

Gateway Center Renovation Project

The Ohio State University

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Meet the team



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Landscape Architecture
Major



Ansley Wilson

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Computer & Information
Science Major



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Mission Statement

Our design converts a space within the Campus Gateway, a mixed-use plaza on The Ohio State's Campus, into a storefront theatre. The goal of this space is to serve both the students of The Ohio State University and the Columbus community at-large. On campus, there are various performance-based student organizations that perform in spaces that do not serve their needs:

- Comedy Organizations such as 8th Floor Improv and Backburner Sketch Comedy
- Off the Lake, the student-run, service-based theatre group
- Movement Variations, a dance organization

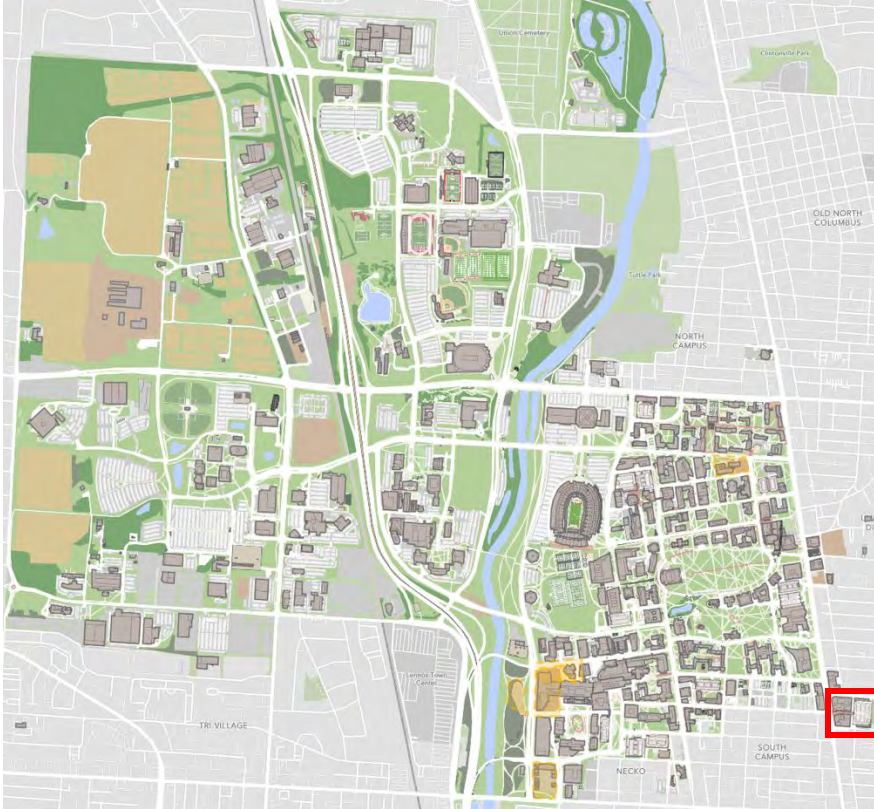
Therefore, a venue on campus could support these organizations in their missions while also serving the city of Columbus. Ultimately, the goal of our design is to create a communal, centralized space where artists of all kinds gather to share a meaningful experience with a diverse audience. The space will function as an intimate, adaptable performance venue intended for on-campus organizations to rent and operate, with the capacity to support both on and off campus performing arts and bolster their engagement with the very thing that keeps them afloat: their community.



Section One: Gateway Center



Why Gateway?



Map of OSU campus and the location of our site

- The Campus Gateway, a mixed-use development on the edge of Ohio State's campus, hosts numerous bars, restaurants, shops, and a cinema. It is a natural gathering space for students and non-students alike.
- Adding a live performance space to this venue adds kinetic energy to the bustling plaza, connecting students to the arts in a familiar area.
- Due to its prime location, our venue will act as a bridge between the university and the city itself, creating partnerships with local artists, schools, and organizations to enrich the cultural landscape.



Current Use

- Completed in 2005, the Campus Gateway draws patrons in with their three most popular storefronts: Gateway Film Center, an independent cinema; Cazuela's, a lively Mexican restaurant; and Eupouria, an interactive nightlife venue.
- Beneath Gateway Film Center lies three venues:
 - Gateway Center Offices
 - Game Arena, an esports gaming center and bar
 - Jimmy John's Subs
- Combined, these spaces have 8600 square feet to convert into a storefront theatre.

Existing Conditions- Exterior



Open, street-accessible walkway connected directly to parking. The Game Arena, marked by the black sign, lies next to the Eupouria bar and the Gateway Film Center.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Existing Conditions- Interior (Offices)



Front and back point of views of the Gateway Center offices spaces.

Existing Conditions - Interior (Game Arena)



The Game Area. This space utilizes a second level, opening the floor plan.



Existing Conditions- Interior (Jimmy John's)



Interior of Jimmy Johns: left and right point of views. This space currently serves as food and dining for those in the area.

Existing Conditions- Interior (Utility Space)

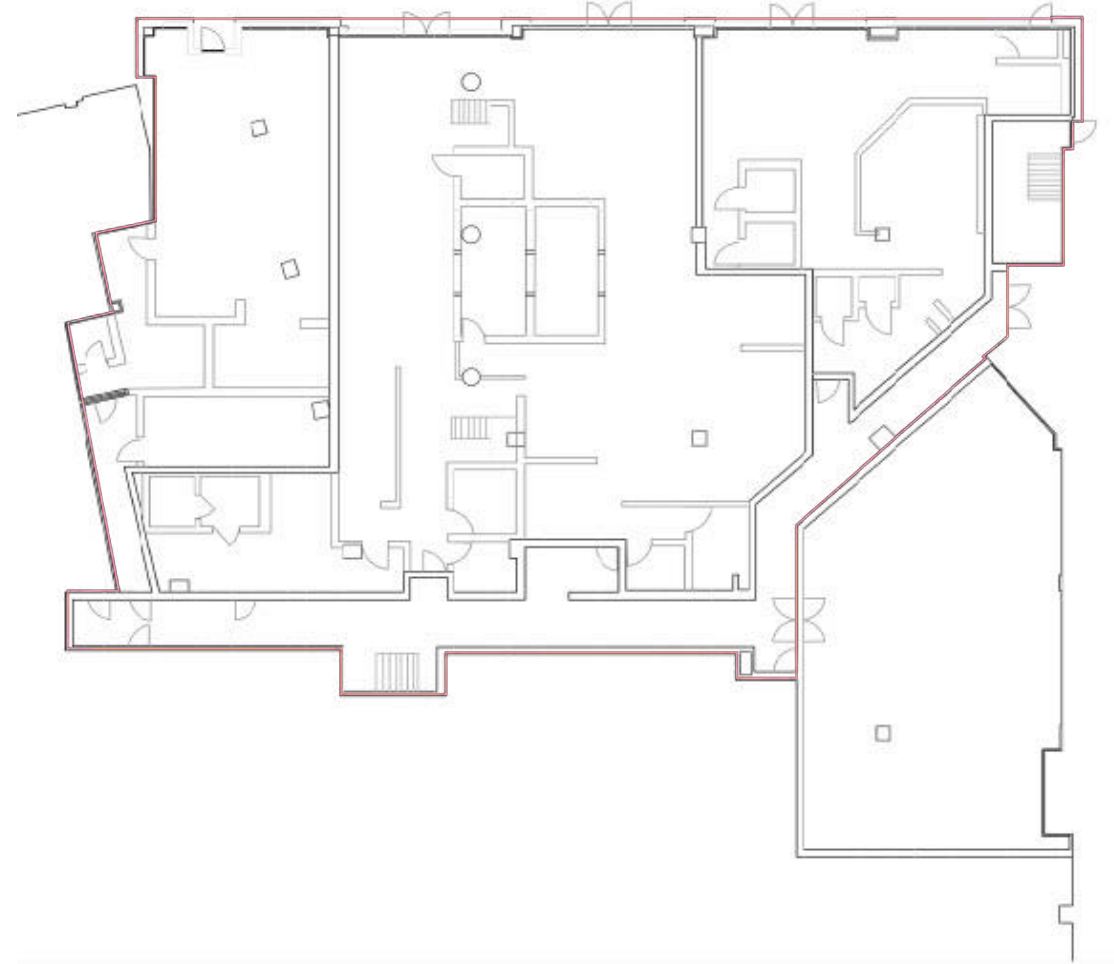


Loading dock connected to venue. Will be used to load in any scenery or supplies needed for productions.

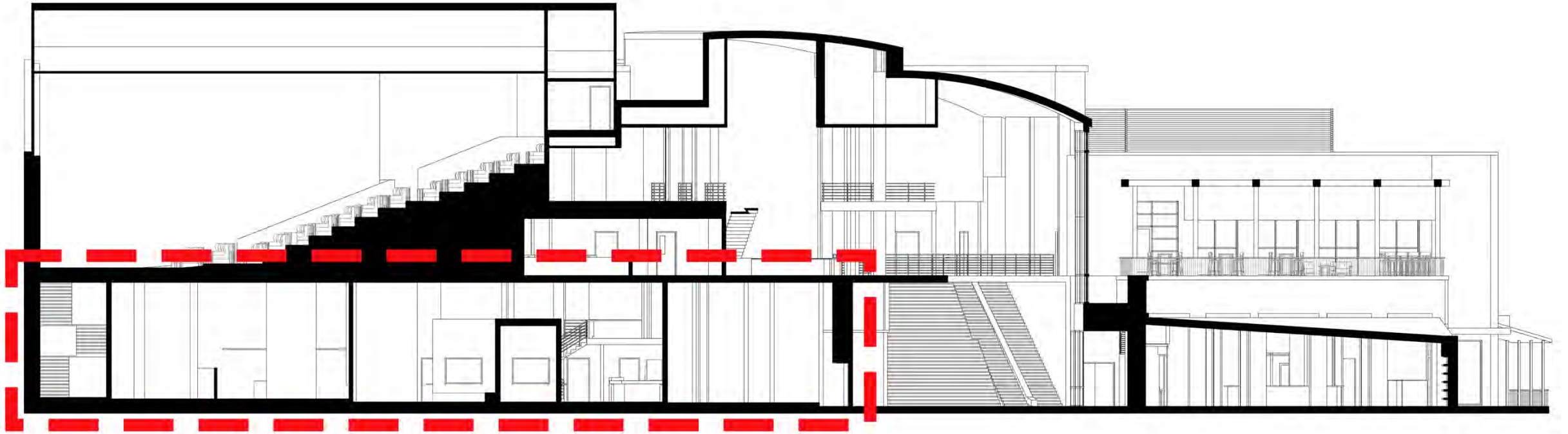
Existing Conditions- Interior (Utility Space)



Existing Floor Plan



Existing Section

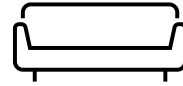


Section Two: Constituents and Outreach



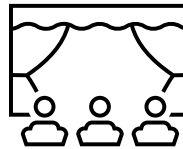
Constituent Needs: 8th Floor Improv

Improv comedy groups, such as 8th Floor, utilize banquet rooms in the student union.



Intimate Seating

8th Floor noted that chairs are too spaced out for an improv show. They would love more seating with a more spacious stage.



Backstage Space

Members stand off to the side of stage (no wings) while not in an act. Would much prefer a space where performers can warm up and rehearse.



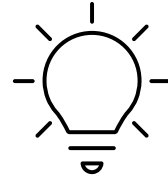
General Technical Requirements

If there was an option for floor mics, they would be interested. In their current space, using mics isn't necessary since it is quite small. Standard stage lighting is needed.



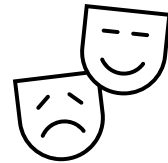
Constituent Needs: Backburner Sketch Comedy

Backburner performs in a campus lecture hall.



Lighting

This group would appreciate more lighting control, as they include blackouts in between sketches.



Backstage Space

The members not actively in a sketch will sit off to the sides of the "stage" where the wings would usually be.



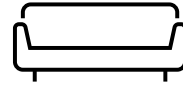
Rehearsal Space

Members of this group noted that both a green room and a rehearsal space would be helpful for their needs.



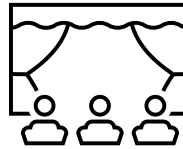
Constituent Needs: Off the Lake

Ohio State's student-run theatre organization builds and performs in the ballroom of a university dormitory.



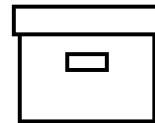
Intimate Seating

Off the Lake typically exceeds seating expectations for their mainstage productions but requires downsizing for one-act plays.



Supportive Staging

The organization currently performs on a raised platform stage that is moved in and out of the space. They would prefer a more permanent and safe space for their performers.



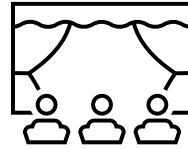
Storage

The storage needs of their productions typically exceed their capability.



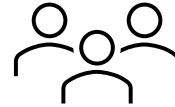
Constituent Needs: Movement Variations

Movement Variations, one of Ohio State's student-run dance organizations, currently performs in a performance hall within the student union.



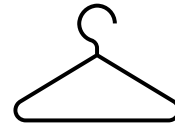
Backstage Space

The union's stage does not have large wings, nor a crossover to get to either side of the stage. Movement Variations wants this in a new space.



Reception Area

Their current venue has no dedicated gathering space outside of the hall itself. This space is needed as they have visitors that would like to meet with the group after performances.



Dressing Rooms

The organization would prefer private areas to change and get ready before performances.

Resulting Goals

- Despite being home to a wide range of performance-based student organizations, The Ohio State University has few affordable, accessible venues that cater to students' needs.
- By creating a community-focused storefront venue on the cusp of campus and the greater Columbus area, we are connecting OSU's student performers to the arts scene just next door.
- An adaptable theatre fulfills the needs of intimate performances like improv comedy and larger-scale stage musicals while upgrading the organizations' preexisting technical capacity.



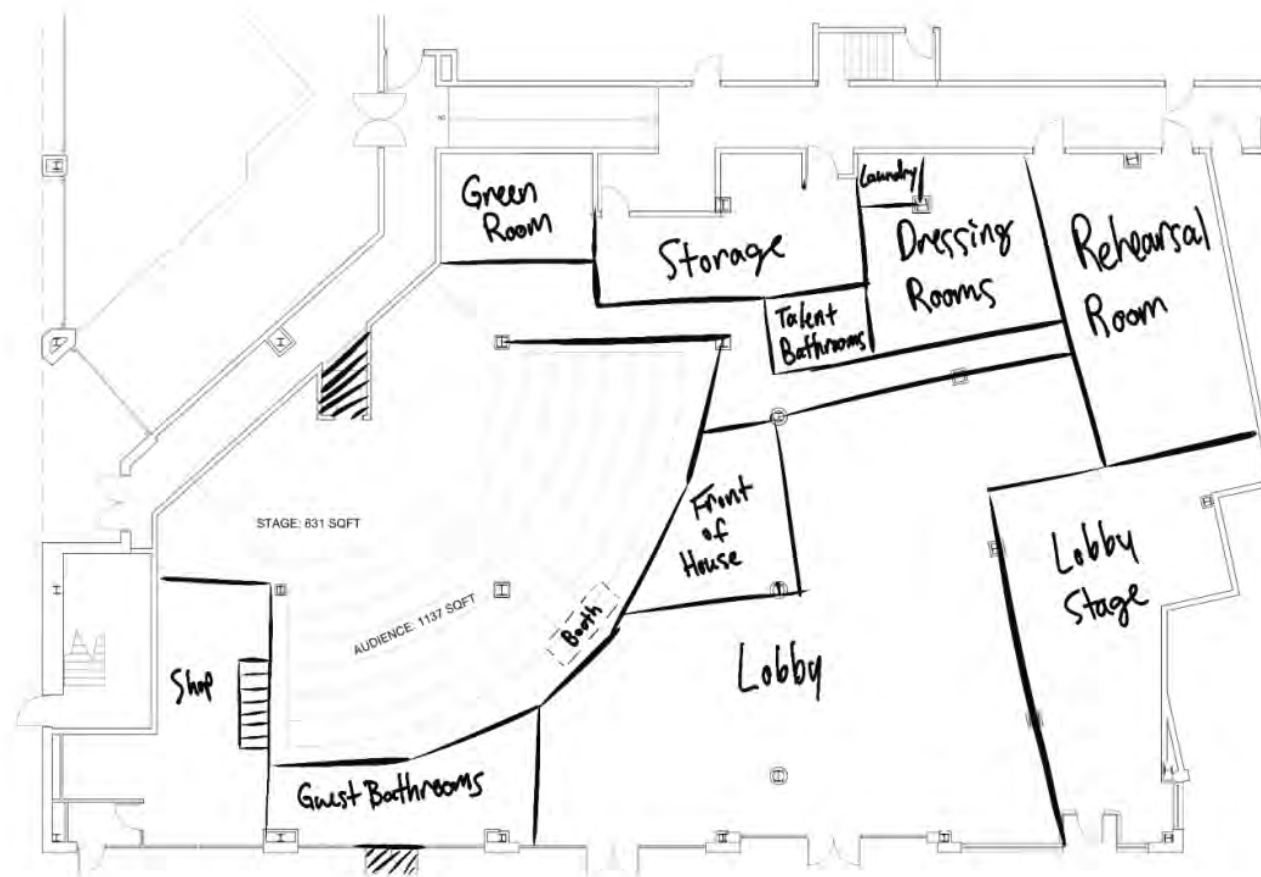
Section Three: Design Progression

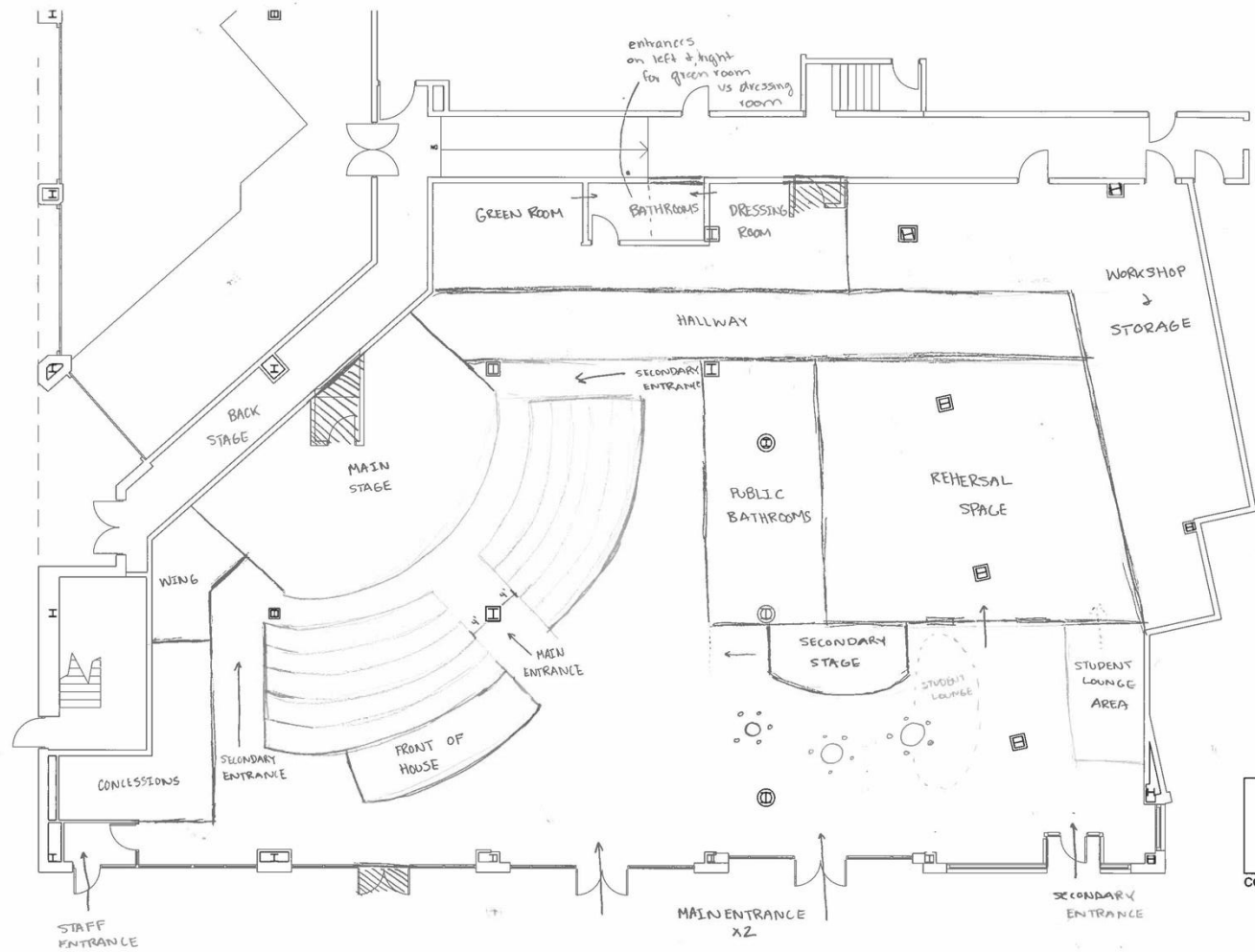


Design Progression- Area Planning & Blocking

- The greatest challenge presented to our renovation was the many columns in the storefronts. Early in the process, we discovered that the far left corner was the ideal area to locate the stage with minimal obstruction to audience viewpoints.
- We allocated square footage to each room based upon research from similar venues and created preliminary designs to see if our schedule was realistic for the renovation.
- During this process, the lobby evolved from an entryway, to a gathering place, and finally to a more intimate, adaptable stage.





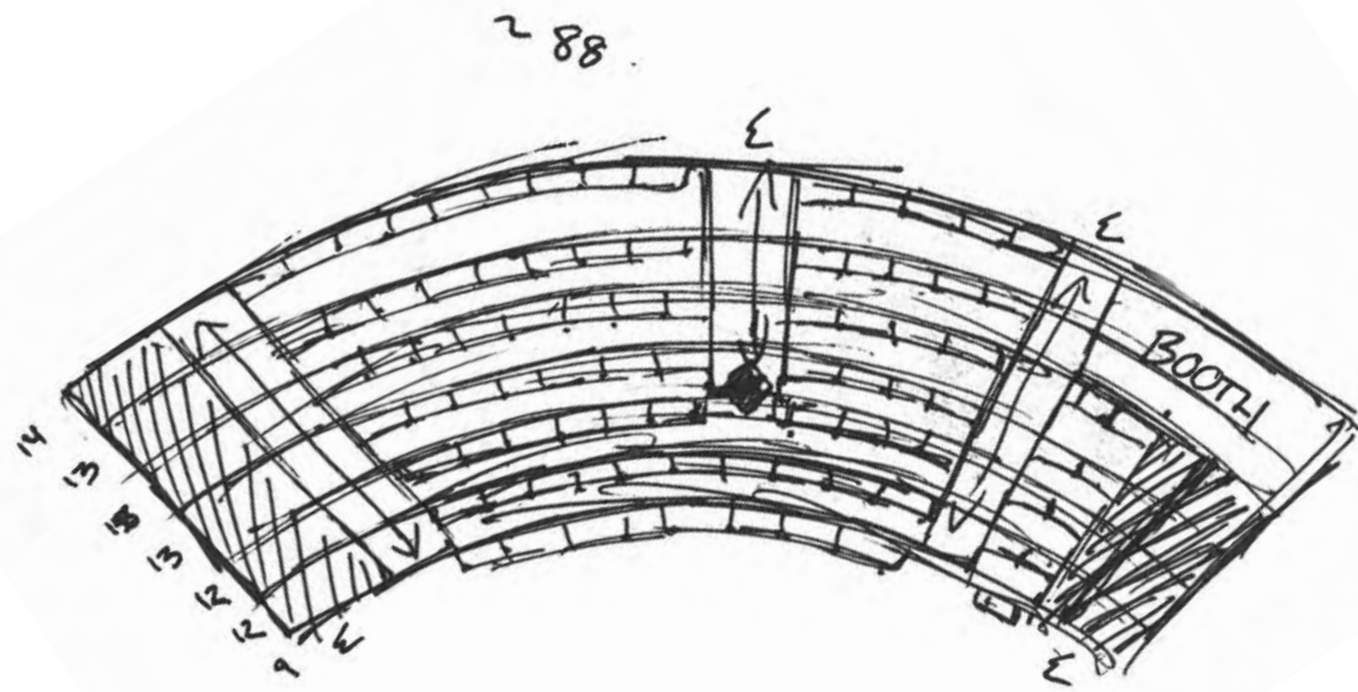


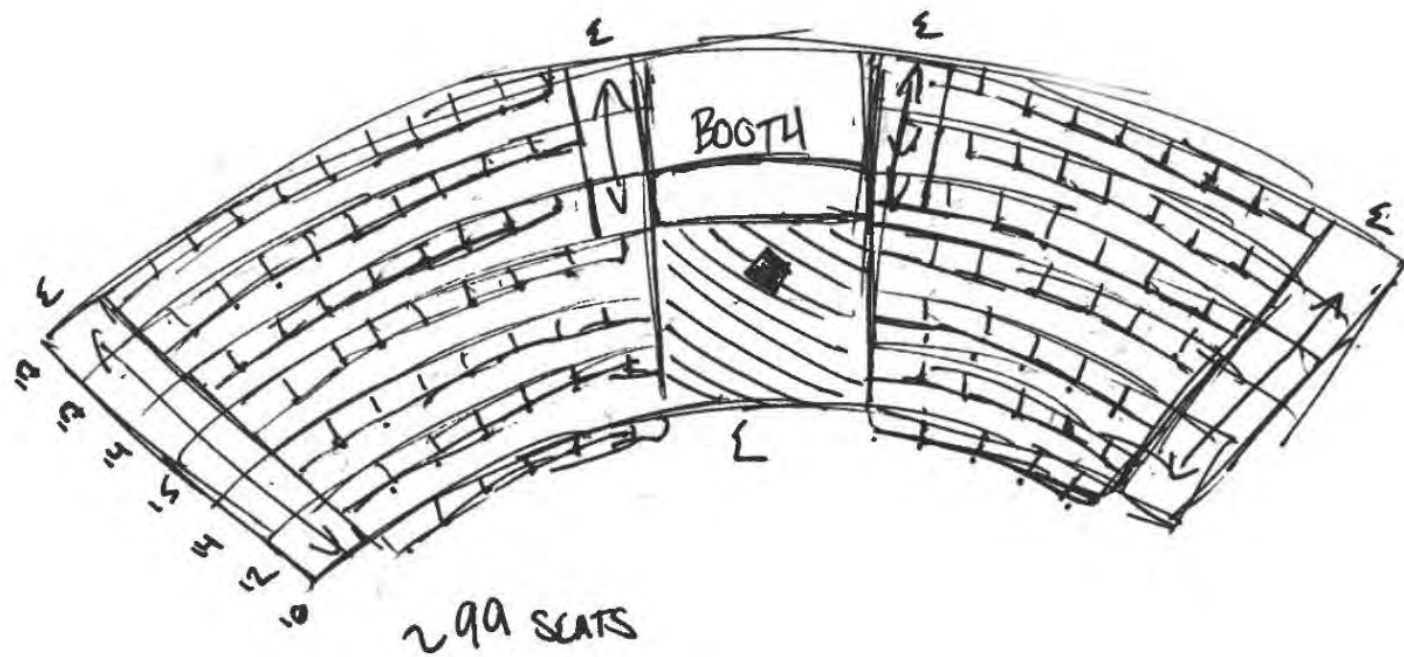


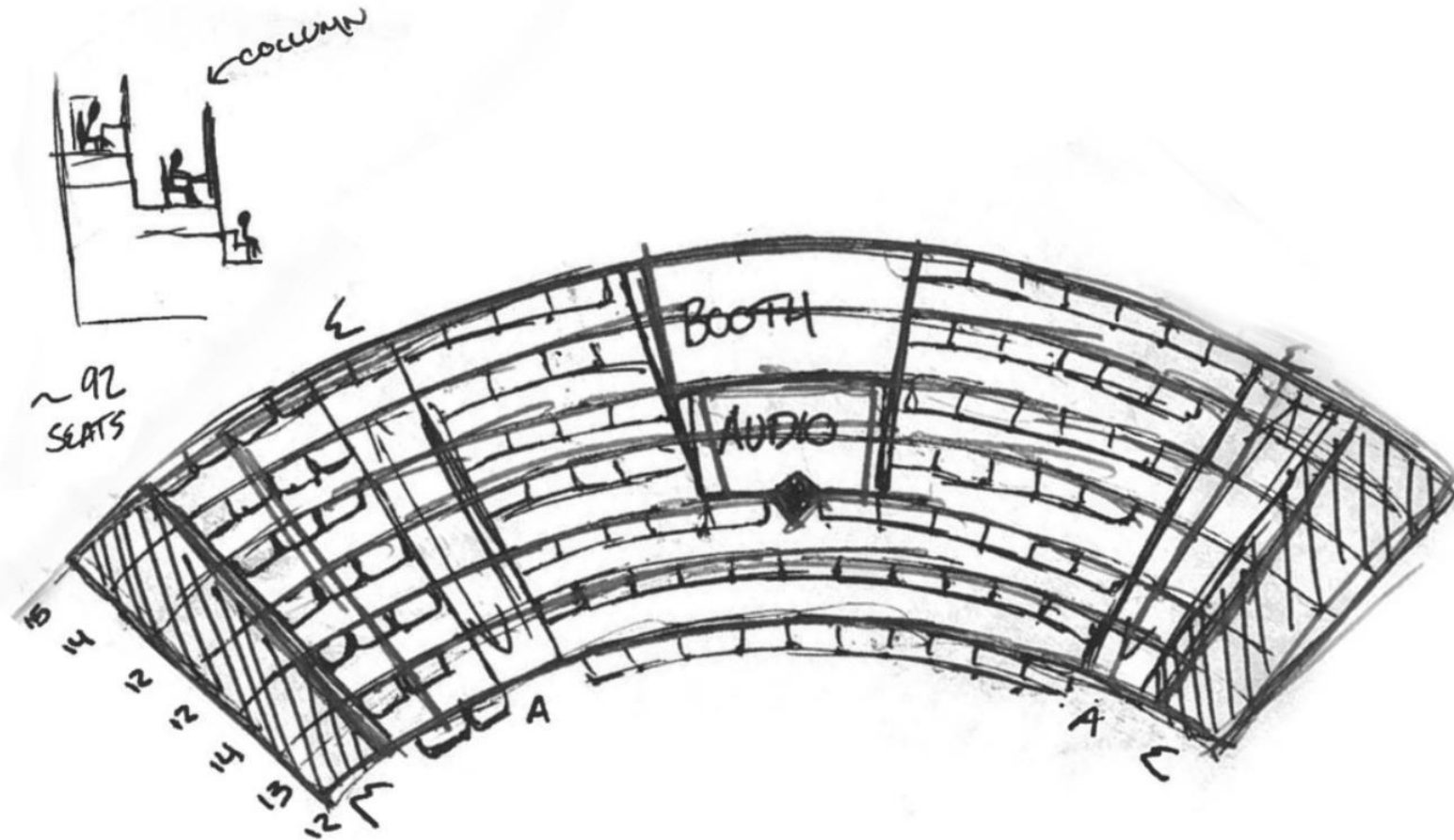
Design Progression- Seating

- Our constituents did not express a need to accommodate large audiences. Based upon our conversations, the theater would need to seat anywhere from 80-150 guests depending upon the program.
- Because of this wide range, we tested multiple seating arrangements within our designated schedule.
- Due to the placement of our stage, there is an unavoidable column in the house. We originally planned for there to be no seating behind it and for the booth to go to the side. However, the sightlines in the booth would not be ideal on the edge of a curved theater.





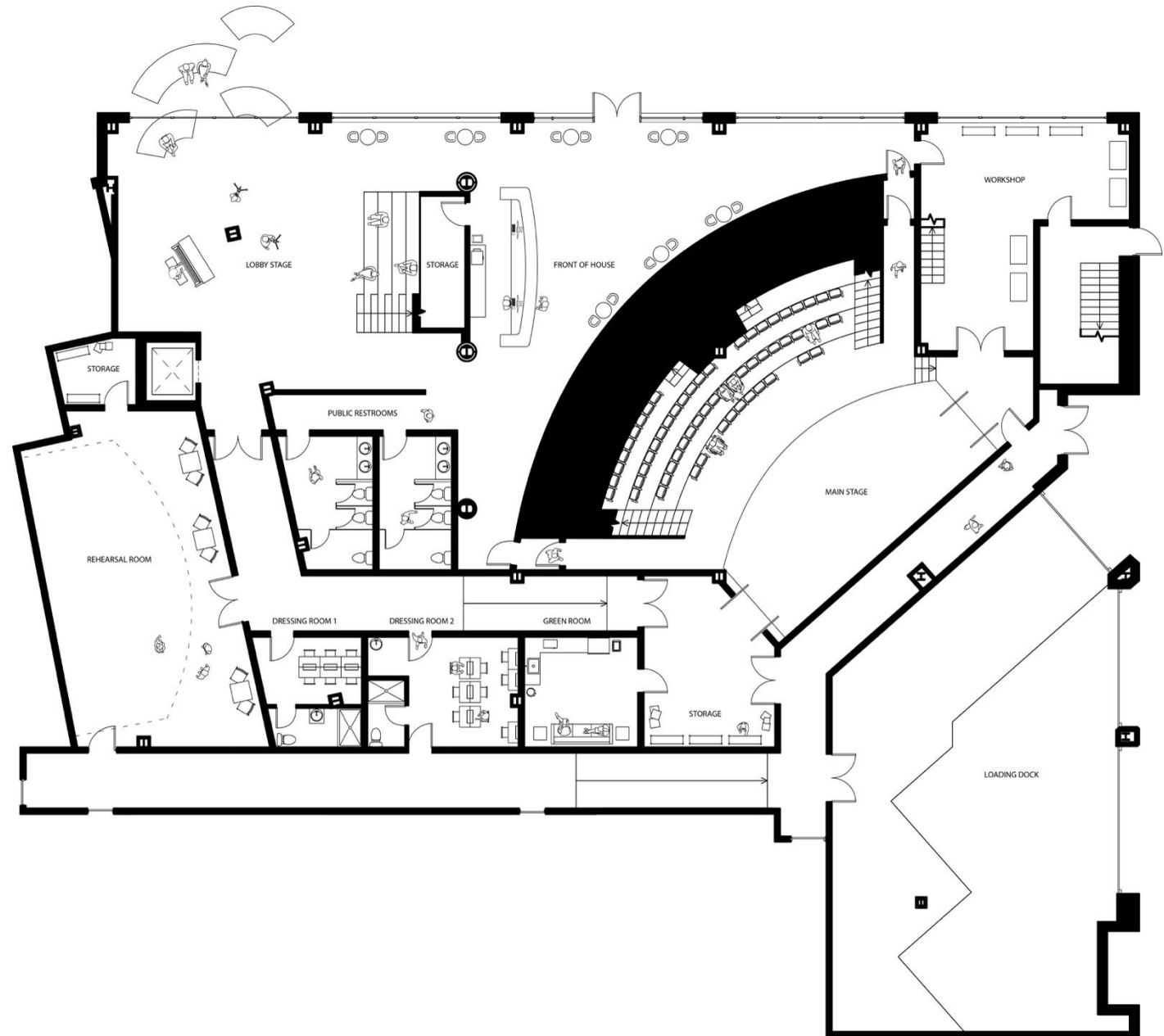




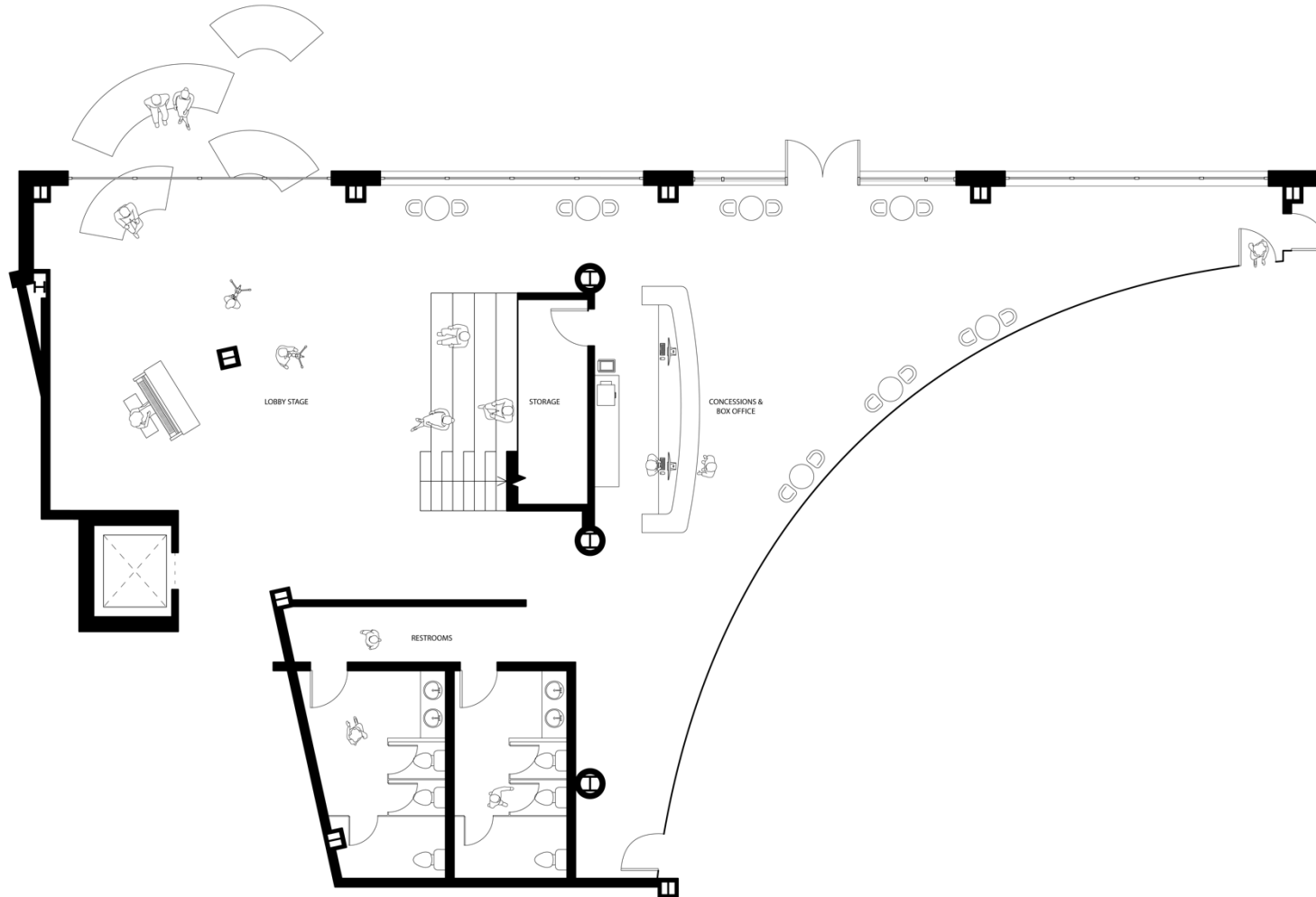
Section Four: Proposed Renovations



First Floor Plan



Front Of House



LOBBY STAGE

Our lobby stage is a convertible, open space that can be organized for cold weather performances, with seating doubling as the stairs to the second level, or outdoor performances, with adjustable block seating facing one of our open entrances. This area is intended for more intimate performances, such as improv, stand up, or music.

The lobby holds several tables and chairs for when performances are not ongoing, so that the venue can be a community space for students when not in use.

CONCESSIONS & BOX OFFICE

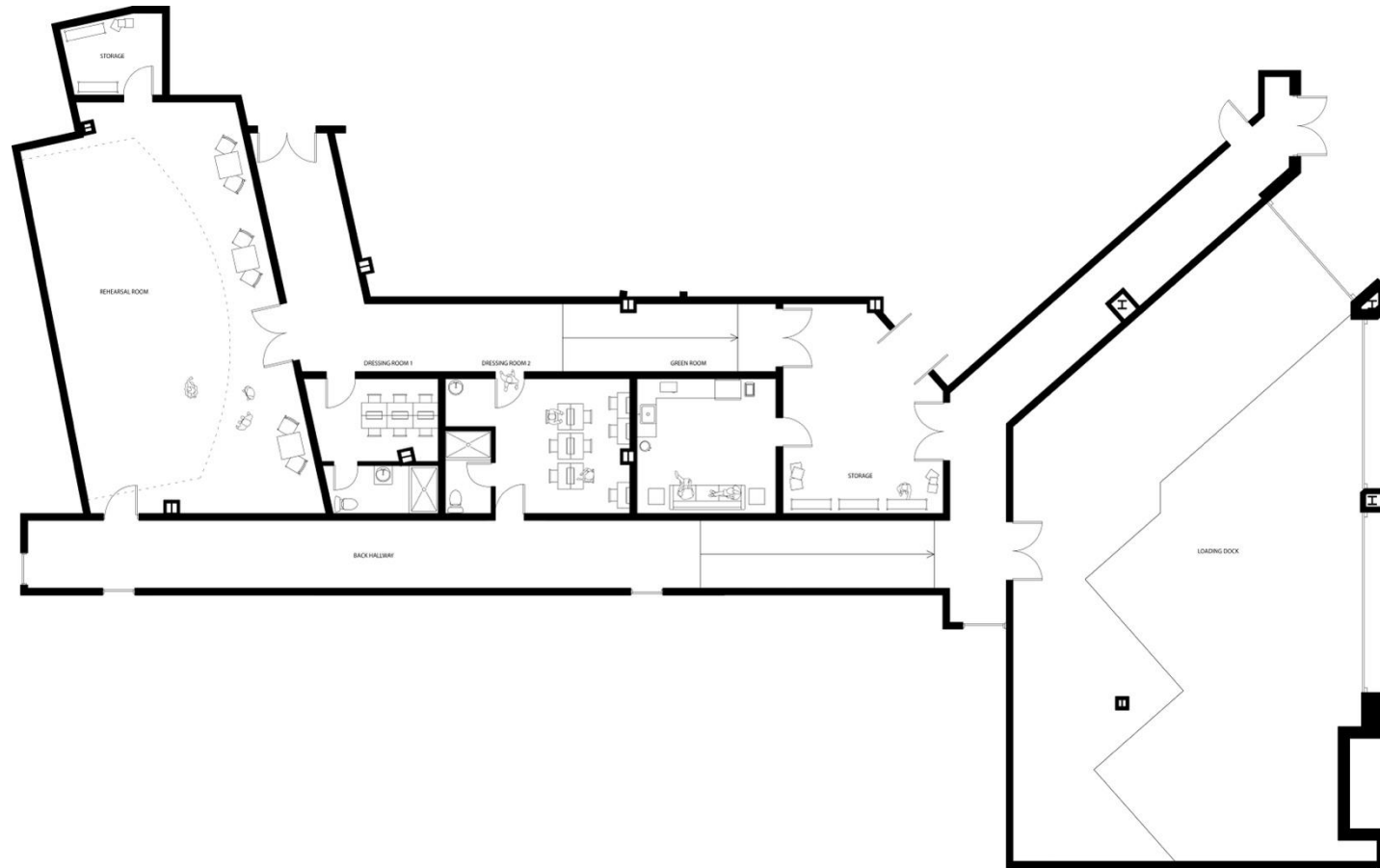
Facing the entrance of our main stage is our dual concessions and box office. Our interviews indicated a very low need for concessions, but nonetheless an interest in including them. Off the Lake and 8th Floor both require ticketing for their shows but often are forced to use nearby tables.

STORAGE & RESTROOMS

Under the stairs lies one of our storage areas, connected directly to concessions and the box office for ease and efficiency.

We have two restrooms on the lower floor, each with 3 stalls.

Back of House



REHEARSAL ROOM

The rehearsal room contains the same amount of space as the main stage. It has its own storage closet to hold props and costume pieces.

DRESSING ROOMS

There are two dressing rooms, each with their own bathroom. The leftmost dressing room has a capacity of 6, while the other can hold 9.

GREEN ROOM

The green room, which is directly accessible from the stage, has counter space and a couch for performers to rest and prepare food.

STORAGE

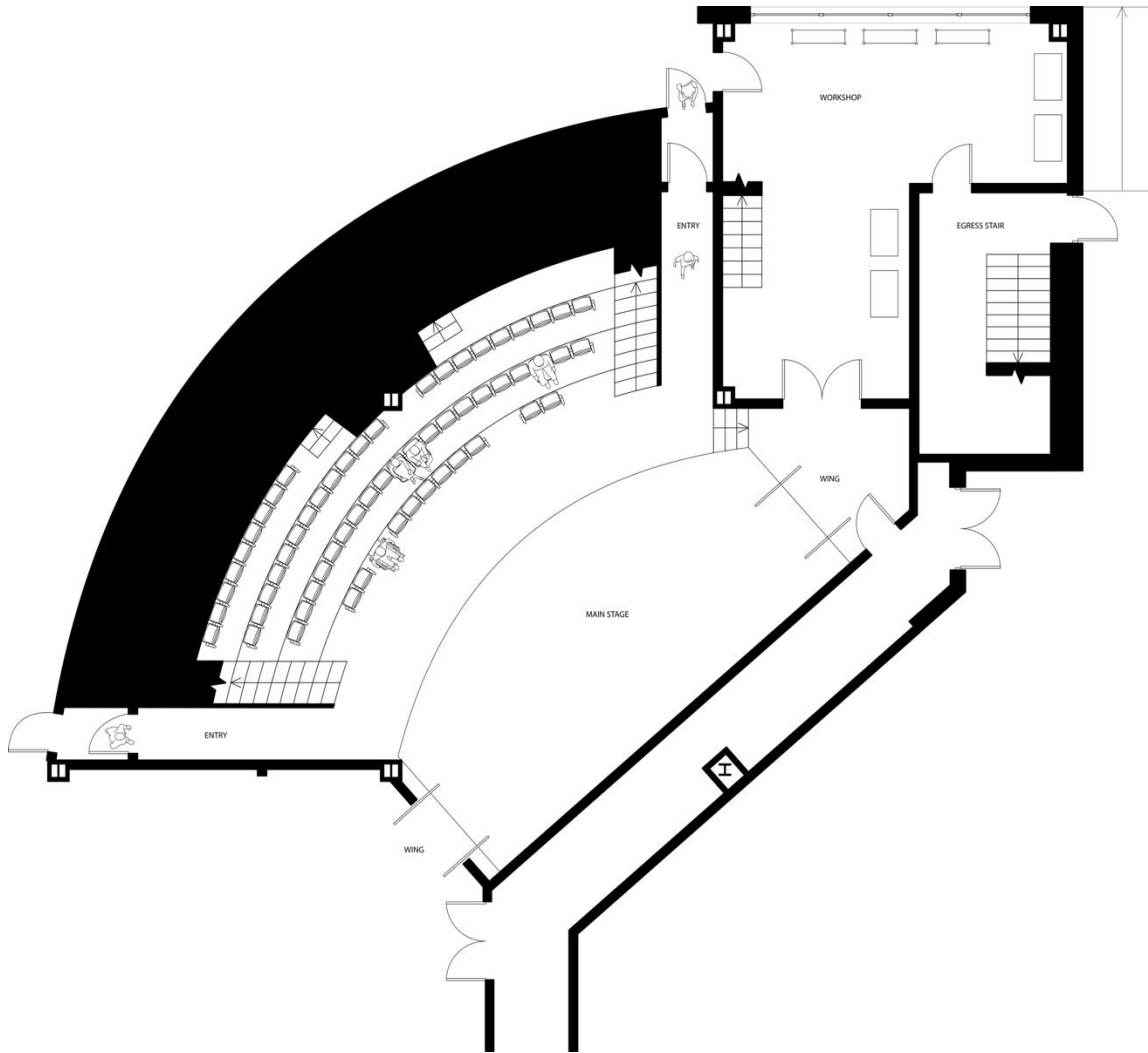
Directly next to the stage lies our largest storage space. It is accessible from both the green room and wings.

LOADING DOCK

Due to our space originally belonging to restaurants, there is a sizeable loading dock already in the building. Set pieces can be loaded directly from the dock to the stage.



Workshop & Stage



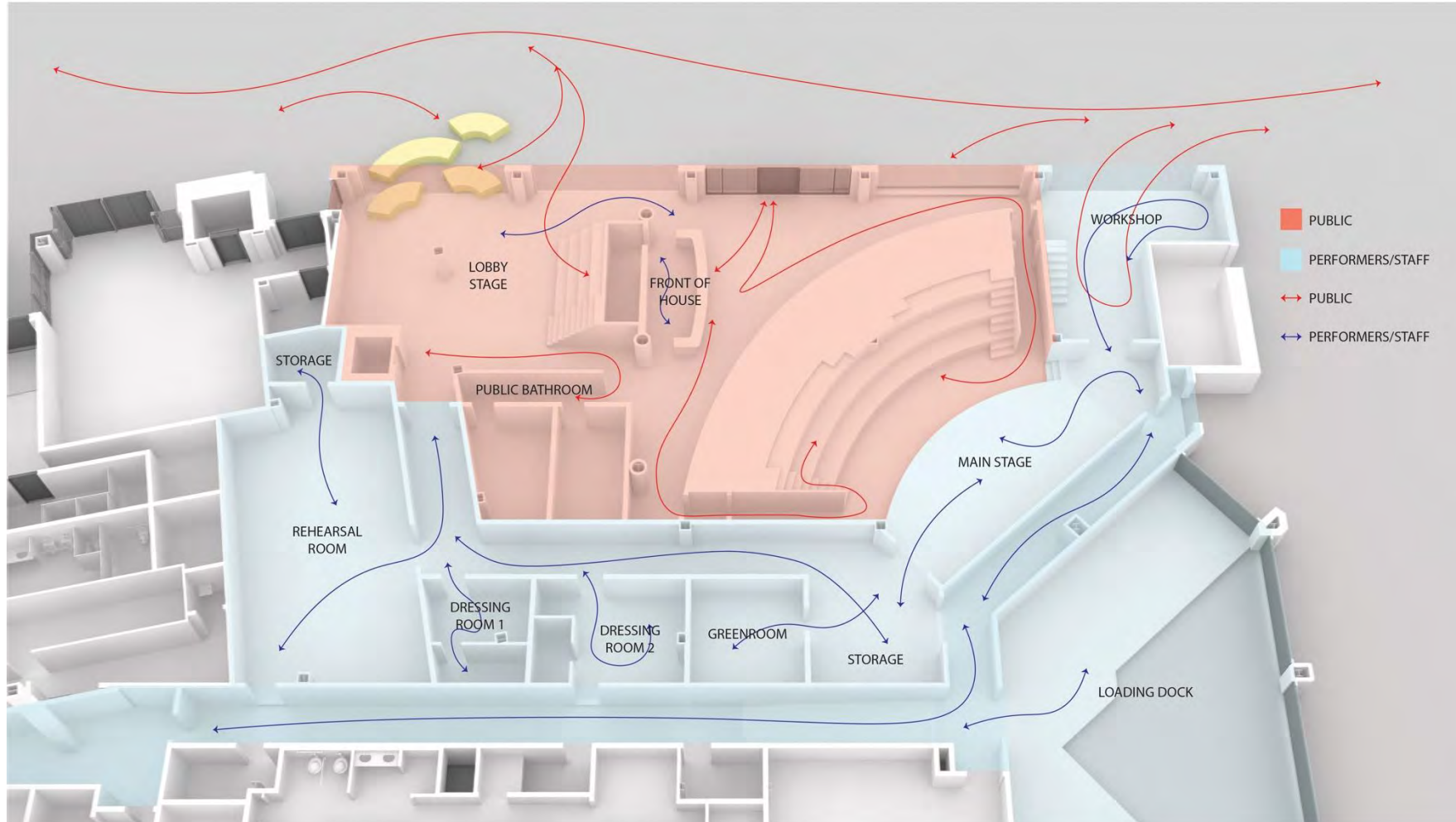
WORKSHOP

The workshop, which is accessible from the wings, egress stair, and garage door, has a full height of 20". Off the Lake, who builds their own sets, noted a struggle with finding the proper space to build. With multiple access points, it is in the ideal area to transfer set pieces of all sizes to the stage.

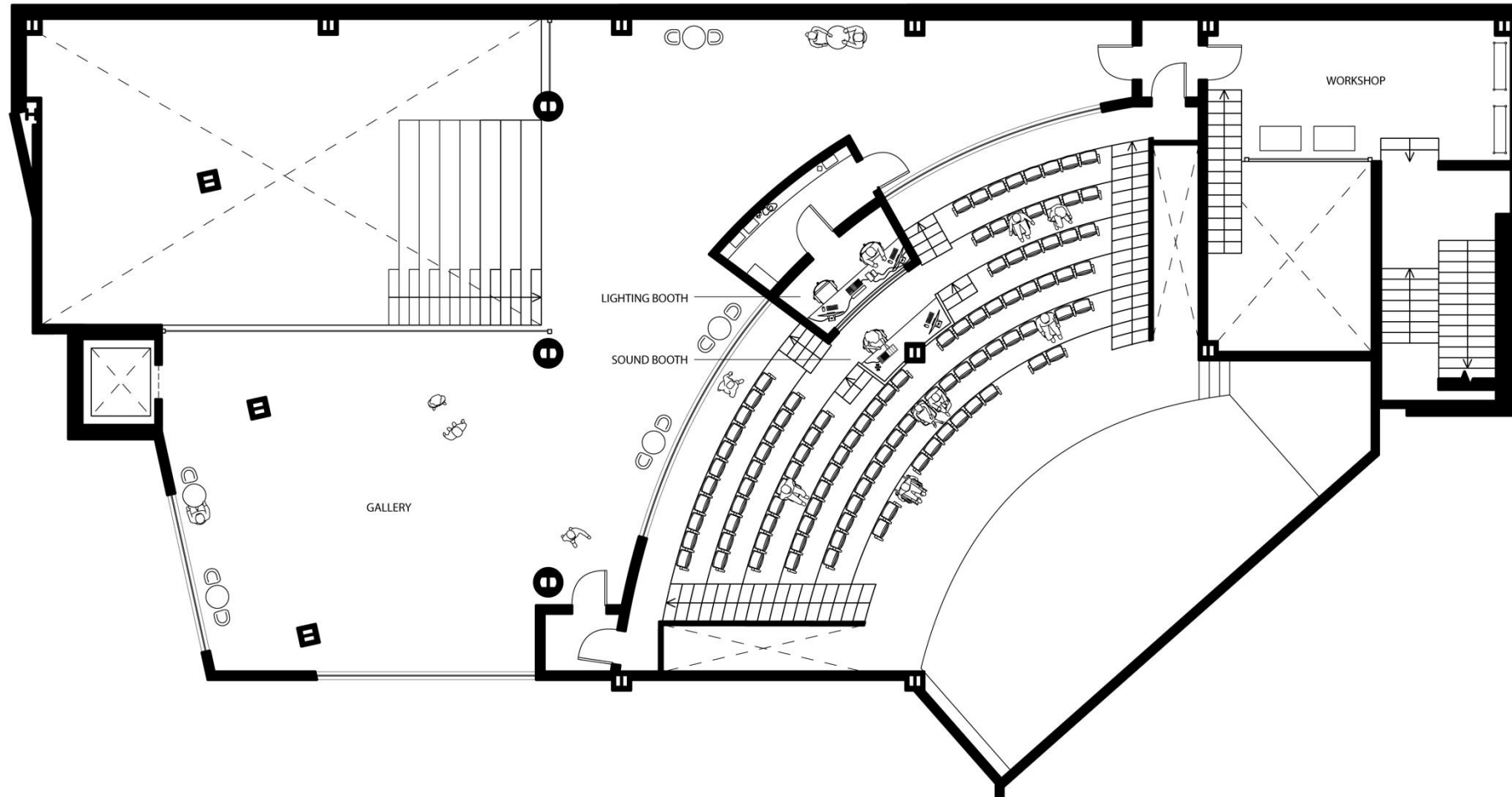
STAGE

The 600 sqft stage is designed for the larger productions our constituents require such as Off the Lake's season or Bellwether, 8th Floor's comedy festival. It is accessible from multiple points: the wings, the house, or the upper level. For actors to directly access the audience from the stage, they would only be able to step down from the stage right wing. Due to the constraints of the building, there is not a fully functional left wing. However, the nearby hallways can easily be used as wing space.

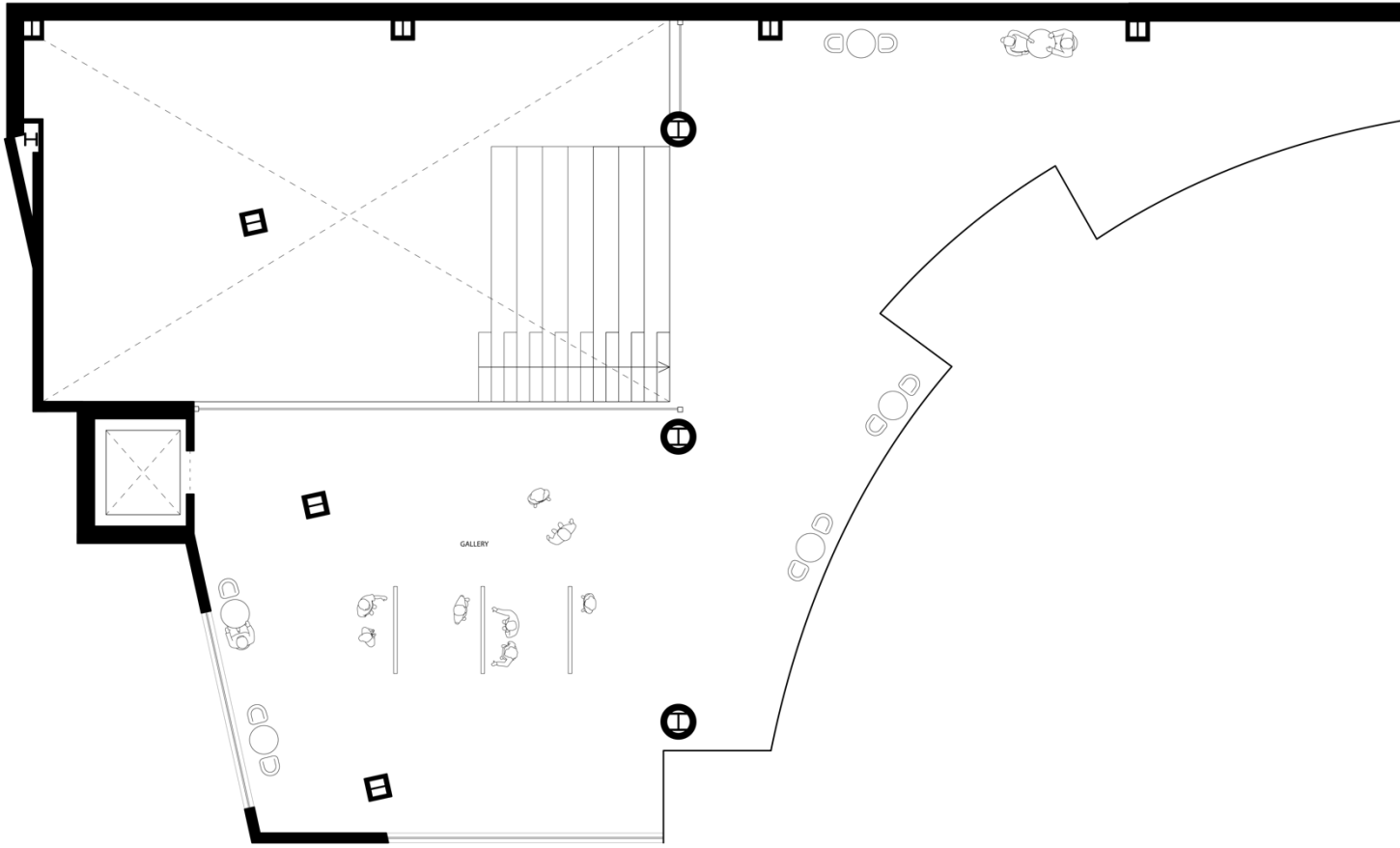
Stage Level Circulation



Second Floor Plan



Gallery

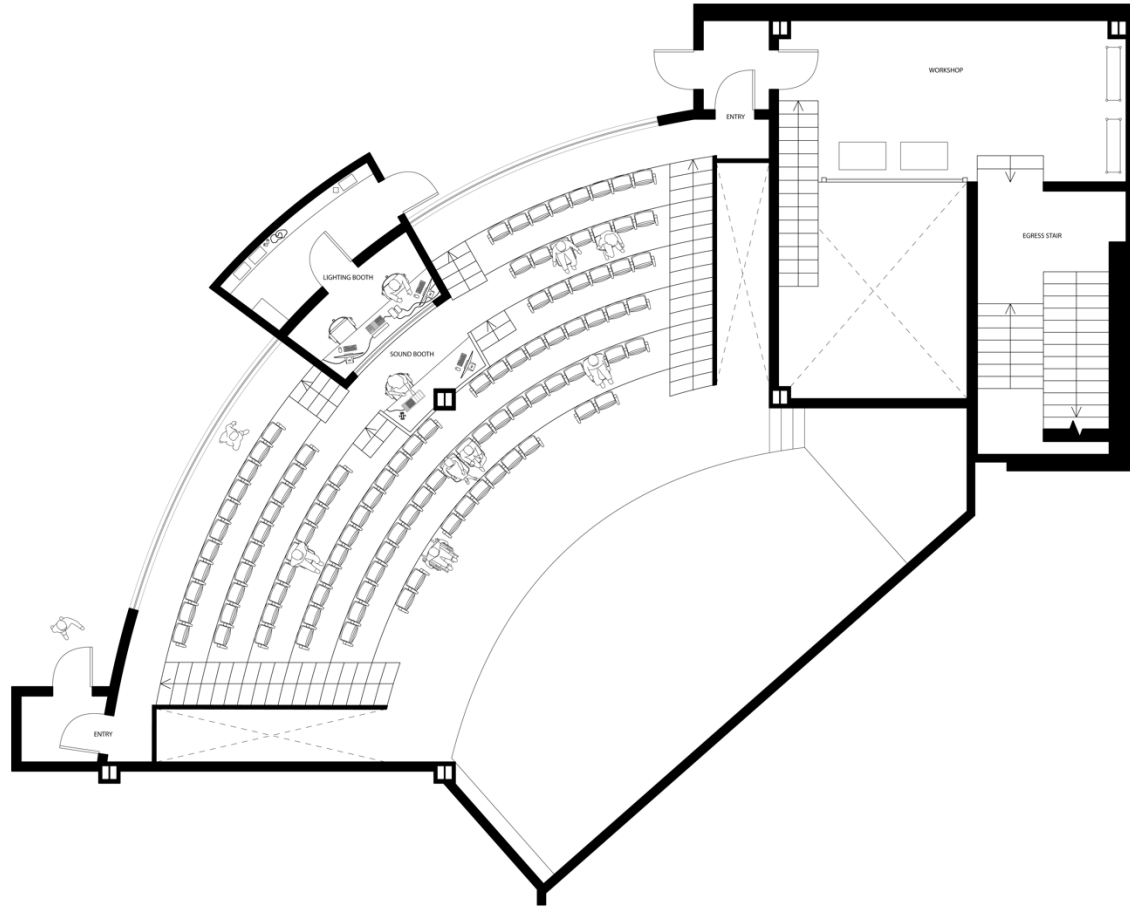


GALLERY

Because our venue is designed to uplift and support student performance, the upper level of the theater contains a gallery of student performances of the past and present. We have also included seating areas and space to gather, allowing students and the community to meet before or after a show. There are windows into the theater on this level to open the space and connect performers to visitors. Blackout curtains would be drawn to keep from any distractions or unwanted light during the show.



House



HOUSE

The house contains 102 seats, with 4 accessible seats in the front row.

BOOTHS

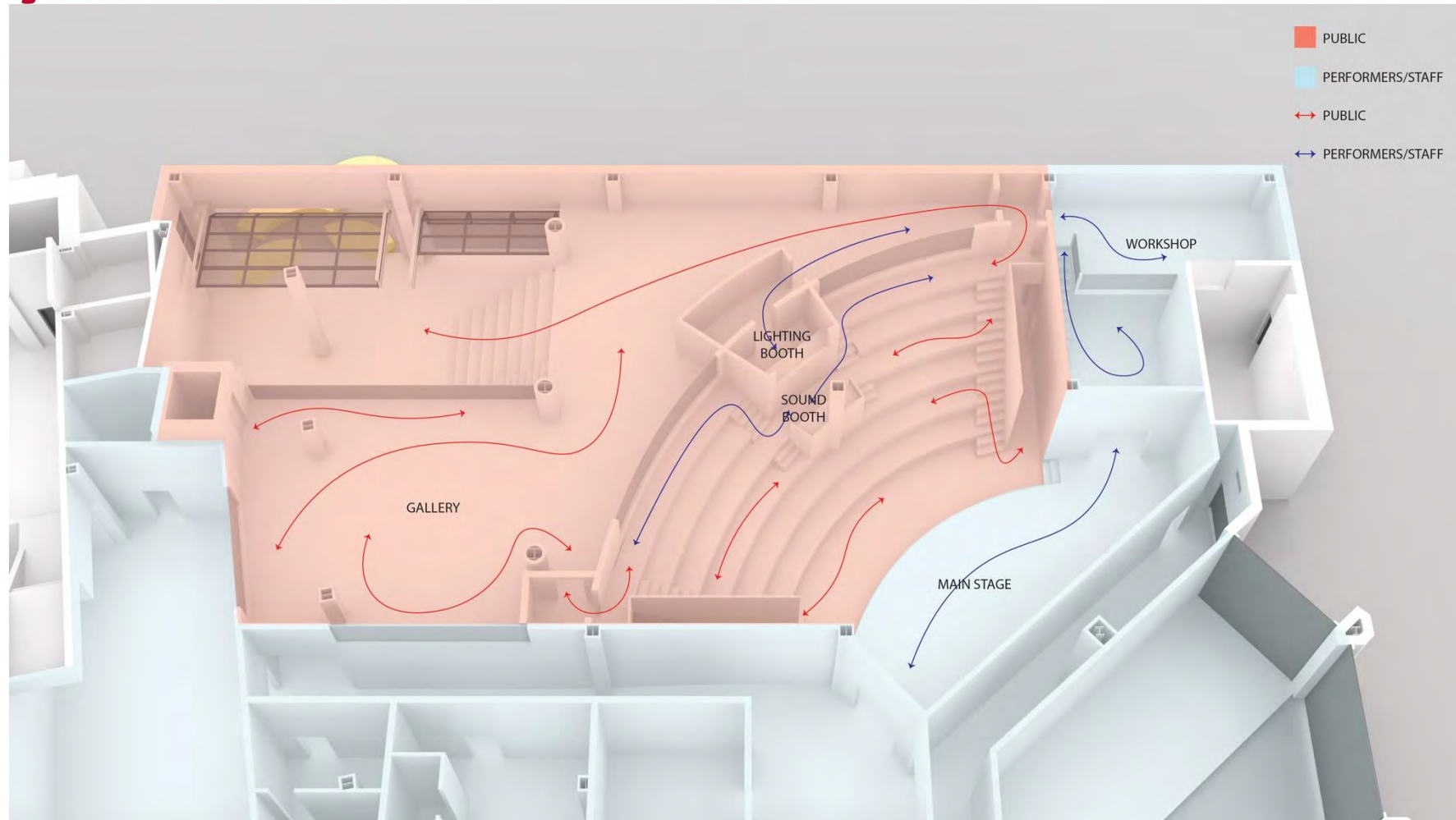
The lighting booth, which is accessible from the second floor, has enough space for a lightboard operator and the stage manager. There is a column in front of the booth, but the crew would ideally be seated on either side with little to no obstruction to their view. On the next level down, there is an open level for the sound booth.

WORKSHOP

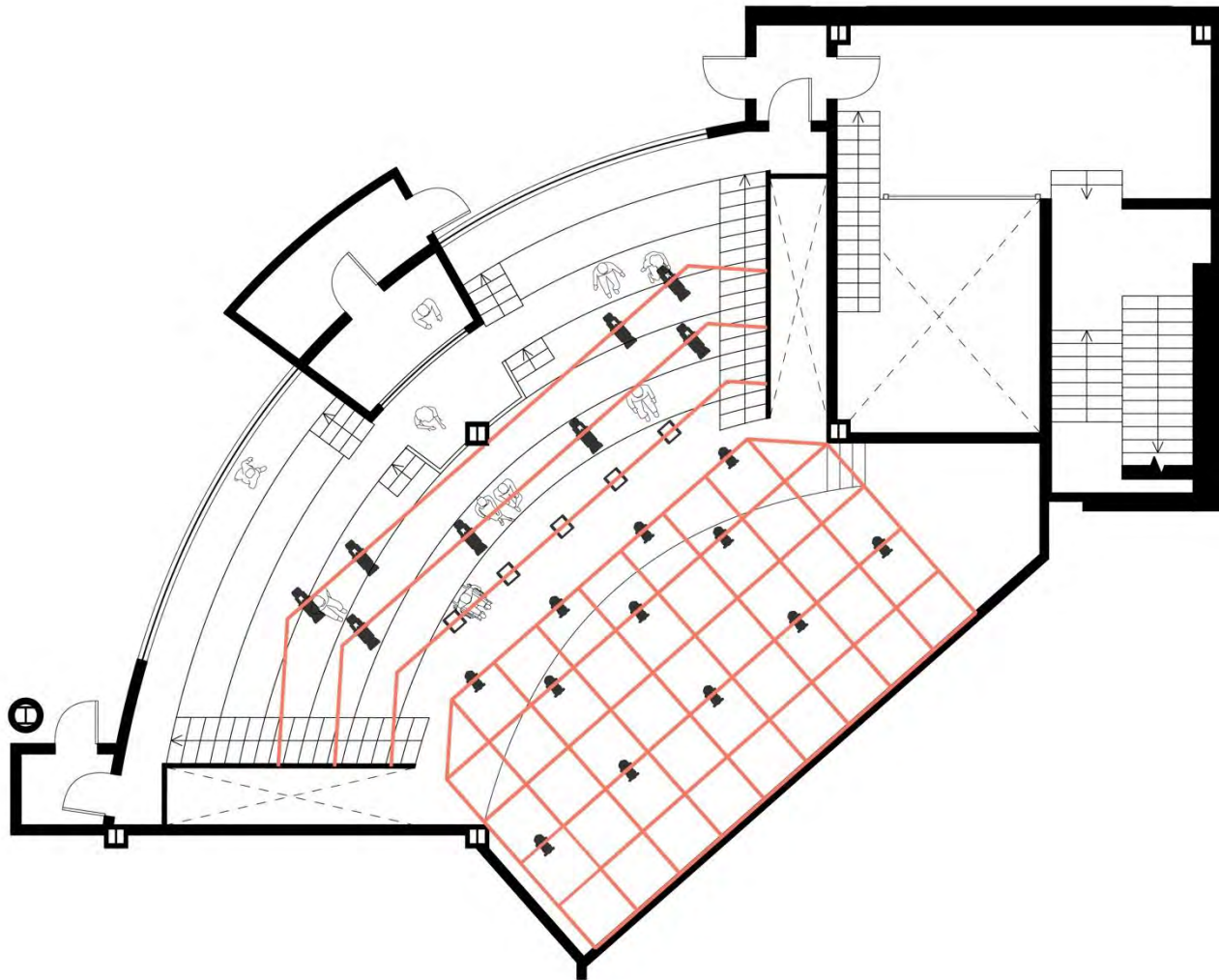
The workshop is also accessible from the second floor, with a platform for work on taller set pieces.



Gallery Level Circulation



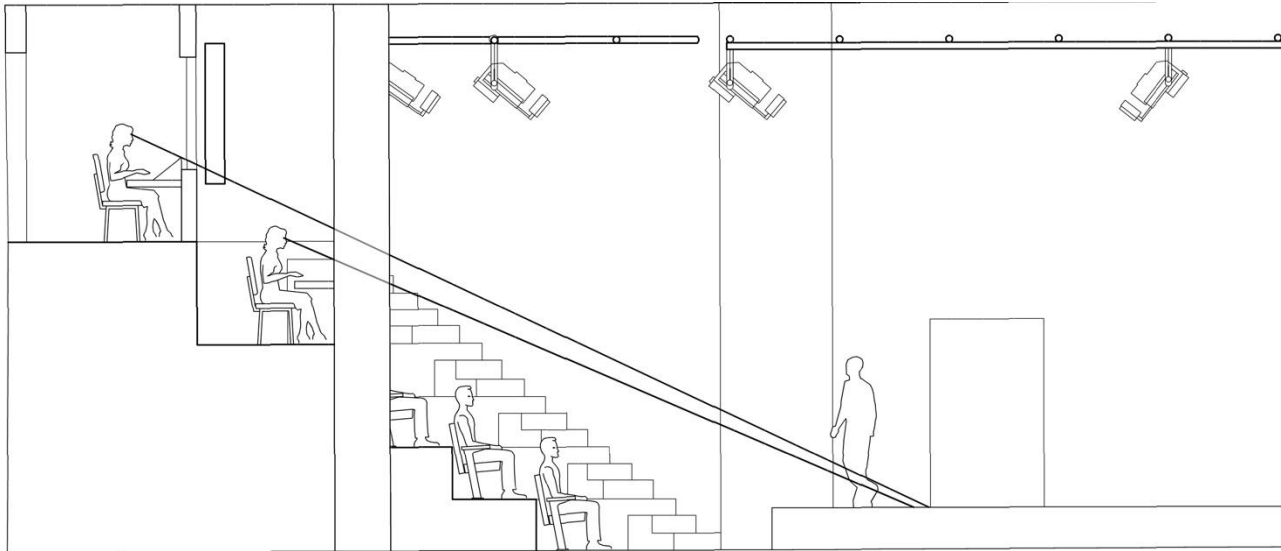
Lighting Grid



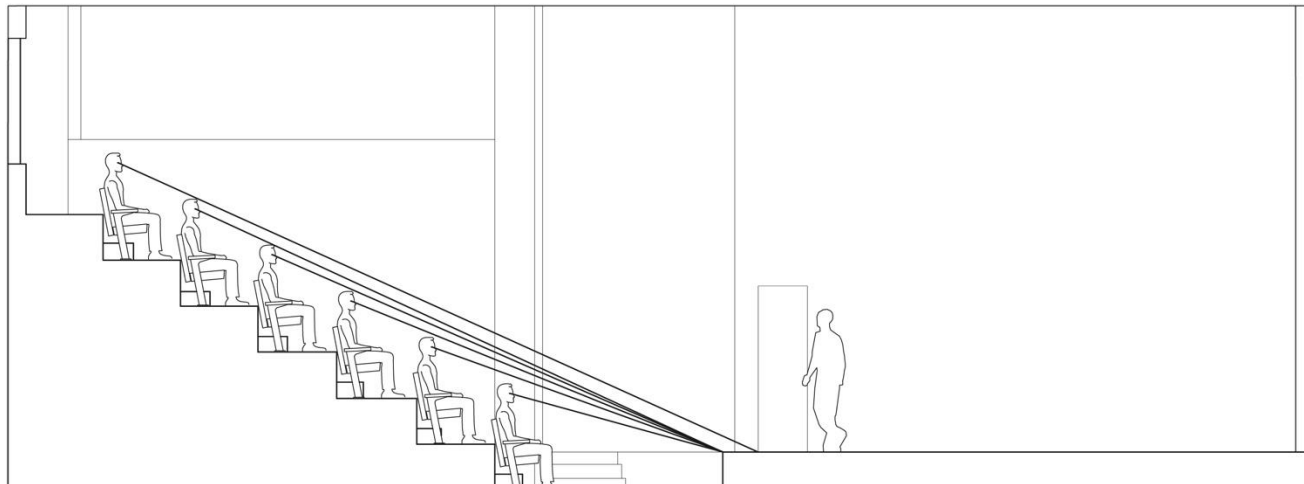
- Three curved pipes hang over the audience with a 4x4' grid over the stage, 6 inches off the wall.
- The grid is accessible from below only.
- Proposed constituents do not require intense lighting capability. For comedy performances, soft backlighting is preferred. For example, Backburner Sketch Comedy only requires simple blackouts to transition between sketches.



Seating Sections



Section from middle of house



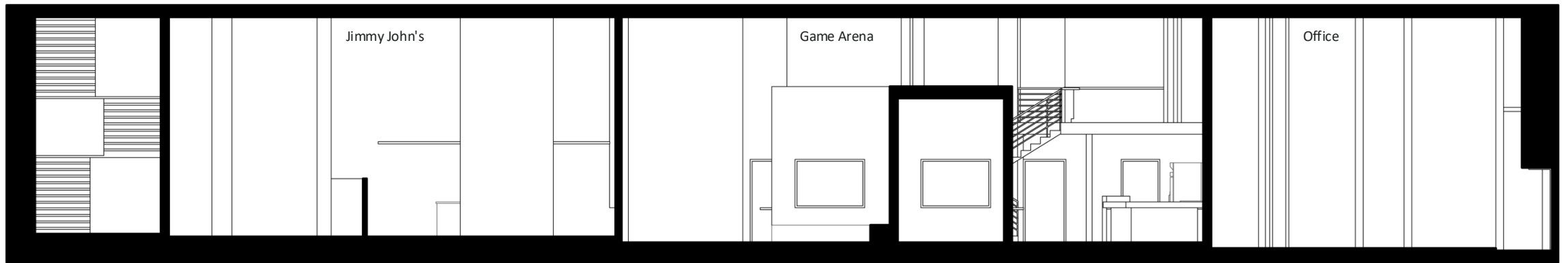
Section from edge of house

- Due to the structural necessities of the pre-existing building, there is a column within the house. However, during the design phase, we found a layout that would only slightly inhibit the booth operators' sightlines, not the audience.
- Certain student organizations, like 8th Floor Improv, specifically noted their current concerns with audience sightlines. Therefore, we ensured every audience member, even in extreme seats, has a solid view of the stage.

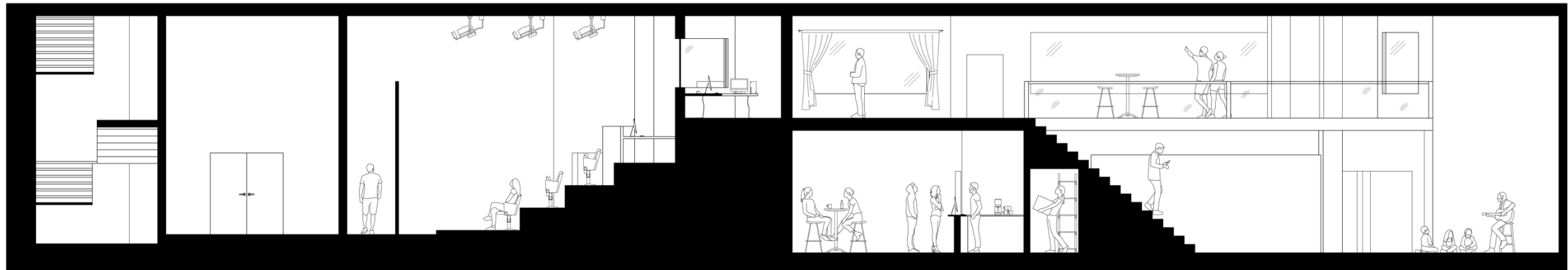


Section View

BEFORE RENOVATION



AFTER RENOVATION



Design Intent- Public Space

“The play doesn’t just happen in the black box.”

Gateway serves as a corridor connecting nearby neighborhoods and campus, featuring various "moments of extension"—outdoor patios and eating areas that foster connections and brighten the alleyway.

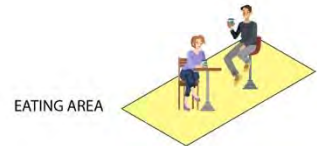
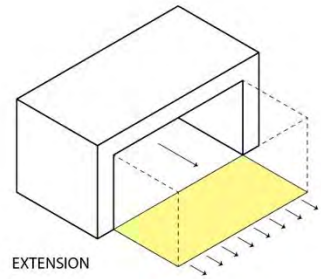
The street-front theatre builds on this idea of extension to further promote neighborhood interaction. Four large garage doors puncturing through the façade blur the boundary between inside and outside, allowing the public to catch glimpses of the theatre’s inner workings—its backstage, rehearsal spaces, and production process—offering a more transparent and engaging experience.

Inside, a conventional black box theatre accommodates multiple performances, while the garage doors act as a mediator between interior and exterior. They create a dynamic threshold—both enclosing and expanding the space—transforming the theatre into an "unconventional stage" that directly engages the street.

This project aims to explore a different way of how a theatre functions, one that is more accessible and beneficial to a broader audience.



The Store-Front



Section Four: Program Renderings



Music Performance- Lobby Stage, Outdoor Conditions



Stand-Up Performance- Lobby Stage, Indoor Conditions



Music Rehearsal- Main Stage



Stage View



Thank You!

