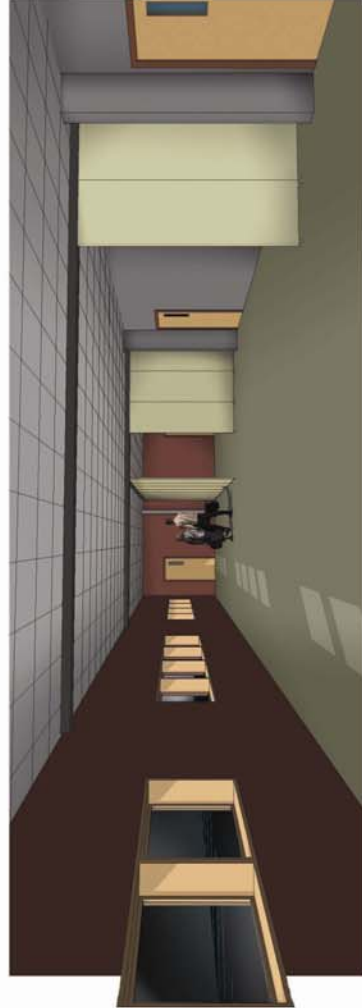
EAST ELEVATION

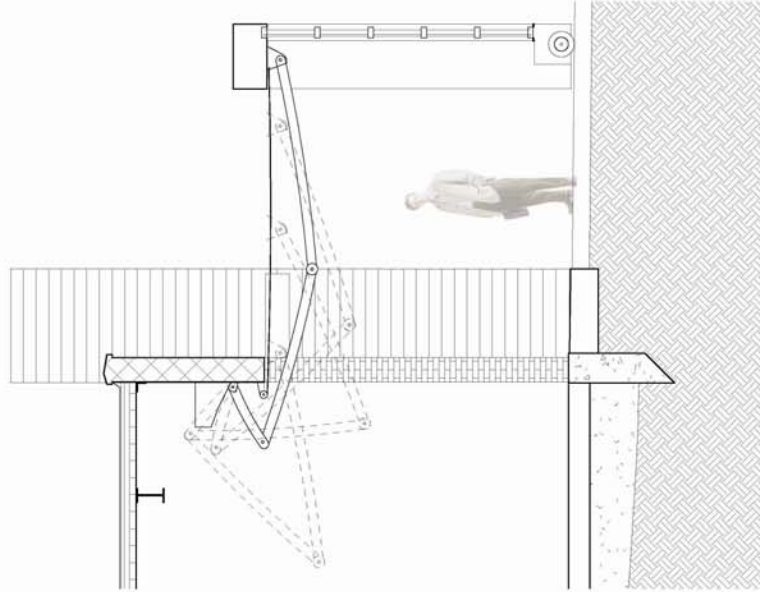


SOUTH ELEVATION

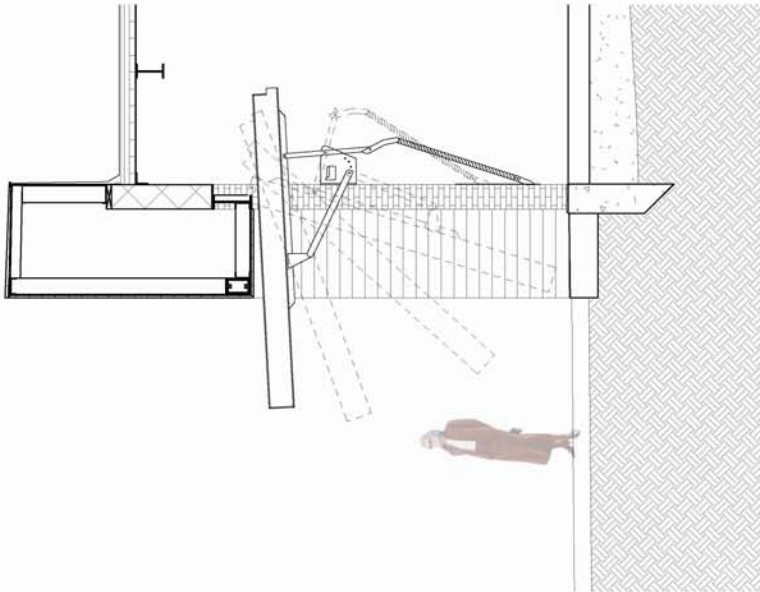








CAFE DOOR DETAIL



THEATER DOOR DETAIL



Conclusion

The design elements of the previous section intend to uphold the architectural intent of the thesis project. By creating a community based performing arts center and by taking advantage of some of the design feature that reach out to the community, it can be seen as a starting point to Cass Corridor development. Based on the same ideals expressed in the case studies earlier mentioned, the arts will serve as a tool to engage and animate this area. With the influence and vitality of the performing arts, this facility can be used as a tool to animate the human aspect of the neighborhood and become a catalyst for the area's development. Through taking a look at the areas leftovers, preserving the memory of space, accepting the cultural influences of an area and by applying relevant architecture, it is possible to see how this thesis can be feasible. Although this written thesis stops with the design and development of one building and merely suggests ideas for its surrounding buildings, the idea is to allow this one building to spark the area to life once again. If all the surrounding buildings can engage and embrace the street front like the design I proposed here, than Cass Corridor can develop its own unique and distinguished style that can draw in more people, businesses, and money. However, with this development it is important to not tarnish the distinguished style that Cass Corridor has made for itself. We cannot simply design and build with no regard for what was once there, especially in historically significant neighborhoods like Cass. We must embrace the past as we move forward in development.

Dedication

This thesis would be incomplete without a special thanks to my parents, Richard and Elizabeth.

Without their on going support and love for me, I would have never achieved all that I have.

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