



# ASTC-USITT Venue Design Challenge

University Baptist Church/Highland Theatre  
2022-2023

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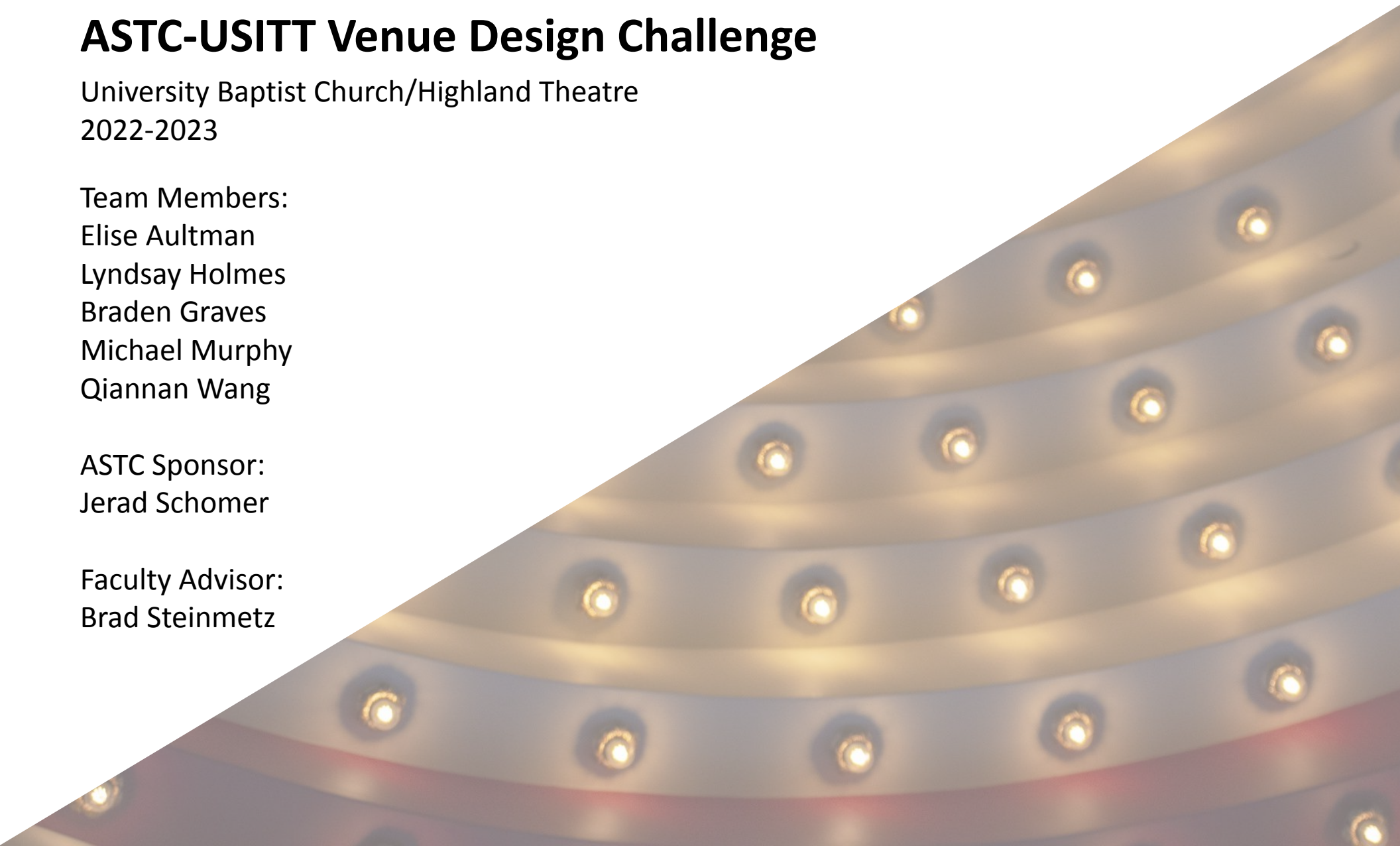
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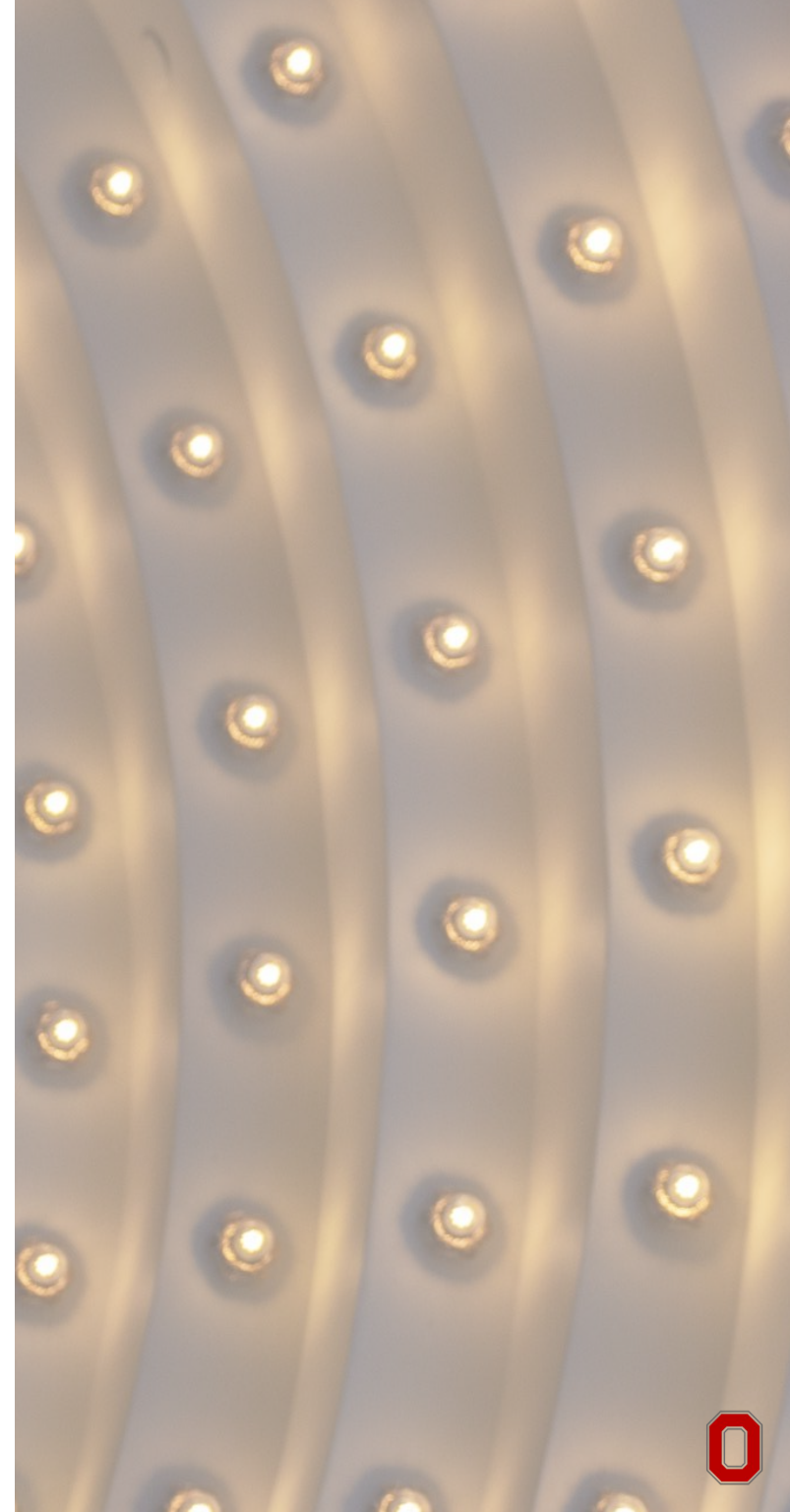
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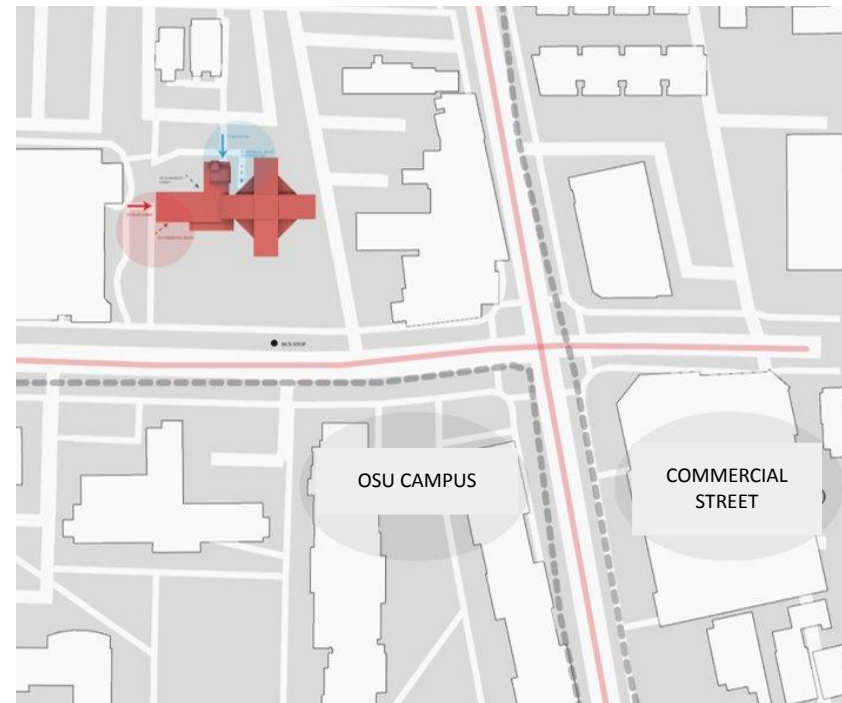
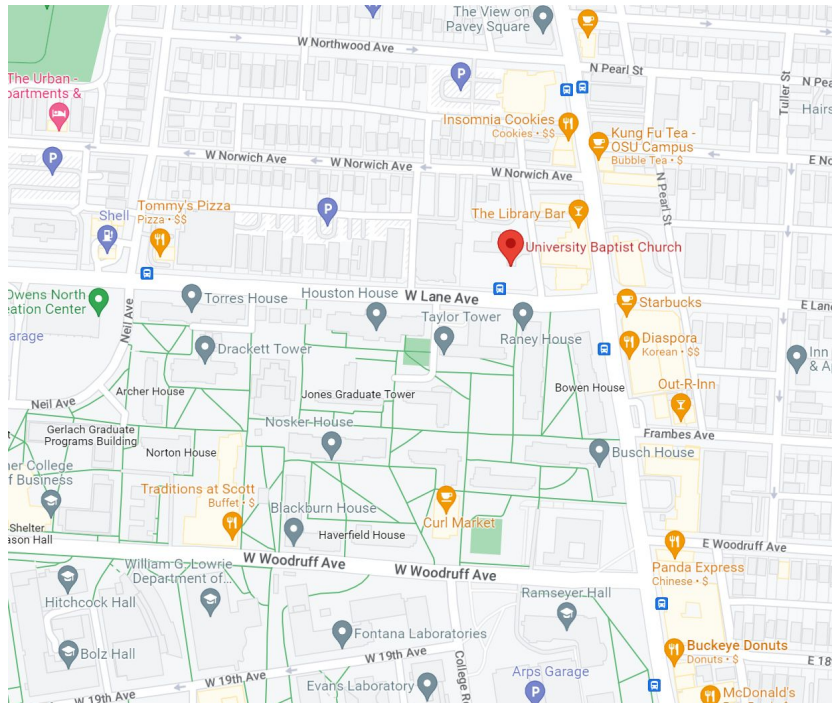
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## **Section I: Site Introduction**





University Baptist Church is a mid-sized church located at 50 W Lane Ave in Columbus, Ohio. It sits on the north side of Lane Avenue which is directly across from The Ohio State University's north campus and immediately west of High Street, one of the biggest commercial streets in Columbus. Many students at OSU live in apartments to the north and east of University Baptist Church, placing it on the border between campus and surrounding communities. On the north side of the church is a parking lot, which is part of the church's property.

This area is ideal for our proposed Highland Theatre as the prime location would allow it to link student communities with local neighborhoods, pulling performance attendees from nearby restaurants and businesses. The large green lawn out front provides additional space for potential outdoor performances and screenings on the wall of the building for the general public.





Rendering of Original Structure

University Baptist Church was established in 1890 at 10th Ave. and Highland Ave. and was known as 10th Ave. Baptist Church. By 1919, the church began strengthening their ties to the nearby Ohio State University with the hope of increasing ministry through student connections. When the original church burned down in 1964, the congregation was forced to relocate. Since 1968, the church has been located adjacent to and the adjacent to OSU's campus.

The building that stands now was designed by nationally-known Columbus architect William Byron Ireland, who designed many other buildings in the area, like the Ohio History Center. Ireland's initial design featured a sanctuary, lower level lobby, and a large open-air porch on the west side. The corten steel spire with an altered design was added in the early 70's. In the spring of 1993, the porch was enclosed to create an interior lobby, a northern addition was built to add an elevator for ADA compliance, and 2 additional bathrooms were added on both floors. During this time, the brace across the ceiling of the sanctuary was installed and the original basement bathrooms were converted into office space.



South side (front)



East side (entrance to basement and stairwell)

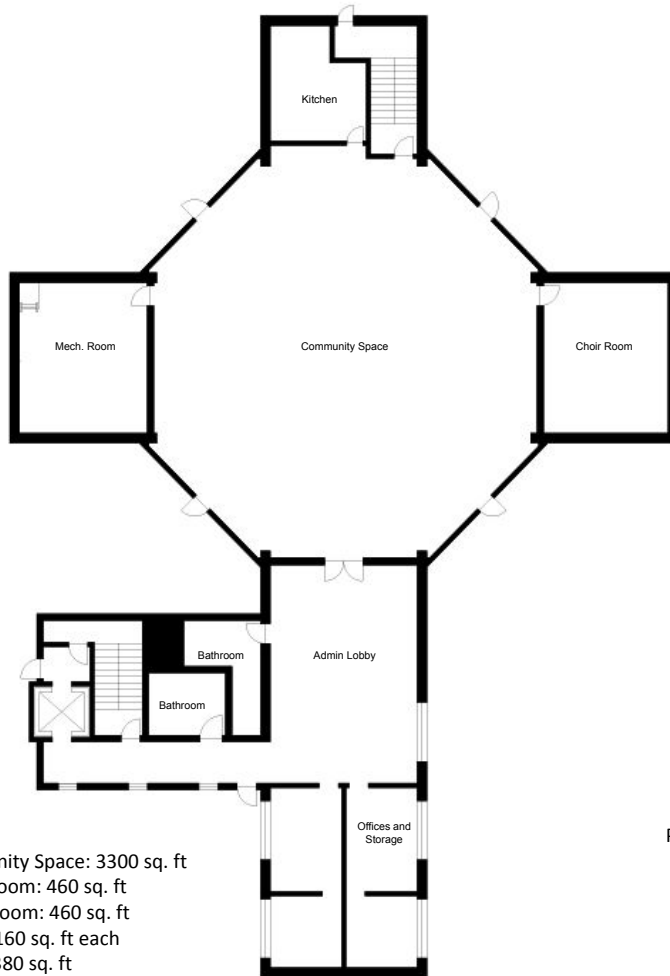


West side (main entrance)



North side (back)



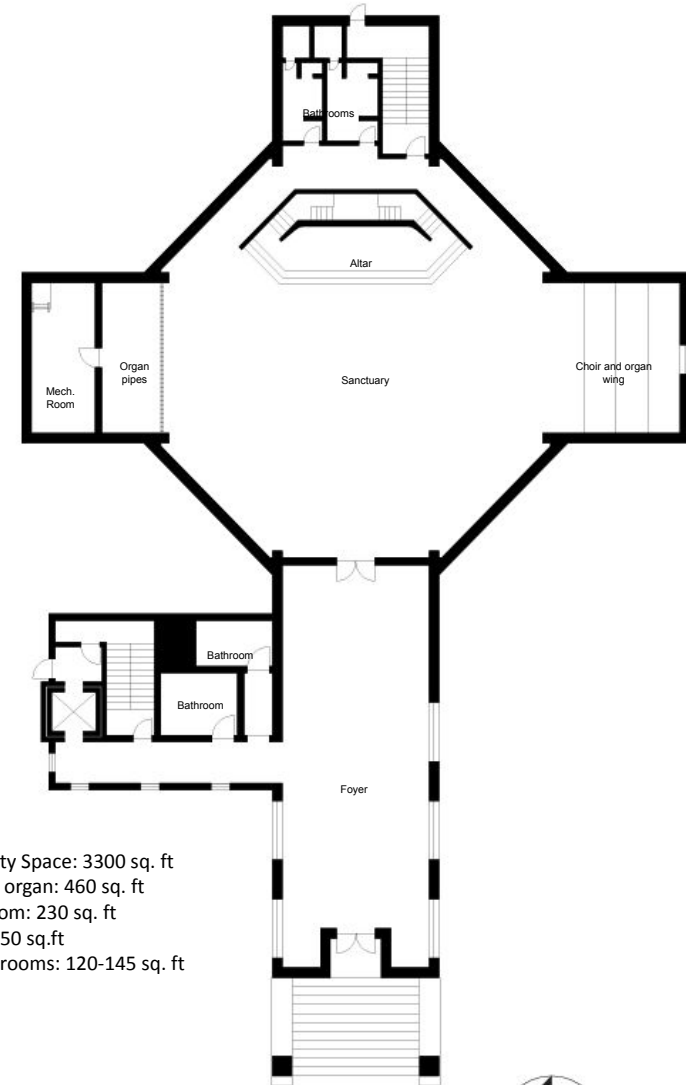


**Program Sizes**

- Community Space: 3300 sq. ft
- Music Room: 460 sq. ft
- Mech. Room: 460 sq. ft
- Offices 160 sq. ft each
- Lobby: 380 sq. ft
- Kitchen: 295 sq. ft

**Basement**

1/4" = 1' - 0"



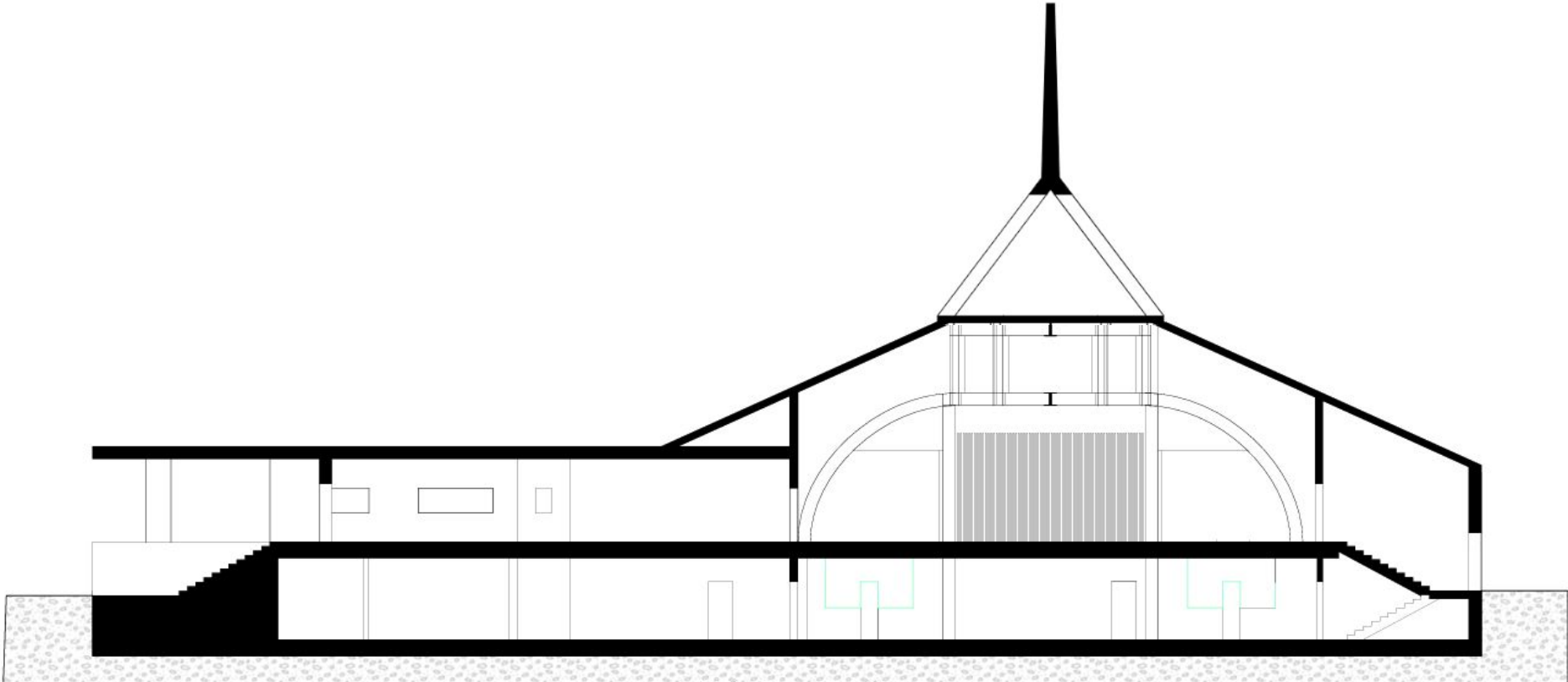
**Program Sizes**

- Community Space: 3300 sq. ft
- Choir and organ: 460 sq. ft
- Mech. Room: 230 sq. ft
- Lobby: 1350 sq. ft
- Rear Bathrooms: 120-145 sq. ft

**Top Floor**

1/8" = 1' - 0"





This section view looks north.

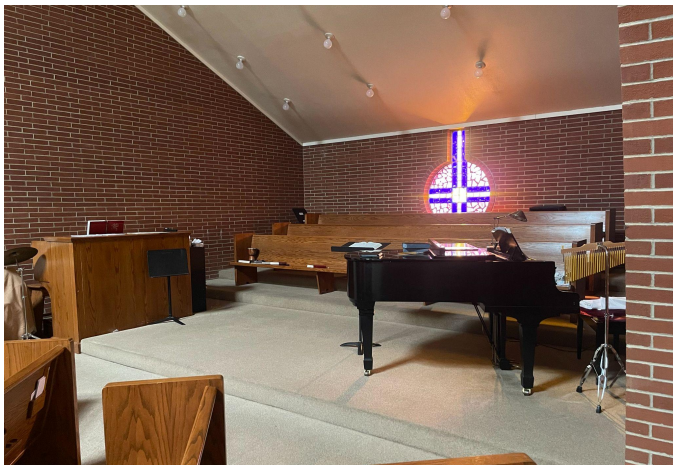




Nave: Looking towards main entrance (west)



Nave: Skylight above steel frame



Transept (south)



Nave: Looking towards south transept

Foyer: Looking towards sanctuary entrance (top floor)



Foyer: Looking towards main entrance (top floor)



Community space (basement)



Admin lobby (basement)





Choir room (basement)



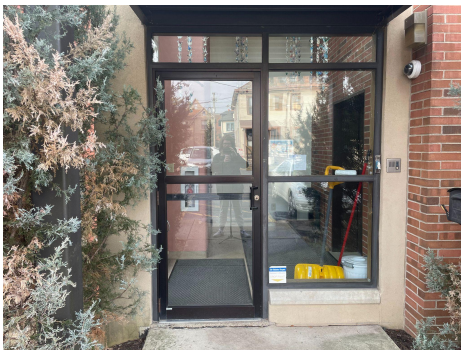
Kitchen (basement)



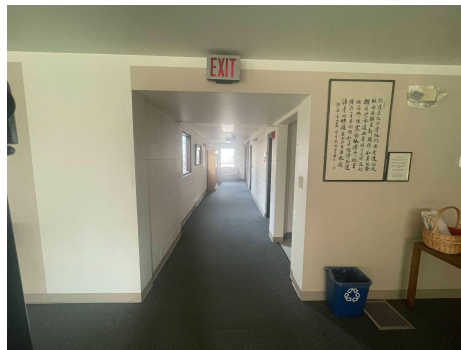
Office (basement)



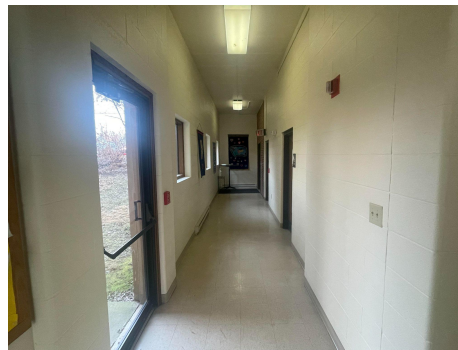
Lobby (basement)



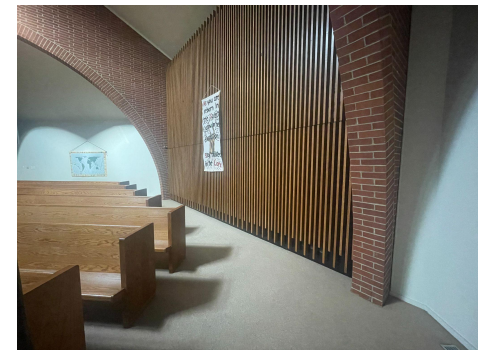
South entrance to elevator  
(middle of basement and top floor)



Aisle to elevator and bathroom  
(top floor, lobby extension)



Aisle to elevator and bathroom  
(basement, lobby extension)



Organ pipes hiding behind the  
wooden screen walls  
(top floor, side of sanctuary)

## **Section II: Project Proposal**



We propose to deconsecrate the University Baptist church and transform the space into Highland Theatre; a co-op for performance arts, that brings together professionals, students, and community members into one collaborative space. The renovated building would not only be a place for performance, but also an art learning center and social gathering place where artists, performers, student clubs as well as the non-university community to connect with each other daily. The space would serve as a space of collaboration and would open up opportunities for those seeking to get involved with local performances.

The building itself reflects this idea of a non-traditional theatre. With an in-the-round stage on the upper floor, performances held here embrace this idea of collective effort and collaboration, and with spaces for workshops and rehearsal in the basement the venue can potentially serve multiple groups at once, providing opportunities for different groups to expand their networks and outreach.



In continuation of University Baptist Church’s legacy of inclusivity, the proposed Highland Theatre renovation aims to provide a space for fostering connections with The Ohio State University and surrounding communities. Local artists and students can use this space for performances and rehearsals, creating a network of current and to-be professionals. The surrounding community will not only use this space as the audience for these performances, they will also have the opportunity to attend classes and programs.

As a church, it already has a large space for gathering configured in a way conducive to larger types of performance—namely theatre groups, art exhibitions, and dance companies—along with a lobby.

Users	Time	Activities	Extended Role
Local performance artists	Permanently	Workshops, Performances	Teacher for Performance Art, Community Outreach
University-sponsored student performance group & clubs	Temporally	Rehearsals, Performances	Connector Between College and Community
The Public (Community)	Daily	Audience, Workshops, Performance	Performance Art Creator/Consumer



The majority of renovations involve the building's **interior**...

- The sanctuary will be converted into the main performance space
  - The geometry of the space lends itself well to an in-the-round configuration
  - The renovation would entail removal and demolition of the altar, baptismal font, and pews, then construction of the new seating system around central stage.
- Outside of the sanctuary, reorganization of the basement is the main focus
  - Dressing rooms, practice rooms, multipurpose breakout rooms, storage, adaptable spaces as well
  - Most work here will be demolition of walls and construction of new rooms in the space.

Renovations also feature two minor extensions on the south side **exterior**...

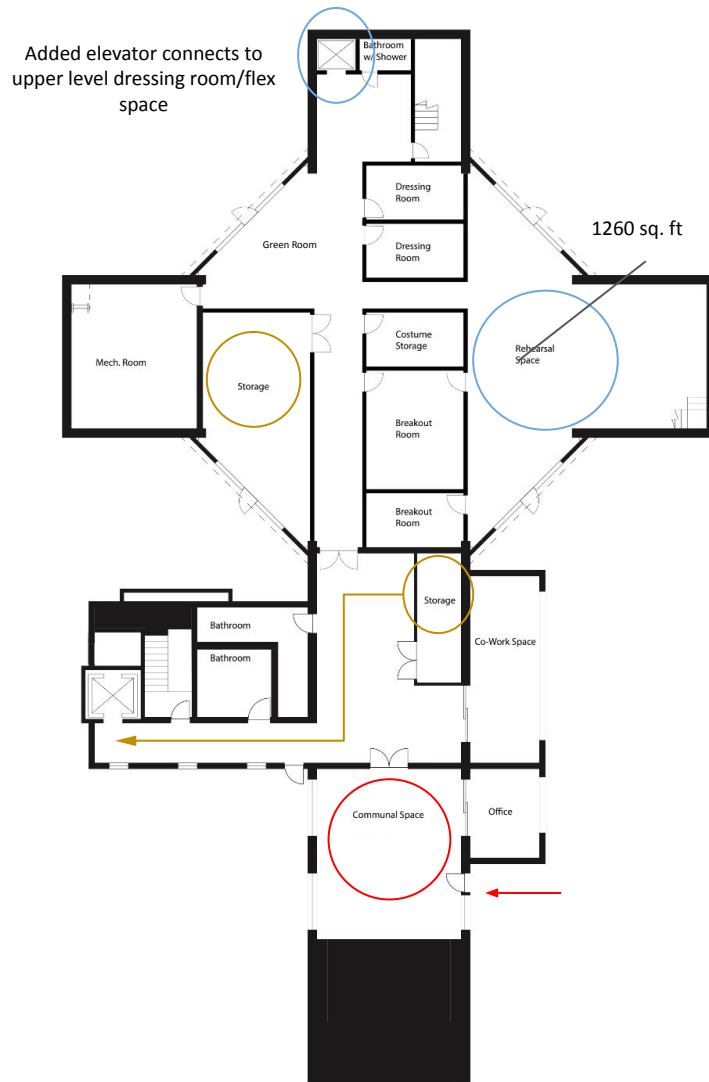
- Room for concessions and ticketing while maintaining the size of the lobby
- The roof must be raised in the southern transept to accommodate access to lighting



## **Section III: Highland Theatre**







**Three main functions of Basement:**

- Rehearsal/Performance support
- Storage
- Communal Activities (workshops, public education, meetings)

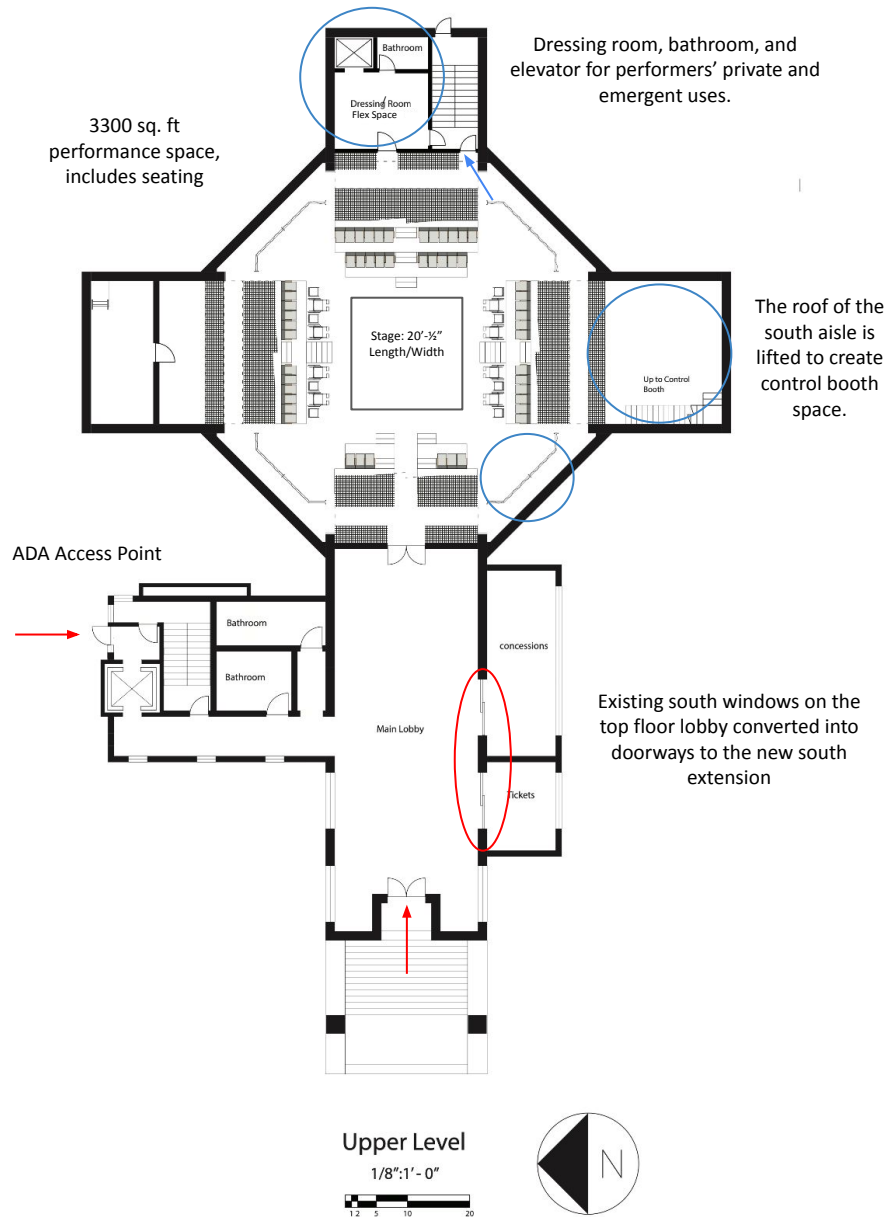
The **rehearsal** space features a large window on the south side of the building which allows for plenty natural light, when desired. The rectangular area of the space is similar in size to the main stage, with additional space on the north side for directors, choreographers, and other performers to occupy during larger practices. (Indicated in **blue**)

One of the **storage** rooms is placed adjacent to the existing exterior door on the north side of the building. The other storage space is in close proximity to the existing elevator. (Indicated in **yellow**)

The **communal** space is multifunctional. It is big enough for many types of events including social gatherings, informal business negotiation, and public education planning. It is most easily accessed by small entrances on the north and south of the building. Branching off the communal room is a smaller office/workspace. (Indicated in **red**)

Thanks to the existing doors, nearly every room in the basement has quick and easy access to an exterior exit. The rehearsal space contains two of these exterior doors, which when opened provide a crossbreeze to help cool and refresh the room.





### Three Areas of Top Floor:

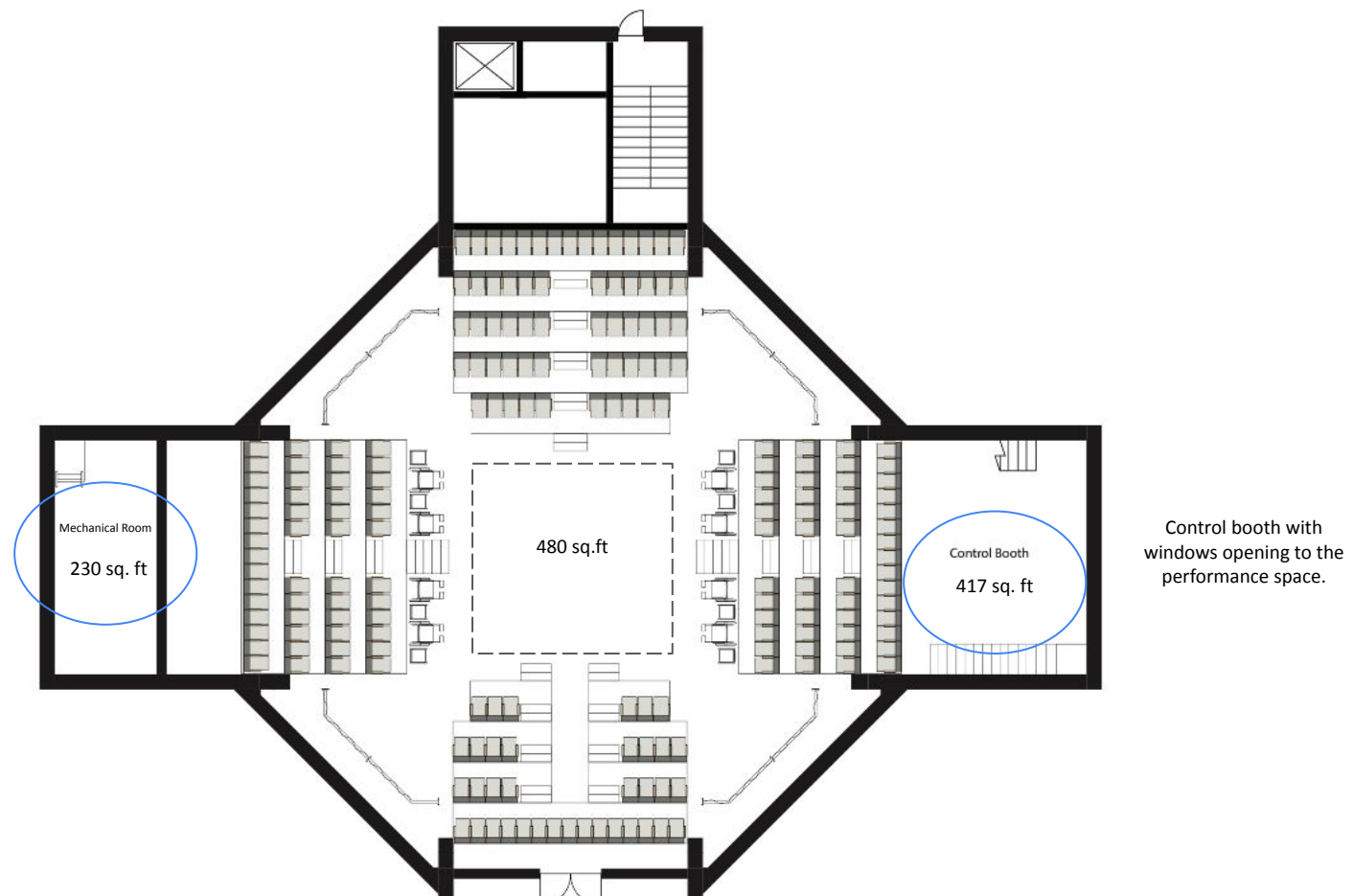
- Front of House
- Performance space
- Back of House

In the **back of house**, an elevator backstage provides an additional access option for performers, equipment, and scenery. A large stage level dressing room/flex space gives space for actors to make quick changes without needed to travel to lower floor of the venue. Interior wall construction and door placement create a moderate sound barrier between this space and the main performance areas which helps to muffle sounds from the elevator and conversations backstage. (Indicated in blue)

Inside the **performance space**, seating is arranged in an “in the round” configuration with audience on all four sides of the square stage. Performers circulate around the perimeter of the room via a passageway beneath the seating risers. Moveable curtains hide performer movement between risers but may be opened to expand the room for set or staging purposes. A control booth has been added in the south end of the sanctuary. The vertical extension of the ceiling allows access to the lighting grid via this control booth.

Renovations convert the existing top floor lobby into the **front of house** with a small extension on the south side to provide patron service areas: a ticket booth and concession stand. The bathrooms are gender-neutral and include a larger accessible bathroom. Clear directions for wheelchair circulation are displayed in the north side hallway leading to the elevator. (Indicated in red)

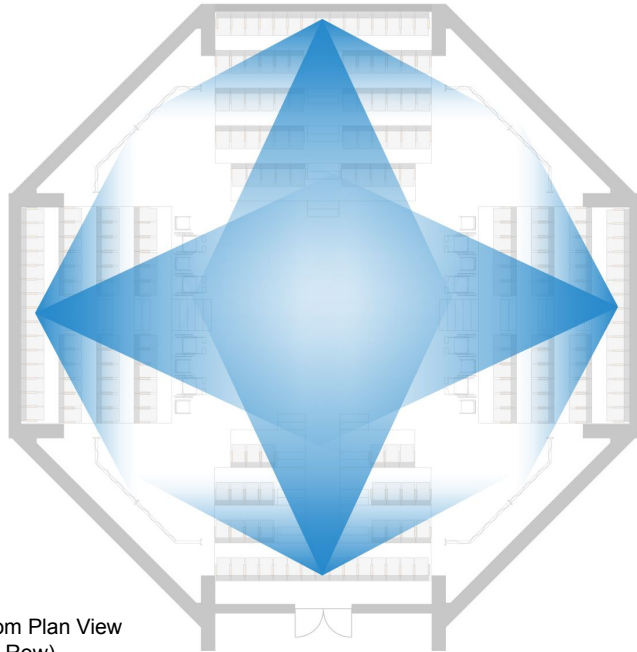




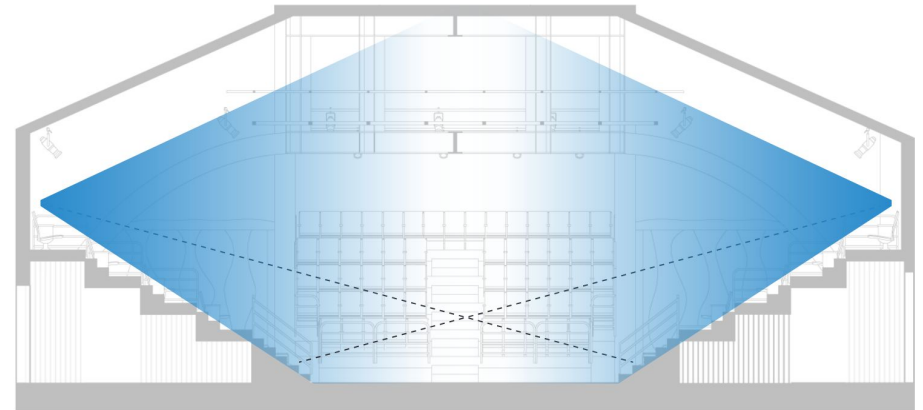
The north transept wing remains the mechanical room of the building.

The south transept wing a control a control booth space behind the seat. Lifted above the top row of seats, the director and operators have optimal views of the stage.





Sight lines from Plan View  
(Center Back Row)



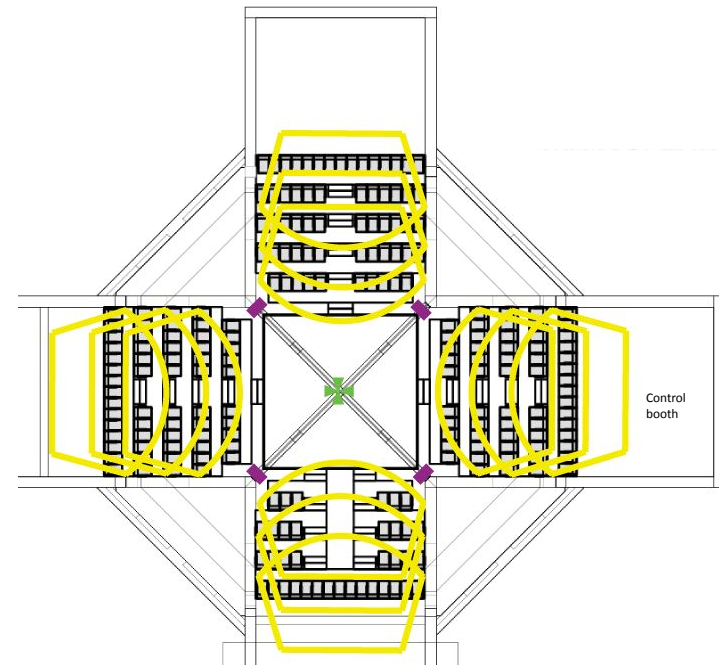
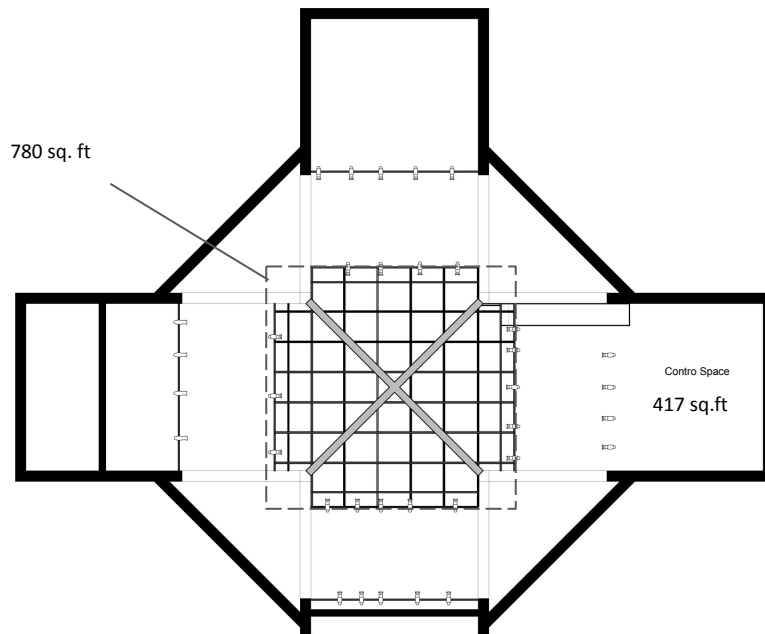
Sight lines from Section View  
(Center Back Row)


Every audience member has a clear view of the stage due to the steep incline of seating risers. In addition, each member can simultaneously view at least two of the four corner areas.





Lighting is hung on a tension wire grid.

In addition to the proposed sound system, acoustic panels would need to be added to ceiling to cover hard surfaces.

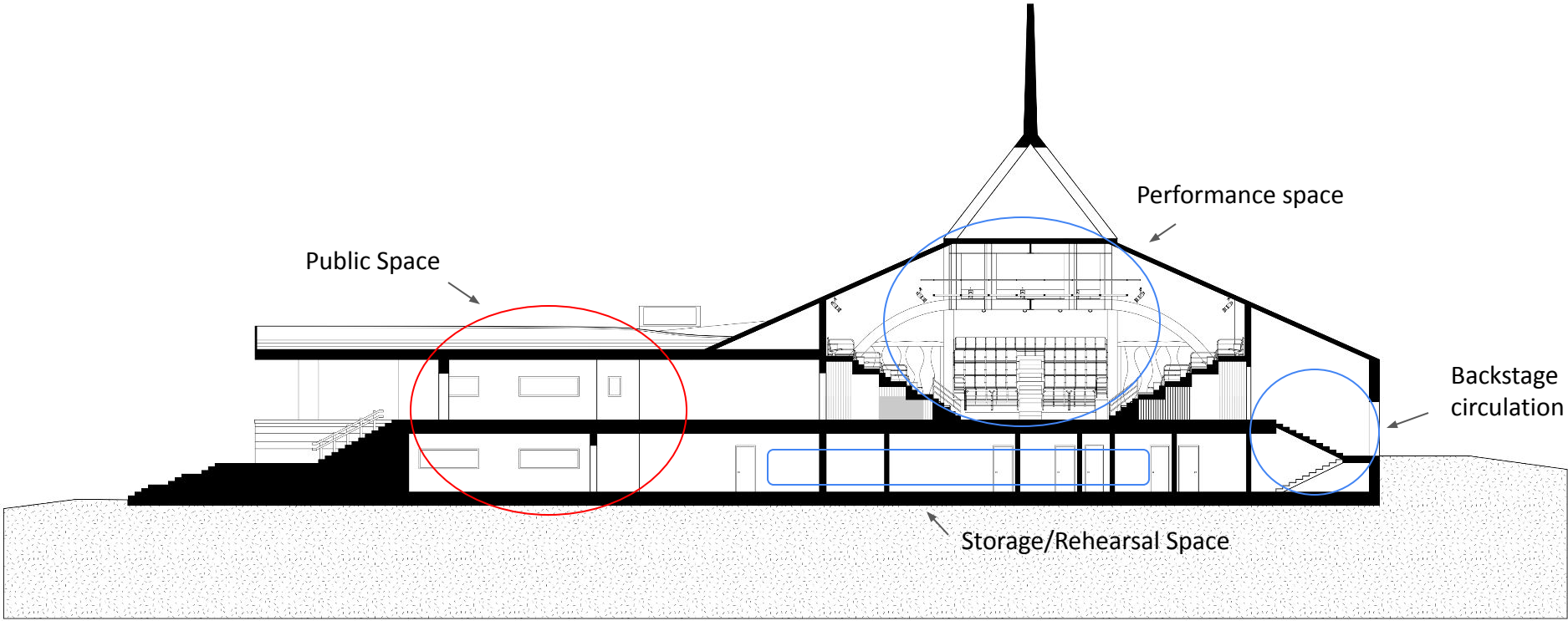


 Foam core acoustic tiles

 Feedback speakers

 Main speakers





This section view looks toward north.

Section  
1/8":1'-0"  
1 2 5 10 20



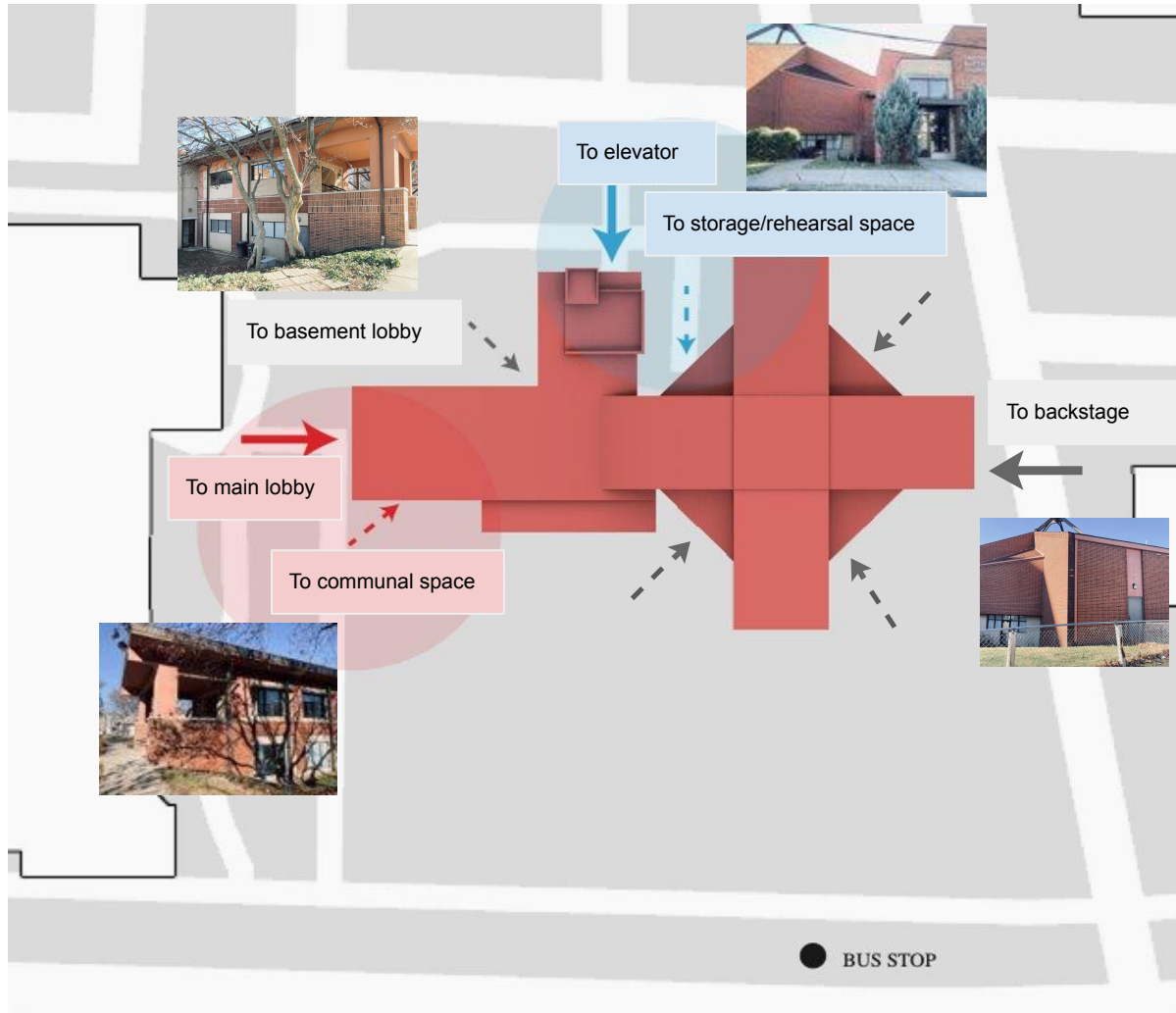
Original space	Original functions and features	New space	New functions and features	New Net Area (sq. ft)
Choir room	Soundproofing	Rehearsal space	Large area, soundproofing, south facing windows and immediate access to outdoors	1260 sq. ft
Community space	Programming, childcare	Costume storage	Opens into hallway	133 sq. ft
		Breakout rooms (1 large, 1 small)	Connects to rehearsal space and hallway	133-293 sq. ft
		Storage	Small set construction possible, immediate access to outdoors	510 sq. ft
		Dressing room/open space	Gathering area, immediate access to outdoors	630 sq. ft
Kitchen	Cooking, storage	Open space, elevator, bathroom	Shower in bathroom, stairwell access	295 sq. ft
Admin lobby	Admin offices, storage, small meetings	Hallway, storage	Water fountains	380 (133 storage) sq. ft
		Co-working space (extension)	Multi-person office	320 sq.ft
Offices and storage	Admin	Communal space	Programming, meetings, offices	540 sq. ft
		Office (extension)	Smaller workspace	154 sq. ft
Mech. room	HVAC, water, pipes, electrical, etc.	Mech room.	HVAC, water, pipes, electrical, etc.	460 sq. ft
Bathrooms	Multi-stall	Bathrooms	Multi-stall	114-138 sq. ft



	Original space	Original functions and features	New space	New functions and features	New Net Area (sq. ft)
Upper Floor	Foyer	Gathering space, seating	Main lobby	Gathering space, windows become doors to extension	1350 sq. ft
			Concessions (extension)	Food prep, sink, plumbing	338 sq. ft
			Box office (extension)	Tickets, information	155 sq. ft
	Main sanctuary	Sky light, altar, used for services, gatherings and readings	Stage and seating	No sky light, theatre in-the-round, actor pathways under seating	3300 (480 stage area) sq. ft
	Choir and organ wing	Open to sanctuary, window	Lighting and control booth access	No window, closed off from sanctuary, electrical, staircase, potential room for elevator	417 sq. ft
	Bathrooms and storage	2 single stalls, closets	Green room and elevator	Larger open area, soundproofed	276 sq. ft
	Bathrooms	2 single stalls	Bathrooms	2 single stalls	114-138 sq. ft
Lighting Level	<del> </del>		Sound and lighting booths (extension)	Control panels, raised window to provide clear sightline to stage	417 sq. ft







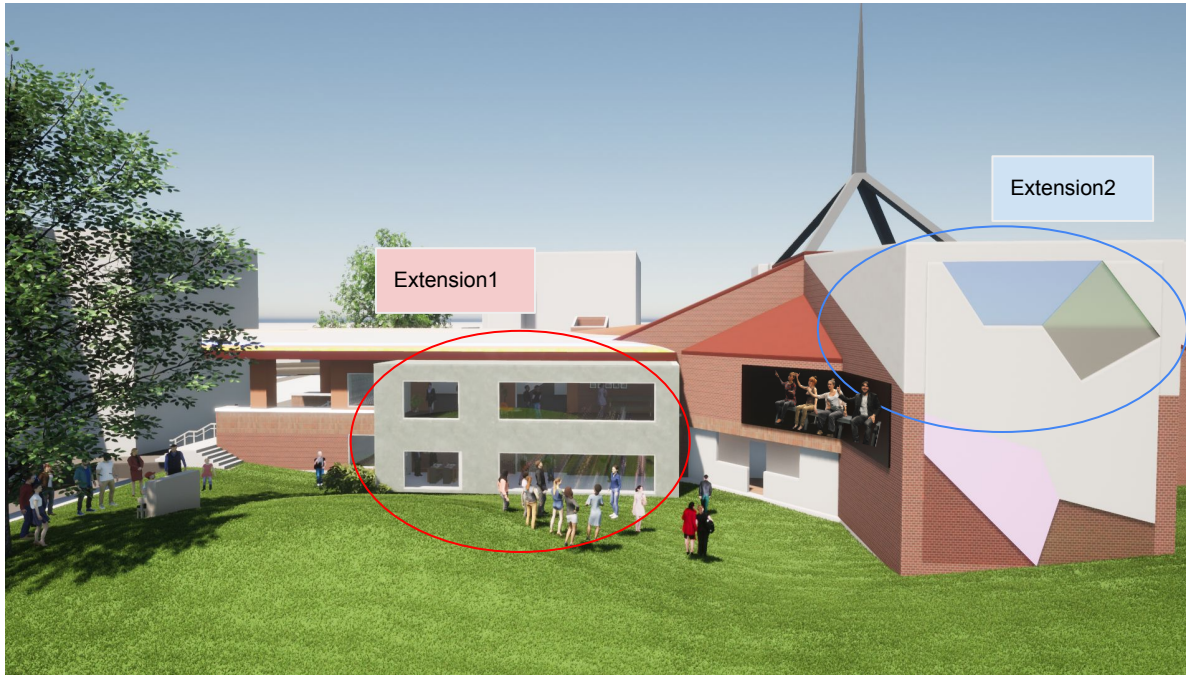
Highland Theatre has two main entrances as well as several secondary points of access. The first main entrance, indicated by the solid red arrow, leads directly into the foyer on the top floor. This entrance is most visible from the street and campus area. It would likely be used by pedestrians and is also adjacent to a primary bus stop. The other main entrance, indicated by the solid blue arrow, give patrons access directly from the parking lot. This point of access contains an elevator and stairwell that span both stories, making it the preferred entrance for staff and performers. This is also a wheelchair accessible entrance which gives access to the main lobby via the elevator. Minor entrances, indicated by dotted gray arrows, provide access to backstage and administrative spaces.

- Primary visitor entrances
- Primary performer entrances
- Additional entrances



## Section IV: Renderings





Highland Theatre features two additions onto the church’s existing footprint—both on the south side of the building. **Extension 1** is attached to the lobby areas on both floors and utilizes the existing window frames to create doors that provide access for the new coworking, meeting, and entrance hall spaces. **Extension 2** lifts the ceiling of the performance space so as to provide more ceiling room for the lighting and sound booths. The digital screen added to the facade of the building can be used for things like broadcasting live performance inside or movie nights.





Rendering of basement co-working space

The entrance to this space is cut through the original exterior windows of the building. These proposed renovations attempt to maintain the well-maintained pre existing brick walls as much as possible. To accommodate the needs of possible large crowds of audience members, the space extends outwards by 11 feet to preserve space in the main lobby while still making room for concessions and the box office. On the bottom floor the 11 foot extension is intended as a coworking space for admin. The large, south-facing windows let in plenty of natural light to the basement and aims foster a sense of connection between those working inside the building and the surrounding community.





To preserve the historic architecture of the church, the interior of the sanctuary remains almost entirely intact. This in-the-round configuration embraces support provided by the existing structure to seat 220 people total. With access passages hidden under the seats and concealed by hanging curtains (that also help with acoustics), through which performers can enter from any side of the stage. Leaving these corners of the theatre empty also provides small areas that can contain vignettes of scenery. The proposed design creates an extremely intimate atmosphere with each seat being, at most, fifteen feet from the stage. At all times, at least two of these corner spaces are visible to each audience member, making them prime locations for multimedia or projection content to be displayed.

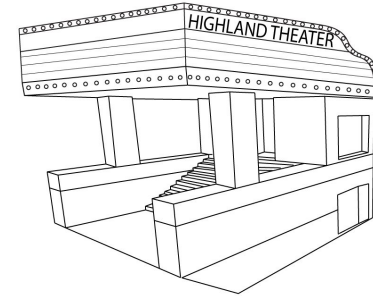




Stage lighting is accessible via a wire tension grid which allows quick and easy flexibility from show to show. There is also a front light hanging position that is accessed from the upper level of each seating section. Both lighting and sound are controlled from a technician booth on the south side of the performance venue.



The close, centralized stage aims to foster an intimate audience-performer relationship, as well as ones between audience members.



In addition to two extensions on the original building, we've decided to renovate the facade of the building through adding theatre marquee and repaint the the existing attachment on the north side, which was added in the early 1990's. One reason is that the facade of the concrete wall is not in a good condition and another reason is that we want to include exterior lighting systems on the surface of the wall, providing good lighting conditions for evening event and also create an atmosphere of fantasy and imaginative inspiration. The exterior garden functions as a psychological buffer before people entering into the building, enabling people to have a good relaxation and create a mood for enjoying a show.





## **Section V: Additional Information**



Local Performance Company	Positions Listed	Estimated administrative positions	Estimated necessary space
<i>Short North Stage</i>	Artistic Director, Associate Artistic Director, Company Manager, Secretary, Board Members- 9 others	About 15	Likely needs at least 3-4 offices or rooms for meeting
<i>Columbus Children's Theatre</i>	Executive Director, Artistic Director, Technical Director/Production Manager, Board Members- 5 members with a president, vice president, immediate past president, treasurer, and secretary	8	3 offices for the full time positions
<b><i>Contemporary American Theatre Company (CATCO)</i></b>	<b>Executive Director, Artistic Director, Education Director, Productions Manager, Education Coordinator, House Manager, Development Manager, Press Representative</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4 rooms with somewhere to meet</b>
<i>MadLab</i>	Artistic Director, Managing Director, Publicity Director, Ensemble Chair, Technical Director, Literary Manager, Education Director, Shop Foreman, Board Members- 6 members including 2 board chairs	14	7 rooms
<i>Columbus DanceArts Academy</i>	Artistic staff: Director, Artistic Director/Instructor, Artistic Director/Instructor, Youth Program Director/Instructor, Administrative Artistic Assistant/Instructor, other part-time instructors, part- time office staff	5	1 office, 1 full time staff room, temporary meeting spaces

**Highland Theatre's size would be comparable to CATCO.** The proposed renovations feature administrative space on the first floor: a mid-sized co-working space, a large communal/education room, and a smaller enclosed room adjacent that could serve as a single office if necessary. As with many local companies, the administrative roles can be worked partially remotely, especially for smaller ones, and board meetings can take place in the large communal room. Therefore, the building provides some space for administrative purposes but does not waste an excessive amount on those that are seldom used. For the most part, the building is optimized to best serve the performers and visitors who will most often use the space.



Thank you to the Leslie, the administrative assistant at University Baptist Church and joined the congregation in 1973, for providing access to original floor plans, section views, oral histories, and letting us tour the site.

Additional history found at: [Where We've Come From — University Baptist Church \(ubccolumbus.org\)](http://ubccolumbus.org)

