

RE-ENVISIONING
THE KIMMEL CENTER

through Civic Engagement and Design

FOREWORD

In 2001, after many years of discussion, debate and anticipation, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts finally opened its doors in downtown Philadelphia. In addition to housing Philadelphia's premier performing arts groups, including the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra, this monumental building was designed to serve as an indoor plaza and community destination for Philadelphians and visitors alike. Several years later, the Kimmel Center still offers an amazing variety of performances on its four stages, but has yet to deliver a real destination for the general public. The space which was originally conceived to facilitate meeting, lingering and exploration is better known for its emptiness and inaccessibility.

Over the course of several months beginning in January 2008, undergraduate students at the University of Pennsylvania worked in conjunction with PennPraxis and the students at the University of the Arts to re-evaluate architectural designs and programming for the Kimmel Center. These assessments were intended to address public space issues and to work toward invigorating the lifeless communal spaces. This undertaking was the main project for the course, Graphic Design Practicum at Penn, which brought together six senior architecture students with six students of design. Under the leadership of Laurie Churchman, professor of Fine Arts, and Harris Steinberg, director of PennPraxis, these students worked together in an effort to realize the Kimmel Center's great potential as a functional and engaging public space.

PennPraxis is a non-profit organization created by PennDesign in an effort to put practical, urban use to designs created in the classroom by PennDesign students and faculty. Using the framework provided by PennPraxis, in partnership with the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, led by Penn faculty member Harris Sokoloff in collaboration with Chris Satullo of the Great Expectations Project at the Philadelphia Inquirer, the

students considered feedback and suggestions provided by the community when contemplating ideas for reimagining the public spaces at the Kimmel Center. Students broke into three groups to pursue different approaches to invigorating this world-class building. With the guidance of professors, professionals, members of community and Kimmel Center employees, the groups proposed architectural, graphic and programmatic changes that took on three themes: Humanize, Connect to the Arts, and Sensory Experience. Ranging from large-scale changes like a nine-story waterwall, to small-scale suggestions like an illuminated sidewalk, the groups considered every aspect of the Kimmel Center's potential public spaces. These themes were presented to members of the community at a public presentation after several months of reconfiguring and fine-tuning the designs. The presentation was intended to spark further conversation and contribute to a more concrete plan for the Kimmel Center's next steps.

The public has taken great interest in this monumental undertaking. \$235 million went toward realizing architect Rafael Viñoly's colossal design. Those who waited so patiently for their time and money to materialize into this magnificent building want to see its potential fully realized. The students, worked diligently to address the needs of the public by bringing new life and excitement to this bold architectural feat. We progressed under the shared philosophy that the Kimmel Center is home to Philadelphia's finest performance arts groups, but its beauty and magnificence should be enjoyed by all.

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IN CONTEXT

Rafael Viñoly's larger-than-life design for the Kimmel Center was realized after nearly a quarter of a billion and many years of deliberation. This world-class space houses Philadelphia's finest performing arts groups and was built under the premise that its plaza and common areas would be shared with the entire Philadelphia community.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KIMMEL CENTER

The Kimmel Center was conceived in 1996 when two architectural projects being pursued in Philadelphia were brought together and reassessed as one unified commission. The Philadelphia Orchestra was in need of a new performing arts house, and the then-mayor of Philadelphia Edward Rendell was in search of a new venue that would accommodate the other prominent performing arts groups in the city. The plans for these projects merged and the concept of the Kimmel Center was born. Slated for construction at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets, the Regional Performing Arts Center helped to secure plans and coordinate the details of this enormous undertaking. Rafael Viñoly, an Argentinian architect was eventually chosen to spearhead the design process. When the Kimmel Center first opened its doors in December of 2001, the city was beaming with anticipation as visions of “Philadelphia’s very own Lincoln Center” began to materialize.

The Kimmel Center facilities house eight resident performing arts groups, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Peter Nero and the Philly Pops, PHILADANCO, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the American Theater Arts for Youth, the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Ballet. These eight groups share Verizon Hall and Perelman Theater. The Kimmel Center also houses Innovation Studio, a basement-level space conducive to experimental productions. This remarkable list of performers is the primary reason the Kimmel Center was brought to life, but its facility was also a public destination. This promise has fallen short as the Kimmel generally only enjoys crowds around performance times and for special events.

This magnificent structure was imagined with the best of intentions for Philadelphians, but architectural roadblocks and programmatic shortcomings have left the center fairly isolated from the general public. Its 150-foot high vaulted glass ceiling towers over Broad Street, but is

relatively invisible to the average pedestrian. Instead, those at street level are confronted with heavy, uninviting brick façades that hardly allude to the Kimmel Center’s architectural brilliance. Once inside, visitors are faced with an enormous stone lobby space that offers little activity, information or seating options. The third floor restaurant, Cadence, is primarily open during peak hours and is usually only enjoyed by performance-goers.

The time, effort and great expectations toward realizing this ambitious vision for Philadelphia’s Avenue of the Arts were inspiring, but have sadly fallen short because the Kimmel Center is not the buzzing public plaza once imagined. The public outcry has resounded and the Kimmel staff has responded. Recently relieved of its \$30 million deficit, the Kimmel Center is now able to move toward actualizing its potential as a world-class public plaza and gathering space. Many people believe in this project and have gone to great lengths to help it fulfill its capacity for greatness.

Demographics

Total Center City employment	220,099
Regional population	6.1 million
City population	1.45 million
Center City population	88,000
Center City households	56,920
Regional households	2,458,531
Median family income in Center City	\$64,058–\$87,214
Median annual wage of Center City office worker	\$73,487

Visitors

Visitor spending in Philadelphia region, 2005	\$5.79 billion
Average hotel occupancy rate, 2006	74%
Visitors to Philadelphia region, 2005	27.3 million
Median household income of overnight visitors, 2005	\$97,000
Number of museums and cultural institutions	253
Number of hotel rooms	10,122
Percent visitors coming to Center City primarily to shop	48%
Percent visitors coming to Center City primarily to dine	53%

Students

Number of institutions of higher learning	15
Enrollment of students in Center City	31,848
Students adjacent to Center City	67,590



43% of Center City's workforce lives in Philadelphia neighborhoods

10% of Center City's workforce lives in Center City

34% of the workforce lives in four metropolitan Pennsylvania counties

18% of the workforce lives in three contiguous New Jersey counties (Gloucester, Camden and Burlington)

Parking

Metered spaces in Center City	6,429
Off-street parking spaces	Over 65,000

Access/Mass Transit

Transit Services	Average Weekday Ridership
27 SEPTA bus lines, 2006	86,359
5 SEPTA trolley lines, 2006	19,711
7 SEPTA regional rail, 2006	35,866
2 SEPTA subway surface, 2006	109,309
PATCO Speedline, 2006	33,083
18 NJ Transit bus lines, 2006	6,582
Average total riders daily	290,910
Amtrak Acela Express, 2006	11,200 annual average
Time to New York City	1:10
Time to Washington, DC	1:38

Key Facts
Data taken from
www.centercityphilla.org

The Avenue of the Arts is the heart of Philadelphia's cultural scene, anchored by the dramatic Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, and lined with theaters, fine restaurants and local and national retailers. Magnificent new condominium projects, on the Avenue and nearby, have drawn a large and affluent residential population base.



Rittenhouse Square



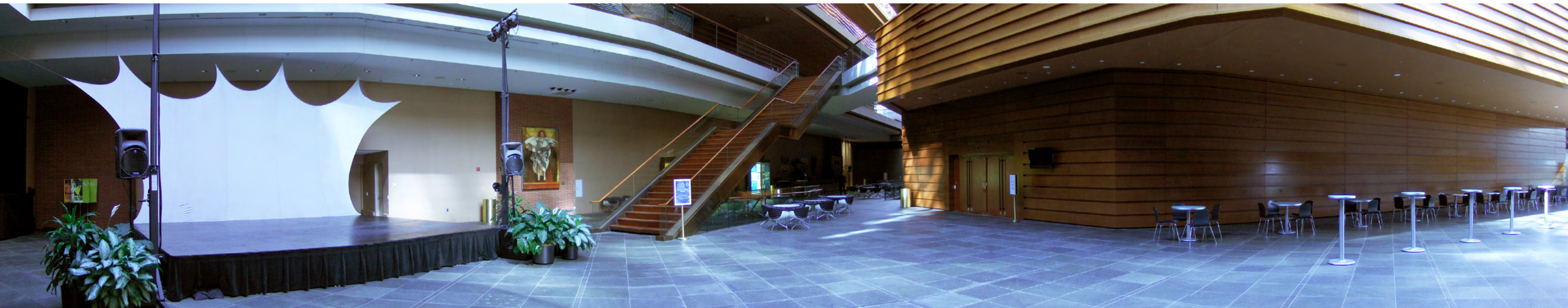
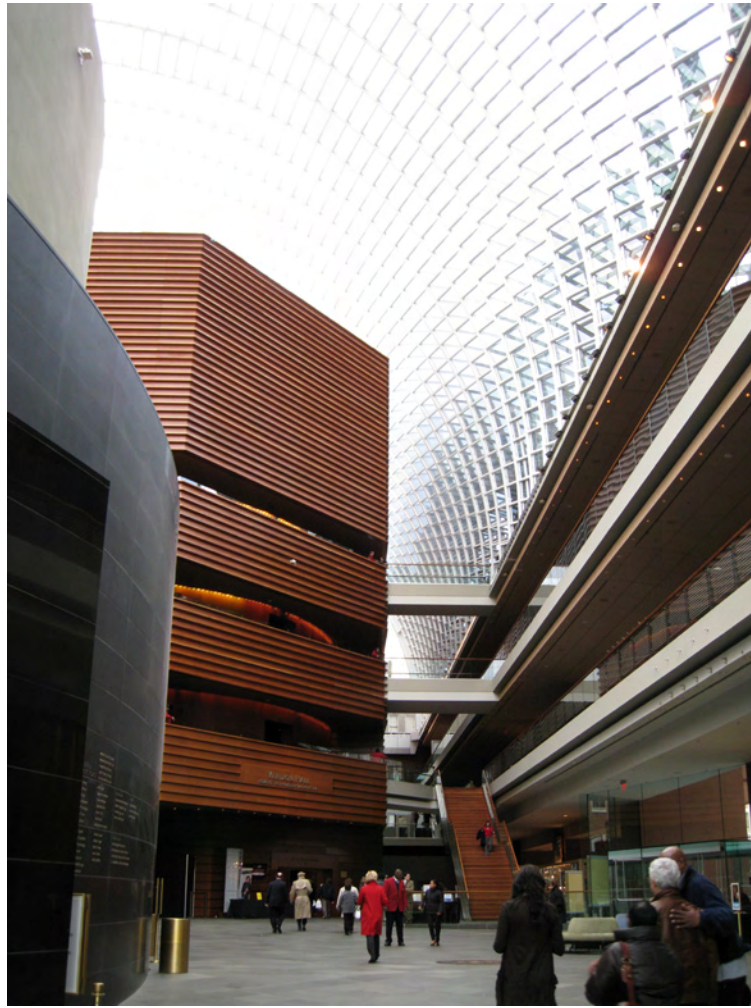
City Hall, Philadelphia

Rouge Cafe
Upstairs Varalli



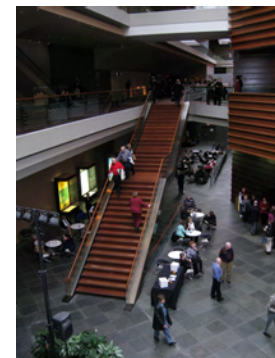
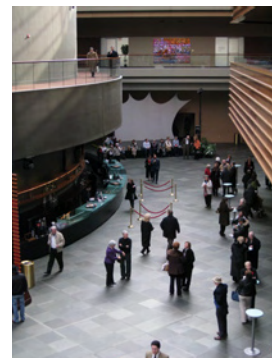
THE NEIGHBORHOOD

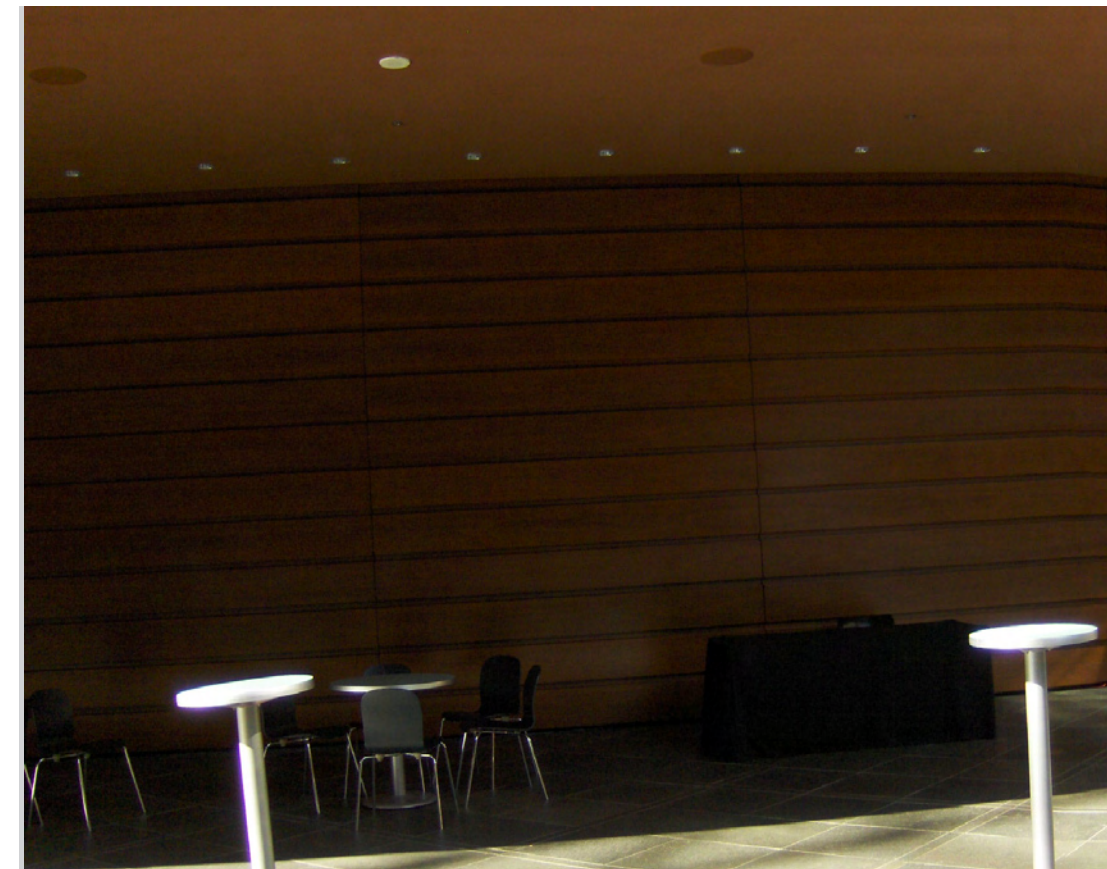


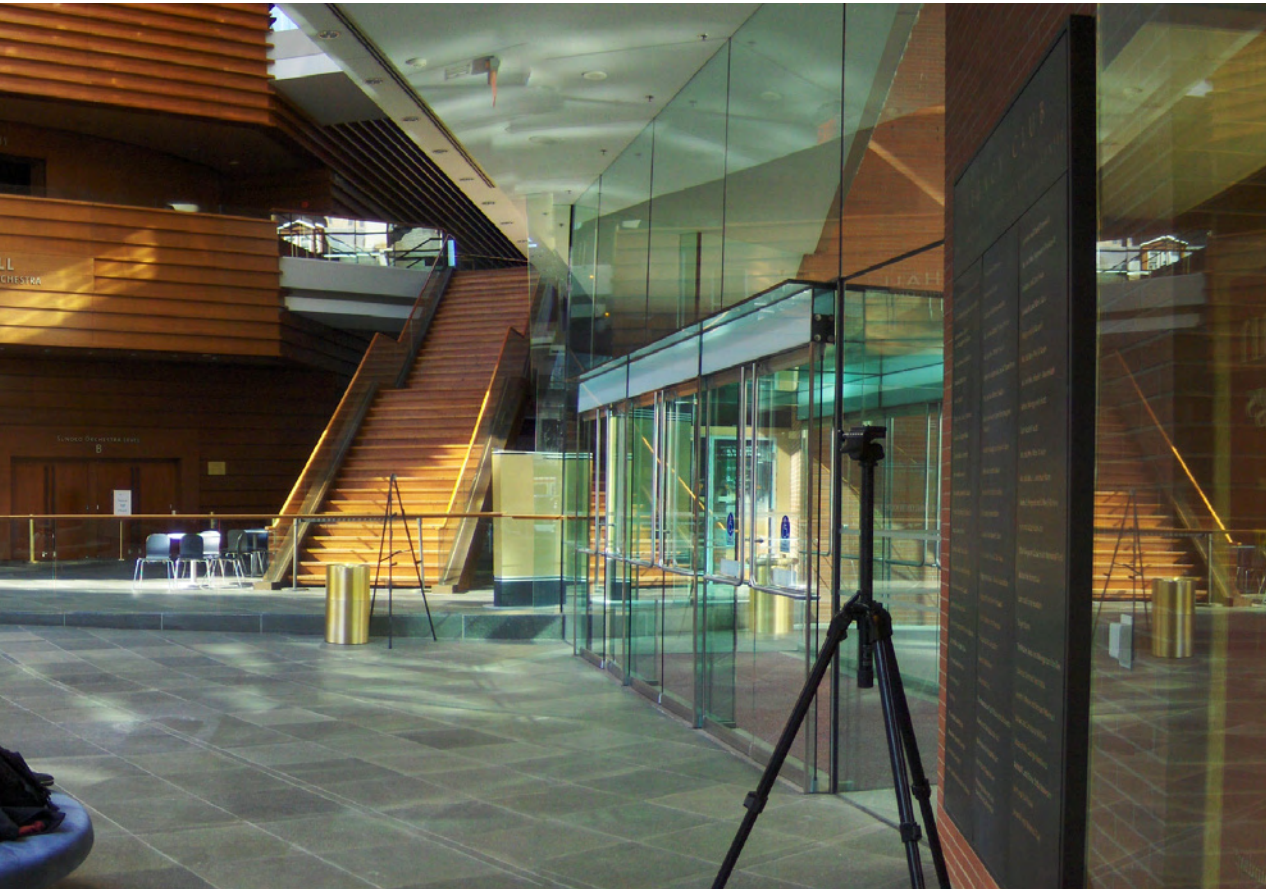




THE KIMMEL NOW



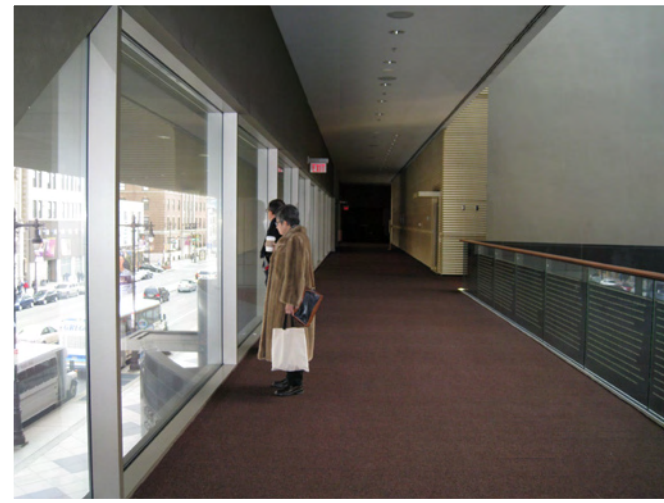
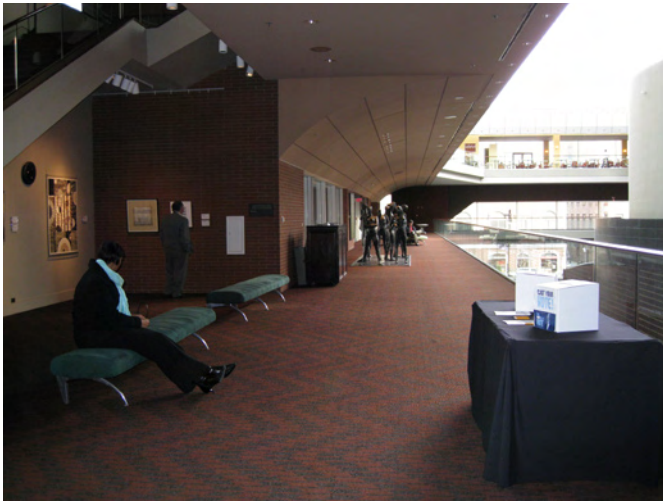


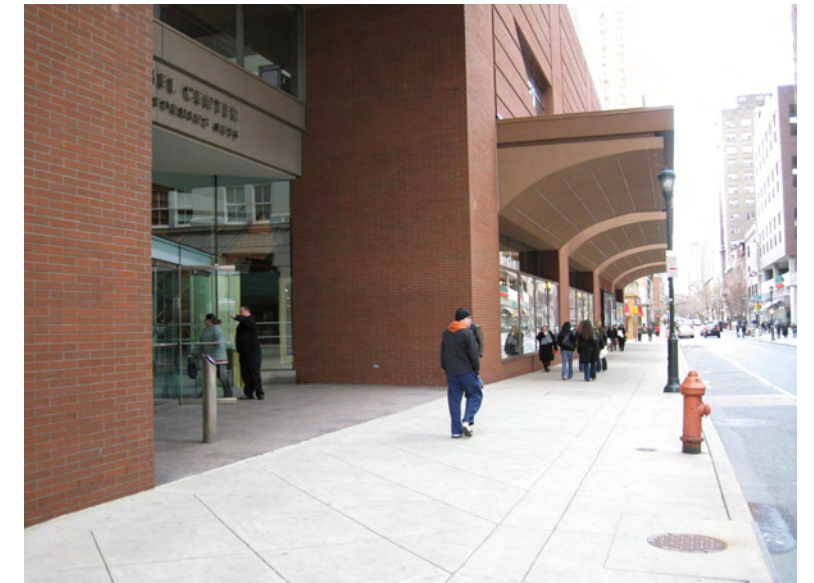


COMMONWEALTH PLAZA

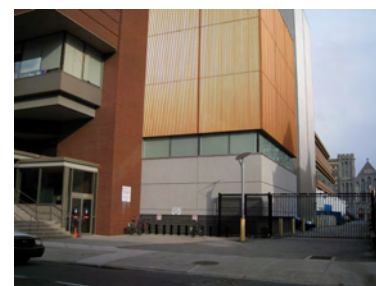


UPPER TIERS



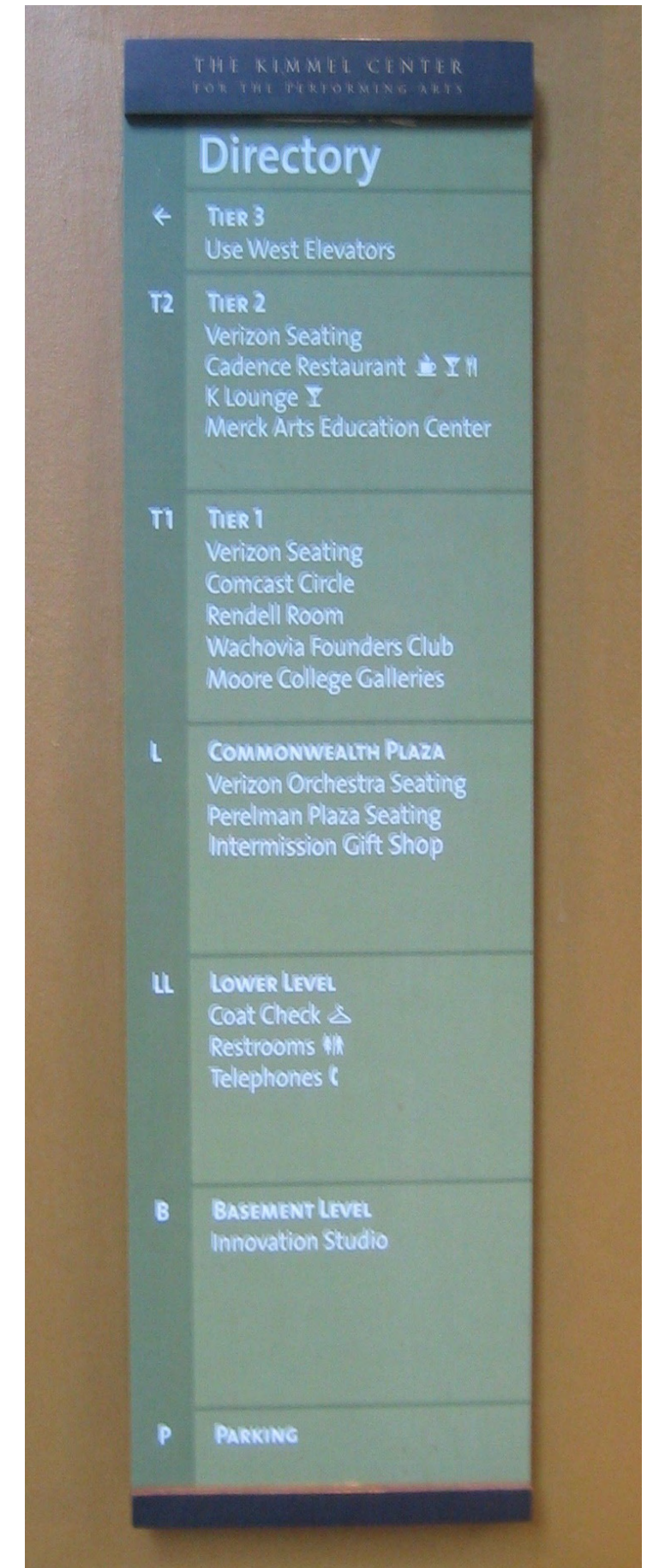
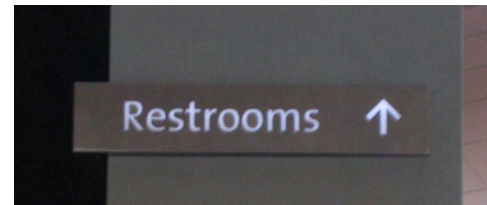
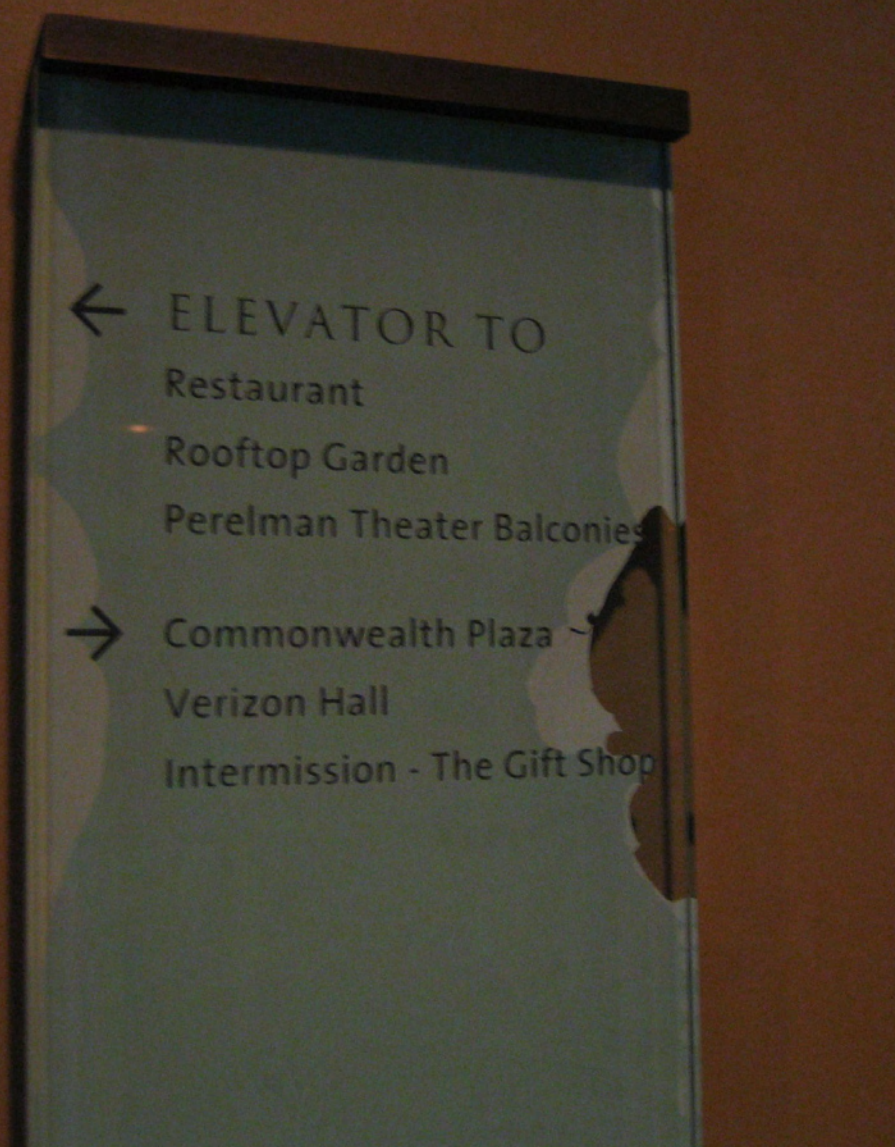


EXTERIOR

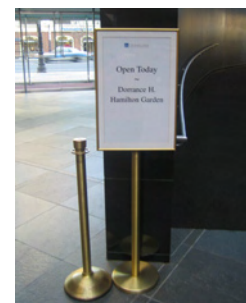
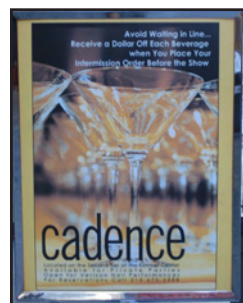




L **COMMONWEALTH PLAZA**
Verizon Orchestra Seating
Perelman Plaza Seating
Intermission Gift Shop



SIGNAGE





Brochures handed out at the information center in Commonwealth Plaza



Studios offered to performing groups in the basement of the Kimmel

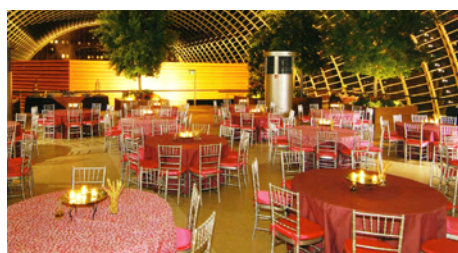


Advertising Brochures

Private receptions at Commonwealth Plaza



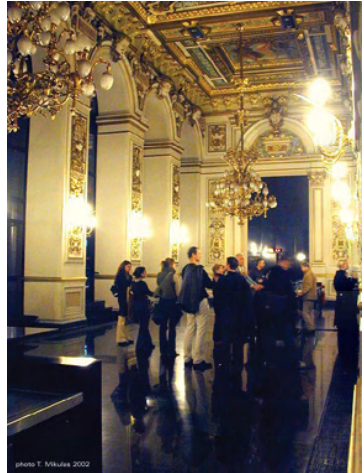
PROGRAMMING



Private receptions at Hamilton Garden, Perelman Theater, and the Academy of Music



*Toyo Ito,
Sendai Mediatheque,
Sendai, Japan 2001*



*Jean Nouvel
Lyon Opera House
Lyon, France 1993*

In order to transform the Kimmel Center into a dynamic performing arts public space, several performing arts venues from around the world were carefully researched, analyzed and considered. Similar to the Kimmel Center, these venues share its architectural grandeur as a state of the art performance space; however, they also serve as a sight for attraction and public destination. Some of these best practices include the iconic Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia, the revitalized Lincoln Center in New York, US, the eclectic Sendai Mediatheque in Sendai, Japan, and the newly constructed National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China.

Through these examples, it is evident that these dynamic centers are achieved through a variety of techniques such as the maintenance of transparency between the activities inside the venue and the outside to engage and invite the public, the creation of additional intimate interactive spaces designed for the public to visit and linger, and also the implementation of intensive programming ranging from entertainment to didactic.



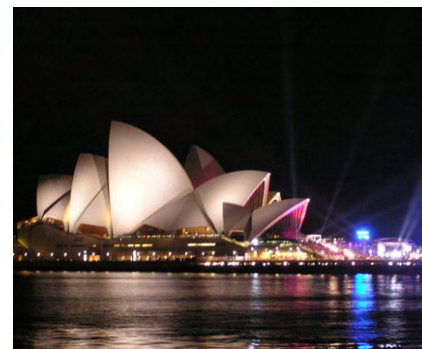
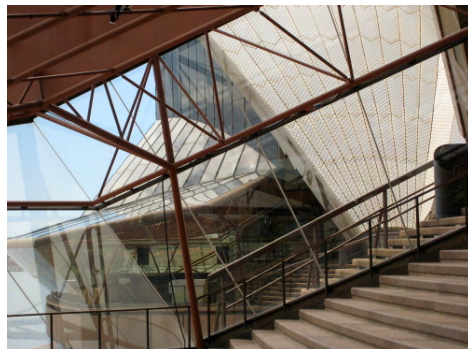
*Paul Andreu
National Center for the Performing Arts
Beijing, China 2007*



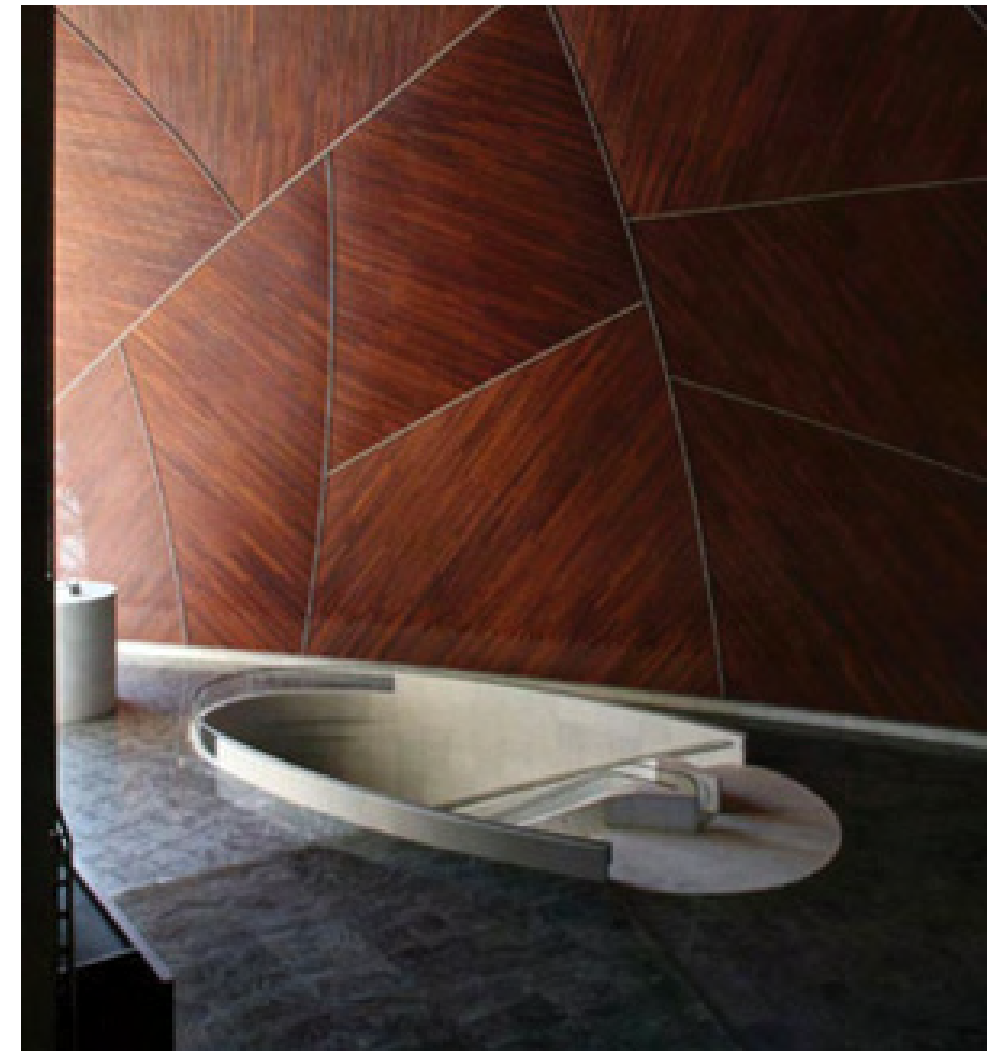
*Jean Marie Charpentier
Shangai Grand Theatre
Shanghai, China 1998*



ARTS VENUES WORLDWIDE



*Jorn Utzon and
Ove Arup & Partners
Sydney Opera House
Sydney, Australia 1973*



*Bernard Tschumi
Zenith Concert Hall
Limoges, France 2007*





CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Penn Project for Civic Engagement called upon citizens to provide feedback and insight into their ideas for the Kimmel Center. This information guided the Kimmel Center's re-evaluation and will eventually shape the changes that the Kimmel Center will undergo to help it become the dynamic public space that was originally intended.

WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

With the help of PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, the Kimmel Center's public space reassessment began. Over 200 citizens attended one of four public forums, held in January 2008 after a brief tour and explanation of the Kimmel Center's mission. Moderators lead small groups in dialogue about the Kimmel Center's strengths and weaknesses. These groups discussed, debated and brainstormed aspects of the Kimmel Center that they wanted to see improved. The results of these forums were compiled and themes were extracted. Harris Sokoloff, of the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, met with Penn students to refine a list of principles that encompassed these primary themes. The civic process and results from the public forums were recorded by columnists from the Philadelphia Inquirer and posted to the urban planning website, www.planphilly.com. Information was made widely accessible and feedback from the public was strongly encouraged throughout the entire process.

Using the principles gathered from the public feedback, Penn and UArts students started imagining how this input could translate into actual transformations. Mini-charrettes and lists of ideas were created to address the individual principles. Penn students broke into three four-person groups, to visualize ideas in preliminary architectural drawings and graphic renderings. Professors, architects, and the Kimmel Center staff gave continual feedback and insight throughout the process.

The designs matured into well-developed thematic approaches to readdressing the Kimmel Center. On April 14, 2008, another civic forum was held. This time, the three groups presented plans for enlivening the Kimmel Center's public spaces, and the audience was asked to respond to the proposals. More than 200 people attended the presentation, held in the Perelman Theater. The attendees were again asked to break into small groups and were given the opportunity to respond to the design concepts.

From the Kimmel Center's conception in 1996 and continuing through today, the public has been one of the central factors influencing the Kimmel Center's role as an urban plaza. Therefore, it is only fitting that the public would be so involved in the Center's renovation. As this process continues to develop, the public will undoubtedly be asked to provide feedback and insight until the Kimmel Center is finally viewed as the dynamic public space that Philadelphia deserves.



Harris Sokoloff
(Penn Project for Civic
Engagement) leads a
civic feedback session,
January 2008



INITIAL PUBLIC FORUM





Chris Satullo
Center Square

A more inviting Kimmel Center

When was the last time you told a friend, "Hey, let's hang out at the Kimmel!"

Never, right? I'm not surprised. The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, with its startling glass vault rising nine stories above South Broad Street, became an icon of Philadelphia's cultural renaissance even before it hurriedly opened its doors in fall 2001. It is home to the Philadelphia Orchestra and five other resident companies.

Beneath the soaring glass canopy sit two performance venues: Verizon Hall with its lush, "inside of the cello" interior, and the versatile Perelman Theater. Verizon Hall's problematic acoustics aside, both spaces draw warm reviews from the arts-going public.

Not so the rest of the Kimmel. And the rest accounts for much of the massive volume contained by that glass canopy. Those public spaces, the vast ground floor and encircling tiers, are called Commonwealth Plaza. The name is a tip of the hat to the state and city dollars that helped get the building built.

As the Kimmel rose, its fans spoke excitedly about Commonwealth Plaza's potential to become Philly's all-weather civic square, a magnet for those who work, live or play near the Avenue of the Arts.

If that was the script, then the Kimmel is a flop. It bustles only before performances; after them, few linger. In daytime, you might roll a bowling ball along the slate floor and hit no one.

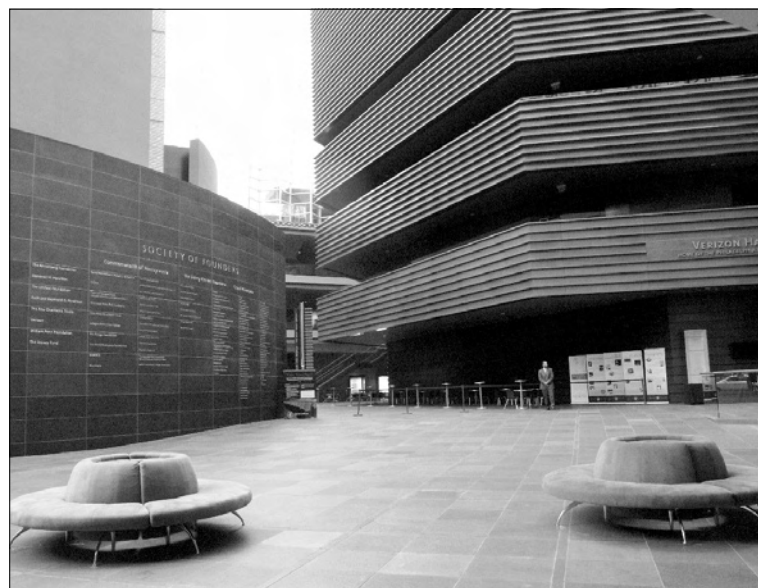
Here's what people invited to the Kimmel on Wednesday for a citizen forum had to say about the building: "Cold." "Uncomfortable." "Disorienting." "Dead." "Weird." "A waste."

As one participant put it, "The place says, 'Feel free to do ... nothing.'"

The problems are many. At ground level, the building meets the street awkwardly. Even if Commonwealth Plaza were jumping, passers-by on Broad would see nothing to lure them in.

Upon entering, the eyes are drawn upward to drink in the audacious roof and the makore wood exterior of Verizon Hall. Striking. Gorgeous.

At eye level, though, something's missing. See **KIMMEL** on B8



The grand court in the Kimmel Center officially is called Commonwealth Plaza. Verizon Hall is the cantilevered structure on the right; on the left is the smaller Perelman Theater.

Center Square By Chris Satullo

Toward a friendlier Kimmel

KIMMEL from B1 off. You search the plaza in vain for signs of warmth, welcome or guidance. It's a building designed to be admired, not loved; to look good in glossy magazines, not to serve vibrant throngs.

At intervals along the cold slate sit chest-high tables that seem to be refugees from an airport, and they're near clusters of chairs that could be on loan from a high-school cafeteria. In a classic chicken-egg dilemma, the lack of foot traffic has meant the buildings' two bars, restaurant and gift shop are closed much of the time.

As a civic magnet, it's no Reading Terminal Market.

The good news is that the Kimmel's new CEO, Anne Ewers, is intent on improving the public spaces.

Thus Wednesday's citizen forum. It will be followed by three more next week. All told, about 200 citizens will give input on what they like and don't like about the Kimmel.

Wednesday's forum produced an early flood of ideas, from the basic (greenery and comfier chairs) to the entertainingly unlikely (a nice climbing wall reaching to the top of the glass vault).

The forums, which I'm helping to lead, are booked. But you're not shut out of the action. If you've got a suggestion on how to improve the program, design or functioning of the Kimmel's public spaces, send it in. All essays will be passed to the Kimmel's leadership, and a sampling will be printed in *The Inquirer*.

Send your ideas to my e-mail (below) or mail them to Kimmel Project, *The Inquirer*, Box 41705, Philadelphia 19101.

And, maybe, someday, I'll see you at the Kimmel.

Contact Chris Satullo at 215-854-5943 or csatullo@phillynews.com. "Center Square" also appears Tuesdays on the Commentary page.

Ewers hopes this civic engagement, blended with youthful creativity, will produce some useful quick fixes, as well as some ideas for bigger changes that could attract donor support to pay for full-blown, professional design.

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January 26, 2008
The Philadelphia Inquirer

February 1, 2008
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Changing Skyline By Inga Saffron

To save the Kimmel, explode part of it

New York's Lincoln Center is embarking on a major overhaul aimed at making that cultural cloister more welcoming to the public and repairing some of its original architectural missteps. And now, it looks like Philadelphia's Kimmel Center will soon start down the same path.

The big difference, of course, is that Lincoln Center is approaching its 50th anniversary, while the

Kimmel was completed barely six years ago. The construction bills haven't even been paid off yet.

The two renovations say a lot about the problems of performing-arts centers. Once, concert halls were simple, single-purpose places. You arrived shortly before the house lights dimmed and dashed for the exits after the curtain went down. No one expected much. See **SKYLINE** on D6



MGA Partners' idea is "activating" the front of the Kimmel Center, at the corner of Broad and Spruce. But there's clearly a better idea: Glass.

How to make the Kimmel more inviting

SKYLINE from D1 more than a good show.

The creation of Lincoln Center, considered the mother of all performing-arts centers, imposed new obligations on such venues. They're now required to offer life and activity off-stage, too, and to do so during those times of day when people aren't normally inclined to visit a theater. Their expanded role is part of the continuing democratization of high culture. But making the hybrid spaces work has not been easy, especially on Philadelphia's still-evolving Avenue of the Arts.

Rafael Vinoly's Kimmel design sure doesn't help matters. Despite the transparent snow-globe roof that vaults dramatically over its two theaters, the Kimmel is an opaque fortress where it counts most — on the ground. Because people can't see into the building, they're leery about venturing inside.

Vinoly once told me that the Kimmel's success should be judged on whether it became a great pickup spot. It's as good a measure as any for evaluating his building. Yet it's hard to imagine anyone lucking upon a potential love interest in the desolate tundra of its lobby.

The Kimmel just can't seem to get people to visit its iconic home for anything other than scheduled performances. Its bars, cafes and shop, which were intended to support its sun-filled plaza as an all-day hangout, now open their doors only for those events.

I observed one of those discussions Sunday. It was intelligent, as well as cathartic. There was complete agreement among the partici-



A lifeless chasm: The space between Verizon Hall and the Perelman Theater needs better sofas, all-day eateries, signage to make people want to visit.

Though the design flaws were evident from Day 1, the Kimmel's management was always reluctant to acknowledge them. But last summer, a new team took over and hired Penn Praxis to study the problems. The nonprofit research group, which just wrote a recovery strategy for another seemingly lost cause, the Delaware riverfront, is now conducting a series of in-depth focus groups in collaboration with *The Inquirer's* Great Expectations project.

The Kimmel's flaws are as clear as its arcing roof. They aren't minor, though. The question now is whether the management can muster the commitment, and the public money, for the extreme interventions necessary to set things right. Natalye Paquin, the Kimmel's chief operating officer, insists the management is open to all ideas, big and small.

Some are no-brainers that could be implemented in a matter of months: better sofas where you can actually start up a conversation; seasonal decorations to enliven the

atrium's huge volume of negative space; more signs; a more affordable restaurant menu; a cafe cart on the rooftop garden. And how about putting a sign and menu for the second-floor Cadence restaurant on the Kimmel's outside wall, so people will know the eatery exists?

Other improvements are more tricky, like breaking down those forbidding walls. Unless the building finds a way to lure people, it won't have a prayer of meeting the pick-up test.

Right now, blank brick walls run for long stretches on the Kimmel's three public sides, Broad, Spruce and 15th Streets. The few street-level windows that exist are either frosted or curtained. Worst of all, Vinoly squandered the site's greatest asset, its Broad Street corner. He marks the high-energy spot where the city's pedestrian grid converges with a dull, black granite cube that houses, of all things, a workroom for the box office.

So tear down that wall. Explode the cube. Un-frost the windows. Several participants in Sunday's discussion suggested that the center's cafe should be visible from the street. One way to realize that fine idea is to relocate the box office, which now backs onto a frosted Spruce Street window, and replace it with an affordable restaurant.

If the cube and the Spruce Street wall were turned to glass, then you'd have an inviting eatery, one that could presumably conduct a

profitable trade from morning to midnight. Presto! Folks without tickets would have a reason to enter the Kimmel.

The key is to think big. Don't just substitute glass for brick. Hold an architectural competition. That would promise the possibility of a fresh, fun design that could reinvigorate the entire arts center, and create public excitement in the bargain.

Philadelphia is now a less timid place architecturally than it was in 2001, so the new wall needn't slavishly respect Vinoly's original design vision. It shouldn't be oblivious to it, either. There's some geometric logic in Vinoly's composition.

At the same time, it's worth asking ourselves how things went so wrong at the Kimmel. It was the first of six major civic buildings (Independence Visitor Center, the two new stadiums, etc.) started during the Rendell administration. All suffer to varying degrees from the same off-putting feeling on their ground floors.

The city is about to embark on another spate of monument building with the Free Library, the Barnes Foundation, the National Museum of American Jewish History, and an addition to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Perhaps this time, the Kimmel can demonstrate how to make a public building feel really public.

Contact architecture critic Inga Saffron at 215-854-2213 or isafron@phillynews.com.

PRESS
COVERAGE

February 5, 2008
The Daily Pennsylvanian

A more inviting space for the arts

Penn Praxis working on renovation plans for Kimmel Center

By KATIE KARAS
Staff Writer

karaskl@dailynews.com

A downtown performing arts venue is getting a public image boost from members of the Penn community.

Students and professors are teaming up with the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts this semester in an attempt to create a more vibrant and welcoming public space downtown.

The Penn Project for Civic Engagement and Penn Praxis — an offshoot of Penn Design that engages students and faculty in practical projects — are working to gather input from Philadelphia residents on how to renovate the Kimmel Center, home to a variety of operas, dance shows and off-Broadway plays.

Last month the Penn Project for Civic Engagement held a series of citizens' forums to find out how the venue, located on South Broad Street, could be transformed into an area more friendly to the public.

Their findings will be shared with Penn Praxis, allowing architecture and design students from Penn and the University of the Arts



Antonio Macasieb/DP Staff Photographer

The Kimmel Center, a popular downtown performing arts venue, will soon see design changes, due in part to the efforts of Penn Praxis. Designers hope to turn the center into a more welcoming public space.

See KIMMEL, page 5

Penn Praxis works on redesign plans for Kimmel Center

KIMMEL from page 1

to formulate ideas on how to remodel the Kimmel Center.

Penn Praxis is best known for its work on plans for a seven-mile stretch of the Delaware River, which were released last November to mixed reviews.

Penn Praxis executive director Harris Steinberg said he was approached by the Kimmel Center a few months ago because Kimmel officials felt the building had diverged from its purpose.

"When it was built, the inten-

tion was for it to be a vibrant public place, 24/7," Steinberg said.

A trip to the Kimmel Center during lunch hour reveals that this is not the case.

Margaret Dupaine, who works at an office building a few blocks away, said she comes to the Kimmel Center's Commonwealth Plaza on nice days because she finds its empty spaces relaxing.

"I rarely run into anyone else here," Dupaine said. "The building itself is beautiful, but there's nothing to attract people here when there aren't performances."

Now that data has been gathered from the citizens' forums and other outlets for public opinion, such as online blogs, Penn Praxis project planner Andrew Goodman said it is in the hands of the students and professors.

"The next step in the process is to take all the data, all the ideas, everything that was discussed and to form principles for design," he said.

Although some Penn Praxis undertakings mostly involve graduate students, Steinberg said this project will include sig-

nificant participation from Penn undergrads.

Steinberg said preliminary design ideas should be available in March, with more concrete plans completed by the end of the semester. Then the Kimmel Center will decide which modifications to implement. Kimmel Center officials did not return phone calls for comment.

"Ultimately it's going to be up to the Kimmel Center itself to decide how to proceed," Steinberg said.

March 22, 2008
The Philadelphia Inquirer



A coda of caring for the Kimmel

The first movement came from the leaders of the Kimmel Center, who were hearing ominous chords from the community. They decided to take soundings: Just how deep was the dissatisfaction with the public spaces at the region's performing arts center? Why had the Kimmel never become the vibrant "in-door square" it had been hyped to be?

The second movement was penned by the public and played *con brio*, with verve. Loyal, would-be and discouraged patrons of the Kimmel flocked to forums in January to give input. They sang mostly in unison about what worked, what didn't, and how to change the place.

Next, that feedback was turned over to design students at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of the Arts. They're using it to create ideas for a revamped, livelier Commonwealth Plaza beneath the soaring glass vault.

This third movement will reach its high point April 14 as the student visions are presented for public comment at the Kimmel's Perelman Theater. You're invited. The event will run from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Space is limited, so register to attend at the Web site (www.planphilly.com/kimmel) of PennPraxis, the design consultant that has managed this process for the Kimmel.

The final movement in this civic symphony will be up to the Kimmel's leadership, to choose which ideas for enlivening the building they want to try.

The project team, of which I'm part, distilled the public's energetic input into a set of principles that the designers are using to inform their creative work.

Here are the Kimmel Center Principles. They incorporate ideas from the forums and from dozens of essays sent in response to my columns about the Kimmel. (You can see those essays, plus video of the forums on the Web site.)

1. Inside/out and Outside/in. The outside of the building must let the public see, hear and feel what is happening inside the building. The outside — now regarded as foreboding, dull and confusing — should broadcast a sense of excitement onto the street and make clearer how, where and when to enter. In sum, the exterior must more effectively explain, promote and invite.

2. Treat Commonwealth Plaza as a third, inclusive arts venue. The grand public spaces of an arts center should be filled with the sights and sounds of art. Let music permeate the space beyond performance times. Locate and use the stage in the plaza to lure members of the public who don't now consider the Kimmel their arts center. Use varied performances by diverse groups in this third venue to ad-

See KIMMEL on B6

The effort to tune up the Kimmel

KIMMEL from B1

dress the center's image problems with affordability and inclusion.

3. Create magnets to lure mixed uses and mixed users. Vibrant town squares are rich in things to do, appealing to a variety of tastes. With its location and imposing facade, the Kimmel must work hard to lure into its public spaces on a daily basis people who want to linger. Create an iconic focal point and gathering spot in the lobby. A universal yearning: more color to enliven and warm spaces now

deemed austere and cold. Another consensus: greenery on the first-floor plaza. Food, coffee, wireless Internet access, shopping, lectures and classes, and an arts bookstore are just a few of the uses the public cites as attractions that would draw them. Those uses must be available on a visible, consistent basis.

4. Offer a warmer welcome — and a map to navigate. Convey to visitors that the center sees them as guests to be welcomed, not interlopers to be handled. The entry spaces should express that the cen-

ter's core client is the public, not just large donors. Signs and posters should offer an array of Do's, not a list of Don'ts. Take advantage of technology (iPods, LED screens, interactive kiosks) to give visitors information about what the center offers and how to use it. The building can be confusing; offer more guidance on how to get around it.

5. Wow! What now? Though grand and impressive, Commonwealth Plaza doesn't make it easy for people to linger. Create nooks, clusters of

comfortable seating conducive to conversation. Make better use of dead-end hallways.

6. Balance aesthetic values and commercial appeal: Efforts to enliven Commonwealth Plaza and attract a broader public should not sacrifice the Kimmel Center's core values: world-class artistry, quality, taste and elegance.

"Center Square" also appears on the Tuesday Commentary page. To comment, call 215-854-5943 or e-mail csatullo@phillynews.com.

THE PRINCIPLES

1. INSIDE/OUT AND OUTSIDE/IN

The outside of the building must let the public see, hear and feel what is happening inside the building. The outside — now seen as foreboding, dull and confusing — should broadcast a sense of excitement and activity onto the street. The approaches to the building must coax visitors in by helping them see how, where and when to enter. In sum, the exterior of the building must more effectively explain, promote and invite.

2. TREAT COMMONWEALTH PLAZA AS THE THIRD ARTS VENUE – AN INCLUSIVE PUBLIC VENUE.

The grand public spaces of a temple of the performing arts should be filled with the sights and sounds of art. Allow music to permeate the space beyond performance times. Locate and use the stage in the plaza to lure members of the public who don't now consider the Kimmel 'their' arts center. Use varied public performances by diverse performers in this 'third venue' to address the center's image problems with accessibility, affordability and inclusion.

3. CREATE MAGNETS TO LURE MIXED USES AND MIXED USERS.

Vibrant town squares are rich in things to do, appealing to a variety of tastes. With its location and imposing façade, the Kimmel must work hard to lure people — particularly people not now patrons of the resident companies — into its public spaces on a daily basis and to want to linger there. Create an iconic focal point and gathering spot in the lobby. The yearning is universal for more use of color to enliven and warm spaces now widely considered austere, drab and cold. The single most often expressed wish is for greenery on the first-floor plaza. This would bring in the warmth that defines our best outdoor public squares. Water is another element that many suggest would enliven and soften the experience of the space. Food, coffee, wireless internet access, shopping, lectures and classes, and an arts bookstore are just a few of the uses the public cites as attractions that would draw them to Commonwealth Plaza. Those various uses must be available on a visible, consistent basis — with 'dark' hours kept to a minimum and clearly communicated to the public.

4. OFFER A WARMER WELCOME — AND A MAP TO NAVIGATE.

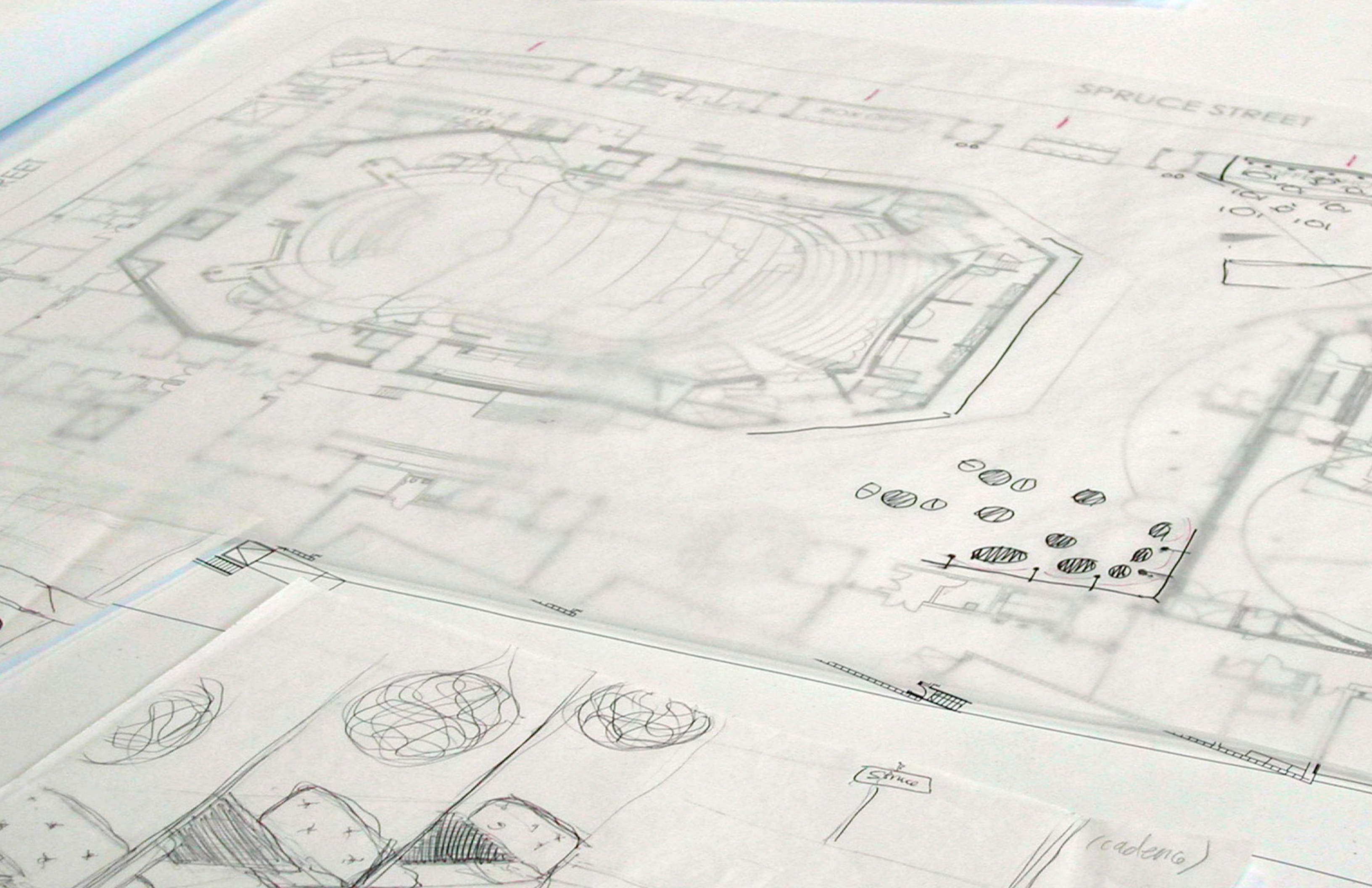
Convey to visitors that the center sees them as guests to be welcomed, not interlopers to be handled. With an inviting gathering space upon entry, the lobby should express that the center's core client is the public, not just large donors. Signs and posters should offer a sense of welcome, not suspicion: an array of Do's, not a list of Don'ts. Take advantage of technology — laptops, iPods, LED screens, interactive kiosks — to give visitors information about what the center offers and how to use it. The building can be confusing and intimidating to the newcomer; offer more guidance on how to get around it.

5. WOW! WHAT NOW?

Though grand and elegant, Commonwealth Plaza often overwhelms people when they enter the building. Offer clusters of comfortable seating conducive to lingering and conversation. Create nooks. Make better use of dead-end hallways. Break the vast lobby space into smaller settings, using flexible furnishings that can be moved to accommodate larger events.

6. BALANCE AESTHETIC VALUES AND COMMERCIAL APPEAL

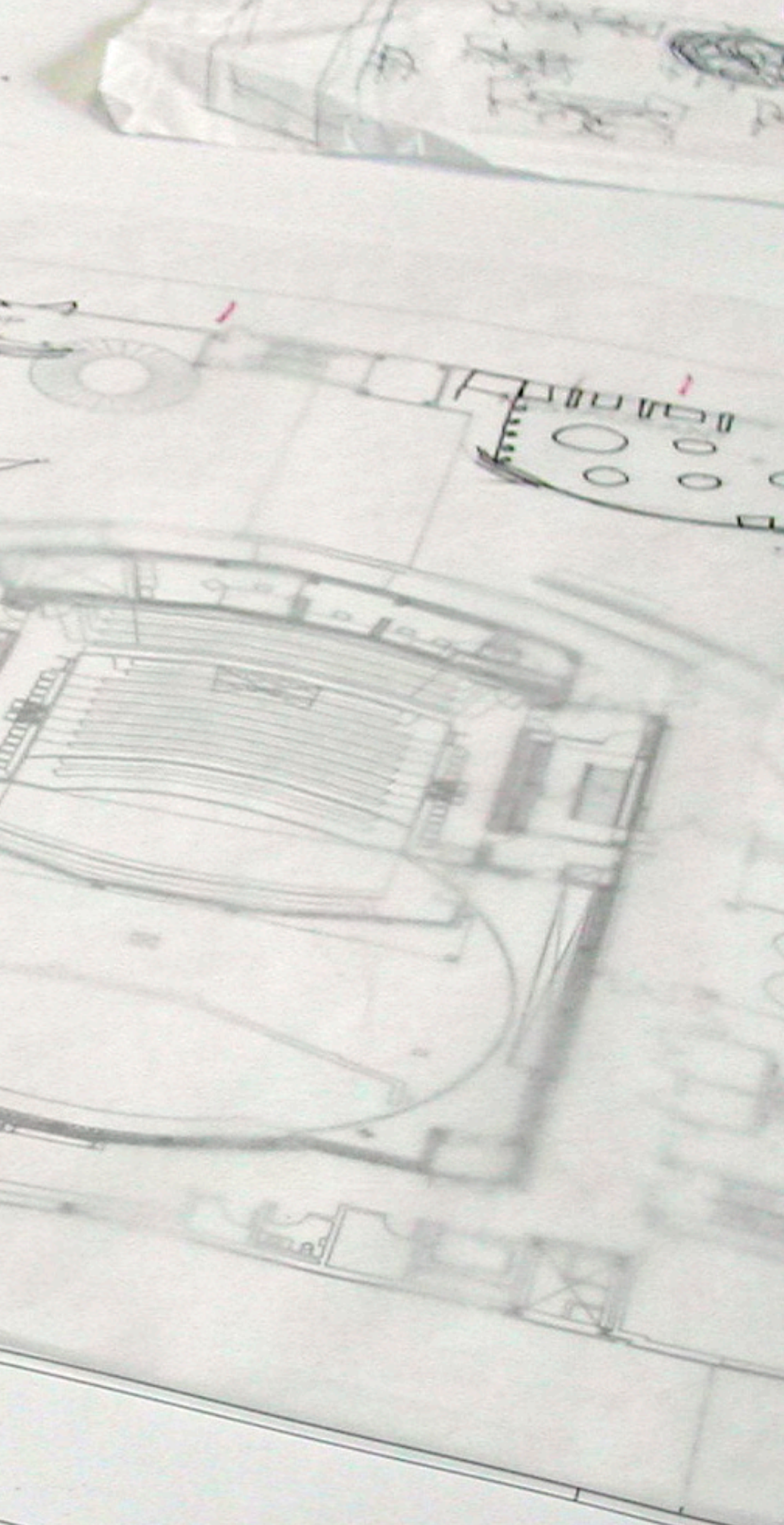
Efforts to enliven Commonwealth Plaza and attract a broader public should not sacrifice the Kimmel Center's core values as a home for world-class artistry: quality, taste and elegance.



SPRUCE STREET

Spruce

(cadeno)

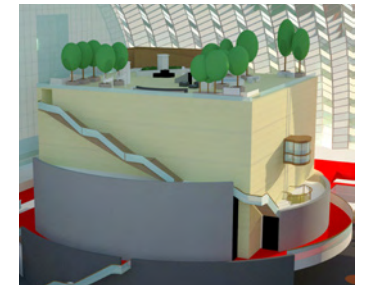


THE PROJECT

Over the course of several months, three small groups pursued the reassessment of the Kimmel Center's public space on the basis of individual themes, which addressed needs for architectural, graphic, and programmatic changes.

HUMANIZE THE SPACE

Ainsley Adams
Matthew Hotsko
Katy Rose Glickman
Aura Seltzer



CONNECT TO THE ARTS

Andrew Watterson
Rachel Gogel
Crista McDonald
Mindy King



SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Ross Cockrell
Angelika Kyrimi
Bonnie Liu
Caitlin Owens



THE BIG IDEAS

Armed with feedback from the public, and the acknowledgment that we were working with an architectural icon, the process began. The common ideas from the civic principles formed our underlying structure, over which we began to layer new ideas. We worked in a multi-disciplinary studio, collaborating with students from UArts studying Industrial Design and Museum Exhibit design.

We began by researching best practices locally and internationally. We gathered inspiration from many great public buildings, and generated ideas exploring new technology and the uses of space. We talked to each other and invited professionals into our studios to critique our ideas, as well as collaborating with UArts through a series of charrettes and digital feedback. We concentrated on larger conceptual possibilities for the Kimmel Center such as architectural reorganization and programming, while the UArts students focused on more specific details such as furniture ideas and artistic interventions. After much debate and seemingly endless discussion, we began to develop concrete ideas that we felt suitably addressed the Kimmel Center's public space re-evaluation. We then divided into three teams in order to fully explore different methods of enlivening Commonwealth Plaza.

From these teams, three "big ideas" emerged: *Humanize*, *Connect to the Arts*, and *Sensory Experience*. The *Humanize* team embraced the vast vertical space within the Kimmel while adding features that made the open spaces more inviting and intimate. The *Connect to the Arts* team used sculptural connections to provide greater access and encourage interactivity across the large space of the Plaza. They also included more public art to help connect the performing arts with the visual arts. The *Sensory Experience* team used the senses as a guide to drape the Kimmel Center's interior surfaces. This approach magnified the experiences of vision, taste, touch, sound, and smell through architectural, sculptural and programmatic changes.

kimmel
center for the performing arts



kimmel

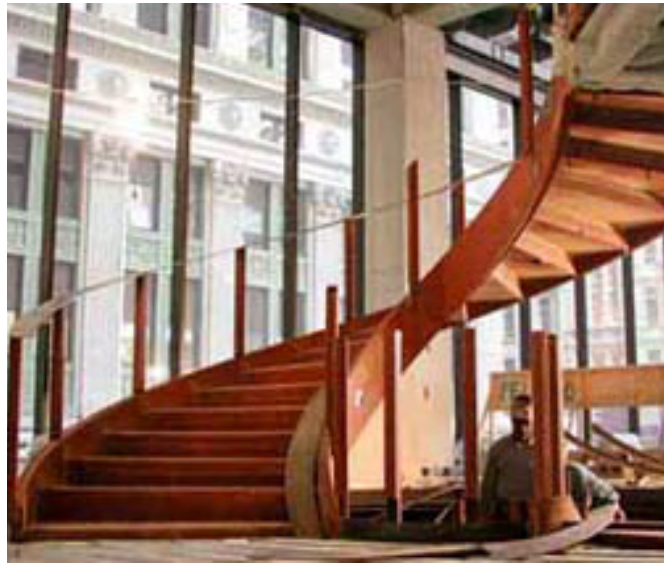
kimmel

*Corner of Spruce and Broad
Streets with new glass-enclosed
staircase and entrance wall
signage*

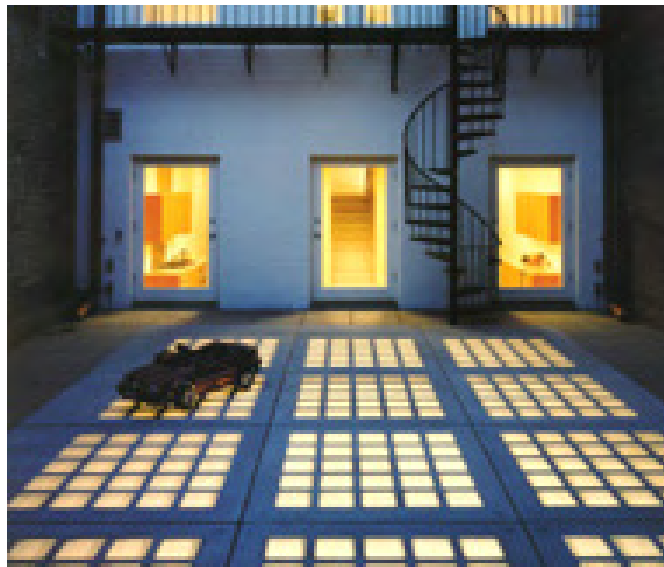
HUMANIZE THE SPACE

Our design attempts to make the Kimmel Center a more vibrant and multi-functional public space. These changes take advantage of the Kimmel Center's dramatic architecture, street presence, and large public spaces to make the Kimmel a destination within Philadelphia.

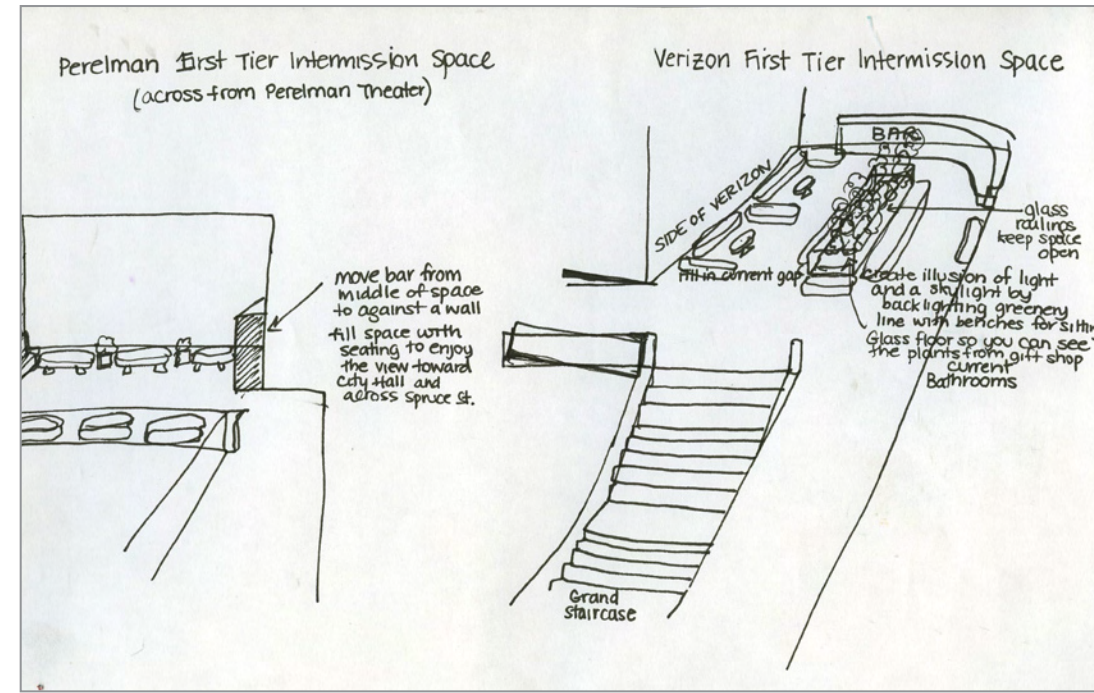
Ainsley Adams
Matthew Hotsko
Katy Rose Glickman
Aura Seltzer



Inspiration for Perelman Wrapping Staircase



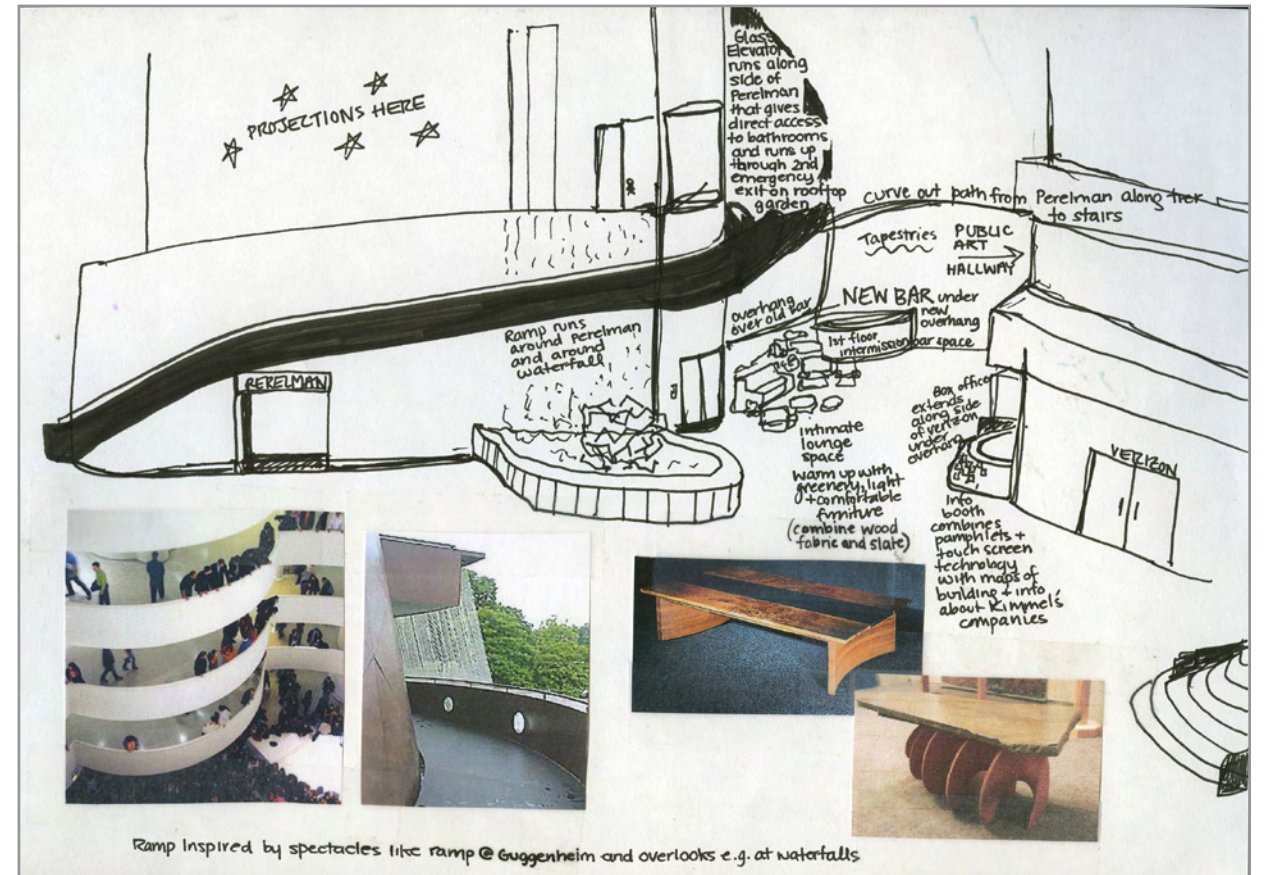
Inspiration for illuminated Sidewalks for Kimmel exterior



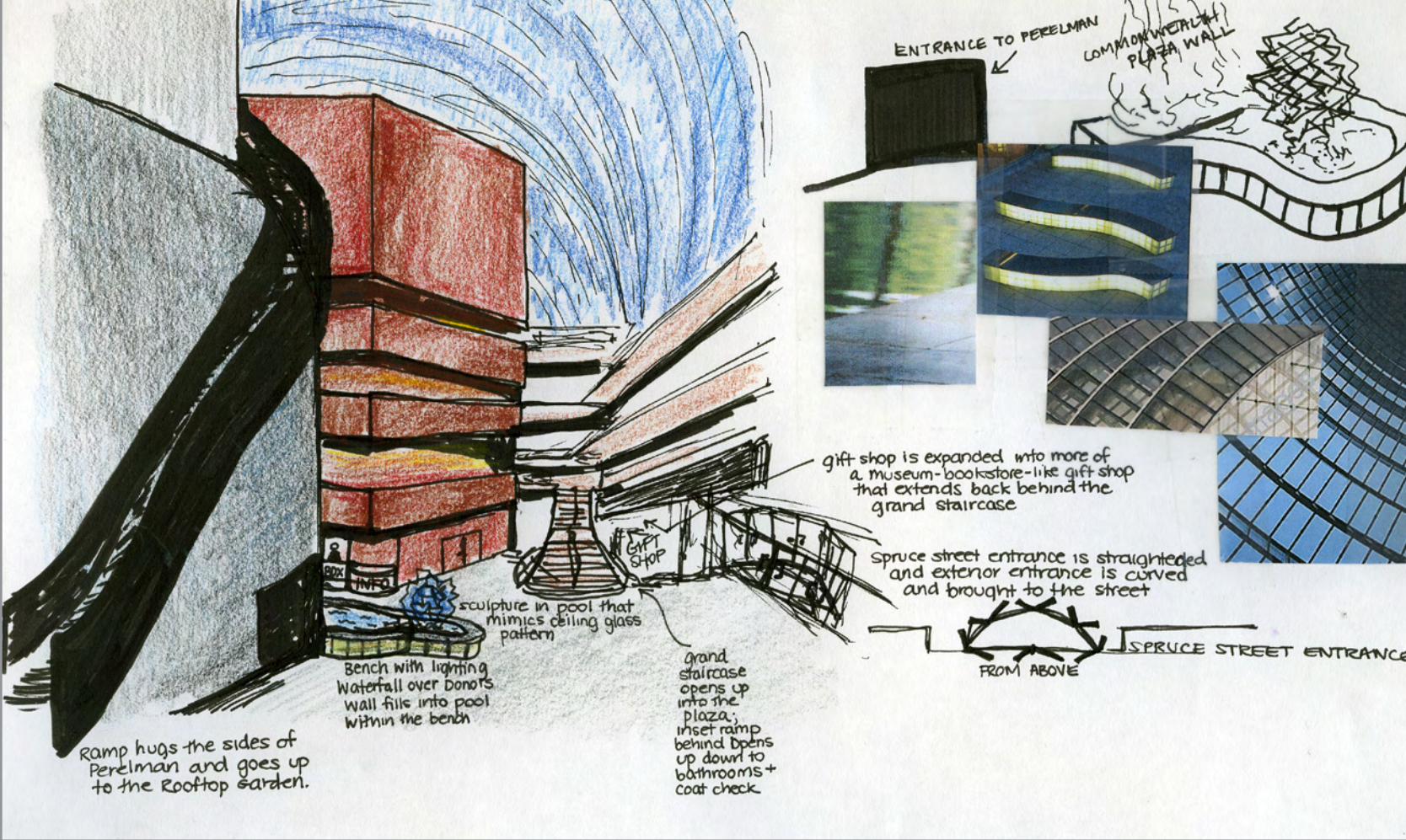
Sketch of grand staircase and first tier intermission space

DESIGN PROCESS

Sketch of Commonwealth Plaza

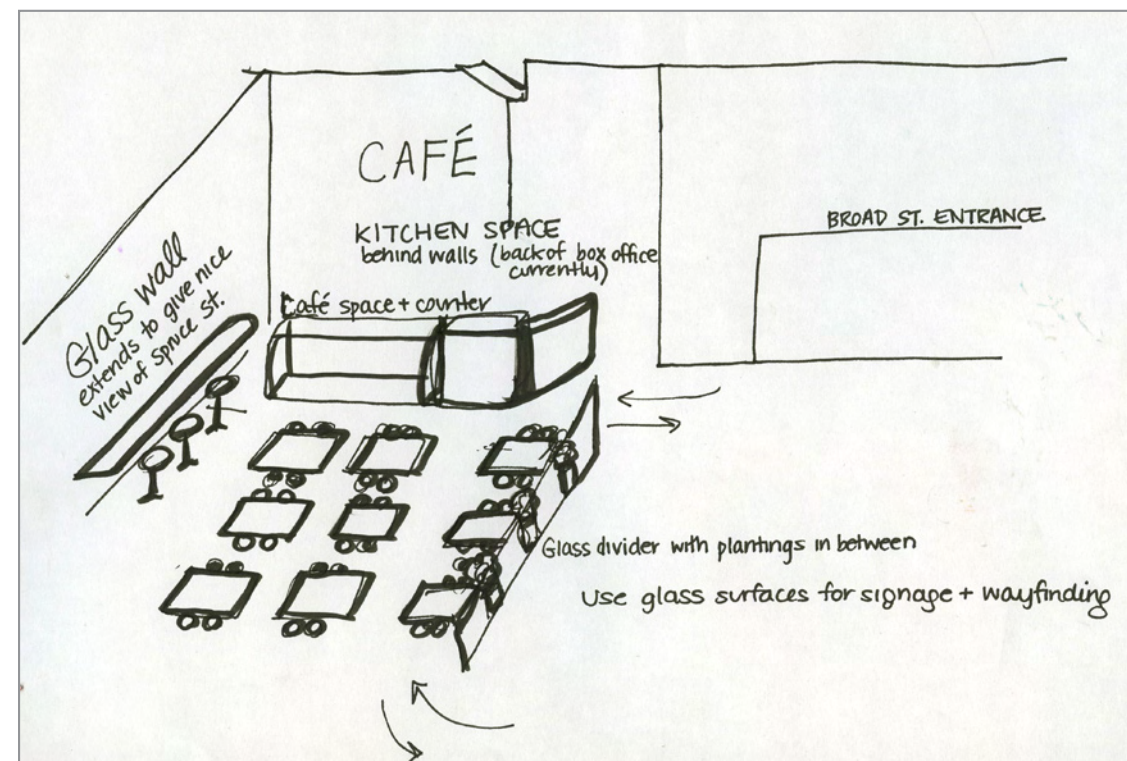


Ramp inspired by spectacles like ramp @ Guggenheim and overlooks e.g. at waterfalls



ENGAGE AND ENLIVEN THE VERTICAL SPACE OF THE VAULT

The Kimmel Center's dramatic architecture and expansive interior provide the framework for the building to become the distinctive public space we envision. By redesigning specific interior and exterior elements, we aim to transform the Kimmel Center into a more vibrant and enjoyable destination. Our design brings the Kimmel to a more human scale by improving circulation, developing a new signage system, reorganizing existing functions, and incorporating new uses. Three new staircases make movement through the building easier and more memorable. Each of these staircases leads to a major destination within the Kimmel Center: the redesigned Rooftop Garden and playground, the first tier lobby, or Cadence Restaurant. Renovations within Commonwealth Plaza, including the relocated PECO Bar and Lounge make the space more inviting, in addition to more comfortable and permanent furniture.



Sketch of proposed café

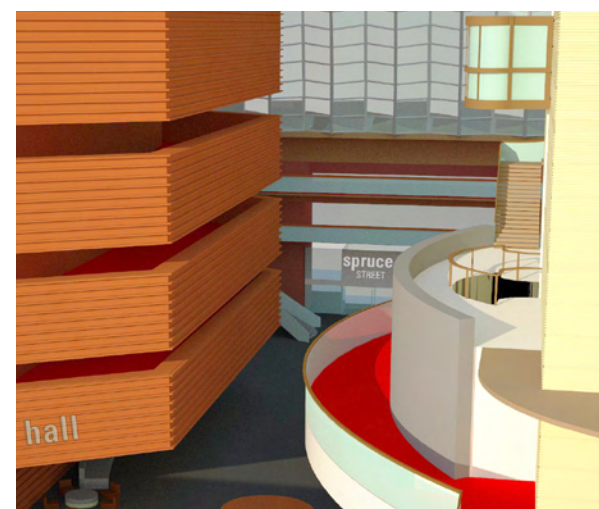
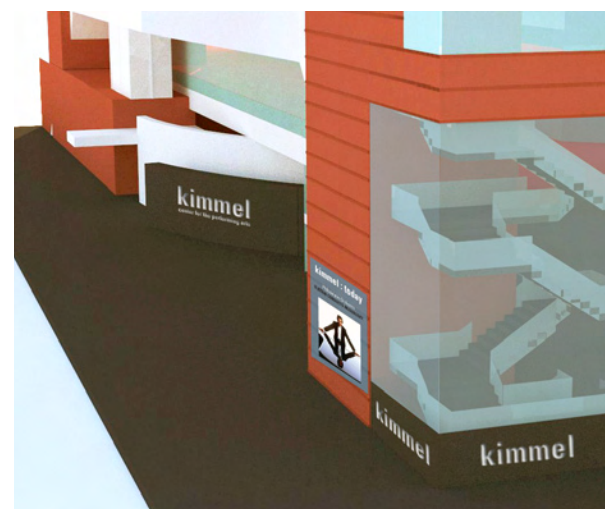


View from the Broad Street Entrance with proposed Perelman Stair, corner café, and proposed redesigned Grand Staircase

NEW STAIRS

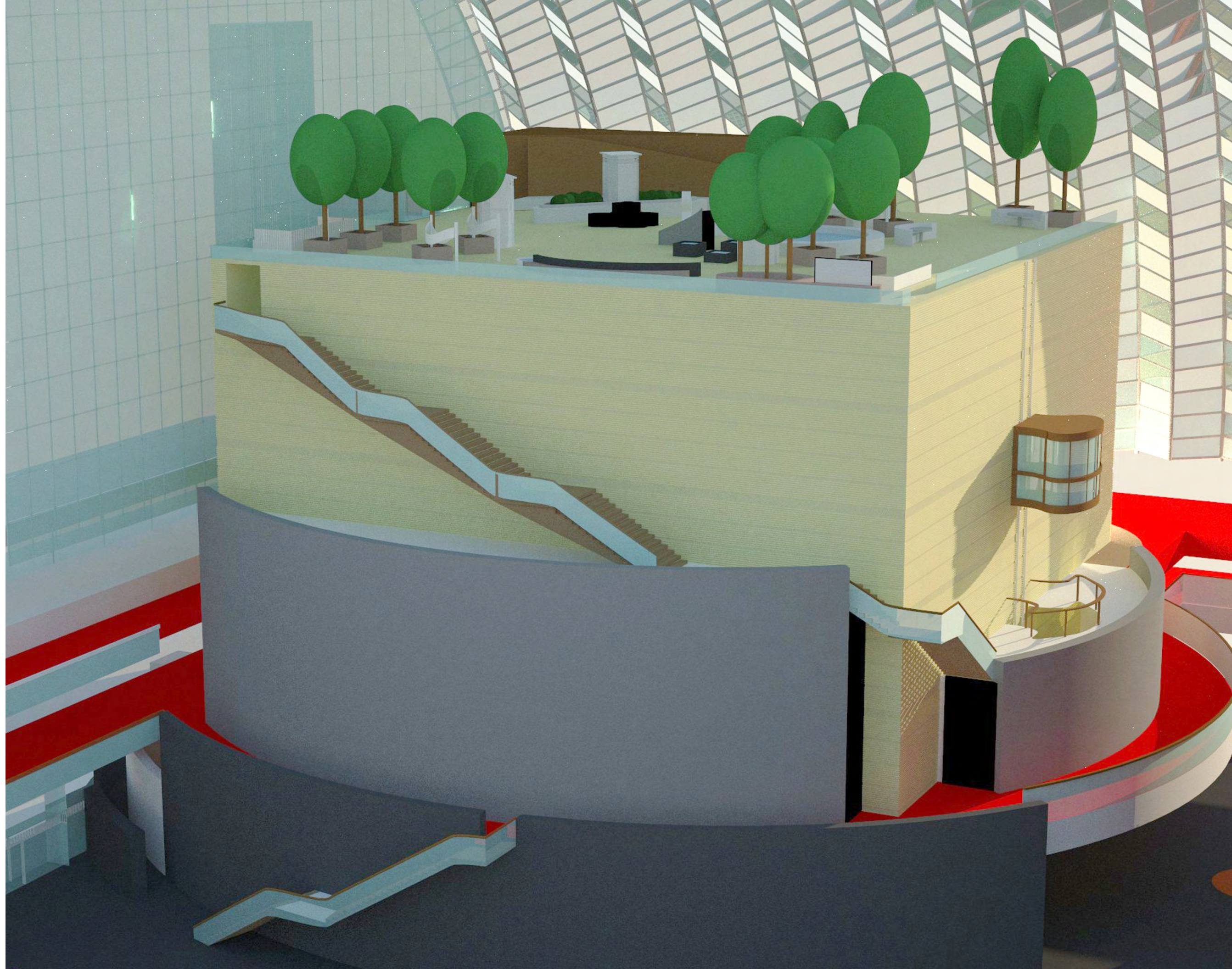
Our most dramatic recommendation for increasing vertical movement is a new stair wrapping around Perelman Theater. It begins in Commonwealth Plaza near the Broad Street entrance and wraps around the shape of the theater on its way up to the rooftop garden. It stops at three different terraces and continues around a new glass elevator. An additional elevator provides visitors with a more visible route directly from Commonwealth Plaza to the rooftop garden. This new Perelman stair is designed to be sculptural and complementary to the existing forms of Perelman Theater. It enlivens the void above Commonwealth Plaza and provides visitors with a more engaging way to experience and interact with the Kimmel Center. Dramatic views not currently accessible also create a unique and memorable experience.

We redesigned the stairs inside the Spruce Street doors to reflect the sense of openness created in Commonwealth Plaza. This grand staircase which is larger, more dramatic, and more secure, addresses concerns from early forums. The enlarged stair's modern curves create a more attractive view from the main entrance and draw visitors upstairs from Commonwealth Plaza.



Corner of Spruce and Broad Streets with new glass-enclosed staircase and entrance signage; view from Perelman Stairs looking down to Commonwealth Plaza

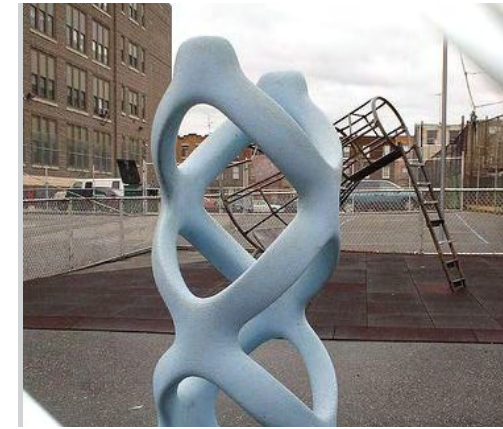
*The new Perelman
Stairs start at
Commonwealth Plaza,
wrap around the
theater through three
tiers, and end at the
Rooftop Garden and
playground.*



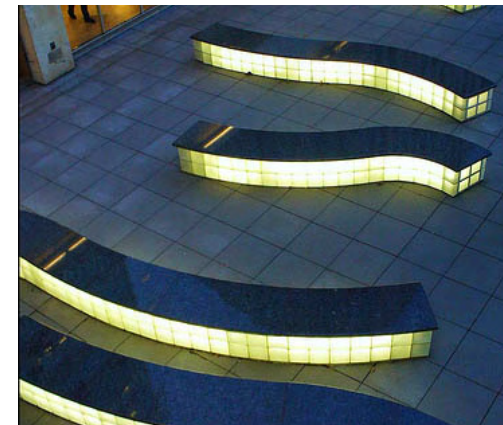


Rooftop playground

ROOFTOP PLAYGROUND

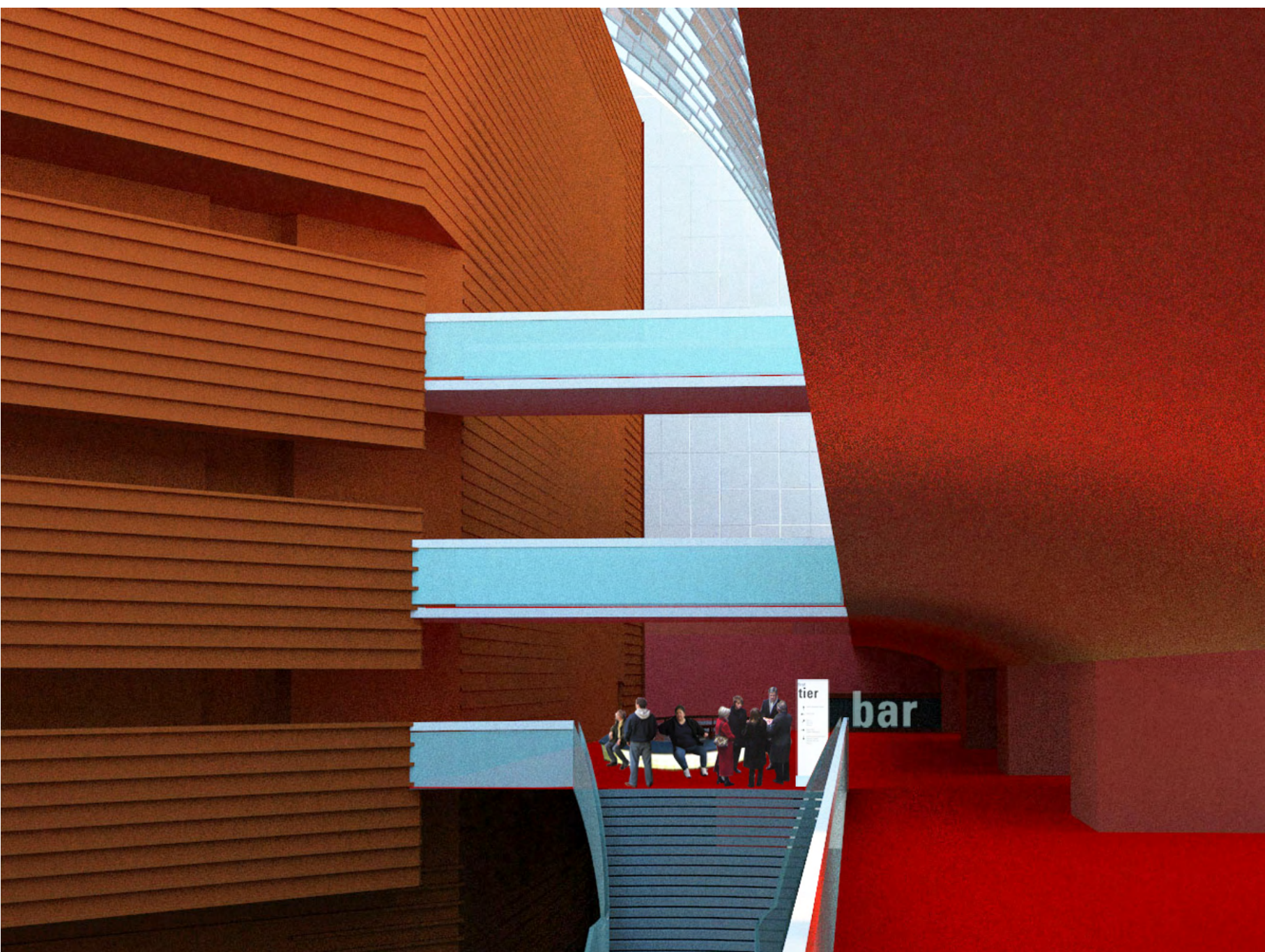


*Artistic play equipment
and a leaping fountain for
the Rooftop Garden and
playground*

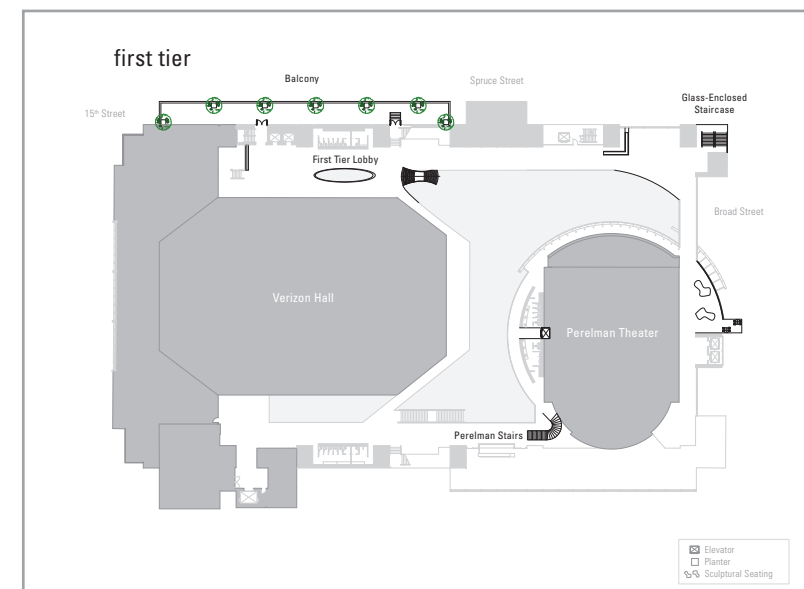


*Illuminated glass furniture
for both Commonwealth
and Rooftop public spaces*

1ST TIER PUBLIC SPACES



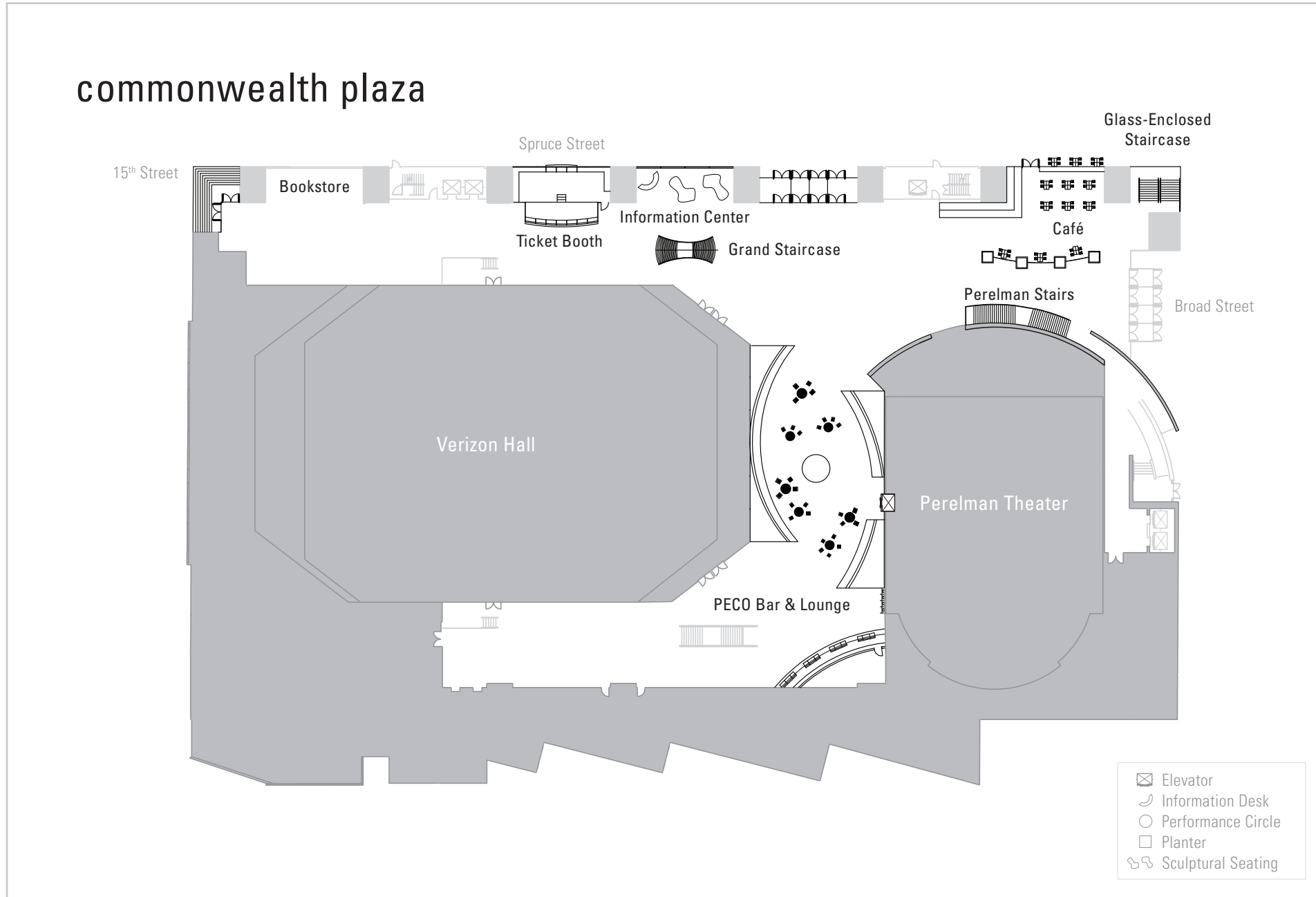
Proposed Spruce Street balcony



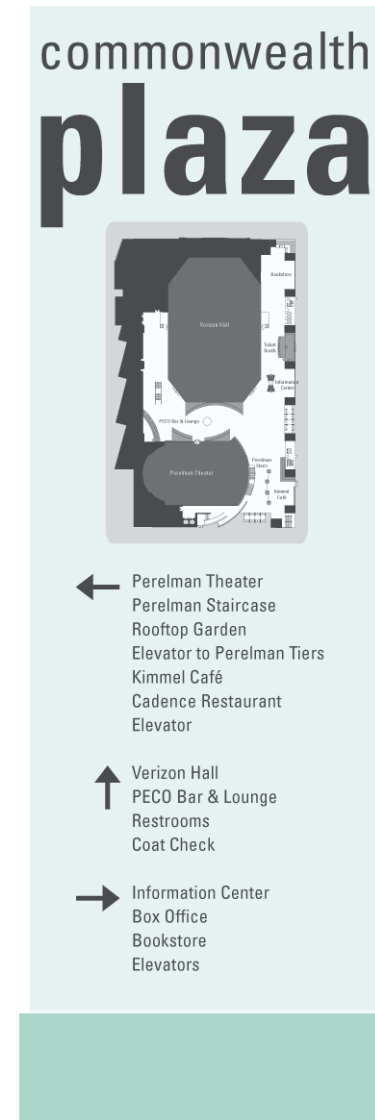
First tier floor plan

View of the enlarged Grand Stair leading to an expanded and redesigned first tier lobby

COMMONWEALTH PLAZA



Proposed Commonwealth Floor Plan



Sample of glass wayfinding with illuminated base



Moving the current PECO Bar into the corner of Commonwealth Plaza creates a larger lounge space available for public use.

INTERIOR SIGNAGE

We began redesigning Commonwealth Plaza by moving the existing bar into the corner currently occupied by the stage. This opened up a larger area for more comfortable and more permanent lounge-style seating that will encourage people to linger in the plaza. The seating centers around a stage inlaid in the ground. This type of pedestrian stage is more appropriate for the public nature of the performances and makes the lounge space more flexible.

In order to ease circulation in Commonwealth Plaza and throughout the building, we are creating a new signage system that uses large graphics compatible with the scale of the building and easily visible throughout the large space. These large graphics continue onto the building's exterior to enhance the Kimmel Center's visibility and street presence. On a smaller scale, we are implementing free-standing glass directories. These directories are located throughout the building and are designed with illuminated bases, more specific directions, and accompanying maps.

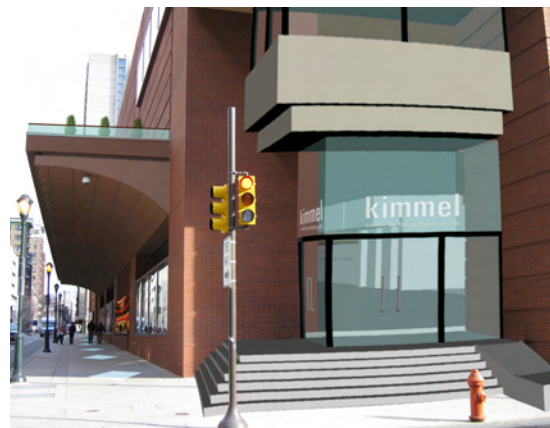
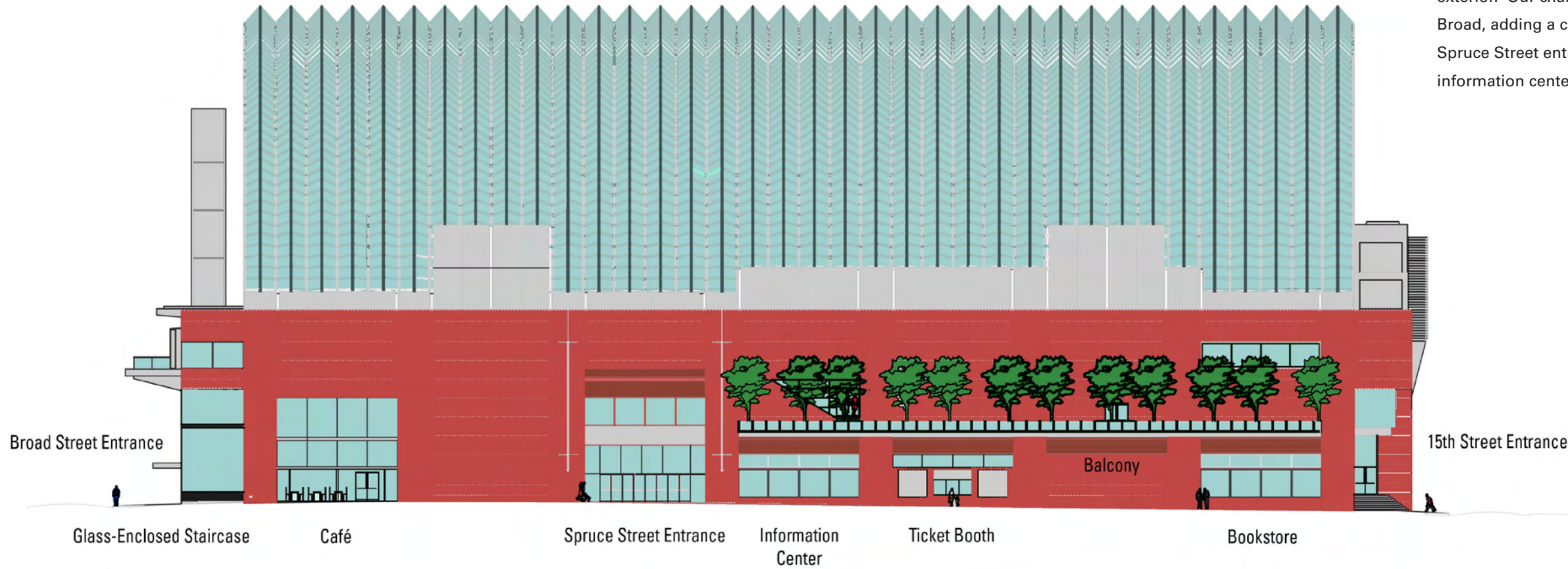


Playful furniture options appeal to younger visitors in the proposed Information Center; sample Café for Commonwealth Plaza



SPRUCE STREET CORRIDOR

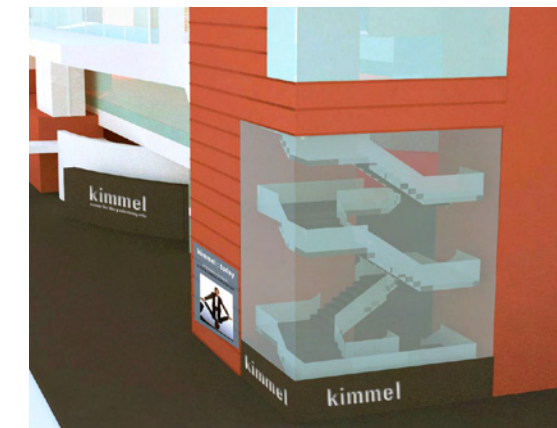
We further enhanced the Kimmel Center’s public spaces by reorganizing the activities along Spruce Street to enliven the block by increasing transparency and bring the outside in and the inside out. This meant moving the building’s public functions to more accessible locations and making activity within the Kimmel Center more visible from the exterior. Our changes included: redesigning the corner of Spruce and Broad, adding a café where the current ticket booth sits, reorienting the Spruce Street entrance to open the space more, and placing an expanded information center just inside the window.



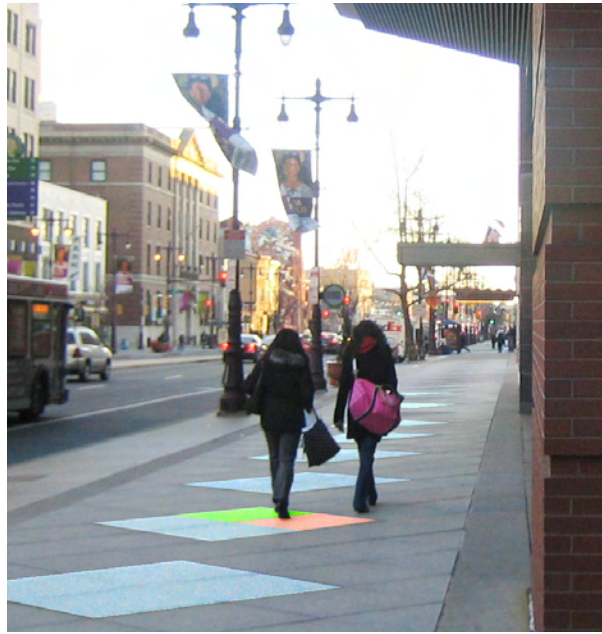
A new entrance at 15th and Spruce will open directly into the Kimmel Center through the bookstore and draw in more people from the street.



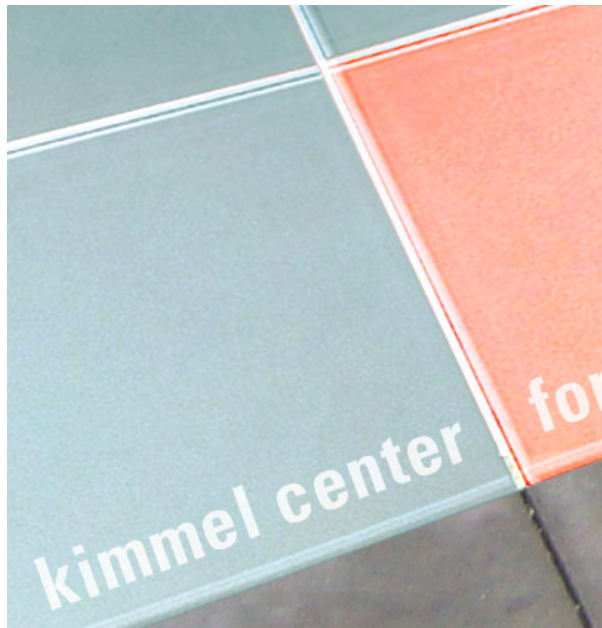
Redesigned Broad Street entrance



By replacing the black box at the corner of Spruce and Broad with a glass-enclosed staircase, it eases access to the first and second tiers, including Cadence Restaurant, and showcases movement within the Kimmel.



Illuminated and interactive sidewalks bordering the Kimmel

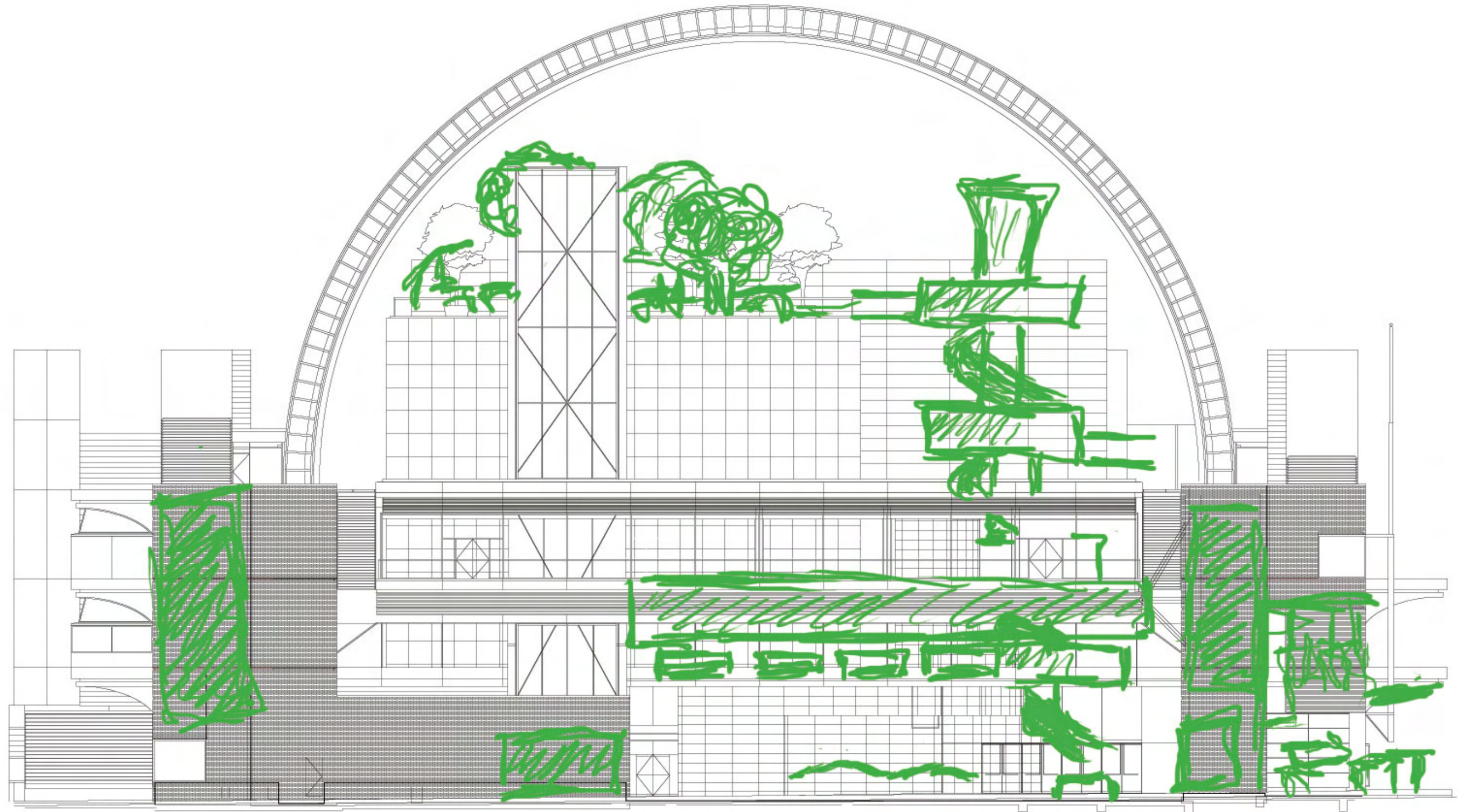


ENLIVEN THE BLOCK

Our goal is to activate the entire block and to create a unique identity for the Kimmel that visitors will immediately recognize. We will do this with new exterior signage and interactive sidewalk panels. These touch-sensitive, frosted glass squares will border the entire building and light up when stepped on. This also relates to other public lighting projects currently underway in Philadelphia. We will create a cohesive aesthetic between the interior and exterior using the same type of large signage and graphics used on the interior. Digital schedules on three sides of the building as well as screens displaying videos from past and upcoming performances will further brighten the exterior.



An additional entrance and a proposed sidewalk café at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets providing outdoor seating will invigorate the block.



*New concept added to existing
East elevation*

*Plaza Tower in Commonwealth
Plaza; more comfortable
seating; Electronic paper*



CONNECT TO THE ARTS

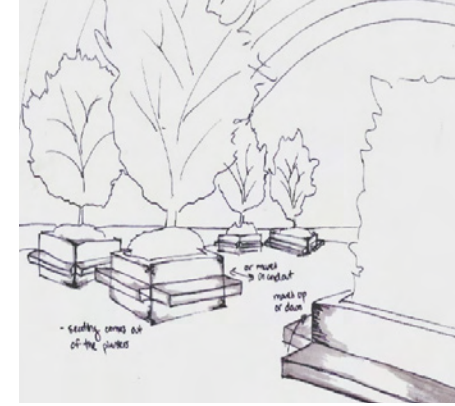
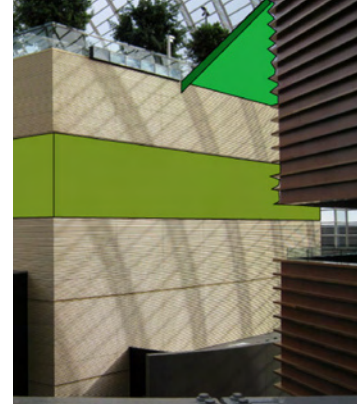
A plan for the Kimmel Center that invigorates the building with public arts of every stripe, embraces its majestic size, and adopts socially-conscious, sustainable operating principles.

Andrew Watterson
Rachel Gogel
Crista McDonald
Mindy King

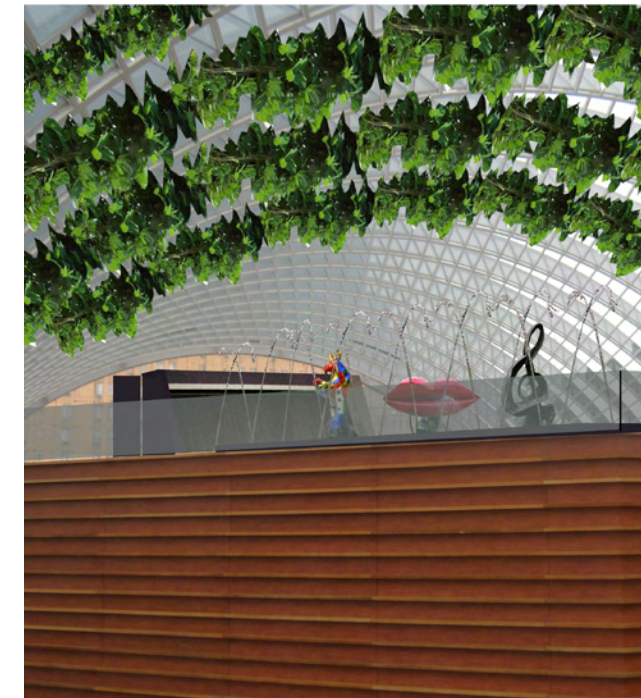


Example of curved bench; Comfortable seating and coexisting greenery; UArts sketch of seating under Verizon Hall overhang

From left to right: Original Rooftop Garden concept: View of new ramp from third tier; UArts sketch of revised Rooftop Garden; ramp to top of Verizon visible; Benches mounted to existing planters

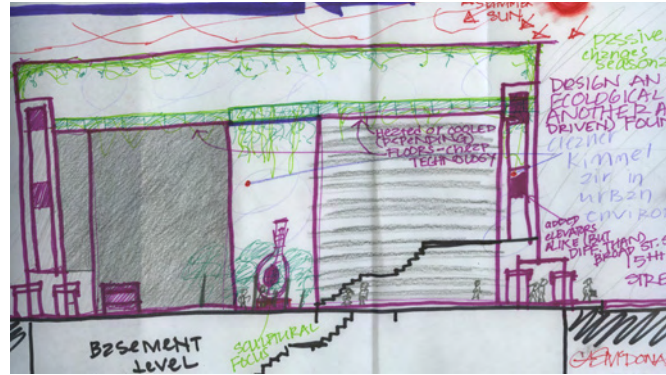
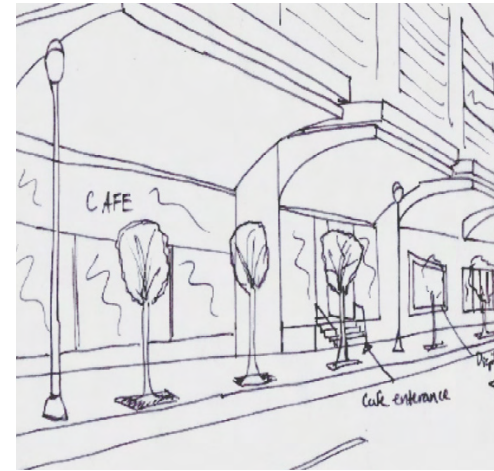


Commonwealth Plaza, fountain as focal concept surrounded by trees and curved benches



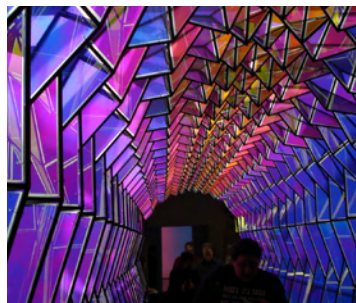
Top of Verizon Hall as new destination with seating, fountains, water sculptures and water walls

UArts sketch of Spruce Street side; Sketch of North Elevation with green vault; top of Verizon as a new destination



Sustainable concept:
Vault covered by vines;
Rooftop Garden connected to top of Verizon by a ramp;
New elevator on 15th Street side;
top of Verizon Hall becomes fantastical garden with a water fountain and water wall as well as seating

DESIGN PROCESS

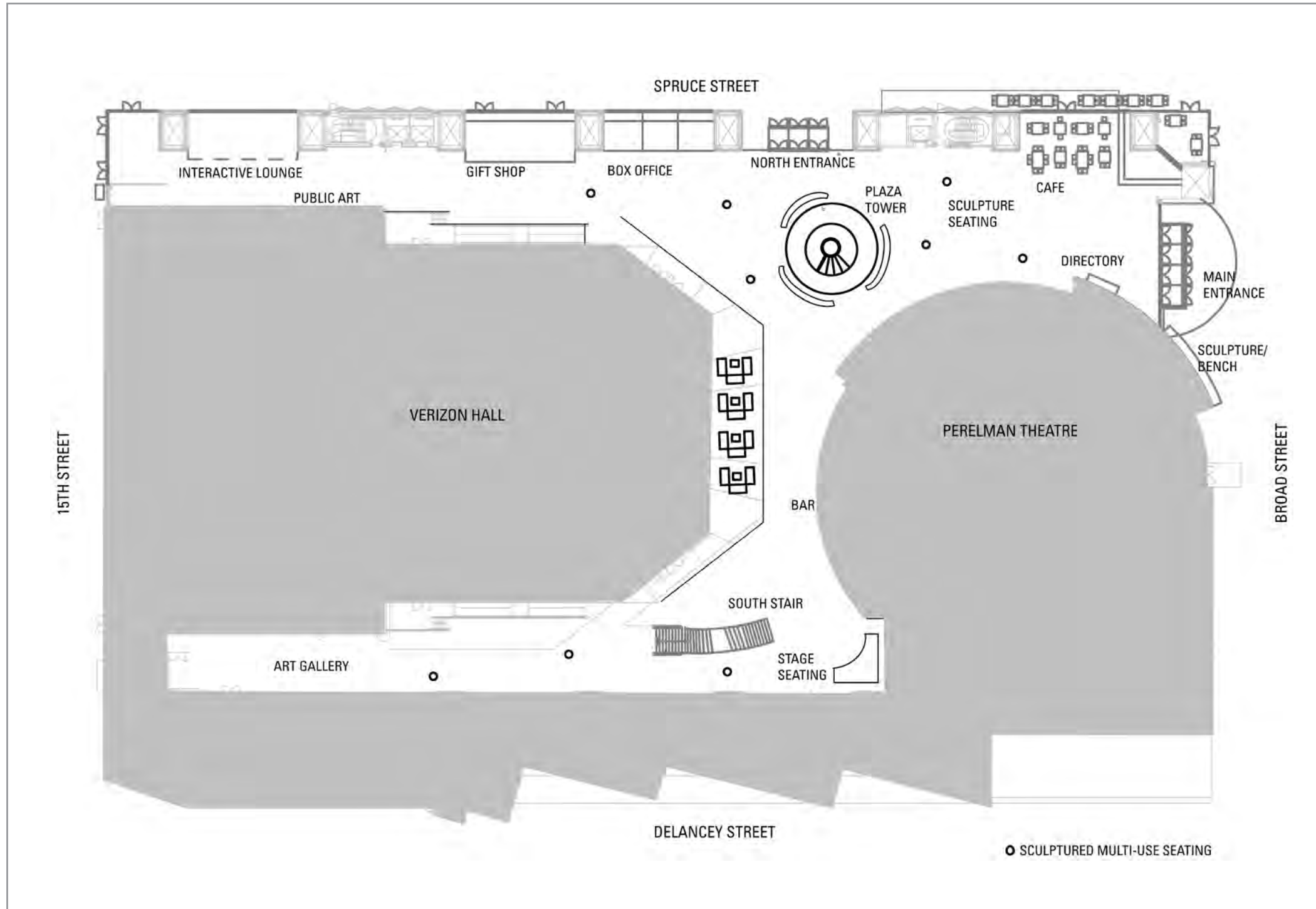


Olafur Eliasson's Take Your Time installation; waterwall; Stravinsky Fountain in Paris

Sidewalk concept: Artwork by Jeff VerPlanck



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



COMMONWEALTH PLAZA

*The Plaza Tower:
Elevator/staircase; one hub for easy access
to all areas of the Kimmel Center starting
from the sculpture garden in Commonwealth
Plaza, the tower connects visitors to new
views and a variety of new spaces*

PLAZA TOWER



Apple Store glass Elevator/staircase in New York City; UArts sketch of Plaza Tower

We envision a plan for the Kimmel that will engage the public with new programs and bring life to all areas of the building. The highlight of our design is a central Plaza Tower that provides the public with more direct access to each tier as well as allowing visitors to enjoy the Kimmel from many different perspectives. This new sculpture acts as a mode of transportation and a centerpiece in the plaza, and both physically and visually connects the various areas of the Kimmel.

Previously empty spaces are transformed into destinations more conducive to lingering, socializing and viewing art. We also plan to include more public art along the tiers and in the plaza. For example, the plaza has become a gallery, with sculptures that can also be used as seating and walls are enlivened by mounted art.



Another hallmark of our design is a reconceived Rooftop Garden that includes versatile seating, a new overhang for shading and a small pool. All these new destinations are flexible to accommodate larger events and offer mixed activities to lure a broader public. In addition, the interior becomes a hub for public art and lounging.



In our concept, the Kimmel acts a place for gathering, where people will not only come to hear the music of the resident companies, but to grab a cup of coffee, socialize and view art. We believe that our design creates a variety of flexible areas encouraging the public to relate to each other, to the art and to the Kimmel itself.



Newly opened corridor through the Kimmel to the 15th Street entrance: More space available for seating, art viewing, and access to the interactive lounge, which holds computers and virtual games

MUSIC LISTENING LIBRARY

AREAS TO LINGER



Stage area next to existing bar: Small performance stage used as a public art gallery and as seating during non-show times



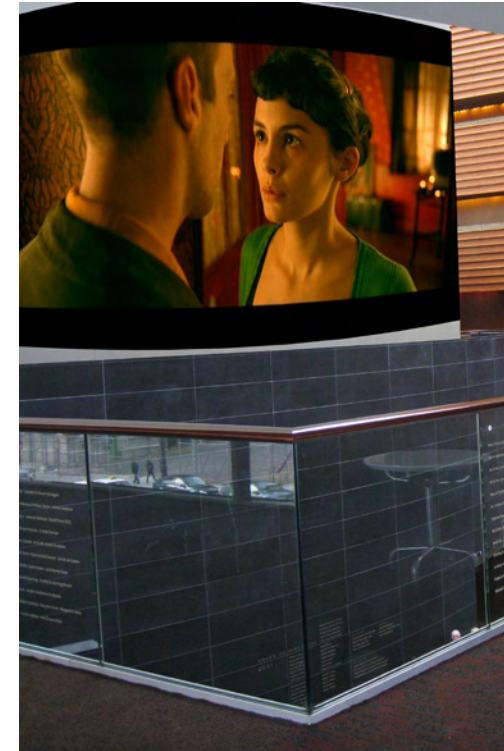
Existing Verizon Hall overhang: New and more comfortable seating next to a public art gallery, and added greenery for warmth



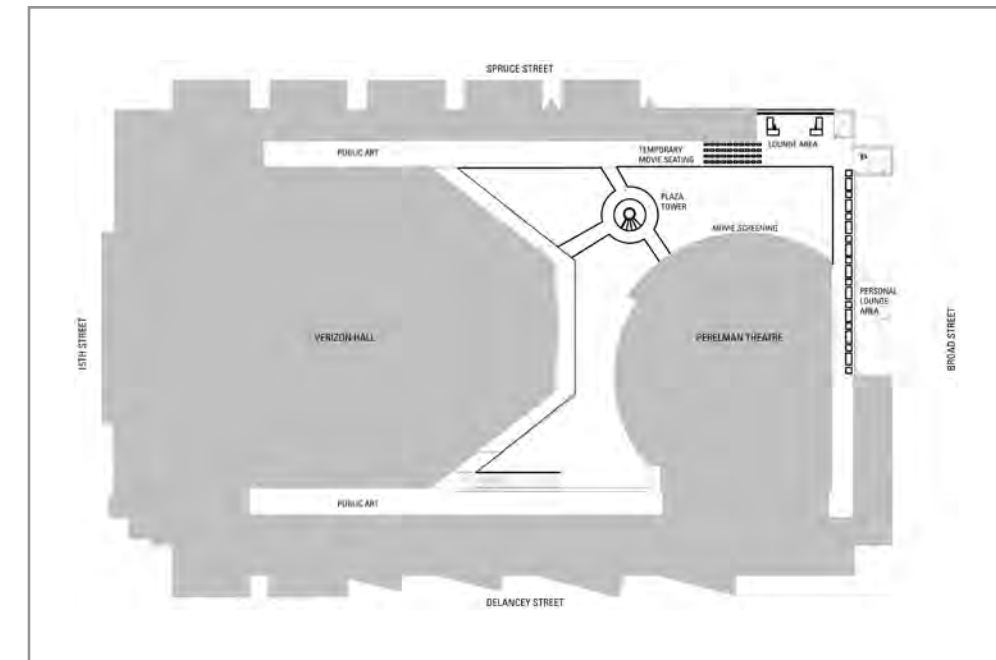
Music listening library on third tier



NEW DESTINATIONS



Lounge area on first tier facing Broad Street; movie screenings from first tier



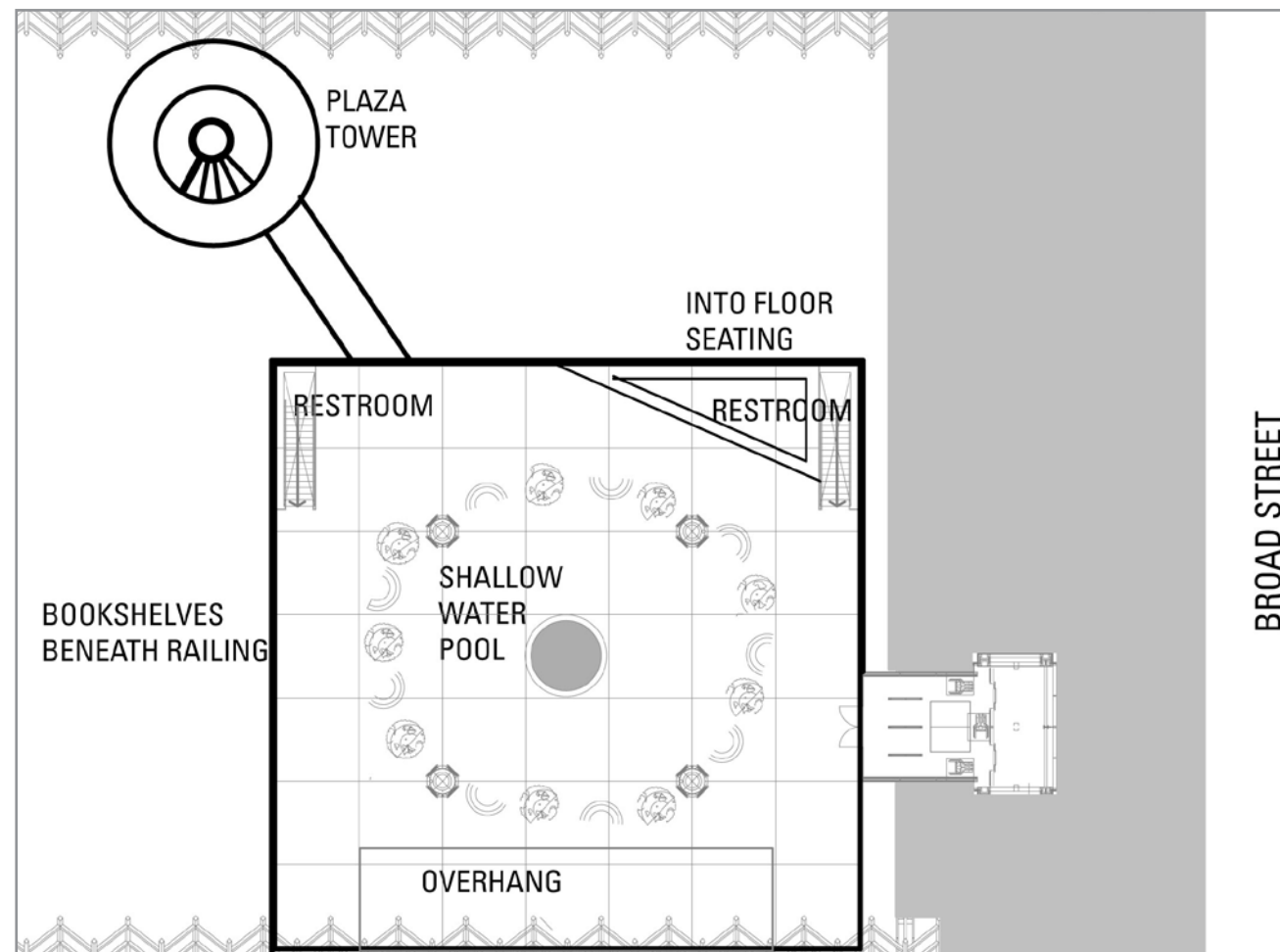
First tier plan

Ramps from Plaza Tower to second tier lookout and Rooftop Garden



*Rooftop Garden:
Including a variety of seating,
a small reading library, and
a reflecting pool*

ROOFTOP GARDEN

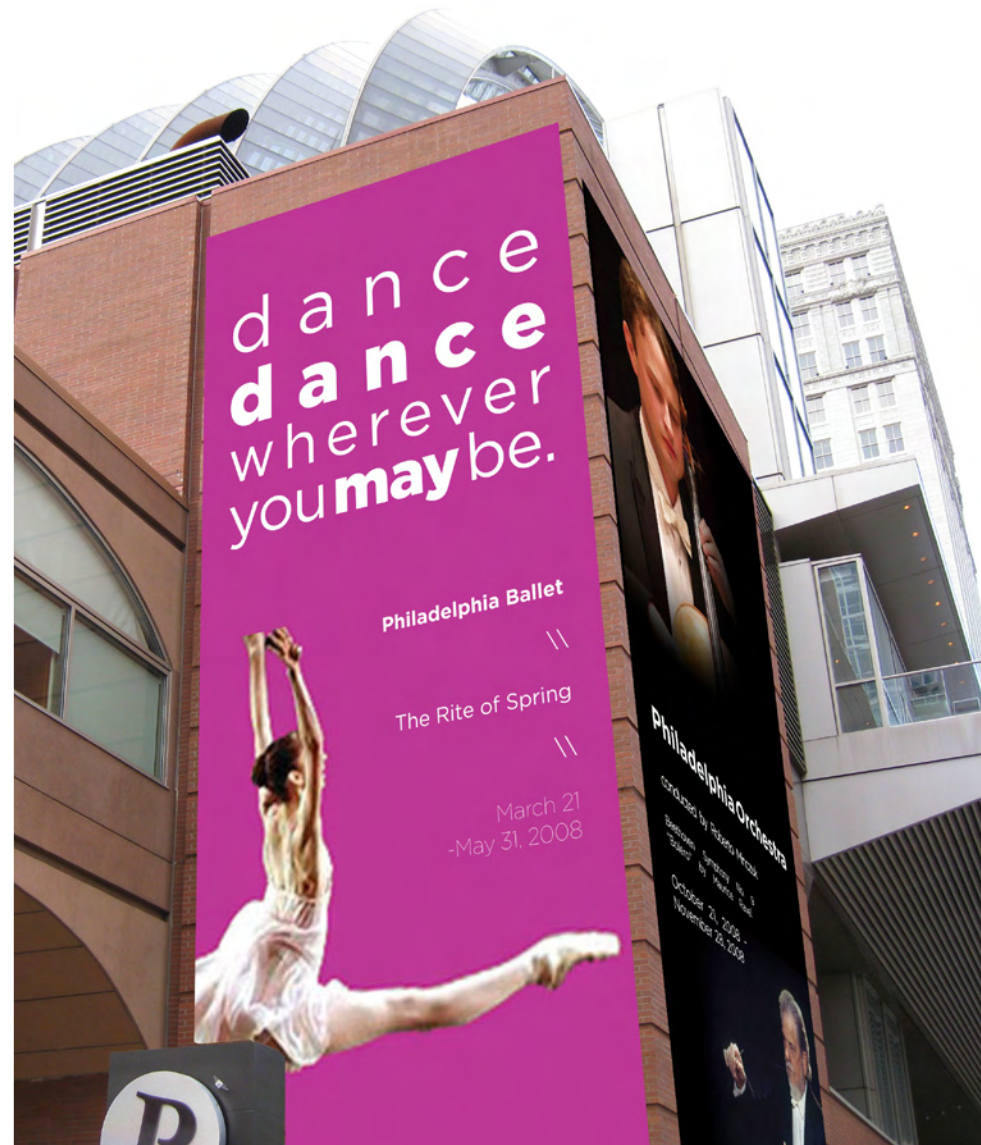


Rooftop Garden plan

SIGNAGE




Corner of Broad and Delancey Streets: Large and inviting signage




Example of 'Today at the Kimmel' Signage

<p>Today</p> <p>AT THE KIMMEL CENTER</p>	<p>7:30 PHILADELPHIA POPS Verizon Hall</p>	<p>1:15 DANCE CONCERT Commonwealth Plaza</p>	<p>2:45 GO, GO, GO, JOSEPH! Perelman Theatre</p>	<p>7:30 PHILADELPHIA POPS Verizon Hall</p>
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THE KIMMEL CENTER

-  Restrooms ←
- Coat Check ↓
- Gift Shop ↓
- Interactive Lounge ↓



Example of signage throughout the Kimmel Center to help navigate; electronic paper signage: a new technology that allows for changeable signage that is high resolution, high contrast, and low power





*Broad Street Façade:
Draped in electronic paper for event signage,
featuring a bench mounted on existing Kimmel
sign next to the entrance and bike
racks along the sidewalk*

EXTERIOR



*Example bike racks:
Place along sidewalks
to promote eco-friendly
transportation*



*Corner of Spruce
and Broad Streets:
at night*

*Corner of Spruce and Broad Streets:
An outdoor window to the indoor café
featuring affordable food; Hanging mobile
illuminated at night activates the corner*

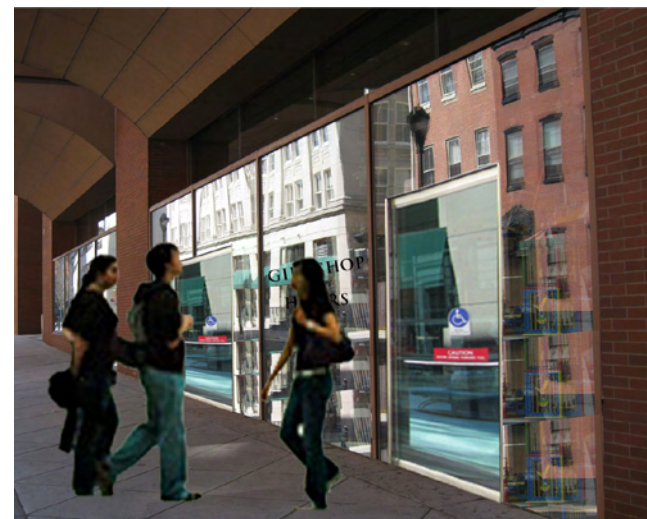




Corner of 15th and Spruce Streets: New entrance

Spruce Street: Café tables spill out under new glass overhang

The excitement of this new identity is broadcast onto the exterior of the Kimmel through new glass corner structures surrounding the outdoor café and the 15th and Spruce Street corner. A new glass overhang also exists along Spruce Street over the outdoor tables. The main Broad-Spruce corner becomes a beacon during the day and at night due to an illuminated, colorful mobile. We used sustainable principles in every aspect of our design. For example, the exterior of the Kimmel Center is draped with electronic paper, a high quality, low energy technology, announcing daily events and rotating images of local and international shows.



Spruce Street side: Gift shop accessible from outside





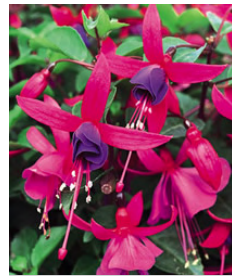
SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Magnify the experiences of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste to engage, entice and seduce the public. The overarching methodology is to redefine the visitor's spatial experience by reconsidering and reinterpreting the traditional functions of the vertical walls and horizontal floor through draping and lining the existing structures of the Kimmel.

Ross Cockrell
Angelika Kyrimi
Bonnie Liu
Caitlin Owens



*Exterior garden wall
Musee du Quai
Paris, France*

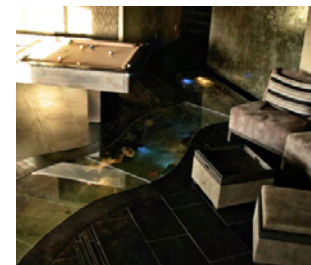


*Ideas for aromatic
greenery in the
Kimmel Center*

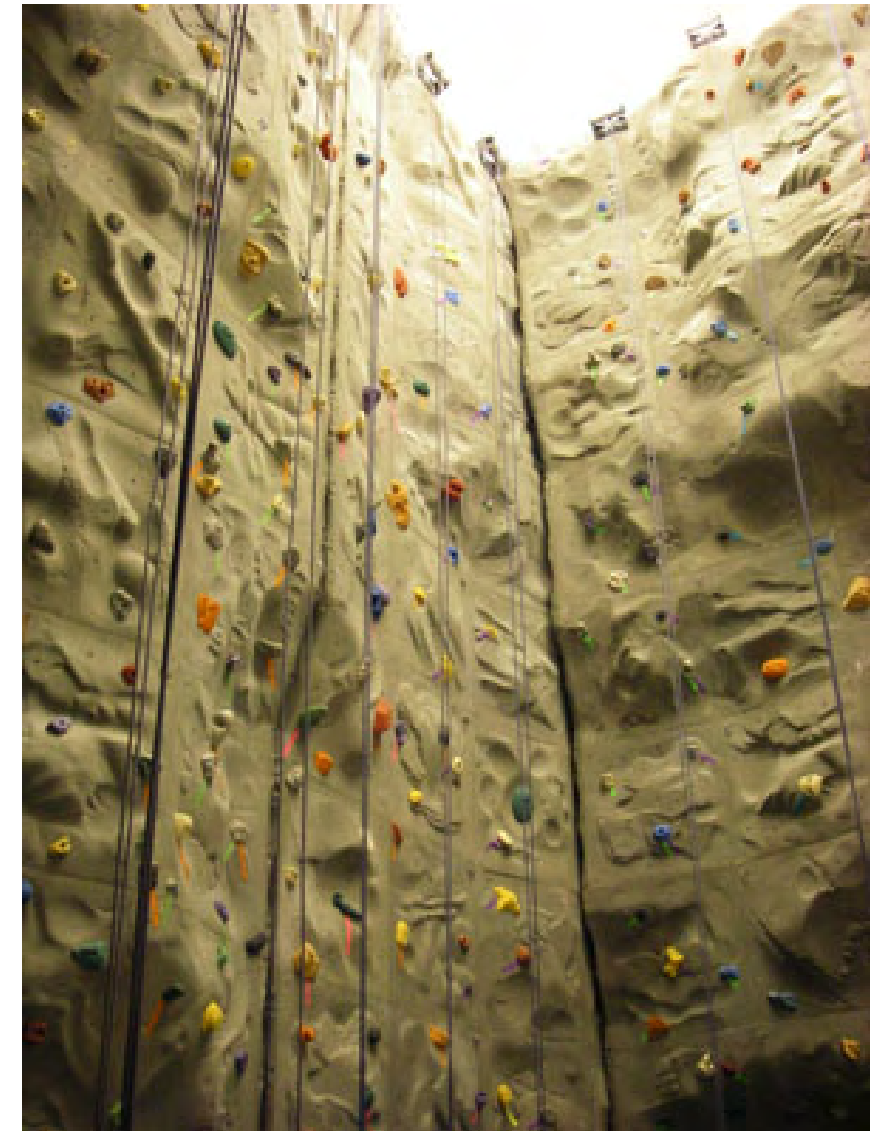


Exterior Waterwall

*Elevated glass floor
with running water
underneath*



Rockclimbing Wall



The Sensory Experience is designed to magnify sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. The stimulation of the five senses will be achieved through several innovative and provocative proposals that we feel will engage the public and make this architectural masterpiece a more personal and dynamic space.

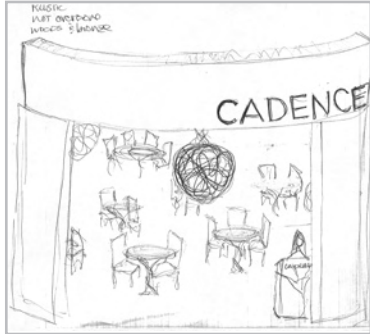
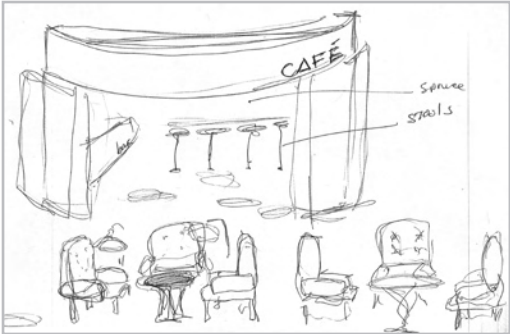
Glass Spiral Staircase



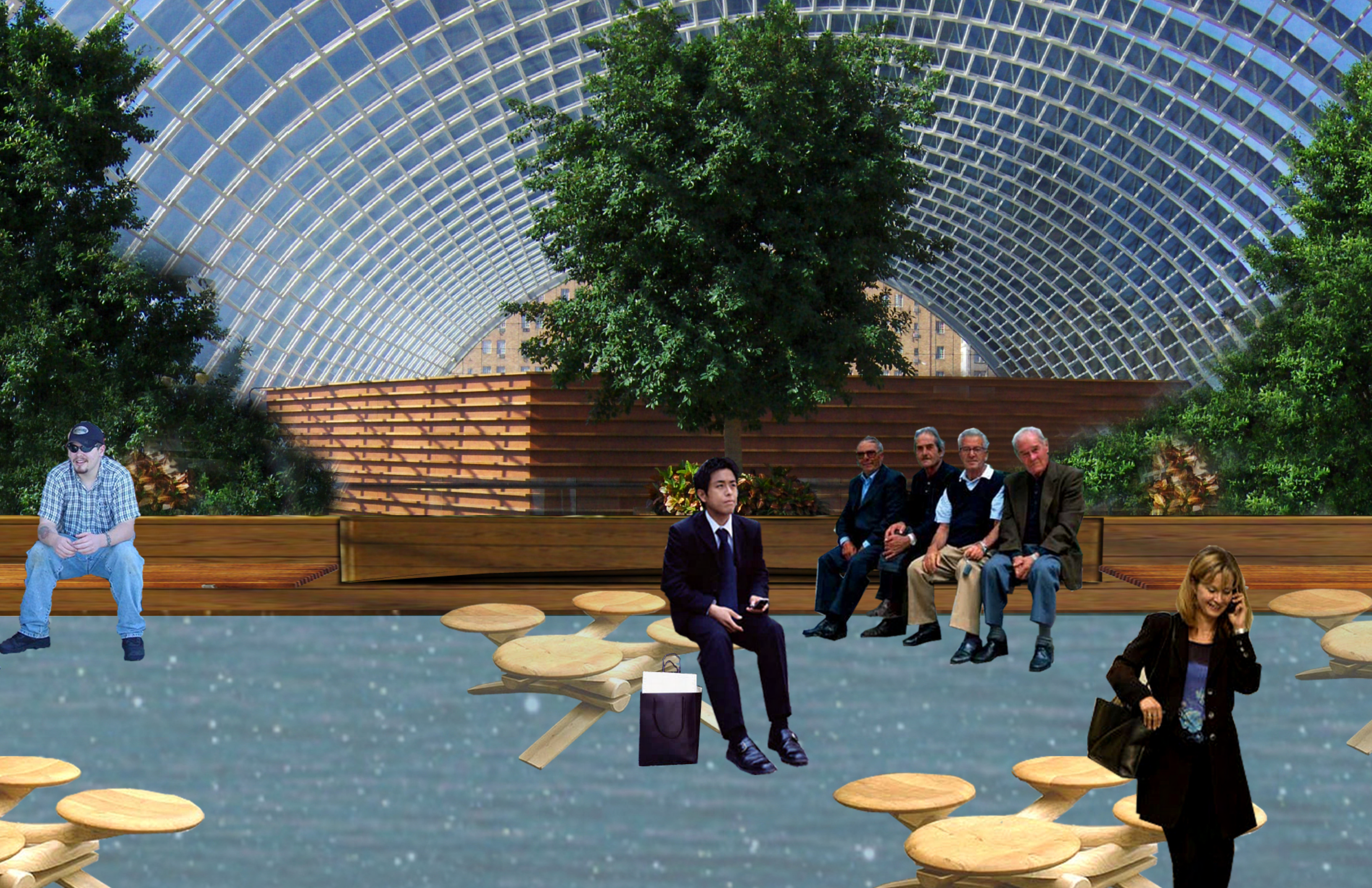
Glass Floors



DESIGN PROCESS



Ideas and sketches for the Cadence Restaurant in Commonwealth Plaza





HAMILTON GARDEN

Starting from the highest point of the Kimmel Center, Hamilton Garden and moving down to Commonwealth Plaza our proposal is to replace the existing floor of the rooftop garden with thick translucent glass, speckled with fiber optic lighting. The elevated glass floor will be the starting point for one of our most innovative suggestions. Beneath the visitors feet will be flowing water that will reach the edges of the garden and drape the sides of Perelman Theatre all the way down to Commonwealth Plaza.

Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy this exciting visual play of lights and water by sitting either on benches lining the edges of the garden or on central mobile seating.



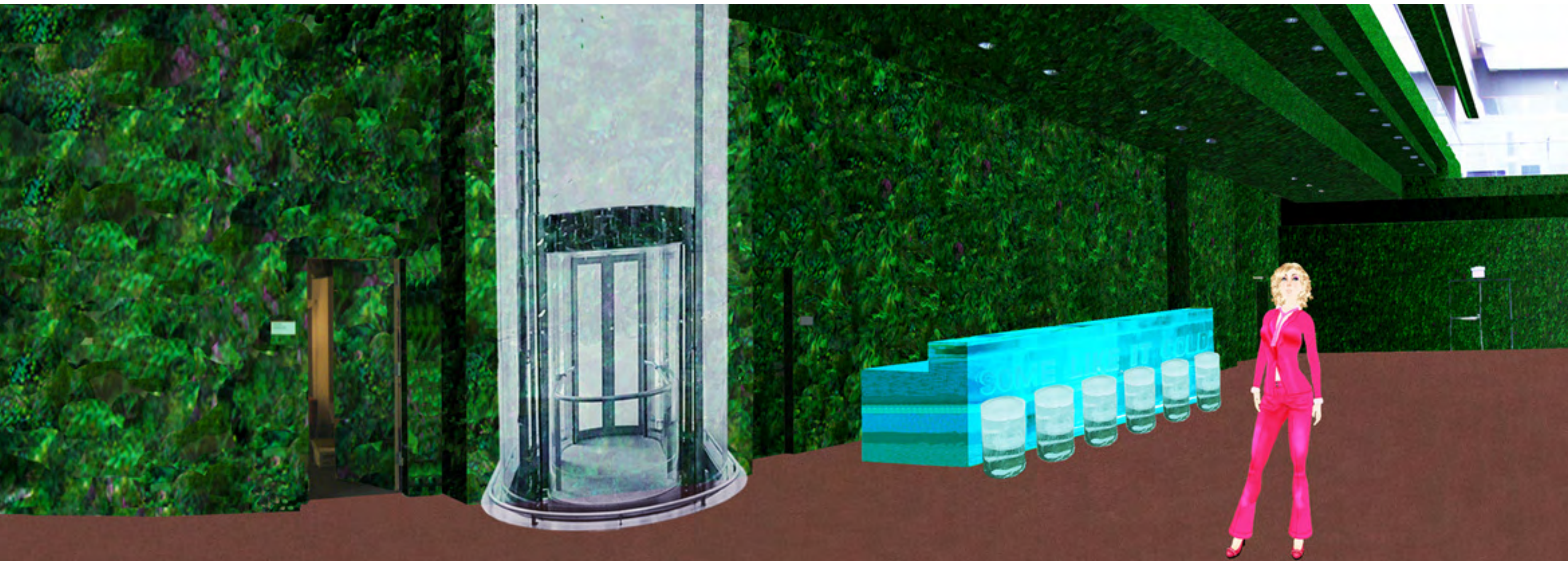
WATER WALL

A water wall will flow from below the the Rooftop Garden down the eight-story façade of Perelman Theater. The calming sound of the water and the grand elegance of the structure will contribute to the sensual appeal of the space.



GARDEN WALL

A vertical garden that will line the back corner of Perelman Theater and wrap around to the south side of the Kimmel Center across from Verizon Hall. This vertical garden will drape the three tiers with plush, aromatic greenery to fill Commonwealth Plaza with wonderful scents stemming from a range of colorful plants. This area will invite visitors to meet, read and linger.



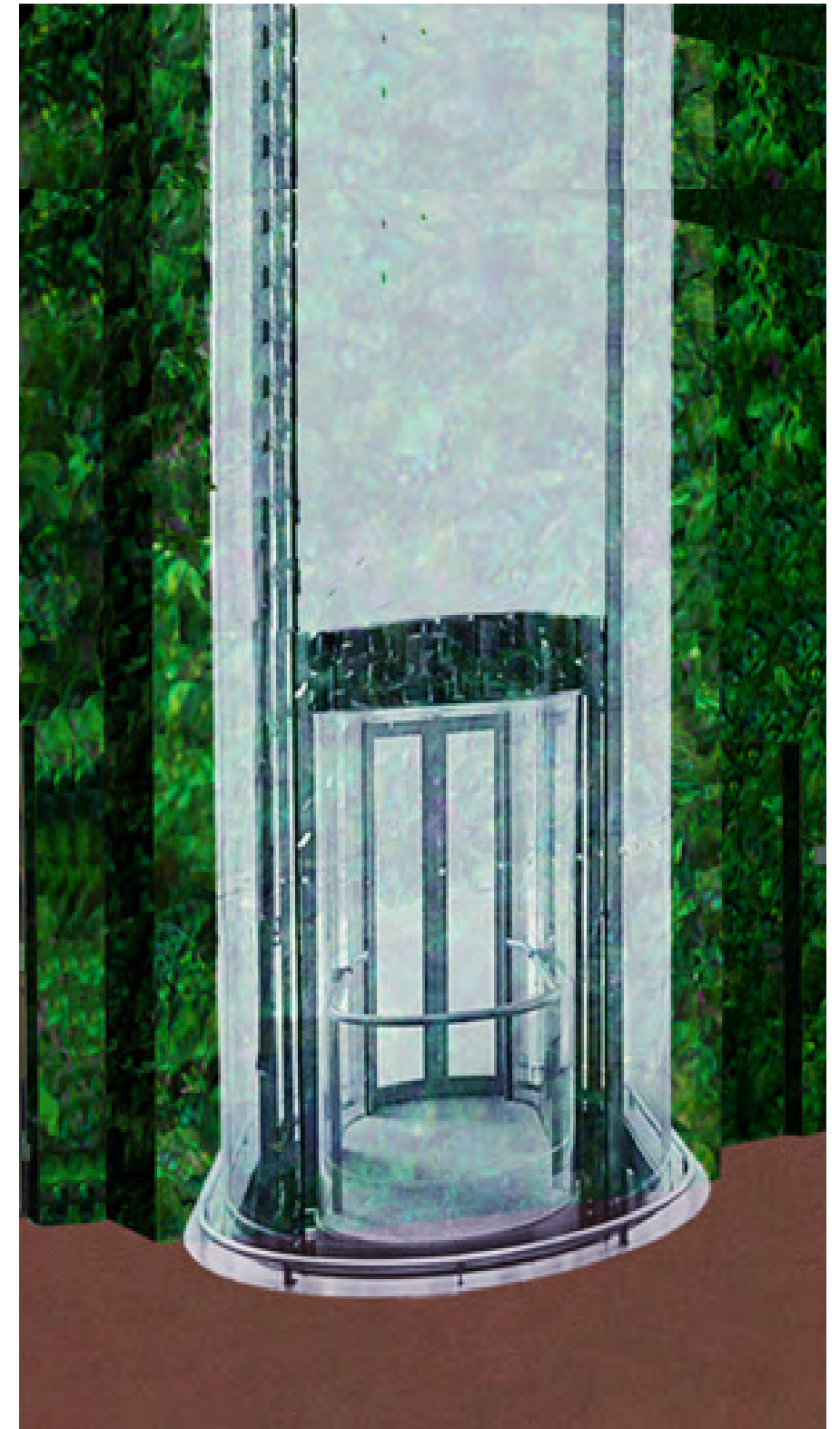


ROCK WALL

In keeping with the organic nature of our concept our boldest proposal is the installation of an artificial rock-climbing wall that will be installed on the south side of Verizon Hall's eight-story façade. In the process of revitalizing this space, we wanted not only to engage the senses, but invigorate the entire body with this activity. While strenuous, rock climbing is a quiet and meditative sport that appeals to a wide variety of users. Visitors will experience the excitement of climbing and watching other climbers indulging in this sport. If implemented, the Kimmel Center climbing wall would be among the tallest in the country.

ELEVATOR PODS

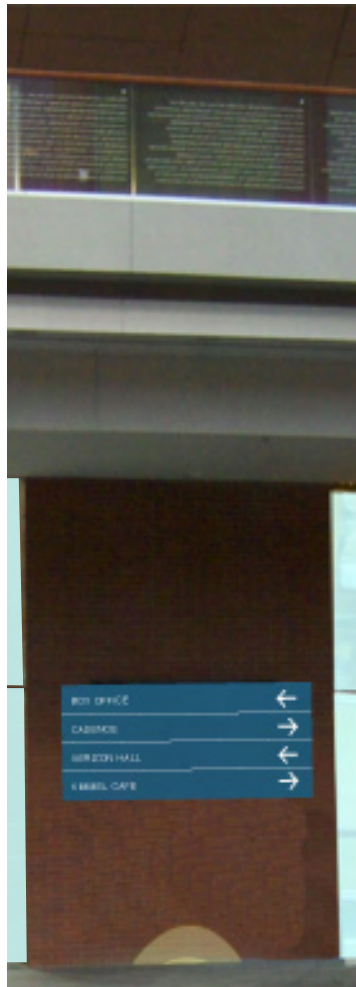
Our proposal is to remove both staircases in Commonwealth Plaza and replace them with glass elevator pods with spiral staircases wrapped around them. Additional pod-like structures will allow the visitors to sit in nooks visible from the exterior.



ACTIVITIES

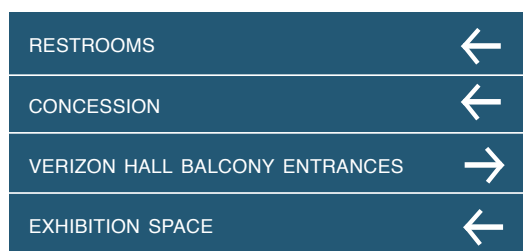
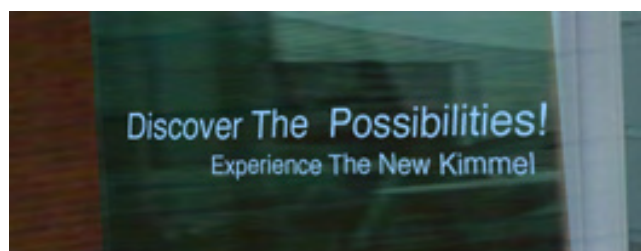
The first and second tiers would offer seating for film screenings that would be projected onto the side of Perelman Theater.

The first tier would feature a glass-floor art gallery to display commissioned pieces by various artists. Visitors would experience the artwork as they travel over it, viewing it through thick translucent glass.



WAYFINDING

In an effort to address the needs the public expressed for a clearer and more visible navigation system we will be implementing signs that will be similar to those of Philadelphia and that will be illuminated on the bottom so that they are easily detectable. Visitors will feel comfortable with this familiar system; and this will contribute to the realization of Commonwealth plaza as a true urban space. Large visible signage on the glass façade of spruce street will be informing pedestrians of the activities that are taking place within the Kimmel Center.



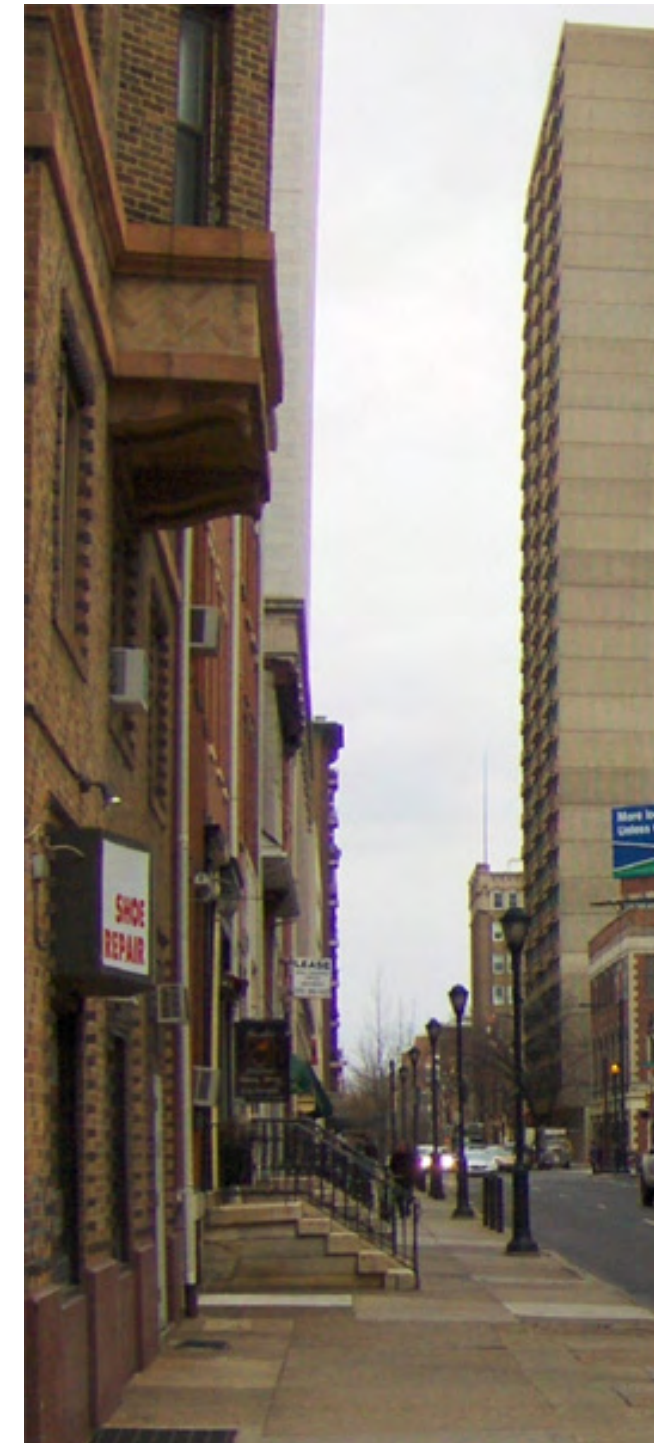
- RESTROOMS ←
- CONCESSION ←
- VERIZON HALL BALCONY ENTRANCES →
- EXHIBITION SPACE ←



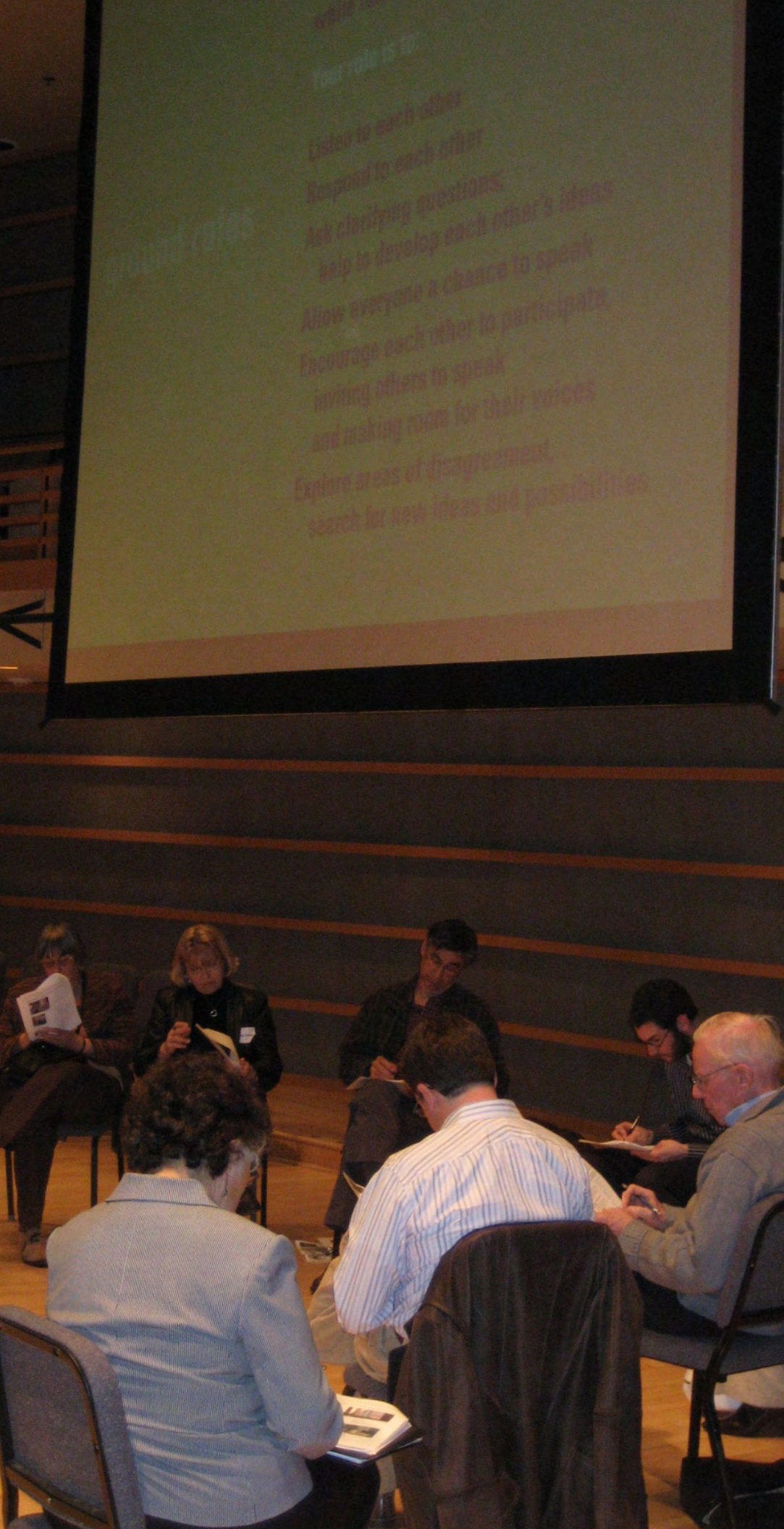
TRANSLUCENT FAÇADES

To open a line of vision between the Kimmel's interior and exterior, we have replaced the brick wall of Spruce Street with a glass window, two stories high. This will give pedestrians an opportunity to view the activities and programs taking place inside and welcome anyone who is unfamiliar to step in and take a peek. We have converted a previously restricted space to a dance studio, where performers and the general public can come and practice.

Our plans include the relocation of Cadence Restaurant, which is currently on the second tier, to the northeast corner of Commonwealth Plaza where the ticket booth is currently located. By removing the black granite box on the exterior corner of Broad and Spruce and replacing it with rounded glass we have opened up a line of vision between pedestrians and diners. Customers will be given a wide variety of options to satisfy their appetites and enjoy the wonderful tastes. We have also drawn plans for a wireless café, whose containing large windows that look out onto Spruce Street.







PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Members of the Philadelphia community gathered in Perelman Theater to review the progress of the Kimmel Center project.

Attendees were asked to complete surveys and give their feedback.

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

The Civic Feedback Session, held on April 14 in the Perelman Theater, provided an opportunity for Penn and UArts students to present their progress to the public. Harris Steinberg and Laurie Churchman began by explaining the design principles developed through public input, and the common concepts generated through initial design exploration. After this introduction, the three groups presented their re-evaluations of the Kimmel Center.

The audience was then divided into breakout groups and asked to give feedback on the ideas they had heard. The reactions from each group were recorded by moderators and surveys were collected that called on the public to answer specific questions regarding the proposals and design principles.

The members of the civic feedback forums represented a wide sampling of the Philadelphia community; from orchestra season ticket holders to neighborhood residents and high school students, everyone who attended was in some way invested in the changes that the Kimmel Center intended to implement. Considering the diverse backgrounds of the attendees, the feedback received at the forum varied greatly. However there were some common themes that arose throughout the evening.

Many people voiced the need for a more welcoming environment to draw in new visitors. Proposals from the presentation addressed this concept with lighted sidewalks surrounding the Kimmel Center's entrances, more seating, understandable and accessible signage interventions, and the addition of the 15th Street entrance. These were all suggestions upon which nearly every group agreed.

The public responded very well to the design concepts for the Rooftop Garden. The groups agreed that a unique attraction should be implemented in this space in order to give visitors an incentive to travel up eight floors. The public also responded well to the addition of more interesting and available seating, as well as a bar or eating option in this space. Accessibility to the Rooftop Garden was an important consideration, whether via a relocated elevator and/or the Humanize Group's enormous "destination" staircase.

Some of the larger proposal ideas, such as the eight-story water wall, the expansive vegetation wall, and the Plaza Tower received mixed feedback from the groups. The general consensus was that while these ideas were innovative, many people were apprehensive about the consequences of their specific implementations. For example, they appreciated the idea that the Plaza Tower would act to connect the entire Kimmel Center, but feared that the nature of such a large project would detract from the openness of Commonwealth Plaza.

While some of the bolder, more transformative suggestions were subject to debate, nearly everyone agreed that a quick and relatively inexpensive way to get started on the "new" Kimmel Center was to introduce more programming options. Programming ideas included the introduction of an Internet café, a redesigned or relocated gift shop, and more artistic attractions. The groups were also happy to see designs for outdoor signage that announced daily attractions. They felt that these implementations could be completed relatively quickly and nearly guarantee an increase of traffic into the Kimmel Center.



Ideas were displayed on boards before the presentation; over 200 citizens attended the presentations and participated in small group feedback sessions



Moderators from the Penn Project for Civic Engagement led groups through a critique of the presented ideas

PRESENTATIONS & FEEDBACK

Students from PennDesign enjoyed the reception before the presentation



MATERIALS & RESULTS

feedback/principles

KIMMEL CENTER PUBLIC SPACES PROJECT CIVIC FEEDBACK SESSION, APRIL 14, 2008

Part I: Please rate each Design Principle on how important you think it is to improving the Kimmel. Please circle the option that best matches your response to each Principle.

Inside/out and outside/in.

The outside of the building must let the public see, hear and feel what is happening inside the building. The outside – now seen as foreboding, dull and confusing – should broadcast a sense of excitement and activity onto the street. In sum, the exterior of the building must more effectively explain, promote and invite.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

Treat Commonwealth Plaza as the third arts venue—an inclusive public venue.

The grand public spaces of a temple of the performing arts should be filled with the sights and sounds of art. Allow music to permeate the space beyond performance times. Use varied public performances by diverse performers in this 'third venue' to address the center's image problems with accessibility, affordability and inclusion.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

Create magnets to lure mixed uses and mixed users.

Vibrant town squares are rich in things to do, appealing to a variety of tastes. With its location and imposing facade, the Kimmel must work hard to attract people – particularly people not now patrons of the resident companies – into its public spaces to linger on a daily basis.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

Offer a warmer welcome—and a map to navigate.

Convey to visitors that the center sees them as guests to be welcomed, not interlopers to be handled. With an inviting gathering space upon entry, the lobby should express that the center's core client is the public, not just large donors. The building can be confusing and intimidating to the newcomer; offer more guidance on how to get around it.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

WOW! What now?

Though grand and elegant, Commonwealth Plaza often overwhelms people when they enter the building. Break the vast lobby space into smaller settings, using flexible furnishings that can be moved to accommodate larger events.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

Balance aesthetic values and commercial appeal.

Efforts to enliven Commonwealth Plaza and attract a broader public should not sacrifice the Kimmel Center's core values as a home for world-class artistry: quality, taste and elegance.

- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important at all

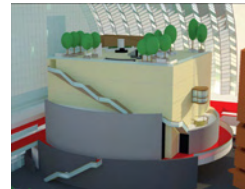


1

feedback/humanize

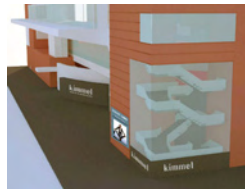
KIMMEL CENTER PUBLIC SPACES PROJECT CIVIC FEEDBACK SESSION, APRIL 14, 2008

Part II: "If this were done, I would be more likely to visit the Kimmel Center." Please circle the option that best matches your reaction to the following design ideas.



A new stair that wraps around the Perelman Theater, improving access from the Plaza to the tiers and the Hamilton Garden.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



An enclosed stair at the corner of Broad and Spruce that leads up to Cadence and provides a window into the activity inside.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Interactive illuminated sidewalk tiles connect and direct visitors to the Kimmel.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3

Two pages from the survey distributed to participants at the public forum; agenda for the night of the public forum

Philadelphia Inquirer
April 15, 2008



Plans to enliven the Kimmel Center were discussed last night at a public forum. Some are truly pie-in-the-sky: creating a rock-climbing space on the side of Verizon Hall. Other ideas are more traditionally capitalistic, such as creating storefronts.

A brainstorming session seeks to make it into a public square. Ideas for the Kimmel Center

By Peter Dobrin
INQUIRER CULTURE WRITER
Coming to an enlivened Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts:

Brahms and bebop, to be sure. But come an hour before the concert and you could do a little rock-climbing on the side of Verizon Hall.

Bring your children to a rooftop playground, or show up at lunchtime to listen to the water falling off the top of Perelman Theater onto vertical gardens.

No one at the Kimmel Center has given the green light to any of these changes, but they were among dozens presented last night at a public forum at the Kimmel. Students from the University of Pennsylvania and University of the Arts formulated three proposals for dramatic changes to Philadelphia's arts center after hearing ideas from the public at four meetings.

The brainstorming session aimed to realize the arts center's original plan to be a seven-day-a-week, 18-hour-a-day generator of street activity — what planners predicted would become another public square.

"The building is not without its challenges or we would not be here tonight," said Harris Steinberg, executive director of PennPraxis, the Penn-related nonprofit planning authority that has cultivated the process along with the Penn Project for Civic Engagement and The Inquirer. "How do we take a building that is largely unfinished and not only finish it but make it a beacon?"

Steinberg said he hoped the Kimmel could become one of the top-five attractions for visitors to the city.

To do that, dramatic and possibly unfeasible gestures would be required, and several flamboyant ideas were floated. Rock-climbing on the side of Verizon Hall would invite liability consequences, planners acknowledged. And water-intrusion, already a problem at the Kimmel, would be further complicated by a glass floor atop the Perelman, from which water would flow down the sides of the



To enliven the Kimmel, drastic changes must be made.

Perelman.

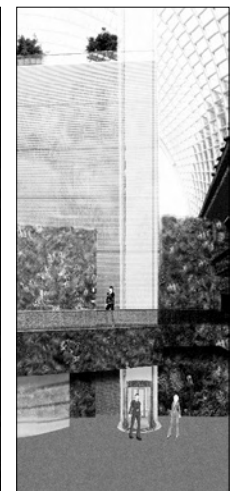
But, "In order to enliven the Kimmel, drastic changes must be made," said Bonnie Liu, a Penn undergraduate who was one of about two dozen students who worked on the proposals.

Less ambitious and less expensive themes emerged — providing wireless access, comfortable furniture and places to drink coffee and get a snack.

"Tonight's ideas are preliminary, and are not mutually exclusive," Steinberg said. "This is just a moment in a broader conversation."

All three design proposals called for replacing the black granite cube at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets with materials that would allow the public to see in, improving signage, and breaking up the heavily bricked Spruce Street side of the building with cafes and other uses by creating a new entrance at 15th and Spruce.

Not part of last night's discussion were proposals to improve the much-criticized



Creating a waterfall from the top of the Perelman Theater was discussed last night.

Paquin, who did not know whether the original architect, New York's Rafael Viñoly, was aware of the proposed changes. "The signature architecture is still there. You still have the grandeur — the vaulted roof, the rooftop garden, the restaurant."

Many of the ideas recalled the concepts of a previous design for an orchestra hall on the same site by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates that included electronic signs to tell people what's going on inside the building, as well as ways to make the exterior transparent to show the activity within.

"The outside of the building must let the public see, hear and feel what is happening inside the building," proclaimed one of last night's proposals. "The outside, now seen as foreboding, dull and confusing, should broadcast a sense of excitement and activity onto the street."

Contact culture writer Peter Dobrin at 215-854-5611 or pdobrin@phillynews.com. Read his blog at <http://go.philly.com/artswatch>.

agenda

KIMMEL CENTER PUBLIC SPACES PROJECT CIVIC FEEDBACK SESSION, APRIL 14, 2008

Preliminary Design Presentation
Perelman Theater

Welcome
Natalye Paquin
Executive Vice President and COO, Kimmel Center Inc.

Project Overview and Design Principles
Harris Steinberg, FAIA
Executive Director, PennPraxis

Introduction of Student Presentations
Laurie Churchman
Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, PennDesign

Tonight's Work and Next Steps
Harris Sokoloff and Chris Satullo
Penn Project for Civic Engagement

Civic Feedback

Small-Group Discussion
Harris Sokoloff and Chris Satullo
Penn Project for Civic Engagement

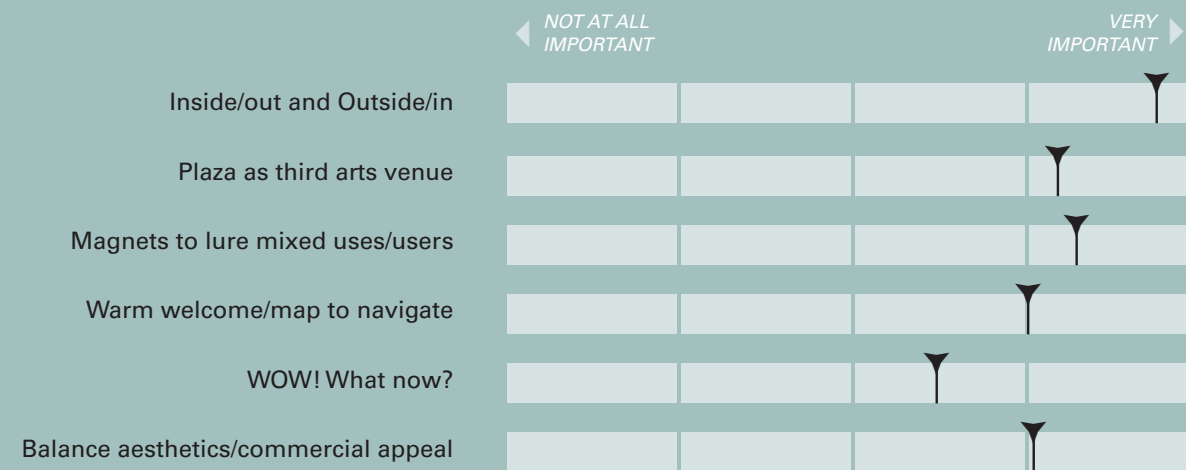
Plenary Discussion and Feedback Form Completion
Perelman Theater



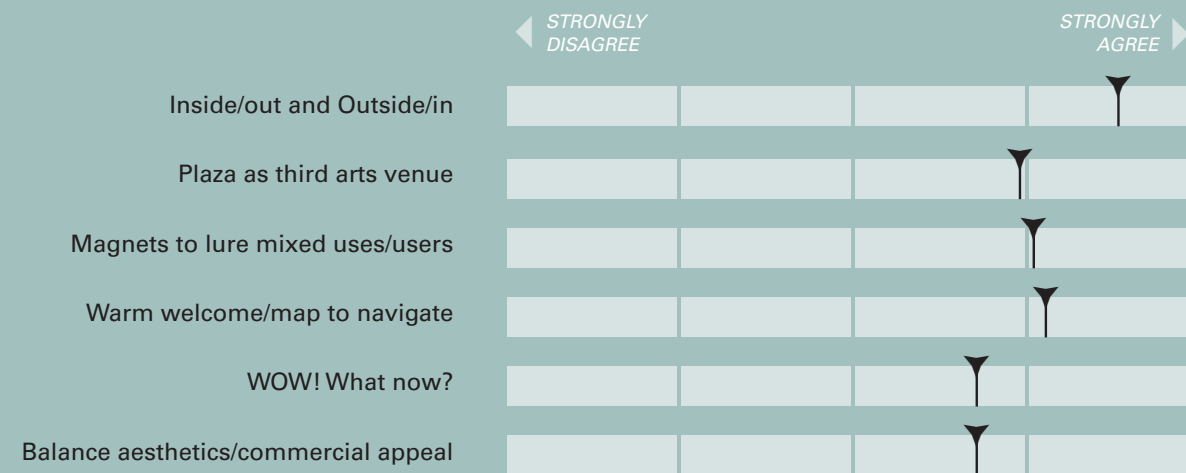
SURVEY RESULTS

A seven-page survey was distributed to the attendees of the public presentation. In six sections, it solicited feedback about the importance of the principles in general, the success of the ideas common to all three groups, the individual group ideas, and finally, the integration of the principles into the design work.

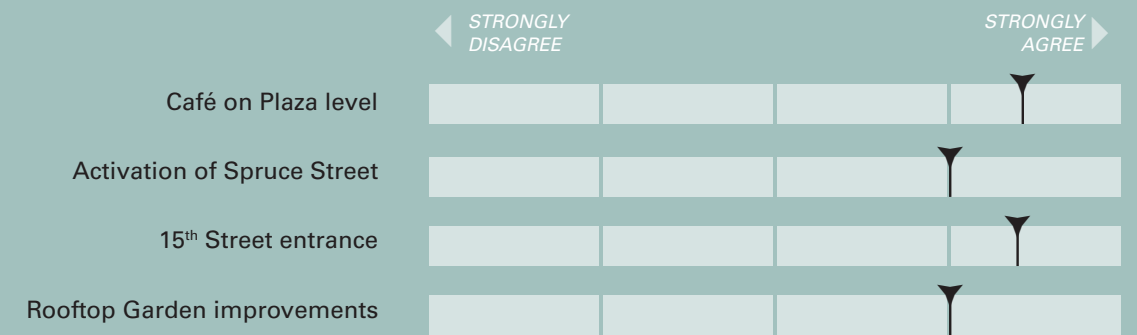
IMPORTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES



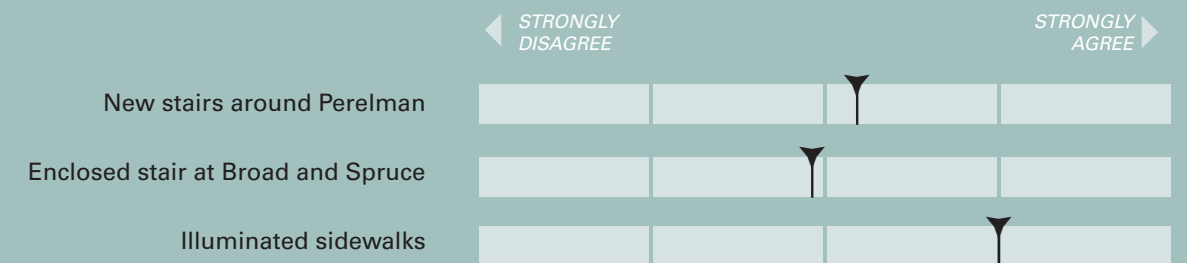
SUCCESS IN USING THE PRINCIPLES



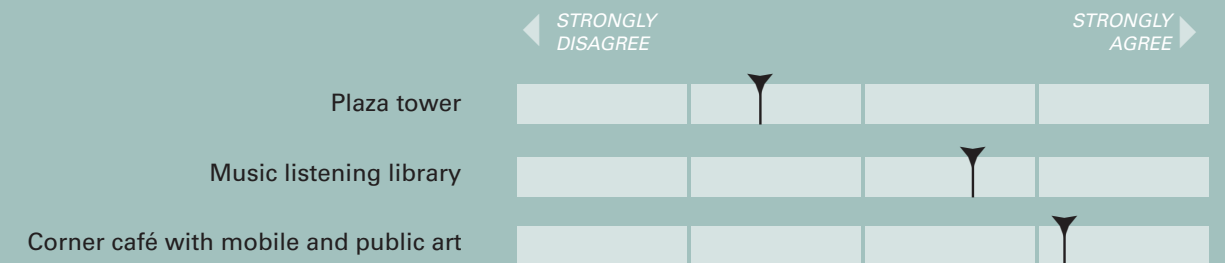
COMMON IDEAS



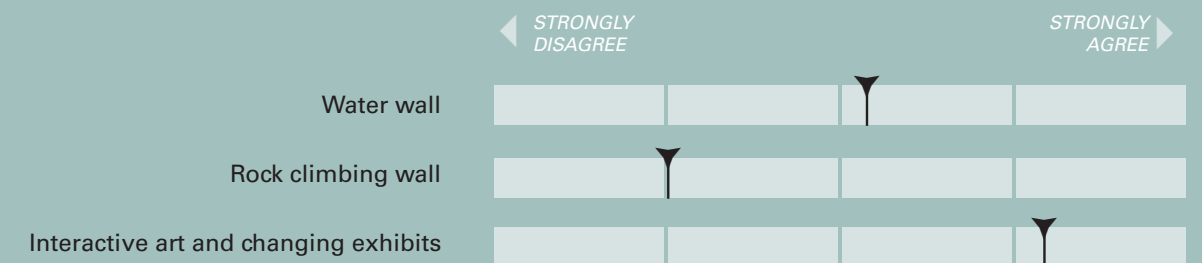
“HUMANIZE” PROPOSAL



“CONNECT” PROPOSAL



“SENSORY” PROPOSAL





NEXT STEPS

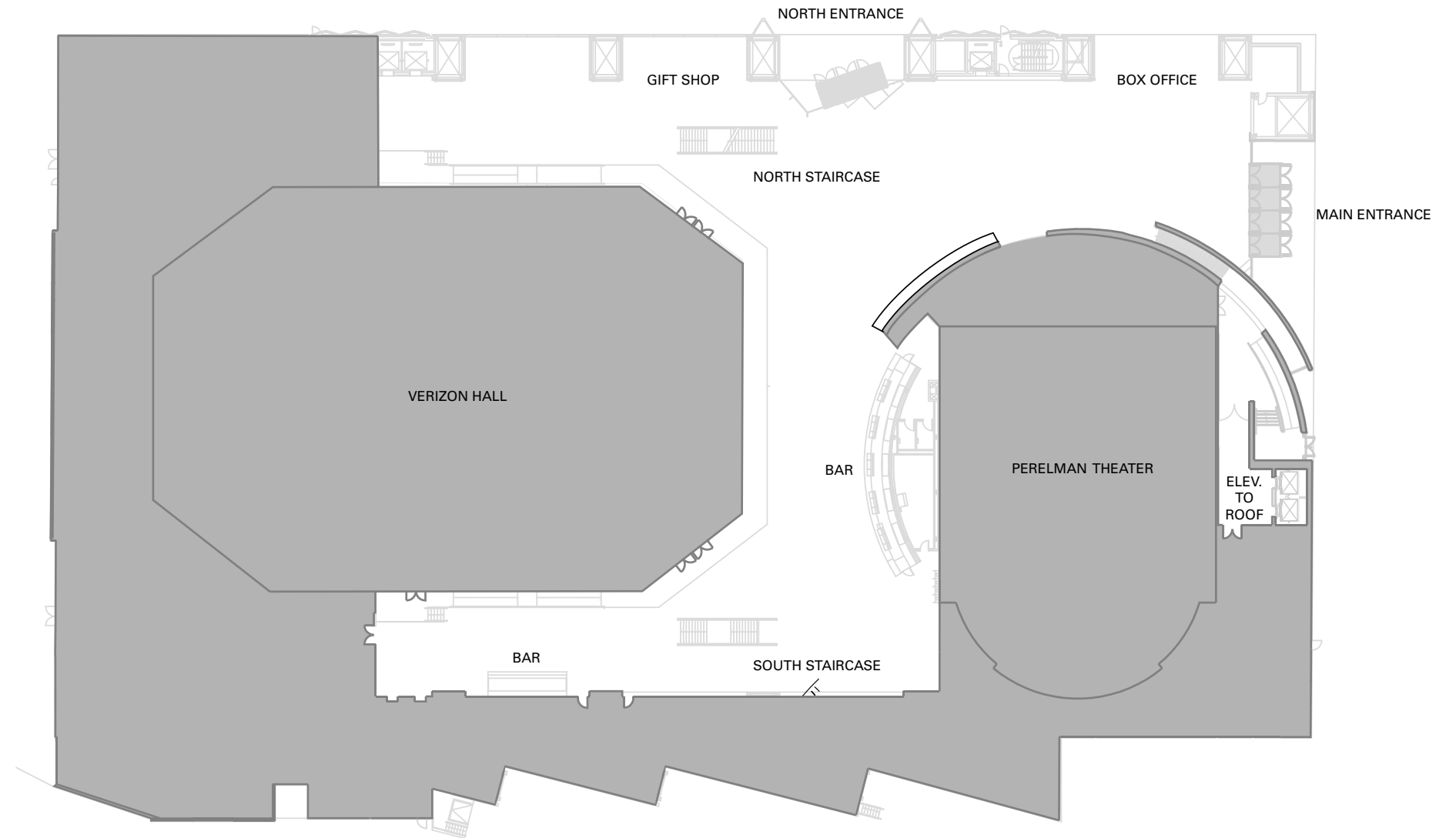
While using the public's feedback about successful elements from the three distinct designs, the students suggested several practical, short-term changes to the Kimmel Center, both structurally and through its programming, that capitalize on its potential as a vibrant urban destination and public space.

MOVING FORWARD

This section distills each of the three groups' designs into a single plan that contains easily implementable initial changes along with the most potent and plausible of the recommended major renovations. Beginning at the corner of Spruce and Broad Streets, we propose removing the exterior black cube and replacing it with a three-story, art-filled atrium. This space may provide additional entrances into the building or may become part of the new café, as shown. Placing some type of café or restaurant in the northeast corner of Commonwealth Plaza, where the ticket booth is currently located, will encourage the public to enter, enjoy, and return to the Kimmel Center. Increasing the façade's transparency with more glass at the café and along Spruce Street will also make the building and street more alive and inviting.

At the opposite end of the block, at the corner of 15th and Spruce Streets, a new entrance is essential. Opening up this corner and creating an interior corridor will increase accessibility from the west, draw in new visitors, expand Commonwealth Plaza, and provide new usable spaces. The proposed plan illustrates these new spaces being used as an enlarged information center that will serve as a hub for all Avenue of the Arts venues, a relocated Box Office that incorporates exterior sales windows, and a large programmable space directly inside the new entrance. The large space could contain a gift shop, a community dance studio, an interactive lounge (three ideas from the student presentations), or any other function that the Kimmel Center deems appropriate.

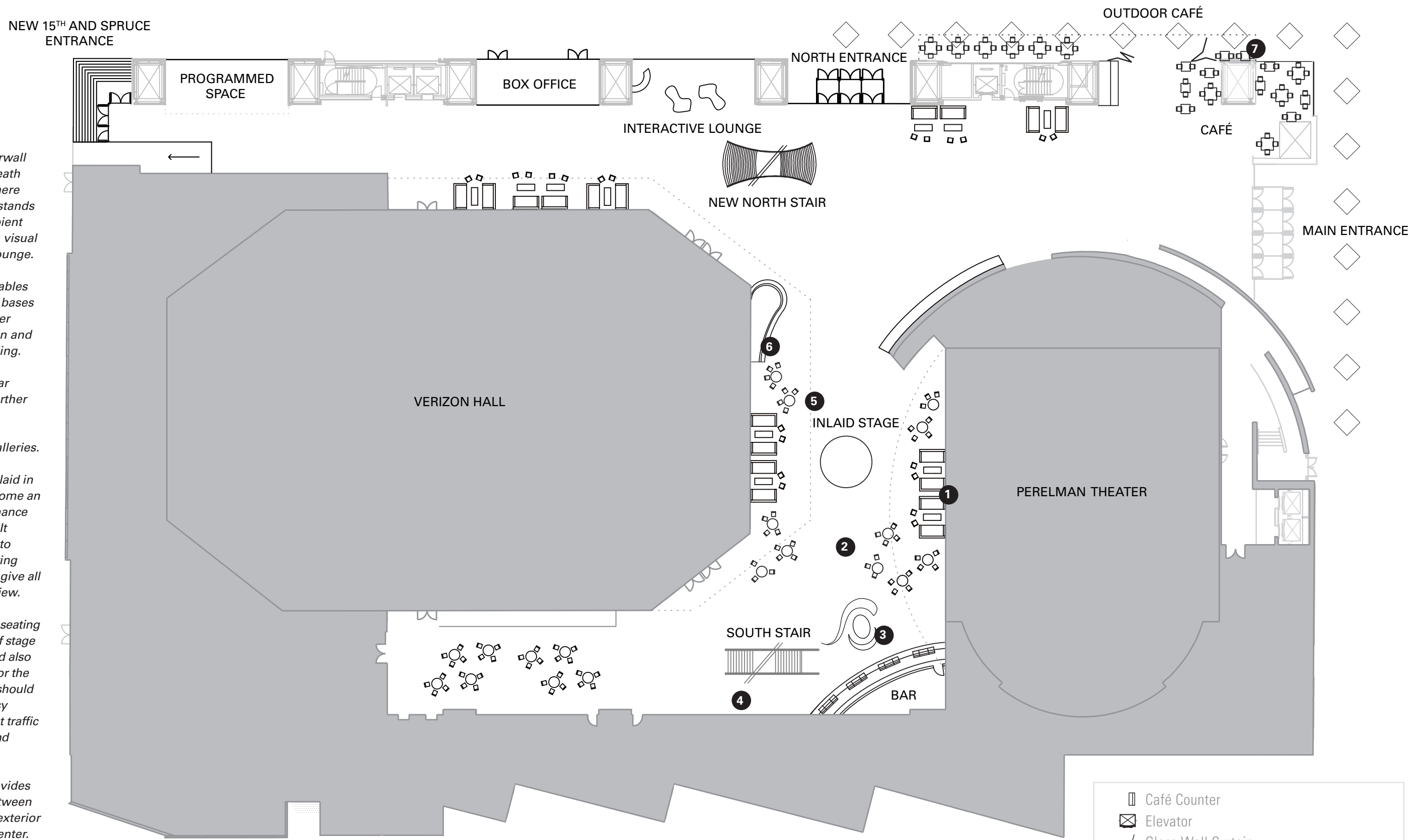
Within Commonwealth Plaza, the most effective solution for opening and enlivening the space while retaining its flexibility requires moving the PECO Bar to the corner currently occupied by the stage. The stage will be replaced by a highly visible and adaptable inlaid performance space in the center of the plaza. The public forums and the student analyses also highlighted the importance of better interior design. In response, this proposal includes suggestions for more permanent, unique, and comfortable furniture, as well as an improved main staircase. Interior and exterior signage improvements will also make moving throughout the building easier and more enjoyable.



Existing Plan

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

We envision the Kimmel Center as a place where people can socialize and enjoy both the music of the resident companies and public performances. Our design allows optimal use of all its public space. Empty areas are transformed into flexible areas encouraging visitors to lounge, play interactive games, as well as linger in our new café.

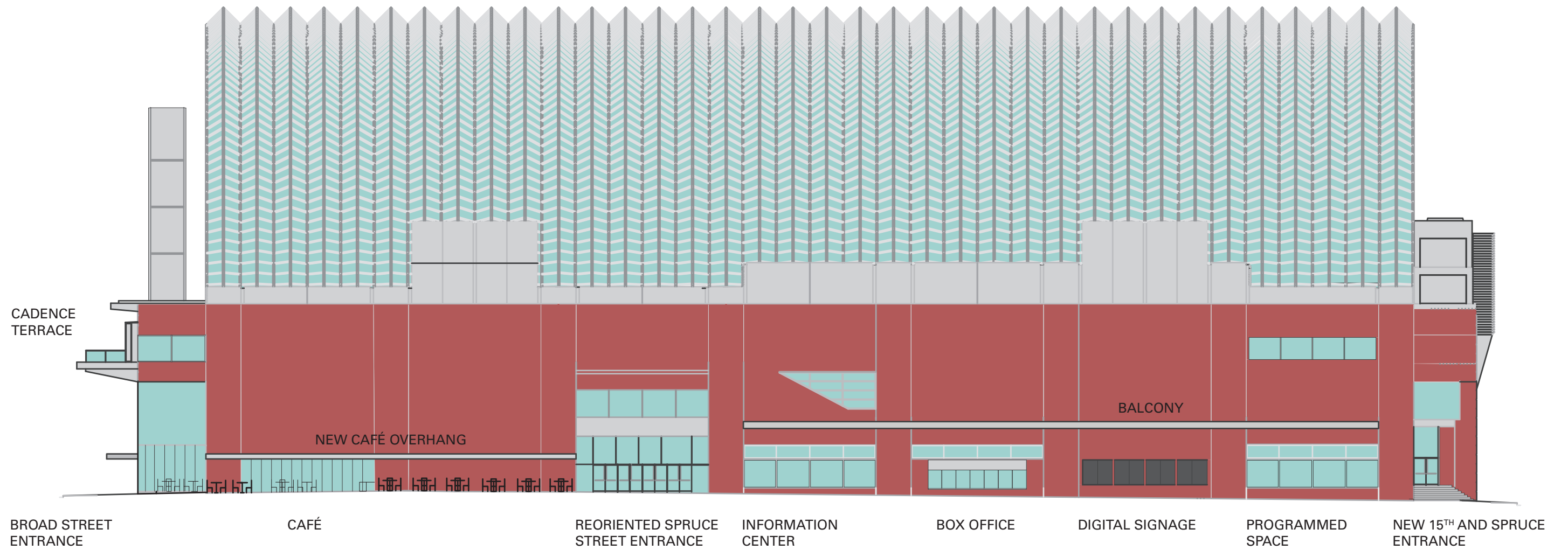


- 1** Installing a waterwall element underneath the overhang where the existing bar stands will provide ambient sound and add a visual element to the lounge.
- 2** Stone pedestal tables with illuminated bases complement other uses of lighting in and around the building.
- 3** Relocating the bar draws visitors further into the lounge.
- 4** Walls become galleries.
- 5** Wooden stage inlaid in the floor will become an informal performance space for artists. It can be also built to rotate slowly during performances to give all visitors a great view.
- 6** Multiple types of seating enable viewing of stage performances and also provide seating for the bar. This seating should also allow for easy movement of foot traffic from the stairs and the plaza.
- 7** Glass façade provides transparency between the interior and exterior of the Kimmel Center.

Café Counter
 Elevator
 Glass Wall Curtain
 Information Desk
 Interactive Sidewalk Tiles
 Seating and Benches

NORTH ELEVATION

In addition to enhancing the public spaces inside the Kimmel Center, we propose several changes along the building's Spruce Street exterior. A new sidewalk café, a reoriented Spruce Street entrance, and new entrance at 15th and Spruce Streets will help enliven the block, increase transparency, and bring the inside of the Kimmel Center out, and the outside in.



Increase transparency to the building by replacing the existing granite cube with a glass-enclosed volume at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets.

Bring in visitors with a sidewalk café. A human-scale awning over outdoor tables and an operable glass slider make it a great spot to lounge in nice weather.

Both interior and exterior box office windows will increase sales and ease of picking up tickets.

A new balcony can serve as a rental space for a variety of outdoor events.

Additional entrance at the corner of Spruce and 15th Streets will increase accessibility and entice individuals to enter the Kimmel Center.

SEATING LINGERING ENLIVENING

New seating throughout the Kimmel Center was selected with the goal of making the building more conducive to sitting and lingering. This meant selecting furniture comfortable enough to make the space more inviting while keeping with the building's contemporary aesthetic. Other decorative changes, such as the addition of several new planters and, in the long term, a more secure and attractive main staircase, will further enliven Commonwealth Plaza and the upper tiers.



Sleek wooden seating in the café will lend the new space a sense of elegance fitting for the Kimmel Center.



More intimate seating niches within Commonwealth Plaza will be created with chic, comfortable furniture.



Lit benches will be placed along the periphery of the lounge spaces in Commonwealth Plaza and within the rooftop garden.



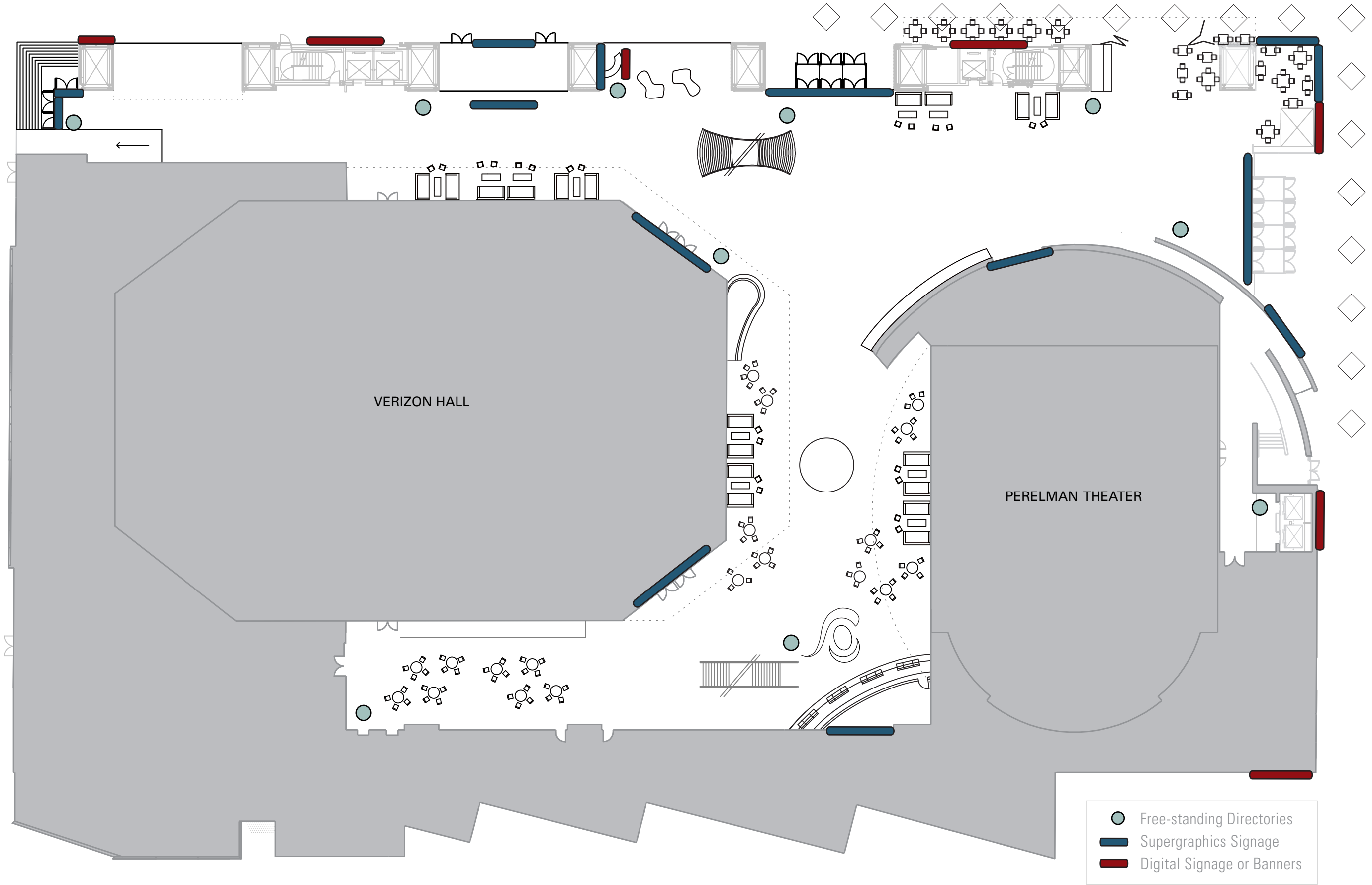
Numerous planters will be added throughout the building to dramatically increase the amount of greenery.



Additional seating will be added on each of the upper tiers to make them more conducive for lingering during intermissions or to take in the view of the Kimmel Center's dramatic vault and impressive views of the city.

SIGNAGE

Implementing consistent and coherent signage throughout the interior and exterior will welcome visitors to the Kimmel Center and help them find their way once inside. Signage will be compatible with the scale of the large space, make use of technology, and complement the existing materials in the building.



INTERIOR



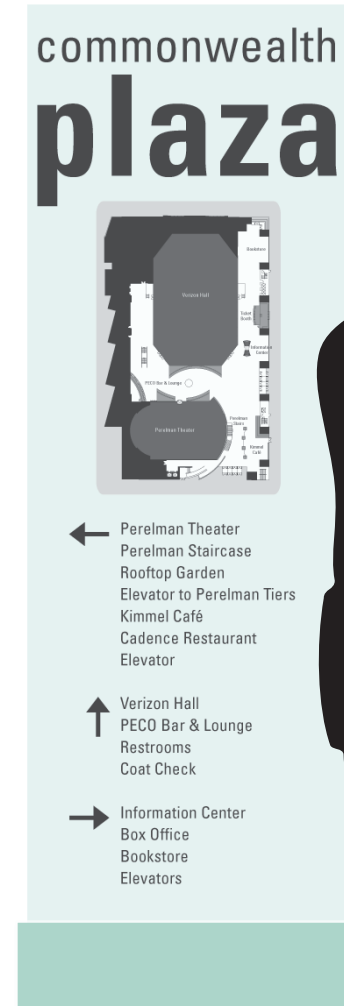
- BOX OFFICE
- CADENCE
- VERIZON HALL
- KIMMEL CAFE



Removable films and thin, flexible, low-energy digital screens will promote sustainable practices. An information center with interactive kiosks will encourage visitors to learn more about the Avenue of the Arts.



We recommend the use of supergraphics to identify the main destinations under the vault, as this type of signage will not be overwhelmed by the building's larger structures.



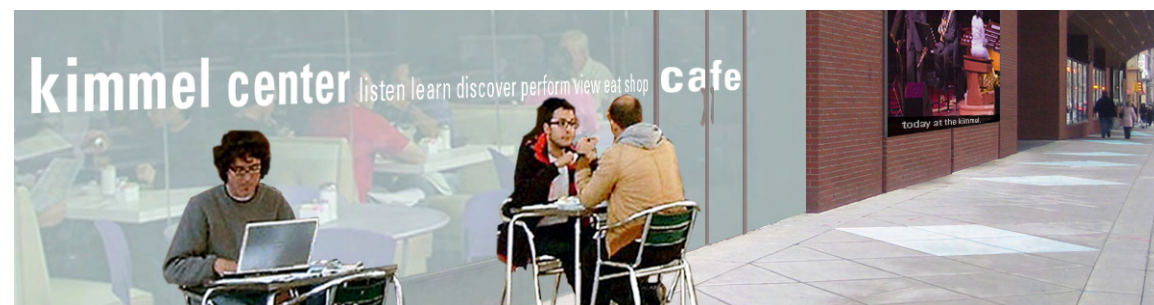
Free-standing or mounted directories can be used in more specific locations. Lit bases for free-standing signage will ensure that directories are easy to find throughout the building. Slight color and material variations will help distinguish between public and non-public areas.



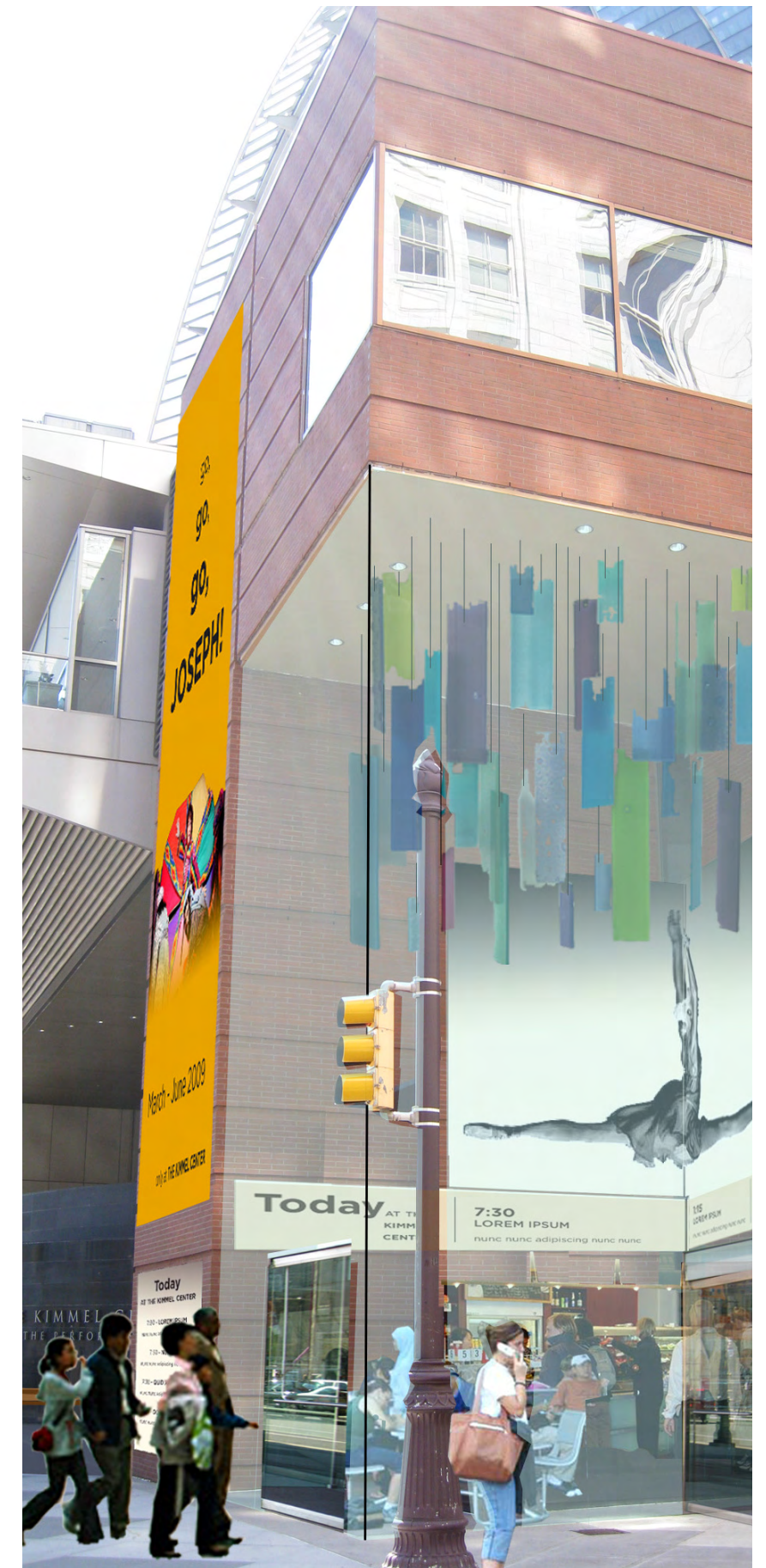
Back-lit, touch-sensitive glass sidewalk panels that light up when visitors walk over them will be a great way to draw more foot traffic to the Kimmel Center.



EXTERIOR



Abundant signage on the exterior will best communicate what is happening inside the Kimmel Center. Supergraphics complement the scale of the building and can identify entrances and programming along Spruce Street.



Digital signage and banners will show daily schedules, publicize upcoming events, and feature video from past and upcoming performers.

PROGRAMMING

Along with the new design concepts introduced, there are several programming proposals that would promote and invite the public into the Kimmel Center. As a venue for the arts, the Kimmel Center should increase its installation of public art from local artists, occupy the stage with daily performances, and project movies onto the façade of Perelman Theater. A sculptural playground on the Rooftop Garden or a dance studio on Spruce Street would enliven the plaza. In order to transform this arts avenue into a destination, the Kimmel Center can also provide computer stations, Wi-Fi access, a music listening library, and adapt Philadelphia's tradition of First Friday.



A dance studio near the corner of 15th and Spruce Streets will promote performing arts to the public.

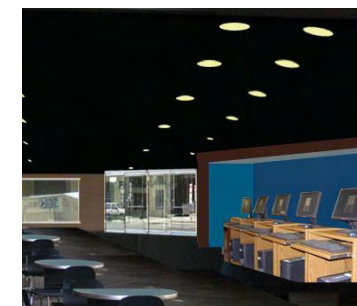


Artistic play equipment will allow the Rooftop Garden to transition between a playground and a sculpture garden, introducing activity and attraction.

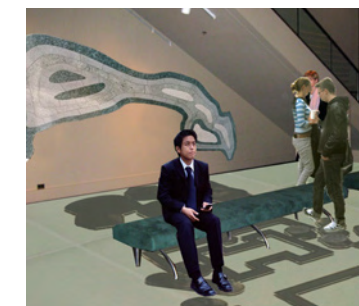


A music listening library and reading space on the Third Tier serve as spaces to relax or educate the public on the performing arts.

Computer stations and Wi-Fi access to make the Kimmel Center a center for connection and communication.



Present weekly movie screenings projected on the façade of Perelman Theater.



More commissioned pieces of public art from Philadelphia artists can be featured with frequent rotating installations as well as incorporation of the Kimmel Center as an arts venue during First Friday.



Utilize inlaid stage for daily public performances and as a rentable space when performances are not scheduled.

AFTERWORD

When the Kimmel Center was originally conceived in 1996, its proponents imagined in the company of such performing arts spaces as New York's Lincoln Center and Washington's Kennedy Center. These venues are home to some of the world's most talented performers, but they are also esteemed cultural destinations within their respective cities. In order to create a similar atmosphere for the Kimmel Center, its designers placed great emphasis on the building as a public plaza as well as a world-class performing arts venue. Architect Rafael Viñoly's design was modeled after a 19th-century European shopping arcade in order to evoke historical ideas of gathering and community. This notion of the Kimmel Center as a space for the public is an inspiring one, and it has been our hope to realize this vision.

The ideas and designs developed over the past several months represent our vision, derived from the Civic principles, Kimmel staff and professional guidance. Our solutions are given not as finite solution for the Kimmel Center's public space issues, but as stepping-stones on the path to an eventual resolution. The ideas that we share are meant to spur discussion and debate, and to hopefully lead the public toward a closer understanding of what they imagine the Kimmel Center to be.

This process has not only given all of us the amazing opportunity to work together on the redevelopment of a world-class building, but also a more intimate relationship with the Kimmel Center. We all want to see this space succeed, and have worked hard to ensure that the options provided best represent the desires of the community. With Philadelphia's continual support and interest, the Kimmel Center will inevitably become the esteemed public plaza that its creators envisioned.

RE-ENVISIONING THE KIMMEL CENTER

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Gotham,

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