



PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER
1714 DELANCEY STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA

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Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
University of Pennsylvania
School of Design

Preservation Studio 2011

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We would also like to thank to Rachel Dukeman, managing director of Plays and Players, who generously allowed us continued access to the theatre and its many resources. We truly appreciate the cooperation and accommodating nature of the Plays and Players organization.

In addition, we would like to thank the Community Design Collaborative for their willingness to collaborate with us on this project. Their ideas and objectives were instrumental in helping us to formulate our goals and visions for this building.

We wish the actors, members, and staff of the Plays and Players Theatre another 100 years of success!

Project Introduction/Objectives

In accordance with the curriculum for the University of Pennsylvania course “Historic Preservation Studio,” (HSPV 701), this project has been compiled to provide an instructive preservation plan for the Plays and Players Theatre located at 1714 Delancey Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. By conducting extensive research, analyzing past studies on the property, and making frequent site visits, our group was able to gain a solid understanding of factors contributing to the building’s historical, physical, national, and cultural significance. The information gleaned from these investigative efforts was utilized to shape our final four-step preservation plan, outlined in Volume 1.

Conversing with the wide array of stakeholders and discussing future goals with current building stewards, the building’s distinct cultural significance and associated values were illuminated. Armed with this information, our group established a link between these values and the built fabric itself by establishing “character-defining elements,” explained and examined in detail in Volume 1. Using these elements as a starting point in the development of the preservation plan, conclusions and recommendations were made as to how best preserve the significance embodied in the structure by protecting these most important features.

In Volume 2, projects conducted and compiled by individual team members explore pertinent subtopics in support of the overall preservation plan.

It is our hope that this comprehensive dossier will serve as a useful tool to future building stewards, the information and instructions provided to guide future building treatments in a way that is most practical and respectful of this incredible structure.

Analysis of Previous Studies

Due to the historic significance of the theatre, Plays and Players has been the topic of several research publications over the past few decades. The depth of information found in these resources has significantly contributed to our understanding of the building. However, we recognize the shortcomings of these studies and chose to focus on the areas that were most

compatible to our project.

In 1985, graduate student David Harrington wrote a thesis for the University of Pennsylvania discussing the Little Theatre/Plays and Players’ position in Philadelphia theatre history, and the distinct personalities associated with it. Included are accounts of the theatre’s original opening in 1911, the founding of Plays and Players as an organization, and biographical information surrounding architect Amos Barnes. The original design of the theatre, as well as the changes to building fabric over time, are likewise described. While Harrington does make a case for the theatre’s preservation, he refrains from detailing specific elements and conservation conditions. Our work aims to build upon Harrington’s informational framework to provide a more in-depth discussion of the building’s physical properties and areas of greatest conservation concern.

University of Pennsylvania graduate student Sarah Hyson penned a second Historic Preservation thesis on Plays and Players in 2005. In this work, Hyson addresses the problem of integrating modern technological systems into the theatre while maintaining original historic fabric. Included is a brief history of the space. While the bulk of her discussion is centered on assessing conditions and summarizing current issues of the entire building, specific focus was given to the main performance space (or auditorium). Hyson concludes her work with a restoration plan for the installation of a new lighting system and updated wiring. This preservation plan also aims to build upon Hyson’s findings by making recommendations for areas in which such alterations would be least disruptive of historic fabric.

In 2010, engineering students from Drexel University completed a proposal for structural and interior alterations to the theatre. The study addresses challenges including lack of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, inadequate restroom facilities, and the need for soundproofing performance spaces. Additionally, their report outlines various recommendations and plans for a project which would alleviate these current issues. It must be understood, however, that such proposed alterations should be carefully cross-referenced with this preservation plan, as many of the suggestions made could result in an irreversible loss of historic fabric.

As of September 2011, the Community Design Collaborative began surveying the building to determine various opportunities for future alterations. The scope of their work is currently in progress and will be completed in Spring of



C A M D E

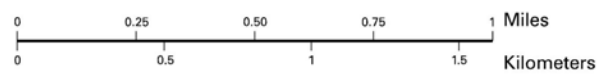
DELAWARE

Petty Island

39° 55'



CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA



PHILADELPHIA
NAVAL BUSINESS CENTER

CITIZENS BANK
LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD
WACHOVIA CENTER

INDEPENDENCE MALL

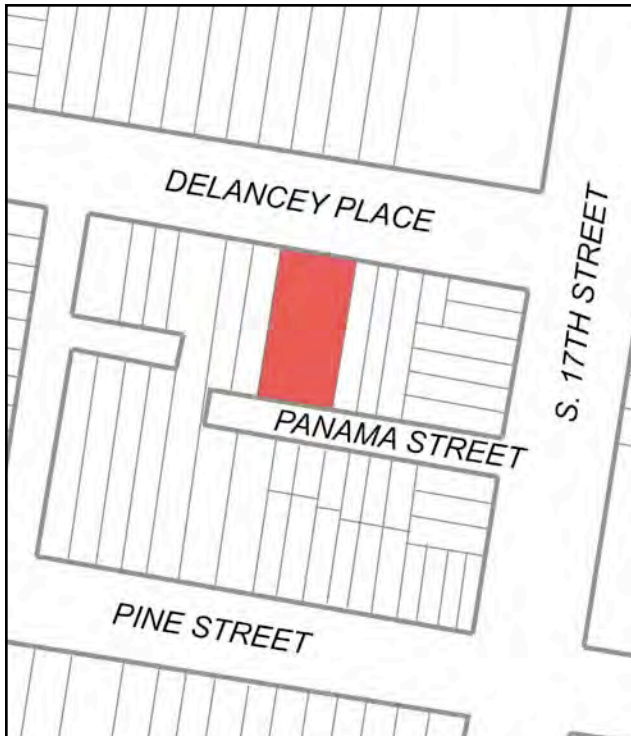
ITALIAN MARKET

Pp

RIVER

SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE AND ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT



1.1 Location

The Plays and Players theatre is located at 1714 Delancey Street in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square neighborhood. Though the structure was originally built in 1912 as "The Little Theatre," it was soon known as "Plays and Players," after the theatrical organization by the same name which began to occupy it in 1923.

The location of the building was a strategic social and economic choice based on changing social values at the time of its erection. Construction was conducted during a period when social clubs were beginning to be integrated into residential neighborhoods across the city. Theatre was also becoming a legitimized and enjoyable pastime for the wealthy, making the Rittenhouse Square area an ideal location for the emerging organization. The 1700 block of Delancey Street was more affordable than other parts of the Rittenhouse area, yet was still in the heart of this much-desired neighborhood.

In the early twentieth century, the 1700 block of Delancey Street was composed predominantly of stables and traditional two and three-story red brick row houses, most of which remain

today. While Plays & Players is taller and wider than other structures on Delancey Street, it nonetheless maintains the same street setback, and contributes to the block's architectural continuity.

1.2 History of Theatre in Philadelphia and the Involvement of Women in Theatre

Although it is commonly accepted that the Philadelphia stage rose to prominence in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its history can actually be dated back to colonial times.¹ Quakers set the tone in Philadelphia, condemning the theater as injurious to man.²

As early as 1700, the religious group had established laws against the stage, prohibiting "stage-players, masks, revels and other rude and riotous sports."³ In 1723, however, this obstruction changed course. Professional actors led by "a player who had strolled hither to as a comedian" arrived in Philadelphia; this new group of actors set up stage in the city and began to publish playbills.⁴ Disregarding the religious resistance, by 1724 the actors had established Philadelphia's first theater, known as the "New Booth on Society Hill."⁵

In August 1749, a "Company of Comedians" was organized in Philadelphia at a converted warehouse owned by a William Plumstead on Water Street.⁶ Though the actors involved are unknown, they made history by being the first actors mentioned in a Quaker newspaper. In February of 1750, the group traveled to New York, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noting the arrival of "a company of comedians from Philadelphia"

1 Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1933), 3.

2 Thomas Clarkson, "Quaker View of Theater," Home, 2005, accessed December 09, 2011, <http://www.worldspirituality.org/quaker-theater.html>.

3 Pollock, 4.

4 The Quaker community did not approve of such activities, especially the mayor, James Logan. In a correspondence to a friend, Logan expressed his dislike for the new community of performers: "how grievous this proves to the sober people of the place, thou wilt easily judge...there is an expectation that I should exert that authority to suppress their acting, but as Gov [Sir William Keith] himself resorts thither, I can by no means think it advisable to embroil myself with the governour to no purpose..." Pollock, 4-5.

5 Ibid.

6 Pollock, 6.

othe Dutch town (New York).⁷

During the nineteenth century, an increasing number of theatres were constructed in response to a burgeoning interest in the arts. Theatre performances became a fashionable form of entertainment, especially for women.⁸ The emergence of “matinee girls”—young women who attended matinee shows unescorted—began to influence choices made regarding which plays would be produced, and which actors were awarded the starring roles.⁹ As the integral role of women in theatre blossomed, new theatrical styles including melodramas, realism, and naturalism also came to light.¹⁰ Realism was a reaction to the historical dramas and melodramas portraying the “fallen women,” popular in the early nineteenth century.¹¹ By the mid-nineteenth century, constraints imposed by commercial theatre further ignited the interest in realism.¹²

By 1837, seven theatres were listed in the Philadelphia City Directory, and by 1884, the city boasted eighteen theatres, ranging from legitimate theatre houses to burlesque and vaudeville stages.¹³ With the increased availability of industrial jobs, immigrants flocked to Philadelphia, creating a new market of theatergoers and reinforcing the popularity of theatre as a favorite source of entertainment.¹⁴

As the nineteenth century continued, the number of women with careers in theatre began to grow. Many were employed as chorus girls or featured actresses.¹⁵ In the years between 1870 and 1880 (as recorded by the United States Census), the number of women who declared “actress” as their primary profession rose from 780 to 4,652.¹⁶

During the early twentieth century, Philadelphia became a prominent player in the theatrical circuit, competing with other major cities including New York, London, and Boston. Along with native well-known actors such as John Drew and Joseph Jefferson, Philadelphia’s theatres were becoming home to many important productions.¹⁷ By 1905, the number of theatres in Philadelphia had increased to thirty-three.¹⁸

7 Ibid.

8 Albert Auster, *Actresses and Suffragists: Women in the American Theater, 1890-1920* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 3.

9 Ibid., 39.

10 Ibid., 76.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 David Hudson Harrington, *The Plays and Players Theatre*, Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1985, 2.

14 Ibid., 3.

15 Auster, 31.

16 Ibid.

17 Harrington, 11.

18 Ibid.

Just five years later, the number of women who considered themselves “actresses,” had risen to 15,432.¹⁹ Twenty-five women came to the stage for every one new male, signifying not only increased economic opportunity but also “social and sexual independence.”²⁰ Women obtained wealth, mobility, and social power through their newfound dominance in the theatre. It was during this height of theatrical entertainment that the Plays and Players organization was born, and Beulah Jay’s Little Theatre was constructed.

1.3 Beulah Jay’s Little Theatre

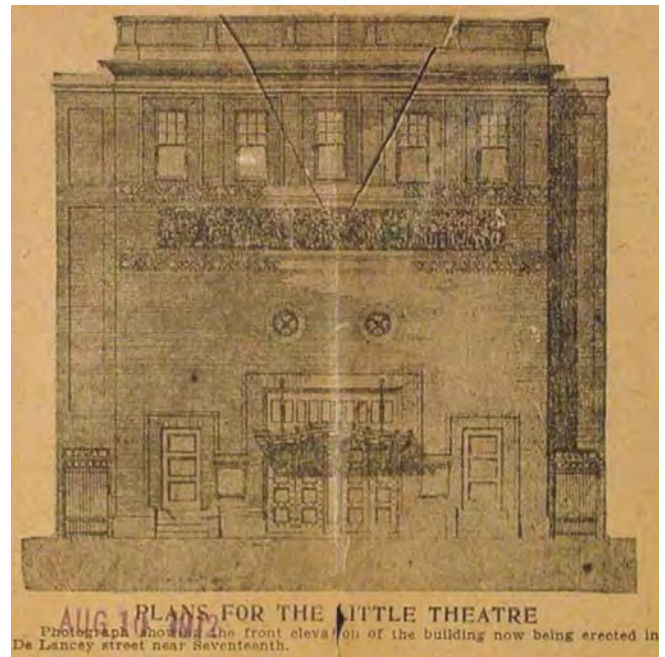


Figure X: Courtesy of Plays and Players Archives (date unknown)

Among the powerful theatrical females of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a Mrs. Beulah Jay. Former student of opera at the New England Conservancy of Music²¹ and later student of the Dramatic Arts in New York, Mrs. Jay acted in several professional companies in New York. Upon her arrival to Philadelphia, she opened the Metropolitan Dramatic School at 103 South 15th Street²² to teach drama to theatrical enthusiasts and students pursuing professional

19 Ibid.

20 Auster, 32.

21 Ibid. In an interview regarding the opening of the Little Theater, Mrs. Jay recounts her initial intent to become an opera singer, but while at the Conservancy, found a new interest in dramatics. “This Woman Built a Theatre to Prove Her Theories.” *The New York Times* 22 June 1913. Print.

22 Auster, 32.

theatrical careers.²³



Figure X: Sanborn Map 1895 / Pbbillygeohistory.com

Motivated by the success of her school, Mrs. Jay looked to construct a theatre of her own, and in May of 1912, purchased a lot located on 1712 Delancey Street. One month later, she purchased the two adjacent lots, 1714 and 1716 Delancey Street. She consolidated the three newly acquired properties into one address, 1714 Delancey Street. In total, the newly consolidated property measured 48 feet in width on Delancey Street and 92 feet in length, extending south from Delancey Street to Panama Street.²⁴

Wasting little time, Mrs. Jay (with the assistance of her husband Edward G. Jay and business partner, F.B. Shelton),²⁵ hired local architect Amos Barnes to design her theatre. Barnes, a civil engineer graduate from New York University, had a successful engineering career in New York and Chicago before moving to Pennsylvania in 1889.²⁶ He opened an engineering firm in 1893 and eventually transitioned into the architecture field. He is credited as the designer of numerous buildings throughout Philadelphia, including the celebrated Forrest Theater.²⁷

On June 20th 1912, Barnes completed construction drawings for Mrs. Jay's Little Theatre and just one week following, contractors were working to price the development.²⁸ The F.A. Havens Company was awarded the final contract at the estimated cost of \$35,000, and construction began soon after.²⁹

The building was outfitted with high-end materials and modern building accoutrements. While Mrs. Jay oversaw the decoration of the interior, F.H. Shelton, part owner of The Little Theatre and engineer by trade, assisted Barnes

23 Harrington, 4.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Sandra L. Tatman, "Barnes, Amos Warren 1867-1953" [Biography from] *American Architects and Buildings database*, http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/22300.

27 Ibid.

28 Harrington, 5.

29 Ibid.

in his execution of the three-story gallery space above the stage. The gallery space consisted of an intricate system of ropes, pulleys and counter weights which controlled scenery flats.³⁰ A painting bridge was also erected within the space.³¹ For fire protection, a curtain separating the stage from the auditorium and a water tank above the stage were added.³²

In addition to serving as the new location for Mrs. Jay's Metropolitan Dramatic School, the building was used for both American and European performances as well.³³ The theatre showcased local talent, including musicians from the Philadelphia Orchestra, who often played during productions.³⁴ Most established theatres in Philadelphia were in partnership with theatrical syndicates or producing firms,³⁵ yet Mrs. Jay's theater was unique in that it operated as an independent enterprise.

In November of 1914, Mrs. Jay sold The Little Theatre to her business partner, F.B. Shelton.³⁶ Though she was no longer the theater's proprietor, she remained influential as the theatre's director.

In 1918, five years after the theatre's opening, an artist by the name of Edith Emerson was commissioned to paint five murals within the theatre's auditorium. The creation of the murals was a three-year long effort led by American artist Violet Oakley, an art professor at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Edith Emerson was her student and a member of the Philadelphia Art Alliance, which Violet Oakley founded. In a May 1918 issue of the *American Magazine of Art*, Oakley referred to the reation of the murals as a "preservation" effort.³⁷ The painting of the murals was perceived as a joint effort to not only draw new interest to the theatre, but to also advance the study and practice of mural art decoration in the city.³⁸

30 Ibid. 23.

31 A catwalk used to paint large scenery flats, Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 New York Times, *Woman*. This marriage of foreign and local plays proved to be unwelcome and met with much doubt

34 Harrington, Theatre, 8.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 10. Soon after the sale, H.T. Dougherty assumed the position of manager.

37 Those involved in The Little Theater were concerned with the negative effects the war was having on attendance. "Mural Paintings for the Little Theatre of Philadelphia," *The Magazine of Art*, 281, accessed December 08, 2011, doi:"Magazine of Art - American Federation of Arts." Google Books. Accessed December 09, 2011. <http://books.google.com/books?id=J1HrAAAAMAAJ>.

38 Ibid. After the commission of the murals, Edith Emerson became Violet Oakley's partner in her studio. Emerson went on to serve as vice-president, president, and curator of the Woodmere Art Museum, her tenure lasting from 1940 to 1978 Sarah M. Hyson, "A Preliminary Survey of the Historic Plays and Players Theatre: Preservation Issues to Be Addressed" (thesis,

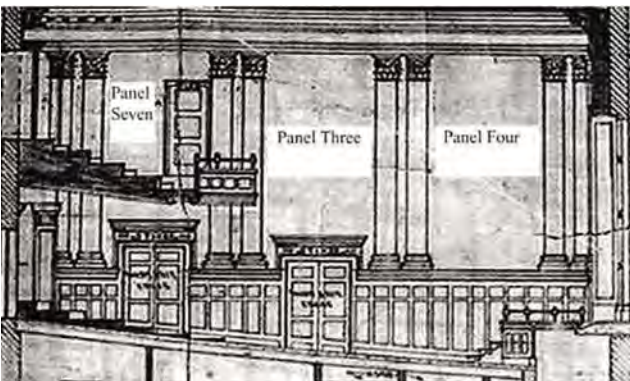
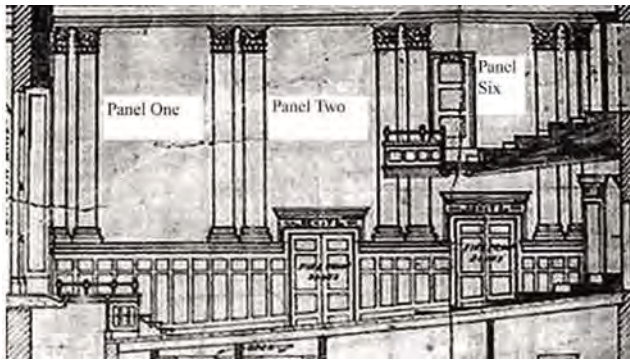


Figure X: THESIS

In the late nineteen teens and early nineteen twenties, the Shubert Organization was acquiring numerous theaters throughout New York and Philadelphia. In addition to Barnes' Forrest Theatre, the Shuberts obtained control of The Little Theatre in 1920.³⁹ A press release announcing this new partnership

University of Pennsylvania, 2005), 11.

³⁹ "History of The Shubert Organization, Broadway Theater Owner and Broadway Producer." The Shubert Organization | Welcome! Accessed December 08, 2011. <http://www.shubertorganization.com/organization/history.asp> The Shubert Organization was a professional theater company founded by the Shubert Brothers in the end of the 19th century. The organization still exists today and is the oldest professional theatre company in the United States.

stated: "Philadelphia is to have another 'first class' playhouse. The Little Theatre at 17th and Delancey Streets [is now] renamed the Delancey Street Theatre. This time and really for the first time, it is to come under competent management."⁴⁰ Upon hearing the news, Mrs. Jay left her position.⁴¹

1.4 History of the Plays and Players Organization

The Plays and Players organization was founded on May 29, 1911. Before inhabiting their present location on Delancey Street, the theatrical company maintained quarters at "The Playroom" located at 43 South 18th Street in Philadelphia. For over a decade, Plays and Players hosted various types of performances, including Club Nights, children's productions, and plays for charitable and educational institutions. Mrs. Ottis Skinner, mother of famed thespians Otis Skinner and Cornelia Otis Skinner, was the club's first president.

Originally formed as an exclusive club, the Plays and Players organization was comprised of several different levels of membership. Plays and Players was a diversion for Philadelphia's wealthy inhabitants, and most theatre members were also members of the Art Alliance.⁴² Membership was divided into three categories: active members, associate players and associate members. The associate members provided most of the financial support to the organization, while all of the decisions made regarding the club's charitable purposes were determined by a committee of associated members. The associated players offered the artistic talent of the company's productions at both the amateur and professional level.

Soon after moving to The Playroom, Plays and Players found itself outgrowing its newfound space. According to the organization's 1913-1914 yearly summary, "the stage facilities are totally inadequate and the Playroom is much too small to accommodate our audiences, necessitating a

⁴⁰ Harrington, 10.

⁴¹ Ibid. Based in Harrington's research of the city directories following The Shubert's takeover, he was able to come to the conclusion of Mrs. Jay's departure from the theater. "Mrs. Jay was listed as director until 1919, when the school disappeared from the city directory. City directories also list Mr. and Mrs. Jay's address at 1722 Delancey, two doors from The Little Theatre, until 1921, when their names no longer appear in the directory. The Little Theatre was listed in the 1921 directory, but no names are associated with it in the entry. The Theatre at 1714 Delancey Street was listed in the city directories as Plays and Players in 1923."

⁴² Ibid. This included the club's first president, who was an Art Alliance founding member.

very limited membership and preventing many lovers of the drama from enjoying privileges of our organization.”⁴³ A building committee was appointed to fundraise for a new location to house their activities.⁴⁴ Not only did The Playroom have limited space for members, it was also inadequate in regards to storage space. The second year alone, 100 volumes were added to the organization’s library, making it one of the most complete working dramatic libraries in the city.⁴⁵

The need for a larger space grew more essential as the Players continued. By 1915, many applicants were denied, and it was mentioned in the yearly summary that, “desirable applications for membership to Plays and Players have been placed on the waiting list until we could move into more spacious surroundings.”⁴⁶ In order to accommodate larger audiences, Plays and Players arranged their Club Nights to be held at the Little Theatre, at 1714 Delancey Street, which enabled them to admit a larger, but still limited, number of new members.⁴⁷ In an effort to devise a plan to finance an adequate clubhouse, Plays and Players appointed a building committee, which held several meetings throughout the year.⁴⁸ While their main focus was to allocate funding for a new theater, they were unable to formulate a financial plan.⁴⁹

After nearly a decade-long search for proper space,⁵⁰

1.5 Historical Timeline

(See next page)

43 [Plays and Players Yearly Summary], Board of Governors Report, 1913-14.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid. 1914-15

49 Ibid.

50 In the 1917-1918 Report of the Board of Governors. Further motivated to acquire a new playhouse, the organization bought a property in 1917, yet information detailing this purchase was unspecified

May 29.
Plays and Players is incorporated

1911

January 1.
P&P moves to The Playroom

1912

April 20.
P&P buys Little Theatre.

1922

1910

1920

1930

1960

1929

Auditorium and lounge redecorated.

1918

Edith Emerson commissioned for interior murals.

1913

Little Theatre opens.

1912

Construction begins.

19

Cl



October 27,
Listed on Philadelphia
Register

Plays and Players
becomes a
Professional Theater.

1970

2009

March 14.
Listed on the National
Register

1973

Listed on Rittenhouse
Historic District

1995

1970

1990

2000

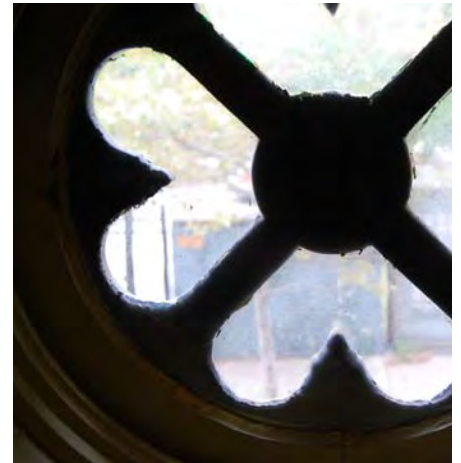
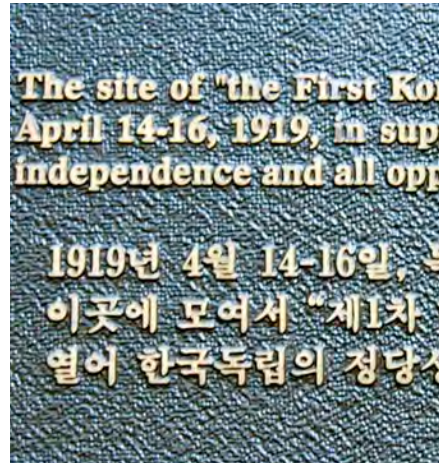
2000s

Assembly Hall
converted
Black Box Theater.

1960s

classroom converted to bar.





SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Six factors have been determined to contribute to the significance of the Plays and Players Theatre:

1. The Little Theatre Typology
2. The Architect Amos Barnes
3. High Level of Intactness of the Interior & Exterior
4. Edith Emerson Murals
5. Continued Use of the Space as a Theatre
6. Cultural Significance

Erected in 1913, Philadelphia's "Little Theatre," known since 1923 as "Plays and Players," is located at 1714 Delancey Street and is considered significant by both the preservation community and its namesake resident organization for several reasons.

Though it was originally intended to house a dramatic school, the building is now understood as a remarkably well-preserved example of the "Little Theatre" typology. "Little Theatres" originated in France, and first arrived in the United States in the early twentieth century. They were generally small in scale, seated approximately 70 to 300 people, and eschewed the grandiose productions of larger theatres in favor of experimental or more modest works performed on an intimate scale. Amateur founders were common, and performers were often green.

Philadelphia's "Little Theatre," now Plays and Players, stands as a testament to the work of architect Amos Barnes and to popular early twentieth-century building styles. Originally beginning his career as a civil engineer, New York University grad and Brooklyn-born Amos Barnes designed works which reflected his technical background. In addition to more utilitarian industrial buildings, Barnes' repertoire included residential construction, hospitals, and shops throughout the Philadelphia area. In 1906, Barnes expanded his notoriety as a local architect with the design of the Forrest Theatre, once designated as "Philadelphia's Handsomest Theatre." While his over-arching aesthetic remained conservatively consistent with his contemporaries, Amos Barnes' adeptness and versatility as a designer was evident in part through the inclusion of varied styles in his designs, among them Tudor and Colonial Revival. The understated exterior Barnes created for Philadelphia's "Little Theatre," was sensitive to the nineteenth-century row houses



Figure X: New York Public Library Digital Gallery (1912)

surrounding it, yet is subtly set apart by its Craftsman-style façade. While not as large or extravagant as the Forrest Theatre, Philadelphia's "Little Theatre," now Plays and Players, remains one of Barnes' most significant works and is one of few still standing today.

Both the exterior and interior features designed by Barnes greatly contribute to the building's significance. A remarkable number of historical details remain intact and relatively undisturbed. The building's interior configuration and spatial functions remain largely consistent with its original use, and the presence of original character-defining decorative elements allows

actors and audience members alike to connect with the extensive history and tradition embodied in the structure.



Figure X: Laura DiPasquale (2011)

The largest of the early interior elements, still in place, are a series of picturesque murals depicting the Greek myth of Dionysus and Ariadne. The murals were painted by local artist, Edith Emerson, in 1918, and were produced in an effort to attract newcomers to the theatre during the somber times of World War I. In addition to these efforts to reverse declining attendance, the murals were installed to garner the attention and support of the greater Philadelphia art community. Before becoming a permanent addition, they were exhibited in the Pennsylvania Academy and the New York Architectural League. The Edith Emerson murals mark a significant period in the theatre's history, and are arguably one of the most important artist's works still on display.

While the historical elements of the Plays and Players theatre play a vital role in determining its significance, building stewards and the theatre community at large have also identified the space as significant for its continued theatrical use and utilization as a community gathering place. As it had nearly one hundred years ago, today, Plays and Players remains a relevant and thriving part of the Philadelphia arts scene. Actors and members gather for both formal and informal events, and after curtain call, congregate in the third-floor bar, "Quig's Pub." In addition to local actors, more well-known thespians have paid

homage to the site, and celebrities from Kevin Bacon to the Barrymore family have graced its stage.



Figure X: Thomas Wilson (2011)

Philadelphia's former "Little Theatre," Plays and Players, thrives today as an architecturally, artistically, functionally, and culturally significant piece of architecture. It is celebrated by preservationists and thespians alike for its distinct architectural and theatrical integrity, and if maintained, promises to continue this remarkable one hundred year legacy.



SECTION 3:

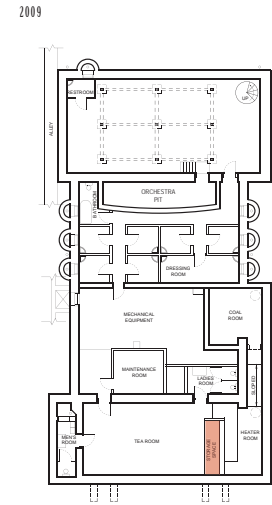
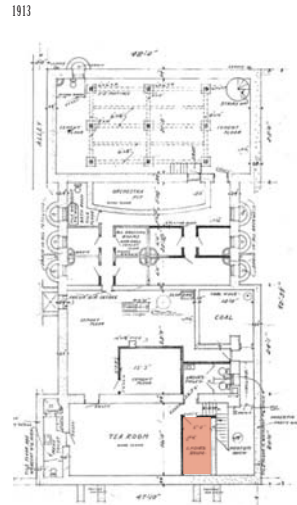
SITE DESCRIPTION & IDENTIFICATION OF CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

3.1 Changes to the Building Over Time

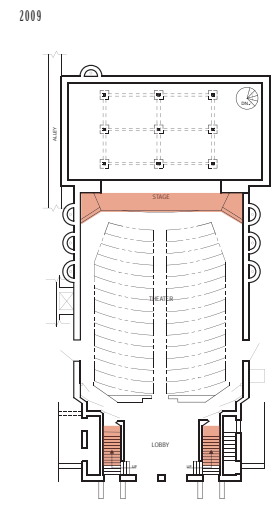
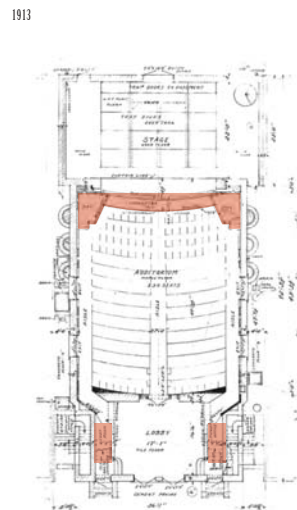
Although the building has hosted several different theatrical organizations, most of its spatial and material features have remained remarkably unchanged over its one hundred-year history. Regarding the integrity of the structure, alterations made to date have been mostly related to use, rather than of the configuration of the layout.



Beginning with the façade, very little has changed. Alterations have been limited to the replacement of five third-story “eight-over-one” windows with modern “one-over-one” windows, and a simple rectangular marquee has replaced the elaborately detailed original.

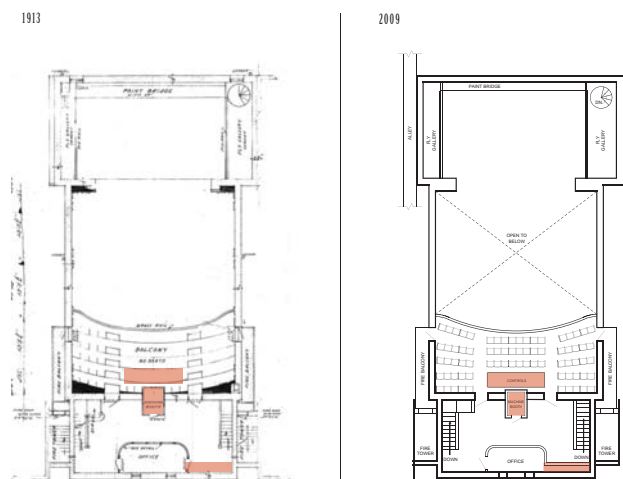


Very few interior spaces have changed as well (when comparing original 1913 building plans to current plans). First examining the basement, only a small area below the west stairway has been altered. Originally part of the ladies' room, this space is now narrower, and serves as a storage closet for costumes and stage props.



The lobby space on the ground level has also remained remarkably unchanged since its original construction. Alterations to this space have been only of use, with the ticket booths now functioning as storage areas. A dropped ceiling of square painted acoustical tiles has been installed, obscuring the original ceiling detail.

Early twentieth-century drawings and photographs also attest to the consistency of many interior decorative elements throughout the two-story auditorium space. Alterations include an early installation of murals by Edith Emerson, and painting of original fabric wall covering. Additionally, a formerly balustrade stage platform has been replaced with a platform of simple rectilinear detailing.



The second level has undergone only minor changes of use. Most notably, the “machine,” or projection booth, has been adapted for use as a storage space. A rear row of mezzanine seats has been removed and the space utilized as an impromptu location for the modern computer equipment controlling production lighting and sound. The small headmistress’ office continues to be used for administrative purposes.



The third story has seen the greatest number of alterations than any other level. Most evident is the addition of the blackbox theatre, in the

space that once served as an assembly hall for the theatre school. The makeup room and ladies restroom has been converted into a kitchen, and a classroom now serves as a bar known as “Quig’s Pub.” The office spaces on this level have been converted into a small library and cloak room, yet the original partitions remain intact.

3.2 Exterior Description



Figure X: North Facade. (Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

Approaching Plays and Players theatre from Delancey Street, one notices the building’s strong symmetry revealed in its composition of architectural elements. An overall English-bond brown brick pattern with two diagonal red and purple herringbone brick courses are set between green bricks surround a pressed concrete frieze. Mercer tiles¹ positioned throughout the brick courses are decorated with whimsical depictions. Above the central doors, a simple marquee suspended by three chains affix to decorative lion heads, announcing the theatre’s presence

in the neighborhood with gold lettering. A ten-paned transom window above the marquee allows natural light to flood the lobby. Centered underneath, two wooden double doors allow direct access to the lobby. Flanking doors allow immediate entry to the stairwells.

Two wooden porthole windows, painted green and inset with glass panels of a four-leaf clover design, accentuate the second floor headmistress' office and allow natural light to enter the building. Above the frieze, five double-hung sash windows illuminate the reception rooms on the third floor.

The composition of the façade's features, such as the tapestry brick and terracotta tiles, all suggest the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, which flourished in the United States between 1910 and 1925.^{2 3}

3.3 Interior Walk-Through

Patrons enter the theatre through two sets of double doors into a symmetrical lobby space. Circulation continues by proceeding into the auditorium, ascending to the second story by the stairs on the left, or descending to the basement by the stairs on the right.



Figure X: Lobby space (Courtesy of Drexel University / 2009)

Four openings punctuate the east and west walls— two arched doorways on the far ends, with two square windows in the center of these walls. The stairs to the upper and lower floors are located in the portals closest to the exterior. Beyond these are two square windows, the closer of which are blind windows, filled in with display cases. The second window on the right serves as a concession counter, and on the left, a box office. These spaces are accessed through arched portals.



Figure X: Auditorium from stage (Laura DiPasquale / 2011)



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

Inside the auditorium, the Arts and Crafts style of the façade and lobby are abandoned for more classically-inspired detailing. The auditorium is dominated by the proscenium and the stage. The front of the stage, which was originally designed to be flush with the proscenium, is currently built out to cover an area of removable flooring that conceals the orchestra pit, which can still be utilized if necessary.

Seating is made up of an orchestra section on the first floor, and a mezzanine on the second floor. Upholstered seats are positioned on both levels on shallow wooden floor tiers. A carpeted center aisle bisects the seating space, which can hold around 300 patrons.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

On the balcony level, accessed through the lobby staircases, a former projection room extends from the balcony to the second floor landing. This landing is also home to the former Headmistress's office, adjacent to the façade.

The former headmistress's office, now used by the administration, is one of the most unique spaces of the building. The office has a curved exterior, paneling, and textured glass, and features two operable porthole windows for ventilation.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

On the third level of the building are the former classrooms and auxiliary offices. To the front, a reception area and library are provided for patrons and club members.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

A blackbox theatre (note number of seats/capacity range) is located on the eastern side of the building, in the footprint of the former assembly room.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

Adjacent to the blackbox is Quig's Pub, a members only bar and lounge. Paneled in faux wood with vinyl upholstered metal furniture, the Pub is a beloved gathering place for the city's theatre crowd. A small kitchen and bathrooms are located to the south behind the pub.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

The basement is divided into several smaller spaces. The area at the bottom of the stairs leading from the lobby functions as a reception area and lounge, and waiting room for the theatre's restrooms.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

The fly space above the stage is notable for its design and function, but is only accessible via a spiral staircase on the stage or through a catwalk at the exterior of the building.⁴



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

Behind the reception area is a machine room with large, mostly outdated building utility systems.



Figure X: Balcony on the second level (Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

Further to the south are dressing rooms, subdivided by wooden partitions, each “room” with their own sink.



Figure X: Balcony on the second level (Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

The southernmost space of the building’s lowest level is a large room with high ceilings below the stage currently used for electrical equipment and set construction and storage. The orchestra pit is also accessed here, through a set of stairs and sliding metal door. The stage can be accessed via a rear door leading to Panama Street and two emergency stair towers, one on each side of the stage.

[1] Towards the end of our investigation, a former board member suggested that the tiles found at Plays and Players Theatre were actually produced by the Mueller Mosaic Company from Trenton, NJ. An investigation of the Mueller Mosaic Company yielded little information to support this claim, and the source was unable to identify where this hypothesis came from. As most of the sources we consulted agree that the tiles were indeed produced by Mercer Tileworks, we credit their craftsmanship.

[2] David Hudson Harrington, *The Plays and Players Theatre*, Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1985.

[3] Sarah Maxime Hyson, *A Preliminary Survey of the Historic Plays and Players Theatre*, Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005.

[4] According to Rachel Dukeman, the Plays and Player’s fly system is one of only two fly spaces in the city that uses the traditional sand- bags.

3.5 Original Fabric vs. Character-Defining Elements

Due to a history of committed building stewards and its continued use as a theatre, Plays and Players has remained a remarkably well-intact historic building. While the retention of this high level of intactness would continue to provide a comprehensive view of past aesthetics, it is important to note the distinction between original fabric and elements considered “Character-Defining.” Items identified as “original” do indeed contribute to the *overall historical significance* of Plays and Players (in their position as relics of history), yet it has been determined that many of these elements do not necessarily contribute to the *defining* character of the site and thus could be removed or altered if necessary to maximize the building’s modern utility. Elements categorized as “Character-Defining,” however, are so integral to the stylistic and historical importance of Plays and Players that permanent alteration should be avoided and extreme caution exercised when modifying areas proximate to these elements.

3.5.1 Character-Defining Elements

MAIN FAÇADE



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F.1 Frieze

The pressed concrete frieze on the building’s façade is direct copy of Luca Delia Robbia’s Cantoria, preserved in the Opera del Duomo in Florence. The design depicts Psalm 150, a hymn of praise and celebration of the Lord. This scene of merriment, complete with animals, musical instruments, and dancing men and women, is a light-hearted representation of Christian lore.¹ The frieze is significant as part of the original design and level of intactness.

F.2 Mercer Tiles

Originally known as the Mercer Tileworks, the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works was likely responsible for the creation of the handmade tiles that adorn the walls of the façade (and lobby). Tiles featured on the exterior are decorated with figures including an ankh, mermaid, lion, eagle, and the masks of comedy and tragedy. The tiles represent excellent craftsmanship and the Philadelphia-area’s culturally significant producer.²

1 Harrington, 25.

2 Hyson’s 2005 report notes that the tiles have never been proven or disproven to be the work of the Mercer Tileworks. An investigation of the Tileworks has yielded similar examples of past work, but never an identical match to the tiles found at Plays and Players. Still, Rachel Dukeman and numerous others involved with the theatre have claimed that the Mercer Tileworks is indeed responsible for the tiles at Plays and Players, and so they are given credit throughout the report.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F.3 Herringbone Brickwork

The artistic diagonal herringbone pattern created by this brickwork frames the Moravian tiles and draws attention to the frieze while adding additional visual interest to the low-relief façade. The herringbone pattern is one of the original and character defining elements that is representative of the work of the architect Amos Barnes.



Courtesy of Plays and Players Theater Archives / Date unknown

F.8 Presence of a marquee

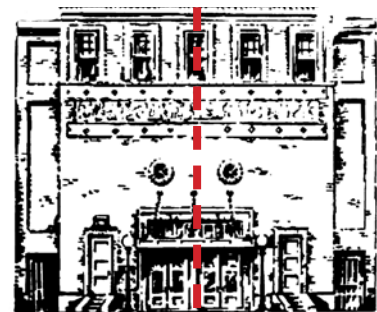
Although the current marquee itself is not original or significant to the building, the presence of any marquee (of similar size in the same location) is considered character-defining due to its position as an indicator of the building's continued use as a theatre.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F. 5 Porthole Windows

The charming quatrefoil design and distinctive construction of the circular windows with center hinge and 90 degree swing radius provide a welcome contrast to myriad of rectilinear elements on the façade. The original porthole windows are original, and help to define the exterior.



Courtesy of Plays and Players Theater Archives / Date unknown

Symmetry

Symmetry of the exterior and lobby is common for theatres, and part of the original design intent. Just as the façade retains its symmetrical appearance, the symmetry of the lobby is an integral aspect of its design.

LOBBY



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.1 Lobby Tiles

Originally known as the Mercer Tileworks, the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works was responsible for the creation of the handmade tiles that adorn the walls of the lobby (and facade). Tiles featured on the interior are decorated with figures including ducks and geometric designs. The tiles represent excellent craftsmanship from one of the Philadelphia-area's most renowned ceramics studios.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.4 Herringbone Brickwork

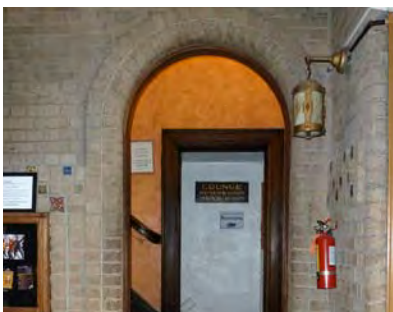
A diagonal red brick course set between two rows of green headers runs along the perimeter of the lobby about five inches from the dropped ceiling. It is one of the most elaborate finishes in the lobby space.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.3 Floor

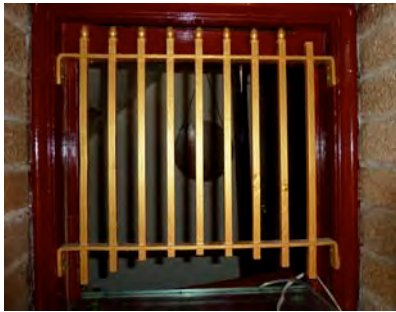
The flooring visually coordinates with the subdued tones of the brick walls and points to use of past fixtures with remnants of circular brass theater posts interspersed throughout the floor.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.5 Arched Doorways

The arched doorways add architectural interest and are integral to the lobby's symmetrical design, contributing to the overall experience of the space.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.6 Ticket Window Openings

Replete with original iron barriers, the ticket window openings on the left and right side of the lobby contribute to the symmetry of the space and signify the building's continued use as a theatre.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.10 Shape of Curved Stairs

The flared/curved shape of the first three stairs leading to the second level mimics curvatures seen lobby's archways, and contribute to the overall symmetry of the lobby design.

AUDITORIUM



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.11 Proscenium

The proscenium, an integral component of any theatre design, is one of the most prominent features of the auditorium space. At the top of this feature, a painted frieze by Edith Emerson, muralist of national significance, visually connects with the larger corresponding murals on the east and west walls.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.12 Crown Molding

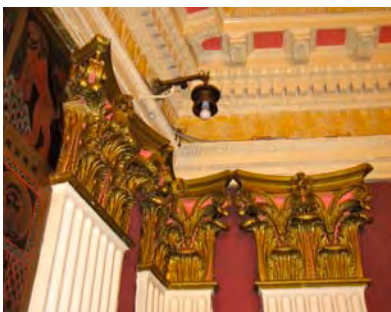
Crown molding features dentil bands, egg and dart motifs, anthemions, and brackets. It caps the perimeter of the auditorium, adding classical flavor to the space.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.13 Plaster Ceiling Details

The ceiling's plaster detailing comprised of ivy, fruit, flowers, and a border of palmettes, contributes to the classical aesthetic of the auditorium and adds elegant visual interest to the ceiling. Additionally, the arrangement marks the central position of the original overhead light fixtures.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.14 Pilasters and Plaster Capitals

Fluted pilasters along the east, west, and north walls rhythmically fragment the elevations and mark separations between mural and fabric panels. On the south wall, they help to frame the proscenium. The addition of Corinthian capitals also adds classical detailing to the theatre.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.15 Ceiling Light Fixtures

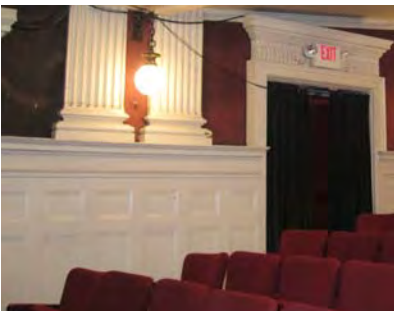
Twelve globular pendant lamps hang from the ceiling's center. Their original design and location reasserts the importance of symmetry and adds dimension to the ceiling. Sconces of corresponding design can also be found along the perimeter walls.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.16 Molding above Doors

The molding above the doors in the theatre is an original architectural detail which exhibits the exemplary woodworking skills of craftsmen in the early 20th century.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.17 Wood Paneling

The wood paneling along the lower walls of the auditorium has existed since the creation of the theatre and exhibits the exemplary woodworking skills of craftsmen in the early 20th century.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.23 Murals

A series of picturesque murals depicting the Greek myth of Dionysus and Ariadne ornament the south, east, and west walls of the auditorium. The somber times of World War One challenged the theater with a decline in patronage, and the murals were painted by Emerson in an effort to attract new theatre-goers. Prior to becoming a permanent addition, the murals were exhibited in the Pennsylvania Academy and the New York Architectural League, most likely to garner additional support for the theatre. The murals are an integral part of the theatre's history, and are arguably one of the best examples of the artist's work to remain on display.³

3 "Mural Paintings for The Little Theater of Philadelphia," *The American Magazine of Art*, pgs. #281-286, accessed October 5, 2011, Google Books.

BALCONY



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.5 Balcony Molding

The wooden balcony molding defines the second floor of the auditorium space and provides decorative interest when viewed from the southern end of the first floor.

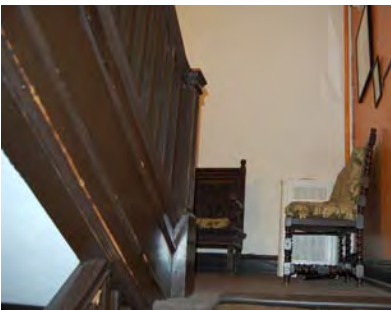
SECOND FLOOR



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.5 Headmistress' Office

Carried over from the building's days as a dramatic school, this prominent and historically significant headmistress' office is formed by two distinct curved sides with exterior paneling at the base and textured glass panes above.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.4 Stairways

The stairways, railings, and accompanying woodwork are important as the building's primary means of egress. They exhibit admirable woodworking techniques seen throughout more decorative areas of the theatre.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.8 Lighting

Semi-flush triple pendant lights surrounded by plaster detailing add historical flavor to the otherwise non-descript second floor ceiling.

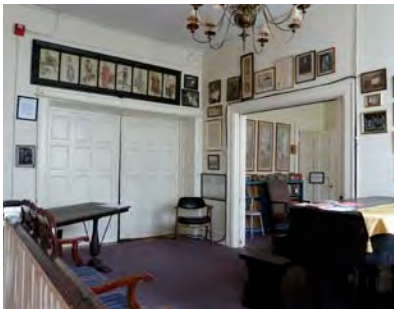
THIRD FLOOR



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

3.1 Quigs Pub

Estimated to have been in use since at latest the 1960s, this members-only bar is one of the most culturally significant spaces within the building. The private bar and lounge is defined by its connections with the theatre community, which has imparted significance within the fabric in its current, rather than original, state. While its features might not be significant on their own, together they define the beloved ambience of the space.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

3.2 Doorways

The doorways between the northernmost third floor spaces highlight transitions between the original room configurations and feature common millwork designs consistent throughout the theatre. Original pocket-door features also add functional interest.

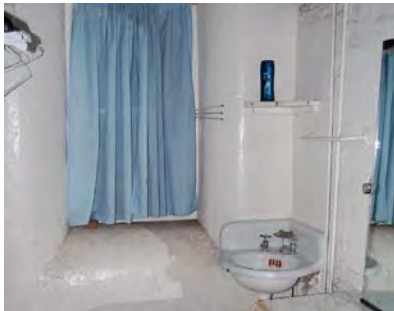


(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

3.4 Fly Space

The fly space above the stage is equipped with a system of sandbags and rope rigging, original to the building. They are definitive of the way in which the theatre operates.

BASEMENT



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

B.2 Dressing Rooms

Dressing room partitions maintain their original configuration with wooden partition walls and original corner sinks. This layout is indicative of the building's function as a theatre.

3.5.2 Original Features

FACADE



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F.6 Transom Window

A ten-paned transom window above the marquee allows natural light to into the dark lobby space.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F.7 Doors

While the doors were once inset with 8 square panels, the 4 panels in the middle have since been replaced with rectangular glass windows, presumably to allow more light into the lobby. Hardware is original.

LOBBY



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.2 Wall Sconces

Four brass Arts and Crafts sconces hang in the lobby, two on either side of the entry door and two on each side of main theatre entrance. The sconces are in good condition and compliment the style of the lobby.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.7 Door Hardware

Push Plates



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.8 Doors



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.9 Heating System

Two original radiators contribute to the historic character of the space by signifying the style of early heating systems.

AUDITORIUM



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.18 Seat Configuration

The tiered layout and overall plan of the seat configuration is consistent with Barnes' original plan for the theatre.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.19 Radiators on Stage

Large iron radiators in herringbone formation point to early heating systems.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.20 Floor Vents

Numerous original vents with decorative grilles remain on the floor and walls of the theatre and continue to function.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.21 Spiral Stairs

This four-story iron spiral stair begins in the basement and rises all up to the fly space above the stage.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

1.22 Lighting Sconces

Wall-mounted pendant lighting sconces on the side walls of the auditorium are similar to those that hang from the ceiling, and are an unaltered original detail.

BALCONY



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.2 Fabric Wallcovering

Though they have since been painted over in red, the existing fabric panels provide information as to the pattern, color, and weave of the earliest auditorium wallcovering.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.3 Balustrade and Railings

The curved wooden balustrade and railings found on the second floor landing are custom-carved and highly detailed. Their shape and quality of craftsmanship represents a different era of building techniques.

SECOND FLOOR



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.6 Projection Room

This protrusion retains its original decorative millwork and signifies its original use as a “machine room.”



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

2.7 Iron Gate

An ornate iron gate custom designed for Plays and Players by master Philadelphia ironworker Samuel Yellin⁴ is bolted to the wall on the stairwell between the first and second floor. While the gate is most likely not in its original place, it represents the work of a renowned artist and reflects Plays and Player’s earliest logo design.

THIRD FLOOR



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

3.3 Pocket Doors

Two pocket doors with millwork matching other spaces in the theatre slide into the partition wall between two meeting spaces on the third floor.

⁴ The gate was initially identified as the work of Samuel Yellin by a member of the CDC team. Upon closer inspection, the mark of Yellin’s Metal Works can clearly be seen on the gate.

BASEMENT



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

B.1 Heavy Machinery

Several pieces of heavy machinery from the theatre's early days still exist in the basement space. These pieces of machinery no longer function as they once did, but signify original mechanical systems.



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

B.3 Orchestra Pit

A crescent-shaped, recessed space composed of brick found underneath the stage was once used as an orchestra pit.

B.4 Wall/Window/Door Shape

The canted and curved shapes of the wall, window, and doors in the basement are a unique design element not found anywhere else in the theatre.

3.5.3 Noteworthy Elements



(Laura DiPasquale / 2011)

F.4 Exterior Placards

A small placard on the far left of the façade commemorates the “Korean Congress,” which was held at Plays and Players Theatre from April 14-16, 1919, to mobilize support for the Korean independence movement.¹ The placard is a symbol of a very interesting chapter in the theatre’s history. Above the Korean Congress placard is Plays and Players’ National Register of Historic Places plaque, which recognizes the national cultural significance of the site.

1 Richard S. Kim, “Inaugurating the American Century: The 1919 Philadelphia Korean Congress, Korean Diasporic Nationalism, and American Protestant Missionaries,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 26, no. 1 (Fall 2006), accessed October 15, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/27501780>.

3.6 Discussion of Character-Defining Elements Mapping and Selection (Matrix)

3.6.1 Discussion of Ranking

To further illustrate the relative importance and concentration of character-defining elements within the Plays and Players space, each of the elements was analyzed and mapped on the basis of 2 factors, integrity and significance. This exercise is meant to organize the listed elements in a hierarchical fashion (how does this process inform/tie into your SOS and recommendations....elaborate on your rationale that you included in the CDC section, also highlighted in green)

The category of INTEGRITY is determined by the following four factors:

1. Location / Setting:
An object that remains in the location for which it was designed or intended.
2. No loss of material:
An object that has not been damaged to the point where some material loss has occurred (this sentence is a little confusing to me... can we say something like :an object that retains the majority of its original material"). This may include objects that have been repaired / partially replaced with contemporary materials.
3. Utility / Function:
An object, space or architectural element whose use or function has remained the same (it may not necessarily be located in its original location or setting).

4. Reversible surface alterations:
Any change to the visible surface of a material that has been done in such a way that any attempt at reversal (to original state/condition) may result in permanent damage or may be beyond a reasonable scope of work.

The category of SIGNIFICANCE is determined by ascribing each element with one or more of the following parameters:

1. Contributing Element to Little Theatre Typology:
Any architectural components (spatial or material) that pertain to the programmatic characteristics or a little theatre.
2. Architecturally Stylistically:
An architectural element (spatial or material) that contributes to the historical importance of the building and/or its character.
3. Culturally Significant:
Attributes of the building (tangible or intangible) that highlight or preserve aspects of Plays and Players' history as well as the world of theatre or popular culture.
4. Configuration and Purpose:
A space or group of spaces that have retained their original configuration, and would disrupt the continuity of use if altered.

	INTEGRITY					SIGNIFICANCE				
	Location/Setting	No Loss of Material	Utility/Function	No Reversible Surface Alterations		Contributing Element to Little Theatre Typology	Architecturally Stylistically	Culturally Significant	Configuration and Purpose	
OUTDOOR										
Brick Course	X	X	X	X	4					6
Doors	X		X		2		X		X	4
Handmade tiles from Moravian Pottery and Tile Works	X	X	X	X	4		X	X	X	7
Korean Congress Placard	X	X	X	X	4			X		5
Marquee	X		X		2	X				3
Porthole Windows	X	X	X	X	4		X		X	6
Symmetry	X	X	X	X	4	X	X		X	7
Terracotta & Frieze	X	X	X	X	4	X	X	X	X	7
Transom above Marquee	X	X	X	X	4		X		X	6
Window Openings	X	X	X	X	2		X		X	4

Figure X: Sample of ranking spreadsheet. Please refer to Appendix C for complete list.

3.6.2 Discussion of Matrix

Each element was carefully considered by individual group members according to the criterion described above, and later concurred upon as a group.

One point was awarded for every factor which applied to the element being considered.

The total number of points for Integrity and Significance were added individually to attribute each element with a two-number ranking.

Once all of the elements were ranked, they were located on a matrix which was organized on an X and Y axis to obtain an overall visual understanding of how each compared in order to consider their hierarchical value. The X axis measured degree of Integrity, while the Y axis measured degree of Significance. The colors indicate their location by floor, while the change in font color distinguishes spaces from objects.

3.6.3 Mapping of Character-Defining Elements and Original Elements

EXTERIOR ELEVATION S & FLOOR PLANS WITH CDES

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS & fFLOOR PLANS WITH ORIGINAL ELEMENTS

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS & FLOOR PLANS TOGETHER

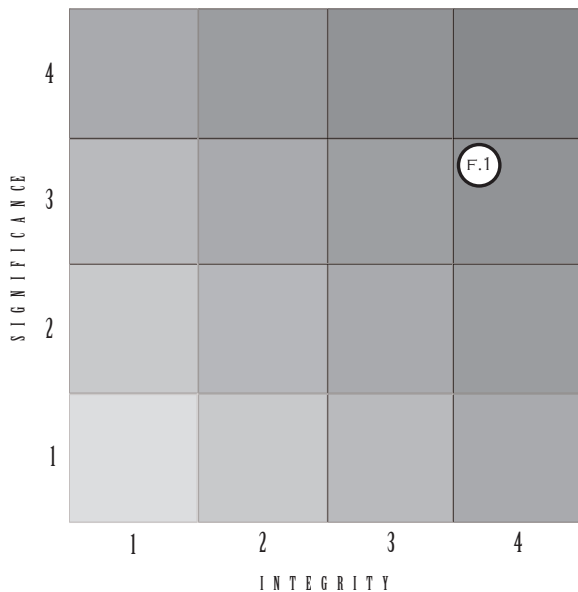


Figure X: Sample of Matrix graph. Please refer to Appendix C for all matrices.



SECTION 4:

DISCUSSION OF CURRENT BUILDING ISSUES AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 Issues:

Though the Plays and Players building has the fortunate distinction of remaining well intact and functioning much as it did when it was first constructed one hundred years ago, it is nonetheless similar to many historic buildings in the issues it faces.

Current issues facing Plays and Players may be divided into four categories: Technical, Functional, issues of Conservation, and issues of Interpretation.

1. *Technical*

Some of the technical issues facing the building include high electricity costs due to inefficient lighting and HVAC systems and a lack of noise control. The modern stage lighting currently in place consumes a great amount of electricity. The large electrical outlets are difficult to access and are located in the set construction area. The air conditioning unit frequently overheats during the summer, and the theatre is often uncomfortable. In addition to the HVAC system, the sprinkler system is out of date and will need to be replaced in the next few years.¹

The southern exterior brick wall and metal door at the back of the stage are the only architectural elements that separate the stage from the back alleyway. Therefore, noise permeates from the outside in, and from the inside out, causing complaints from both the actors on stage and the neighbors outside. The alleyway is narrow, with private residences roughly ten yards from the back of Plays and Players. There are no soft surfaces to absorb the sound, and complaints often result from this unwanted noise transmission. Noise transmission within the building is also a problem, and prevents the organization from having simultaneous performances on the main stage and in the blackbox theatre at once.

2. *Functional*

There are a number of functional issues facing the building which diminish the efficiency

with which the organization runs. One of the biggest functional issues is the lack of ADA compliance. There is no elevator or ADA accessible seating in the auditorium. There are also no ADA accessible restrooms, and only two toilets in each restroom, which causes delays during intermission. Despite having a great deal of space, the current configuration of the basement as a whole is largely inefficient, with large areas of dead space. There is no green room for the actors, and the orchestra pit does not accommodate a modern orchestra, so it is extremely underused. There is also a lack of administrative space. In addition, the fly space is accessed only through the spiral staircase on the stage or the exterior catwalk. Other functional issues include poor lighting in the lobby and second floor, and uncomfortable seats in the auditorium.

3. *Conservation*

Due to the age and continuous use of the building, there are several areas in the building which have damaged or degraded materials. One of the greatest interior conservation issues is the darkening of the murals. The organization has obtained quotes for the conservation and cleaning of the murals over the years, but has not yet conducted an assessment. Improper roof drainage and leaks, as well as incompatible mortar repointing, has caused moisture to infiltrate the interior.²

4. *Interpretation*

One of the less tangible issues associated with the building is the limited amount of interpretation and signage. The organization operates a website and prints informational brochures, but not all historical and architectural matters of significance are addressed in a manner obvious to site visitors.³

4.2 Stakeholders

The stakeholders of Plays and Players play an integral role in the continued use and success of the theatre. Stakeholders range from the president of the company to members of the Philadelphia community, each adding to the dynamic environment of the historic organization and playhouse. By identifying stakeholders and examining their goals, our team was able to better understand the variety

² A conditions assessment of the façade, east and west exterior walls, lobby and auditorium is available in the accompanying document, as part of the individual project by Laura DiPasquale.

³ An interpretation plan by Tom Wilson is available in the accompanying document.

¹ Rentals manager, Andrew Beal, has stated that the system must be replaced by 2018.

of opinions and thoughts regarding the space's current and future functionality, as they intersect with the site's values and required modifications.

Since Plays and Players transitioned to a professional theatre company in 2009, they have acquired a full board to manage day-to-day operations. This board consists of a producing artistic director, managing director, president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and executive committee. Also included are eight members at large. The Board serves as the foundation of the stakeholder cadre as they are most responsible for its maintenance and success.

In addition to the board, the theatre has 500 associated members who are divided into three tiers. Each category is designed to target a specific group, depending on the level of involvement. The categories range from full voting memberships to artist memberships which allow artists to convene, share ideas, discuss projects, and meet other local creative professionals. All members are entitled to access to Quig's Pub. These members are an essential aspect of the theatre's identity, financial and cultural structure. As individuals who regularly use the space for art events and social gatherings, their opinions regarding the theatre's future use are of vital importance.

Plays and Players has also hosted a vast number of attendees since first opening its doors one hundred years ago. Thousands have performed on its stage, and it continues to host touring theatre companies from around the nation. The theatre acts as more than just a performance venue. Plays and Players serves as a gathering place for the artist community and holds a great deal of emotional significance for actors all over Philadelphia. In addition to artists, the public also shares involvement in the ongoing success of the theatre. Over 100,000 people attend the productions and special events each year.

The Philadelphia Historical Commission and National Park Service are also considered a significant stakeholder. The Plays and Players Theatre became a national registered historic building in 1973 for its architectural significance. The Historical Commission and National Register of Historic Places has full jurisdiction over the exterior of buildings, their sites, and site appurtenances. Any work which may change the exterior appearance of the property must be reviewed and approved by the Commission staff. Failure to comply with regulations can result in the revocation of tax incentives and ultimately removal from the Register. Cited as the last remaining Little Theatre in Philadelphia, Plays

and Players is included in the national program to protect America's historic resources.

To aid in alterations, the Community Design Collaborative (CDC) began work on the theatre in Fall 2011. CDC is a public organization which provides design assistance to nonprofit organizations and raises awareness about the importance of design in community revitalization. The CDC accepted Plays and Players' petition for assistance with designs for ADA compliance and technical upgrades. The CDC's comprehensive long-term plan will allow for key renovations to better serve the public and theatre groups utilizing the space, and help Plays and Players become more sustainable with efficient electrical equipment and a potential future green roof. The CDC group assigned to Plays and Players consists of professionals across several design fields including architects, engineers, and preservation professionals (of which there is one designated to this project).

4.2.1 Stakeholders Map & Explanation

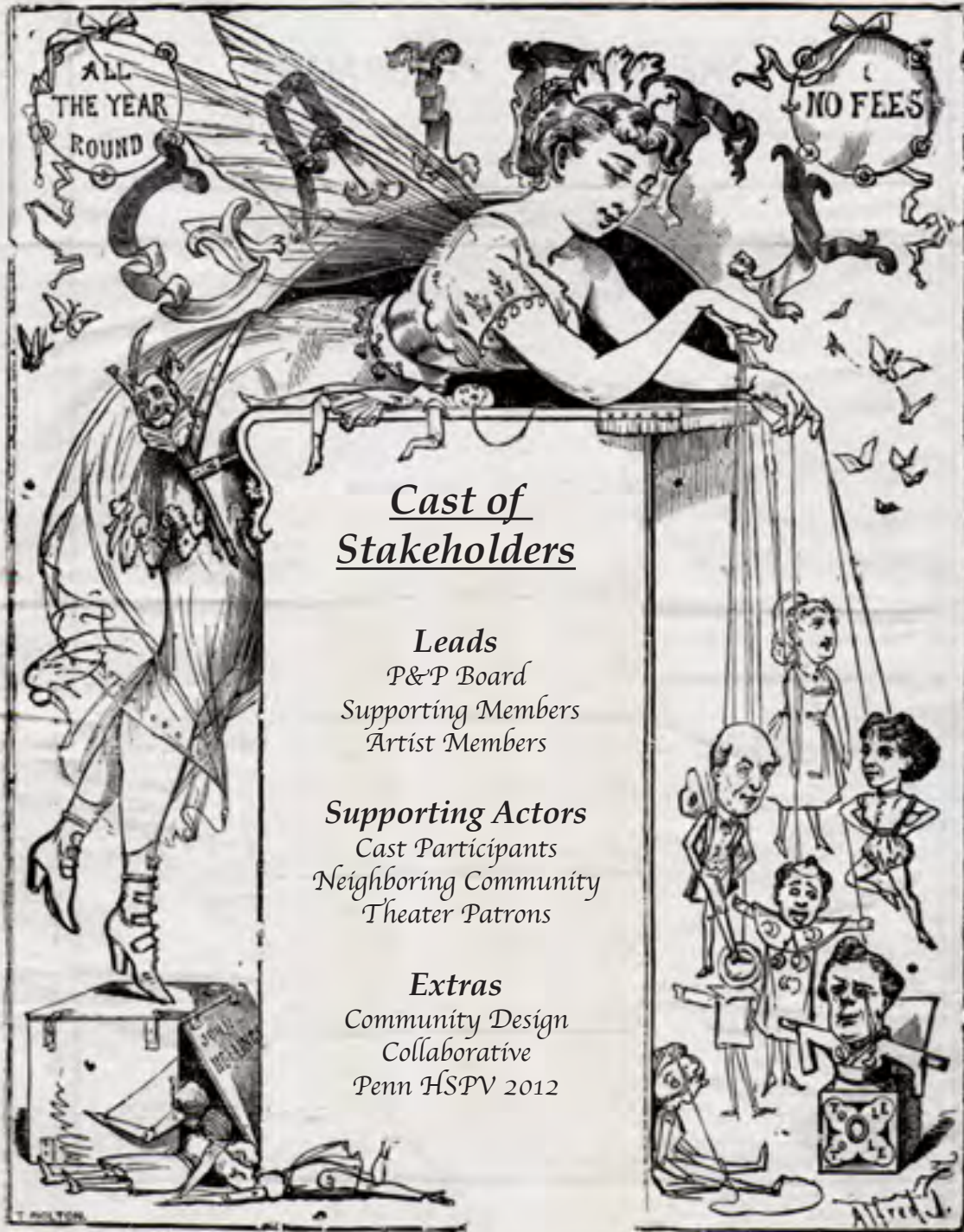
Each group of stakeholders has been included in a map diagram which graphically displays how the interests of each group intersect and relate. General interests and concerns for Plays and Players Theatre have been condensed into four categories: Architectural Integrity, Continued Use and Function, Tradition or Cultural Significance, and Attendance and Profit.

As Historic Preservation students conducting this study for our comprehensive studio course, our main concerns falls within the realm of architectural integrity, continued use and function, and tradition or cultural significance. All of the aforementioned elements stem from the building's determination of significance.

4.2.2 Stakeholder Application to the Preservation Plan

The first step to designing the preservation plan was a critical analysis of stakeholder goals, discussed above. The Community Design Collaborative is one such group in which several of the interests of the HSPV studio overlap (therefore it was particularly important to review how both of efforts intersect). The CDC's project scope, to be executed over six months, addresses all of the main issues outlined by the Plays and Players organization.

In its letter of agreement with Plays and Players, the Community Design Collaborative described



Cast of Stakeholders

Leads

*P&P Board
Supporting Members
Artist Members*

Supporting Actors

*Cast Participants
Neighboring Community
Theater Patrons*

Extras

*Community Design
Collaborative
Penn HSPV 2012*

its scope of work as follows:

“The master plan study will consider recommendations for providing accessibility, sustainable options for energy efficiency, acoustical separation, water abatement, maximizing the use and efficiency of [the] space, and addressing [the] historic murals.” Specific deliverables of the master plan include:

- Executive Summary
- Location Map
- Photographs Showing the Interior & Exterior and overall building context.
- As-built Floor Plans
- Conceptual Floor Plans showing proposed interventions in 3 phases: 0-1 year, 2-5 years, 6-10 years. Building, life, safety, accessibility code, acoustical separation issues will be addressed in these plans.
- Color-renderings showing proposed design solutions
- Historic Preservation Assessment: including “Recommendations for preserving the historic character/elements of the building with the proposed repairs/ renovations... review of current designations and recommendations for future... [this] may also include recommendations for treatment of murals.”
- Interpretive Exhibit Design including signage and graphics incorporating history and physical characteristics of the building with a goal to set provision for tours and an establishment of permanent library of collection artifacts.
- Building Systems Assessment
- MEP Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing evaluations and alteration recommendations, including roof. Recommendations will be made in accordance with phases 1,2,3.
- Opinion of probable cost

While Plays and Players’ major issues will be addressed by the Community Design Collaborative’s plan, our group identified one area which warranted more attention than the CDC had provisioned for- preservation of the existing historic interior fabric. In the development of our preservation plan, our group focused on communicating the importance of this consideration. Both written and visual information has been provided in this dossier to help shape the CDC’s master plan as one respective of the theatre’s existing historic fabric.

At the outset of the project, CDC

volunteers were each provided with a packet of information outlining the project. At the kick-off meeting, a brief introduction to the site and its history was given. In order to further the volunteers’ understanding of the significance of the site and fill this gap, we direct the group to our Statement of Significance (Section 2), which outlines the six major factors we consider most important in contributing to the site’s significance.

To illustrate how these significant factors are embodied in the building itself and help the CDC better understand our specific interest in preserving the historic fabric, we have identified and elaborated on the building’s Character-Defining Elements (Section 3.5) As explained previously, each feature has been ranked and mapped. Conclusions have been drawn based on the concentration of these features, and recommendations have been made for areas which should be considered amenable to change (refer to Section X).

It is our hope that identifying and presenting a clear rationale for the significance and integrity of each feature and demonstrating their relative ranking within the matrix will help bolster the argument for preserving elements deemed most important, with an emphasis on the notion that the more CDEs which are preserved the better the outcome of CDC’s project. (this is good, can you add some of this rationale in the CDE section.?) Furthermore, we find it especially critical that our preservation voice be heard, given that there is only one professional historic preservation representative on a team of 10 individuals.

4.3 Internal and External Drivers

While the objective of this project is to ensure that the significant historic fabric of the theatre is protected, it is necessary to note that there are factors both within the organization and outside of it that, although unrelated to the fabric itself, may influence the future of the building. Internally, issues that impact the organization’s financial position, such as rental space, Quig’s Pub, and the organization’s transition to a professional, for-profit company, may have an effect on the continued use of the

building. The “black box” theatre on the third floor also influences the site with supplementary income and by adding a new dynamic with contemporary performances in an historic building. Technical issues that impinge on the theatre’s success include the lack of space for set construction and storage, and the need for modern lighting and sound equipment.

The following chart enumerates these internal drivers:

INTERNAL FACTOR	INFLUENCE
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THEATRE COMPANY	Plays and Players’ transition to a professional theatre company in 2009 marked a fundamental transformation in the organization’s history. No longer just an exclusive club, the theatre now needs to market and rely on the public to support their productions. The entire association has reorganized their management in order to accommodate these new objectives. In addition, the theatre’s finances are based on performance income instead of solely on membership dues.
RENTAL SPACE	The space is frequently rented out to other theatre companies, ranging from a weekend show to several month-long productions. Rentals amount to almost a third of the theatre’s income and Plays and Players depends on this financial support in order to afford the regular maintenance and upkeep of the building.
QUIG’S PUB	Quig’s Pub is a significant aspect of the Theatre as both a social venue and source of income. In the past, revenue from the pub has made up one third of annual income. Plays and Players depends on the pub for its social appeal as well as for added revenue.
BLACK BOX THEATRE	The newly installed black box theatre brings supplementary performances to the theatre. These short, contemporary shows result in additional attendees, income, and greater scope of interest.
LIMITED PHYSICAL SPACE	The physical size of the building influences the company’s ability to effectively construct sets, store props and costumes, and hold various events. The limited space also affects Plays and Players future expansion and progress.
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Several technical issues shape the type and quality of the company’s performances. The modernization of these elements is a concern to the theatre’s future opportunities and ability to compete with other theatres throughout the city.

Influences that affect the site from an external standpoint involve issues determined by factors outside the control of Plays and Players, such as social trends and government building regulations. Competition from a number of additional theatres in Philadelphia, as well as a decline in cultural tourism, prove to be ongoing threats to the theatre. The location of the building in a residential neighborhood limits both the types of performances Plays and Players can produce, and precludes future expansion to neighboring lots.

The following chart enumerates these external drivers:

EXTERNAL FACTOR	INFLUENCE
DECLINE IN CULTURAL TOURISM	Over the past twenty years, a decline in cultural tourism has greatly impacted the sustainability of historic sites as well as other sites of art and entertainment. As both an historical and cultural building, Plays and Players is directly affected by this social trend.
LOCATION IN A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD	The location of the building influences the style of plays and time intervals in which they can be performed. Plays and Players needs to be cognizant of the level of noise they are producing and courteous of its surround neighbors.
CODES AND REGULATIONS	The structure constantly faces problems when confronted with government building regulations. Plays and Players continues to search for ways to comply with modern code while still protecting the historic fabric of the building.
COMPETITION	Plays and Players faces competition from the variety of theatres around the city of Philadelphia. The company is under pressure to be able to market and draw in theatre goers with unique shows and special events that top similar venues.



SECTION 5: COMPARABLES

Prior to developing the preservation plan for Plays and Players Theatre, several comparable sites from around the country were examined. Each comparable was evaluated for its related typology and the methods with which the building was preserved and adapted. While the lessons learned from the analysis of each site were varied, they all hinted at the usefulness of a solid preservation plan in guiding the future of America's historic theatres.

5.1 Comparable #1: Le Petit Theatre, New Orleans



Figure X: Le Petit Theater

Significance

Le Petit Theatre in New Orleans, LA, was the first comparable analyzed. Like Plays and Players, the structure is nearly 100 years old, embodies the little theatre typology, and is facing many of the same issues. A Board of Governors manages Le Petit Theatre, and a professional staff manages its open-audition productions.¹

Issues

In 2004, the theatre undertook a multi-million dollar renovation project that was centered on the creation of a new orchestra pit. As construction neared completion in summer

of 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, causing damage to the theatre. When the theatre's new orchestra pit took on water, the historic structure had to be closed for over a year. After a lengthy period of assessment, the theatre agreed to lease 60% of its space to the Dickie Brennan Restaurant Group in order to remain in business. Brennan, a well-known New Orleans restaurateur, has come up with a plan to preserve the historic structure and make it a viable part of the French Quarter once again.²

Lessons Drawn from Le Petit Theatre

Throughout the investigation of Le Petit Theatre, we learned that it is facing several of the same issues as Plays and Players, including the need for ADA Compliancy, the addition of bathrooms, and restoration/preservation issues. Still, Plays and Players has been in continuous use as a theatre since its inception, and it is our belief that partnering with an outside commercial organization for funding and/or alternative uses is not in Plays and Players' best interest. Therefore, no recommendations for alternative use or partnerships were made in our plan.

2 "Brennan Plan | Le Petit Theatre, New Orleans," Le Petit Theatre Du Vieux Carre, accessed November 12, 2011, <http://www.lepetittheatre.com/news/brennan-plan/>. Restaurant Group Plan: "Due to severe roof, water and termite damage, DBRG will invest another \$3-4 million into resurrecting the building and restoring it to its original beauty and architectural significance. DBRG will be working with the Vieux Carre Commission (VCC) to maintain the historic importance of the building. Some parts of the building, like the courtyard windows, have been altered over the years. DBRG plans to restore many parts of the structure to their original state, including these windows. The outside wall of the Mainstage Theatre is 18 inches of solid brick – virtually sound-proof. Therefore, performances on the mainstage will not be interrupted by noise from the restaurant. The money from the DBRG sale will allow LPT to renovate its portion of the building, which will bring the LPT building current with all municipal and American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The DBRG renovations will bring DBRG's part of the building up to municipal and ADA standards. The bathroom plumbing in the theatre will be fixed. DBRG will install, at its expense, bathrooms which will be accessible to theatre patrons, estimated to include 8 stalls for the ladies room and 6 stalls for the mens room. The restaurant at Le Petit Theatre will be reminiscent of the style and ambiance of an old New Orleans manor house and feature similar details found in the restaurants housed in the building during the 1800s. For example, the DBRG's current design calls for black and gold chairs, neutral curtains with splashes of crimson and gold, glow lighting and gilded chandeliers in interiors with a pale green color scheme. Design elements, interior decor, dishes and cocktails will remain faithful to the building's history."

1 "History | Le Petit Theatre, New Orleans," Le Petit Theatre Du Vieux Carre | French Quarter, New Orleans, LA, accessed November 15, 2011, <http://www.lepetittheatre.com/news/about/history/>.

5.2 Comparable #2: Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, CA



Figure X: Le Petit Theater

Significance

The second comparable examined was the Pasadena Playhouse, in Pasadena, California. Actor-director Gilmore Brown founded the Pasadena Playhouse in 1916. Brown established the Community Playhouse Association of Pasadena in 1917 which grew so quickly that it became necessary to build a new venue. The community theatre organization quickly grew, and in May 1924 the citizens of Pasadena raised funds to build a new theatre in the city center. Architect Elmer Grey completed the Spanish Colonial Revival style theatre in 1925.^{3 4 5}

Issues

A \$4-million restoration in 1986 brought the theatre portion of the 70,000-square-foot structure to the condition of its opening in 1925. The Pasadena Playhouse nearly went bankrupt in 2010, and later filed for bankruptcy, saved only by matching \$1 million in donations. The Playhouse plans to reopen in April of 2012.

Conclusion from Pasadena Playhouse

Similar to Le Petit Theatre, the Pasadena Playhouse shares a common history with

3 "History," The Pasadena Playhouse, About Us, accessed November 15, 2011, <http://www.pasadenaplayhouse.org/>.

4 "The Pasadena Playhouse," Jonnie King, accessed November 15, 2011, <http://www.jonnieking.net/gpage11.html>.

5 Curt Eriksmoen, "Founder of Famous Playhouse from N.D.," BismarckTribune.com, May 8, 2011, accessed December 1, 2011, http://bismarcktribune.com/news/columnists/article_825a3f2c-7808-11e0-9bf6-001cc4c002e0.html.

Plays and Players. Unfortunately, the Pasadena Playhouse waited far too long to think of new programming and new ways to attract visitors. It became less and less relevant to the community, and as a result, the theatre went bankrupt in 2010. While Plays and Players is currently on stable financial ground, it is our belief that Plays and Players must make an effort to find new ways to draw in visitors or else it too could suffer the same fate as the Pasadena Playhouse.

5.3 Comparable #3: Provincetown Playhouse, Greenwich Village, NYC



Figure X: Le Petit Theater

Significance/Issues

The Provincetown Playhouse, which was located in Greenwich Village in New York City, was analyzed as a comparable due to its date of construction and similar use. Faced with the rising costs of maintenance and preservation issues, the Provincetown Playhouse was put up for sale in the early 1980's and was purchased by New York University. Although eligible for both the State and National Register of Historic Places, the building was never listed, as most believed that NYU would be an excellent steward of the historic structure. At the beginning of its ownership, NYU invested in the building's maintenance, but in 2009 the building was irreversibly altered. The NYU School of Law decided to erect a new building on the site, proceeding to tear down 94% of the structure. Rather than exposing them, it entombed original brick walls and seat markers which it had previously agreed never to destroy.⁶

6 "History of the Provincetown Playhouse," Provincetown Playhouse, accessed November 14, 2011, <http://www.provincetownplayhouse.com/history.html>. "Activists Balk at NYU Provincetown Playhouse Repurposing," Neighborhoods and Real Estate Blog, accessed November 14, 2011, <http://ny.curbed.com/tags/provincetown-playhouse>.

Conclusion from Provincetown Playhouse:

Although this comparable is somewhat of a doomsday scenario for Plays and Players, it reinforces our belief that Plays and Players should not partner with any large corporation or university sponsor in order to ensure stability.⁷

there is an abundance of materials already stored at the site that could be easily and efficiently displayed. In addition, historic tours could bring in new sources of revenue and appeal to people who aren't necessarily interested in catching a performance at the site.

5.4 Comparable #4: Hull House Theatre, Chicago, IL



Figure X: Le Petit Theater

Significance

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr created the Hull House Theatre in Chicago, IL, in 1889 to serve as a social and educational center for the large immigrant population that had settled in the city throughout the nineteenth century. It is widely considered to be the inspiration for the development of the distinctly American Little Theatre.⁸

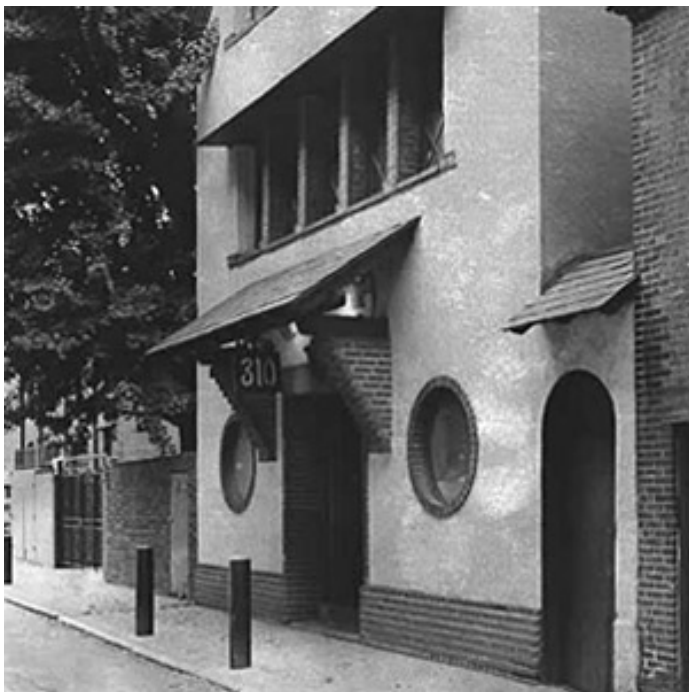
Conclusion from Hull House Theatre

While the building no longer operates as a working theatre, it remains relevant due to a museum installed inside the site and flexible programming which includes historic tours and allows people to rent out spaces within the theatre. A small museum in Plays and Players would be both appropriate and beneficial, and

⁷ The Real Deal | New York Real Estate News, accessed November 14, 2011, <http://therealdeal.com/new-york/articles/activists-balk-at-new-york-university-provincetown-playhouse-repurposing-at-133-macdougal-street>. "Provincetown Playhouse : Curbed NY," Curbed NY : The New York City

⁸ Stuart J. Hecht, "Social and Artistic Integration: The Emergence of Hull-House Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 34, no. 2 (May 1982), accessed November 11, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207448>.

5.5 COMPARABLE #5: MASK AND WIG CLUB, PHILADELPHIA, PA



Historic Photo of Mask & Wig Theatre
Source: Matthew Millan Architects, Inc.

Mask and Wig Club Theatre was chosen as a primary comparable due to the many similarities it shares with Plays and Players Theatre. Like Plays and Players, it is a small venue listed on the National Register, and it recently underwent a drastic renovation. From 2007-2009, the theatre made changes that addressed many of the concerns Plays and Players faces today. After the renovations were completed, it was awarded an Architectural Excellence Designation in Restoration award in 2010.¹ Mask and Wig serves as an apt comparable because it provides examples of historically sensitive design solutions that can be used to solve many of the issues that Plays and Players is currently facing.

¹ Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia. 2010 Preservation Achievement Awards. May 12, 2010. <http://preservationalliance.com/events/luncheon/luncheon.php> (accessed 10 2011).



Current View of Mask & Wig Theatre
Source: Matthew Millan Architects, Inc.

Significance

According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination form, the Mask and Wig and Club has been deemed significant because of its role in theatre and music, its interior art, and its architecture. Mask and Wig was originally built as a coach house and stable between 1834 and 1853.² It is a two-story structure composed of stuccoed brick with a gable roof. In 1894, the Mask and Wig Club hired Wilson Eyre to remodel the stable in a theme of a “Bavarian” clubhouse. Most of the changes occurred in the interior, while the exterior maintained the character of the original stable.

Upon entering, visitors to the Mask and Wig club encounter a small entry hall with stairs leading up to the second floor, where there is a room called “The Grill.” The Grill room has wainscoted oak walls that stand 6 feet tall, with large wooden piers and beams on the ceiling. Around a central fireplace is banquet seating with diamond-patterned mutton windows and deer antlers. The chestnut trim throughout the building was whitewashed and stained to achieve an “antique” appearance, while all other wall surfaces are in rough sand plaster.

² Matthew Millan Architects, Inc. “The Mask & Wig Clubhouse Renovation: Construction Description.” Mask & Wig Construction Report, Philadelphia, 2010.



Photo of The Grill Room
Source: Matthew Millan Architects, Inc.

A small theatre is located on the second floor. The stage fills the entire volume of the gable roof, with the exception of a small attic area in the center of the peak. During the first renovations, a man named Maxfield Parrish worked with Eyre to decorate the interior. These decorations included caricatures of the club members that were painted in oil on the Grill Room wainscoting, and a depiction of Old King Cole, which was painted on canvas and then framed and mounted in the room. Two plaster murals were also created, one for a ticket window on the first floor and the other surrounding the proscenium around the stage. The artwork within the club is significant because the artist, Maxfield Parrish, later achieved international fame as an illustrator and artist. His artwork at Mask & Wig may be one of his first commissions, and is a good representation of his early technique and style. In Parrish's later years, he designed several program covers for the Club that were framed and put on display.

Wilson Eyre further enlarged the building in 1903. Ten feet of space was added to the front of the building (covering the stable wall) and a large pair of front doors with a large hood was added, flanked by two round windows. The second and third floors had bands of diamond windows with a hood over the second floor, and a slate shingle gable peak over the third floor. This new addition created a new center hall vestibule in front of the former entrance. In addition, the first stairway was changed from its landing. On the second floor, a new balcony and corresponding stair were created, while on the first floor two smaller rooms were removed to expand the Grill Room. These renovations required that the Parrish ticket window mural be destroyed. The larger room had additional banquettes built around the perimeter, and the fireplace was covered with ceramic tiles from the Mercer Tileworks. Beyond the Grill Room, new enlargements allowed for the creation of a kitchen, mezzanine-level offices, and dressing rooms on the second floor. Since the 1903 additions, very little has changed at Mask and Wig Club.

Architecturally, the building has retained its barn-like appearance, and because of the quality of the craftsmanship it has been said to be one of the single most significant exteriors on the street.³ The primary period of architectural importance lies with Wilson Eyre's alterations in 1894 and 1904. The club is representative of his style, and it embodies many of the characteristics for which his work has now become recognized, including his use of specific materials, inglenook, pointed arches, leaded windows and carvings.

Issues

Renovations to the Mask and Wig Club Theatre were conducted in 2007 by Matthew Millan Architects. When trying to find theatres to compare with Plays and Players, we determined that the Mask and Wig Club was closely aligned with Plays and Players in terms of similar histories, typology, and issues. The architect, Matthew Millan, had to address several concerns for the renovation, including HVAC, sprinkler, electrical, accessibility, and art conservation issues. Plays and Players Theatre currently shares all of these concerns.⁴

The Mask and Wig renovation occurred in two phases. The first phase included a survey and documentation of existing conditions, preservation of the artwork, repairs to wooden features of the building, and patching the slate roof with salvaged slate.

The second phase included the addition of an HVAC system, fire suppression systems, security systems, structural reinforcement, ADA compliancy and a complete overhaul of the architectural lighting and electrical wiring.

³ Dagit Saylor Architects. The Mask & Wig Club of The University of Pennsylvania. National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Philadelphia: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1979.

⁴ Preservation Issues faced by Matthew Millan Architects, Inc. were discovered during an interview with the architect: Matthew Millan, AIA, interview by Jason Cantu. Interview with Matthew Millan to talk about the Mask & Wig Clubhouse & Theatre Renovation (November 11, 2011).



New HVAC System
Source: Matthew Millan Architects, Inc.

Of all the interventions made at Mask and Wig, addressing the lack of heating, ventilation, cooling, and dehumidification systems was the key driver. Before the integration of a mechanical system, Mask and Wig relied purely on natural ventilation, with heating provided by radiators. Unfortunately, it was difficult to maintain a comfortable atmosphere during performances. For example, the architect explained, during winter months, the radiators would become so hot that doors and windows towards the rear of the auditorium would be opened to allow for ventilation. This allowed for some cooling at the rear of the auditorium, while audience members at the front were uncomfortably hotter.

The air handler units were located in small back rooms and in the basement of the Grill Room. In order to minimize the visual impact of the equipment from the street, and a platform was created by dropping into the rear portion of the roof for the condenser units. Sizing of the ducts had to be carefully considered to insure that noise from the air system would be at a minimum. The sound rating for acceptable noise level is currently NC-25,5 which was achieved by isolating the equipment and insulating the ducts.

The mechanical system consists of two zones for

5 Noise Criterion (NC) was established in the United States for rating indoor noise and noise from air-conditioning equipment etc. The noise criterion system consists of a set of criteria curves extending from 63 to 8000 Hz, and a tangency rating procedure. The curves define the limits of octave band spectra that must not be exceeded to meet occupant acceptance in certain spaces. The NC rating can be obtained by plotting the octave band levels for a given noise spectrum. The noise spectrum is specified as having a NC rating same as the lowest NC curve which is not exceeded by the spectrum. A NC rating of 25 for Mask & Wig exceeds the minimum requirements.

The Engineering Toolbox. NC - Noise Criterion. 2011. http://www.engineeringtoolbox.com/nc-noise-criterion-d_725.html (accessed December 13, 2011).

the two different floors. Due to the fact that heating and cooling loads change dramatically for each performance (the theatre level can accommodate 200 people with chairs only and 100 in banquet style, tables and chairs), there are 3 air compressors and air handling units to help regulate the two zones (one for the first floor and two for the second).

The primary goal of the renovation was to develop a system that would be efficient, reduce humidity, and manage CO₂ levels while minimizing the visual impact of the equipment. The heating system is gas powered, and the supply and return grills are seamlessly incorporated with existing architectural elements by integrating them into the Grille Room benches and theatre stage apron. Exposed linear diffusers in the theatre mimic the exposed timber ceiling trusses.

To protect the clubhouse and its contents, an automatic fire protection sprinkler system with low water pressure was added. This required the installation of a fire pump and pump room to drive the system. In the theatre space, fire pumps were fed through the attic because there is insulation covering the rafter areas. The rear spaces have sprinklers that are attached to sidewalls and exposed wooden rafters. On the Grill Room level, the framing for the second floor was uncovered so the pipes could run exposed alongside them. However, in order to cut down on their visual impact, they were painted dark brown to blend with the wooden rafters. In all other areas, they are concealed where building construction allows.

Due to the fact that the new HVAC system required more electrical power, the electrical service was upgraded to increase the incoming amperage. Originally, the main service was redone at different points in time with a series of subpanels (two services were integrated incrementally over time). In general, the wiring was left alone and the new service was brought in to feed the sub panels. Lights were replaced with fixtures that are more efficient and provide better lighting in color, distribution, and texture. The lighting that was being used to illuminate performance areas was unsafe and wasteful. The architect determined that the best solution would be new, recessed down-lights that give better color and light coverage. Spotlights were also added close to the proscenium to highlight the artwork flanking each of its ends. To minimize the appearance of power cables, a permanent conduit was added to the attic space for the lighting system.



Restored art work around proscenium
Source: Matthew Millan Architects, Inc.

Regarding universal accessibility, the architect added a wheelchair lift that travels between the first floor and theatre level while also adding a unisex, ADA-accessible restroom on the ground level. To enter the building from street level, a portable ramp was constructed. Once inside the space, determining whether to install an elevator or a lift between the main floors was of primary concern. It was determined that a lift would be best because it was the least invasive and didn't require the construction of an elevator shaft. The lift runs on a track that transports patrons with disabilities from behind wooden doors that match the interior's motif. The location for the lift is in a corner of a waiting area outside the women's room that is aligned with a storage space under the balcony of the theatre level above. The space for the lift and restrooms was previously a large cloak room.

When addressing the preservation and conservation of the interior finishes and art conservation, experts were hired for professional council. The finishes required repair of woodwork, trim, plaster, and painting. Paints were matched to their historic color, oak flooring was replaced in its original configuration,

and low sheen varnish coats were used to make the interiors look softer.

Similarities

Of all the similarities between both Mask and Wig and Plays and Players, the first to be noticed is how they are situated on their sites. Mask and Wig is built out to its property lines on three sides and has a narrow access alley to its north end. Plays and Players is oriented in the same fashion. Sandwiched between two buildings, the structure abuts its front and rear sidewalks. Due to the fact that the building is built out to its property lines, stage loading and unloading can be done directly from the rear wall of the theatre's stage.

The next common issue facing the two theatres addresses their HVAC concerns. Although Plays and Players has an HVAC system in place, it is inefficient and requires replacement. Taking cues from Mask and Wig, Plays and Players should try to repair areas where historic and character-defining elements have been damaged in order to accommodate the current system. For example, areas of the cornice work in the main theatre space have been cut to make way for vents, and garden-like latticework has been placed over the voided spaces. Finding ways to conceal these ducts (possibly under the theatre seats or trim work) would be less invasive. Transference of noise is already an issue for Plays and Players, so when designing a new HVAC system, this should also be taken into consideration. Plays and Players may want to also pay close attention to duct sizing and locate their air handlers in isolated spaces. Also, like Mask and Wig, they should include more thermostats for increased occupant comfort and energy control. Mask and Wig has a thermostat for the theatre and one for the lower spaces. Plays and Players could save money if it only heats and cools spaces in use versus the entire building all the time.

Regarding fire protection, Plays and Player's existing system is fairly new and has two pumps – one in front and one in the back. This may be the least expensive upgrade for Plays and Players since the system is fairly new; however, there are still places that need to be sprinklered. Another plus is that the site no longer has a water tower putting a large load on the roof. When redesigning their sprinkler systems, they may want to paint the sprinkler pipes and use concealed heads whose placement and look should consider the historic fabric, like Mask and Wig.

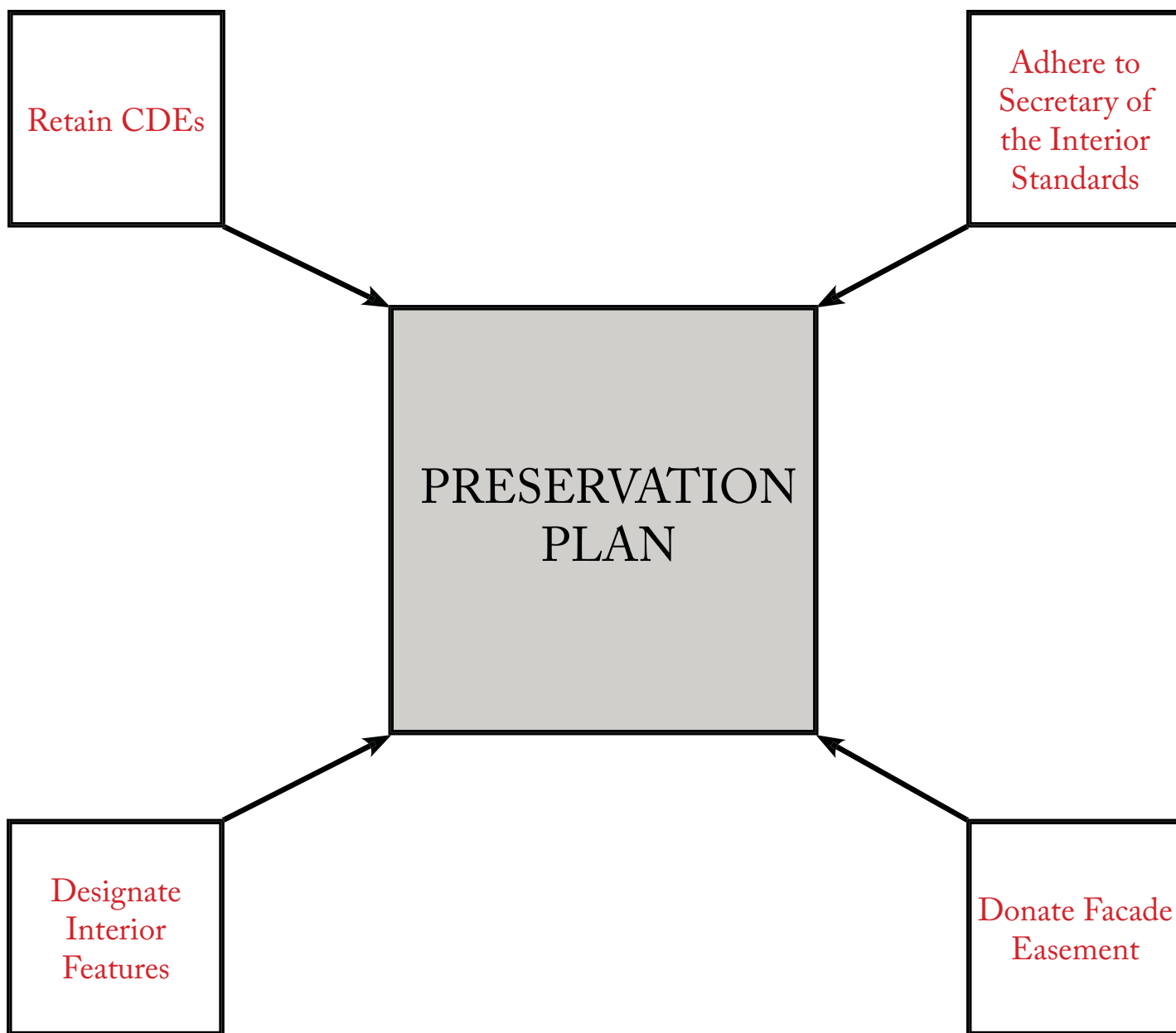
When looking at the Plays and Player's electrical system, a comprehensive upgrade is needed. Mimicking Mask and Wig's more efficient two-phase converters and better lights might increase the visual impact of murals and artwork along the building. Because Plays and Players is not going to be able to reuse any of its current electrical system, it may want to integrate permanent conduit like Mask and

Wig by adding receptacles along the baseboards and behind walls. Doing this will make the spaces look more uniform, will cut down on the visual impact of the unorganized wires and possibly make the spaces a bit more flexible if there are more places to plug in. Currently, wires are exposed as they run along the theatre walls. Recessed lighting may not work since we don't know much about the ceiling structure and it may interfere with historic fabric.

When examining ADA compliance, adding a wheelchair lift may be more suitable than an elevator since it runs on a track and might not require an elaborate construction process. The challenge, however, will be finding locations for the lifts and restrooms.

The last common issue both theatres face is that they both have intricate finishes and artwork. Plays and Players could benefit from hiring a consultant to do paint analysis, documentation, and cleaning. The process employed at Mask and Wig involved adding a conservation varnish over the cleaned original works and then filling in missing pieces with similar paint. The completed pieces were then painted with conservation finishing varnish. This adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's standards in that any restoration work is reversible while staying true to the original intent of the artist.

In summary, Plays and Players is fortunate to have a comparable that is close by and so similar in nature regarding conservation efforts. Careful attention should be paid to the renovations undertaken at Mask and Wig for the sake of saving money as well as preserving elements that define Plays and Player's character.



SECTION 6: THE PRESERVATION PLAN

6.1 Values-Based Preservation Approach

The application of values-based conservation to the management of historic sites around the world is a complex, multi-faceted process that involves numerous stakeholders and continuous revisions. At every site, a conservation plan must be tailor-made to address the specific issues that are present at a given location. Failure to properly address the concerns of each stakeholder at a historic site can quickly prove disastrous, as those left out of the planning process can cause serious issues for site managers through legal or collective action. Values, of course, are not always consistent within a site, and must be revisited on a regular basis to provide the most effective interpretation.

Values-based conservation at Plays and Players Theatre was observed through the lens of the Burra Charter, a pivotal document which assesses value through “value categories”- namely aesthetic, historic, social and scientific.¹ By dividing a site into these distinct categories, the Burra Charter helps to appropriately assess value and balance the site’s overall representation of the past. At Plays and Players, our comprehensive management plan was informed by Plays and Players’ aesthetic, historic, and social values.² By analyzing values, we were able to appropriately assess the overall importance of Plays and Players Theatre, and from there we developed our statement of significance. Understanding the layers of significance of the building informed our preservation policy, and with our recommendations it is our hope that the management of Plays and Players can be a respectful and productive steward of the building for another 100 years.

Values-based conservation has varying degrees of success depending on how thoroughly the stakeholders at a given site are consulted prior to the conservation plan and periodically after its implementation. While the idea of consulting the local population might seem quite simple, it is in fact an incredibly complex and arduous process. The issue lies in deciding

¹ “Burra Charter,” Australia ICOMOS, accessed November 11, 2011, <http://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>.

² We did not take into account the scientific values of the site because we feel there is little to be garnered from scientific experimentation at Plays and Players.

which stakeholder, if any, should be most comprehensively represented at a given site. We identified several tiers of stakeholders at Plays and Players, which we divided into three categories, “Leads,” “Supporting Actors,” and “Extras.” The “Leads” at Plays and Players include the P&P Board, Supporting Members, and Actors. We worked most closely with this group as we felt they have the greatest stake in the future of the theatre. After listening to their wishes and concerns, we then set out to create a comprehensive management plan for the theatre.

While the Burra Charter is an incredibly helpful tool in assigning values, each site must assess value on a case-by-case basis, and must continue to look at values long after the initial planning phase is over. In addition, values-based conservation does not instantly create a conservation plan or tourism management strategy, nor does it immediately inspire an overall mission statement. It should not therefore be considered a “fix-all” solution to the problems plaguing historic sites. Still, in conjunction with clear, honest planning and a continuous dialogue with visitors and stakeholders, values-based conservation can provide a solid framework for site management, and it has helped us a group to decide what important values at Plays and Players should be protected.

6.2 Introduction to the Preservation Plan

The preservation plan for Plays and Player’s theatre centers around the safeguarding of the structure’s character-defining elements, each of which have been determined to embody the building’s greater significance. The plan is constructed of a series of four recommendations. All should be observed currently and when planning future building interventions.

Based on careful analysis, this study has determined that Plays and Players should:

1. Retain Character-Defining Elements
2. Adhere to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation
3. List Interior Features on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places
4. Donate a Facade Easement

Each of the four factors contributing to the preservation plan is detailed below.

1. Retain CDEs Based on Observation of Concentration of CDEs and Levels of Intervention

By presenting the character-defining elements by location, one can gain a better understanding for spaces that hold a greater significance within the building and which present greater flexibility for change. This can be observed on the first floor and on the facade, where the greater concentration of features signifies a space that is the least tolerant to change. Those spaces that possess a lower number of CDEs, such as the second, third, and basement levels, are less restricted when conducted in a manner that complies with recommendations made regarding acceptable alterations. Among the features that scored the highest were the handmade tiles, the ticket window openings, and the proscenium and molding.

Levels of Intervention

Recommendations for each level of intervention are determined by analyzing the concentration of Character-Defining Elements through space distribution. These are categorized into five tiers based on level of risk to the historic fabric: Low Risk, General Risk, Significant Risk, High Risk, Severe Risk.

Tier 1 - Low Risk:

The spaces highlighted in green are areas with minimal historic fabric or Character-Defining Elements and are the most amenable to change. The basement and upper floors have significantly fewer character defining elements, and thus would be ideal spaces for interventions, adaptation or new construction. The basement in particular has a great deal of underutilized space, and it is suggested that this be the location of all major alterations.

Tier 2 - General Risk:

The blue highlighted areas indicate some character defining elements, however minor alterations will not disrupt the overall integrity and experience of the space. General caution should be taken to avoid the alteration of Character-Defining Elements within these spaces.

Tier 3 - Significant Risk:

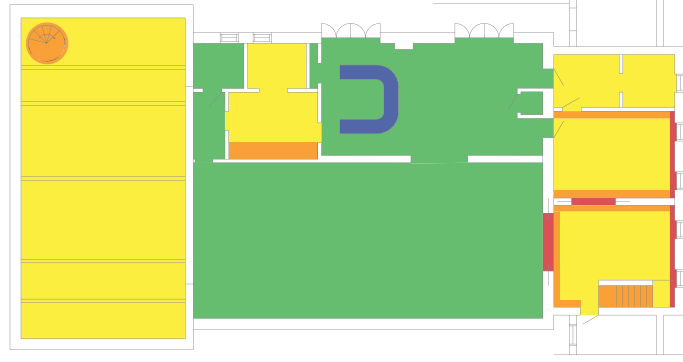
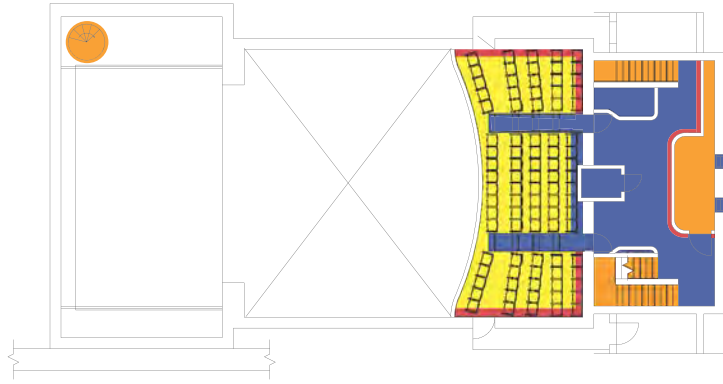
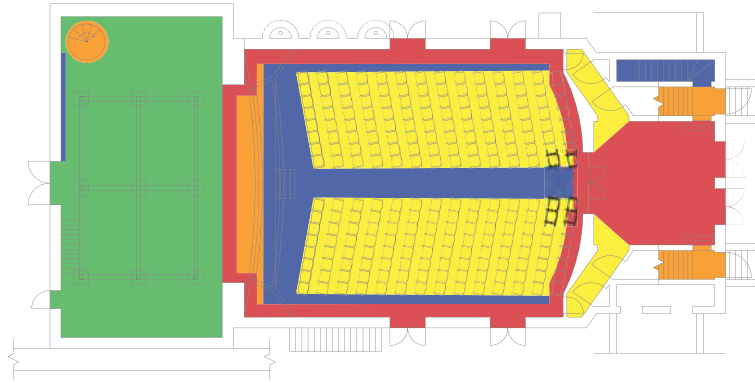
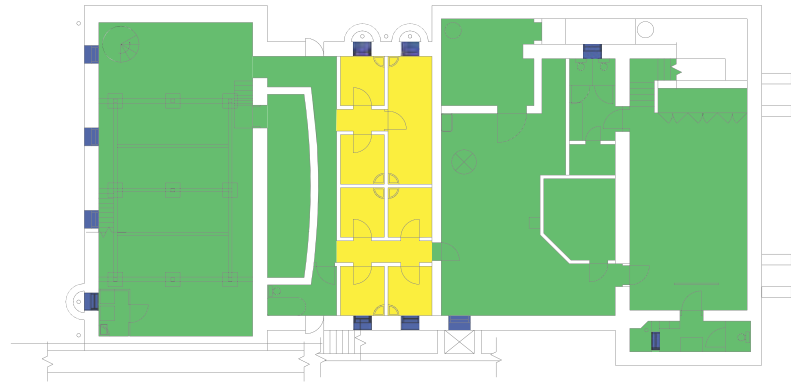
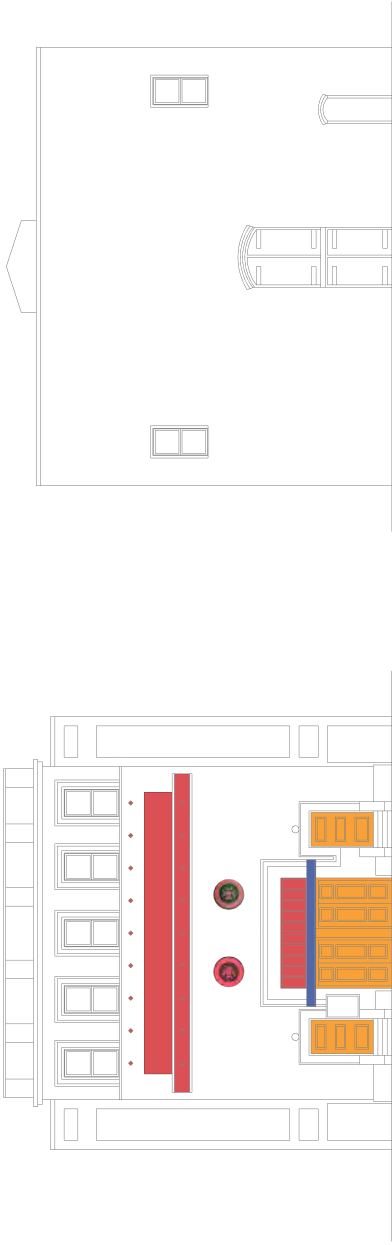
The yellow areas have some character defining elements, but like tier 2, small changes would not be detrimental to the experience of the space. It is important that significant caution be taken due to a higher concentration of CDEs when considering alterations.

Tier 4 - High Risk:

The spaces highlighted in orange are similar to the previous two tiers in that they contain a moderate number of CDEs and variations are permitted as long as there is no alteration to these features. However, modifications require the highest level of caution as to not damage the integrity of the significant fabric. It is recommended that changes be avoided as much as possible in these areas.

Tier 5 - Severe Risk:

The areas highlighted in red contain the most character defining elements and are the most sensitive to change. These correspond to the historically most public areas of the building, which were given more elaborate finishes. These areas (the façade, lobby, auditorium, balcony and headmistress's office) should be handled with the greatest care, and efforts made to preserve and enhance the historic character of these spaces. If these spaces must be touched, it is recommended that all interventions be minimally invasive.



Severe Risk

High Risk

Significant Risk

General Risk

Low Risk

	ACCEPTABLE INTERVENTIONS		UNACCEPTABLE INTERVENTIONS
FAÇADE	<p>Replacement of existing marquee with new marquee of similar size in same location (style approximating original marquee preferred, as per 1913 photo)</p> <p>Replacement of transom or sash windows in kind (patterning of mullions/muntins to be consistent with original or existing divisions)</p> <p>Repainting of doors in accordance with findings from historic paint analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning as advised by conservation professional (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of marquee without acceptable replacement • Alteration of window or door configuration • Obstruction of glazing • Replacement/removal of porthole windows • Removal or alteration of masonry detailing (including brickwork and pressed concrete frieze) • Painting of any masonry element • Repointing mortar without mortar analysis by conservation professional 	
LOBBY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of acoustical ceiling tile • Installation of lighting if respective of existing historical ceiling details (currently hidden) • Removal of dated heating equipment • Repainting of doors in accordance with findings from historic paint analysis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration of symmetry • Removal or alteration of herringbone brickwork, flooring, wall tiles, arched doorways, ticket window openings, or shape of curved stairs • Painting of any wall or wall feature (including tiles) • Removal or replacement of existing wall sconces • Repointing mortar without mortar
TWO-STORY AUDITORIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-painting of plaster, ceiling, and wood elements of first floor and mezzanine in accordance with findings from paint analysis • Replacement of seating on first floor and mezzanine in existing configuration (select seat removal permitted only if for purpose of ADA compliance). Scale of seats should closely approximate existing seats (style of seats should match original seat design if possible, as per 1913 photograph) • Replacement of carpet runners with solid-color runners as per 1913 photographs of interior • Re-finishing or replacement of wood flooring in natural dark stain • Re-grading or re-sloping of flooring to allow ADA access or HVAC/electrical upgrades • Removal of stage projection over orchestra pit • Replacement of stage projection with similar millwork detailing as original projection (as seen in 1913 photographs) • Temporary removal of Emerson murals on first floor and mezzanine 		<p>ON FIRST FLOOR OR MEZZANINE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal/destruction of millwork or plasterwork including proscenium and molding, crown molding, ceiling details, pilasters and pilaster capitals, molding above doors or wood paneling • Permanent removal of Emerson murals • Perforations or surface alterations to Emerson murals not supervised by conservation professional • In areas of close proximity to murals, placement of lighting, HVAC, and/or sound equipment without consultation by conservation professional • Removal or replacement of ceiling or wall light fixtures • Alteration of wooden balcony molding

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for conservation (if required) • Cleaning or restoration of Emerson murals by conservation professional • Removal of asbestos curtain by remediation professionals • Installation of simple green velvet (or similar material) curtain (as per 1913 photograph and description). • Re-upholstery of first floor and mezzanine walls where upholstery is present. Fabric should match weave, coloring, and motif of original, as determined by fabric analysis 		
2ND FLOOR LANDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions to exterior sides of projection room • Replacement of carpeting on (upper and lower) stairs and at landing area with carpet or wood flooring • Repainting of stairwells (upper and lower) and landing walls based on conclusions from paint analysis • Relocation of metal gate to alternate area within the playhouse • Repainting of doors or millwork in accordance with conclusions from historic paint analysis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstructing stairway access • Removal or replacement of light fixtures • Alterations to stair balustrades and railings • Removal or alteration of door configurations • Removal or alteration of millwork features
HEADMISTRESS'S OFFICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repainting or re-finishing of surfaces in accordance with conclusions from historic paint analysis • Broken glass may be replaced in kind 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural or surface alterations to encasement (interior or exterior)
3rd FLOOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconfiguration bar, blackbox, bathroom, and/or kitchen space • Replacement of carpeting or flooring • Repainting of stairwells and landing walls based on conclusions from historic paint analysis • Replacement of existing ceiling light fixtures with 1910's era-appropriate lighting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of doorways and pocket doors in landing, library, and entryways to blackbox and bar
FLY SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement in kind of weights, ropes or pulleys (system type and configuration takes precedence over actual original material) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitution of fly system with alternate mechanical system
BASEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration or reconfiguration for additional restrooms, dressing rooms, green room, storage, or mechanical systems 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, avoid removing dressing room partitions and sinks

2) *Adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards*

In addition to outlining Character-Defining Elements and explaining acceptable versus unacceptable interventions, our group felt it prudent to incorporate additional means of protection with more formalized guidelines.

The National Park Service's Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SIS) serves as a useful tool for respectfully designing historic building alterations. The Plays and Player's Theatre, in its need to address efficiency and accessibility issues, can take many cues from these guidelines.

Whereas the National Park Service also considers different ways of addressing Renovation and Restoration, categorizing the Plays and Players project as one of "Rehabilitation" is fitting as it implies probable change to the structure in order to achieve "efficient contemporary use." According to the Secretary of the Interior, rehabilitation is defined as: "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values." Plays and Players, in its need for ADA access as a public space, and lower utility costs for financial feasibility, most certainly fits within the cadre addressed in this definition.

Several guidelines are outlined in the Standards for Rehabilitation, and the most applicable phrases have been examined and extracted for use by Plays and Players' building stewards.

Any additions necessary for providing optimized ADA access accessibility and up to date programming should be designed in a way that is as minimally disruptive to the historic material as possible. The additions should be designed as not to distract from or overwhelm the historic fabric, yet should differentiate themselves in a way that it is clear to visitors and future building stewards that these additions are not part of the building's historic significance. This careful design is essential to preserving the integrity of the historic structure, and will become a critical determining factor for whether or not the project is eligible for historic preservation tax credits.

In order to better apply these standards, the SIS has provided information on their website (http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_index.htm) for how best to interpret and

follow these standards. "Recommended" and "not recommended" scenarios are presented to best illustrate how to minimize the loss of historic fabric and avoid damage to a structure's historic character. Two of Plays and Player's major issues include accessibility³ and energy efficiency.

3 The Secretary of the Interior's Standards recognize a common issue that Plays and Players shares with countless other historic buildings: incorporation of federal rules, regulations, and standards in order to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Codes include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

RELEVANT STANDARD	APPLICATION TO PLAYS AND PLAYERS
ENERGY EFFICIENCY	The first step in retrofitting historic buildings for better energy efficiency is to “identify and evaluate existing historic features to assess their inherent energy-conserving potential. If it is determined that retrofitting measures are necessary, then such work needs to be carried out with particular care to ensure that the building’s historic character is retained.”
INSULATION	“Installing thermal insulation in attics and in unheated cellars and crawlspaces to increase the efficiency of the existing mechanical systems. Installing insulating material on the inside of masonry walls to increase energy efficiency where there is no character-defining interior molding around the window or other interior architectural detailing.”
WINDOWS	“Improving thermal efficiency with weatherstripping, storm windows, caulking, interior shades, and if historically appropriate, blinds and awnings.” “Installing interior storm windows with air-tight gaskets, ventilating holes, and/or removable clips to insure proper maintenance and to avoid condensation damage to historic windows.” “Installing exterior storm windows which do not damage or obscure the windows and frames.”
INTERIOR FEATURES	“Retaining historic interior shutters and transoms for their inherent energy-conserving features.”
MECHANICAL SYSTEMS	“Improving energy efficiency of existing mechanical systems by installing insulation in attics and basements.”
ACCESSIBILITY	<p>“Work must be carefully planned and undertaken so it does not result in the loss of character-defining spaces, features, and finishes. The goal is to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact.”</p> <p>“Identifying the historic building's character defining spaces, features, and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.” Our group has conducted and outlined this identification, as seen in section X. This also related to SIS’ suggestion for “Complying with barrier-free access requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.”</p> <p>“Working with local disability groups, access specialists, and historic preservation specialists to determine the most appropriate solution to access problems.”</p> <p>“Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled person to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.”</p> <p>“Designing new or additional means of access that are compatible with the historic building and its setting.”</p>

The Secretary of Interior Standards provides relevant recommendations for the following:

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STANDARD	APPLICATION TO PLAYS & PLAYERS
1. <i>"A property shall be used for its historic purpose..."</i>	Plays and Players has been in continuous use as a theatre for 100 years, and we encourage the continuation of this use for its cultural significance and meaning to the community.
2. <i>"The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved...removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided..."</i>	The character-defining elements, highlighted earlier in this dossier, serve as a foundation for categorizing this property's historic character. We urge current and future building stewards to mind and preserve these historic elements, conducting necessary intervention work only in spaces where concentrations are most low, and avoiding work in spaces where concentrations are most high.
3. <i>"Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use..."</i>	As described in the Statement of Significance, this building has been determined to be of significance not only for its remarkable fabric, but for its level of intactness, example as a noteworthy work of Amos Barnes, and of the Little Theatre typology. It is quite rare that a building demonstrating this level of significance remains so visually congruent with its original appearance. We recognize, and encourage others to remember, that this building is indeed an irreplaceable record of its time, place, and use, and its position on the National Register of Historic Places should further support this argument.
4. <i>"Changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved..."</i>	One example of this principle in relation to Plays and Players, is the continual change that has been seen in Quig's pub over the last several decades. While most of its interior is not "historic" in the traditional sense, the space has acquired cultural significance on its own as a center for the community theatre. Therefore, we see it appropriate for physical change to occur in this space only if the changes do not disrupt this imbued cultural significance.
5. <i>"Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved."</i>	As we have discussed in the explanation of each character-defining element, several details of the space represent a high level of craft. Elements including tiles from the Mercer Tile works and the Murals of Edith Emerson are good examples.
6. <i>"Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced... Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence."</i>	Fortunately, the main spaces of Plays & Players are not missing any substantial original features. While there do appear to be conservation issues in select areas, there is indeed significant evidence as to the original condition of most features which can help guide the repair of any damages.
7. N/A	
8. <i>"...[The] surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible."</i>	The Edith Emerson murals are in great need of cleaning. Conservation standards require that any cleaning-related changes made to the murals be as minimally invasive as possible. Therefore, we advise the stewards of Plays and Players to work only with trained professionals in the art and historic conservation fields to restore and conduct this work.
9. <i>"...related new construction shall not destroy the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment."</i>	Any additions necessary for providing optimized ADA access.

Careful consideration of and abidance by the standards set forth will not only ensure that a large percentage of historic fabric remain intact, but will also allow Plays and Players to be eligible for certain tax benefits, such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit. In order to achieve these tax benefits, a property must demonstrate that any repair or alteration of the building has not “damage[d] or destroy[ed] materials, features, or finishes that are important in defining the building’s historic character.” Being that our team considers many of the interior decorative elements to be an integral part in defining the building’s historic character, it is our hope that observation of these standards will aid in the protection of our previously identified character-defining elements.

3.) DESIGNATE INTERIOR FEATURES

In 2009, The Philadelphia Historical Commission amended the Philadelphia Historic Preservation ordinance to include the designation and protection of public interior spaces and features. The first space to be designated under this provision was the City Council Chambers at City Hall in November of 2010, followed by the Family Court Building in Logan Square in May of 2011.⁴

The designation of an interior space on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places protects and monitors changes on the interior in its entirety, while the designation of specific interior features protects and monitors changes only in the areas which have been individually designated.

Though Plays and Players is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Section 5.1 of the Preservation Ordinance of the City of Philadelphia is critical to note. This provision states that even if an historic structure has been individually designated, its interior is NOT protected “unless it has been specifically designated after the effective date of this subsection of the Code,” July 1, 2009. The interior of Plays and Players, which was placed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1970 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, does not fall within these parameters, and is at this moment vulnerable to change.

The University of Pennsylvania studio team sees the interior designation of theatre features

⁴ Spaces considered for designation must be open to the public and do not require the owner’s consent for designation.

as incredibly import due to the fact that many of the character-defining elements are located in the building’s interior. Of the 28 character-defining elements identified, approximately 80% are located on the interior. If this space is left unprotected, it is possible that future plans for the site could have adverse, irreversible effects on many of the features which contribute to the building’s significance.

Considering the fact that many changes will need to be made in order to optimize the building’s use as a theatre with universal accessibility, it is important to consider the degree to which an interior designation would limit the flexibility of future changes. As with the designation of any historic building, the property’s individual needs and history must be understood as unique. Given the breadth of changes that would need to occur for this particular property, we recognize that it may not be realistic to designate the entirety of the interior space. Therefore, we would like to propose that certain areas of the space be designated rather than the entire space. Our recommendations include the areas with the highest concentration of character-defining elements including the first floor lobby, the walls, ceiling, proscenium arch, balcony face, and murals of the two-story auditorium space, as well as the headmistress’ office on the second floor.

The ordinance also states that if an interior is designated, it must be “kept in good repair.” This insistence, though seemingly obvious, is important as it places a degree of maintenance accountability on current and future building owners.

Aside from the irreplaceable loss of historic fabric, monetary consequences can also result from the alteration or demolition of features under an interior designation. These include fines and mandates to restore the appearance of the interior prior to a violation. However, it is understood that any restoration of previously lost elements only signify the original placement of historic fabric and do not necessarily “count” as significant historic elements themselves. In order to proactively avoid these potential effects, interior designation would serve as a filter for potentially disruptive alterations to the property. Any proposed changes to the building or application for permits would, under this designation, first need to be approved by the Historical Commission of Philadelphia.

Though interior designation is a prevalent practice in many cities, it is one often met with controversy. Building owners often fear that an interior designation will result in a loss of their “rights” to alter the building and could perhaps

include financial obligations the building owner may not be able to support.

Plays and Players is reminded that the protection of the interior features through such a designation would not prevent change to the interior, rather would ensure that any alterations would be appropriately sensitive to the existing historic fabric. Proposed changes would be met with a review process and approved or disapproved by the Historical Commission based on the level of sensitivity to the existing fabric. Any hearing regarding this decision would be open to the public, and building owners and other stakeholders would have the opportunity to address the Commission about the proposed changes.

Plays and Players should also be aware that an interior designation, if granted and keenly capitalized upon, could help draw attention to the interior of the theatre, and therefore potentially increase revenues and general interest in preserving its continued use as a theatre.

4.) DONATE A FACADE EASEMENT

To aid in the conservation of the façade, Plays and Players should also consider the donation of a façade easement. A façade easement would satisfy both the goals of the preservation of the Character-Defining Elements of the building, be minimally restrictive to the organization, and offer a small economic benefit to the organization. Although the current owner takes excellent care of the property, it is important to recognize that this may not always be the case. The donation of a facade easement would help to protect the property, even when sold to subsequent owners. For the current owners, the preservation easement would have the benefit of a charitable tax donation, the amount of which will be dependent upon the property owner's tax status and the value of the easement.

The building owner (grantor) may donate a façade easement to a "qualified organization," (grantee) such as the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia to add a layer of security to its protection and maintenance in perpetuity. Plays and Players qualifies under the IRS requirements that the building be a "certified historic structure" listed on the National Register and the façade publicly visible. The value of the façade is appraised and the amount deducted from the value of the property before property taxes, thus decreasing the amount of property taxes owed annually. Most times, a small

percentage of around 5% of the appraised value of the façade is paid as a one-time fee to the accepting non-profit organization.⁵

The process for donating a facade easement to the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia is as follows: After the owner has contacted the Preservation Alliance and the Alliance has determined the property is eligible, the Alliance issues a letter of intent to accept the easement. The owner then must countersign the letter and return it with a deposit to cover the preliminary legal fees for preparing the documents. The property owner then selects an appraiser to determine the value of the easement to be contributed. The Alliance then provides the property owner or the owner's attorney with the model easement legal agreement and necessary attachments. Finally, once the certification and appraisal are complete and the easement documents are signed by all parties, the easement is recorded by the Register of Deeds. The whole process can be completed within 30 to 45 days. For more information, consult the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.

The easement would prohibit the demolition of the structure and require review and approval by the grantee for major renovations or additions that could affect the significant elements of the building. The easement would also require the organization to maintain the facade, a requirement already in place due to the building's Register listing. The donation of facade easements does occasionally restrict change of use, so the façade easement may hamper future adaptation of the building. However, for the foreseeable future, Plays & Players is not likely to conduct extensive changes to the façade, making the donation of a façade easement a viable option for the organization. For more information on the donation of façade easements, see the IRS report on Façade Easement Contributions.⁶

5 Community Awareness Kit: 12th and 13th Street Corridor, p. 10. Available: <http://www.brynmawr.edu/iconog/washw/images/G/G6b.pdf>

6 Available at http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/fa-cade_easement_brief_june_2009_final_revision_08272009.pdf

SECTION 7:

CONCLUSION

The preservation plan for Plays and Players has been based on a careful analysis of the building's character defining elements supported by its historical, architectural and social context.

Though Plays and Players is currently occupied by a stable and active theatre organization, it is important to recognize the building may not always enjoy such responsible stewardship.

The importance of the theatre transcends its resident organization, with cultural significance indelibly imparted upon the architecture.

The remarkable level of intactness of original fabric has allowed the structure to remain a foremost example of the Little Theatre typology, and stand as one of few examples of Amos Barnes' architectural and engineering prowess. Distinguished decorative features including Edith Emerson's auditorium murals further enrich the building's significance, and its century-long continued use as a theatre solidifies its place in Philadelphia and theatre history at large.

This preservation plan has been crafted to delineate how and why the aforementioned factors of significance can be preserved throughout the building's future use. Observing the provisions set forth in this plan (retaining character-defining elements, adhering to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, listing interior features on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and donating the façade easement), ensures that character-defining architectural elements will remain intact and the building's significance maintained.

APPENDICES (COORDINATE NUMBERS WITH PLAN)

ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE TOOLS AVAILABLE

In addition to the previous recommendations, Plays & Players has several available incentives for the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic structure. Should the organization decide to undertake a rehabilitation consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, they would be eligible for the 20% Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the City's Improvement Incentive. The donation of a façade or interior easement would provide a one-time tax deduction, as well as decrease in property taxes. Organizations such as the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission offer technical assistance to aid in these endeavors. Other incentives that may help the organization reach their goals of sustainability and increased interpretation are the Philadelphia Green Roof Tax Credit and the Heritage Philadelphia Program's Award for Interpretive Inquiry and Investigation. Below are more detailed descriptions of these programs.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives
(<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/index.htm>)

The National Park Service, Internal Revenue Service and State Historic Preservation Officer jointly administer the Federal Historic Preservation tax credit for the rehabilitation of commercial or income-producing historic properties. This 20% tax credit is subtracted from the property's tax bill on an amount that offsets tax liabilities (i.e. the increased value of a property after rehabilitation). To be eligible, the building must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register Historic District. In addition, the current owner must retain the building for at least five years after rehabilitation.

Philadelphia Improvement Incentive
(www.brynmaer.edu/iconog/washw/images/G/G6b.pdf)

City Council Ordinance 1130 allows for the exemption of real estate taxes on 100% of improvements to an industrial, commercial or other business property with no owner occupants.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is available through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and through the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. The PHMC conducts initial reviews for the federal rehabilitation tax credit, for which Plays & Players could qualify. The Preservation Alliance, a non-profit "dedicated to the protection and appropriate development of Greater Philadelphia's historic resources," provides technical assistance, public advocacy and the acquisition and maintenance of preservation easements.

Philadelphia's Green Roof Tax Credit
(http://www.dvgbc.org/green_resources/library/green-rooftax-credit-philadelphia
http://www.phila.gov/revenue/pdfs/Internet_Summary_-_B.pdf)

Should the organization show interest in installing a green roof covering at least 50% of the rooftop, it would be eligible for the city of Philadelphia's one-time Green Roof Tax Credit. This credit, totaling up to 25% of the green roof construction cost, would be levied against the Philadelphia Business Privilege Tax (up to \$100,000).

Heritage Philadelphia Program Awards for Interpretive Inquiry and Investigation
(Pew Center for Arts & Heritage) <http://www.pcah.us/heritage>)

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage "supports individual practitioners in the investigation of imaginative projects in public history." The organization will award small grants to individuals to "support research that explores new approaches to engaging audiences with history." Eligible projects include new interpretive products or programs such as an online or traditional publication, film or video, program plan, curriculum guide, exhibition plan or original audience research.

VOLUME 2:
INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

The accompanying document is composed of projects completed by individual members of the University of Pennsylvania preservation studio. These projects were intended to delve more deeply into a particular issue facing the organization, or to address one aspect of the preservation plan outlined in this document. The projects cover a broad range of topics, from the compilation of oral histories and development of interpretive tours, to a contemporary stage lighting plan, to conditions assessments and interior finish analysis and interpretation.

Larry Parra: Oral Histories

This oral history campaign is a first effort at preserving the rich cultural history and significance of Plays and Players, focusing on active members who have been associated with the organization for decades. While Plays and Players' organization has archives rich in pictures and playbills, no one has taken the time to go through them and create a comprehensive history of the organization. Plays and Players has always had a large and vibrant membership, with many members involved through most of their lives. Many see and use the theater as a gathering place for community, utilizing the theatre's Bar, Quig's Pub, as a place to share stories and pass down the theatre's rich cultural history by word of mouth.

Tom Wilson: Interpretation Plan

Plays and Players has been a staple of the Philadelphia arts community for over one hundred years, and yet beyond its members, relatively few people are aware of its existence or remarkable history. A semi-regular tour and small on-site museum would be inexpensive and engaging ways to attract new visitors. A tour would not only generate interest in the theatre's striking architecture, but also the rich history and cultural significance over the past 100 years. The rich repository of material already on site that documents the theatre's storied history could easily be used to create a stylish and informative museum in the basement space. Any donations or profits received from the museum or tour could be used for overall maintenance of the building, specifically the retention of the space's Character-Defining Elements and restoration of the interior features.

Laura DiPasquale: Condition Assessment and Maintenance Plan

A condition assessment and maintenance plan

are basic necessities in addressing issues that may contribute to the degradation of a building's Character-Defining Elements. A condition assessment provides a baseline upon which the maintenance plan can be built, identifying any current problem areas. The maintenance plan and schedule then establish periodic inspections to help identify problems before they occur, thus extending the life of the building, preserving the original and character-defining elements of the structure, and minimizing emergency and large-scale damage and repair costs.

Sarah Peterson and Gladysa Vega-Gonzalez: Analysis of the Early Auditorium Interior

The level of intactness of Plays and Players is one of the most remarkable aspects of the building. This factor of significance is true especially in auditorium space, which displays among many historic elements, the character-defining and significance-contributing Edith Emerson murals. In order to best understand the context in which the murals were first viewed, an analysis of the interior auditorium finishings and furnishings was conducted.

Findings from microscopic paint analysis and in-situ investigation was conducted and cross-referenced with historic (archival) accounts in order to accurately specify which finishes or furnishings could be included when and if the interior is rehabilitated. In accordance with the preservation plan set forth for Plays and Players, this analysis was observant of the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation which, with regards to the replacement of original features, mandates any replacement features "shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence."

Jason Cantu: Lighting

The theatre's main auditorium space is the area with the greatest concentration of character-defining features and is least tolerant to change. Upon evaluating threats to the walls (molding, murals, pilasters, and sconces), it was determined one of the most visible and direct threats to their maintenance and protection is the current lighting system. The current lighting system violates a number of the prohibited recommendations in our preservation plan. To both protect the character defining elements and meet the secretary of the interior's standards, a new lighting system that completely removes all modern stage lighting systems and their accessories from the walls is proposed.

ORAL HISTORIES

LARRY PARRA

Introduction

Being in existence for 100 years now, Plays and Players has shown a strong presence in Philadelphia and yet, little is known about its history. The organization has archives rich in pictures and playbills, but no one has taken the time to go through them and create a history for the organization. As previously mentioned, Plays and Players has always had a large amount of members associated to the organization, many involved throughout their lives. Many see and use the theater as a gathering place for community, who often share stories with each other. Many details of those involved, are by word of mouth, mostly shared in the theater's Bar. In order to get most out of the significance of the theater and organization, I propose an oral history campaign, focusing on board and active members who have been associated to the organization for decades.

Methodology

The primary focus was to interview those who have been involved with the organization for many years. Originally, the plan was to conduct interviews using a video camera during two consecutive weekends. With the help of Rachel Dukeman, Managing Director of Plays and Players, I was able to come up with a list of potential candidates for the oral history interviews. Furthermore, in efforts to speak with people directly in hope of agreeing to participate in the project, I attended a Collaborative meeting. There I met some members Rachel had referred me to, as well as new possible candidates. I was fortunate enough to have most agree to participate. I was able to get their contact information from Rachel and started setting up interviews. Unfortunately, getting people on the phone was somewhat problematic. After numerous tries, the project was nearly extinct. In a last attempt to get these interviews, I was advised by Rachel to attend an event at the theater where many older members would be in attendance. I arrived with a video camera and tripod in hopes some would agree to have a sit down with me. I also came prepared with release forms and some preliminary questions. Within 30 minutes of arriving to the theater's bar, I had a conversation with Raymond Smith, who has been a member of the organization since 1976. He went into detail regarding the day he became a member of Plays and Players and why he decided to join the organization. He explained how he and most of his friends were shocked that a Catholic man was accepted into an organization known at the time for being "WASPY". I asked him if he would tell his story yet again, but on video; he agreed.

My second interviewee was Elizabeth Chomentowski. She further elaborated on the restrictive membership Plays and Players was known for in the 50s and 60s. She also gave me a brief history on how the theater has changed, both in its operations and its demographics.

Linda Gryn, whom I had met at the Collaborative meeting weeks before was my third interviewee. She, like Elizabeth, recounted the changes in the organization and shared some personal stories of the theater.

Carmen Di Felice has been involved with the organization for six years. Though she has not been a member as long as the aforementioned interviewees, she was able to give insight of the organization's more recent change, the transition to a professional theater.

Sample Questions

When did you join Plays and Players?

Why did you join Plays and Players? What made it different from the rest of the organizations?

What's your first memory of the Theater?

What's your fondest memory?

How many plays were you involved in?

Favorite play? (seen or acted in)

Which actors were involved in the theater when you started?

Did you meet any famous actors?

Interviews

Raymond Smith

Member since 1976

Date of Interview: Dec. 2, 2011

Location: Plays and Players Theater

Q: When did you join Plays and Players?

I joined Plays and Players in 1976. I was 27 years old and been out of college for many years. [I] acted in college but hadn't done anything in the 7 years I had lived in the city. I had seen some perfectly dreadful productions here at Plays and Players but it just so happened that in March of 1976 I went to see a production of *The Miracle Worker*, which to this day is one of the greatest things we've ever

done. In June of 1976, no I'm sorry, May, I was walking by and it saw there were auditions for *Thurbor Carnival*, a show I had done in college and I thought, "I hadn't done anything in a long time, there's so many parts to this show, I'll audition and get a small part. I auditioned, and the man who was directing it, [?] Chomentowski, cast me in the role of James Thurbor. After the opening montage, I had a 6-page monologue. I was terrified, but anyway, I agreed to do it. So we rehearsed for almost a month and a half and opening night was on a Wednesday night. Back then, Plays and Players was a membership organization and before you became a member, you had to meet with the membership committee. So we open on a Wednesday night, I am downstairs being made up to play James Thurbor of *Thurbor Carnival* on opening night, when I am summoned up here, to this room, which used to be called the Skinner Room. I met with the membership committee. At that time it was three ladies, middle-aged women, sitting around a silver tea set, they were wearing hats, with veils, pearls, and gloves. Everything was very formal, we even got cookies and tea passed around. I'm sitting here the entire time thinking "if they don't accept me as a member, do I not go on tonight? I'm the lead in this play. Blessedly, they said yes, yes you can, you're officially a member. So I raced down and made my opening debut that very night."¹

Elizabeth Chomentowski

Member since 1968

Date of Interview: Dec. 2, 2011

Location: Plays and Players Theater

Q: When did you join Plays and Players?

I moved to Center City in 1965, and I started working with a group called Drama Guild. Drama Guild was a semi-professional theater that had a connection with board of education. They did classic plays and they rented at Plays and Players, which is how I came here. We were the outside people. [We were] the renters that did horrible things when Plays and Players wasn't watching. The gentleman who designed sets for drama guild was a member of Plays and Players. At one point I remember him saying to me, I recommend you to membership, but I really like you. I thought that was really odd. I didn't become a member until 1968 or something like that.

Q: Why did you decide to join?

I guess I wanted a chance to direct. I had directed in college and I wanted a chance to do that. They had it set

¹ I had no intention of interviewing Raymond, but I met him at the theater's bar and he told me the story above. I asked him if he would repeat it in front of the camera.

up so that you had to stage-manage first for Plays and Players. So I joined so I could get that opportunity. And I got it right away simply because I got to do the January show. No one wanted to do the January show because that meant rehearsing over the holidays. Plays and Players in those days was divided between social members and theater people who were in just to do the theater. Plays and Players had just opened their plays to the general public. In the early 60's, they were still doing it just for members. The membership was quite large, but they had opened it to doing it about the middle of the 60s. First show I ever saw here was *Taming of the Shrew*. It was a drama guild show, but it was showed at Plays and Players. What struck me was that that show had a white character playing the male lead and a black woman playing Kate. I thought it was really cool because it was something you didn't see very often in those days. I associated that with being a member here. Which was of course, not true, but it's what got me here.

Q: What's your fondest memory of Plays and Players?

Well, partially would be *Taking of the Shrew*, doing a {?} of drinks got me drunk with power because it hit a nerve in the college community, Zendel was not often done back then. We had lines that were out the door and down the block, which was really exciting. So that kind of got me really hooked.

Q: How many plays were you involved in?

No way of going back there.

Q: How has the theater changed since you've been here?

We developed a workshop theater, because there were a lot of new people coming around looking for opportunity. They very often didn't get cast in the major shows. It was sort of the same people over and over getting cast. So we started a workshop theater. The idea of the workshop theater was to do small things up here, but this wasn't a theater room back then². We did things up here that people had always wanted to do, like if you wanted to play a fellow but you weren't black or you weren't the right age but you wanted to play that part, you could do it in workshop theater if you got the production together. That way new people had opportunities, older people had opportunities to do parts they had missed and our children's theater started then because a people back then wanted to do a children's show.

Q: Based on a previous interview, the theater's membership was restrictive. Do you agree?

² Referring to the room where the interview took place. Now known as the black box theater.

You came up here and waited in the bar and they interviewed you and this kind of thing. When I came here, I guess I knew, that it was sort of friends of friends who became members. I didn't know the why of that. Being naïve, coming from the freshly minted, "lets give a flower to everyone and love everyone generation", I didn't know it was a way of keeping the club homogenous. In subsequent years, Cindy Bloom ran Drama Guild. He was Jewish, and said that he had applied for membership and had been turned down. And I thought, "maybe they just don't like you". He was the first one that noticed the tiles in the lobby; there is one that looks like a swastika. In reality, it's not a swastika because it goes in the other direction and the building predates Hitler. But Cindy was so convinced that he used to put little pieces of papers over those symbols every time he did a show down there. This caused people to come and lift up the paper and look. We eventually looked up the history of it from Plays and Players point of view and had a thing at the box office where if people questioned, we could let them know that it predated [Hitler]. But it is true, as most private clubs were at the time, [they were] more homogenous.

Q: So when you were a member, Plays and Players had black member already?

One. And I don't think he was a member when I joined. We didn't even have black people audition for shows very much. We had to go out and look for them. [We started looking for black actors] Because when we started doing children's theater, it occurred to us, we were doing very white faces for an audience that went that way into the south of Philadelphia where you had mostly black kids. If you were dealing just with the audience of center city, it was different. And it did occur to us as some point when we start contacting schools and community centers, it would behoove us to try and pull in some other people so that we didn't look so different from the people that we were doing shows for. It was a hard push in those days.

Q: Was there any resentment from other members?

I don't know. To tell you the truth, I mean, a lot of people came and did shows but did not join because it was not required. We pushed so that it was not

required anymore for people to join. Children theater especially attracted younger actors and a lot of them couldn't afford it, the membership and things. so they didn't join. Eventually we offered some low priced memberships to make it more available. I don't think there was ever any resentment that I ever saw here at Plays and Players towards anybody about anything. I think it was more the fact that it had always been a certain way. Even today, there are people who will say to you, "no, we weren't restricted" and they don't believe there was a time that it was and of course I don't think It was written down. People didn't do that back then. But I have never seen anyone be, well I shouldn't say that, we are strange to each other at times but its never based on that kind of thing. I got more views from being a theater person who wasn't interested in the social aspect than I got for anything else

Q: What do u mean social aspects?

Well this [Plays and Players], started as a social club. It was started by people that were interested in the avant-garde theater, the way a lot of people are today. They were interested in bringing in things to the public that were innovative for their time. It then morphed into a social club, since social clubs were really big up until the 50s. Soon after, social clubs started to disappear. But it was a very big social club, I know people who were members in the 5 years before I came here and that was their primary focus. They came here for Friday cocktail parties; they were a very big thing. Everyone showed up for them and it was a big social gathering. A lot of young couples, before they had children and moved out to the suburbs, were members here for that reason. And those of us, who joined, I would say, towards the end of the 60s and into the 70s, were more interested in what opportunities the theater had to offer. So [some] didn't have energy to do both things. So mostly we didn't show up for the social events, until we started having brunches. We came up with the idea that the workshop could do things as entertainment for the brunches. And then we showed up for those things because we were the entertainers. So there was more blending of the two [groups]. We used to have gourmet dinners here, on the Saturday night of the show. People dressed formally, came to candle lit dinners that were cooked by members. I know this because my husband used to be a waiter here for the gourmet dinners. We never actually went to one ourselves, but he came to waiter. I met him here actually

Q I heard from one of the members that you would bring your whole family to the theater.

I have three kids and they did everything here. My oldest, while a teenager, used to love bringing down sets. I think they only thing they were ever in together was Hansel and Gretel; they were among the gingerbread children. My daughter did box office sort of stuff. They grew up here. We have a picture of my husband stage-managing a show with her in her baby seat sound asleep next to him.

Q: Any other drastic changes in the theater since the time you've been here?

Well, it changes in response to what the neighborhood is. The only community theaters here were society hill; it existed the same time that we did. We had different people coming in and doing shows. But mostly, Gilbert and Solomon was a regular renter here and then they were regular before we ended up with Philadelphia Company. Its hard to exist as a community theater. We were one of the few community theaters in metropolitan (?) for a long time because we didn't have competition. Kevin Bacon was here in *Remember the Wedding*. I remember that show, I remember everybody from it, but I don't remember him. He wasn't a major character. A lot of the people that had worked on the shows that I worked on are in show business. A young girl that I worked with a long time ago, Paola de Foria, is a director of documentaries. T.J. Mioli is an actor and has done some directing. There are many whom have gone off to do different things. We used to have a member who was an accountant that went off to California, worked as an accountant for the director of Hunter³, and ultimately, now directs commercials out in New York. He said to me "*you know what I got out of Plays and Players? I found out how to do it for nothing. When I came here and brought in a commercial under budget, they looked at me like I had four heads and it was the best thing they had ever met in their entire life. I just said I learned how to do on a wish and a prayer at Plays and Players.*" We have a lot of people out there that have come in here over the years. It's been a good place to be. It winding down from that now, oddly enough, a lot of what's happening now is sort of how the theater was in he beginning. It's people looking for new things. It always changes, there was a time when we did 6 major productions or five and did a children's show on the set of each one of the major productions. So we'd open with the major production, then we did the children's show during daytime playing Saturdays and Sundays and then we would end up with both show plays the last weekend. So sometimes we had an hour to close up one and start the next one. It seems impossible now, but we

3 Hunter, a TV series from the 1980s.

did it.

Q: Any other stories?

There are noises in the theater. Have you heard about that?

Me: **Yes, we've heard about that.**

We were doing *Little Foxes* and the set designer was a young man named Mitchell Gillette. He could not work until midnight, because he had another job. He had to paint the set so he wanted to come in at midnight. So we made arrangements for him to come in at midnight. We gave him a key, he came in one night and he said "no, I can't do it anymore by myself, somebody else has to be here". Why? I said. "No, there's things, I can't explain it but there's things." So the other person on the artistic committee and myself had to take turns coming to baby-sit Mitchell during the night between midnight and like 4 o'clock in the morning so he could get the thing done because he said he couldn't be alone, "its too much here"

Q: Any other stories of that nature?

[Chuckles] A lot of strange people come though here. I think one of the reasons I like being here was because it made me feel normal. In the normal world, I wasn't normal, but here I was. I remember a young gentleman sat at the bar and got mad at someone, and went down and ripped the tiles out of the bathroom in the ladies room. [He] Ripped the tiles out and disappeared. There was another guy who worked in our office and turned out he took a lot of money while he was working here. He still sends us money as part of the terms of getting out of jail.

Linda Gryn

Member since 1977

Date of Interview: Dec. 2, 2011

Location: Plays and Players Theater

Q: When did you join Plays and Players?

So I joined 34 years ago when I was twenty and my first show was actually a very cool show, it was "*The Owl and the Pussycat Went to See the Beautiful Pea Green Boat.*" It's an English musical that they found and they did it as a

main stage play for children and adults, with adults in it. When I got here, I auditioned for the play and they gave me a small part and they asked Betty [Chomentowski] what she thought. She said, “she can sing it, but I don’t know if she can act it, you’ll have to give her a small part.” So that was my first show and at the end of that season they did *10 Nights in a Bar Room*. Betty directed it and actually had me audition for it. I played little Mary, which was a small part but I had to sing a lot. But I die in the play and they take me to heaven and I have to come back at the end. So at the end of one of the intermissions, they put me on a swing, up send me up by the rafters. I sit up there for waiting for act 3, until my entrance coming down as an angel. And [Betty] said “from the first row, you could see these little feet, dangling from [above] before I would come down singing “Look for the Silver Lining”. So that was my first year here at Plays and Players.

Q: Why did you choose Plays and Players?

I guess for me, everyone was really involved in it. They put a lot of personal time into it. And it made it feel like an interesting group. I got to know everyone personally and the bar was open all the time then. So you would have rehearsals and then go to the bar and you sit around and talk and share stories with other people that were in the play and other people you came to the play.

Q: What is your first memory of the Theater?

My first memory is from when I was sixteen; I came to see a play, *Canterbury Tales*. I thought it was a neat little building and promptly forgot about it since it was in the middle of town, its hidden on Delancey Street, you don’t find Delancey street easily. I didn’t realize it again until I came to audition and I said “I’ve been here before!”

Q: What was your favorite Play?

One of my favorites was *Really Rosie*, I played Rosie. I was forty years old and had to wear gloves all the time because my hands looked too old to play Rosie but I was short enough, you know, childlike enough to play Really Rosie.

Q: How has the theater changed since you’ve been here?

When you came in, you auditioned for a play but after your second play they encouraged you to join. They did have a joining process, like you’ve heard before, we had a tea and you had to have a sponsor who was already a member. I guess people would have thought it was cliquey. There were these little cliques and groups but its changed over time. There was no interview process after that and you did get more “ethnics” involved. They did experiment with plays that were of more variety of audience like straight plays and gay plays and Hispanics.

They were trying to do nontraditional casting.

Q: When were gay plays introduced to Plays and Players?

Probably in the early 90s. We did a couple, which were done in workshop rather than the main stage. We experimented [with] different gay plays and things like that. We’ve done more over the years. One season we ended up canceling our last show; we were supposed to do *Adam and Steve*, but we ran out of money that year so we didn’t do it. But that was very controversial that we decided to do that. But that happened in the late 80s.

Q: What makes a Hispanic Plays?

We did some in workshop; where we had Spanish characters in them, not speaking Spanish. But I can’t think of the name at the moment.

Q: Were some of the workshop productions done on the main stage?

Yes, some were done on the main stage, but without sets, just costumes and props. We started using the third floor more for small plays and cabarets and things like that. During my first years here, you didn’t do a lot of musicals because they were very expensive. So we did live cabaret nights since we didn’t have to pay for the music. We started doing musicals again about six years ago.

Q: Why are musicals expensive?

Musicals cost you more money because you’re paying for royalties but you’re also paying for the music. So it’s double the royalties. If you do it downstairs, it goes by the number of seats, so its 300 seats. If you did it up here, (black room), its 80 seats. So we did cabaret up here. So was easier to do it up here than the ones we did on the main stage⁴.

Q: Any controversies in your time here?

We had one election; typically the president would renew for about five years and then not again. But the president wanted to run again and we ran it as an election. Which during my time, they had never had one. This occurred just ten years ago. It wasn’t controversial necessarily but it was an interesting concept. We had a ballot; we had to send them out. Members had to mail them back. People from one candidate had to count the ballots, then the other candidate’s people had to count them. It was actually kind of fun.

⁴ The Kind and I, The Secret Garden, Camelot, and Carousel were musicals done on the main stage.

Q: Did you run?

No, I was vice president, no one opposed me. And well they should not have. [laughs] I've been vice president for 15 years.

Q: What other changes have you seen within the organization?

A lot of the changes have occurred in the past three years. These changes have changed the way we do things, such as being more professional and starting to pay people. I still remember a time when you had to dig up people to do plays because you couldn't find enough people. There were a lot of people when I first started here since there weren't many little theaters in the city. So there were a lot of people who did non-paid theater for practice and moved out onto doing paid theater. There wasn't an Arden, or all the little theaters like Brat and 1812 and all those things. They hadn't existed yet, so we were one of the only games in town. It was tough to get into Walnut Street. I guess the Walnut has been around for a long time; they were in that smaller venue over on Sansom Street. Philadelphia Company did their auditions in New York instead of doing their auditions here; so they got a lot of their people imported. Philadelphia Company is where I met any famous people that I've met in this building. That's where I met Richard Thomas, John Voight from the *Waltons*, and Zoe Caldwell. Celeste Holmes came and did a show with them and neither of them thought our dressing rooms were very attractive. They are just holes cut out in the basement painted in different colors (laughs).

Q: Well not anymore, they are all white now.

No, not anymore, but there used to be a pink one and a blue one, you know, a creative one with daisies on the wall. We did go a little paint crazy one time and painted them all different colors.

I remember when we didn't have air conditioning and we had to rehearse in the summer for the September shows. That was hot. We didn't get air conditioning until I was here for about five or six years. We had a campaign for it and we had a matching grant for it and finally got air conditioning. Now of course, it's trying to die so we'll have to wait again. We keep hoping it's going to last for a few more years.

Q: Any changes in the building?

It hasn't really changed. This room has changed the most. We had dinners, and brunches, and we did cabaret night stuff up here. We had the big piano that's out in the hallway in here. The seats are an upgrade; they were added right before I came in. During our 75th year anniversary, we actually had people name seats. We've gotten a couple of new roofs. We had the electric upgraded, especially on stage. When I came here, there were these big levers that you had to turn on a dial and push the lever up and then you locked it in place. Then we upgraded to a computer board. When we had a blackout, you locked all the knobs together and then pulled this one big handle to make the room blackout. So to make the whole room black out, there were three sets of levers and I had to leap up and hold the lever and lift my feet, so my entire weight would slowly blackout the room. And that's how I did a slow blackout, but lifting my feet up and pulling the whole thing down until my knees almost hit the ground. I don't remember what the board was called, but it had big goose knobs and you had to turn them all.

Q: How do you feel about the building itself, in terms of its significance or reaction if anything changed?

It feels comfortable. It's like home, well, I've been here for a long time, so it is like home. I love working downstairs because it has great acoustics. You don't need microphones, it carries your voice, it carries singing voices, it carries instruments, so it's a beautiful sound room to work in as an actor.

Carmen Di Felice

Member since 2004

Date of Interview: Dec. 2, 2011

Location: Plays and Players Theater

Q: When did you join Plays and Players?

I think I joined the winter of 2004 or maybe January of 2005. My first show at Plays and Players was *It's a Wonderful Life* directed by Betty Chomentowski. They were having trouble finding a Mary Bailey and I had been involved with the Brick Playhouse and Overnight Theater in Philadelphia and there was an organization doing fly by night productions where we did 24-hour theater. So I had a circle of friends in theater and

someone, I think Nancy Seagal got word to me that she thought I should audition for Mary Bailey. The rest of the show was cast and I came up here to the third floor and remember Betty was behind a table. Prior to the audition, I had never been to Plays and Players. They auditioned me and asked me if I'd take the part. The show was unusual because it ran through December and I don't know if we had six weeks, well, it seemed like forever that we did the show. We were trying to capture the Christmas audience through December and then we had a two-week break and we came back and ran the show two more weekends in January.

I learned that the theater was a club and it reminded me of my high school experience in theater, which was the best exposure I had to working with a group and doing all parts of theater such as working backstage and working with lights and costumes and really being a part of a whole production company. So that's why I wanted to join.

Q: What are some of the changes you've seen during your time at Plays and Players?

Oh god, so many. The thing that I love the most is listening to stories from members who have been involved with Plays and Players for decades.

I think its more challenging now because there are so many theater companies in Philadelphia and with the French festival and so many ways you can produce your work and to have a voice. In some ways, its make it hard for this theater, which was such a community, their energies, are now more scattered. We'll have people come in from temple, Drexel, or university arts will get involved with different shows. But they graduate and move on, people are more transient now. It's harder for us to build a base of artist that stay with Plays and Players. With Bill Eagonist as president, so many things have become much more structured and we've been able to become f professional. It's so nice to have staff members now. A lot of it was just a few dedicated volunteers that were really keeping this place alive. It was such burdens on them that I was so happy to see more people that can help continue the tradition of Plays and Players.

Q: Do you like the idea of Plays and Players becoming a professional theater?

I have my misgivings in ways. I love the idea of a community theater, of people coming in with all different backgrounds. Sometimes you find the most amazing people who haven't had the experience that paid actors who have been doing it for a living have. I'm not a professional theater artist myself, but its something that I love and want to be a part of. I still feel we need

to involve the community, but I am all for us having a professional organization. It is a professional endeavor to keep this beautiful theater operating and to work on restoring it and to keep out finances in a manner that we can apply for grants and help improve things and continue what so many people have led us up to in 100 years.

Q: So going professional, does that mean only professional actors can audition?

No, we still have open auditions. I don't think there's any limit on who can come and audition. Its just that we are trying to pay more actors and have that level of credibility that reviewers are going to come see the show early, to have better PR and marketing to get the word out. I think we were in the shadow of the Philadelphia Theater Company. They were out major renter; they were in the space downstairs. We were still continuing our shows along, but it was in between their bigger productions that had a wider audience. Therefore, a lot of people didn't know who Plays and Players were. Some thought the theater would close after PTC got their own theater on Broad Street.

Conclusion

Though we have been able to provide history of the Little Theatre and Plays and Players organization from our research; we were unable to find much information of Plays and Players after the last Report of the Board of Governors. From 1933 until now, very little information has been recorded regarding the theater's history. By conducting an oral history campaign, we were able to get a perspective from those involved in the organization for almost four decades. Raymond, Elizabeth and Lynda were able to give a personal account on how the theater has progressed throughout the years. Their personal account on the restrictive social club shines a new light on how the club functioned during the 60s and 70s. It's hard to imagine that the organization known today, as a community theater was once such an esoteric organization. Furthermore, this new information makes us look back at the roots of both the Little Theatre and Plays and Players. Both organizations, though known for being avant-garde and focused on community theater, did have memberships upon their inceptions. It's hard to delineate if the theaters' original intent was solely to gather money from memberships, or if in fact used membership as a way of segregation of the Philadelphia elite. Though the interviews still leave us with many questions, it would be interesting to research membership policies of other theaters during the 1960s and 70s. Looking into this would help us conclude if in fact Plays and Players was progressive during the mid-century as it was during early century.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT: TOM WILSON

Tour Overview

It is my recommendation that a tour be offered two to four times a month, and be conducted by volunteers, theatre members, or Plays and Players' directors. Weather permitting, tours would begin outside of the theatre and highlight the importance of the site's location and its unique architectural elements on the façade. Moving in to the lobby space, visitors would learn more about the theatre and how it operates on a day-to-day basis. The bulk of information about the history of Plays and Players would be delivered by the tour guide from the center aisle of the main auditorium, with the tour group standing on the stage and looking out across the space. Highlights would include the Edith Emerson murals, notable actors who once graced the stage, and the space's decorative ornamentation. The tour would continue up on the 2nd floor outside of the former headmistress' office, focusing on Beulah Jay and the beginnings of Plays and Players'. On the 3rd floor, visitors would tour the blackbox, get a glimpse of Quig's Pub, and view some of the portraits of former board members and actors. Finally, the tour would end in the lobby space, and visitors would be encouraged to visit the basement museum. A small donation box would be placed in the museum for guests to see on their way out. Figures 1 through 4 illustrate the way in which the tour should be laid out, and offer visual representations of what applicable topics can be addressed in each space:

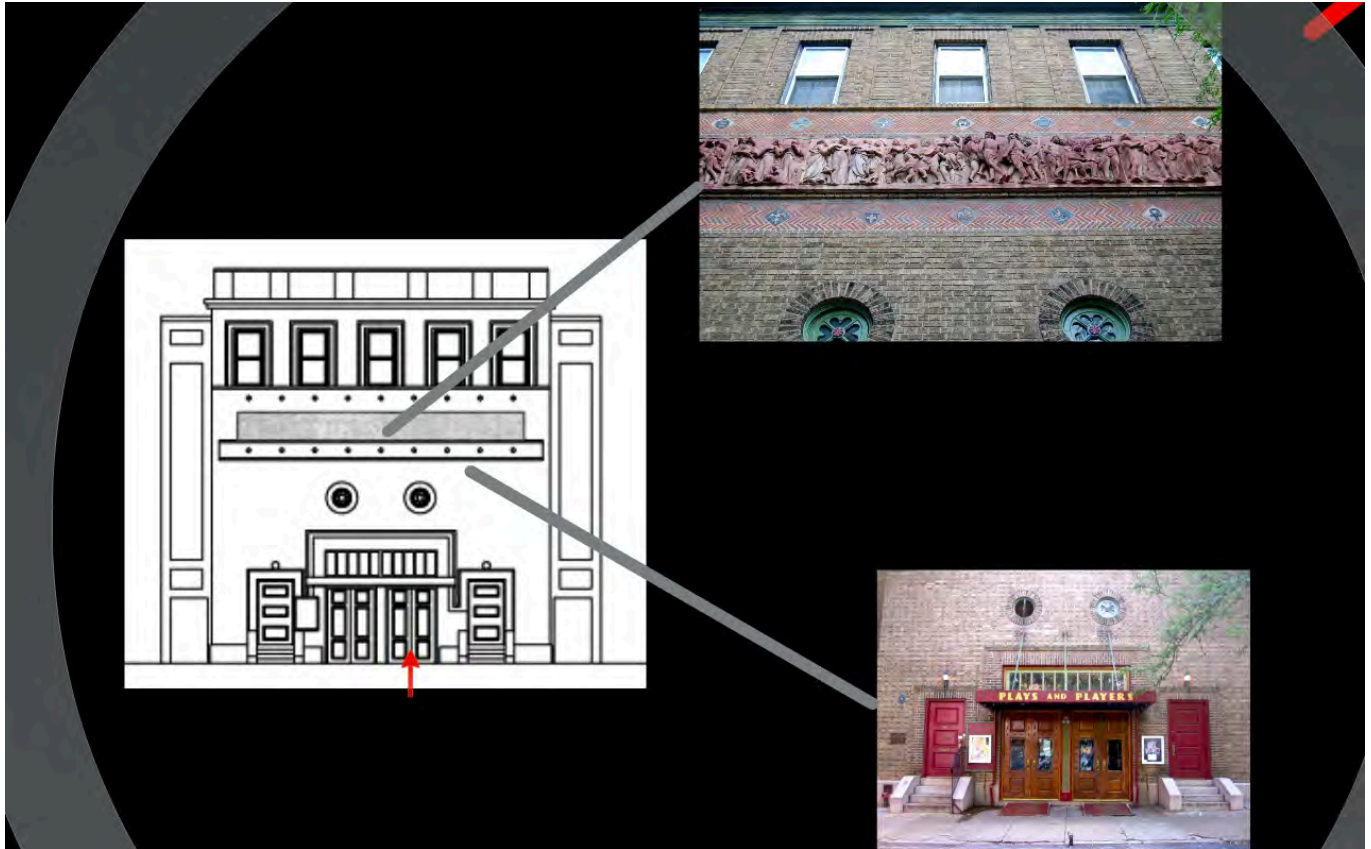


Fig. 1: Facade

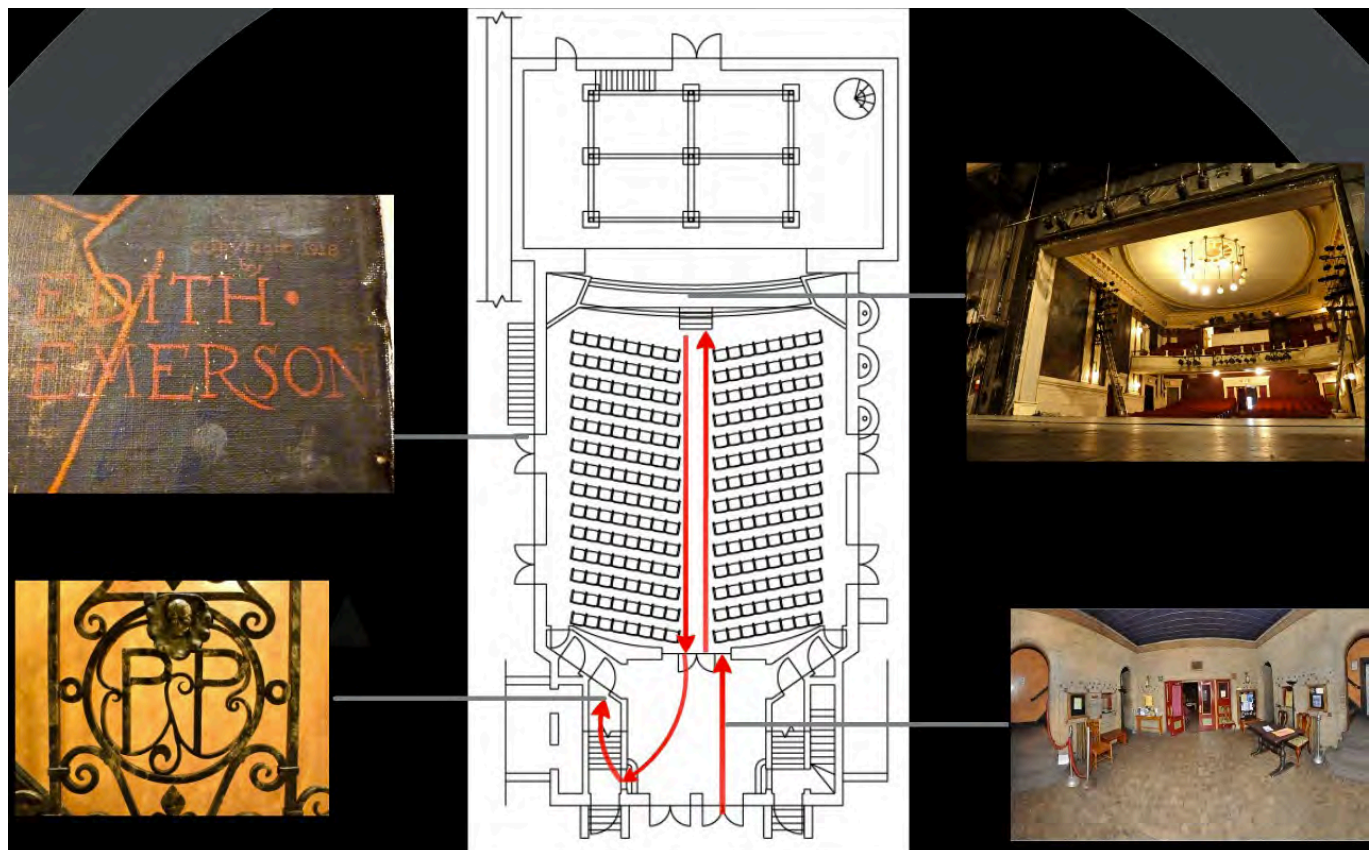


Fig. 2: Lobby & Auditorium

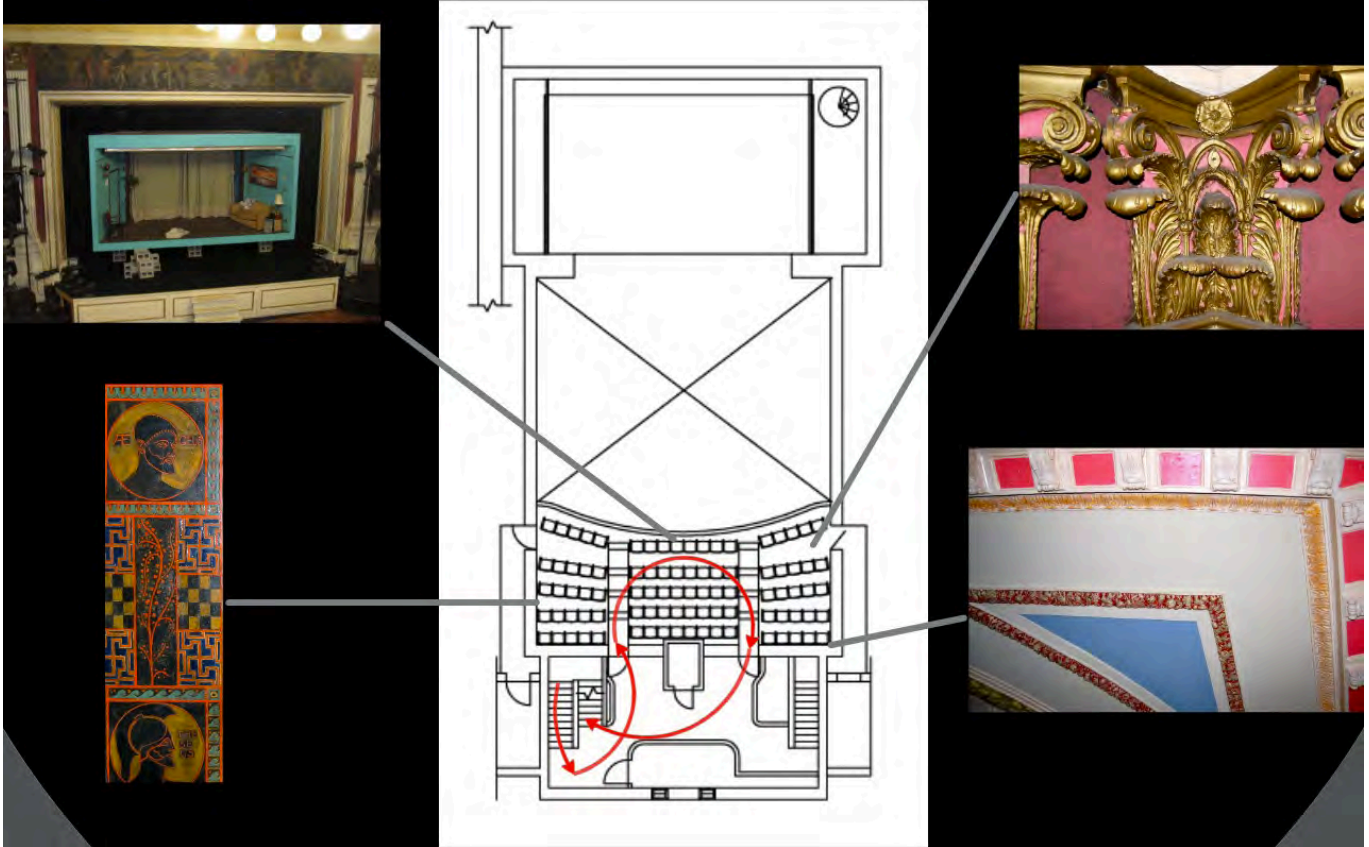


Fig. 3: 2nd Floor

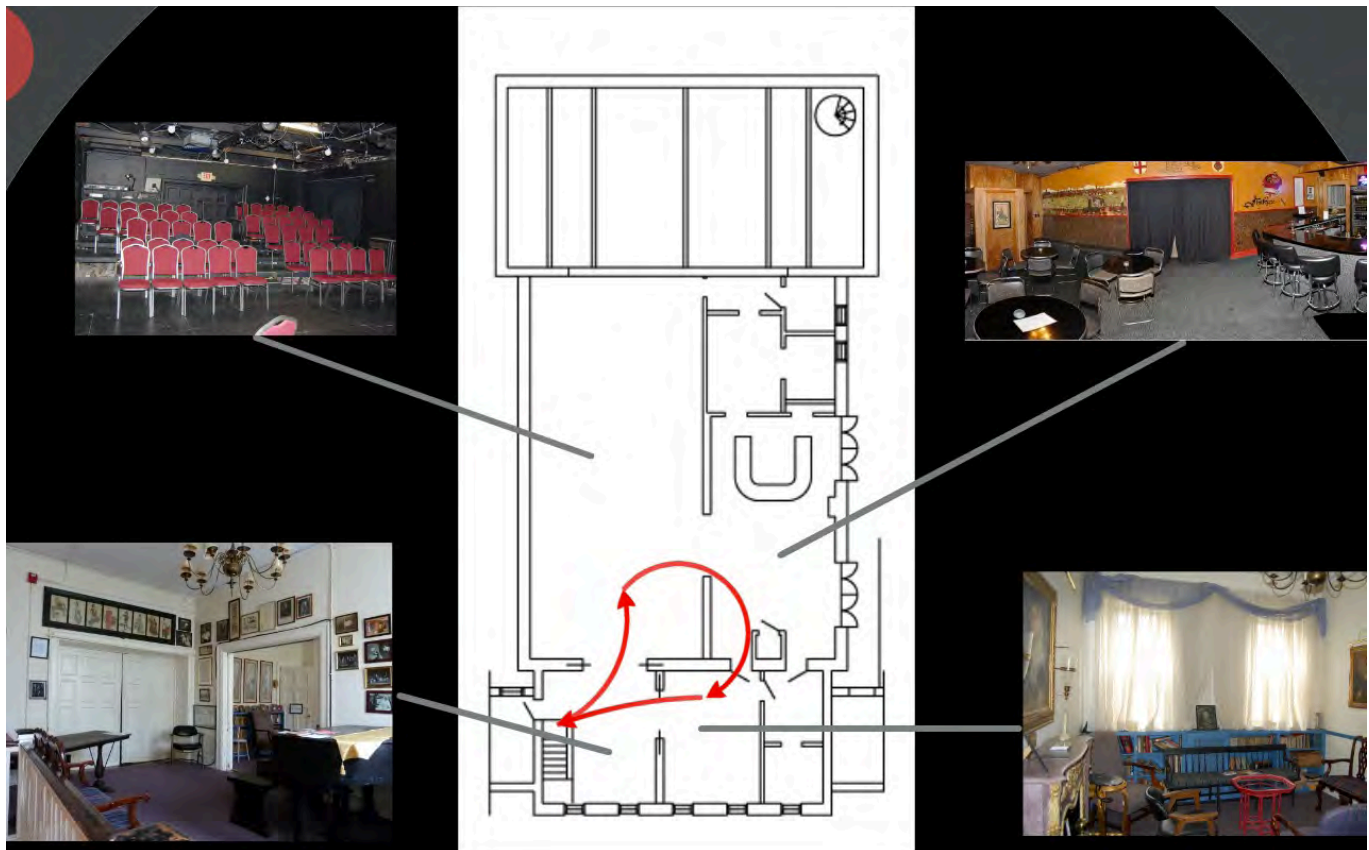


Fig. 4: 3rd Floor

Signage Overview

It is also our belief that Plays and Players would be well served by some more permanent signage, particularly in the lobby space. Small placards highlighting interesting facts about the theatre could easily be installed in the rectangular cabinets next to the ticket window openings. In addition, there is a need for a more visible and permanent explanation of the Sanskrit swastikas found on some of the Mercer tiles. Rachel Dukeman has expressed that some of the guests are perturbed by the swastikas, and while there is a small sign explaining the difference between the Sanskrit and Nazi depictions of the figure, it is in a strange place and pretty easy to miss. The Korean Congress placard on the façade should also be addressed in more detail. While signage can be quite expensive, Plays and Players will not necessarily have to spend a lot of money on expository materials, for existing sign holders and architectural elements can be re-purposed and used as display spaces. Figures 5-8, below, are sample signage templates that Plays and Players could utilize for expository purposes.



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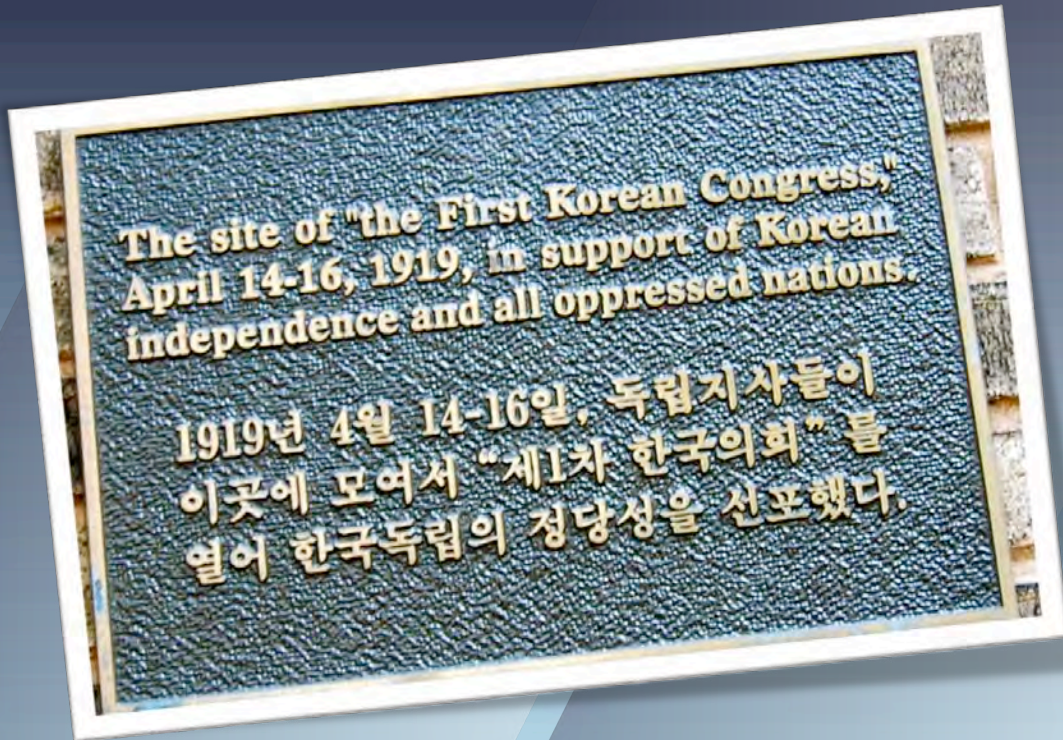


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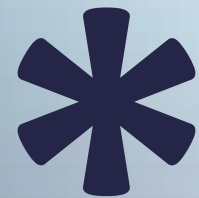
A small placard on the far left of the façade (pictured above) commemorates the “Korean Congress,” which was held at Plays and Players Theatre from April 14-16, 1919, to mobilize support for the Korean independence movement. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, Korean immigrants convened at the theatre after the creation of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) to voice their support for the new government and the freedom of Korea.

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A small placard on the far left of the façade (pictured above) commemorates the “Korean Congress,” which was held at Plays and Players Theatre from April 14-16, 1919, to mobilize support for the Korean independence movement. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, Korean immigrants convened at the theatre after the creation of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) to voice their support for the new government and the freedom of Korea.

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Korean Congress Placard, Façade



A small placard on the far left of the façade (pictured above) commemorates the “Korean Congress,” which was held at Plays and Players Theatre from April 14-16, 1919, to mobilize support for the Korean independence movement. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, Korean immigrants convened at the theatre after the creation of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) to voice their support for the new government and the freedom of Korea.

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Curious about the history of

PLAYS AND PLAYERS?

**The site of "the First Korean Congress,"
April 14-16, 1919, in support of Korean
independence and all oppressed nations.**

**1919년 4월 14-16일, 독립지사들이
이곳에 모여서 "제1차 한국의회"를
열어 한국독립의 정당성을 선포했다.**

Korean Congress Placard, Facade

LEARN MORE

A small placard on the far left of the façade (pictured above) commemorates the "Korean Congress," which was held at Plays and Players Theatre from April 14-16, 1919, to mobilize support for the Korean independence movement. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, Korean immigrants convened at the theatre after the creation of the Korean Provisional Government (KPG) to voice their support for the new government and the freedom of Korea.

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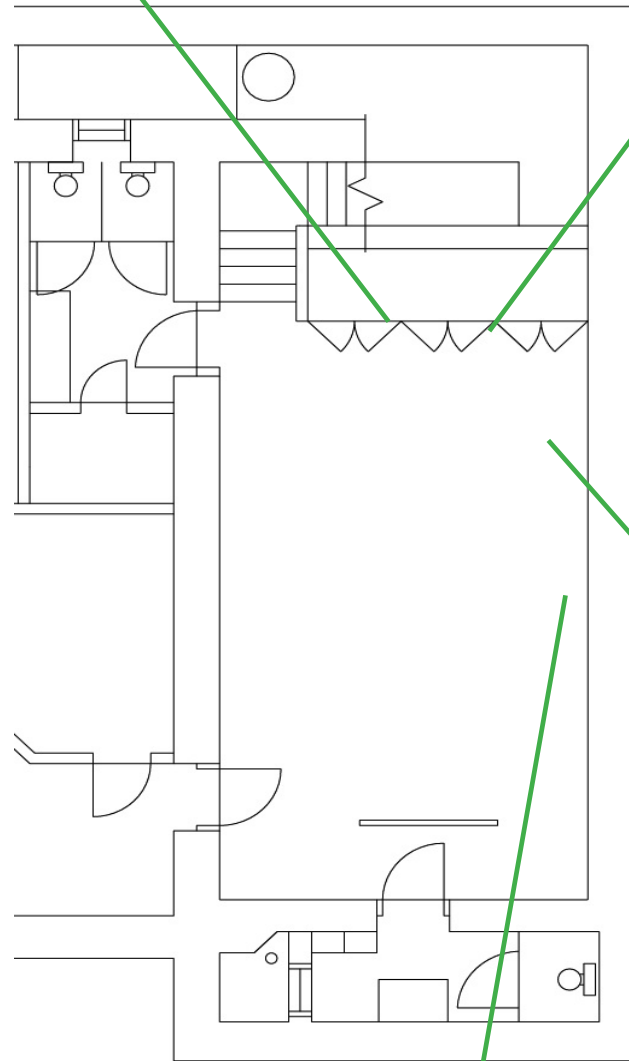
WWW.PLAYSANDPLAYERS.ORG

Museum Overview

There is an abundance of material already located at Plays and Players that could be exhibited to the public. The lack of character defining elements in the basement space means that alterations can be made freely, and a museum could be created easily and economically. Not only would the museum be a good way to show off some of the unique props and costumes from past productions, it would also be a way to quietly solicit donations and inform visitors about upcoming productions and events at the theatre, perhaps generating additional revenue. For a graphic representation of the museum overview, see Figure 9 on the next page:

IMPORTANT DETAILS

- The lack of character defining elements in the space means that alterations can be made freely
- A museum could be created easily and economically
- There is an abundance of material already located at P&P that could be exhibited to the public



- Remove random furniture to give the space a more cohesive look
- Tie museum signage with the logo found on Plays and Players' newly updated website
- Utilize existing cabinetry and repurpose it as a display cabinet for props and memos

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Display props from most important past productions
- Remove or modify costume storage area to function as both storage and exhibition space



- Paint walls white or light gray to brighten the space
- Remove the carpet or replace it with a period piece (Left: Comparable carpet, Orpheus Theatre, 1927)





CONDITION ASSESSMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR PLAYS & PLAYERS:

LAURA DIPASQUALE

M.S. Historic Preservation Candidate, University of Pennsylvania

CONTENTS:

1. Narrative of Current Maintenance Program and Goals
 - a. Purpose
 - b. Current Program
 - c. Scope
2. Narrative of Current Conditions and Recommendations
 - a. Façade
 - b. Exterior Side Walls
 - c. Lobby
 - d. Auditorium
 - e. Roof
3. Chart of Conditions and Relevant Preservation Briefs
4. Conditions Map and Illustration
5. Maintenance Priorities
6. Annual Maintenance Schedule

1. NARRATIVE OF CURRENT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM AND GOALS

a. Purpose

The purpose of a maintenance plan and schedule is to establish periodic inspections that can help identify potential problems before they occur, thus extending the life of the building, preserving the original and character-defining elements of the structure, and minimizing emergency and large-scale damage and repair costs. A building condition assessment is the first step in restoring or preserving a historic building, as it helps to determine what issues are most egregious and establish priorities for the renovation or rehabilitation of the structure. After the initial condition assessment, keeping a log book of conditions, changes, repairs, and costs of repairs can also aid in future budgeting and in preservation and restoration efforts. According to the National Research Council, “two to four percent of the current replacement value of a building should be spent every year on maintenance.”¹

1 Committee on Advanced Maintenance Concepts for Buildings, Building Research Board, National Research Council, *Committing to the Cost of Ownership: Maintenance and Repair of*

For a more comprehensive description of maintenance plans, please reference the Heritage Building Maintenance Manual of Manitoba from Canada’s Historic Places.²

b. Current Program

The current maintenance measures for Plays and Players takes place on an as-needed and emergency basis. The building is cleaned on a regular basis, Monday-Wednesday-Friday by two cleaning staff, one of whom cleans upstairs, the other of whom cleans the auditorium, systems, and basement. While the cleaning staff handles regular up-keep, there is no preventive maintenance plan and no record of repairs made through the years. Although the organization would like to hire an operations manager, they have not done so at this time. The rentals manager, Andrew Beal, handles many of the repairs to the building, and notes that the roof was repaired, repatched or replaced within 25 years, and that the sprinkler system needs to be replaced before 2018. Beal notes that much work was done in the 1980s, such as the roof and window replacement. This also appears to have been when much of the mortar was repointed, or covered, using cement-based mortar.

c. Scope

Due to time restrictions imposed by the academic semester, the scope of the condition’s assessment and maintenance plan are limited to the spaces containing the highest concentration of character defining elements (the façade, lobby and auditorium), plus the roof and side walls. As the primary barrier from the elements, proper maintenance of the roof is essential to the condition of the building as a whole. The exterior walls, as part of the building envelope, are also a primary barrier.

2. CURRENT CONDITIONS

For a one hundred year old building, the interior of Plays and Players is in remarkably good condition. As noted numerous times in this report, the building’s continuous use as a theatre has left a large number of original and character-defining elements intact and with high material integrity. There is, however, some minor wear and tear and larger issues that if left untended, could result in greater material degradation and loss.

a. Main Façade

Condition:

Upon initial inspection, the façade appears perfectly intact, but photographs from above the frieze show that there are numerous conditions affecting the integrity of the frieze. For more information on this, see Lauren Szeber’s individual

Public Buildings (The National Academies Press, 1990).

2 *Heritage Building Maintenance Manual* (Manitoba: Canada’s Historic Places, 2008).

project, included in this report.

The pointing between the brick on the front façade is original and mostly intact, although there are some holes in the mortar where holes were drilled or signs hung in the past. The areas of loss should be repaired with a non-concrete mortar, such as a lime-based mortar, depending on the composition of the original mortar.

The marquee is in poor condition, with water pooling on top. Although it had not rained for several days, at the time of this inspection, roughly an inch of water was still pooled on the left (facing the building) side of the marquee. There is correspondingly damage underneath the marquee, which could end up rupturing, perhaps becoming a safety hazard for patrons. The recommended course of action is to find a way to properly drain the roof of the marquee, or replace it entirely. Since it is not original or character defining, and there is evidence of the original marquee, replacement would be acceptable.

Recommendations:

Repoint lost mortar with soft lime-based mortar. Properly drain roof of marquee or replace it entirely.

b. Back Façade

Condition:

The back façade has some areas of water damage, primarily at the base, with some areas that appear to have been repointed. There are two large iron doors that are rusted, to the point of complete loss in some areas, and two windows whose wooden frames are seriously deteriorated. There are also plants growing at the base of the building.

Recommendations:

- Repoint with soft mortar
- Remove plants and debris from base of building
- Do not use cement mortar
- Do not paint or cover with water-resistant coating

c. Exterior Side Walls

Condition:

The side exterior walls of the building are not in as good of condition as the front and back, probably due to the fact that they do not receive direct sunlight or airflow to help them dry. The ground floor of the western wall is in decent shape, with some areas of loss in the mortar due to rising damp. This side has not been repointed, and if it is to be, should use a lime-based or soft mortar.

The eastern side of the building is ripe with water damage. Almost the entire wall has been hastily repointed with thick application of concrete mortar, some of which was applied over the lime mortar and is now popping off. Since the brick is softer than the replaced concrete mortar, the brick has become

the sacrificial material. Unfortunately, this has caused moisture to travel through the brick, resulting in efflorescence on the exterior (and undoubtedly interior) brick, and in some cases, the powdering of the original mortar and loss of brick itself. The rising damp has traveled at least eight feet up the wall in some areas. The areas of greatest water damage on the exterior correspond with the damaged back corner of the auditorium. It is also likely that the plaster behind the murals is damaged, which could be the cause of the buckling and disadhesion of the murals from the wall.

Brief inspection of the third floor indicates that water ingress has not been localized to the ground floor, but is pervasive along the entire eastern wall. When the assembly room was renovated to form the blackbox theatre, the plaster along the exterior wall was damp and fell off. Andrew Beal has been removing the remaining plaster and covering the bare brick with a waterproof sealant. It is difficult to see the majority of the exterior side walls, but by leaning out a replaced side window, it was evident that much of the mortar has been replaced with concrete. Similarly to the ground floor, the mortar replacement corresponds with areas of water damage. It is likely that the brick was repointed due to water damage to the original soft mortar, but that the impermeable nature of the concrete has exacerbated moisture ingress through the brick itself into the interior.

It is unclear whether the western side of the building is suffering equal damage, as the interior walls of the bar are covered in wood paneling. However, in the front interior corner of the room, the paneling has separated from the wall, and when pushed back, expels dust from degraded plaster. This coincides with repointing of the mortar with concrete, and efflorescence on the brick on the exterior.

Recommendations:

- Repoint with soft mortar
- Remove plants and debris from base of building
- Do not use cement mortar
- Do not paint or cover with water-resistant coating

d. Lobby

Condition:

The lobby is composed almost entirely of dense, non-porous surfaces of tile and brick, making it largely unsusceptible to physical damage. The condition of the original ceiling is unknown because it is covered by a painted acoustical tile dropped ceiling. The paint prevents the acoustical tile from functioning properly and absorbing sound, but aesthetically is in good condition.

Recommendations:

- Retain current upkeep
- Do not paint
- Investigate ceiling concealed by dropped ceiling & determine condition

e. Auditorium

Condition:

For the most highly trafficked room in the building, with the most intricate details and finishes, the auditorium is in good condition. The primary conditions of concern are water damaged plaster, and the darkening, tearing, and loosening of the murals. There are some areas of mechanical damage to the pilasters and capitals, as well as the proscenium. Finally, there are lesser issues associated with use and wear, such as flaking or missing paint.

In the back left corner of the auditorium is an area of major water damage, which has caused the plaster to powder, sag, and in some places, disintegrate entirely. According to first person accounts, this area has been in the same condition for many years and was caused by flashing failure on the roof, which was repaired. The water damage on the ceiling towards the front right of the auditorium was caused by leaks from the third floor bathroom and kitchen. It is unclear whether these issues have been entirely resolved.

Mechanical damage to the pilasters is generally consistent with the location of moveable lighting. Ladders are frequently set up against the pilasters, and the movement of the ladders and lighting can nick the pilasters and capitals, causing damage.

The Emerson murals also have numerous issues, including the fact that they are detaching from the walls, having ripped away from the nails that were supposed to hold them in place. A professional conservator should be consulted to determine the proper treatment of murals. For more information, see 2005 University of Pennsylvania thesis by Sarah Hyson.

Recommendations:

- Repair damaged plasterwork in corner and ceiling (remove damaged plaster and replicate ornament)
- Repaint as needed, or based on paint analysis (see accompanying report by Sarah Peterson and Gladysa Vega)
- Have a professional conservator conduct a full assessment, and eventual treatment, of Emerson murals

f. Roof

Condition:

The roof is estimated to have been replaced some time in the 1980s, and needs to be replaced or resurfaced in the very near future. There is pooling water on the roof, as well as debris, cracking, blisters and clogged drains. A leak in the blackbox ceiling during rain indicates that there is a leak somewhere towards the center of the roof.

The front parapet is of particular concern, as the mortar in the brick on the eastern corner has disintegrated completely, causing the bricks to loosen. The section of roof above the stage and fly space, which is separated from the main space by a fire wall and parapet, has been replaced more recently and is in decent condition, other than some pooling water and debris. The roofing material itself, however, appears intact.

Recommendations:

In terms of overall intervention, as a non-historic and non-visible part of the structure, Plays and Players has a great deal of flexibility with roof repair and replacement. The National Parks Service permits the replacement of flat roofs that are not visible from the street, with modern materials, noting that the most important thing is that “A weather-tight roof is basic in the preservation of a structure, regardless of its age, size, or design.”³

According to Michael Stern of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, the average life cycle of a flat roof is 10 years, although it may last longer if regularly maintained, with some types of flat roofs lasting up to 30 years.⁴ Thus, the roofing over the main space has certainly outlived or is quickly approaching its life cycle and needs to be replaced at the latest in the next two to three years. Since the organization plans to replace the HVAC systems that are located on the roof, it would be preferable to replace the roof at this time as well. Replacing beforehand would undoubtedly result in damage to the surface.

The roof should be checked at least two to three times per year, with any changes recorded and reported.

The roof should also be checked within 48 hours of any major storm (rain or snow), to ensure that there is no pooling water, snow build up, or ice blocking drains after a thaw. Special attention should be paid to flashings around all the roof top penetrations, particularly in areas where sharp bends may occur. 90% of all roof leaks and failure occur at the flashings.

Roof drains should be checked multiple times per year, especially in the fall when roof drains are likely to become clogged with debris.

What to look for:

- Pooling water or areas of debris
- Clogged drains
- Blisters- sections of the roof that feel “mushy” underfoot
- Cracked or “alligator”-like appearance
- Inspect seams/flashings and any corners or cracks

³ Sarah M. Sweetser, *Roofing for Historic Buildings*, Preservation Brief (National Park Service, 1978).

⁴ Michael Stern, “Inspecting and Maintaining Your Flat Roof,” Vol. 12, no. 2 (Philadelphia: Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, Fall 1997).

3. CHART OF CONDITIONS & RELEVANT PRESERVATION BRIEFS

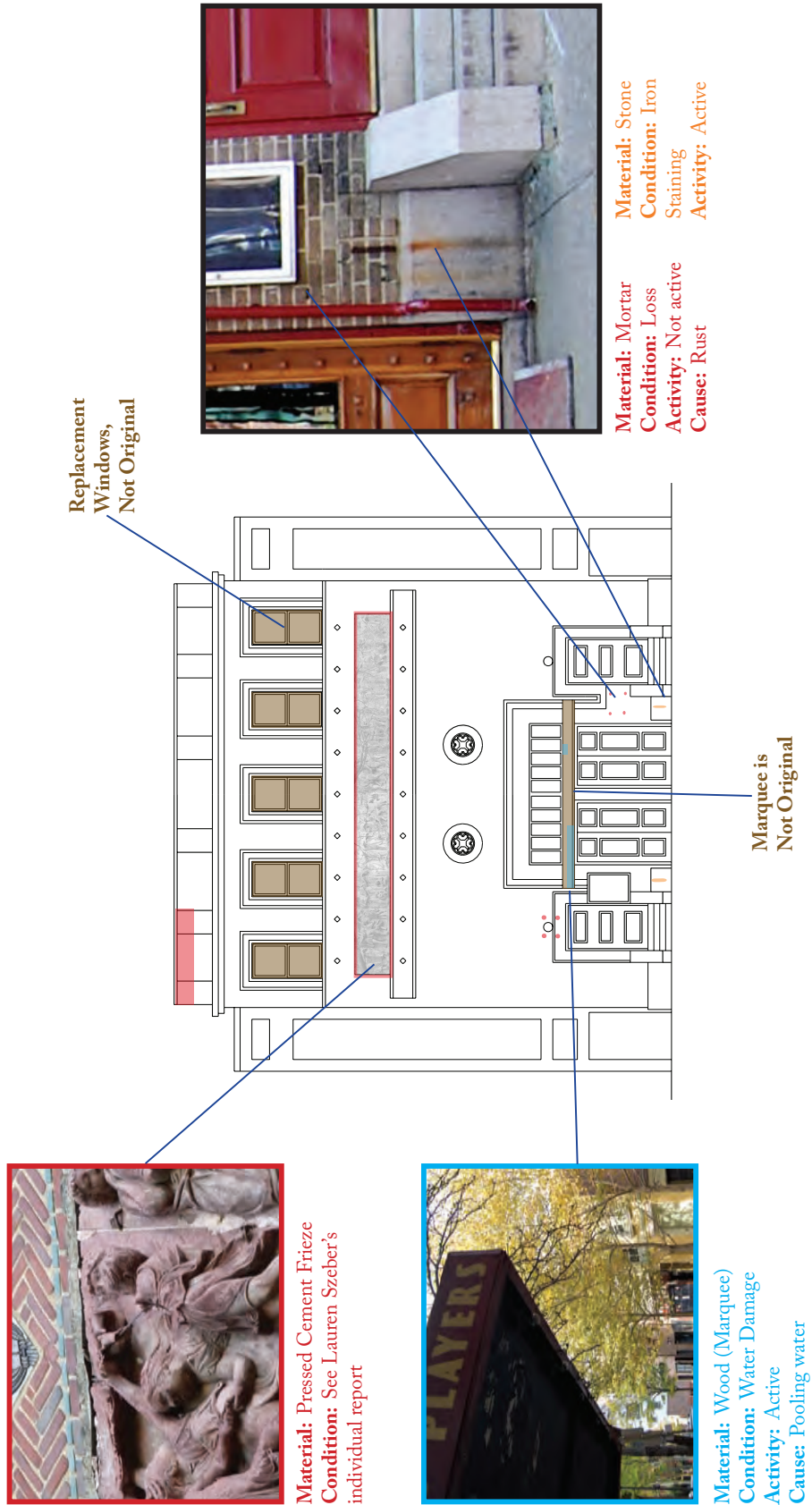
Location	Material	Condition	Cause	Active (Yes/No)	Urgency (1not-5very)	Relevant Preservation Brief	Routine Maintenance Needs	Additional Notes
Façade: Front	Brick	Good: Some repointing needed; Surface soiling	Drilled holes	No		Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings: NPS Preservation Brief # 1 http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/brief2/s/brief01.htm Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings: NPS Preservation Brief # 6 http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief06.htm	Check for crumbling mortar	Cleaning of brick should be done in consultation with preservation professional-- Power washing or sandblasting may cause irreparable damage (see relevant preservation briefs)
Façade: Front	Pressed Cement	Poor (see Lauren Szeber's report)	(see Lauren Szeber's report)	Yes		Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Historic Cast Stone: NPS Preservation Brief # 42 http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief42.htm		
Façade: Front	Circular Wood Windows	Fair				Preservation of Historic Wooden Windows: NPS Preservation Brief #9 http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief09.htm	Check for chipping paint; Loss of glazing; Damage to frame; Weatherstripping	
Façade: Front	Wooden marquee	Poor:	Pooling water	Yes	5: SAFETY HAZARD		Remove pooling water	If enough water builds up on top of marquee, it may rupture, perhaps injuring someone below
Façade: Sides	Brick	Poor: Water Damage (efflorescence, loss of mortar and brick)	Rising damp; Rain water from roof; Repointing with incompatible cement mortar	Yes		Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings: NPS Preservation Brief #2 http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief02.htm The Maintenance Series: NSW Heritage Office Info Sheet #2: Rising Damp http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/docs/maintenance2-1_risingdamp.pdf	Repoint with soft, compatible mortar (based on mortar analysis)	Repointing with cement mortar causes damage to bricks as it pushes moisture and salts through the brick rather than the mortar (the intended sacrificial material)
Façade: Back	Brick	Fair: Some water damage; Some plant growth	Rising damp; Incompatible mortar;				Remove plant growth	
Façade: Back	Iron (door)	Poor: Rust	Moisture; Age					
Lobby	Brick	Good					Gentle cleaning, if necessary	Use of abrasive chemicals, powerwashing/sandblasting or painting unacceptable
Lobby	Tile	Good					Gentle cleaning, if necessary	Use of abrasive chemicals, powerwashing/sandblasting or painting unacceptable
Lobby	Acoustical Tile Ceiling	Fair	Paint	No	1			Painting of the acoustical tile has negated its sound-absorbing properties, but the tiles themselves are not in bad condition. Exploration of underlying, possibly original ceiling, recommended
Auditorium: Wall, cornicework	Plaster	Water Damage	Flashing on roof; Rising damp; Incompatible exterior mortar causing moisture ingress	Yes		Preserving Historic Flat Plaster: NPS Preservation Brief #21 http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief24/1.htm ; Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster: NPS Preservation Brief #23 http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief23.htm	Eliminate exterior water source through maintenance of roof and exterior walls	
Auditorium: Ceiling	Plaster	Water Damage	Leaks from third floor bathroom and kitchen	No?		" "		
Auditorium: Pilasters, Proscenium	Plaster	Mechanical Damage, loss	Trauma from ladders, lighting installation/movement	Yes		" "		

3. CHART OF CONDITIONS & RELEVANT PRESERVATION BRIEFS CONTINUED

Auditorium	Murals	Detaching; Tears; Darkening; Buckling	Age? Lighting Equipment? Water ingress?	Yes	4			Consult conservation professional for proper cleaning and maintenance of murals
Auditorium	Paint	Chipping	Age and use	Yes	2	Painting Historic Interiors: NPS Preservation Brief #28 http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief28.htm	Remove chipping paint; Repaint as necessary	(See report by Gladysa Vega and Sarah Peterson for additional information on historic paint colors in auditorium)
Roof	Unknown	Poor: Cracking; Ponding water; Debris			5	Roofing for Historic Buildings: NPS Preservation Brief #4 http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief04.htm	Sweep debris off roof; Unclog downspouts; Remove ponding water	Roof needs replacement in very near future
Roof: Parapet	Brick	Failing; Loss of mortar; Crumbling brick				5: SAFETY HAZARD		Loose brick on parapet is dangerous not only to historic fabric but to passersby

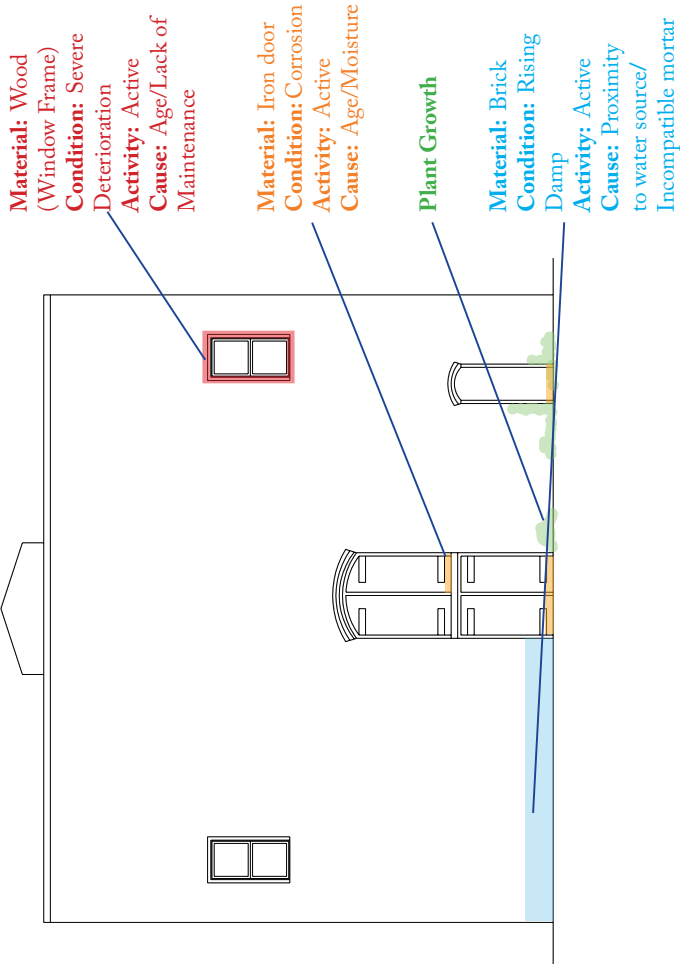
4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: MAIN FACADE PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



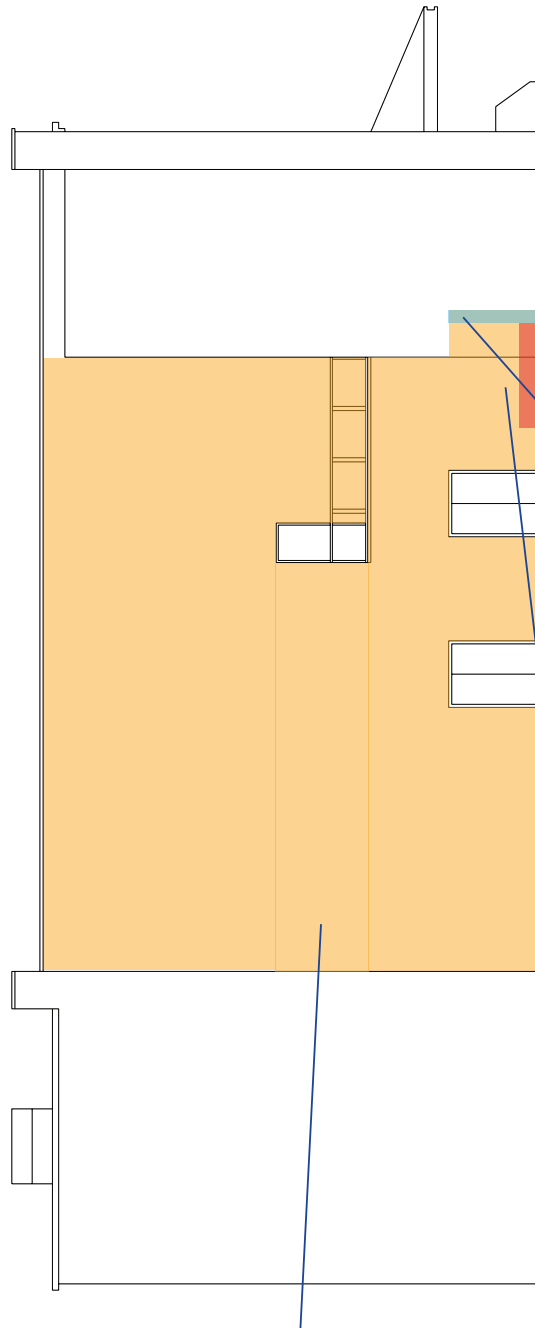
4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: BACK FACADE PLAYERS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: EASTERN WALL PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



Area Likely
Repointed with
Incompatible
Cement

PLEASE NOTE:
THE ENTIRE
ELEVATION
WAS NOT
ACCESSIBLE.
THE AREA

Material: Brick/Mortar
Condition: Loss
Activity: Active
Cause: Incompatible
cement mortar/ Moisture



Material: Brick/Mortar
Condition: Rising Damp
Activity: Active
Cause: Incompatible
cement mortar/ Moisture



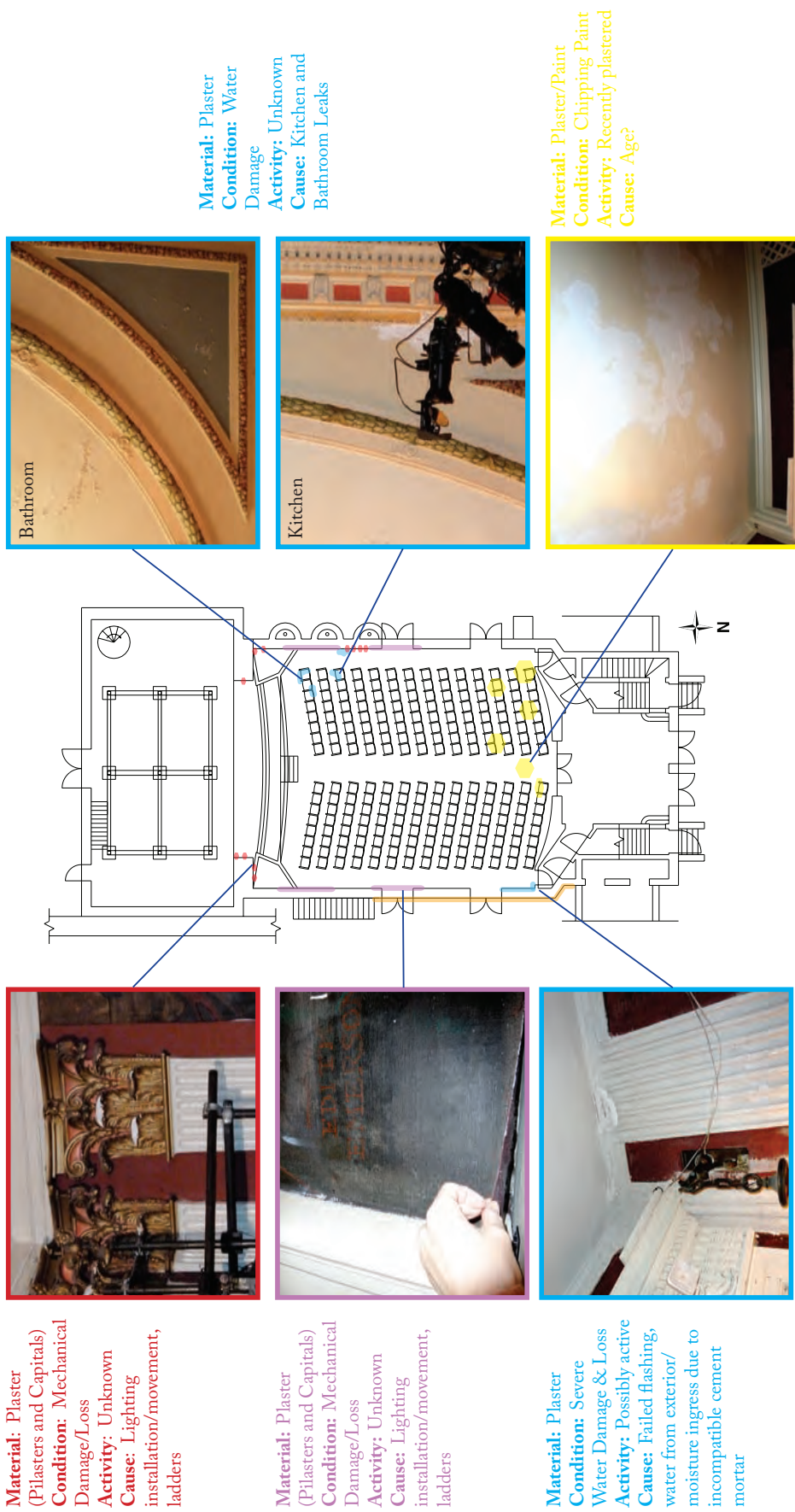
4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: WESTERN WALL PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: AUDITORIUM
PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



Material: Plaster
Condition: Water Damage
Activity: Unknown
Cause: Kitchen and Bathroom Leaks

Material: Plaster/Paint
Condition: Chipping Paint
Activity: Recently plastered
Cause: Age?

Material: Plaster (Pilasters and Capitals)
Condition: Mechanical Damage/Loss
Activity: Unknown
Cause: Lighting installation/movement, ladders

Material: Plaster (Pilasters and Capitals)
Condition: Mechanical Damage/Loss
Activity: Unknown
Cause: Lighting installation/movement, ladders

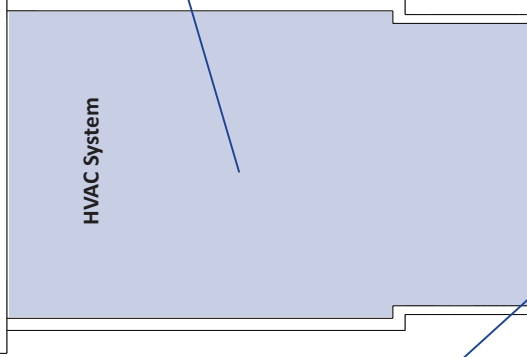
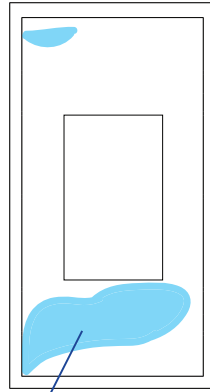
Material: Plaster
Condition: Severe Water Damage & Loss
Activity: Possibly active
Cause: Failed flashing, water from exterior/moisture ingress due to incompatible cement mortar

4. CONDITIONS MAPS

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT: ROOF PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA



Material: Roofing material
Condition: Pooling water and Debris
Activity: Active
Cause: Improper drainage



Material: Flat roof
Condition: Cracking, Alligatoring, Pooling
Water, Debris
Activity: Active
Cause: Age
WHOLE ROOF NEEDS REPLACING



5. MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES

MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES	
Within 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize and repoint parapet • Create proper drainage for or replace marquee • Check roof and flashing; patch as needed
Within 2-3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace or fully resurface main roof (preferably in conjunction with new HVAC system) • Repoint joints on lower eastern exterior wall with soft mortar (based on mortar analysis) • Repair damaged plaster in auditorium (corner and ceiling)
Within 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove cement mortar from eastern wall and repoint with soft mortar (based on mortar analysis) • Have a professional conservator conduct an assessment of Emerson murals
Within 10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace replacement windows with higher quality custom windows • Have a professional conservator treat and restore Emerson murals

6. ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATRE | PHILADELPHIA, PA

- Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of the season (30 minutes)
 - Sweep debris from flat roof (30 minutes)
 - Examine flashing for a tight fit and proper water shed where horizontal surfaces meet vertical surfaces (roof, parapet cap, etc...) (30 minutes)
 - Clean out gutters and downspouts, and inspect for damage that might have occurred during freeze-thaw cycles (1 hour)
 - Inspect base of building for damage caused by salt (10 minutes)
 - Remove any plants growing on or close to walls and foundation (15 minutes)
 - Visually check for moss or lichen, especially around parapets, sills and downspouts (30 minutes)
 - Check weather stripping around windows and doors. Install where necessary to prevent air infiltration (1 hr)
 - Caulk gaps in wood for temporary water-tight seal (30 minutes)
- JANUARY** | **FEBRUARY** | **MARCH** | **APRIL** | **MAY** | **JUNE** | **JULY** | **AUGUST** | **SEPTEMBER** | **OCTOBER** | **NOVEMBER** | **DECEMBER**
- Check masonry for loose mortar or bricks (15 minutes)
 - Examine windows for broken glass or putty failure (10 minutes)
 - Remove any temporary caulk (from winter), and permanently fix wood gaps with an epoxy or wood consolidant (1 hr plus set time)
 - Examine any painted surface for paint failure (cornice, windows, trim, doors) (30 minutes)
 - Repaint if necessary (2-3 hours)
 - Remove plants growing on or close to walls and foundation (20 minutes)
 - Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of the season (40 minutes)
 - Examine roof for pooling water (15 minutes)
 - Check gutters and downspouts to make sure water can flow freely. Clean out if they are clogged (30 minutes)
 - Sweep debris from roof (30 minutes)

MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES	
Within 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize and repoint parapet • Create proper drainage for or replace marquee • Check roof and flashing; patch as needed
Within 2-3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace or fully resurface main roof (preferably in conjunction with new HVAC system) • Repoint joints on lower eastern exterior wall with soft mortar (based on mortar analysis) • Repair damaged plaster in auditorium (corner and ceiling)
Within 5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove cement mortar from eastern wall and repoint with soft mortar (based on mortar analysis) • Have a professional conservator conduct an assessment of Emerson murals
Within 10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace replacement windows with higher quality custom windows • Have a professional conservator treat and restore Emerson murals

6. ANNUAL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE¹

Building inspections should be conducted multiple times per year, at LEAST in early spring (to catch damage caused over the winter) and late fall (to make sure the building is in good repair before winter). Inspections should also be conducted after rain and snow storms. Much interior maintenance is covered by routine cleaning, but exterior maintenance is also extremely important to both the building envelope and interior features.

Mid March:

- Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of the season (30 minutes)
- Sweep debris from flat roof (30 minutes)
- Examine flashing for a tight fit and proper water shed where horizontal surfaces meet vertical surfaces (roof, parapet cap, etc...) (30 minutes)
- Clean out gutters and downspouts, and inspect for damage that might have occurred during freeze-thaw cycles (1 hour)
- Inspect base of building for damage caused by salt (appears in the form of white powder on the brick) (10 minutes)

Mid-May:

- Check masonry for loose mortar or bricks (15 minutes)
- Examine windows for broken glass or putty failure (10 minutes)
- Remove any temporary caulk (from winter), and permanently fix wood gaps with an epoxy or wood consolidant (1 hr plus set time)
- Examine any painted surface for paint failure (cornice, windows, trim, doors) (30 minutes). Repaint if necessary (2-3 hours).
- Remove plants growing on or close to walls and foundation (20 minutes).

Early-September:

- Remove any plants growing on or close to walls and foundation (15 minutes)
- Visually check for moss or lichen, especially around parapet, sills and downspouts (30 minutes)

Early/Mid-October

¹ Adapted from Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

- Inspect interior of building for leaks during first heavy rain of the season (40 minutes)
- Examine roof for pooling water (15 minutes)
- Check gutters and downspouts to make sure water can flow freely. Clean out if they are clogged (30 minutes)
- Sweep debris from roof (30 minutes)

Mid/Late November

- Check weather stripping around windows and doors. Install where necessary to prevent air infiltration (1 hr)
- Caulk gaps in wood for temporary water-tight seal (30 minutes)

FRIEZE CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

LAUREN SZEBER

Introduction

One of the most striking features on the façade of the Plays and Players Theatre is the sculptural relief. Framed between two bands of patterned terracotta brickwork, the frieze is classified as a character defining element and an integral part of the Theatre's appearance and historic fabric. A century after the construction of the building, the frieze is in a critical state of deterioration. This project sought to document the range of conditions that are currently afflicting its structural integrity.



Figure 1: Panel 9 of Luca Della Robbia's Cantoria in Florence.



Figure 2: Panel 8 of Luca Della Robbia's Cantoria in Florence.

It is hoped that this work will prompt further investigation into the frieze's present state with the objective of preserving it for future generations.

History

Original to the 1911 construction, the frieze is a reproduction of Italian Renaissance sculptor Luca Della Robbia's Cantoria, currently preserved at the Opera del Duomo in Florence, Italy (See Appendix A). Originally sculpted in the 1430s for the Cathedral of Florence, it was the artist's first documented commission and commonly considered one of his finest

works. The Cantoria illustrates Psalm 150, "Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius..." a spirited hymn of praise with reference to celebrating the Lord with trumpets, harps, timbrels, stringed instruments and cymbals.¹

The original sculpture consists of eight panels disposed on two levels, and the addition of a thinner panel flanking each side. Each panel features groups of children and adolescence engaging in music and dance. Unlike Luca Della Robbia, the figures on the Plays and Players Theatre are not contained by pilasters and instead stretched to create one long continuous band (See Appendix B). However, all the details of the sculpture, including the positioning of the drapery, figure positioning, and

facial expressions are exact replications. Each panel



Figure 3: Panel 4 of the sculptural frieze on Plays and Players. Authors own picture.

is approximately 36 by 42 inches except for the two exterior panels. These units are much thinner and roughly 28 inches in width.

Materials

Despite its resemblance to terra cotta, the frieze is actually constructed of what is commonly referred to as cast stone. Cast stone is defined as "a refined architectural concrete building unit manufactured to simulate natural cut stone, used in unit masonry applications."² The material has any names, including stamped concrete, pressed concrete, and pressed stone, however they are all used to describe a mixture of cement and lime with various decorative aggregates and masonry pigments. It can be made from white or grey cements, sands, natural gravels and crushed stone to achieve the desired appearance.

While the idea of cast stone has been applied to buildings for hundreds of years, the cementitious cast stone known today began in England and France in the 18th century. The use of the material grew rapidly with the development of Portland Cement and the subsequent concrete industries of the 19th century. Cast stone became popular in the United States after the Civil War and by the early 20th century, it was widely accepted as an economical substitute for natural stones like limestone, brownstone, sandstone, bluestone, granite, and slate. In most cases, cast stone is used for ornamental details, such as trims, cornices, and balustrades.

The two basic cast stone production systems were "dry tamp" and "wet cast." The dry tamp process employed a still, low slump concrete mix that was pressed into molds. The decorative aggregate was frequently distributed only on the exterior facing of

²Definition of Cast Stone," Cast Stone Institute. Lebanon, PA 2011. <http://www.caststone.org/default.htm>

¹ Allen Marquand, *Luca Della Robbia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1914). 14 - 20.

the cast units, while cores of the units were common concrete. Units were then left to cure in steam rooms to ensure proper hydration. The west cast process, on the other hand, utilized a much more plastic concrete mix, that was poured into molds. The method doesn't require elaborate curing and the decorative aggregate is distributed throughout the entire mix rather than just the outer layer.³ Advantages of the material include its ability to successfully replicate stone appearance and texture with similar properties, however it is known to lose its color in sunlight and are more absorbent than natural stone.⁴

The original manufacturer of the Plays and Players frieze is unknown, however replications of the exact frieze have been found in various locations around the United States, such as the South Kingstown Public Library in Rhode Island. Incidentally, advertisements were found in a trade catalog by PP Caproni and Brother of Boston, offering plaster cast replicas of Luca Della Robbia's Cantoria the same year that Plays and Players Theatre was constructed.



Figure 4. Catalogue of P. P. Caproni and Brother 1911. Annotations visually superimposed on photographs. This made it possible to establish patterns between the different

Methodology

Due to lack of maintenance, the frieze has been subjected to various forms of damage over the course of the past century. The first step in determining the state of the panels was to identify and define the conditions currently afflicting the structural integrity. These include cracking, differential erosion, discoloration, delamination, animal deposits, loss in sculptural definition, pollutants, exposed metal reinforcement, and total loss. A full list of conditions is defined in Appendix C. Each panel was then individually assessed and the issues documented on rectified photographs. It should be noted that this was only possible with binoculars at ground level as the frieze is not accessible for close examination. Therefore, all the conditions are subject to the judgment of the person conducting the analysis. Finally the survey

³Richard Pieper, Preservation Brief 42: The Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Historic Cast Stone. Washington, DC: Preservation Assistance Division, national Park Services, U.S. Department of the Interior, 19XX.

⁴United States Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The Preservation of Historic Architecture: The U.S. Government's Official Guidelines for Preserving Historic Homes (Guilford: The Lyons Press, 2004) 167.

conditions and their position across the entire sculptural relief.

Assessment

The analysis of the sculpture suggests a relationship between the conditions, the degree of severity, and its location on each panel. One of the most threatening of these factors is a form of differential erosion. This condition is present across the entire frieze and the catalyst for other destructive deterioration mechanisms. Differential erosion is identified as a deep, tubular pitting where it is apparent that some component of the material is deteriorating at a faster rate than its surrounding counterparts. This is largely occurring on the tops and projecting sculptural elements where the frieze is most susceptible to rain and water runoff. This deterioration is so severe that it has resulted in the loss of the sculptural definition and in many cases whole features such as the tops of the figures heads,

arms, and delicate musical instruments.

Other forms of loss are found in correlation with exposed metal reinforcement bars. During the original manufacture, long thin cast stone units required reinforcement with iron or steel reinforcing bars. Occasionally, these thin bars or wire are too close to the surface of the piece and rusting will result in the spalling of the surrounding element. This frequently happens when repeated heavy wetting leads to the loss of the alkalinity in the concrete. The first two panels at Plays and Players show evidence of exposed, corroded reinforcement bars. The elements originally supported by these bars, like the large scroll and figure's arm, have spalled off, resulting in a total loss of the element.

Also prevalent throughout the frieze is a dark film of what appears to be pollution or atmospheric deposits. Deposits of this kind are most likely carbon from the burning of organic material. This is found typically settling in the crevices formed from the differential erosion or under the projecting elements. Other forms of pollution are indicated by a light grey accumulation. Conditions of this kind are most noticeable under projecting elements where it is unable to be washed away by rain, although in significantly smaller percentages than the previously mentioned pollutant.

Discoloration is prevailing in most of the panels distinguished by large, uniform areas of substantially light shades of grey. Due to the range in discoloration, this condition was further divided into two groups based on the severity of the alteration to the original color. The most significant discoloration occurs in the fourth panel. The entire panel is much lighter than the rest of the sequence, further compounded by the practically white areas of discoloration found in the central portion of the unit. The distinct difference in the shade of this panel might suggest that it was replaced or there are other mechanisms occurring within the building that have affected this panel in particular.

Some of the less common but still destructive conditions include animal deposits, cracking, and delamination. Bird waste is most abundant in panel six where an entire bird's nest is set inside one of the figures. Small cracks are also observed mainly in the upper most regions of the panels. This is potentially

a cause of the differential erosion that has left these areas weaker and unstable. Documentation of all the conditions specific to each panel can be located in Appendix D.

Future Recommendations

While this study is a valuable step in the preservation of this architectural element, further measures need to be taken in order to assess the causes of deterioration and implement a successful treatment plan. The manufacturer of the frieze is still unknown and any documentation would be valuable to understanding where and how the frieze was made. In addition, crucial to this project will be a full analysis of the material composition. This will give direct insight into the different components, their compatibility, and weathering properties. The severity of the differential erosion might indicate the addition of gypsum in the cast stone, which would explain the aggressive rate of deterioration against the surrounding medium. An analysis of the composition would confirm the presence of all materials in the cast stone.

Composition analysis will also facilitate an understanding for the causes of erosion. Besides problems within the material itself, other mechanisms are taking place at the structural level. Water infiltration may be the consequences of impurities in the concrete, how the panels are attached to the façade, or structural issues such as the large space between the frieze and the flashing course. It is also possible that water is getting trapped in between the frieze and the masonry substrate. Mortar and brick are substantially more porous than cast stone. Thus moisture may be seeping into the substrate but unable to evaporate due to the impermeable nature of the concrete mixture. Confirming the sources of deterioration is imperative in order to establish an appropriate plan for treatment or replacement.

Due to the preliminary nature of this study, no treatment recommendations can be made at this time. Future work would highly benefit from better accessibility to the frieze for a more extensive investigation. However, it is hoped that this project will provide a platform for further work in the conservation of frieze and of the Plays and Players Theatre.

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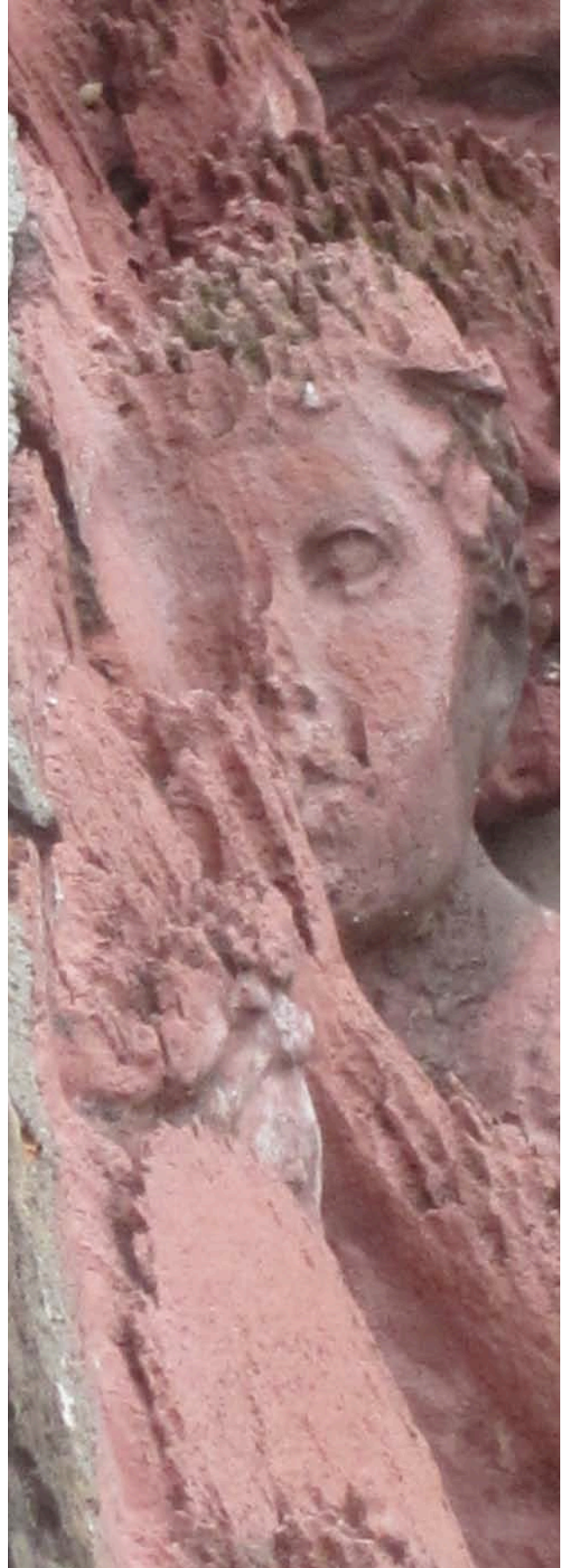


Figure 5: Detail of Panel 5. Photograph taken by author.

APPENDIX A



Luca Della Robbia's Cantoria at the Opera Del Duomo in Florence, Italy. Photograph courtesy of artmight.com.

APPENDIX B



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

Animal Deposit: Evidence of animal or bird excrement

Cracking: Fractures of variable length and orientation

Delamination: Separation of the surface and core layers

Differential Erosion: Difference in the degree of disintegration of the various components of the material when exposed to the same environment.

Exposed Metal Reinforcement: Areas in which deterioration mechanisms have caused the visibility of structural reinforcement bars

Major Discoloration: Areas in which original color is no longer present. The resulting shade is drastically lighter than the original, ranging from light grey to white

Minor Discoloration: Areas in which original color is no longer present resulting in a significantly lighter hue

Loss in Sculptural Definition: Areas in which the original sculptural elements have weathered to an extent that the detail is no longer discernable


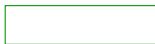





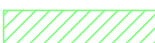


Pollutants: Presence of soil or carbon deposits, indicated by darkened surface area

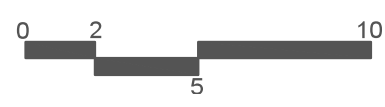
Total Loss: Complete absence of original sculptural element. Typically corresponds to the presence of exposed reinforcement bars

APPENDIX D

PANEL 1






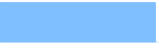






-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

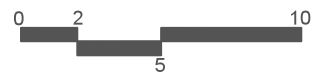


APPENDIX D

PANEL 2






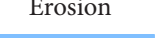
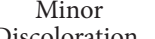

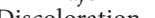

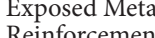

-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

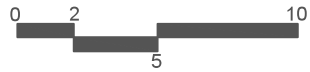


APPENDIX D

PANEL 3




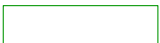








-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

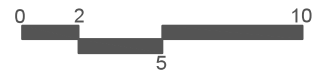


APPENDIX D

PANEL 4










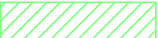


-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

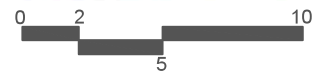


APPENDIX D

PANEL 5



-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss



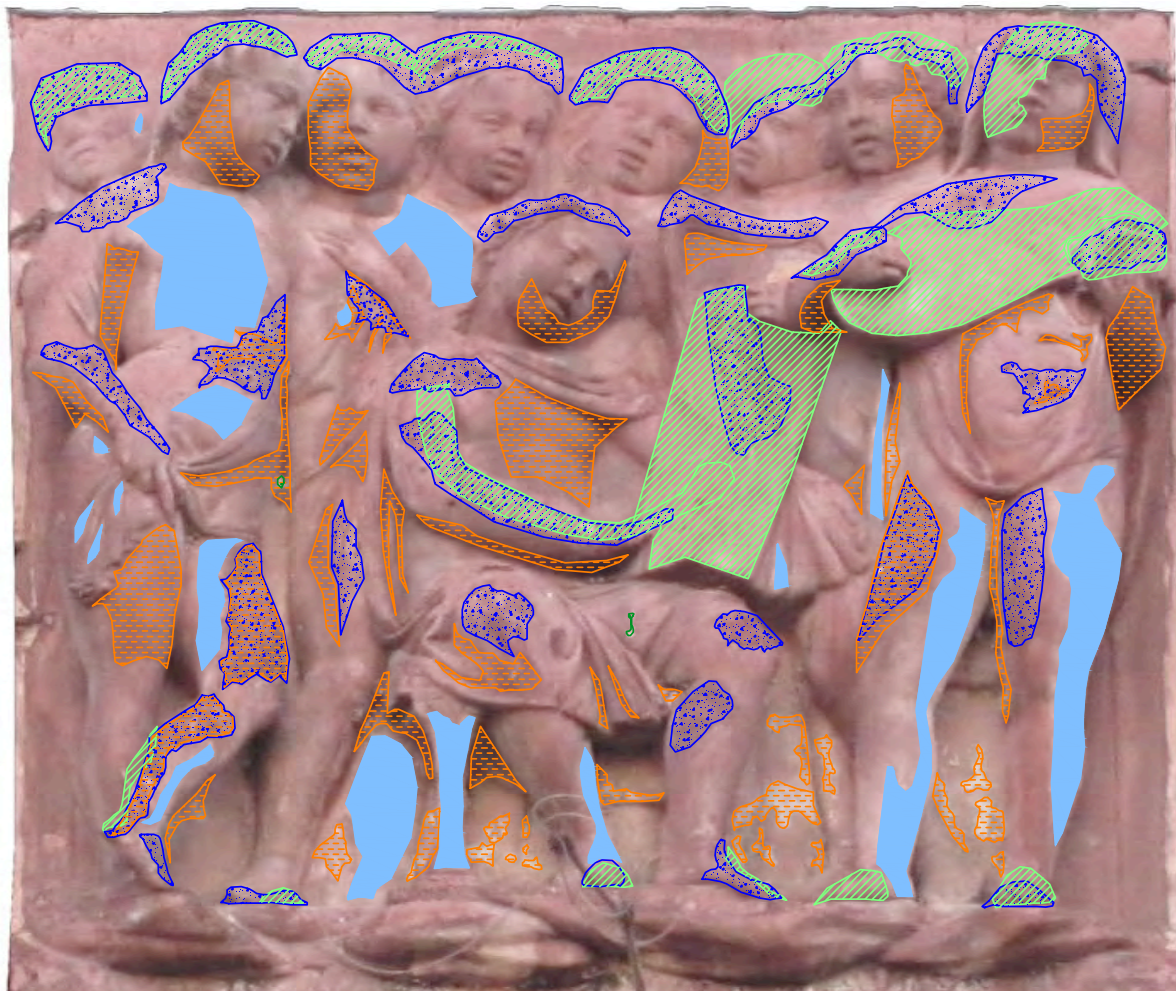
APPENDIX D


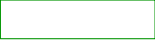




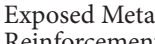



PANEL 6

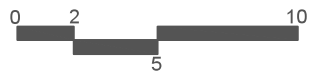


APPENDIX D

PANEL 7






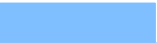


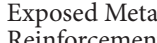



-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

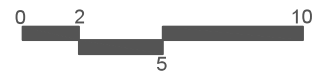


APPENDIX D

PANEL 8






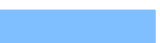


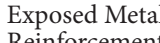



-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

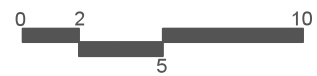


APPENDIX D

PANEL 9











-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
-  Cracks
-  Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss

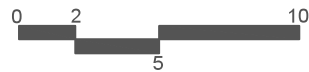


APPENDIX D

PANEL 10



-  Pollutants
-  Animal Deposits
-  Differential Erosion
-  Minor Discoloration
-  Major Discoloration
- Cracks
- Exposed Metal Reinforcement
-  Loss of Definition
-  Delamination
-  Total Loss



**INDIVIDUAL PROJECT:
SARAH PETERSON &
GLADYSA VEGA**

**ANALYSIS OF THE EARLY AUDITORIUM
INTERIOR AT PLAYS AND PLAYERS
THEATRE**

“The treatment of walls is one of the fundamentals of decoration; and this is evident when we realise that no furnishing, however handsome in itself, will constitute a good interior unless the walls, also, have been adequately studied and carried out in accordance with the principles of good design.”

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Introduction



Google.com (2011)

Enveloping the uppermost east and west walls, and dramatically capping the southern proscenium of the Plays and Players auditorium are the skillfully painted narrative murals by Edith Emerson. These murals, unveiled just five years following the opening of the theatre, have assumed a position as one of the most critical character-defining elements of the theatre's magnificent auditorium space.¹

While it is evident the murals have darkened over their near 100 year-old history, it can also be noted that these intricately painted panels were once surrounded by millwork treated in finishes far different than the neutral vanilla-hued paints which coat them today. Simple observation of chipped layers and hidden patches on the decorative moldings and pilasters reveal multiple painting campaigns with colorations differing from their more widely visible counterparts. Such knowledge informs the supposition that a darker

1 At the ceremony in which the murals were revealed, Emerson's mentor and noted painter Violet Oakley was purported to have proclaimed, the murals "set the mood, illuminate the walls, reveal a fine idea, and present a message of art eloquently in a manner novel to theatres in this country." "Murals Presented to Little Theatre" in Sarah M. Hyson, "A Preliminary Survey of the Historic Plays and Players Theatre: Preservation Issues to Be Addressed," (Graduate Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005) 11.

scheme of the areas framing these murals once existed and greatly enhanced the color of the murals, with a lower level of contrast allowing color variations in Emerson's works to visually advance.

In order to structure a sufficiently robust hypothesis as to what these original mural-framing millwork colors would have been, several levels of analysis have been undertaken to support the final conclusions. Conducted in tandem, scientifically-based analysis of the paint layers confirms most early accounts of the paint colors, and historically-focused secondary research addressing decorative schemes typical to early twentieth-century interiors provides context for conjectures made regarding these features.

PAINT ANALYSIS

History and Importance of Paint Analysis in Plays and Players

"The research and analysis of architectural paints—intended to understand their color, appearance, and composition—has been underway in the fields of architectural and fine arts conservation for nearly a century," and began with cross-section analysis of fine art in the early twentieth century. By mid-century, these methodologies were applied to architectural structures.²

As a process, the analysis of architectural finishes analysis can reveal the following information:

- *Documentation of a color scheme associated with a particular significant historic period for a building*
- *Construction chronology of a building*
- *Original aesthetic intent of the building's designer or occupant*
- *New information on traditional painting materials and techniques*
- *Information to guide paint-removal projects and on-site exposures of earlier finishes*
- *Information for cleaning or conserving a specific finish³*

For this project, finish analysis is being used to document original color schemes associated with Plays and Players' period of significance. Given

2 Dorothy S. Krotzer, "Architectural Finishes: Research and Analysis" *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology International* 39, no. 2/3 (2008): 1-6, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25433950> (accessed November 14, 2011).

3 Ibid, 2.

the high degree of intactness of the century-old space and stakeholder interest in uncovering original finishes within the auditorium, the first ten years of operation, 1913-1923, (with the Emerson mural installation directly in the center of that time period in 1918), has been deemed the period of significance for this investigation.

In a 1982 article written for the *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, historic finishes consultant Frank S. Welsh cites the appropriateness of conducting paint analysis following a thorough historic and architectural documentation of the property in question.⁴ The University of Pennsylvania Historic Preservation department has initiated several studies on the space through two theses written by David Hudson Harrington in 1985, and Sarah M. Hyson in 2005, as well as the Fall 2011 HSPV Studio Preservation Plan, which this paper accompanies. The comprehensiveness of this collective set of studies points to the apt timing of this analysis.

It is our hope that the forthcoming paint analysis included in this paper will be utilized by Plays and Players to more closely approximate the early appearance of the building's auditorium when the murals were installed. Re-painting millwork elements adjacent to Emerson's murals in colors similar to those which originally appeared, can act as a simple and inexpensive first step in restoring the building's historic interior.⁵ Additionally, it can serve to better enhance the color fields of the darkening murals until necessary conservation interventions can be conducted.

Though Welsh urges paint analysis to be conducted on the entirety of the building at one time, the size and detail of the building, scope, and timing of this project, precludes the analyzers from doing so. Therefore, care has been taken to select areas of analysis which comprehensively address one space: the north, south, east and west vertical planes of the two-story auditorium.⁶ Areas directly bordering

4 Frank S. Welsh, "Paint Analysis," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology International* 14, no. 4 (1982): 29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1493901> (accessed November 14, 2011). Krotzer likewise recommends utilizing building specifications to ascertain any information which may have been outlined regarding the type or color of original paint at the outset of property construction. Unfortunately, no such records were uncovered while consulting primary resources.

5 The most common method of paint restoration in America involves matching an historic paint color to modern paint, and using the modern paint to achieve the original look. Andrea M. Gilmore in "Analyzing Paint Samples" for Roger W. Moss, *Paint in America: The Colors of Historic Buildings*, (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994) 178.

6 When selecting areas of study, recommendations from other parties were also taken into consideration. The most recent work, Hyson's thesis dated 2005, recommends that paint

the murals, including the proscenium, pilasters, wainscoting and crown molding were sampled and analyzed in accordance with informal (or preliminary) paint analysis techniques.

Methods of Paint Analysis

“The discipline or architectural-finishes research... is now widely recognized as an essential part of the documentation process for historic buildings... [yet] there is no single approach or methodology for how such a study should be conducted.”⁷ In a 1986 write-up for *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, “Who is an Historic Paint Analyst? A Call for Standards,” Welsh introduced three methods in which paint analysis is conducted.

The oldest, referred to as the “Research Survey” method, includes a crude “scrape and magnify” approach, resulting in color evaluation “without scientific basis.”⁸ The second, includes examination of paint layers through a microscope, also, he argues, “with no scientific basis.”⁹ Welsh does, however, credit this method with providing otherwise unobtainable information about the “early surface layers which may be too thin to see with the naked eye.”¹⁰ The third, and final category presented, is the “microscopist’s” approach, also referred to by Welsh as the “Microchemical-analytical” method, centered around an understanding of “historic buildings and finishes, and of necessary skills for microscopically analyzing and accurately interpreting layers, colors, pigments and media.”¹¹ Additionally, this approach invites specialists well-versed in sophisticated analysis methods, “like X-ray diffraction, scanning electron microscopes and electron microprobes,” to conduct “elemental analysis which helps in the identification of pigments and other particles.”¹²

analysis be conducted on the auditorium’s paneling, proscenium, bases, shafts and capitals of the pilasters, as well as the seating area, doors, and ceiling. Due to the short time period in which this study was conducted, study of the doors and ceiling had to be eliminated, with preference given to the areas directly surrounding the murals. It is still recommended that areas not covered in this study be analyzed for original paint finishes in the future.

7 Krotzer, 1.

8 Frank S. Welsh, “Who is an Historic Paint Analyst? A Call for Standards” *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology International* 18, no. 4 (1986): 4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1494224> (accessed November 14, 2011).

9 Ibid.

10 Frank S. Welsh, “Paint Analysis,” 29.

11 Ibid.

12 Frank S. Welsh, “Who is an Historic Paint Analyst? A Call for Standards” 4-5.

The analysis provided for Plays and Players’ auditorium can be considered a merging of the two latter categories, as samples extracted from the site were processed in the lab, photographed and analyzed using a fluorescent-light microscope and a stereo microscope. Initial suppositions as to paint color and content were conferred upon with preservation professionals qualified to draw more accurate conclusions, including instructor Catherine Myers, architectural and paintings conservator, who served as an informal advisor throughout the process.

Despite professional assistance in later stages, the majority of this finish analysis was conducted by the authors who are only minimally versed with standardized methods. Of the requirements suggested as “minimum” for a Paint Analyst, knowledge and skills of “stereo and polarized light microscopy and microchemical testing techniques,” comprehension of “architectural building history and technology...knowledge of historic finishes manufacture and application technology,” a “true understanding and perception of color and how pigments and paint colors are affected by aging,” and, “professional willingness and ability to evaluate findings and/or techniques with others who are qualified in relation to individual project/client requirements,”¹³ were all met by authors on some level, but not comprehensively.

Therefore, the findings from this study, provided below, consist of an interpretation of the original paint scheme based on observations conducted with the use of stereo microscopy, fluorescent light microscopy and testing with fluorescent dyes. Although no elemental analysis could be performed, a substantial amount of information was nonetheless acquired through the above methods.

Interior Description

As William Seale suggests in his manual *Recreating the Historic House Interior*, research should be the first step in restoring any interior. Researchers for this project were fortunate to have a series of early written accounts already synthesized. One 1917 book featuring the Little Theatre recalled the design of the auditorium as “charmingly decorated in brown and old gold.”¹⁴ In Harrington’s 1985 thesis on the theatre, an opening night attendee was described as detailing nearly the entire space. According to Harrington’s interpretation, “The pilasters

13 Frank S. Welsh, “Who is an Historic Paint Analyst? A Call for Standards” 5.

14 Constance D’Arcy Mackay, *The Little Theatre in the United States* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917) 99.

were in a chocolate color, and the intermediate tapestried wall coverings were done in tints of brown with a figured design. The ceiling was painted in cream and buff shades. The proscenium was of the same dark brown as the pilasters. The stage curtain was green velvet.”¹⁵ A June 1913 article also captured the interior in photographic form. Although the images are in black and white, they can be useful for understanding polychrome decorative schemes because “they reveal differences in color.”¹⁶

Though in this case the research findings yielded a relative wealth of critical information including a general description of the paint colors, it is important to bear in mind that not all recorded descriptions can be taken at face value. The color noted by the author is only one piece of the puzzle-- more information must be provided on surrounding furnishings in order to reconstruct a thorough representation of the early interior aesthetic. Actual pigment mixes and paint content cannot be deciphered by the naked eye, and human error can exist in perception of the color, especially with respect to the presence of artificial lighting. F.N. Vanderwalker, a 1924 book author on paint colors and their associated theory, noted that changes in color perception occurred “... under the influence of electric or gas lights,” with “buff appear[ing] to be little changed, [but] brown appear[ing] softer.”¹⁷

Similarly, though general knowledge of early paint schemes has been outlined, the process of paint analysis can still be considered valuable for this project in that it has opened the door for future, more in-depth study. By preparing and providing processed samples of the auditorium wall details, *Plays and Players* has been afforded the opportunity to leapfrog over a very time-consuming and costly step. Now equipped with the necessary samples, *Plays and Players* may send the samples out for (further) professional

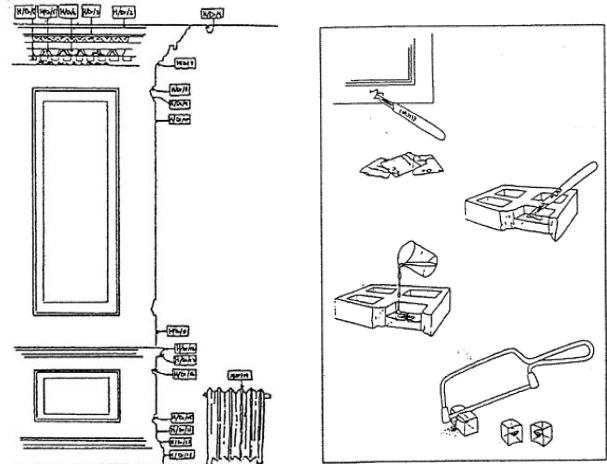
15 “Little Theatre Makes its Bow” in David Hudson Harrington, “The Plays and Players Theatre” (Graduate Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1985) 22.

16 “Historic photographs are indispensable for identifying areas of decorative painting.” Gilmore in Moss, 174-175.

17 F.N. Vanderwalker, *The Mixing of Colors and Paints: Description, properties, theory, harmony and management of colors; the mixing and use of colors and paints for interior decorating, house painting, arts and crafts, furniture and polychrome finishing* (Chicago: F.J. Drake, 1924) 219-220. Though the main wall sconces are downward-facing pendants, which suggests they were always illuminated by electric means (gas lighting only operates on fixtures pointing upwards), gas cocks below the wall sconces can be interpreted to suggest the presence of gas lighting at some point. When cross-referenced with early photographs, however, it can be presumed that electric lighting was indeed the main source of illumination in this space, and the gas cocks possibly represented some form of emergency lighting.

testing, including elemental and specific pigment analysis (currently outside the scope of this project).

Paint Analysis Process



Drawings from “The Role of Paint Analysis in the Historic Interior” by Patrick Baty

A total of 14 samples were extracted from different locations around the main theater space on the first and mezzanine levels. They were collected from discrete locations where some damage or peeling was occurring.¹⁸ A small X-ACTO #11 blade was used to extract the samples from the plaster and wood substrates. The potential for arriving at erroneous conclusions is substantial if the analysis is done on improperly extracted samples whose substrate has detached, therefore, great care was taken to extract several samples and examine only those which remained attached to the substrate and were of adequate size so that multiple cuts representing all layers could be taken.¹⁹ The extracted piece was immediately placed on a small coin envelope, labeled with its corresponding unique identification number and a description of the location.

18 This was done in order to minimally disrupt the existing finish and ensure that extractions made were as minimally visible as possible.

19 “Care must be taken that the samples are complete and that they are representative of the finishes being studied... When selecting a sample location, it is especially important to look for protected areas of paint build-up or hard-to-reach places, in order to avoid taking samples from locations that may have been previously stripped or were heavily weathered... removal of the finish layers, as well as a portion of the substrate, is also essential to ensure that all layers are present in any given sample and that the nature of the substrate is understood, as well.” Krotzer, 3.

Following The Architectural Conservation Laboratory's guidelines for embedding paint cross sections for microscopic analysis, we processed all the samples extracted. Small molds were coated with Buehler mold release agent and allowed to dry for approximately one hour. Bioplast, (Ward's polyester monomer) mixed with a catalyst (Ward's Methyl Ethyl Ketone Peroxide) at a ratio of 1% per volume was poured to provide a supporting layer which was allowed to cure for 24 hours. Small labels indicating the unique identification numbers were embedded on the support layer before it was allowed to cure. The samples were then carefully placed on their supporting layer with the substrate facing down and covered with a similar mixture of Bioplast and catalyst. The cubes were then allowed to cure for 4 days and extracted. For approximately 2 days the embedded samples were laid on a paper towel and allowed to cure further under a 100 watt incandescent bulb.

After it was determined that the Bioplast was fully cured, the top surface of each cube was sanded with an 80-grit paper to remove the meniscus caused by the casting pour. Thin sections of approximately 2mm in thickness were cut with a Buehler IsoMet Low Speed Saw that is continually lubricated with Stoddard solvent. Each section was polished by hand using 0.05 micron gamma agglomerated alumina powder dispersed in deionized water and poured onto a 2" MicroCloth (Buehler, long napped synthetic rayon cloth). They were then mounted on glass sample slides using slightly heated Cargille Meltmount with a refractive index of 1.662. Each section was analyzed and photographed using two different microscopes with two different types of illumination. The different strata were first observed under optical fiber raking light using a 4x and 10x objectives on a Olympus CX31. Photomicrographs for each sample were taken using a Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1 camera through a 1x trinocular head and 10x objective. The samples were observed and photographed under ultraviolet light using The Architectural Conservation Laboratory's modified Nikon YS2-T with a BV-1A fluorescence filter.

Each sample was first prepared for observation by placing a drop of Stoddard solvent over the sample and covering it with a glass cover over the sample.

While being observed under 14x magnification on the Olympus CX31 microscope adjacent to a North-facing window, the initial layers were color matched using a Munsell color standard. The findings were noted and illustrated on each sample form.

Once the photomicrographs were taken, information from each sample was organized in individual forms describing imaging methodology and the results of the stratigraphic analysis.

Findings from Paint Analysis

(See Appendix)

Assuming the areas sampled in fact contain original material beginning from the date of construction, our findings show extensive paint campaigns across all areas of the theater space. Most samples reveal at least 7 different finish layers while a few reveal up to 11 applied during 7 painting campaigns.

Red lead primer was probably used across most of the surfaces in the theater when they were originally painted a "chocolate brown color"²⁰. Samples taken from the proscenium and pilasters show traces of this original scheme. No evidence of this bright red primer was found on the samples extracted from the crown molding on the mezzanine level.

Although most of the surfaces studied in this report have been painted white, no early layers reveal evidence that this color was used during the theater's previous generations. It is understood by this study that all of the layers revealed do not indicate a finish color, yet without the aid of composition analysis, it is difficult to present a conclusion as to which layers are primers or preparatory layers and which are finishes. A more detailed description of the findings will be discussed by area, below.

Balustrade:

Samples extracted from the balustrade columns and base reveal four layers of a deep red color followed by at least four layers of white. The wood substrate appears to be Circassian walnut based on observation of the graining under 21x magnification.

Crown molding:

No traces of red color are found in this sample, yet there is evidence of at least two distinct gold/bronze metallic-paint campaigns. The first layer is what appears to be originally a white layer, which fluoresces under UV light. It is unclear if this layer was the first finish application or if the metallic paint was exposed. There is indication of some discoloration along the upper half of the layer suggesting that what is currently seen was not the original color. Without compositional

20 "Little Theatre Makes its Bow" in David Hudson Harrington, "The Plays and Players Theatre" (Graduate Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1985) 22.

analysis, two hypothesis can be made as to the cause of this particular discoloration: a) that the white paint layer was the original finish of this element and that the slow accumulation of dirt and oil caused the exposed surface to change in appearance, or b) that the white layer is a primer for the metallic paint and the corrosion of the metal pigment is combining with the oil binder and causing a stain on the upper areas of the white primer layer. Should this be a white primer, it could be an aid in identifying the date that other metallic paint layers in the theater were applied, since would be the only sample with metallic paint applied as a first campaign and the only early metallic paint applied with a white primer. As other samples studied suggest, early metallic paint layers were applied over a dark red primer. The proscenium and pilasters samples contain three layers of metallic paint of which the last one (most recent?) is the only one with a white primer.

Wainscoting:

The wainscoting along the first level of the main theater space appears to have received the least amount of paint campaigns of all the samples taken from this space.

Similar to the balustrade samples, the stile piece sampled reveals a first layer consisting of a deep red/brown color yet, unlike it, this layer is highly fluorescent under ultraviolet light. A bright orange/red and a deep red color follow after. What appear to be three distinct white layers follow a similar pattern under ultraviolet light. The panel sample presents a more extensive history. A dark brown/red layer is followed by gold/bronze metallic paint. A sequence similar to the stile follows after, with a bright orange/red, and two dark red layers. Four layers of white paint follow, the earliest two showing high fluorescence.

The baseboard sample presents contradictory evidence than what was observed on site. Striping paint caused by deterioration revealed a red layer of paint on the surface of the baseboards, yet no red paint is visible on the studied thin section, although the substrate remained intact during processing. It is with regret that this study cannot elaborate further on the color history of this element.

Proscenium:

An extensive amount of layers were found across all areas sampled from the proscenium. The center of the north face of the east side of the proscenium presents evidence of a deep brown initial color, immediately followed by a gold/bronze metallic paint. Subsequent metallic, red and eight layers of white paint follow and are described in detail in the attached forms.

The corner of the north and west face of the east side and the (insert word here—there was nothing) of the proscenium present a similar scheme as that of the center, yet there is some evidence of a muddy yellow paint being applied on the paneling details.

The bundled reed molding presents a thick orange/red layer similar to those found across the samples followed by a thin layer of chocolate brown paint. Four distinct campaigns of metallic paint are present, ending with a very thin layer of similar paint which is still visible today. The last layer on this sample belongs to a neighboring color.

Pilasters:

Both samples extracted from the pilasters on the mezzanine level exhibit the same type and number of layers, indicating that they have always been finished in a way as to read as one element, rather than in a manner that distinguishes the different details of their composition. An initial thin white layer is found immediately adjacent to the substrate, followed by the orange/red layer found throughout. A dark layer, possibly brown in color follows after that. A deep red was covered with gold/bronze metallic paint and a second paint of this kind was applied over a white color. Five subsequent layers were applied over this second metallic paint. Although the earliest two appear to have a slight yellow color, this study cannot ascertain whether this was the original color intended or if they are (?) the result of deterioration.

Discussion of Historic Paints

In addition to being well-versed in the extraction and lab processes required for paint analysis, Welsh recommends that an analyst “be knowledgeable and very familiar with current and past methods of paint manufacture... painting practices and techniques...”²¹ Therefore, during the analysis of Plays and Players’ auditorium finishes, background information was compiled regarding paint technology and compositions typical to the time the theatre was constructed.

Around the time of The Little Theatre’s construction, the American paint industry “... was undergoing profound transformations, including tremendous growth, the degree of concentration of ownership, and in the very definition of their product.”²² Historically, paint

21 Welsh, “Paint Analysis,” 30.

22 The specific date referred to in this excerpt was 1910. Christian Warren, “Toxic Purity: The Progressive Era Origins of America’s Lead Paint Poisoning Epidemic,” *The Business History Review* 73, no. 4 (1999): 709. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3116131> (accessed December 2, 2011). “The value

had required some degree of assembly by the user, with “raw ingredients purchased in local paint stores or chemical supply houses” mixed by the user just prior to painting. “Skilled painters could custom-blend oils, thinners, and pigments for a particular job,”²³ but soon, a sharp increase in residential construction called for more readily useable products to be manufactured.²⁴ “Between 1899 and 1919, the market share for ‘ready-mixed paints’” had risen from 21 to 31 percent of the total value of paints and varnishes produced in the United States.²⁵ Lead was a ubiquitous element in paint, with white lead pigments “account[ing] for 30 to 40 percent of the United States’ consumption of lead” well into the 1920s.²⁶ Though in paints, lead was the mineral most predominantly seen, zinc was another which commanded a large share of the industry. “From 1900 to 1910 metallic zinc production increased almost three times as fast as lead production.”²⁷ In addition to lead and zinc, “paint manufacturers experimented with zinc-oxide, zinc-sulphide, barytes, and carbonates... producing a range of new products: some cheaper, some whiter than white lead, and some... [more] durable.”²⁸ Paints which incorporated a combination of many of these elements were popular as well, these “mixed” varieties often passing themselves off as of the “Old Dutch,” or pure lead kind.²⁹

“Some projects require additional investigation of the composition of a paint layer, including characterization of binding media³⁰ and identification of pigments³¹. This supplemental research is typically performed to provide

of paints and varnishes produced in the United States rose by 8- percent between 1899 and 1909, while the value of goods and services in the paint industry increased by almost fifty percent.... Between 1899 and 1919 the number of establishments involved in paint manufacture increased by almost 40 percent.” Ibid, 710.

23 Ibid, 711.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Christian Warren, “Toxic Purity: The Progressive Era Origins of America’s Lead Paint Poisoning Epidemic,” *The Business History Review* 73, no. 4 (1999): 712. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3116131> (accessed December 2, 2011).

27 Ibid, 713.

28 Ibid, 714.

29 “Lead companies stressed their role as executors of ancient, time-honored traditions in paint technology (the words “*Old Dutch Process*” appeared in both the National Lead Company and Sherwin Williams logos) while selling a substantial portion of their product to those who manufactured “mixed” paints.” Ibid, 717.

30 “*Binding Medium* refers to the portion of paint that forms the film and binds pigment particles to each other and to the surface to which the paint is applied.” Krotzer, 1.

31 “*Pigment* refers to the finely ground material dispersed throughout a paint film that contributes primarily color and opacity to a paint.” Ibid.

information for paint replication, identify a layer’s potential for discoloration or fading, or provide information about the best way to clean or conserve a finish.”³² The scope of this project does not include compositional analysis, therefore conclusions are made based on observation of the physical properties of the samples.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ORIGINAL PAINT COLORS

Color Selection and Theory

Considering the uniqueness of this building as one of the few remaining “Little Theatre” archetypes in America, it is also useful to set the paint color findings into a greater context. Relating the presumed colors to greater trends in interior design at the space’s determined period of significance can help to better illuminate Plays and Players’ pioneering history and the auditorium’s incomparable interior, even as compared to the ancillary spaces within 1714 Delancey itself. In a June 1913 article, *The New York Times* captured Beulah Jay’s theatre through both photographs and words, and hinted at its unorthodox nature. In the article, founder Beulah Jay described her theatre as “...a happy relief from the cut-and-dried things that the old-time theatres hand out from season to season without variety.”³³ “The theatre itself,” the *Times* responded, “is perfectly appointed.”³⁴ Though her theatre was ornate and boasted a classically-inspired design, Beulah purported to refute the notion of high society. Her choice of “*The Adventures of Chlora*,” as the opening night production (a previously unknown play by an unknown author), spoke volumes: “... I chose it for the honor of opening the theatre... for the reason that I did not want Philadelphia to start with the idea that the Little Theatre was to be a ‘highbrow’ institution.”³⁵

The design for the Little Theatre’s auditorium space, which Beulah supervised, may very well have been a component of this attempt at differentiation. An examination of other theatres constructed around the time of the Little Theatre reveal that the dark color scheme used on the walls was not necessarily typical to

32 Krotzer, 4-5.

33 *The New York Times*, “This Woman Built a Theatre to Prove Her Theories,” June 22, 1913. <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2441/pqdweb?index=2&did=100271721&SrchMode=1&sid=3&Fmt=10&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=HNP&TS=1323845134&clientId=63417> (accessed October 3, 2011).

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

theatre design. Harmonizing with the popular Louis XVI style ornamentation, light colors such as old rose and shades of gray were common, with shades of blue or violet often appearing as a contrasting color.³⁶ Of the twelve theatres reviewed, only one mentioned the use of brown. Said one (1910's) writer regarding brown: "there are many attractive shades... The colour should, however, be sparingly used, as it makes for darkness and dullness."³⁷ Brown was categorized with those considered "warm" and "restful," yet as a dark color it was deemed "mysterious, sober, sedate, sombre, mature and dignified."³⁸ Gold was employed almost ubiquitously in theatres, though distinctions appear to have been made between "gold," and "old gold," and "antique gold." The descriptions, as well as the photos, depict spaces in which light colors dominated. This stands contrast to the darker, rich colors used on the walls at the Little Theatre.

According to one writer who recorded the theatre's appearance on opening night, Beulah's aesthetic for the theatre strove to "avoid any garish effects or red and gold," instead being finished in "rather subdued tones."³⁹ Though presumably unconventional by comparable terms, critics found the chosen decorative scheme for the auditorium quite agreeable. One lauded "There has evidently been a conscious effort to get away from the conventional red plush and brass trimmings, and the result is singularly pleasing...⁴⁰

The presence of these colors in the early years of the interior takes on additional meaning when considered with respect to color theory. Color theory played a large role in the determination of interior schemes at this time, and could very well have been a consideration when the final decorative schemes were being selected.⁴¹ We know from the early accounts of opening night that the dominant scheme was a relatively monochromatic one, with dark brown accents in

36 Historic information on 12 theatres in New York built between 1910 and 1918 were examined, including the Playhouse Theatre, George M. Cohan's Theatre, and the Folies-Bergere, all built in 1911.

37 Harold Donaldson Eberlein, Abbot McClure, and Edward Stratton Holloway, *The Practical Book of Interior Decoration* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1919) 20.

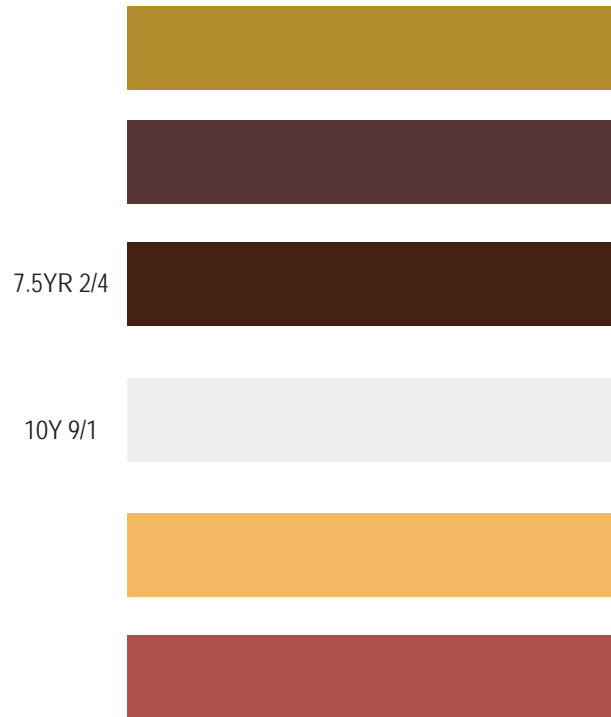
38 Vanderwalker, 217.

39 "Little Theatre is Now Underway," in Hyson, 35.

40 "Little Theatre Has Auspicious Opening," in Hyson, 35.

41 "The psychology of colour was now drawn into the discussion of appropriate colour schemes, and also began to be used as an explanation of trends in taste." Mary Schoeser and Celia Rufey, *English and American Textiles from 1790 to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989) 150. Vanderwalker furthers, "Intense interest is being aroused in the great masses of people in better and more extensive use of colors." 221.

the proscenium and pilasters supporting a cream and buff ceiling. This lack of contrast was often sought, as it was believed that "Too much variety causes restlessness; discord and chaos are extreme degrees of variety in contrasts of values, hues or intensities."⁴²



Murals, Furniture, Textiles and Lighting

In accordance with the mandates of color theory, the entire scheme which would have been determined at the time of paint selection.

Vanderwalker, in 1924 explained:

"Decorators... are confronted with the necessity for learning more about the tasteful and harmonious use of colors... Having a plan for a color scheme makes one consider the room as a whole and points to the wisdom of correlating colors, textures and designs; it makes one construct the harmony of a room as an author constructs his story and as an artist plans his composition on canvas... When a thoughtful plan has been made all furnishings and colors, textures and designs going into a room are selected with reference to the whole room as a unit."⁴³

Though the murals were installed five years following the opening of the theatre, according to the aforementioned theory, their colors would

42 Vanderwalker, 223.

43 Ibid, 221.

have needed to comply with the existing interior hues of the interior when they were installed (including the paint as well as the textiles). Emerson's murals, rendered in "variations on... gold, brown, and green..."⁴⁴ help to confirm the original auditorium color suppositions, with brown, gold and green likely being the predominant furnishing colors.

Wallcoverings, carpeting, furniture and lighting would have also been chosen at the time of the paint. As was the case with the paint colors, historic information has provided clues to these supplementary elements. Period newspaper articles describe the upholstery, curtains and woodwork. Historic photographs lend information about the furniture and lighting.

It can be seen, for instance, that the chairs in the auditorium (the only pieces of furniture assigned to this space), appear to have slightly curved wooden backs with green or brown leather. The color and material suppositions for these items can be based on historic photographs: upholstery on the front on the seats appears to have a reflective surface, and it is clear there was padding underneath due to the way in which the upholstery gapped at the seat back. Nailheads can be seen on the back of the chairs, which was a treatment often used to secure leather upholstery to wood furniture at that time. The leather colors of green or brown can be deduced from the overall description given of the interior, and the assumption that the color of the leather would not have been in contrast to other colors in the room.

The pendant lights on the ceiling and sconces on the walls in shape, size, number, and method of suspension, appear to have matched those which still exist in the theatre today. It is likely that these original globes were indeed frosted as they appear today, as the brightness of electric lights would have been necessary to conceal during performances.

Though we have been made aware that the stage curtain was green, we can glean from early photos and drawings that this curtain was an unpatterned one in velvet, with an asbestos fire layer behind. The simplicity of this curtain would also have stood in contrast to curtains typical at the time. In *Grand Drapes: Tormentors and Teasers*, Terry Helgesen cites that theatre curtains at this time were often elaborately decorated with fringe, tassels, banners, or were even painted.⁴⁵ The Little

44 "Mural Paintings for the Little Theatre of Philadelphia." *The American Magazine of Art*, May 1918. http://books.google.com/books?id=J1HrAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA281&pg=PA281&dq=edith+emerson+murals&source=bl&ots=RF8CQS71xB&sig=s24m40532jQ4NrSgAJmRv0Os7hk&chl=en&ei=86mATvvnNujV0QH8gpnADw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=res ult&resnum=6&ved=0CGMQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed December 6, 2011).

45 Terry Helgesen, *Grand Drapes: Tormentors &*

Theatre's curtain was instead more modest.

Another textile element present in the space was carpeting. Tiered seating platforms⁴⁶ were most likely finished in exposed wood with a dark stain, but carpeting would have been utilized in circulation areas between the seats. A central aisle carpet shown in the 1913 New York Times photograph appears to be of dark color with light contrasting border. The color of the carpet was likely brown or dark green, to match the rest of the interior colors, with the border possibly in a contrasting gold.⁴⁷ The inclusion of a dark floor covering would similarly harmonize with notions about wall/ceiling/floor color relationships. In Grace Wood and Emily Burbank's 1919 *The Art of Interior Decoration*, the writers proclaim "it is Nature's own arrangement, green trees and hillsides, the sky above, and the dark earth beneath our feet. A ceiling, if lighter in tone than the walls, gives a sense of airiness to a room. Floors, whether of exposed wood, completely carpeted, or covered by rugs, must be enough darker than your sidewalls to 'hold down your room,' as the decorators say."⁴⁸ The unpatterned carpet, seat upholstery, and stage curtain were well-fitting of the contemporary notion that "If walls are decorative... the floor should be restful..."⁴⁹

Analysis of Wall Upholstery

Perhaps most critical to the discussion of early interior textiles at the theatre, however, are the observations which can be made regarding the patterned wall fabric. Today, as it had nearly one hundred years ago, heavily-woven fabric blankets much of the back and side walls of the auditorium space. Prior to the installation of the murals, this fabric dominated the auditorium, and appears to be the first wall finish applied to the interstitial spaces between the pilasters.⁵⁰

One early source identified the fabric as a "gobelin tapestry."⁵¹ Gobelin fabric can be defined in two different ways: one, as "A hand-woven tapestry from the Paris factory of

Teasers, (United States: Theatre Historical Society, 1983) 2.

46 These platforms are present in the auditorium today and appear to be original.

47 Gold was the lightest color mentioned in the early writings about its interior, and photographs reveal there was a high level of color contrast in the carpet.

48 Grace Wood and Emily Burbank, *The Art of Interior Decoration* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1916) 33-34.

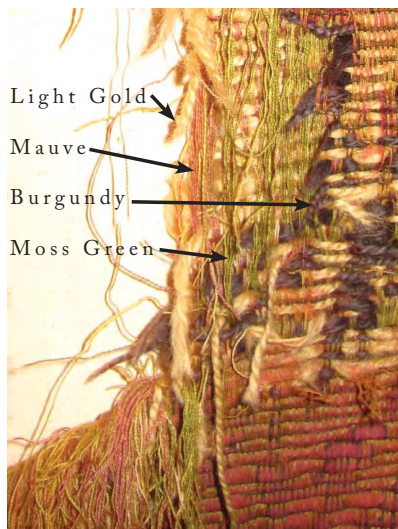
49 Eberlein, McClure, and Holloway, 240.

50 Areas in which the fabric had torn revealed no evidence of paint over the original plaster to which the fabric was applied.

51 "Little Theatre has Auspicious Opening," in Sarah M. Hyson, "A Preliminary Survey of the Historic Plays and Players Theatre: Preservation Issues to Be Addressed," (Graduate Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005) 11.

Original Unpainted
Plaster

AGE



COLOR

Non-reversible weave



WEAVE

the name,” or two, “The technique of weaving a discontinuous weft, creating a reversible design...”⁵² Inspection of the back of the cloth⁵³ reveals that the fabric is not reversible, pointing to either a misidentification of the cloth by the reporter, or its origin as a tapestry product of the Gobelin factory.⁵⁴

Similar to the methods prescribed for Paint Analysis, Frank S. Welsh outlined methods for examining historic wall coverings as well. Those outlined in “Investigation, Analysis and Authentication of Historic Wallpaper Fragments” serve as a useful guideline when analyzing the wall upholstery in Plays and Players’ auditorium.

In this methodology, Welsh outlines five points. The first, perhaps most obvious, is to

⁵² Marypaul Yates, *Fabrics: A guide for interior designers and architects* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002) 285.

⁵³ The area of inspection was on the mezzanine level where the fabric had pulled away from the wall.

⁵⁴ “So-called tapestry-woven upholstery fabrics are jacquard-woven weft-faced fabrics” pge 64 Yates

“Tapestries are designed with a rotating stripe of (usually) six different warp colors, with an individual end of each color following sequentially in repeating order (for instance, one end of red follows one of blue, which follows one of green, which follows one of gold, which follow one of black, which follows one of red again). The jacquard loom will be instructed to select... every sixth end... to be lifted and woven with a particular filling to achieve a red area of the design. Blue ends, gold ends, and green ends are similarly selected in other areas. This warp-color arrangement, along with the weaves specified in each area, simulates the appearance of the true tapestry weave (in which fill-faced fabrics were hand-woven in plan weave with discontinuous weft) commonly used on past centuries for the large fabric murals in European castles.” Yates, 78.

“Search for evidence.”⁵⁵ At Plays and Players, this step proves easy as many of the wall areas are still covered in the historic fabric. Since the fabric has been painted over since its initial installation, effort was made to identify areas in which the paint had worn off to expose original patterns and/or colors. One area of particular help was on the north wall of the mezzanine, to the east side of the projection booth, where much of the paint had rubbed off.⁵⁶

The second step suggested by Welsh is to “Evaluat[e] the context of the physical evidence.”⁵⁷ At Plays and Players, this was done by finding a discrete location in which the area underneath the wallcovering could be examined (also adjacent to the projection booth). It was determined that the wallcovering was attached to the wall prior to any paint application (directly on the plaster), indicating the fabric currently present is indeed the original fabric seen in early photographs.

The third step of wallcovering analysis concerns identifying the pattern: If a fragment has an identifiable pattern, it can be compared to what is known about popular usage. The pattern often helps date the sample and can suggest pattern features no longer visible.”⁵⁸ Fortunately, the pattern of the wallcovering at Plays and

⁵⁵ Frank S. Welsh, “Investigation, Analysis, and Authentication of Historic Wallpaper Fragments,” *American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 43, no. 1 (2004): 91-110.

⁵⁶ It is understood, however, that the exposed colors in this area may still be inaccurate due to age and possible paint pigment infiltration.

⁵⁷ Frank S. Welsh, “Investigation, Analysis, and Authentication of Historic Wallpaper Fragments.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 93-94.

Players is visible in areas of heavy wear. The paint applied over the fabric (many years after its installation), though irreversibly altering the surface, has ironically prevented wear, allowing the pattern to remain intact. Since it has been determined that the fabric was the first and only surface applied to the walls between pilasters (prior to the murals), dating the pattern itself is not necessary. A full repeat of the pattern and its design can best be seen on the wall just to the east of the projection booth.⁵⁹

For the fourth step, Welsh suggests that one “determine[s] the type of wall covering and methods of manufacture.” As explained previously, much of this information has been already examined and the fabric understood as the Gobelin tapestry variety. Further information on the specific fabric weave can be ascertained from observing the thread patterns on the back of the fabric and researching the methods of weaving utilized in its factory of origin.

Welsh’s fifth and final step for wallcovering analysis is to “Analyze the material composition and evaluate [the] original appearance.” For this, he suggests microscopic analysis and other laboratory work “to identify the fibers in the... fabric wallcoverings.... Help[ing] not only to establish benchmark dates for the wallcovering but also aid[ing] in [the] interpretation of original color and appearance.” Though this step is unfortunately outside the scope of this particular project, it can be determined from visual analysis of the fabric’s density and appearance that the fibers within the fabric are likely cotton, wool, or a blend of the two, perhaps with threads of silk woven in.

Considering the intricate rococo-like flower, leaf, and scroll pattern, it is likely that several colors were utilized in the weave. Such colors would not, however, been in high contrast to each other as the fabric was described by theatre reviewers as soft and “subdued.”⁶⁰ 1919’s *Practical Book of Interior Decoration* stipulated: “The secret of the decorative effect of blended colour is an open and very simple one. Let us take, for example,...a piece of textile. The hues of either may be of much variety and even brilliant in themselves, but to a great extent they complement and thus neutralise each other, some one colour, however, being dominant.”

Color determinations can be made by examining the back of the fabric.⁶¹ Though

⁵⁹ “When wallpapers and fabric wall coverings meet all the criteria of appropriate context, style, and manufacturing processes, and composition for the period under study, they become authenticated candidates for reproduction.” Frank S. Welsh, “Investigation, Analysis, and Authentication of Historic Wallpaper Fragments,” 105.

⁶⁰ “Little Theatre Now Under Way,” in Hyson, 35.

⁶¹ The back of the fabric is particularly useful to obtain this information because it has not directly been painted on, and has not been exposed to light which makes the possibility

described as being rendered in “tints of brown with a figured design,”⁶² the back of the fabric shows evidence of gold threads with a burgundy or brown ground, as well. A light pinkish/orangey red also appears, as does a subtle mossy green, though all original colors should be confirmed by microscopic analysis prior to the reproduction of the design.

Conclusion

“There is no such thing as a color which is constant under all conditions as to appearance to the human eye. The character of a color is always relative. The appearance of color differs always, depending upon the amount of light it receives... and especially does the appearance differ according to what other color or colors surround it... Any two colors will change in character when placed beside each other.”

The Mixing of Colors and Paints, 1924

Though it is clear the murals in Plays and Player’s auditorium have darkened over time, a full understanding of the original interior elements in the decade surrounding their installation can help to shed light on how they might have originally appeared. In an interior which currently so closely resembles its early appearance, restoration of original paint colors would be a first and important step in approximating the original design while optimizing the visual appearance of the now-darkening character-defining murals. A second phase of restoration of original textiles and seating (both of which require replacement), would complete the theatre’s original aesthetic and the framework for which the murals are understood, while further advancing the argument for preservation of this exceptional space.

of fading less likely.

⁶² “Little Theatre Makes its Bow” in Harrington, 22.

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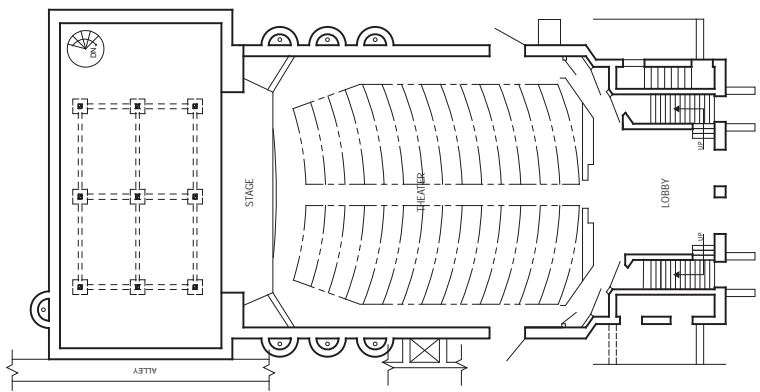
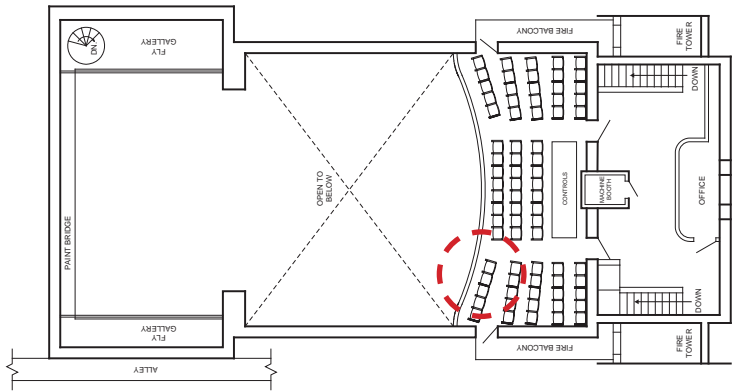
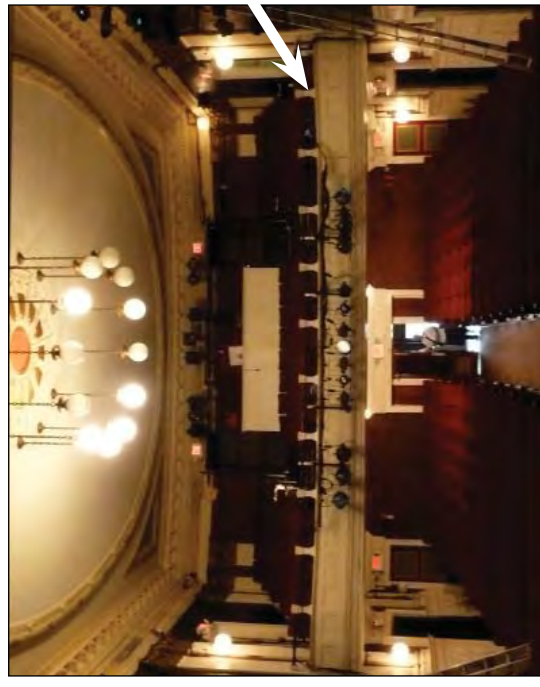
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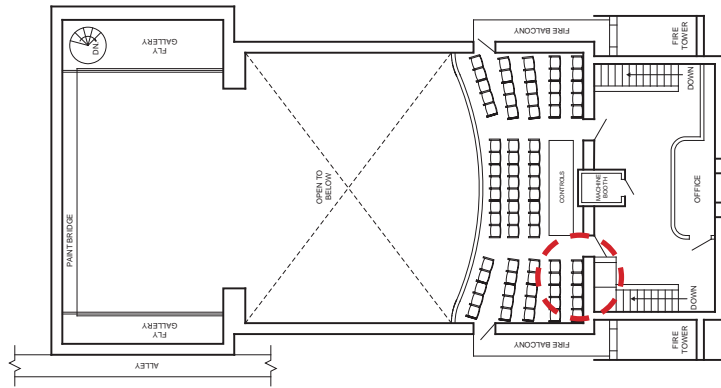
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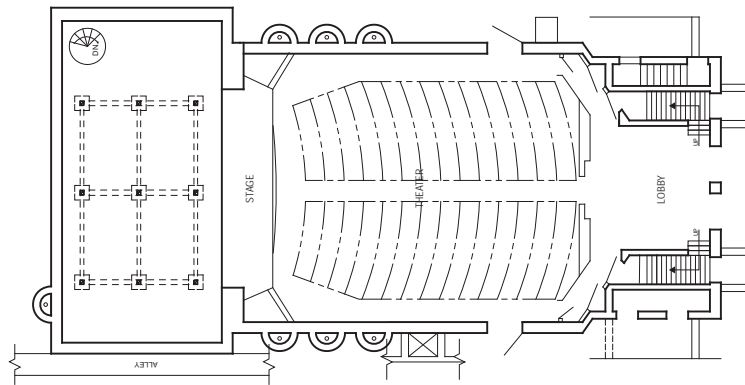
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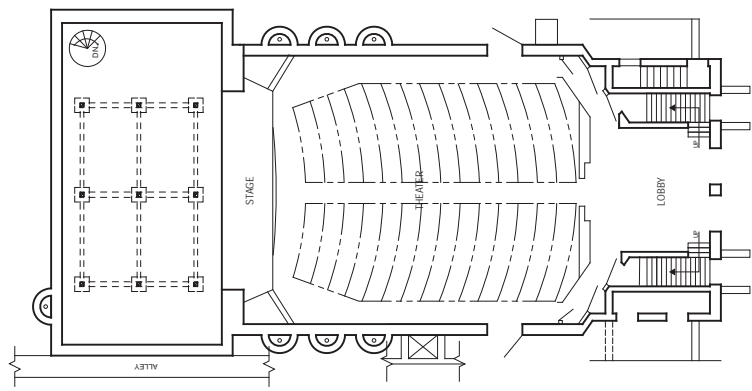
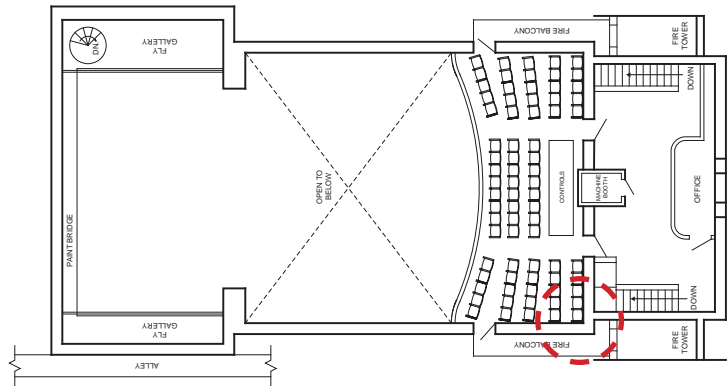
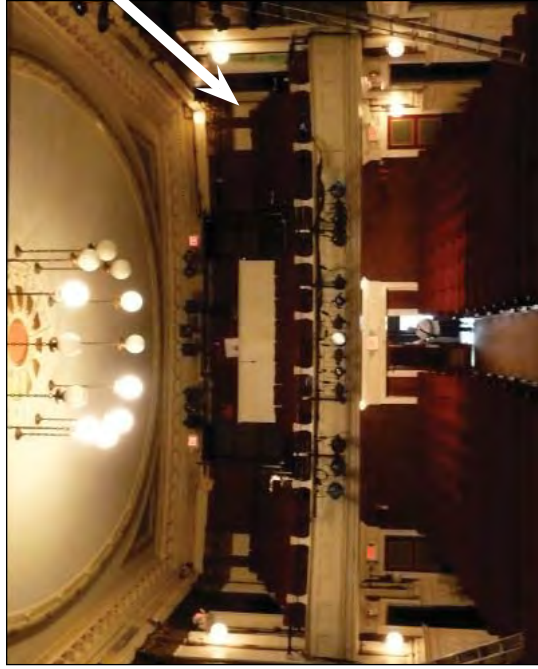


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CROWN MOLDING



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PILASTERS

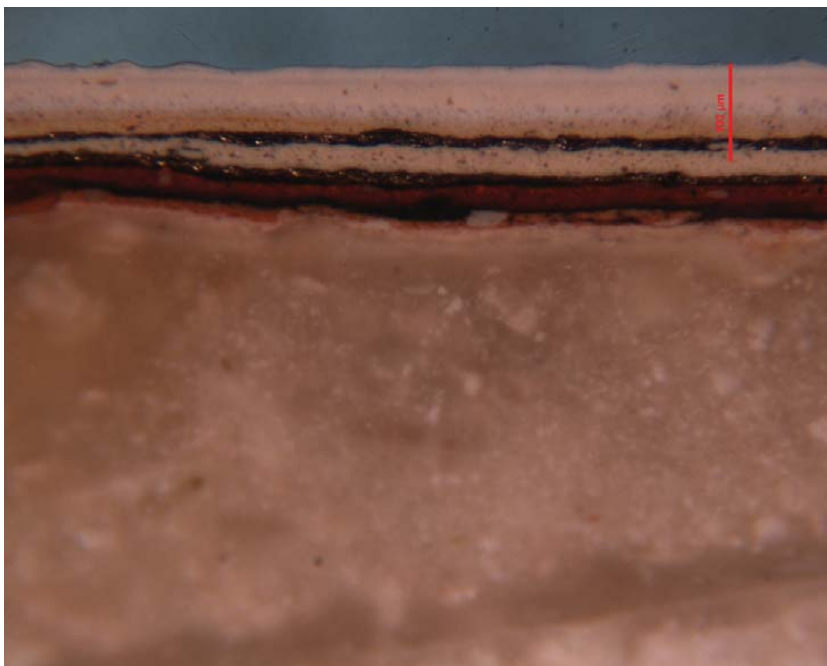
PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER
 PHILADELPHIA, PA
 University of Pennsylvania
 Preservation Studio
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PL1

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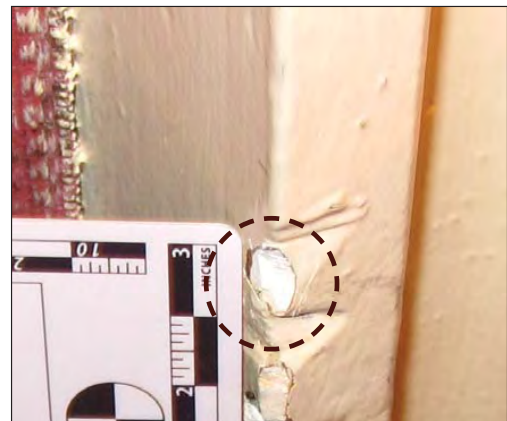
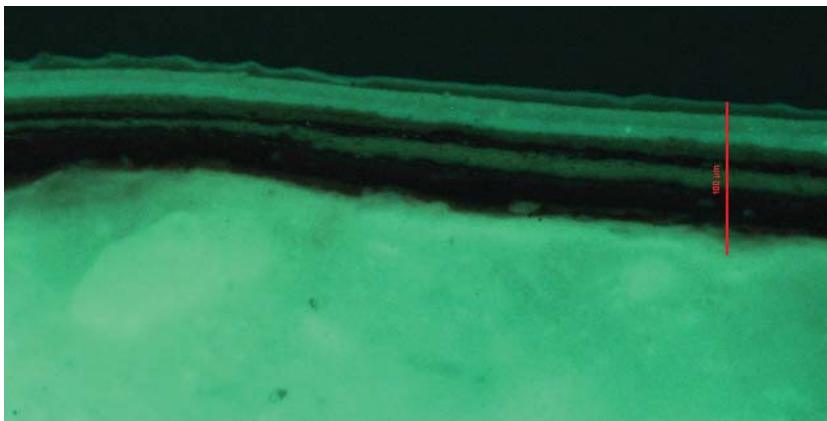
REMARKS



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4	dark red	
3	dark red/brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	orange/red	
1	white	
S	plaster	

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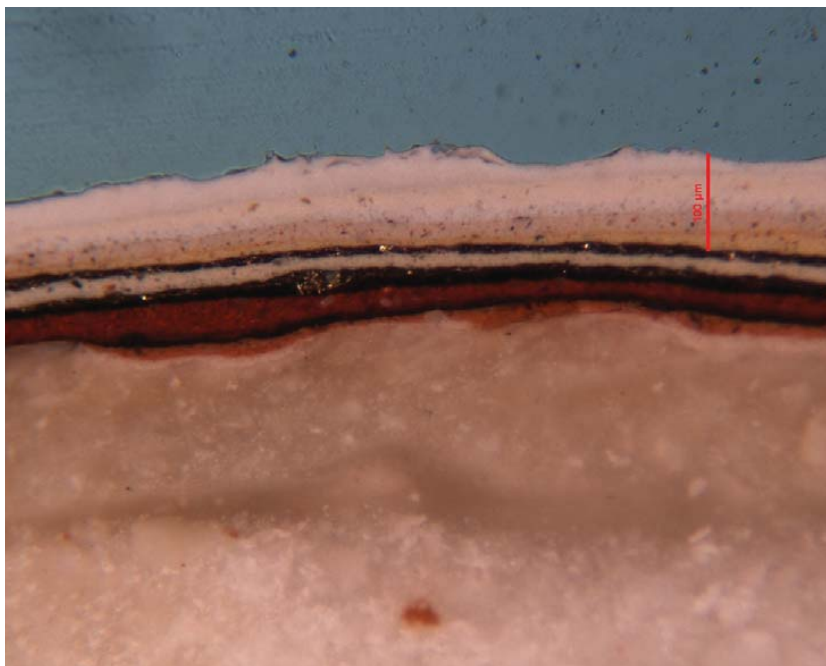
PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER
 PHILADELPHIA, PA
 University of Pennsylvania
 Preservation Studio
 HSPV - 701-201

PL2

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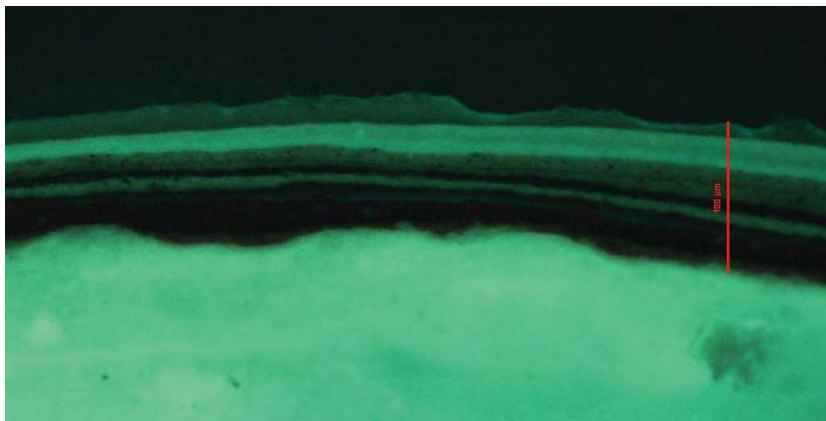
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4	dark red	
3	dark red/brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	orange/red	
1	white	
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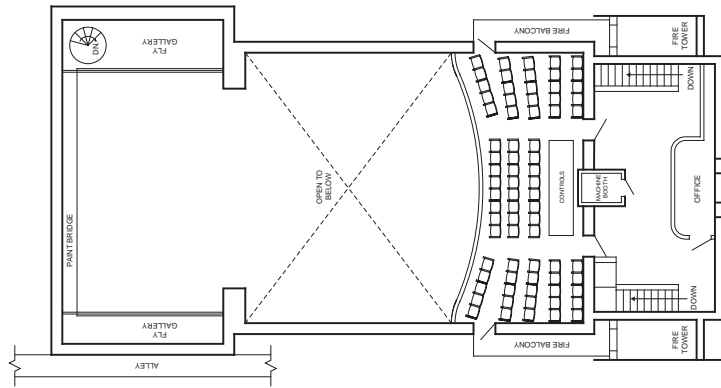
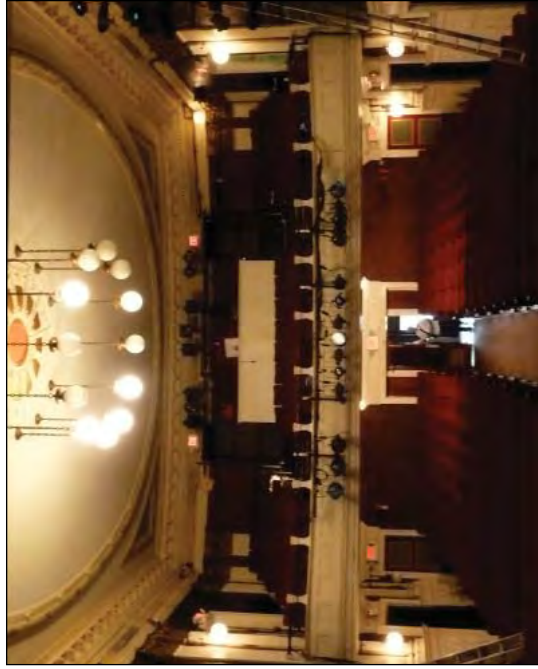
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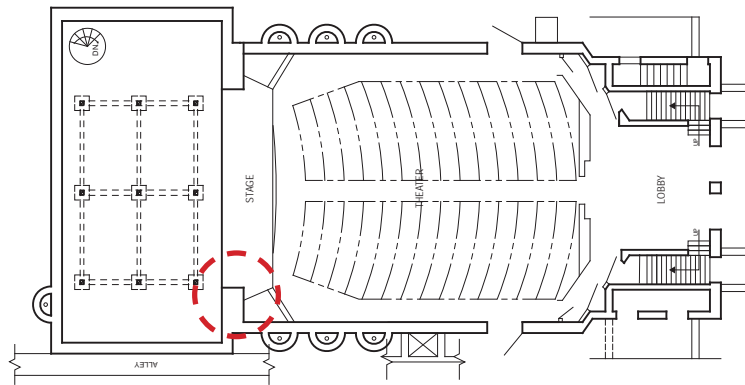




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PROSCENIUM

PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

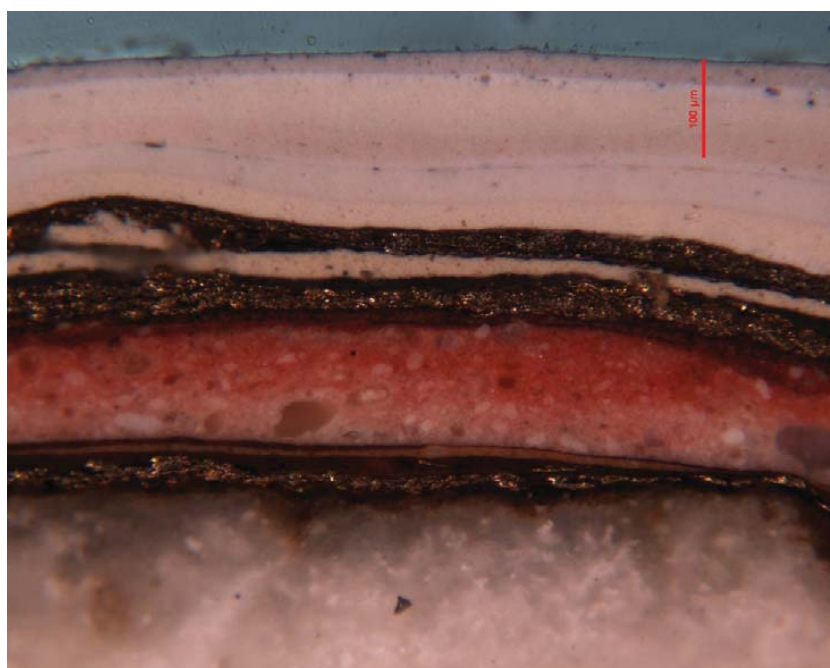
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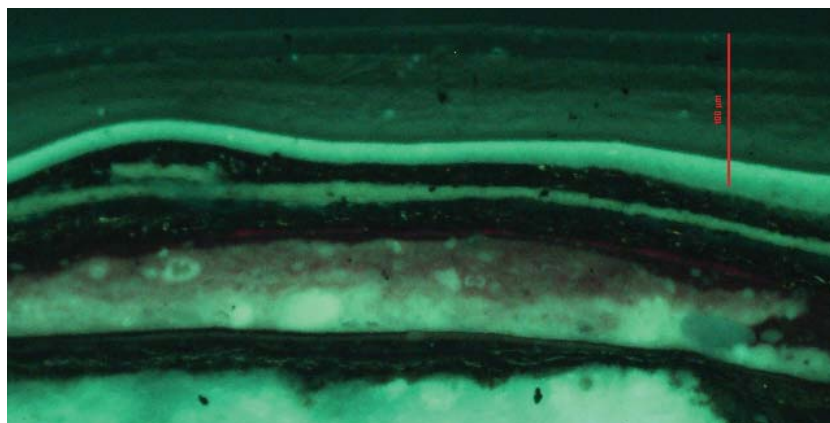
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REMARKS



LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
15	white	
14	white	
13	white	
12	white	
11	white	
10	metallic paint	
9	white	
8	metallic paint	
7	dark red	
6	white	
5	brown	
4	tan/white	
3	brown	
2	metallic paint	
1	brown	7.5YR 2/4
S	plaster	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm	



PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

PHILADELPHIA, PA
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P2

FEATURE PROSCENIUM	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, NORTH FACE OF EAST SIDE	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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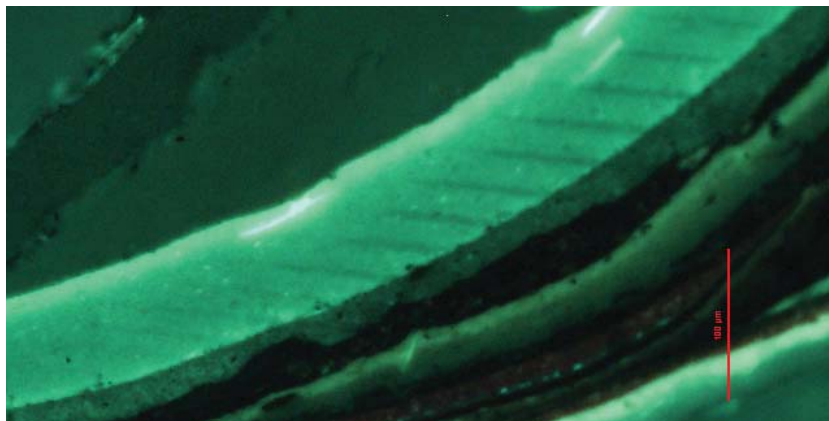
REMARKS	
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LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
13	white	
12	white	
11	white	
10	white	
9	metallic paint	
8	white	
7	metallic paint	
6	red	
5	dark red	
4	tan/white	
3	brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	orange/red	
1	white	
S	plaster	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

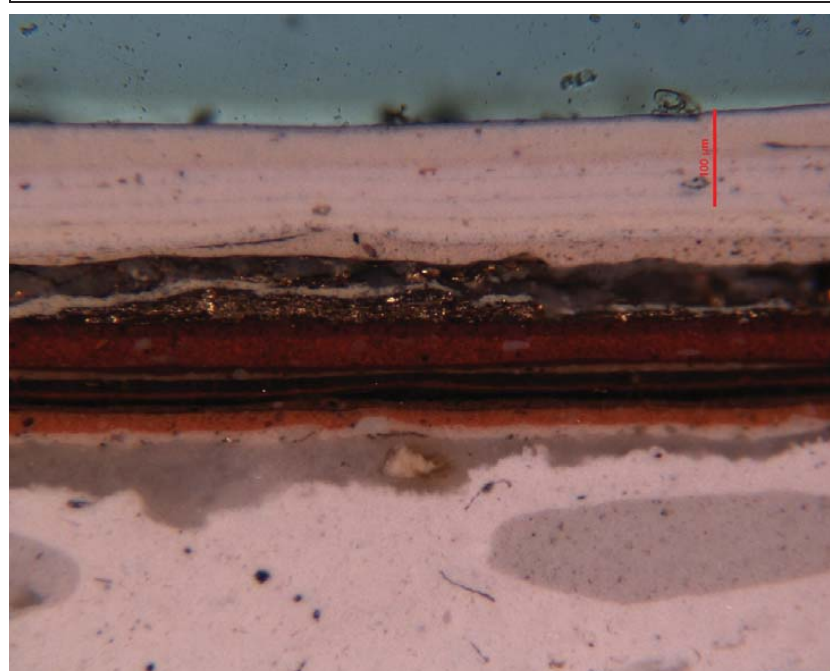
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P3

FEATURE PROSCENIUM	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, WEST FACE OF EAST SIDE, BOTTOM RAIL	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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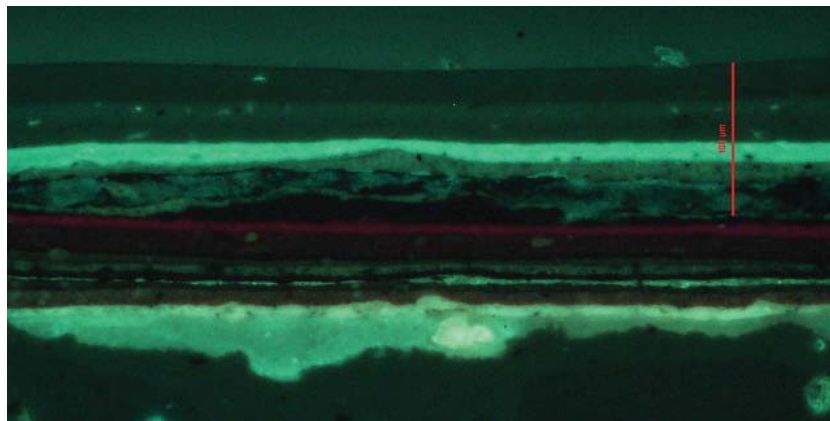
REMARKS



LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
15	white	
14	white	
13	white	
12	metallic paint	
11	white	
10	metallic paint	
9	dark red	
8	red	
7	yellow/tan	
6	brown	
5	red	
4	black	
3	brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	orange/red	
1	white	
S	plaster	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

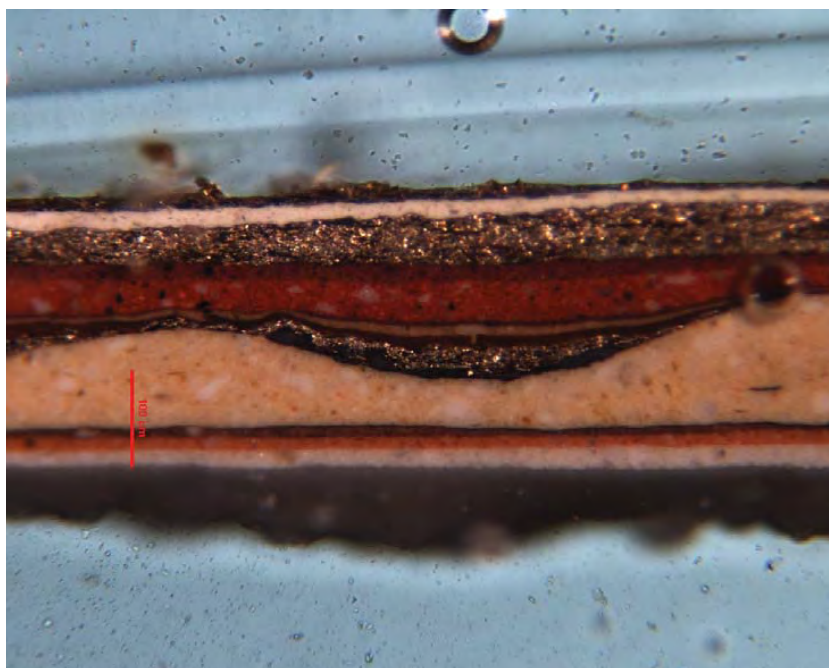
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P4

FEATURE PROSCENIUM	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, WEST FACE OF EAST SIDE, PANEL	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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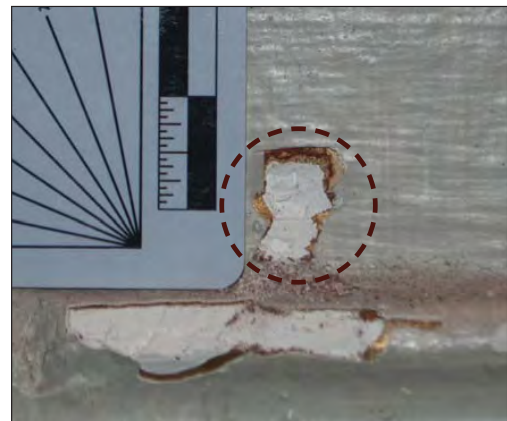
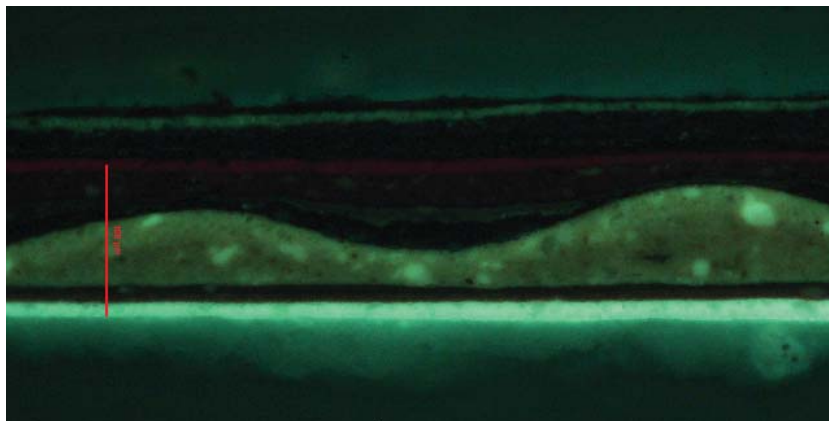
REMARKS	
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LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
13	metallic paint	
12	white	
11	metallic paint	
10	dark red	
9	red	
8	dark brown	
7	yellow/tan	
6	dark red	
5	metallic paint	
4	yellow/tan	
3	brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	orange/red	
1	white	
S	plaster	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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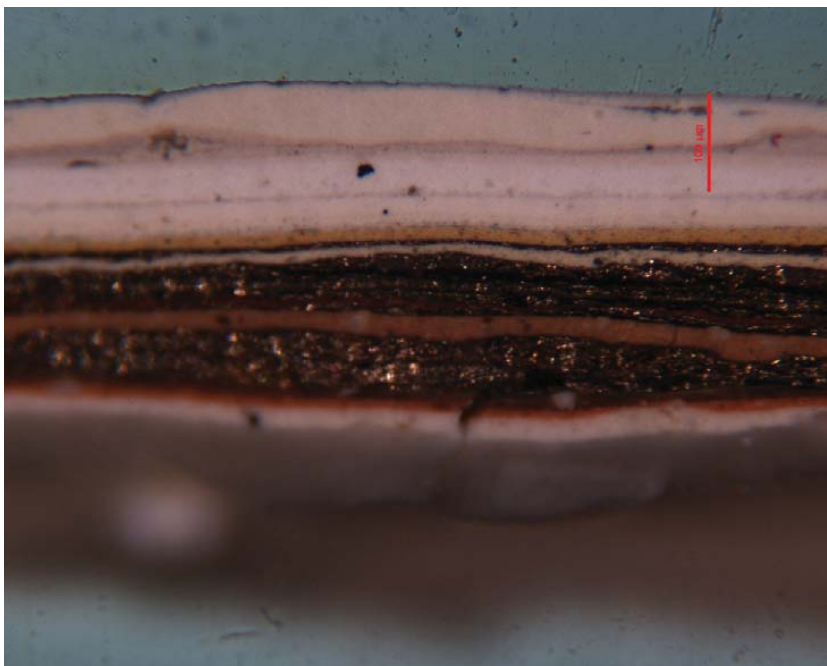
PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER
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P5

FEATURE PROSCENIUM	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, WEST FACE OF EAST SIDE, PANEL MOLDING	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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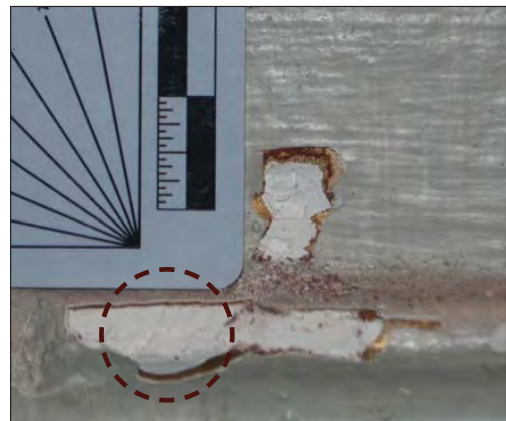
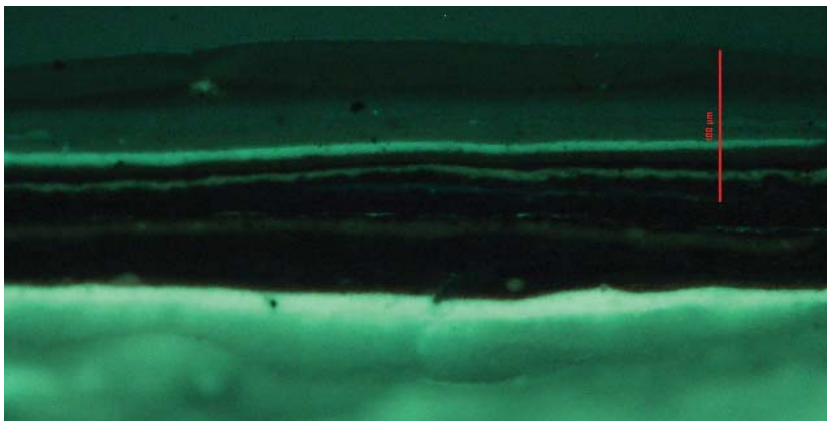
REMARKS



LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
15	white	
14	white	
13	white	
12	white	
11	tan/yellow	
10	metallic	
9	white	
8	metallic	
7	dark red	
6	metallic	
5	tan	
4	metallic	
3	brown	7.5YR 2/4
2	dark red	
1	orange/red	
S	plaster	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

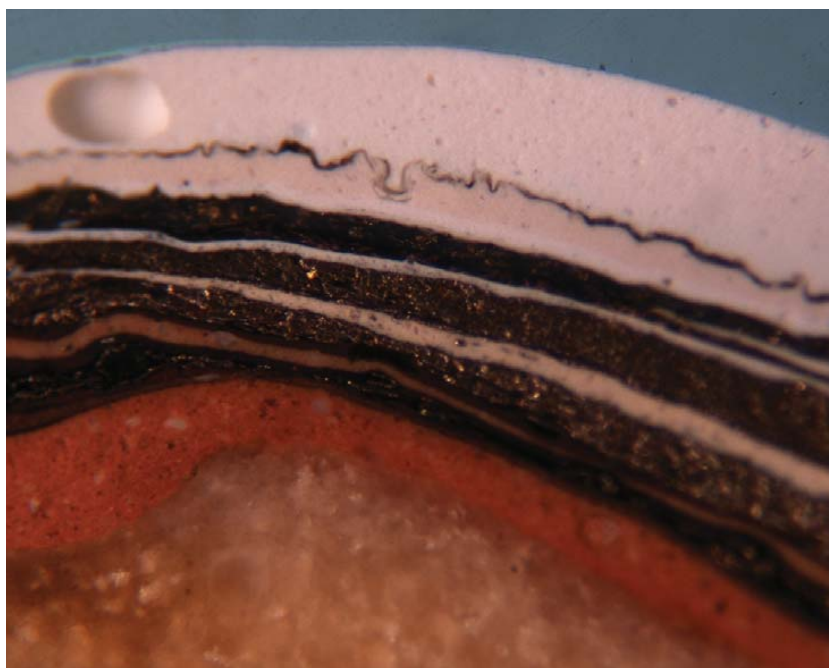
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P6

FEATURE PROSCENIUM	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, W FACE OF E SIDE, BUNDLED REED MOLDING	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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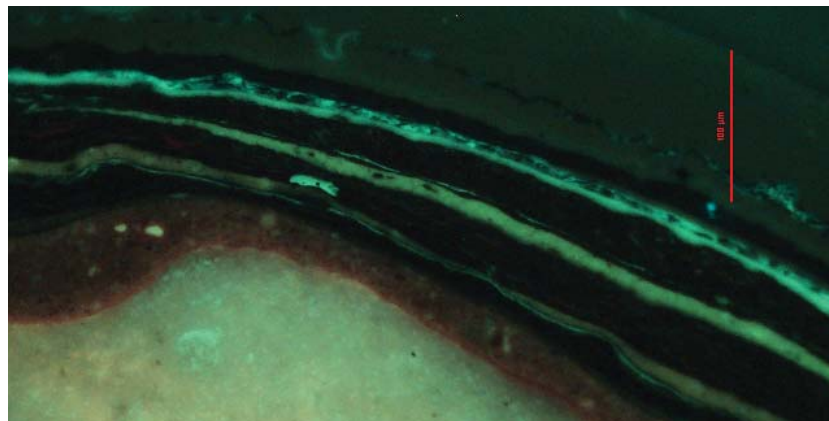
REMARKS	
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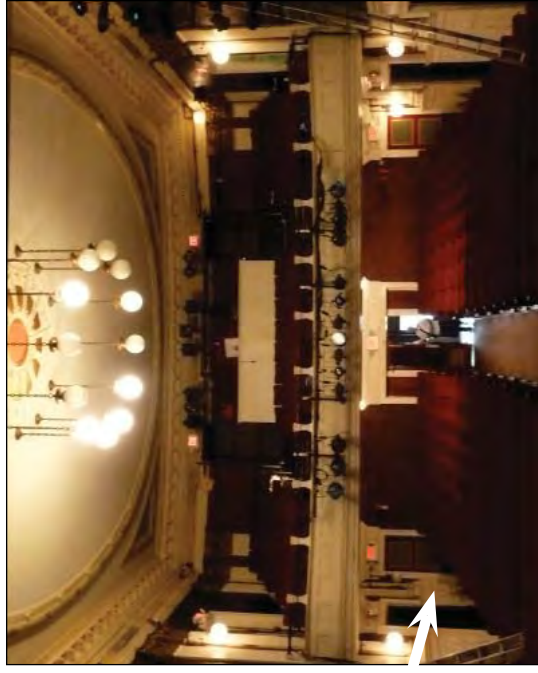


LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
15	metallic	
14	off-white	
13	white	
12	metallic	
11	white	
10	metallic	
9	white	
8	metallic	
7	dark brown	
6	tan	
5	dark brown	
4	metallic	
3	dark red	
2	brown	7.5YR 2/4
1	orange/red	
S	plaster	

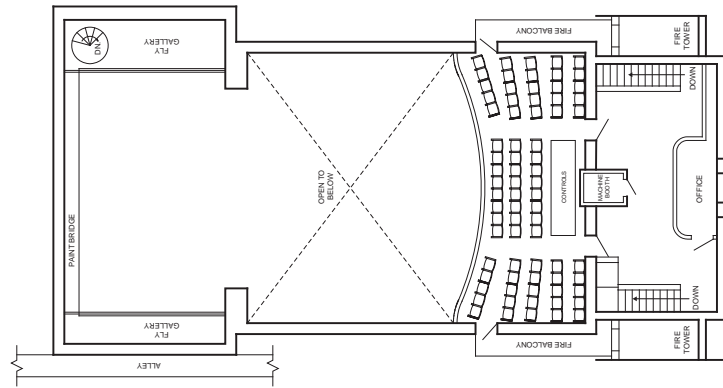
MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Perpendicular Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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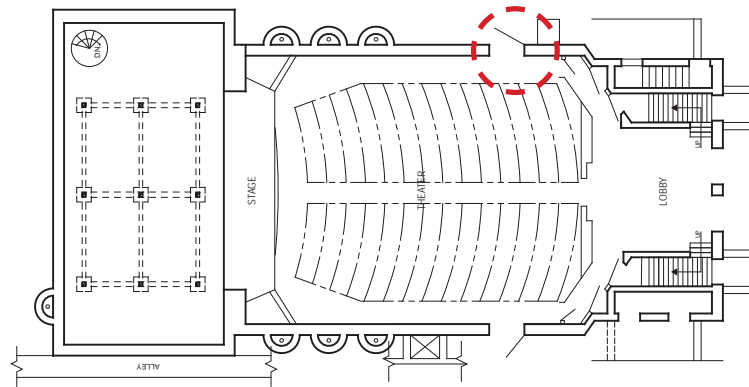




W1
W2
W3



2



1

WAINSCOTING

PLAYS AND PLAYERS THEATER

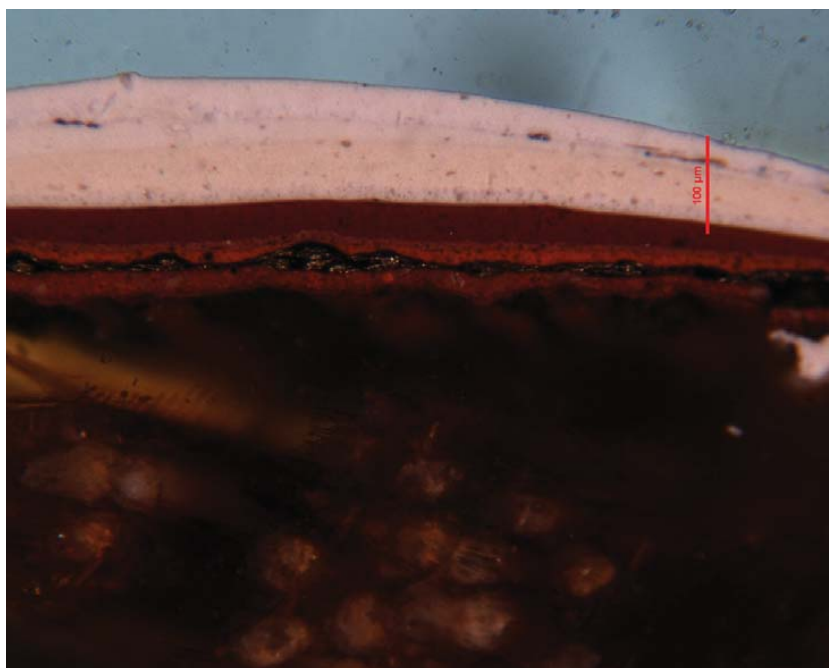
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W2

FEATURE WAINSCOTING	LOCATION FIRST LEVEL, WEST ELEVATION, PANEL	DATE ANALYZED DEC / 14 / 2011
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MICROSCOPE Olympus CX31	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 10x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 1x
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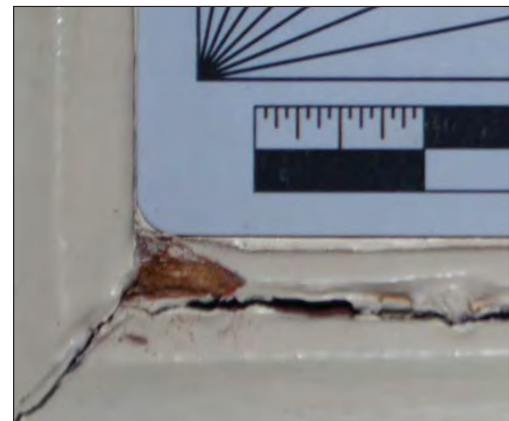
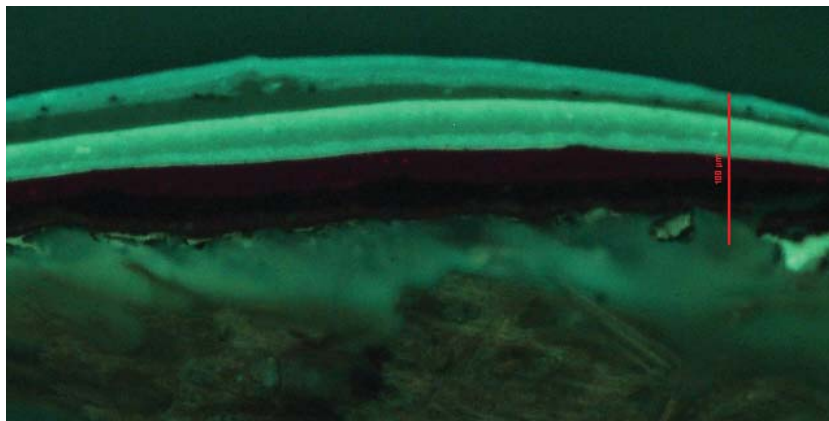
REMARKS	
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LAYER	FINISH TYPE	COLOR
11	white	
10	white	
9	white	
8	white	
7	white	
6	dark red	
5	red	
4	orange/red	
3	metallic paint	
2	red/brown	
1	red/brown	7.5YR 2/4
S	wood	

MICROSCOPE Nikon YS2-T	MAGNIFICATION OBJECTIVE 4x	ILLUMINATION Raking Light	CAMERA Nikon Digital Sight DS-Fi1	MAGNIFICATION TRINOCULAR HEAD 0.6x
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FILTER NUMBER BV-1A	EXCITATION Purple light (430-440nm)	EMISSION Yellow/Green light (470nm)	DICHROIC 455nm
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A CONTEMPORARY LIGHTING SYSTEM THAT RESPECTS THE CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS OF THE MAIN THEATRE SPACE AND ADHERES TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION.

Jason Cantu

The theatre's main auditorium space is the area with the greatest concentration of character-defining features and is least tolerant to change. According to our intervention tolerance diagrams, the main area's walls fall under the severe risk category (highlighted in red). Again, this means that the walls



Photo. 1 Current Lighting System

contain a large amount of character defining elements and are the most sensitive to change. The walls of the main theatre space were given more elaborate finishes and should be handled with upmost sensitivity. Upon evaluating threats to the walls (molding, murals, pilasters, and sconces), it was determined one of the most visible and direct threats to their maintenance and protection is the current lighting system. In order to meet modern stage lighting needs, Plays and Players has had to create a system that is both economical and capable of lighting the stage but unfortunately has not been sensitive to the character defining walls.

The current system has a surplus of cables and wires that come from the basement up through the stage and then snake around the perimeter of the room up to the balcony spaces. Although efforts have been made to conceal the wires by tacking on thin plywood strips above the lower wall molding, the wires have cut, torn, and scratched the murals. The cables attract dust that is making the murals dirty,

and the apparatuses designed for attaching the lights seem fragile and unstable. Should any of the systems fall or break, because of their proximity to the murals, there is a high likelihood that they may fall and cause irreparable damage to the elements around them.



Photo. 2 Wires coming from below stage (Photo taken by Jason Cantu)



Photo. 3 Scratches on murals due to lighting wires (Photo taken by Jason Cantu)



Photo. 4 Attempt to cover wires (Photo taken by Jason Cantu)

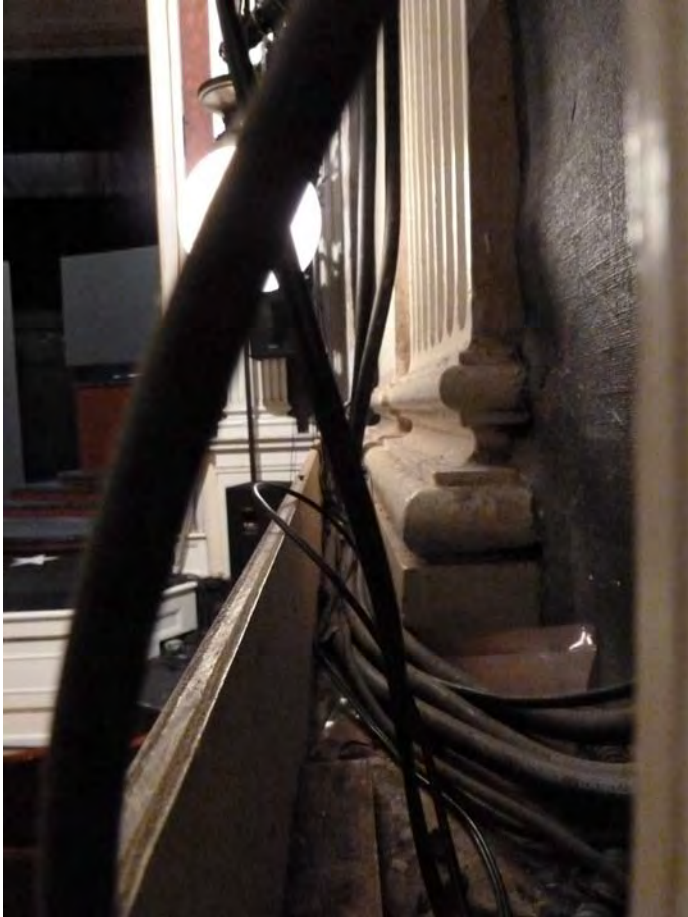


Photo. 5 Hidden pilasters and murals due to attempt to hide wires (Photo taken by Jason Cantu)



Photo. 6 Punctures in murals in an attempt to organize wires

The proposed preservation plan for the main theatre space suggests that the following interventions are allowable when referring to the walls: re-painting of plaster and wood elements of first floor and mezzanine in accordance with findings from paint analysis, temporary removal of the Emerson murals on first floor and mezzanine for conservation (if required), the cleaning or restoration of Emerson murals by conservation professional, and the re-upholstery of first floor and mezzanine walls where upholstery is present (fabric should match weave, coloring, and motif of original, as determined by fabric analysis). The following are strictly prohibited: the removal/destruction of millwork or plasterwork including proscenium and molding, crown molding, ceiling details, pilasters and pilaster capitals, molding above doors or wood paneling, permanent removal of Emerson murals, perforations or surface alterations to Emerson murals not supervised by conservation professional, the placement of lighting, HVAC, and/or sound equipment without consultation by conservation professional when in close proximity to the murals, removal or replacement of wall light fixtures, and alterations of wooden balcony molding.

The current lighting system violates a number of the prohibited recommendations in our preservation plan. There has been removal of millwork and plasterwork, there are perforations to the Emerson murals, and the lighting placement is dangerously too close to the murals. Since current theatre use requires more lighting beyond what was historically supplied, a contemporary lighting system that respects the character-defining elements of the main theatre space must be developed.

In developing a new lighting system, the preservation plan requires that it meet the secretary of the interior's standards for rehabilitation. These standards are meant to assist with the long-term preservation of the theatre's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. To be in compliance with these standards, the proposed lighting intervention must: minimally change the defining characteristics, not remove any of the historic materials or alter the features and spaces that characterize the theatre, not create a false sense of historical development (such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings), acknowledge changes made over time that might have acquired historic significance in their own right, preserve distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the theatre, repair rather than replace deteriorated historic features (where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials and replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence), not use chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting,

that cause damage to historic materials, protect the historic integrity of the theatre and its environment if new additions or related new construction is conducted (the new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features), and any new additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be carried out in a way that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the auditorium space and its environment would be unimpaired.

Although the secretary of the interior's standards are important, it is also important that the new lighting system meets minimum requirements for modern stage lighting. Lighting today has come a long way since the first American "little theatre" in New York City called the Washington Square Players.¹ In general, when patrons attend a performance in a theatre, they want the greatest possible disturbance of their enjoyment, they want mental or audiovisual entertainment, and they want safety.² In researching temporal modern stage lighting systems, the most widely used are lightweight aluminum space trusses. These are constructed and disassembled fairly quickly as well as very economically. Examples of these kinds of system can be observed in modern concert stage design. As performers tour the US, they tend to take their own stage equipment designed especially for their performances. The stage and lighting has to be economical, easy to assemble and disassemble, yet strong enough to carry large live loads. These components can cost about \$160.³ The proposed lighting system utilizes light duty square truss and triangular truss components.⁴ Advantages to using this type of construction come from the fact that the parts are modular (adding to ease of adapting and disassembling the structure), the fact that the

1 Athanasopoulos, Chr estos Ge orgiou. *Contemporary Theater : Evolution and Design*. New York: Wiley, 1983. Pp 114.

2 Ibid. Pp 232.

3 The price quoted comes from a company called Global Truss (<http://www.globaltruss.com>).

4Ibid.



Photo. 6 Sample of space truss modular component (www.globaltruss.com)

materials are aluminum thus adding little weight to the current structure, and that the system can be manipulated to accommodate changing lighting needs.

To both protect the character defining elements and meet the standards listed above, the proposed lighting system completely removes all modern stage lighting systems and their accessories from the walls. Completely removing all elements from the walls and isolating the lighting features and CDEs may be the best way to ensure their survival while also unveiling historic fabric. The current system covers pilaster base details, mural trims, and wall molding accents. The proposal also creates a window in the rear of the theater at the balcony level to move the sound and lighting control panels out of the theatre and into a protected area. Two walls have been added on the mezzanine level outside the headmistress' office to create a larger office space and protect the tech equipment. Removing the control system from the



Photo. 7 Example of space truss system in concert setting (<http://www.pacificcoastentertainment.com>)

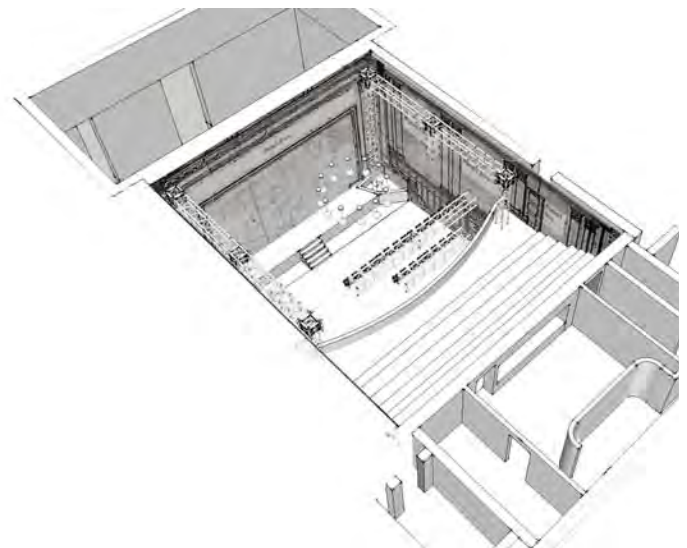


Diagram 1. Proposed lighting system with opening in rear wall

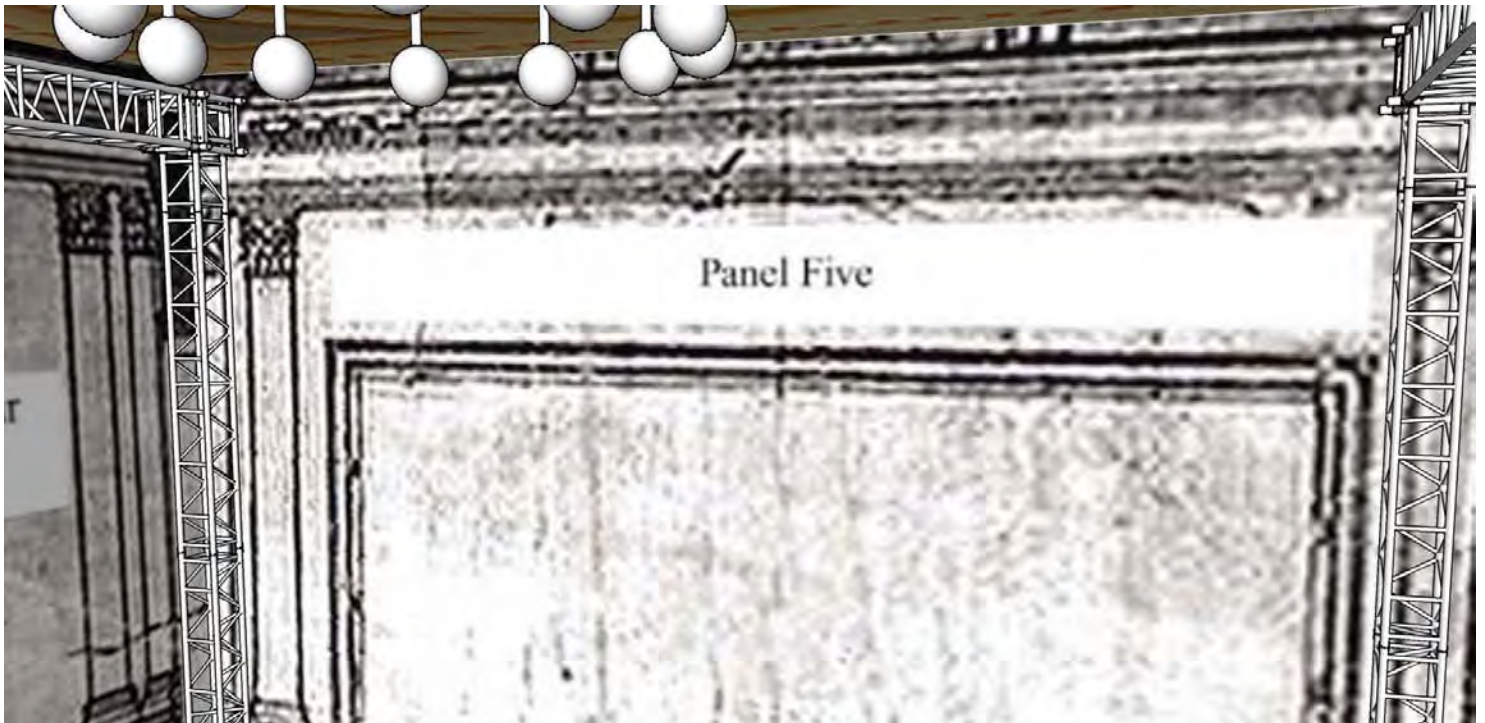


Diagram 2. View of truss system from balcony (North)

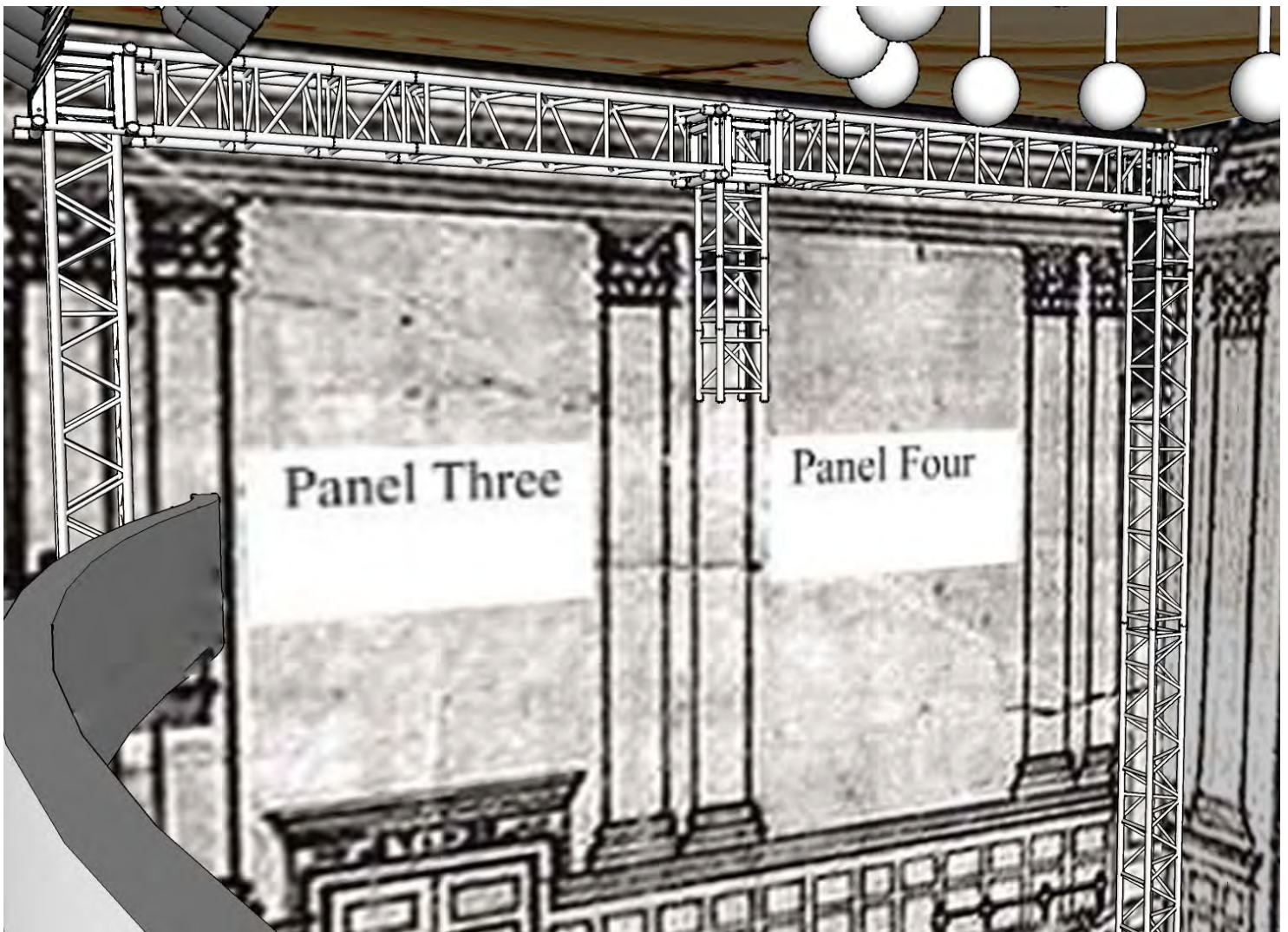


Diagram 3. View of truss system from balcony (North)

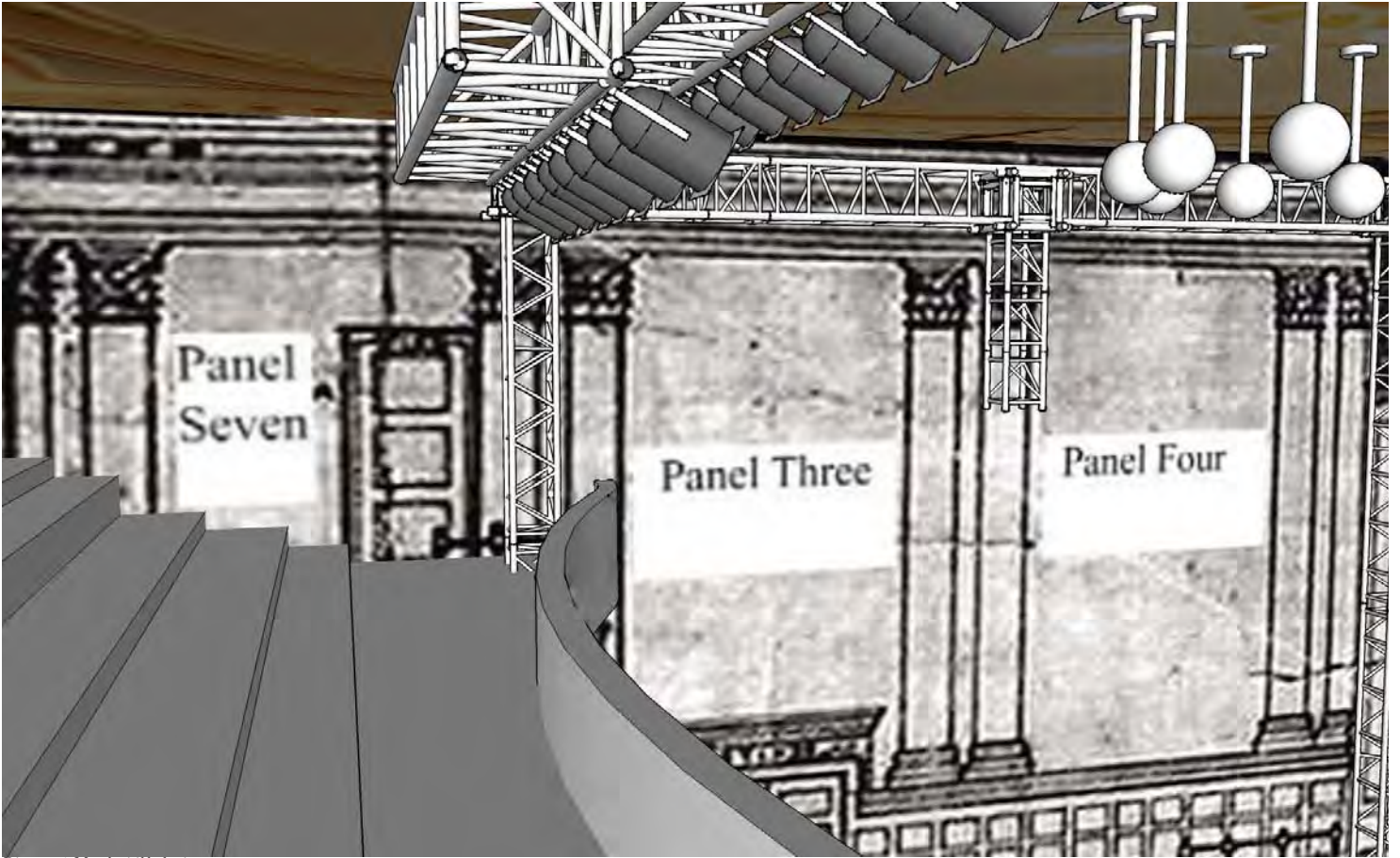


Diagram 4. Murals visible despite truss system

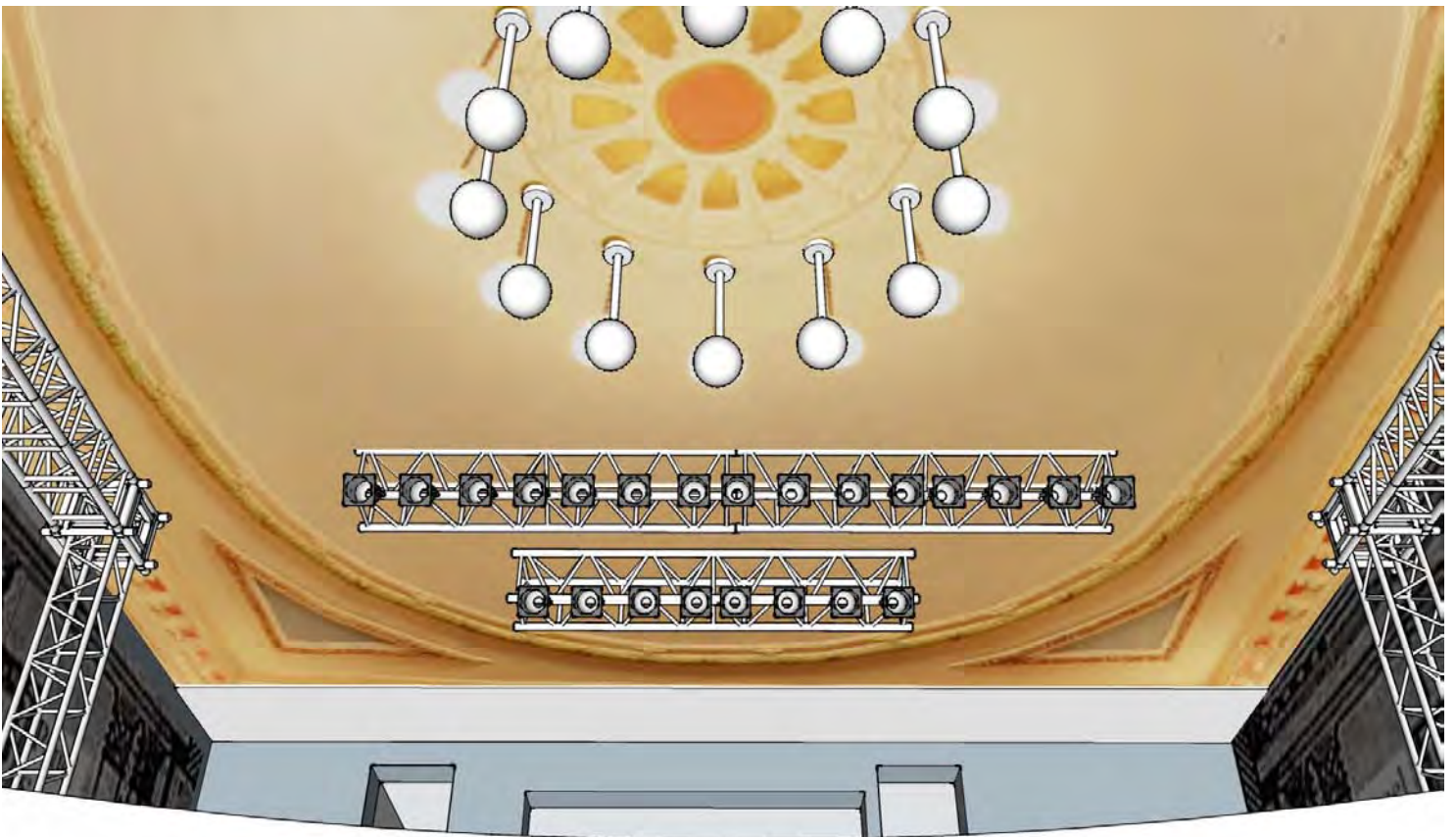


Diagram 5. Proposal for ceiling truss system

seating area allows me to replace missing seats. All the seats but the row closest to the wall would be replaced. The last row becomes a space to walk from one isle to the other.

With regard to placement of the new lighting on the space truss systems, through discussions with the current lighting director for Plays and Players, Andrew Thompson, and lighting designer Oona Curley, if two triangular trusses are placed in the rear of the theater by suspending them from the ceiling or attaching them to the proposed two truss side structures, lights that currently flank each end of the theater can be completely eliminated. They also noted that the optimal placement of lights for the types of performances the theatre conducts, lighting parallel to the stage would be best.

In conclusion, as technology changes and lighting techniques improve, should Plays and Players decide to remove the aluminum structures, disassembly in no way disrupts the character-defining elements of the theatre. It is recommended that if this lighting proposal is accepted, that an engineer be consulted to verify loads and that the current lighting designer receives a chance to influence the final design. The foundation for this proposal was to bring awareness to an issue that needs to be addressed and provide preliminary designs that could be greatly enhanced

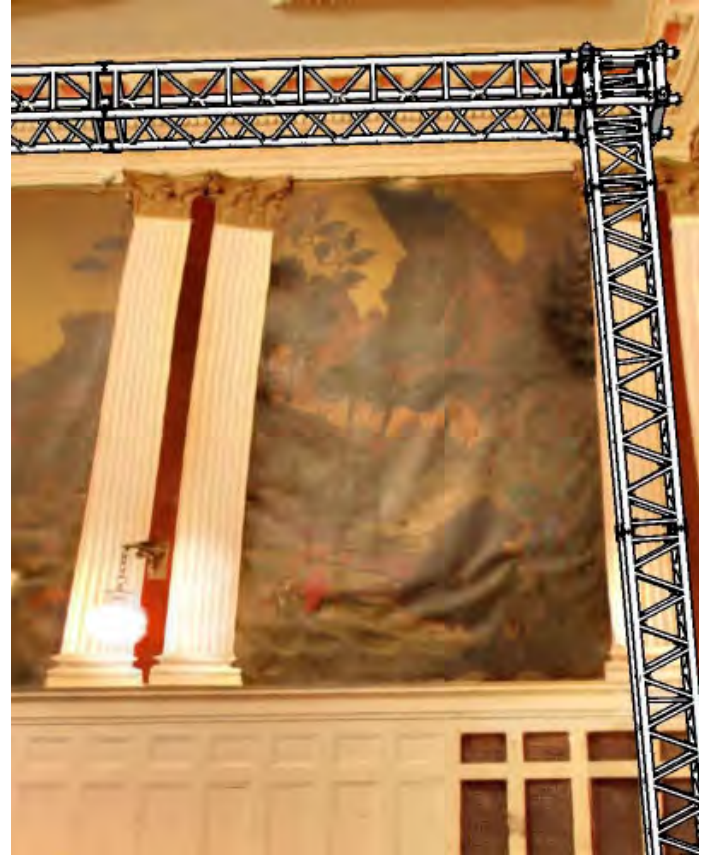


Photo manipulation. 1 Truss system with molding unbarred and pilaster bases exposed. (Lighting booms removed)



Photo Manipulation. 2 Truss system with molding unbarred and lighting removed from balcony.

