

Kimmel Center Public Spaces Project Civic Feedback Session

April 14, 2008

Small Group Facilitator: Ellen Greenberg

Design Principle Feedback: Which principle presented tonight resonates most with you (the group asked if they could each pick the two that resonated most)

1. Inside/out and Outside in: ***
2. Treat Commonwealth Plaza as the third arts avenue—an inclusive public venue **
3. Create magnets to lure mixed uses and mixed users *****
4. Offer a warmer welcome—and a map to navigate. *
5. Wow! What now?
6. Balance esthetic values and commercial appeal. ***

Note: several people mentioned that they felt that the third principle directly relates to the first principle.

DISCUSSION ABOUT DESIGN IDEAS PRESENTED:

Ground lights on Broad

- One suggestion was for the lights to also play music as people step on them
- Two people in the group didn't like this idea and thought it would be tacky and not fit the Kimmel Center

Inside Out/ Outside In

- Signage: people need to know, both outside and inside, what's going on (should be a balance – the signage shouldn't be “in your face”)
- People liked:
 - The idea of utilizing the glass walls (dance studio, practice, etc.)
 - Projecting or somehow showing what's happening on stage and during practice outside
- Everyone agreed that something needs to be done about the outside – the discussion revolved around not being able to know when things are going on inside the Kimmel
 - More lighting on the building
 - Find something to do with Broad Street
 - Place where people can bring their own food
 - Block off the loading docks on 15th Street (which was referred to as uninviting and “no man's land”)

Emphasis on verticality by creating the tiers

- People thought that they would need something to do on the tiers
- They all liked the idea of listening stations
- Liked the stairs to the tiers but were concerned about the handicapped and the elderly (this might be a turn off for those populations)
- Felt that stairs indicate movement
- There were mixed reviews of the glass staircase
- Did like the idea of combining the elevator and the stairs
- Asked about the possibility of an escalator
- Thought that wrapping Perlman theater with stairs was impractical but looked nice
- All felt that there should be multiple routes to get to different places

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Garden Roof

- Whatever is done, people felt that the garden should be obvious (people should know about it and know how to get there)
- Everyone felt strongly that the guard rails need to be new and sturdy
- People were concerned about the playgroups for kids – didn't think it was a good idea, they didn't like the idea of kids playing actively on a roof

Rock Climbing Wall

- Didn't generate a whole lot of energy – no one seemed particularly interested in this idea.
- One comment was that if they did it, they should incorporate art and music some how to make it more "Kimmel Centery"
- Could be a HUGE liability

Garden Wall

- Some thought that it was a good idea, but not the whole wall (plants and flowers are ok, but not covering the entire wall)
- Like putting some thought in about the environment and ways for the Kimmel to be "green"
- Were concerned about:
 - Impracticality
 - Maintenance
 - Kudzu (plants will take over)
 - Clashes with the rest of the building
 - Potential nightmare
 - Shouldn't have green that's just for symbolism

Waterfall

- Engineering nightmare
- Too costly
- Could be too noisy
- Maintenance nightmare

Overhang on Spruce Street

- Everyone felt this needs to be addressed

Spruce side and new entrance

- Everyone agreed that the new entrance is a good idea
- Suggestion to add street trees (everyone thought this should be done)

15th Street

- Like the idea of it as a connecting spot

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Current Gift Shop:

- People think that what's currently in the Kimmel is disappointing and that the sales aren't supporting its existence
- Talked about taking it out or making it smaller
- Also talked about the possibility of a smaller shop or stands (kiosks) that could be moveable and would be open during performances – and the items sold could be related to the performances that are running at any given time

Book Shop:

- People talked about it being at another entrance and open at other times (before, during and after performances)

WiFi:

- Some liked it
- Others thought it would be a better idea to have an internet café (not everyone has a lap top so this would make it accessible to more folks – mentioned ING Direct on Walnut St as an example)

Ticket Booth

- Everyone liked the idea of moving it and adding another entrance

Restaurant

- Most people liked the idea of having a café on the first floor that serves lunch and having something more formal on one of the other floors
- The first floor café needs to be reasonably priced

Stages in the public area

- Suggestion that the stages should be moveable/modular and that they could be changed depending on the use – should be beautiful and functional

Other ideas discussed:

- Someone felt that Broad Street was left out of the design process and that it shouldn't have been
- There was conversation around the idea of continuing to get the public involved in the design process and that that could actually bring people to the Kimmel
- They felt that the community wants to be involved in the process and that it shouldn't stop after this exercise and should actually continue through the life of the Kimmel Center (i.e. identifying the programming that people want to come to)
- Talked about the fact that activity generates people and that people generate activity
- Said that more aesthetics, will be better for the Kimmel, but that just more aesthetics won't be enough
- Thought that time should be spent on thinking about how to make some of the activities intergenerational

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- Talked about having activities that attract younger people who want to be performers – have them involved in and perform at the Kimmel

Other discussion continued

- Music Museum on the 3rd tier – people didn't know it existed and the person who brought it up thought it should be a lesson to be learned
- One person felt that not utilizing the space in the soaring arch was a missed opportunity
- The group felt that currently, the lighting and the acoustics are the main problems of the Kimmel and that these issues weren't addressed in any of the presentations
 - Need to diffuse the light
 - Light is currently for the space and not for the people in the space
- Thought that light can be used to bring people in and through the building
- One person liked the idea of some kind of interactive wall of light and music
- Someone mentioned the idea of having artistic cooking classes (way to bring in money)
- EVERYONE thought that the students did a great job and it was a remarkable effort

What would make you come early, stay late or come some time other than for a performance?

- Interesting public areas
- Places to talk
- Music stations
- Movies
- Authors
- Composers
- Film festival
- Art exhibits
- Food (lunch place that's reasonably priced)
- Expand on things happening in the city, i.e. the fringe festival and the film festival
- Get the Kimmel connected to community events – bring the community into the Kimmel

What's Most Important?

- Know what this place is AND know what's going on RIGHT NOW
- Accessibility – getting in on the first level and opening it up visually
- Corners of Broad and Spruce and 15th and Spruce – Café/bookshop
- Funding?