

ADAPTING AN ICON:
ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MOVIE THEATERS



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Figure 02 | Nor Shor Marquee Today

ADAPTING AN ICON

A Design Thesis Submitted to the
Department of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
of North Dakota State University

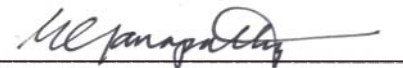
by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Architecture



Primary Thesis Advisor



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Figure 05 | Traill Theater, Hillsboro, ND abandoned and decaying

THESIS ABSTRACT

Downtown theaters serve as landmarks for many communities across our region because of their unique design features. Elaborate auditoriums, decorated facades, and flashy, grand marquees are all iconic characteristics of local theaters. The value of the theater was never in the movie; rather the theater served the community as the center for social interaction, facilitated by the nostalgia that the architecture provided.

However, these cultural landmarks have become culturally forgotten and abandoned. Our downtown's risk losing their sense of place without the prominence and upkeep of the local theater. *This thesis research provides adaptive reuse solutions for the rehabilitation of local, downtown cinema theaters.* If a local theater is positively rehabilitated it has the opportunity to bring new life and healthy revitalization into the community, rather than sitting vacant and decaying. Research investigates how architecture served as a tool for the inspiration that the theater provided to the community, which in turn will provide insight into how a downtown community union can be a symbol for today's social engagement and learning.



Figure 06 | Belfield Theater, Belfield, ND advertising "No Movie"

NARRATIVE OF THE UNIFYING IDEA OF THE THESIS

“In some cases, radical changes are needed to give new life to old, dilapidated buildings that would otherwise be demolished.”

- H. Ward Jandl, National Park Service

The Unifying Idea

Downtown theaters serve as landmarks for many American towns and cities. Their grand marquees and ornate interiors provide a nostalgic experience that cannot be achieved by any other typology. For many, the theater represents a time or experience that will forever live in their memories: the first movie they ever saw with their parents, riding their bikes downtown to see a new show on a summer afternoon, or a first date with their high school crush. The experience of a theater is reinforced through the architectural features; the dramatic exterior marquee, which draws in patrons like a beckon, the high style detailing in the lobby and auditorium that is meant to facilitate a journey into a new world only movies can provide. These experiences are why downtown theaters became the landmarks of our communities from their inception. The architecture reinforces the experience that the movie was created to employ.

Regretfully however, modern day advents such as the television and multiplex cinema theaters being built in new suburban developments have taken away the built environment's influence on the movie experience of the 1920's, 30s, and 40s. These new typologies have threatened the prominence of the downtown theater. Today, throughout the country and in our region, we are starting to see these nostalgic palaces become vacant and forgotten. Unfortunately, some have been demolished, replacing the venue for so many childhood and family memories, with parking lots. The tragedy in a theater becoming abandoned and often demolished, is that the community loses a cultural landmark, a sense of place and the memories that come with the sight of the picturesque marquee on Main Street.

A new wave of architectural thinking in the past 10-20 years have reinforced the idea that old typologies can serve in new and popular ways. We are starting to see old elementary schools becoming elderly housing, industrial build-

ings becoming chic, urban condos, and historic school supply warehouses become schools of architecture; but, what are theaters becoming? Because of their unique architectural features like overhanging balconies, sloped auditorium floors, and proscenium stages, theaters do not lend themselves to easily being rehabilitated or reused.

Two major factors have caused the decline in downtown theater use; Adaptive reuse of historic, downtown theaters' is rare because of the unique challenges in their architectural design as well as the easy and access of new forms of entertainment (multiplex movie theaters, Netflix, and cable packages featuring hundreds of options). These two inevitable factors have solidified the extinction of the local theater and we risk losing these local landmarks to the wrecking ball, unless we are able to use architecture and design as a means to finding new uses for these treasures. If we are able to rehabilitate the theater into something new and engaging we have the potential to socially, culturally, and economically ignite downtown and reestablish the theater as a symbol for the community.

In order to bring distinction and pride back to the local theater we need to find ways to breathe new life in these forgotten spaces. For some communities a downtown theater may not be a feasible option anymore, but we would be remiss if we were to neglect the opportunity of taking these incredible buildings and utilizing their character in another capacity. A sense of place can be achieved through a collective set of memories, and a landmark or node in the area can serve as a symbol for those memories. My argument is that the local, historic theater is the landmark so many people look to for spark those feelings. However, if the theater is becoming vacant, the positive memories associated with that place are over shadowed by its state of disrepair, and our positive memories are soon replaced with a negative view of the dilapidated



*Figure 07 | Walla Theatre, Walhalla, ND
National Register of Historic Places building sitting vacant and decaying*

scene. In order to avoid this black eye on the community, we need to find another use for these theaters that will continue to give citizens the nostalgic feelings associated with it, but also spark social, cultural, and economic impacts on the downtown.

The Site

Duluth, Minnesota is a unique and distinctive community. Settled on the side of a substantial slope overlooking Lake Superior, the city has many components to its identity, many of which are centered on the use of the beauty and nature surrounding it along with the lake. An industrial shipping hub, a tourist destination, and a college town all identify Duluth. Because of Duluth's strong connection to the lake and its shipping industry, the city expanded, forming suburbs on away from downtown, but it never left or abandoned downtown, and continued to build on its industrial, commercial, and cultural center. A contributing factor early to that cultural piece in downtown was the theater life. The Orpheum Theatre set on the slope of Second Ave was the city's finest theater, eventually being adapted into a cinema house and dubbed the Nor Shor Theatre. The Nor Shor Theater was the focal point for downtown Duluth after being established in 1941. After its grand opening the Duluth News Tribune featured a story that hailed the Nor Shor as "The Northwest's most spectacular theater...the Norshor has already earned the distinction of being more sensational than New York's Radio City" (Dierkins, 2010). Designed by renowned theater architects Liebenberg and Kaplan, the theater was not only a cultural focal point, but a physical focal point; originally designed with a 65' tower marquee that could be visible from 60 miles away, the Nor Shor was a symbolic lighthouse for Lake Superior, located just down the hill from Duluth (Dierkins, 2010).

The Nor Shor is also no stranger to adaptation. The theater located in "Old Downtown" has been abandoned and compromised over the course of the last two decades; at some points acting as a conglomeration of bars and clubs, a secret resting place for the homeless, and a strip club. Because of its visibility and location in Duluth it served as the community landmark for many years, but more recently has acted as a scar. For the past decade, the East Superior neighborhood has been the scene for anything but a healthy community. The

downtown area was populated with transient, homeless and troubled people; the strip club in the Nor Shor converted a once cultural landmark into a place defined by drug dealing and prostitution (Ross, 2014). Just down the street was the store, "Last Place on Earth," that sold illegal synthetic drugs and paraphernalia (Olsen, 2014). Without question the neighborhood was bringing the vibrance and heart of the community into a condition of disgrace. Collectively, Duluth itself started to become defined by these activities happening on East Superior and by the people who were patrons of the businesses.

As of late the area has seen healthy new life and purpose. The Nor Shor strip club was closed and the theater was purchased by the city of Duluth with future plans to restore it with the collaboration of George Sherman, a Minneapolis developer. (Ross, 2014). The Last Place on Earth was also closed when owner Jim Carlson was sentenced to 17 years in prison for felony charges in selling synthetic drugs through the shop (Olsen, 2014). The closing of these businesses lay the foundation for serious rehabilitation in the area in an effort to give identity back to the historical and cultural neighborhood.

The Typology

The recent story of the Nor Shor is proof that the theater truly serves as the identity of the surrounding community. When it lays abandoned or misused it reflects negatively on the neighborhood, but if we breath healthy, new substitute use in the theater it will have significant influence on the downtown. A focal activity and sustained use will ensure that its new home within the theater will be permanent, which will have a ripple effect on the symbolic identity the theater presents. In my mind, a collective collaboration of multiple typologies into one that would serve as a Downtown Community Union, brings the same values that the theater brought, but is altered to fits today's changing idea of social interaction. The Downtown Community Union would facility dedicated to providing many types of entertainment and engagement for the community as a tool for socialization. The downtown community union would be a place where a coffee shop and gathering space to visit with friends meets DIY workshop space for citizens. Unique opportunities that no other businesses provide would be the goal of the downtown community union, all while trying to serve as a social institution for Downtown Duluth.

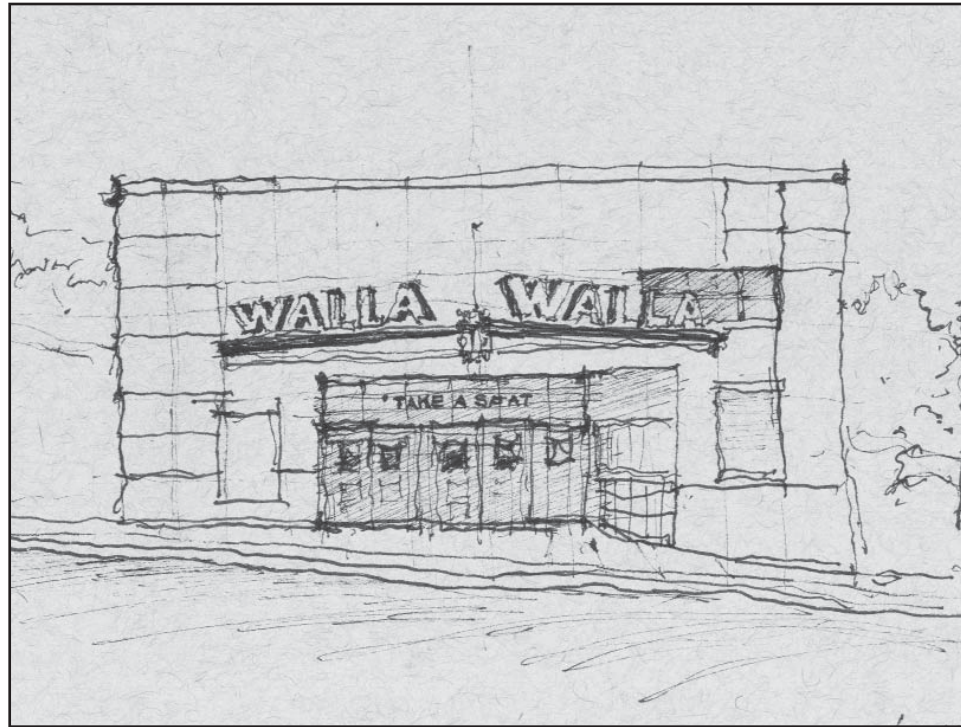


Figure 08 | Sketch of Walla Theater

THE PROJECT TYPOLOGY

Research

The vibrance of a downtown climate was and will always be reliant on the health and success of the businesses and activities that take place within environment. The death of the downtown theater was due in large part to the advent of the television and multiplex movie theaters in developing areas outside of the downtown core. With this in mind, it becomes important for any adaptive reuse project of a theater especially to take precaution when deciding what typology should be inserted into the downtown context. It should promote the use of downtown, and should have a long term commitment to serving downtown. In addition, every effort should be made to design a use that is sustainable and cost effective. An adaptive reuse project that uses sustainable design takes a building already 100+ years old and gives new life to that structure - potentially extending its life another 100 years. A cost effective design encourages others to also make a commitment to adaptive reuse, especially in downtown theaters.

With this in mind I established a set of priorities in deciding upon a typology for my project:

1. Any use will have to be a permanent home for that business
2. The use should encourage multiuse
3. A typology that is cost effective should have higher priority

These priorities were made deliberately knowing that their intent would give the best possible future outcome for a sustainable reuse project. A business that stays in a downtown building for an extended period of time contributes long term to the success of downtown and acts as a landmark. Multiuse activities help to bring users downtown day and night, as well as during the week and on weekends. Finally, cost effective designs do not imply cheap or poorly crafted buildings, but rather integrate design into producing a quality product that encourages other entities to invest in downtown buildings rather than demolishing or building new on the outskirts of a town.

Initial typological research was conducted in order to identify uses that align with the identified priorities previously shown. Adaptive reuse projects, in most cases, yield a far fewer environmental impacts than new construction projects; automatically making sustainability a priority in the project (Preservation Green Lab - National Trust for Historic Preservation, Cascadia Green Building Council, Green Building Services, Skanska, and Quantis, 2011). Research

conducted by the Preservation Green Lab et al. on environmental impacts such as resource depletion, climate change, human health, and ecosystem quality shows that it takes 10-42 years before a newly constructed building, 30% more efficient than a typical new construction, to “overcome negative climate change impacts related to the construction process.” (see Figure 15.1) With this information, priority was set on a mixed use project or a commercial office project for their innate sustainable qualities.

When conducting the feasibility of adaptive reuse, owners and developers must also consider funding sources, in many cases, relying on banks to put up necessary capital to fund large projects (Maddex, 1981). Because of the unknowns in adap-

TPOLOGY	Years for new construction to overcome climate impacts avoided through adaptive reuse
Urban Mixed Use	42 Years
Single Family Residential	38 Years
Commerical Office	25 Years
Multifamily Residential	16 Years
Warehouse to Office Conversion	12 Years
Elementary School	10 Years
Warehouse to Residential Conversion	Never

Figure 09 | Environmental Impacts

 Potential Thesis Typologies

tive reuse during construction many banks are skeptical of financing rehabilitation projects (Maddex, 1981). This becomes especially true when non-profits attempt adaptive reuse projects because typically they do not have the amount of cash income as would a business (Maddex, 1981). For this reason, a certain priority was placed on a typology that would provide a commodity or service, and collect a steady and stable income typical of a healthy business.

When considering an adaptive reuse of a historic theater a certain amount of thought was also placed in how existing construction features could house certain typologies best. As discussed, theaters provide certain design features uncommon in other typologies and care needs to be taken prior to intervening that will ensure we



Figure 10 | Nor Shor at Holidays

can save existing theater design precedents. Adaptive reuse projects can vary in their degree of adaptation: same use adaptations are generally less expensive because of minimal interior work that needs to be done (Kincaid, 2002). In contrast when an adaptation is changing uses or completely changing classes, more issues arise (Kincaid, 2002). Construction unknowns, financing, and code compliance all become more substantial with the more changes that happen in a rehabilitation project (Kincaid, 2002). A project that completely guts the interior of a building, moves structural members and raises or lowers floor levels will be more time consuming and risky compared to a project that changes wall colors. With this in mind, preliminary thought was given to what spaces could make sense with the given structural patterns and floor levels, which will help to decrease overall cost and risk. Specifically in a retail, commercial or office typology, areas that are most often updated or changed in an adaptive reuse project include escape patterns and HVAC (Kincaid, 2002). Using this preliminary research as a basis for deciding on a final typology potential considerations included a downtown university building, the Duluth News Tribune headquarters, and a local Minnesota business headquarters.

Project Typology

The Downtown Community Union, just as the theater did in the early 20th century provides opportunities for social engagement that meets the needs and wants of people today. Today's downtown theater wants to be a hub for today's social, curious and productive citizen. It wants to bring masses of people together to read, eat, drink, learn and exchange ideas. It should be a place for neighbors to spontaneously meet over coffee, as well as a place for emerging business partners to lay out strategic goals together. Today's theater wants to bring old friends together to break bread and catch up on forgotten years, as well as teach others how to make their own bread. The downtown theater today should be a community center focused on providing spaces and activities for enjoying a friends company or working on your own company. Through purposefully designed social environments such as retail stores, reading and working space, coffee shops, and restaurants people, friends and neighbors will have an environment to interact, engage and employ. The value in the community union is as a central place downtown for all of these unique activities to take place together. It can be somewhere people meet spontaneously for a drink or somewhere they come every Tuesday night for a screen printing class. Multiple uses, at all times of the day, encouraging all sorts of citizens to come together in order to engage and interact socially.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY UNION

Spaces and activities for a social Duluth

ASSEMBLY AUDITORIUM	TED Talks local musical acts / dueling pianos Community / State / Regional Speakers
COFFEE SHOP / BOOKSTORE	Local / State / Regional Book Collection Magazines & Popular Books
CONVENTION CENTER	Home shows / Product showcases Business Conferences Wedding / Receptions / Banquets
MUSEUM / CULTURAL ARTS	Local Art Display Art Workshops / Classes Studio spaces Gift Shop/Sales Room of Art
PERFORMANCE HALL	Concerts, Orchestra, Plays, Musicals, High School / College Plays/Music
RESTAURANT / BAR	Lunch/Suppers w/ Rotating Chefs; 2-4 Weeks Lunch and Learns w/ community speaker) Cooking Classes Luncheon Concerts (acoustical/local) Local craft brewery tastings
RETAIL	Pop Up Program / Start-up retail space (12-18 month leases) Minnesota / Wisconsin Exclusive Products
SMALL BUSINESS STARTUP SPACE	Rentable Office Space DIY Workshops Learning workshops
UNION GATHERING SPACE	Spontaneous Study Space Reading Area Community Group Meetings

THE TYPOLOGICAL RESEARCH



*Figure 11 | Proposed exterior treatment of Suburban World Theater
www.ouruptown.com | photo credit*



Figure 13 | Rialto Theater Interior

photo credit: www.bringingbackbroadway.com



Figure 14 | Urban Outfitters adaptive reuse

photo credit: la.racked.com

URBAN OUTFITTERS AT THE RIALTO THEATER

TYPOLOGY: Retail Store (2013–Current), Cinema Theater (built 1917)

LOCATION: 810 S Broadway, Los Angeles, Cal.

SIZE: 9,830 SF (Theater sat 900)

(Alcala, 2013) (Urban Outfitters to open, 2013)

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

This adaptive reuse projects takes a 1917 theater that stood vacant until 2013 and rehabilitated it into retail space (Urban Outfitters to open, 2013). The marquee was restored to its original condition, which adds dramatically to the character of the store and to the streetscape. The Urban Outfitters adaptation was one of a few other retailers to open in the neighborhood, which has contributed to a major revitalization; the population of the area has grown to 5 times its size in the past ten years (Urban Outfitters to open, 2013).

The interior of the Rialto was almost entirely gutted, leaving little to no original characteristics of the theater. The original roof structure was utilized, with additional structure added for the second floor extension and to bring the floor of the space flush from the original slanting theater floor. New HVAC was added to all spaces.

PROJECT HISTORICAL RESPONSE

The adaptation of the Rialto started with a complete restoration of the overhanging marquee. New life was immediately added to the exterior of the Rialto and engages attention by pedestrians. However, once a patron enters it seems more likely that the space was a barn instead of a beautiful, ornate theater. All character defining features have been removed from the original theater; due in part to a 1994 earthquake that caused extensive interior damage (Alcala, 2013). The existing roof trusses and vertical structure is all exposed, giving a rustic character. The space is purposely meant to be perceived as cluttered, giving a warehouse characteristic that aligns with the products offered by Urban Outfitters. Understandably, as a retailer, historical architectural features probably do not take as much priority in a renovation as much as financial concerns would; the rehabilitation of features would have increased cost undoubtedly. This begs the question of why a theater would be chosen for retail space if characteristics of the original space were all lost - little to no identity would be retained, minimizing the nostalgia that is desired when inhabiting a typology as unique as a theater.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

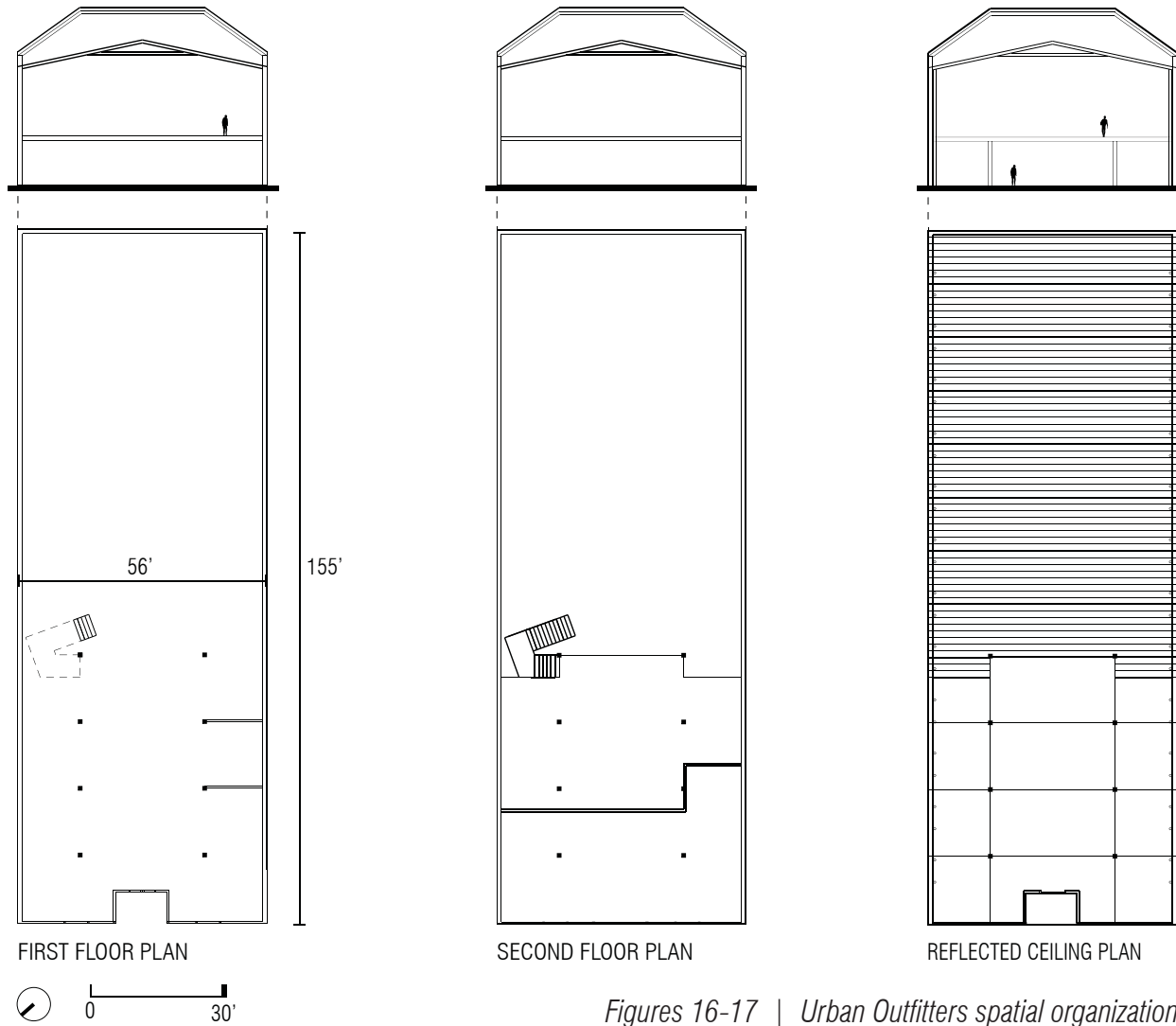
Public: Floor Space, dressing rooms

Private: Employee Restrooms, employee space, mechanical

CASE STUDY TAKEAWAYS:

The revitalization of the Rialto Theater into a usable and dynamic typology has contributed to the growth and image of its neighborhood in south Los Angeles - evident in its population increase. The restoration of the marquee is visual evidence of a positive impact on an urban landscape - taking a worn feature that diminished the character of the street view and making a prominent, attractive feature to users.

Unfortunately, rehabilitation of the interior was not true to the architectural character of an early 20th century movie house. Lessons can be taken from the neglect to restore historic character of the interior and used as proof that original theater features make an impact on the perception of the space. Rather than celebrating the distinguishing characteristics of a theater, the project makes no connection, losing its nostalgic appeal.



Figures 16-17 | *Urban Outfitters spatial organization*

ANALYSIS

For accessible use and flow, the theater's slanted floor in the auditorium was filled. A new second floor was added at the front of the first 1/3 of the store for additional space and auxiliary spaces such as mechanical, employee spaces, and restrooms.

This provided the entire first floor for retail and display space, as well as some added character articulated in the space with the valued ceiling in the second 2/3 of the store.

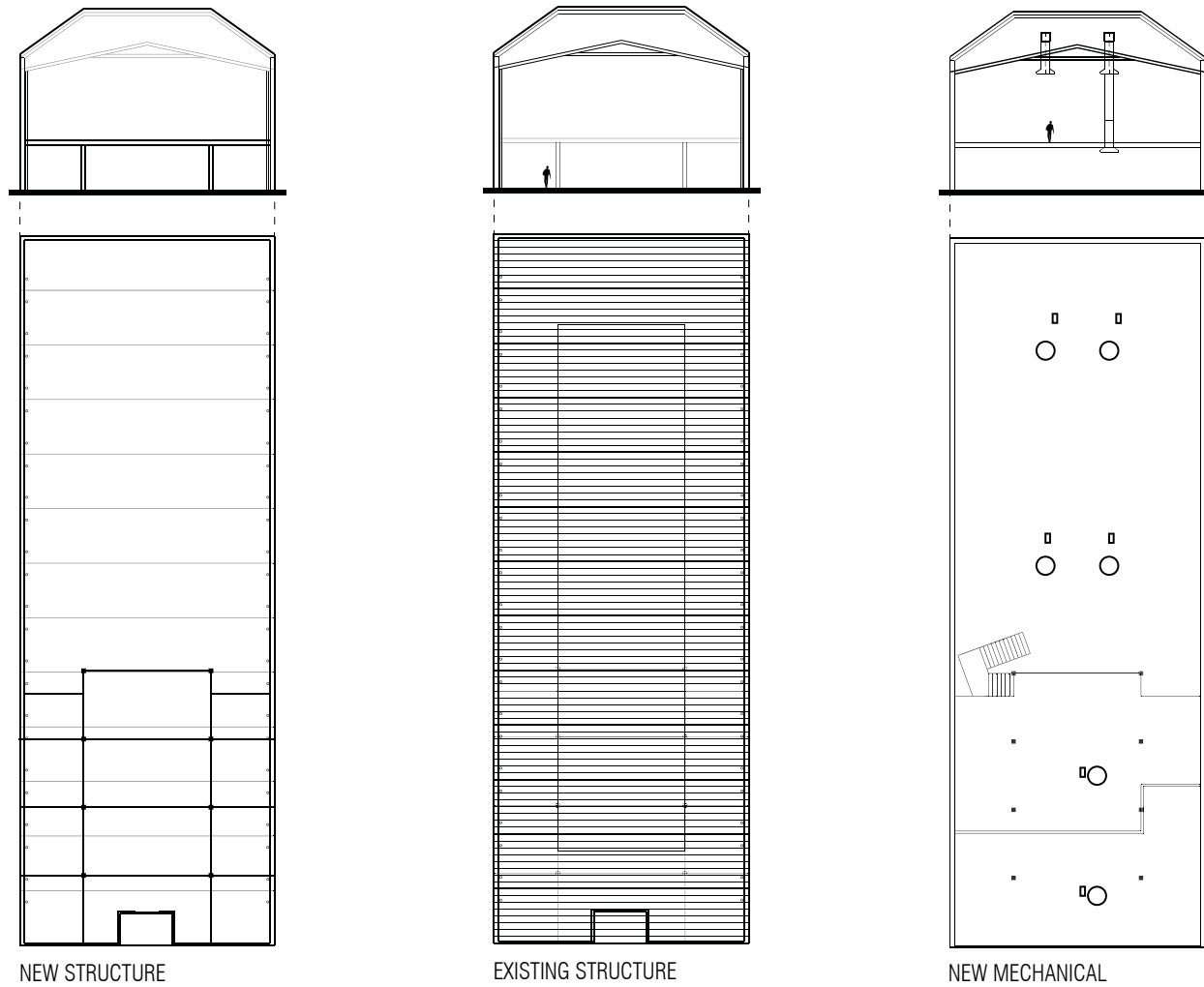


Figure 18-20 | Urban Outfitters structure & mechanical

Figures 18 and 19 shows the integration of existing and new structural elements. Original structural elements have been exposed and remain integral. All new structural work supports new spaces and does not assist original structure.

New mechanical work was added to the expansive retail floor, as well as in the smaller scaled entry and second floor. Duct work was placed in a fashion that resembles large distribution ducts that were used in early theater design.



Figure 21 | Clif Bar & Company Interior

ZGF Architects | photo credit

CLIF BAR & CO. HEADQUARTERS

TPOLOGY: Office Headquarters

LOCATION: Emeryville, Cal.

SIZE: 75,000 SF

(ZGF Architects)

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

The Clif Bar & Co. Headquarters is a LEED Platinum office facility that once operated as a WWII manufacturing facility (ZGF Architects). The company moved into their new facility in 2001 after doubling its size in the first ten years of operation (McKnight, 2012). Clif Bar & Company invests in its employees, encouraging them to utilize on the clock time to exercise (McKnight, 2012); further analysis shows that 1/3 of all space within the company headquarters is devoted to employee “perks” spaces including a childcare facility, theater, organic cafeteria, indoor rock wall, and gym (see *Figure 31*).

This industrial facility was a good candidate for a sustainable office rehabilitation. The complex provides many opportunities for natural light with three crane bays of clerestory windows that are situated 27’ above the floor plane and flood the interior with day lighting (ZGF Architects). Four atria were added to the core of the building to bring in natural light to spaces, but also to provide users the opportunity to step “outside” for fresh air or a venue of an “outdoor” meeting. Sensors were incorporated in the design that turn off interior lighting when adequate day lighting is provided (ZGF Architects). Additionally, the Clif Bar HQ was the first building on the continent to implement “smart” solar panels over 500Wh; providing almost all of the office’s needed electricity, additionally 70% of the facilities hot water is supplied by thermal roof panels (ZGF Architects).

PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE:

So often in today’s society a company makes a marketing and financial statement by building an iconic high rise in the heart of downtown using the image of their new building to attract business and prestige. In the case of Clif Bar, they aimed to achieve the same results by retrofitting an old industrial building in the outskirts of suburban Oakland - talk about a statement. For Clif Bar, the commitment to sustainable design, employee comfort and employee enjoyment far outweighed the benefits of advertising on a corporate tower. Clif Bar’s company website claims its goals are centered around sustaining their business, brand, people, community, and planet. This case study shows how

architecture is able to align with the values of an organization. Exceptional sustainable design proves their commitment to “sustaining their business, community, and planet” through operating in a facility that achieves as little impact on the environment as possible. Additionally, Clif Bar’s claim to “sustaining their brand and people” is evident in their commitment to employee health and enjoyment; dedicating 1/3 of the office square footage to employee enjoyment spaces.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

Open employee cubicle floor	Outdoor play area
Four (4) outdoor/indoor atria	Outdoor seating area
Conference rooms	Gym with rock wall
350 seat theater	Locker rooms
Cafeteria	Bike storage
Childcare center	

CASE STUDY TAKEAWAYS:

The Clif Bar & Company Headquarters decided on unique priorities when planning their new headquarters in Emeryville, California. One of those priorities was to make a statement in sustainable design - so much of a statement that the project earned a LEED Platinum distinction. Their claim to sustainability was not simply a response of installing LED lights, rather, it started from the beginning in choosing a site that would lend itself to sustainable rehabilitation.

The other priority they made in the design phase was to build a facility that was more than a work place to their employees, it would be a place where they wanted to come to work. Dedicating 1/3 of all spaces to employee enjoyment and benefits, the Clif Bar HQ is a community center inside of an office complex. Clif Bar has built a headquarters that proves it values its employees, their goals, and their families. It is a place that I would feel motivated and energized to work.

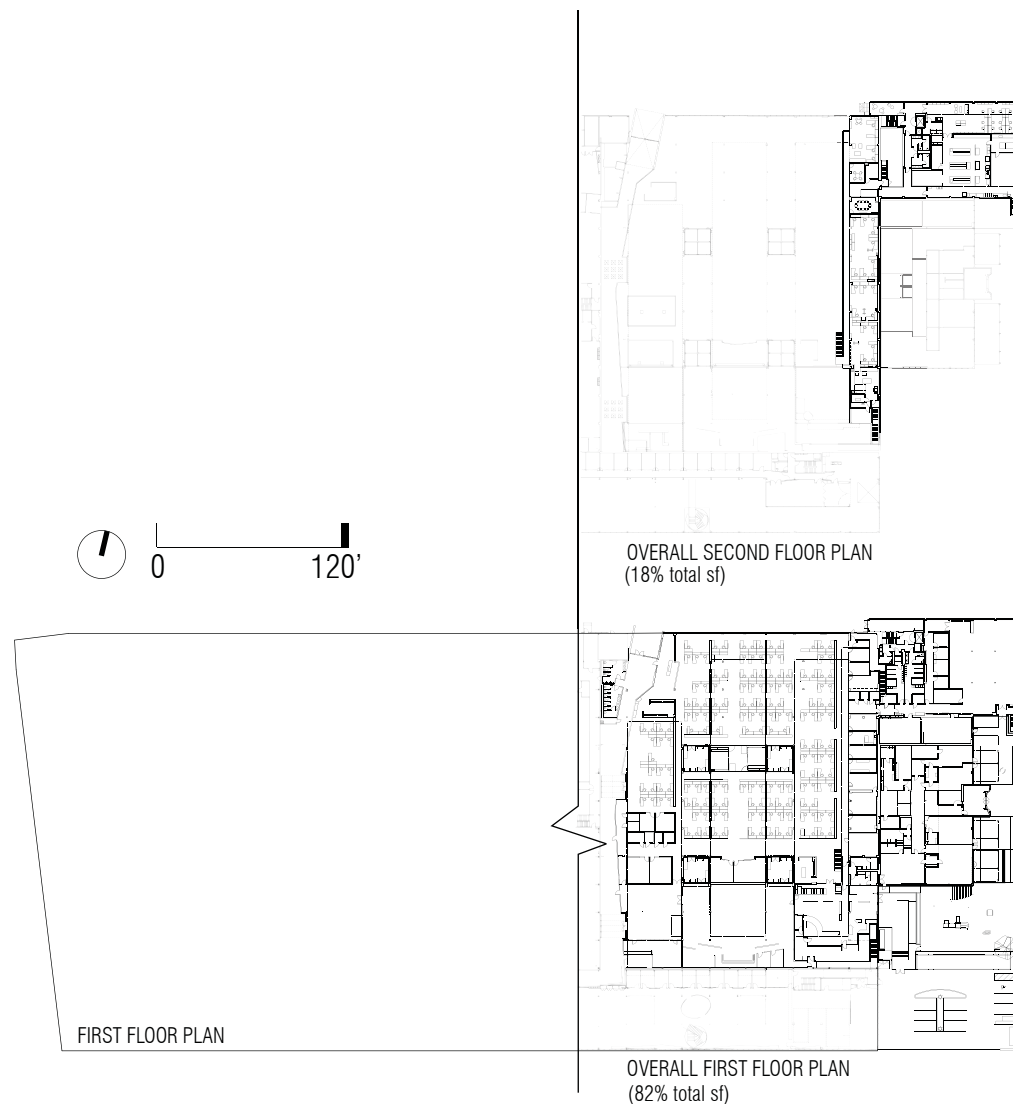


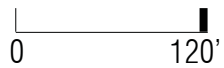
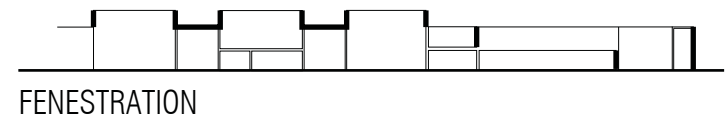
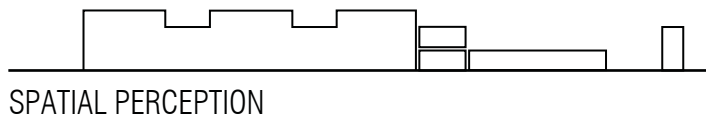
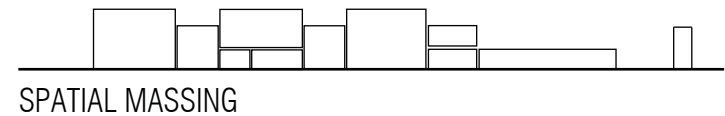
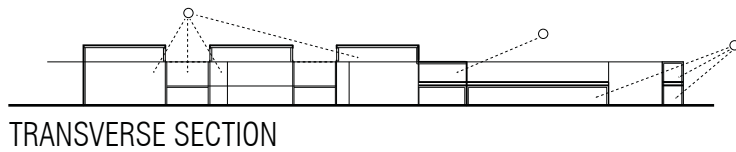
Figure 22 | Clif Bar floor plans

CLIF BAR & COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

The Clif Bar & Company Headquarters was investigated as a case study because it aligned with four criteria I established as important measures for an office case study project:

1. Adaptive Reuse
2. Sustainable Design
3. 35,000-75,000 Square Feet
4. Employee Focused Spaces

The following analysis will investigate various spatial arrangements dealing with space use. Diagrams were created as a tool for visual analysis.

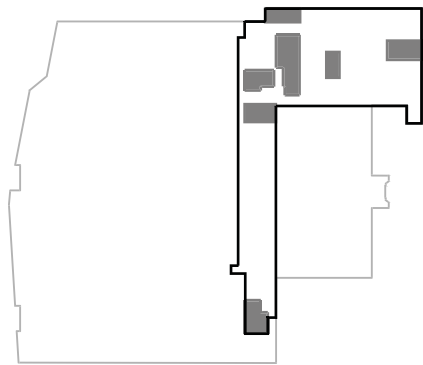


Figures 23-26 | Clif Bar sectional analysis

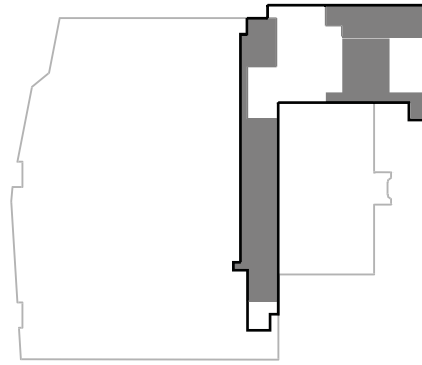
ANALYSIS

Sectional diagrams in conjunction with floor plans on following pages provide insight into interior conditions. Consistent in all of the images above is the prominence of the three crane bays that now bring in natural daylight.

Analysis of the “Spatial Massing” diagram shows how ZGF Architects used spaces within spaces to bring the scale of the crane bays down for meeting and collaborative settings.



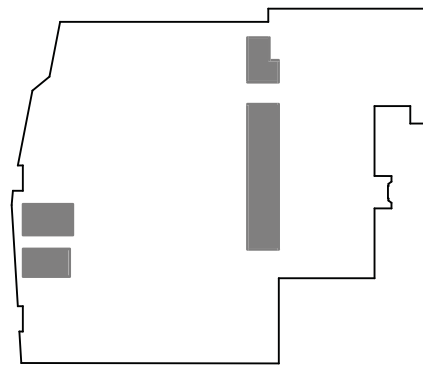
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

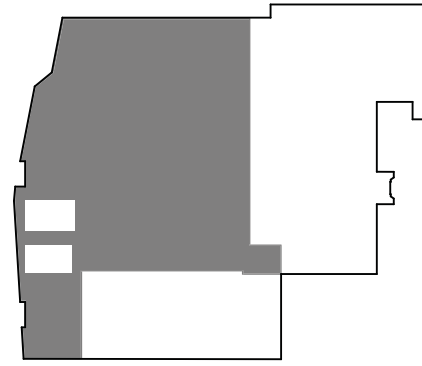


SECOND FLOOR PLAN



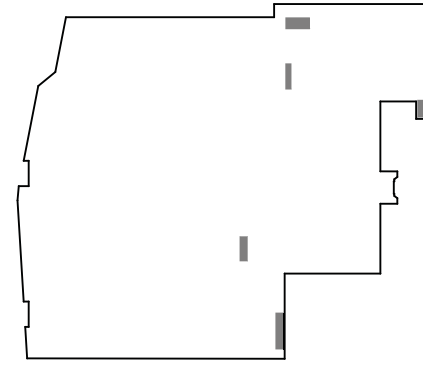
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PRIVATE OFFICE SPACES
(15% total sf)



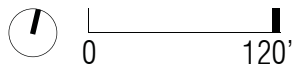
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PUBLIC OFFICE SPACES
(85% total sf)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

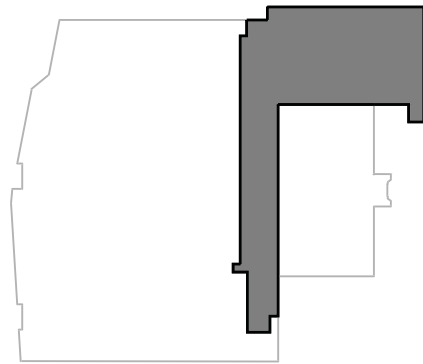
VERTICAL CIRCULATION



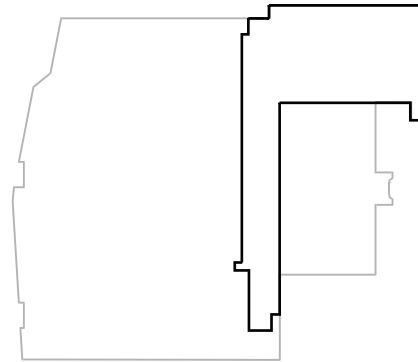
Figures 27-29 | Clif Bar space / circulation

ANALYSIS

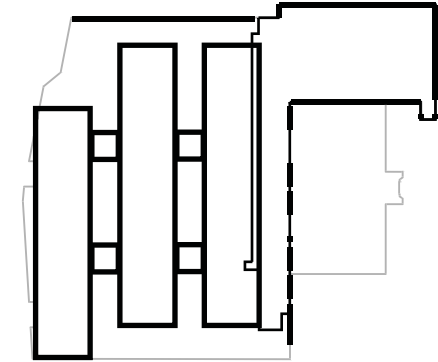
Floor plan analysis in the following diagrams investigates relationships and proportions of office to open spaces. As shown, 85% of business related areas are open layout spaces; this allows for natural light to influence as many possible spaces as possible, as well as encourages collaboration among employees.



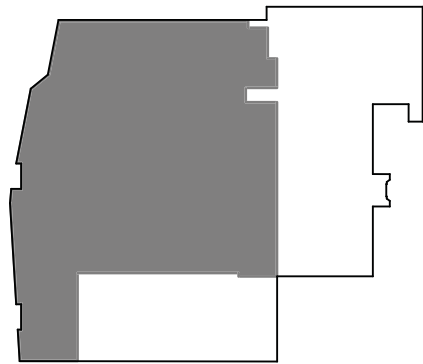
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

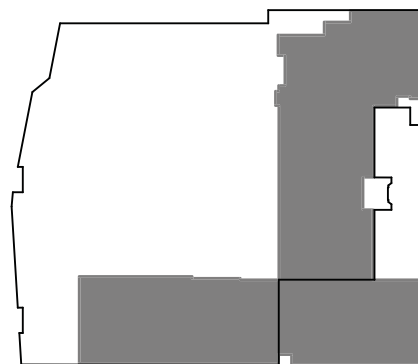
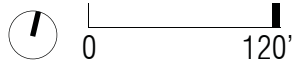


SECOND FLOOR PLAN



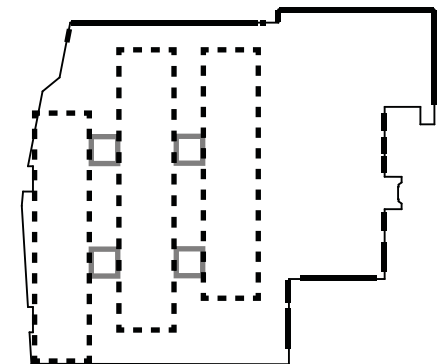
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

■ BUSINESS SPACES
(68% total sf)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

■ EMPLOYEE BENEFITS / PERKS SPACES
(32% total sf)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

— FENESTRATION / NATURAL LIGHT
 ···· CLERESTORY / NATURAL LIGHT
 — ATRIUM / NATURAL LIGHT

*90% SPACES NATURALLY LIT

Figures 30-32 | Clif Bar spatial use

Perhaps the most interesting information uncovered in this case study is the amount of space allocated employee benefits and “perks.” Over 1/3 of facility space is dedicated to spaces for the enjoyment and convenience of employees.

- Workout Gym & Rock wall
- In-house Day care
- Locker rooms
- 350 Seat Theater
- Bike Storage
- Organic Cafeteria

Figure 32 shows the importance and influence natural light has on all spaces with the building; 90% of all spaces are naturally lit through fenestration. (ZGF Architects).



Figure 33 Granada / Suburban World Auditorium

Hennepin Co. Library | photo credit

SUBURBAN WORLD THEATER, PROPOSED RETAIL CONVERSION

TYPOLOGY: Proposed - Retail Space, Previous - Cinema Theater (1927-1999), Cinema Grill (1999-Current)

LOCATION: Minneapolis, Minn.

SIZE: 6,000 SF

(Imboden, 2013), (Proposal for Suburban World Theater to city of Minneapolis department of community planning and economic development)

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

The Granada Theater (1927-1954) and eventual Suburban World Theater (1954-1999) is a locally recognized historic theater located in Uptown Minneapolis (Proposal for Suburban). The significance of the Suburban World is in the auditorium; it is the only theater left in the state with an “atmospheric” ceiling (Proposal for Suburban). An atmospheric ceiling creates the illusion that there is no roof on the theater (*Figure 33*) (Proposal for Suburban).

Developers are now proposing converting the Suburban World into a retail store (Imboden, 2013). However, unlike the previous retail conversion case study, Urban Outfitters adaptive reuse of the Rialto in Los Angeles, the developer and architects are insisting on maintaining as much of the historical features that remain. Ornate detailing shown to the right (*Figure 33*) will be preserved and on display in the retail space. The use of a wood framed platform with glass railing detail will be built to remedy the existing slanted auditorium floor (see *Figure 35*) (Imboden, 2013).

PROJECT SOCIAL/ECONOMIC RESPONSE:

This neighborhood in Uptown Minneapolis is predominately used for retail stores. Little entertainment venues or restaurants exist, with a few exceptions of food options in the mixed use mall across from the Suburban World. By converting this historic theater into retail opportunities, the developers are contributing to the identity of the neighborhood, in turn building its reputation. Areas such as this attract weekend and evening shoppers. The previous dinner cinema use could have been profitable, however with a majority of people coming to the neighborhood to shop, it stands to reason that the typical users of the cinema were not spontaneous users because of the time frame that a retail area encompasses. Currently, popular retail chains such as H&M, Columbia, Urban Outfitters, Apple, and The North Face surround the Suburban

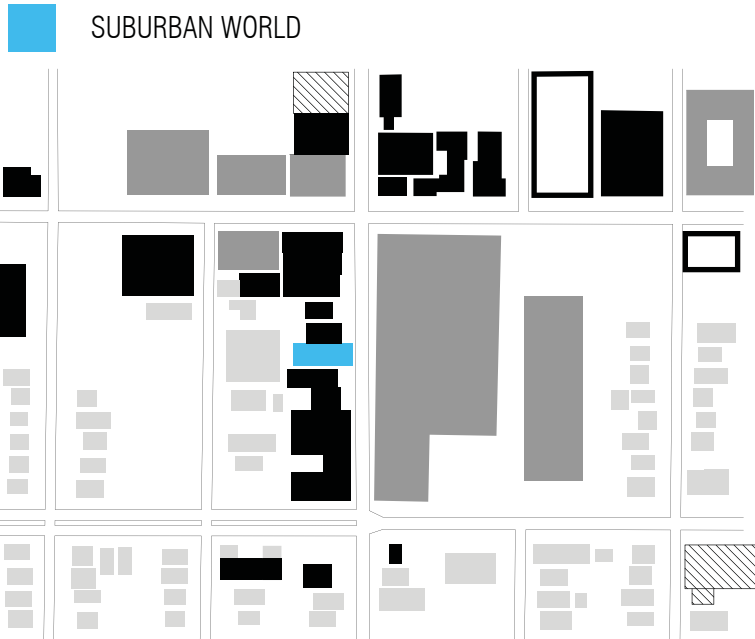
World site. The Suburban World sits on valuable land in the heart of this existing commerce that would be best used in a retail capacity to play off of the neighborhood identity. The development of this structure for retail will contribute to the economic and social identity that the neighborhood has built.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS: (Imboden, 2013), (Proposal for Suburban)

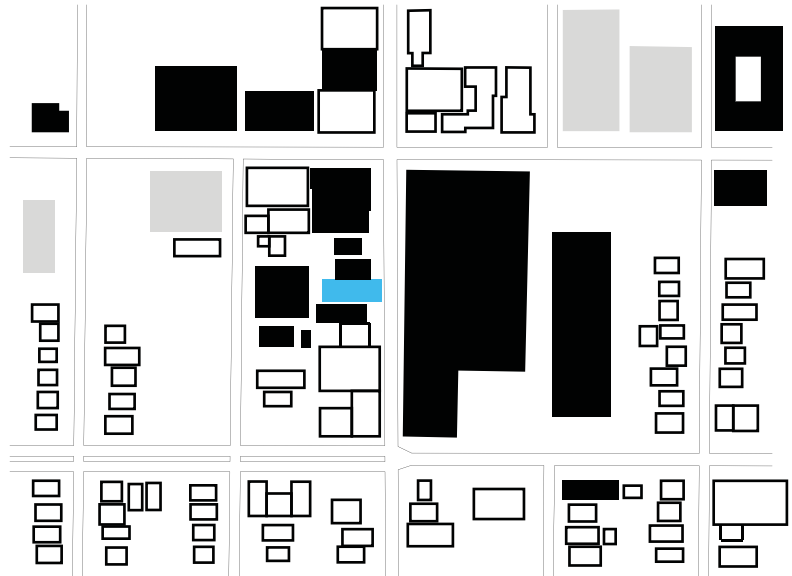
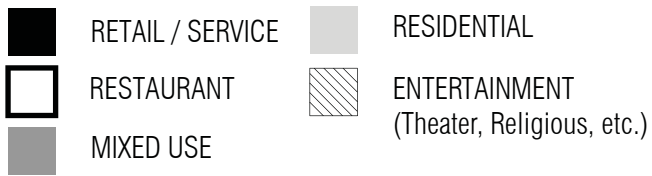
1. Auditorium will be adapted by a platform to serve as a level retail floor.
2. Projection room will be office space and employee rest room.
3. Stepped auditorium seating will be partially demolished to make two larger display and retail platform spaces.
4. Projection room will house an office and employee restroom
5. Historical “sunken living room” just off the front lobby will become project display space.
6. Basement spaces will be employee support spaces

CASE STUDY TAKEAWAYS:

The adaptive reuse of the historical Granada / Suburban World Theater in Minneapolis proposes solutions much different than the previous Rialto Theater case study. The developer of the project is making preservation a priority in the solution while also converting the use of an old theater into something new that will contribute socially and economically to the neighborhood. Unlike the Urban Outfitter store, the Suburban World retail conversion will pay homage to the fact that it was previously a theater, bringing an added dimension to the experience of the patrons. When new interventions are proposed they aim to minimally impact the historical significance of the theater while allowing it to function in a different capacity. Attention to detailing by the architects were also considered when developing solutions for lighting and MEP.



NEIGHBORHOOD USE



NEIGHBORHOOD AGE

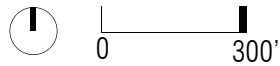
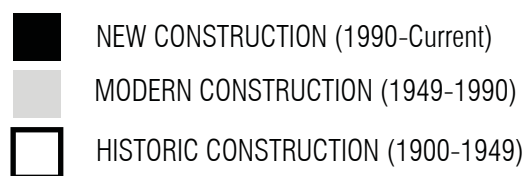
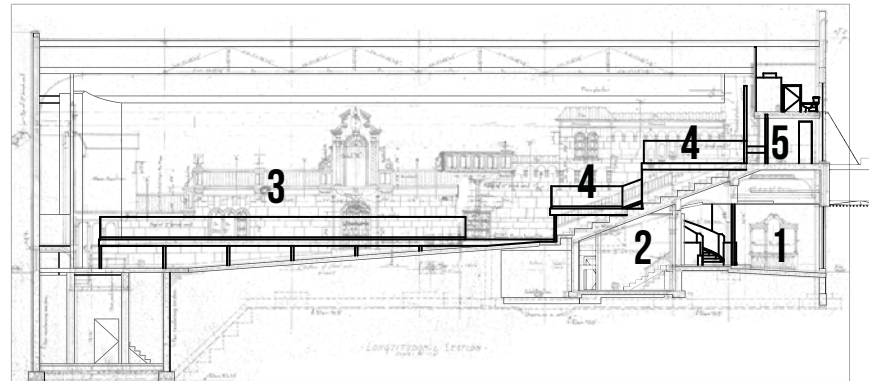


Figure 33-34 | Suburban World neighborhood use analysis

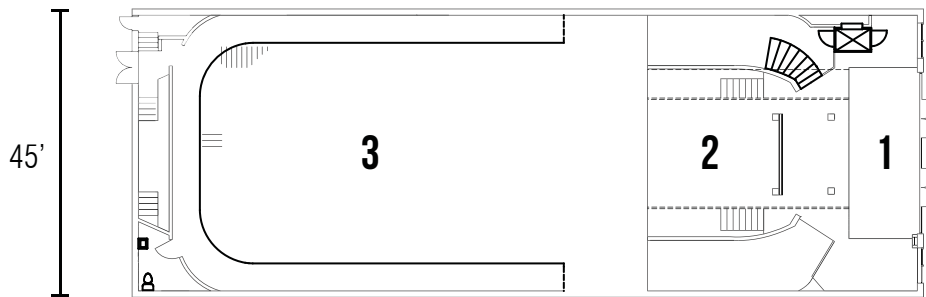
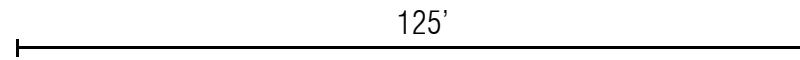
NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

A site analysis was conducted to show neighborhood use and age relationships. As shown, the Suburban World is surrounded by retail spaces, along with heavy mixed use housing additional retail. The neighborhood also has little restaurant options, which was the previous use of the Suburban World, as a dinner cinema theater. This would suggest that the neighborhood supports commerce and shopping, probably during the daytime, attracting little spontaneous patrons during “dinner” hours.

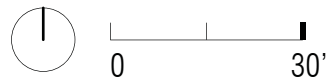
Also noteworthy, the Suburban World is surrounded by almost exclusively new construction, with a retail emphasis. Popular stores such as H&M, Apple, The North Face, and Columbia share the block with the Suburban World. The conversion of the Suburban World into a retail shop plays into the predominate neighborhood use, while adding its unique flare by adaptively reusing a local historic structure.



PROPOSED SECTION



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN



EX. PROPOSED CHANGES /
previous, existing

-
- 1 ENTRY /
entry
 - 2 DISPLAY AREA /
sunken "living room"
 - 3 RETAIL FLOOR /
slanted auditorium floor
 - 4 RAISED RETAIL /
stepped seating
 - 5 OFFICE /
projection room

Figure 35 | Suburban World spatial arrangement

ANALYSIS

The proposed section best shows the conversion of the Suburban World into a retail space. The platform that will sit over the existing slanted auditorium floor, serving two purposes: creating a level floor for retail space, but also housing MEP/HVAC equipment. A glass railing around the platform will be set back four feet from existing walls to maximize

views to the ornate wall detailing. The perimeter under the platform will have to be sound dampened in order to take away associated noise with mechanical equipment. Additionally, freestanding lighting techniques will be implemented as to not disrupt the historic "atmospheric" ceiling and ornate wall detailing.

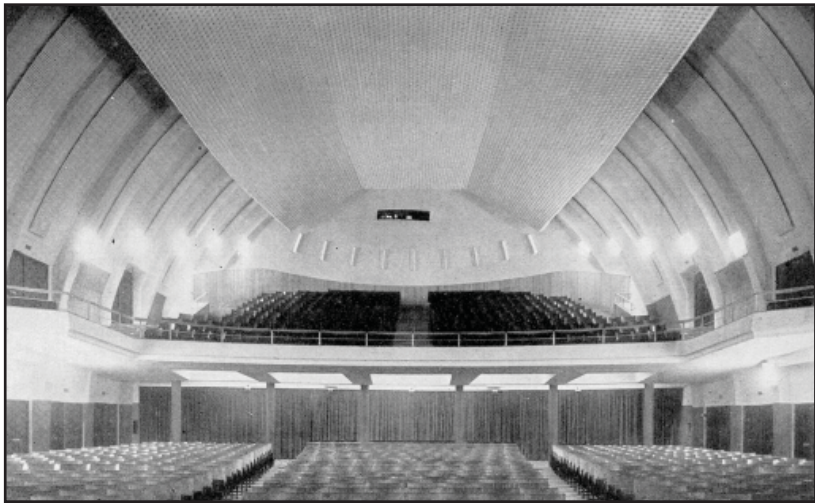


Figure 36 | Original Cinema Istria

www.archdaily.com | photo credit



Figure 37 | Convert Headquarters

www.archdaily.com | photo credit

CONVERT HEADQUARTERS / RETAIL STORE

TYPOLOGY: Clothing Producer Headquarters (Current),
Cinema Theater (Previous)
LOCATION: Milan, Italy
SIZE: 10,000 SF

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

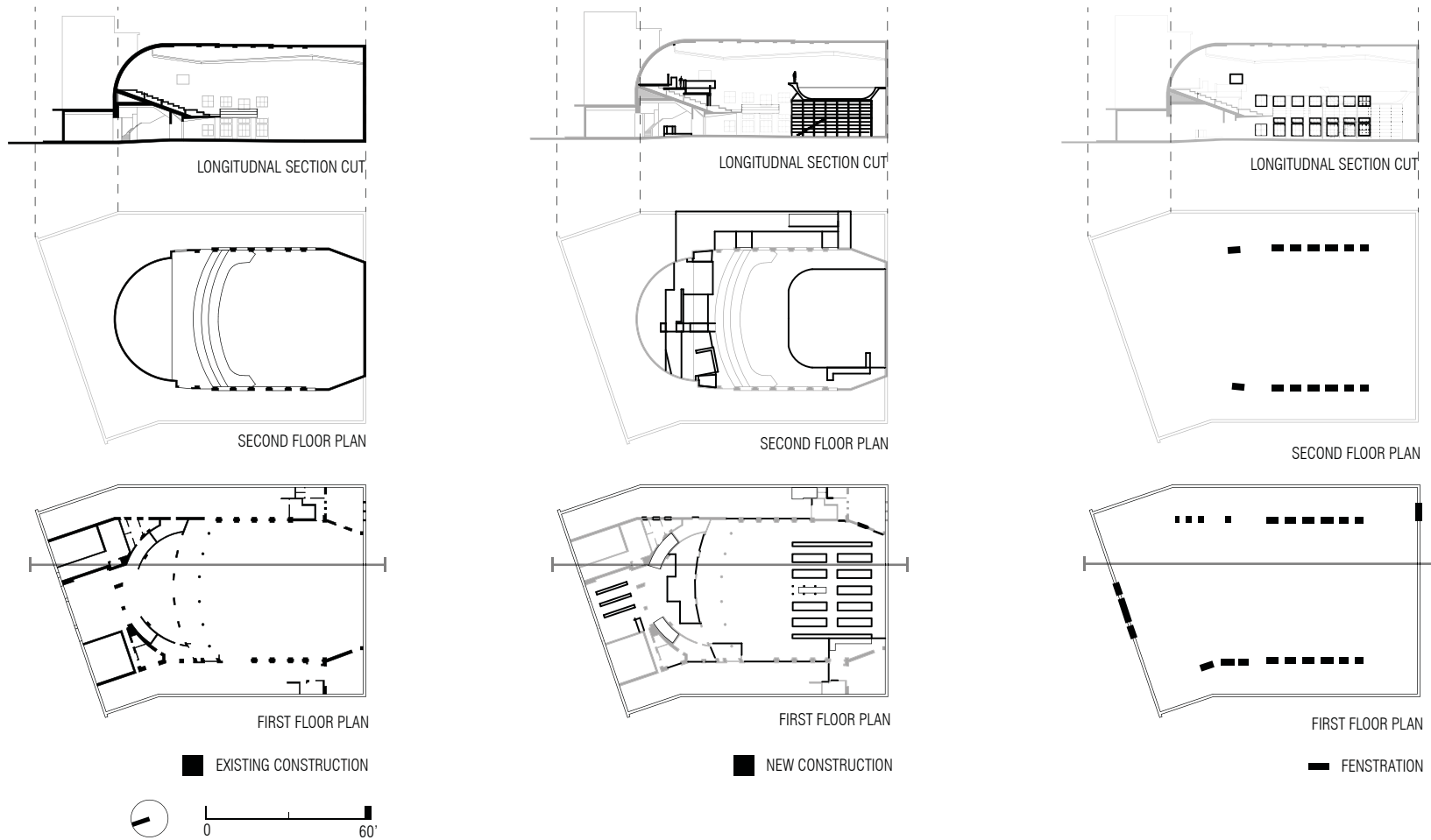
The Convert Headquarters case study investigates the adaptive reuse of a 1940's cinema house into a company headquarters and flagship retail store. The facility serves as an all-in-one location for this clothing supplier and distributor's business operations, storage, and retail needs. The design both incorporates the unique features of a typical cinema theater, while introducing interventions that are specific to the interests of the company, such as the elevated skateboarding bowl. The space below the elevated bowl was utilized as shelving for product storage and staging. A majority of the offices were placed on the balcony previously used for elevated seating in the Cinema Iстриa. This incorporates the typical corporate management hierarchy into a preexisting spatial hierarchy, a symbolic architectural gesture further articulated within the framework of existing theater design characteristics.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

Retail space at entry
Office workspace
Meeting rooms
Product staging space
Product storage
Product display
Skateboarding bowl
Restrooms

CASE STUDY TAKEAWAYS:

The all-in-one programmatic scheme of Convert's headquarters and flagship retail space is emblematic of what I hope to achieve with my adaptive reuse in the Nor Shor for Duluth Pack. Retail, product storage, product display, employee work spaces, and 'perks' spaces are all programmatic areas that will be needed in my intervention. Even though the scale of the Convert HQ will be smaller compared to what the potential extent of the Duluth Pack HQ will be, with a full production area, and increased office, storage, and retail space, the case study nevertheless offers valuable insights into proposed uses of existing architectural features and spatial relationships / boundaries in an open volume space such as an auditorium.



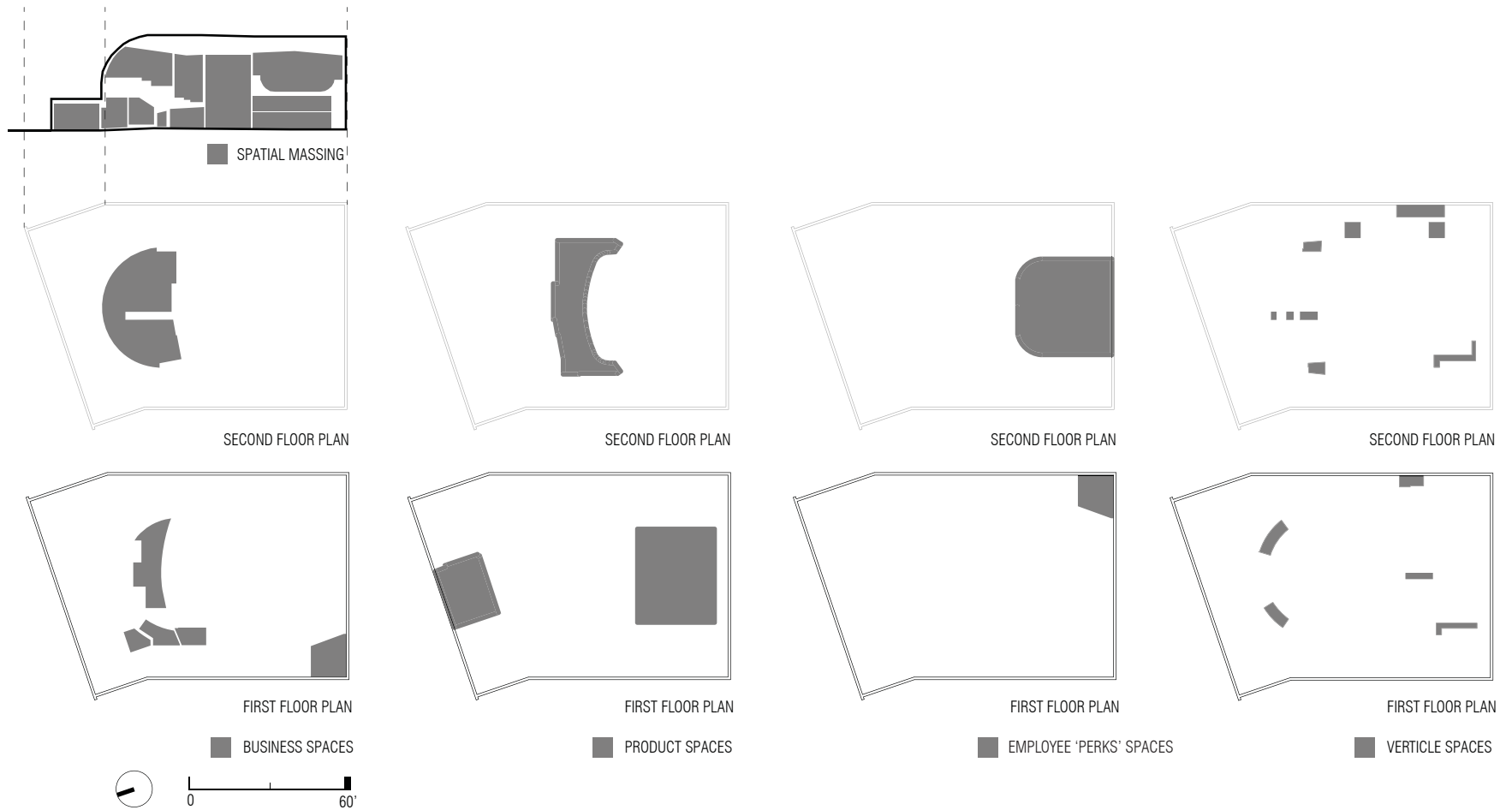
Figures 38-40 Convert old / new integration

ANALYSIS

By retrofitting existing spaces such as the lobby and balcony, as well as breaking down large volume areas for multiple uses, Convert was able to maximize its space allocation in this adaptive reuse project.

Remarkably, little was demolished in this project, showing Convert's ability to embrace the unique adaptive capabilities of a cinema theater.

The storefront space to the north was utilized as the retail store, because of its high visibility to the street. Beyond the entry, the original crescent shaped lobby acts as a distributing space to the first floor office and conference space.



Figures 41-44 | Convert spatial adaptation

The auditorium's vast volume was broken up to accommodate multiple uses: the first half of the floor remains open to act as a staging area for moving product or as an opportunity for product displays. The second half is by far the most drastic reallocation of space; the floor is utilized for product storage both for the on site retail store and online sales.

Custom shelving units act in a dual purpose by housing the products as well as acting as the structure for a large overhead skateboarding bowl, which is situated at eye level to the balcony. This relationship brings the scale and height of the office spaces, situated on the balcony, to a smaller scale.

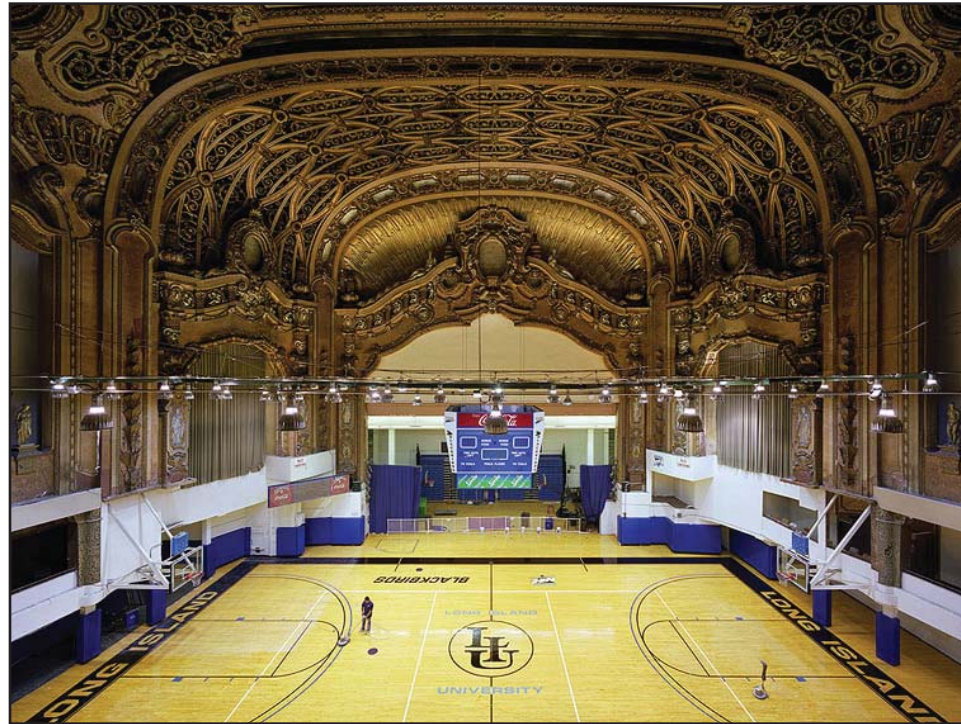


Figure 45 | Paramount Theater, New York City

Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre Photography | *photo credit*

CASE STUDY AND TYPOLOGICAL RESEARCH SUMMARY

Adaptive reuse projects require a different set of skills than a new construction project, therefore my case study analysis aimed to help equip me in dealing with rehabilitation. Information I found to be relevant throughout my case study research was a project's response to integrating old with the new, effective solutions to adapting existing features, the influence of natural light, and the employment of structure and MEP.

Adaptive reuse was the focus of all four of my case studies: Urban Outfitters conversion of the Rialto Theater, Clif Bar & Co. Headquarters, Suburban World retail adaptation, and Convert Headquarter's adaptive reuse of a large cinema house in Milan. Some studies utilized existing features well, while others provided examples on negative adaptive reuse outcomes. In three of the four cases, theaters were the existing or previous use of the project. Convert Headquarter's was an exciting project to find because it aligned closely with the adaptive reuse program I intended to use, but also the successful reuse of existing theater features such as the overhead balcony, while maintaining the character of the theater, which was an important discovery in moving forward with my unifying idea. On the other hand, Urban Outfitters' reuse of the historic Rialto in Los Angeles was a good case study to analyze, because it was largely unsuccessful, in my mind, of retaining those nostalgic theater defining features that help to tell the story of a downtown cinema theater.

One of the first adaptive reuse projects I came across early in my thesis research was the Long Island University basketball facility. This project successfully placed a full size college basketball floor in the middle of an old proscenium theater in New York City (*Figure 45*). This project helped to inspire me throughout the initial stages of the thesis project because of its incredible ability to reuse an ornate and detailed theater into a completely new typology that spans two different generations of time. It was this marriage of old use and historic expression, with new use and new expression, that convinced me historic, downtown theaters could be reused again, even though they are so unique compared to other old buildings.

Through the investigation, I found new case studies reminding me of similar issues being addressed in previous studies. In both the Suburban World retail proposal and the Urban Outfitters adaptive reuse, the theaters represented an investment into a developing a neighborhood through adaptive reuse. In my unifying idea, I explain how dilapidating theaters become eye sores for our once historic streetscape both of these projects help to show how bringing

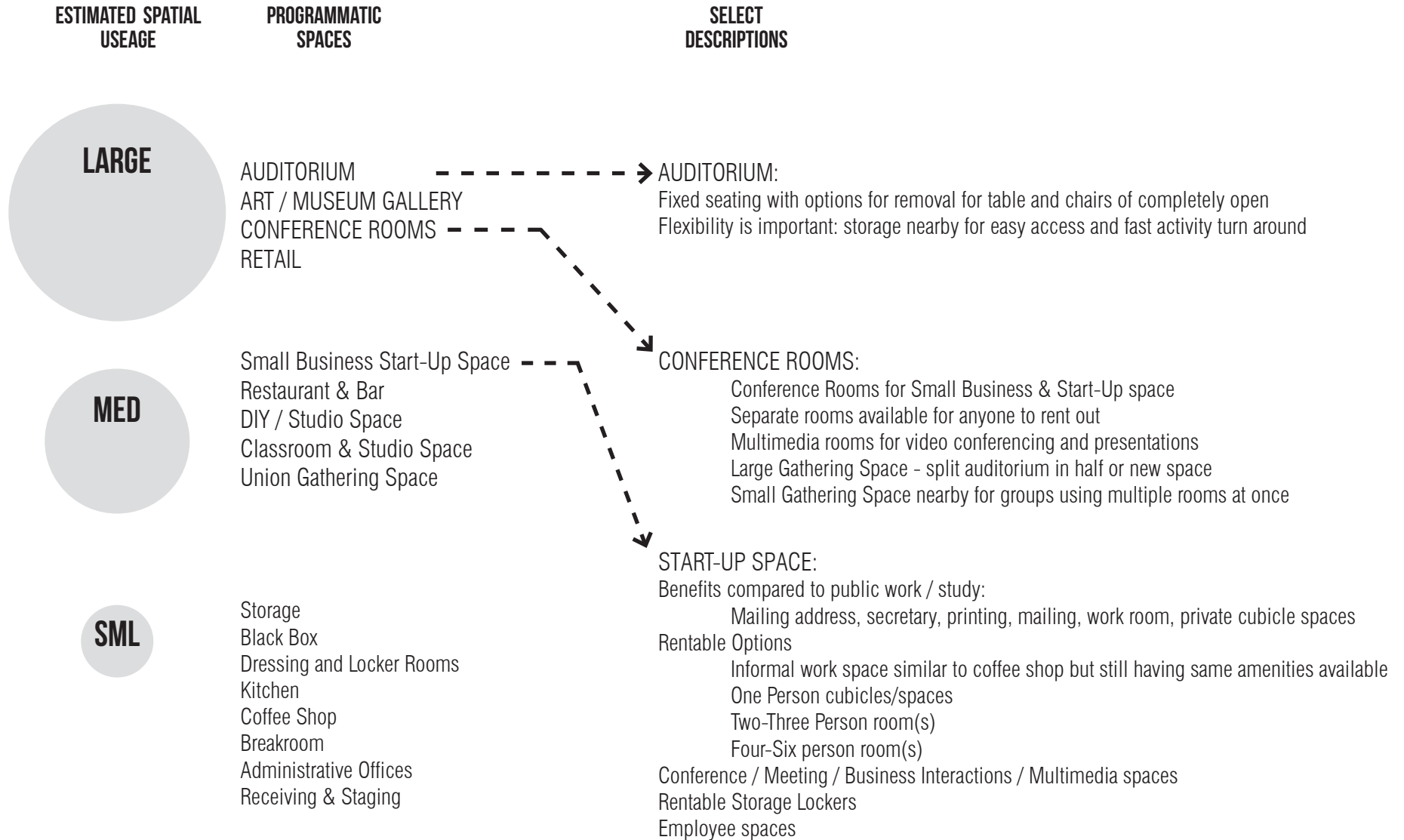
new life to the theater can enhance the neighborhood and revitalize the area.

In my mind, retaining the character of the theater is the most admirable feature of both the Convert Headquarters and the Suburban World retail reuse. As discussed, part of the reason for little adaptive reuse projects of local theaters is due to unique features that scare away serious developers and the feasibility of a project. The Suburban World and Convert projects give me hope in moving forward with my adaptation of the Nor Shor because both projects are successful in finding new uses for unique spaces such as the balcony or projection room, and minimizing the large volume of the auditorium spaces. Alternatively, the Rialto conversion into Urban Outfitters gave valuable information into how the aesthetic of a theater reuse is eliminated when little to no original features are retained. When I first started looking into the project I immediately thought of how terrible it would be as a case study because of its obvious neglect in preserving existing theater features, but then it became apparent that there was value in studying how the space is affected when character defining features in a historic building are removed. Also discovered throughout the research of Urban Outfitters was that some of the decision into keeping little of the historic natures was not the decision of the architect or company, but rather the inevitable cause of natural disasters of a site.

Purposely, the Clif Bar & Co. case study was not the adaptive reuse of a theater. The reasoning for this was to open to doors in finding a case study that maximized its potential in sustainability while providing an alternative look at adaptive reuse. The Clif Bar HQ stands out among all other studies for its use of natural light in all its spaces. This aesthetic is difficult in theaters because of their naturally dark characteristic, as well as the fact that windows are difficult to integrate into a theater as detailed as the Suburban World with its ornate and detailed wall features; windows have the possibility of dramatically effecting the character of the existing auditorium. The Nor Shor also has its own interior auditorium characteristics (see *Figure 04*) that will have to be assessed when addressing the need to incorporate as much natural light as possible.

While I am happy with the analysis uncovered in my case study research, it was difficult to find such examples. This reaffirms my ideas expressed in my narrative that hypothesize theaters are comparatively not rehabilitated into new uses compared to other older, downtown typologies. However, when someone takes a chance on adapting them for new uses, the outcomes can be very successful for social and economic gains if original architectural features are exploited and retained.

MAJOR PROJECT ELEMENTS



USER/CLIENT DESCRIPTION

Nor Shor: Duluth's downtown community union

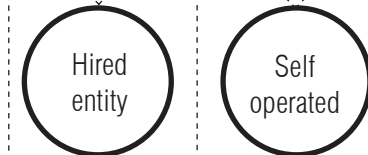
CONSIDERATIONS

1. Unity of Spaces; Feels like one building
2. Fluid, Open spaces; Feels more welcoming than closed, dark theater - Open for business and spontaneous stops
3. Transition of different uses / activities in one day
4. Convenient storage locations, behind the scenes as much as possible as to not disrupt activities
5. Access/Lack of access; partitioning off areas at night or during the day when not in use
6. Circulation for multiple activities

WHO OWNS IT?



WHO OPERATES IT?



WHERE DOES MONEY COME FROM?



POSSIBLE ENTITIES:

- Northern Lights Books and Gifts
- Duluth Coffee Co. (Small shop currently two blocks SW of Nor Shor)
- Great Lakes Design (custom gift shop)
- CoCo (Provides office space for Small business start ups in Mpls, St. Paul and Fargo)
- Duluth Arts Institute (currently two locations, but opposite ends of town)
- Colleges and universities (UMD, St. Scholastica, Lake Superior, Wis-Superior)
- High Schools (Duluth Denfeld High School, Duluth East High School, other)

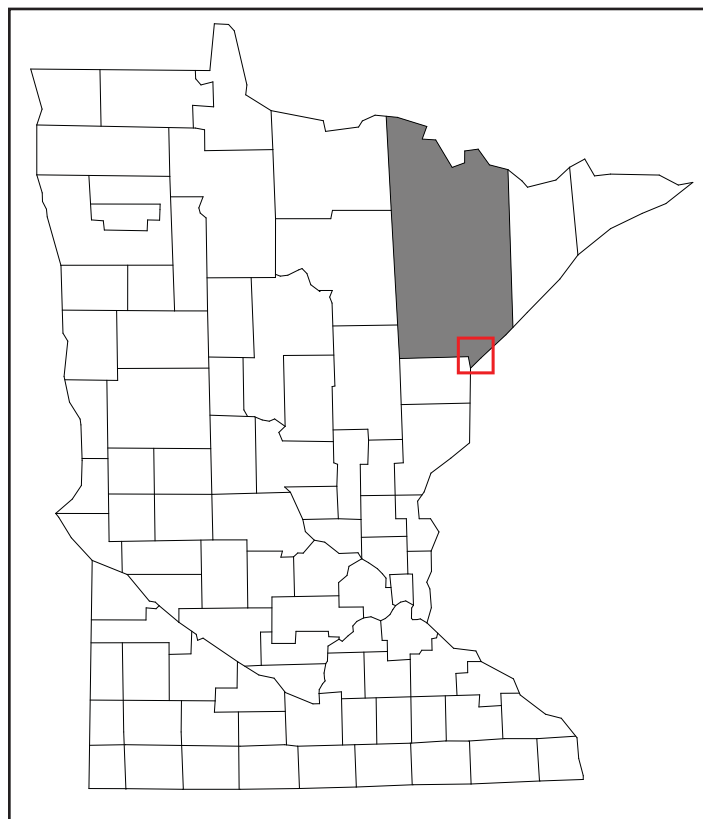


Figure 46 | St. Louis County, Minnesota

THE SITE

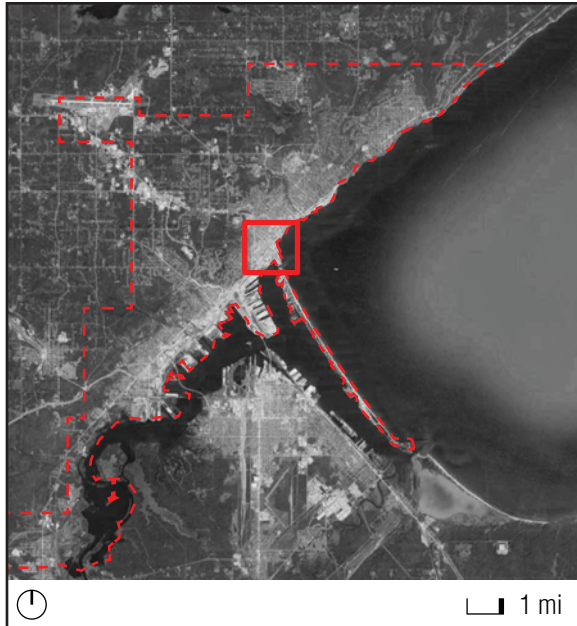


Figure 47 | Lake Superior Context | Duluth, MN



Figure 48 | Downtown Context | Duluth, MN

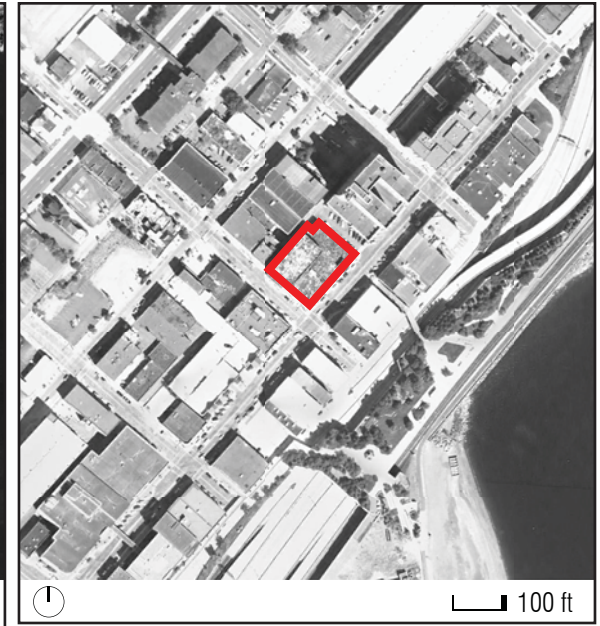


Figure 49 | Nor Shor Site Context | Duluth, MN

SITE SELECTION:

Duluth, Minnesota was chosen as the location for my thesis intervention first and foremost because of the Nor Shor. The theater sits vacant in the heart of Old Downtown with endless possibilities for adaptive reuse that would benefit the neighborhood. It is part of the history of Duluth and needs to return as a social and cultural landmark for the identity of the city.

Additionally, the first time I remember visiting Duluth I was struck by the heartless qualities of downtown, which were all attributed to the types of activities and criminal behavior discussed in my narrative (see Page 13). However, as I kept returning, the downtown area became more and more vibrant, welcoming, and healthier - this inspired me to want to contribute to rehabilitate downtown Duluth.

CITY OF DULUTH VALUES:

Connection to nature

Duluth's active connection to Lake Superior and its integrated activities within the slope of the hill the city is built upon are features that are embraced by the general population

Downtown, Urban Identity

Downtown Duluth was established along Lake Superior, and has continued to build and enrich the downtown while other communities of its size have started to sprawl to suburban areas

Diversity

Duluth attracts many different groups of users to the city. Transient trade workers, tourists, and other visiting for the various cultural offerings and events. The city naturally has a high level of users and diversity



Figure 50 | Duluth, MN Skyline

Randen Peterson | photo credit



Figure 51 | Site Perspective | Duluth, MN



Figure 52 | Nor Shor southeast facing elevation | Duluth, MN

NOR SHOR PRELIMINARY INFORMATION:

Total Square Footage: **53,520 SF**

Number of Floors: **THREE FLOORS + BASEMENT (FOUR TOTAL)**

Basement SF: **6,777 SF**

1st Floor SF: **19,416 SF**

2nd Floor SF: **12,382 SF**

3rd Floor SF: **14, 944 SF**

The Nor Shor provides unique opportunities for the adaptive reuse of a local, downtown theater. The large area gives adequate square footage for an honest study and proposed intervention. The “L” shaped site fronting two separate streets adds a challenge in responding to pedestrian engagement, and the steep slope of the adjacent street gives a unique site consideration.

Major Elements and Character Defining Features

1. Expansive Auditorium (Figure 04)
2. Southeast facing annex space with large windows (Figure 52)
3. Shipping receiving dock
4. Three adjacent bays of storefront retail
5. Historic “Milk Bar” remaining
6. Expansive overhead balcony seating
7. ‘L’ shaped site with windows facing southwest and southeast (Figure 51)
8. Original plaster detail work remaining in auditorium, stair cases, other areas

THE PROJECT EMPHASIS

1. Rehabilitation of an iconic typology that has been rarely adapted successfully

As earlier discussed, many iconic historic buildings have found new use in the 21st century: elementary schools have become elderly housing and industrial warehouses have converted into urban condos, so what will theaters become and how will they reestablish their influence and iconic downtown image?

2. Integration of sustainable strategies in a historically significant building

If we expect to create an iconic community symbol it needs to stand for another 100 years; sustainable design can yield those results while also minimizing harmful extended impacts on the community

3. Identification of architectural precedents in downtown theaters

Investigations into theater design can give a better picture of the architectural make up in a theater and hopefully provide in sights into how certain architectural features can be adapted for new use

GOALS OF THE THESIS PROJECT

Theoretical, physical and social goals of the project:

1. *[Physical]* Create a reference document analyzing various theater design precedents; establishing how one might identify them and where they are located in the region.
2. *[Theoretical]* Answer the theoretical question of whether or not we should be adaptive historic typologies, like theaters.
3. *[Theoretical]* Does adaptive reuse change the character or nostalgia of a theater?
4. *[Social]* Reestablish the Nor Shor as a community landmark in Dultuh.
5. *[Social / Physical]* Identify appropriate and inappropriate typologies for adaptive theater use in terms of economic and social factors.
6. *[Social]* Educate people on the importance and benefits of adaptive reuse in our communities
7. *[Theoretical]* Learn about construction techniques and architectural theories employed in historic and older buildings

A PLAN FOR PROCEEDING

Definition of Research Direction

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER / AREAS TO ADDRESS:

Theoretical premise / unifying idea:

1. Precedents in existing historic theater design features
2. Precedents in theater volumetric organization, spatial organization, construction techniques / assemblies, materials and elevation hierarchies
3. Identifying consistent character defining features of downtown theaters
4. What challenges arise in rehabilitation in the change of a typology?
5. How do sustainable strategies fit into rehabilitative design?

TOOLS: Regional theater visits, Documentation (National Register Nominations, Construction Documents, historical records)

OUTCOMES: Analysis to inform how adaptive reuse interventions might be incorporated into downtown theaters

TYPOLOGY:

1. Identify client / community goals and values.

TOOLS: Duluth Pack Co. contact, Duluth, MN history, Community member information and opinions

OUTCOMES: Information that speaks to what the community would find beneficial to health and vibrance. Information that addresses qualitative opinions on the built environment (What can a building do for me and my neighborhood?)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

1. How do cultural / social issues affect theater use?
2. How does community success play into theater success?
3. What communities can support a theater (Are there certain prerequisites / characteristics)?
4. What towns / cities will lose their theaters in the near future?
5. Can they support an adaptive reuse of their downtown theater?

TOOLS: Country / State / Local History, recorded history of theaters, regional theater activity (In full time use, part time, closed, demolished, adaptive reuse),

OUTCOMES: Analysis showing trends / effects / time periods of theater use, information on what causes unsuccessful downtown theaters, information suggesting correlation between town/city size, historical events that led to theater fate

SITE ANALYSIS:

1. What opportunities are there for sustainable strategies related to SUN, WIND, and LIGHT base on existing site conditions?
2. How will an adaptive reuse impact neighboring buildings? (i.e. Economically, Socially, Culturally, Design Impacts)

TOOLS: Sustainable Design + Adaptive Reuse Strategies, Sun Analysis, Climate Data, Existing Shadows Analysis. Site visit information / Iterative analysis of site.

OUTCOMES: Avenues in which to take advantage of sustainable opportunities within site conditions. Site information pertaining to neighborhood use, material applications, profile of users

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

1. What spaces encourage employee productivity / buy-in?
2. How do you unify multiple company spaces / uses into a cohesive environment

TOOLS: Current Duluth Pack employees, past personal employment experience, additional all-in-one headquarters case studies

OUTCOMES: Successful spatial organization connecting opposite uses (i.e. production and executive offices) [successful = positive employee morale, employee collaboration, opportunities for spontaneous interaction]. List of possible employee enjoyment spaces based on response/case studies

DESIGN METHODOLOGY:

a system of methods used to arrive at a research conclusion

1. UNIFYING IDEA
2. TOPIC RESEARCH LEADING TO DISCOVERY OF NEW IDEAS AND TOOLS TO HELP YOU ANSWER RELATED QUESTIONS
3. TESTING OF NEW IDEAS AND TOOLS
4. FORMULATION OF YOUR OWN DESIGN OPINIONS
5. FORMULATE THOSE OPINIONS INTO A PROPOSED INTERVENTION

HOW: HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS A GOOD DESIGN?
HOW WILL YOU DECIDE?
HOW WILL YOU ARRIVE THERE?

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:
INDUCTION INTERPRET DATA/INFORMATION
THROUGH ITERATIVE INVESTIGATION

INTERPRET ANALYSIS TO INFORM
DESIGN DECISIONS

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS:
DEDUCTION DOES THE INTERVENTION MEET THE
GOALS AND VALUES OF THE CLIENT
AND COMMUNITY?

EXPLORATION:
ABDUCTION ALLOW QUANTITATIVE AND
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ANSWER
DESIGN QUESTIONS THAT ARISE
THROUGH THE DESIGN PROCESS AND
INTROSPECTION/INSPECTION

DOCUMENTATION OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

DOCUMENTATION COMPILATION / Documentation Creation:

MEDIUM FOR DESIGN INVESTIGATION:

Hand Sketching
Hand Modeling
Computer representation

SOFTWARE FOR INVESTIGATION:

Autodesk AutoCad
Autodesk Revit
Rhinoceros
Sketchup 2014

SOFTWARE FOR REPRESENTATION:

Adobe Illustrator
Adobe InDesign
Adobe SketchUp

DESIGN PRESERVATION METHODS:

1. Creation /investigation of representation
 - a. Scanning hand produced drawings
 - b. Photograph hand models/artefacts
2. Feedback from advisor(s)
3. Weekly material sent to main thesis advisor
4. Notes preserved by hand in sketch books, dated and reference later
5. Reserach Material documented by hand; sources accounted for later credit
6. Computer files backed up weekly via Dropbox
7. Computer files backed up biweekly viz external hardrive
8. Thesis book updated weekly as per schedule
9. Drawings/Diagrams credited upon acquisition in references section

PUBLICATION OF MATERIAL:

Relevant material will be recorded and credited in final Thesis Book available:

1. NDSU Institutional Respository
2. Hard cover book format

DOCUMENTATION ORGANIZATION:

File Labeling: Year-Senescall_Thesis_Phase_Name
Example: 2015-Senescall_Thesis_Systems_Mechanical-Diagram

UNIFYING IDEA RESEARCH

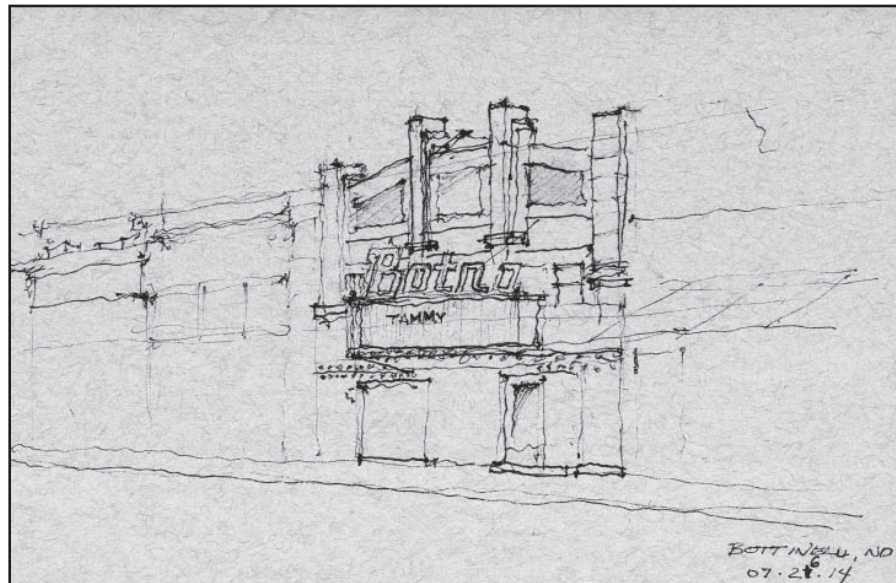


Figure 54 | Site sketch of Botno Theater in Bottineau, North Dakota

UNIFYING IDEA RESEARCH

Downtown movie theaters once served as the landmark of the downtown community. The sense of place that the theater provided for main street was one of the most compelling and unique in the history of our country. Memories were made and nostalgia was fostered in these buildings where the marquee's dominated the main avenue and the ornate detailing in the lobby and auditorium provided a scene for patrons to experience something majestic even before they entered the auditorium.

However, because of mid century advents such as the television and automobile, we have fled our downtowns and the theaters that supported them. These buildings were at one point in history the collective landmarks of our towns, but now serve as nothing more than eyesores on the community. Abandonment has turned into neglect, causing these once cultural gems to decay to a point of disrepair. However, even more substantial is the impact that the abandoned theater has on the vibrancy of the downtown environment and identity.

I believe these theaters can serve as a community landmark once again. In turn, by revitalizing these palaces we have the opportunity to reinvigorate the downtown scene and reignite the bright and positive light the theater shed on the community.

Adaptive reuse allows a community to retain a building with existing investments and give it new meaning and purpose. When we reestablish structures that already have the infrastructure, bricks and mortar and the presence downtown we immediately set up a project for economic and social success. A downtown revitalization minimizes new impacts on the built environment and adds vibrancy to an already established neighborhood. There is little "starting new" in an adaptive reuse, but rather a lot of momentum to proceed and succeed.

We have seen trends in adaptive reuse projects over the course of the past couple decades: old elementary schools becoming assisted living facilities, creameries have turned into unique office buildings, and

warehouses are now chic, urban apartments. These typologies are being served in new roles and adding to the vibrancy of our downtown communities. Old schools, creameries, and warehouses are being adapted for new uses, but what are old downtown theaters becoming? Research in the history of downtown movie theaters and their impact on society will unveil what made them so special and to help inform what they have the potential of becoming.

“ OLD SCHOOLS, CREAMERIES, AND WAREHOUSES ARE BEING ADAPTED FOR NEW USES, BUT WHAT ARE OLD DOWNTOWN THEATERS BECOMING? ”

NOSTALGIA OF THE THEATER

The entertainment of choice in the early 20th century was the theater. It was an activity that almost anyone could enjoy. Just as today, other forms of entertainment were popular and enjoyed by the community but not to the level of the theater. Playhouses and operas were often too expensive for common people, bars were not places for families, parades were weather dependent, and amusement parks were often separated from the core of the community (Forsher, 2003). The theater was in the city center, it was cheap, and the family could go to it together.

Theaters were unbelievably popular; want proof? In 1929, 74% of the population went to the movies once a week (Forsher, 2003). Compare these numbers to 2013, when 68% of the population saw a movie, ONCE A YEAR, and where only 11% of the population saw a movie once a month (Motion picture association of America, 2013)! This is undoubtable proof that the theater was more universally enjoyed in 1930 than what it is 80 years later. Why is this? Do people not enjoy movies anymore? Was there nothing else to do in the 1930s? I would argue that neither of these are the case; homes are centered around the TV, Netflix and other streaming video websites, and they continue to gain extreme



Figure 55 | Scenic Theater in Lisbon, ND

popularity. Also, what do we as a society, especially in a town the size of Fargo or smaller, do for entertainment on a weekend that is any different than 60, 70, or 80 years ago?

“ IN 1929, 74% OF THE POPULATION WENT TO THE MOVIES ONCE A WEEK. IN 2013, ONLY 68% OF THE POPULATION SAW A MOVIE, ONCE A YEAR, AND ONLY 11% OF THE POPULATION SAW A MOVIE ONCE A MONTH! ”

(Forsher, 2003), (Motion picture association of America, 2013)

So why was the population going to the movies so much more collectively in 1930 than 2013? The reason, I would suggest, is that the theater was never centered around watching a movie. The theater was a venue for social interaction.

Going to the theater was a collective activity shared by the community as a way to escape the misfortunes of their everyday lives living during the Great Depression and World War II efforts. As an almost ritualistic activity the community and thousands across the country would get ready together on a weekend night: the family got the kids ready and loaded up in the car, young men would grease their hair and put on their best shirt, ask Dad to borrow the car and take a girl to the new showing, friends would ride their bikes on a summer afternoon together and pretend they were a gang of outlaws, just like the ones they would watch on the big screen once downtown. All of these groups, all across the country would then make their way into town or down the street. They would see the marquee, its bright colors and flashing lights, and immediately remember the last movie they saw, or predict who they might see in the lobby at the theater tonight, kids would laugh and giggle at how much popcorn and candy they would consume. Once inside, the lobby would act as an ar-

chitectural time traveling machine, transporting them into a movie scene of their own, long before they even took their seats. The vibrancy of the crowd and the exceptional character of the interior would take a person from their small town main avenue into a New York Broadway palace.

The theater was a holistically entertaining experience, even before the film began to roll. It started on the sidewalk or street; approaching the marquee with its lights and colors flashing proved that what happens inside this place is something magical and grandeur, much more so than any other building in town. It continued in the lobby by preparing patrons for the movie by transporting them into a different world, and a different outlook and expectation. The auditorium was the setting for the movie and the architecture of the room was an opportunity for the audience sitting in the chairs to experience a new world from their chairs while viewing it on the screen; all of this ornate and exceptional detailing and design reinforced prepared the patron for the show.

The architecture of the downtown theater had the same influence on people as the movie did. People see movies to give them a feel of being involved in a different life, at a different time and in a different place. People want to experience something out of the daily ordinary. The theater was the built environment that achieved that transportation from the day to day life on Main Street to the glamour and vibrancy of a movie.

Between years of 1930 and 1937 theaters saw a roller coaster in attendance due in part to the economic hardships of the Great Depression; in 1930, there were 90 Million weekly movie viewers (74% of the total population – an outstanding amount), that decreased in 1932 – 60 Million weekly viewers, but rose again in 1937 to 88 million weekly viewers (Forsher, 2003). It would be a reasonable explanation that the drop in 1932 was because people couldn't afford it. At that point in history the benefit of seeing a movie didn't exceed the cost of a ticket. However, how can we explain the incredible increase 5 years later. As we will discuss more in depth later, theaters understood the depression would bring slow ticket sales, so they started to market new activities during the movies: "Bank Night", Bingo, Lotto Night, Look-a-Like contests, were activities used to entice patrons back to the theater (Forsher, 2003). This

would suggest that the experience in seeing a movie is not important enough for people to spend the money for a ticket. However, the experience of the movie along with the new activities was beneficial enough for the ticket cost. People enjoyed the experience around the movie more than the movie itself. Is that why attendance to movies today is smaller in percentage than 80 years ago? People want an experience, a sense of place, not just a movie. What if the downtown theaters today gave that experience and that sense of place to the community today? Would they be popular? History shows that they might be.

Maggie Valentine in her book “The Show Starts on the Sidewalk,” declares that a “Theater should stimulate a mood or feeling; create a sense of place” (1994). The sense of place in a theater is the composition of many different factors. Architecture, in like manner, creates a sense of place. Valentine continues to say that movie goers take with them a “memory and a mood” when they leave a movie. In a playhouse or opera, the patrons develop a relationship with the performers, and therefore a memory, and their mood becomes a result of the show (Valentine, 1994). In a cinema, the patrons mood still comes from the satisfaction in their expectations of the show, but their memory and relationship has to be filled somehow, which is filled with the impact of the architecture (Valentine, 1994). The architecture of the movie theater provides a “palpable” opportunity for the story to be experienced by the audience (Valentine, 1994).

Dutch architect Aldo Van Eyck said, “Places we remember and place we anticipate are mingled in present time. Memory and anticipation, in fact, constitute, the real perspective of space, giving it depth.” Eyck is trying to convey to us that at its essence, a space (and its “depth”, or impact) is defined by the memories and expectations that come from experiencing it. If we relate this to the memories that a theater provides, it could be said that the memories of the theater define its presence and impact as a building. Additionally, it is my contention that architecture can serve as a tool in the built environment for the reminder of a memory. When people see the Fargo theater marquee their memory of the space differs greatly from the memories of West Acres Cinema in suburban Fargo. The memories we take with us from a downtown theater are the intricacies of

the lobby, the glow and sparkle of the marquee, and the feeling of being transported in time when you walk into the theater. The memory is the architecture. The memories we take with us from a multiplex or suburban theater is the plot and story of the movie. The memory is the movie. In a downtown theater the “depth” and impact of the architecture is vastly different than the architecture of West Acres Cinema.

“ THE MEMORIES WE TAKE WITH US FROM A DOWNTOWN THEATER ARE THE INTRICACIES OF THE LOBBY, THE GLOW AND SPARKLE OF THE MARQUEE . . .

THE MEMORY IS THE ARCHITECTURE.

THE MEMORIES WE TAKE WITH US FROM A MULTIPLEX OR SUBURBAN THEATER IS THE PLOT AND STORY OF THE MOVIE.

THE MEMORY IS THE MOVIE. ”

The small town theater was the communities chance to bring the grandeur and majesty of a New York or Los Angeles theater to Main Street, USA (Valentine, 1994). Ornamentation and decoration made a significant impact in early theater design because silent movies lacked the character of a vaudeville performance, so that was made up for by lavish interior architecture (Scherer, 1986). In a typical small town community the Bank was the gem of downtown (Valentine, 1994), and the other storefronts that flanked both sides of Main Avenue were somewhat similar to one another in character and expression. As one moves from town to town in a 30 or 40 mile area, the character of the downtowns seem to blend together and neither stand out nor distinguish themselves. The theater was the opportunity to bring that identity to a street with each theater marquee distinguishing itself from the next theater a town over. In some instances the theater coined itself after the town in which it is situated (i.e. Botno Theater in Bottineau, ND or the Siston Theater in Sisseton,



*Figure 56 | Empire Theater in Grand Forks, North Dakota
The Empire now serves as a cultural arts center for downtown Grand Forks*

SD). In the big cities, the theater design and ornamentation wanted to meet the expectations of the upper class and serve as a unique experience for the lower class (Valentine, 1994). Eventually, the community or neighborhoods theater design became an arms race of sorts, the next one built had to be twice as extravagant and imaginative in order to attract the patrons of the neighboring theater.

Nostalgia is the only way to describe the thoughts, feelings and emotions attached to the downtown theater. When we try to analyze the impact of the movie theater we soon find out that the unprecedented popularity of the theater had little to do with the actual movie. These theaters were venues for social interactions among the community. The events leading up to the movie and the encounters in the lobby and under the marquee were the true worth in the movie theater. A sense of place is defined by the memories of those who experienced it. The theaters sense of place, while made up of those memories, were reinforced through the architecture. The memories were recalled to the patrons through the architecture and its unique character defining features. These architectural characteristics served as the means for inspiring those memories, retaining and remembering them.

ADAPTING AN ICON

Recognizing historic and influential buildings has become an important part of our community, state, and country's history. National grants and recognitions have been established to award and endorse designers and planners for revitalizing historic places. Adaptive reuse, however, is a more controversial topic. How would the country feel if, for example, President Washington's home at Mount Vernon would have been adaptively reused as a liquor store? When we come across unique and incredible buildings, such as downtown theaters, we initially want them to stay that typology forever because of their association with positive and enjoyable memories inside of us. However, as we have discussed, sometimes the popularity of these buildings diminish, along with its character and appeal as that use. H Ward Jandl of the National Park Service, the government department in charge of the National Register of

Historic Places, said that "...in some cases, radical changes are needed to give new life to old, dilapidated buildings that would otherwise be demolished" (Highsmith & Landphair, 1994). So how do we decide if a building is old and dilapidated or considered an antique? And how do we justify adapting such an iconic typology such as the downtown movie theater?

Concerning adaptive reuse as an architectural theory, Philippe Robert in his Book "Adaptations: New Uses for Old Buildings," compares an

“ ...IN SOME CASES, RADICAL CHANGES ARE NEEDED TO GIVE NEW LIFE TO OLD, DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE DEMOLISHED. ”

- H WARD JANDL, National Park Service

architectural elevation to a palimpsest justifying that just as an author can erase and add new information to a reading or manuscript, an architect can modify an elevation (1989). Adaptations present unique architectural opportunities as well. An architect can take the liberty of designing off of one unique feature or detail in the building (Robert, 1989), it presents opportunities to highlight important pieces within the composition rather than designing an entire building and adding in details or unique features after initial design. Additionally, in some instances, theaters being an obvious example, that a typology has outgrown society or has found new homes. In this instance, it becomes extremely difficult for society to refer back to "old habits" and enjoy a building that does not have the same amenities that newer version might. So should we just sit back and watch these wonderful buildings die before our eyes, or get torn down before our eyes and forgotten completely? It is my personal contention that many people would rather see a historic building thriving with a new use or typology, rather than remain unmodified and sit for decay.

The idea that theaters were built to show movies and that is it, is a bit misleading if we consider the vast history of the theater. Theaters have been adapting as buildings since the beginning, with the goal to accommodate the wants and needs of the public. Some theaters began as vaudeville show houses with live performances, comedy, dancing, and novelty acts; this type of entertainment became too expensive to bring in new acts consistently while trying to keep ticket prices down (Valentine, 1994). The idea of showing a movie in these first theaters became a cheap way to provide equivalent entertainment (Valentine, 1994). Other communities without a vaudeville theater started to show movies in abandoned storefronts along Main or in civic auditoriums, often having to borrow chairs from the town undertaker (Valentine, 1994). During the Great Depression, new forms of entertainment were tested at the movies: Look-a-like contests, "Bank Night", Give-a-ways, Bingo, Lotto, as well as the comeback of some vaudeville performances were used as tools to entice people to come back to the theater (Forsher, 2003). Additionally, in smaller communities the theater was used as a civic hall for school plays, private group gatherings, graduations, and church services (Scherer, 1986).

Changing the use of a nostalgic building threatens to take away parts and portions of potentially just one persons memory or connection with that structure. In this regard, adaptive reuse is difficult. Without a doubt, research and a high level of care must be taken in order to ensure that what will replace this iconic building has the potential to be just as influential to the community.

TOWNS (Sorted by year established starting at bottom)

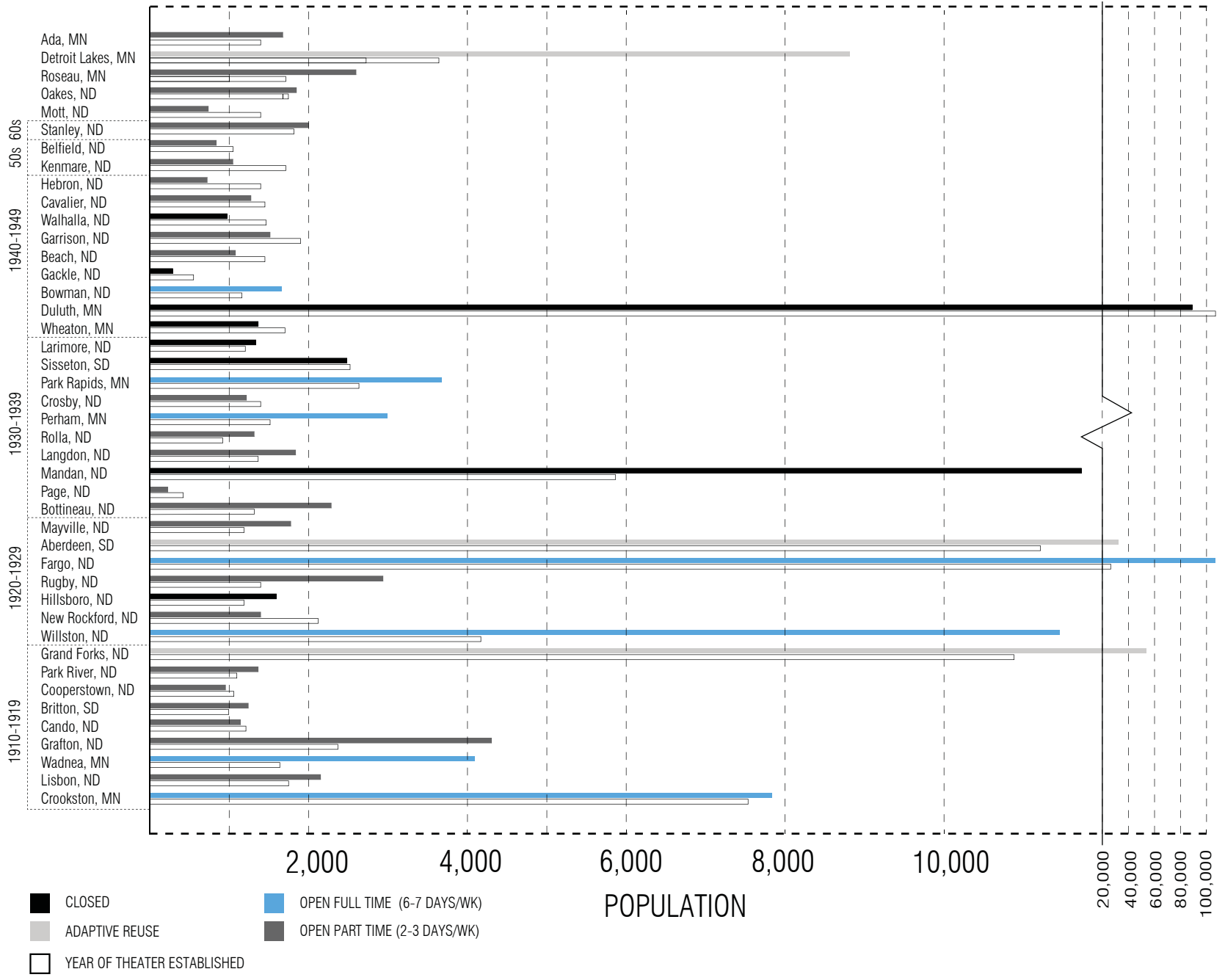
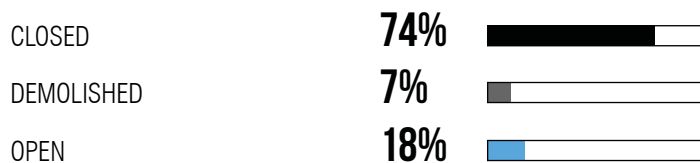


Figure 57 | Sample study of regional theaters' status

(Cinema Tour: North Dakota Theater History)

THEATERS BUILT IN ND HISTORY: **274**



“OPEN” THEATERS: **48**

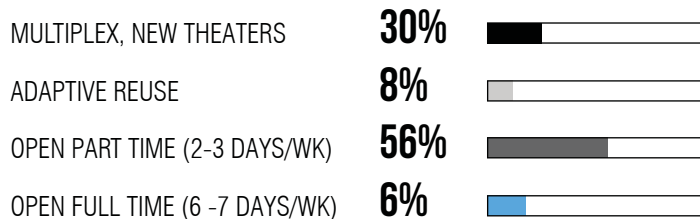


Figure 58 | History of North Dakota’s Theaters

WHY CAN’T THEY JUST BE THEATERS AGAIN?

The question remains however, with such an effort recently in the revitalization of downtown communities across the country, why can’t these theaters show movies again? Fortunately some communities, including ones in our region, the theater still remains a viable downtown amenity; however, many more have already been closed with no signs of a come-back.

Figure 58 shows an analysis of all the theaters built in North Dakota’s history. As shown almost 3/4 of all theaters built at one point in North Dakota’s history are now closed. Even more surprising, of the theaters still in operation today in North Dakota only 3 have remained open full time.

Figure 57 shows a sample of 43 regional theaters and their current operational status: closed, open full time (characterized by operating at least 6 days per week), open part time (open at least 2 days per week), and adaptive reuse (suggesting a use other than showing movies). These theaters were chosen because they stand today with character defining features of a downtown theater. Two lines are represented by each community; the top bar representing the population of the community today, compared to the bottom white bar which represents the population at the time of establishment. The towns and cities are arranged in order of establishment (with the exception of the top five) from oldest at the bottom, the Grand Theater in Crookston, ND, to the newest at the top, the Regis Theater in Stanley, ND. I have visited 30 of the 43 theaters on the list. The following pages provide statistics analyzing influential factors that the community, year established, and population has on the theater.



REGIONAL THEATERS ANALYZED BY YEAR ESTABLISHED:

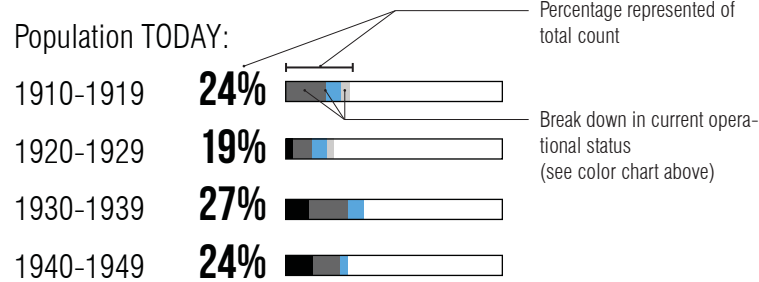


Figure 59 | Regional Theater Analysis - Population Then

Population when theater was established:

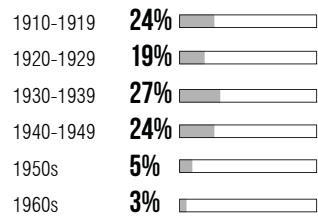


Figure 60 | Regional Theater Analysis - Population Then

Regional Theaters Analyzed by POPULATION:

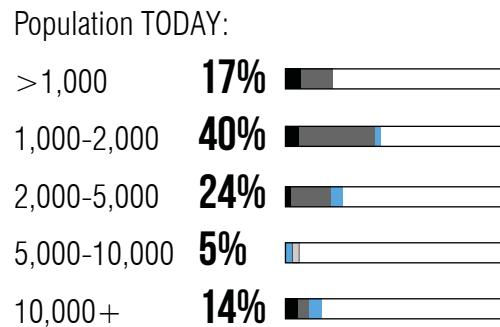


Figure 61 | Regional Theater Analysis - Population Today

Figures 59 and 60 identify current operational statuses of theaters with emphasis on when they were established and the population of the town/city today, to see if there is a correlation between these factors and the fate of the theater.

Figure 59 shows analysis sorting the decades these theaters were built and their current operational status; as a comparison Figure 60 shows the population of these communities the year the theater was established.

Analysis from Figure 59:

- Theaters from 1910-1919 yielded NO closed theaters
- Figure 60 shows a majority of theaters built in the 1930s, during the time of the Great Depression in the US
- Theaters established between 1910-1929 have far less closed theaters than ones established between 1930-1949.

Figure 61 illustrates today's community population and compares the current operational status of the downtown theater. Questions being investigated are what size community yields a healthy environment for a theater. What size communities still have a theater? Are operational statuses' dependent on community size?

Analysis from Figure 61:

- Many of the theaters that exist today are found in communities between 1,000 -2,000 people in size; often open only part time
- Communities less than 2,000 people cannot support a full time operational theater (Exception: Bowman, ND)
- Large communities have the most full time and adaptive reuse theaters, but they also the most closed theaters



Regional Theaters Experiencing a population **DECREASE** since establishment: **40%**

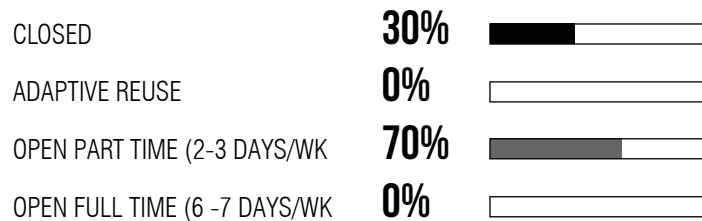


Figure 62 | Regional Theater Analysis - Population Then

Regional Theaters Experiencing a population **INCREASE** since establishment: **60%**

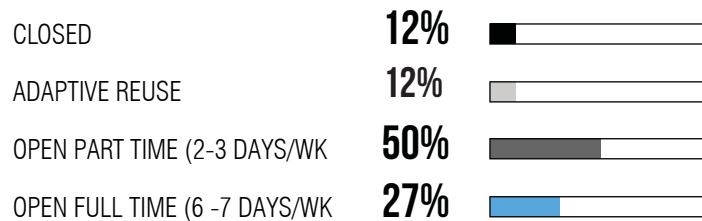


Figure 63 | Regional Theater Analysis - Population Then

Figures 62 and 63 demonstrate the impacts the theaters have had on the population of the communities. Of the towns and cities in the sampling, 40% have seen a decrease in population since the theater was established; on the other hand 60% have grown in size since the establishment of the theater.

Analysis from Figures 62-63:

- Of the communities that saw a decrease in population since the establishment of the theater, 30% of the theaters in those towns are closed; compared to only 12% of the closed theaters in communities with increase in population
- Communities with a population increase have an operational theater to some extent (Full time, part time, adaptive reuse) 88% of the time; compared to communities with a population decrease who only have 70% of theaters operational



Figure 64 | Strand Theater in Britton, South Dakota
Tyra Gefroh Photography | photo credit

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY

Throughout the course of a summer I often found myself traveling to see friends and family on the weekends. With my thesis project in mind I made it a priority throughout my traveling to stop in as many small town's and cities as possible to see the downtown theater, its condition, popularity and impact. The following is a journal article of sorts that I wrote following a trip to southeast North Dakota and northeast South Dakota:

"I spent my day walking up and down small town main streets pointing a camera lens in the direction of the downtown theater. The first one or two stops (Lisbon and Oakes (ND)) it seemed like everyone who drove by slowed down their vehicle speed by 5 mph and stared at me through the side window and probably thought to themselves "What is he taking pictures of in small town North Dakota?!" The ironic part of that statement is that's what happened on the first stop on this journey. My finance, Hannah, who became my copilot throughout most of these theater expeditions, overheard one lady say to her son while walking by us in downtown Lisbon, ND, "What is he doing?!", with an almost disgusted and concerning tone. Throughout the trip I started to notice more of these glaring looks from passerby's and started to get a little discouraged by their obvious disgust in my affection with these little theaters.

However, once we got to one of the last stops for the trip, and my arm was starting to get sore from the constant raising and lowering of it to wave at the stares I received from the locals, I realized that the stares I was receiving were temporary and that many of these slow passing vehicles after exchanging their peace with me would fixate on the theater! Think about how many times these locals passed by their theater on Main an simply didn't take the time to recognize and appreciate the town landmark. It is my hope that this fascination I brought with me on these trips caused these locals to slowed down to observe and for maybe the first time in awhile, actually look up at that theater and enjoy the sparkle of the marquee.



Figure 65 | Sketch of the Krieger Theater in Gackle, North Dakota

In our first stop at Lisbon to see the historic Scenic Theater, claiming to be "The longest continually running theater in America!", I felt a great deal of excitement as we approached the marquee that was noticed from a few blocks down. This marquee wasn't any old 'True Value' or 'Dairy Queen' sign that also lined the streetscape of downtown. The Scenic Theater marquee was a blast from the past, a burst of history in a two colored, sheet metal geometry with protruding light bulbs hanging sturdy from the old brick facade. I could see 1920, 1930 and 1940 Lisbon right before my eyes, and it painted a picture for what values to expect in the town and what they found to be important.

I grew up in a city with a four screen multiplex, mall theater that was located almost as far away as it could be from downtown. I went to the theater to see a movie because the theater itself wasn't something to be seen. I never had the pleasure of walking downtown under the lights of a relic marquee or seeing the theater and realizing that I was in downtown Dickinson and this is what represents its sense of place. These pieces of history are important to the memories of a town.

Prior to our excursion today through southeast North Dakota, northeast South Dakota, and west central Minnesota I had done research to prepare what theaters we could see along the way and I plotted a route. However, the coolest experience is not bringing addresses or town maps on the trip - we were going to find these theaters without directions. Most were as easy as turning on Main Street and seeing the colorful, grandeur beacon almost immediately from three blocks away. The Siston Theater in Sisseton, SD was the most difficult, relatively speaking, considering we had to make two turns instead

of just one. All we had to do was look for the Broadway or Main St. sign, the City Hall or County Courthouse's arched dome, or the Grain elevator and without a doubt there was the marquee. All of them in their respective downtown setting painted the typical picture we imagine or have experienced in a small town. In some cases, for instance Lisbon, the downtown was bustling and busy, full of people shopping on a Saturday or running errands. In other cases, like Sisseton, the only sign of human life were the vehicles three blocks down traveling east and west on the highway. Coincidentally, the theaters operational status mimicked the downtown landscape in both Lisbon and Sisseton especially, but in many of the towns I visited. The Scenic Theater in Lisbon was clean and still popular as "The longest continually running theater in America!" While the Siston Theater was one strong 40 mph wind gust away from losing its decrepit overhanging marquee.

At some point in history I know these theaters were the glitziest and glamorous places in a 30 mile radius. They were the flashing lights that kids looked for on a July, Saturday night and the beacon that lit the black top on Main Street. These old theaters have seen their glory days and proved their worth in town. Now, they are under used and diminishing in integrity; and in some cases almost failing apart. The question becomes, how do we make these gems as coveted and prized as your Dad's old, restored Chevy in the garage. How do we make those old marquees with the lights bulbs busted and paint chipping, sparkle and shine again like that Chevy's new candy red paint job? That's the goal..."

- Saturday, May 26, 2014



Figure 66 | *The Walla Theater in Walhalla, North Dakota*



Figure 67 | *The Comet Theater in Perham, Minnesota*

A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY cont....

The one thing I learned throughout the course of visiting these small towns and growing cities is that they all had their own individual niche. It is hard to not be biased and say that these niches were independent of the theater, but in many cases the theater was the character defining piece within the town. The Strand Theater in Britton, South Dakota, is perhaps the most obvious case with its colorful facade demanding the attention of patrons on Main Avenue (see Figure 64). In the case of the Strand in Britton the coloration is what grabs every ones attention, but in many other cases it is the marquee, its size, color, and presence within the context of its surroundings. To those familiar with Fargo it is obvious that the Fargo Theaters' marquee is one of the most grand and distinguished in the region, but there is something to be said about the small quaint marquees that hang above the sidewalks in Lisbon and Gackle (Scenic and Krieger, respectively, Figures 55 & 65). While these theaters are not nearly as grand or elegant as the Fargo Theater or the Chicago Theater, the memories associated with them are not less important to the people who enjoyed them. The shape, size or color of the marquee and theater facade does not change the memories that the citizens of the community associate with these architectural features. The Scenic Theater, is advertised by the city of Lisbon and the theater itself as the longest running movie theater in the United States, but it has a relatively simple and modest street presence.

Figures 66 and 67 show a street view of the Walla Theater in Walhalla, ND on the left and the Comet Theater in Perham, Minnesota on the right. The comparison is easy to identify, cars line the streets of Perham, showing its downtown environment as vibrant. Visiting Perham on a Friday afternoon I was excited to experience this upbeat environment. People were going in and out of shops, walking down the sidewalks enjoying the nice summer day. On the other hand, visiting Walhalla on a Saturday afternoon was an experience that most people would associate with a dying small community. In the half an hour span I was there visiting the Walla Theater, only one pedestrian passed by on the sidewalk, the first convincing evidence of human life in the north-eastern North Dakota community, and maybe only two to three pickups and cars drove by - each as curious about what I was doing downtown Walhalla as I was of them.

I bet you can guess which town - Walhalla or Perham - has the open theater. There was a consistent trend in all of the theaters I visited: if the theater was open the town was engaging and more vibrant, if the theater was closed and out of business the town was lifeless and miserable. It is hard to say whether or not the towns vibrancy is due to the operational status of the theater, but there is no refuting the fact that there is a correlation in these thriving communities and the popularity of the theater.

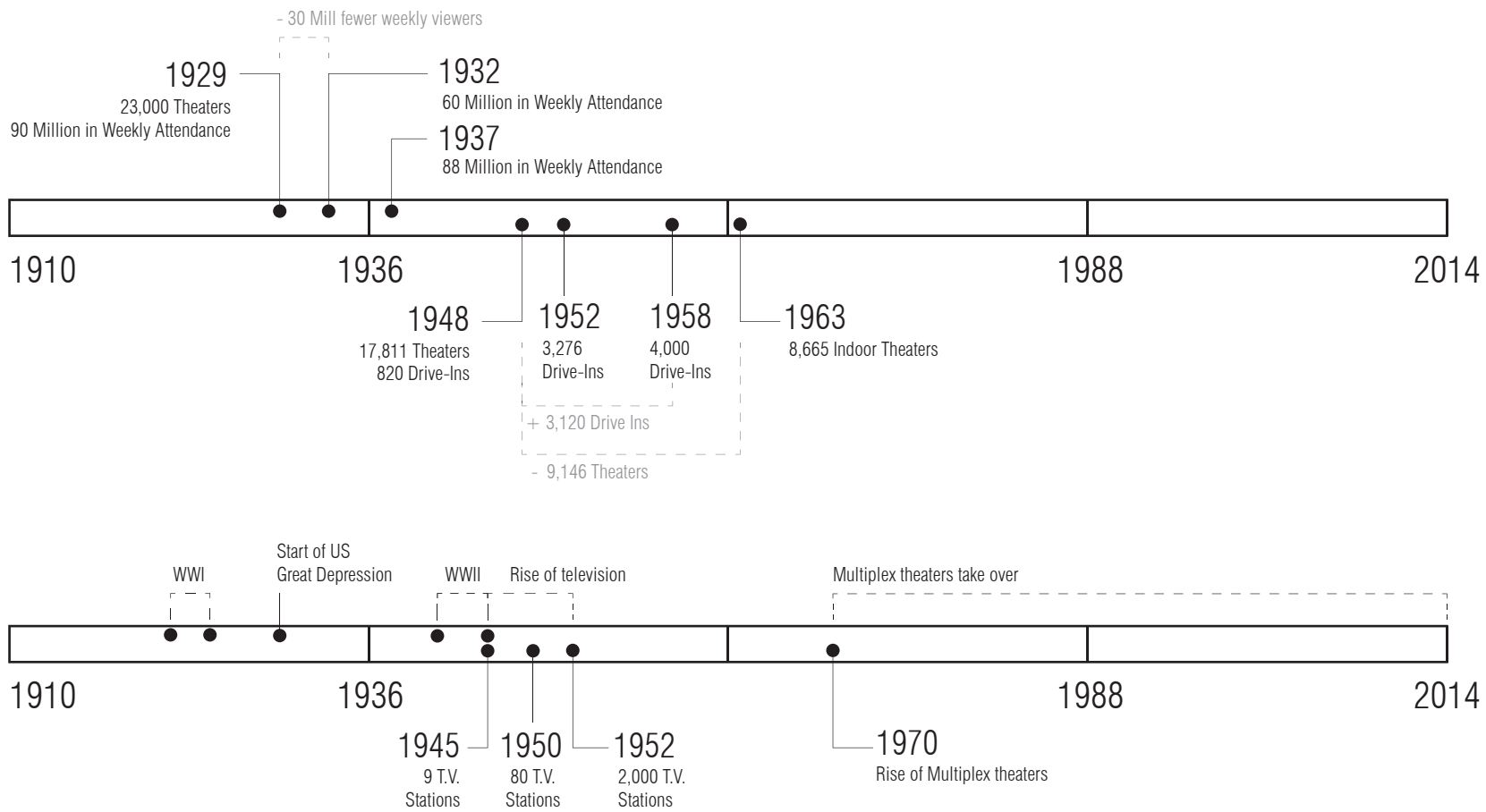


Figure 68 | Historical Impacts Timeline

Sources:
 (Forsher, 2003)
 (Motion Picture Association of America, 2013)

THE THEATERS HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

So what happened to the downtown theater? In its most simple form two factors weighed heavily on the decline in popularity of the downtown movie theater: the television and the automobile. After World War II, men and women came home and began to start new lives. Not ironically, at this same time television and the automobile were becoming increasingly popular. In 1945, immediately following the war, there were nine TV stations in the United States; seven years later, in 1952, there were 2,000 TV stations (Forsher, 2003), an astronomical increase in seven short years. People were given the chance to be entertained by the television in the comfort of their own home and during any season of the year.

Additionally, many of these new TV's were being placed on top of mantels in new homes built after the war in the suburbs. The popularity of the car, now even more affordable, allowed towns and cities to stretch and expand. New homes were being built further and further away from the community downtowns and the city center was slowly starting to diminish.

However, it should be noted that the popularity of the movie did not diminish as much as the popularity of the theater: the car brought on the advent of the Drive-In theater. Families could now load up the kids, drive their car to an open field, sit in the comfort of their own seat, and watch a movie. The kids could be rowdy, husbands could comment on the movie to their wives, and teens could get away with things they could not inside of a packed auditorium; people enjoyed the Drive-In. At almost the same time in history as the television started to draw away theater patrons from downtown on the weekend, the Drive-In had its own impacts on the Main Street theater. In 1948, 820 total Drive-Ins existed in the US; ten years later an incredible 4,000 Drive-Ins had been established (Forsher, 2003). From this point forward, the social experience enjoyed by people at a downtown theater had been compromised to become an individual experience (Forsher, 2003). From 1940 through 1960 over half of the country's theaters closed (Putnam, 2000). Unfortunately, for some of the downtown theaters that remained, in order to stay in business and attract

some level of patronage they started to feature X-Rated movies (Highsmith & Landphair, 1994). For the theaters reduced to this need, the nostalgia and positive memory of the theater was completely lost.

At the beginning of 1960 and really taking over throughout the 1970, the Multiplex and "Mall Theater" brought the popularity of movies out of its decade long slump. The movie companies started to use the television to their benefit by advertising new movies during commercials (Putnam, 2000). It turned out to be too late for the downtown theaters though, after 30 years of expansion and growth, decentralization from the downtown had impacted many towns and cities. Instead of returning to the downtown theater, new theaters were built in the sprawling suburbs close to new neighborhoods. Additionally, the theater industry soon found out with that two, three, or four screens could be added to the theater with virtually the same amount of staff working to increase profits (Forsher, 2003). Now, instead of the community collectively seeing one movie, the option of three or four movies reduced the social outcomes and benefits of the downtown theater. Additionally, with profit at the forefront of the developers minds, adding more screens meant increasing new construction start up costs. Collectively those start up cost came from the architectural features that once symbolized the downtown theater, leaving the character of the new theaters in the past along with the social experience.

In 1948, the Supreme Court ruled that movie corporations controlled a monopoly by producing, distributing and showing (in a corporate owned theater - Paramount, Fox, Loew's - MGM) movies (Putnam, 2000). While this affected few theaters in the country because many were individually owned in small communities, the decision did affect larger theaters in cities, effectively shutting them down or putting them on the market for individual buyers. In addition, during the late 1930s, a popular period for downtown theaters, 40% of all US theaters were in towns less than 2,500 people (Putnam, 2000). At that time in theater history a small town would show around 150 movies in a year, compared to a city theater that would show less than 25 movies a year (Putnam, 2000). A small population required higher turn around in showings to keep full attendances year round (Putnam, 2000). This high volume of showings

OPEN
 CLOSED
 OPEN PART-TIME, REUSE
 OWNERSHIP CHANGE

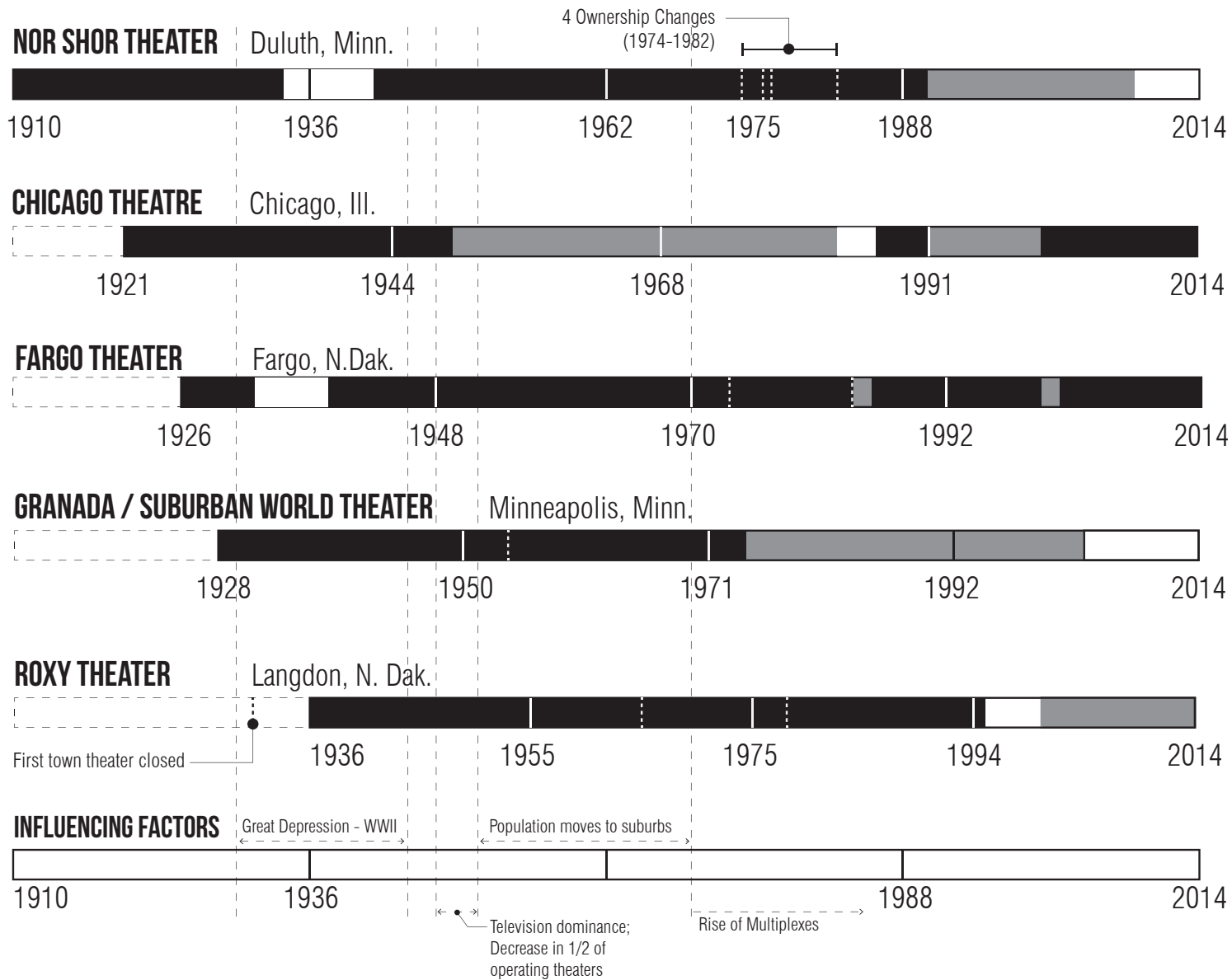


Figure 69 | A collection of theater histories

(Highsmith & Landphair, 1994) (Imboden, 2013)
 (Dierckins, 2010) (Hart, 1997)
 (Proposal for Suburban World Theater, 2013) (Fargo Theater, 1996)

was expensive for small towns and some theaters suffered when tough times hit the box office. While these two examples are mere wrinkles in the history of the downtown theater, they provide the example that many factors had a collective impact on the decline in our Main Street theaters.

The automobile and television have provided incredible opportunities for American society; however, not before they had their own unique hand in killing the most popular building typology in US history. The advent of the car decentralized our downtown core and drew people away from the theater. Drive-In theaters, made possible by cars, marked the start of the individual movie experience that changed the social benefits of the downtown theater. Finally TV's provided instant and accessible information and entertainment at the disposal of the people in their own living rooms, which reduced the need to seek social entertainment that the theater provided.

Figure 69 analyses five time lines of various theaters popular in our region and in the country. The goal of this study was to find patterns in the histories of varying theaters as an attempt to see if certain factors had an impact on the level of operation in these theaters. A selection of theaters was made to represent my thesis site theater in Duluth (Nor Shor), a local theater (Fargo Theater), a history theater in the Twin Cities (Granada), a regional small theater (Roxy Theater in Langdon, ND) and a popular national theater (Chicago Theater in Chicago, IL).

Analysis of these time lines:

- In three of the communities, Duluth, Fargo and Langdon, there was no theater open for the majority of the 1930s due in part to the affects of the Great Depression.
- In some form or another all representative theaters show some of troubling time between the mid-1950 and the 1980s.
 - The Nor Shor changed owners four times from 1974-1982
 - The Chicago Theater for the majority of three decades was abandoned or rarely open
 - The Roxy changed owners twice in almost a decade
- After the introduction of the Multiplex theater around the 1970s many theaters see operational changes or ownership changes; specifically Duluth's four changes, Chicago and the Granada's part-time use and closings, and Fargo's two ownership changes
- We also start to see great attempts at restoration in the late 1980s; proving unsuccessful after a few years of operation

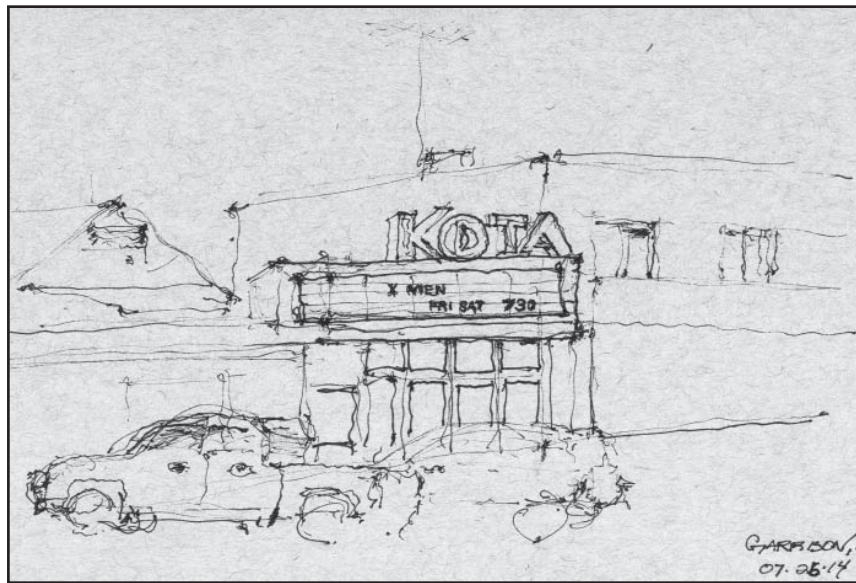


Figure 70 | Sketch of the Kota Theater in Garrison, North Dakota

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Our community downtown theaters are becoming forgotten. It is truly a shame that a once thriving, popular, and influential environment that brought communities together to interact and socialize has now been diminished to an uninspiring room showing a movie. These theaters stood as the backbone to our main streets and the landmarks of our towns. Architecturally the theater is significant because it inspired the memories of a community and served as the reminder of the past. The theater was a magical and inspirational place, and its architecture was able to take people to new and exciting places just as the movie was able to.

However, they are being abandoned and forgotten; and just as the historic theater is dying, so are the downtowns and communities that supported them. The automobile, which allowed for cities to sprawl and decentralize caused the urban core and the main street to dwindle in vibrancy and popularity during the middle of the century. It also introduced a new way to watch a movie, the Drive-In, which was society's first taste of a non-social movie experience. Television also hurt the downtown theater because now people had news and entertainment at their disposal whenever they wanted. All of these factors contributed to the decline of the social experience the downtown theater provided. In North Dakota, 75% of all theaters that were ever built are now closed. Of the theaters that are still surviving, only three of them are still in full-time operation. These communities need their landmark back and benefiting the social and economical environment of the community. Both quantitatively and qualitatively we can show that there is a correlation between a healthy and vibrant downtown community and having an operational theater. Perhaps one of the most shocking facts is that there are only three downtown theaters in North Dakota still showing movies full-time. There are a number of operational downtown theaters showing movies part-time, however, it begs the question, how much longer can they last? If these nostalgic buildings are not being used to their full potential to show movies, then we need to collectively find a new use for them so they can continue to serve as positive landmarks for our communities. The theater is too special in the memories and hearts of our community to have them remain unused and forgotten.

RESEARCH IMPACT ON DIRECTION OF THE THESIS

My initial intended and proposed use for the Nor Shor theater adaptive reuse was a corporate headquarters for Duluth Pack: a historic backpack manufacturer that has been creating beautiful and durable backpacks and bags in Duluth since the late 1800s. Research on these downtown theaters and their impact on the community has proven to me that they cannot make the same impact they did in 1940 today, as an office building with a production space. The Nor Shor and all theaters alike cannot be closed off to society and serve only the employees that go to work there everyday. They need to act as a local social opportunity and inspire the users in the same way they did as movie halls. Therefore, the project focus has changed programmatically, but the purpose will not change; theaters need to be symbols of vibrancy and social life in our communities.

Moving forward, questions were presented during the thesis research that need to be investigated further. A lot of effort was used to describe the qualitative impact that architecture had on the patrons of the theater, but what if I could prove that this impact was as powerful as discussed. Continued research will attempt to make a convincing argument that architecture had a major role in the popularity and presence of the downtown theater. Additionally, because of the weight placed on architecture's role in the downtown theater, it will be important to establish how that is translated into the new intended use for the theater as a downtown community union. Architecture made theaters in the 1920s, 30s and 40s places of inspiration and nostalgia, so it needs to be determined how to give as much impact to the architecture in the 21st century.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS ON PROGRAM

The downtown theater was never about the movie. The movie was always the icing on the already moist cake. When we hear, read and listen to stories about the old theater from those lucky enough to have lived to see it, we never hear about the movie or the actors, the story told is always about the memories of what happened before and after the movie and the friends that were along for the ride. The downtown movie theater was the opportunity for a community to come together to engage in a social environment for a few hours on a Friday night; the activity just happened to be a movie. The movie was cheap and everyone could go; it was the perfect formula for a community wide ritual every weekend. Let us not forget the impact that the architecture had on the theater experience. When memories were fostered at the theater, below the marquee, in the lobby and in the seats, the inspiring architecture helped to capture that memory and be a constant reminder of the events that happened in these palaces.

Why do people today go to coffee shops, or the library or the mall when they can get the product or the good from their home on their couch? Why do people go to bars or restaurants when they can go to the store and prepare whatever they want to consume from a recipe? People go to these spaces within the built environment to interact with their fellow neighbors and citizens: these places are informal social opportunities.

The downtown theater has died and people now enjoy “seeing movies” on an independent level; maybe they just want to actually see the movie today? So what does the downtown theater become in the 21st century? How can it impact the community socially, culturally and economically the same way today as it did in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s? Well I believe it can, but not by showing movies. In order to bring the community social aspect back we have to modify the program to meet the needs and wants of today’s “ticket buyer,” just as the theater modified their product throughout the early 20th century.



Figure 71 | Grand Theater in Oakes, North Dakota

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

In a generation where impactful and profound architecture has been lost, our communities need the built environment to make a rebound. Efficiency has been the best possible descriptor of the architecture built during my lifetime; having positive, but many more negative impacts on our neighborhoods. Efficiency has yielded boring design, driven by an efficient checkbook that tells our builders to refrain from pushing the envelope of design. Hipped roofs, steel studded buildings with brick and EIFS facades are the most efficient to build and the most efficient to design. These buildings fail to inspire anyone, except for local architecture students who feel obligated to push their design education in order to be better equipped to never have to build anything like that in their careers. What happened to design that excites the community and lasts for generations? What happened to buildings like the theaters that represented the values of a city and acted as a public symbol for the community? We need to bring architecture to the esteem and value it once held in our communities and the only way to do that is by reminding the public of the true worth in architecture. The revitalization of the theater is the perfect opportunity to exemplify the nostalgia that architecture facilitates between the built environment and its users in years gone by. Adaptive reuse of theaters can be the rebound that exemplifies the benefits of architecture once more.

Because the theater was once the symbol of the community, I know it has the potential to be that symbol again. My project, the Nor Shor in Duluth has the opportunity to pave the way for other communities with dead or struggling theaters to bring life back to their downtowns and make architecture the source of emotion and inspiration in our citizens. It is relatively easy to propose adaptively reusing a dying building typology, the hard part is creating design that does not diminish the historical value and nostalgia that the theater is held to in the community. It would be easy to go into a theater, tear everything down and start fresh, but that would not give these theaters their due respect or justice. The hard part in adaptively reusing a theater will be trying to make the architecture as inspirational to the patrons as they were originally. The value in this project will be how I am able to transform a historic typology along with its character defining features into a new typology while giving back to it the life it once had and the inspiration it once brought. These concepts will be the ultimate test in my skills and knowledge as a student of architecture.

Additionally, competency will be tested in how new technologies and architectural solutions can be introduced in an old building to not just preserve its historical nature, but ensure its extended life; Sustainable strategies is perhaps the most appropriate opportunity to do that in an adaptive reuse project.

SITE ANALYSIS

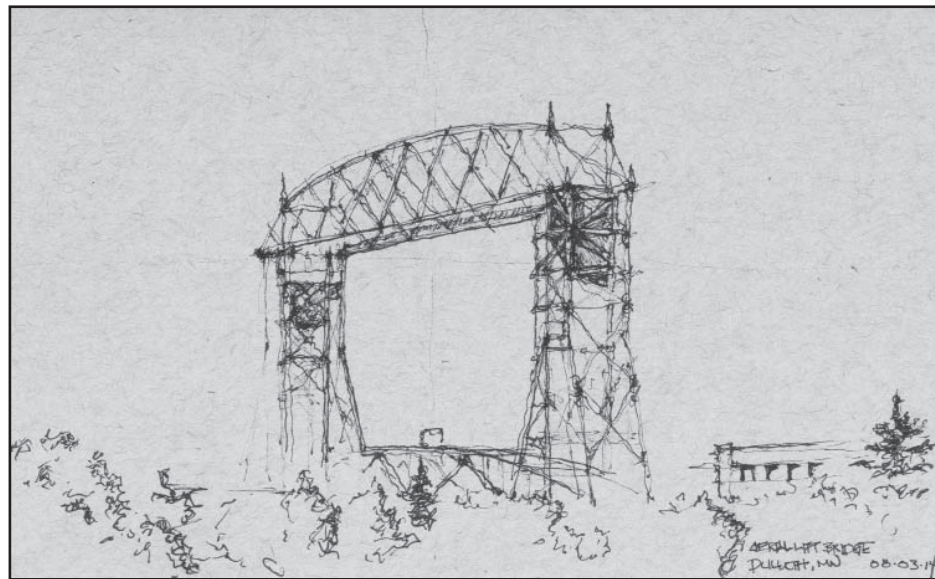


Figure 72 | Sketch of Lift Aerial Bridge in Duluth, Minnesota



Figure 73 | Site Map - Duluth, Minnesota

DULUTH, MINNESOTA

Positioned on the side of a mountain and on the shore of the world's largest fresh water lake, Duluth is truly one of the region's most unique cities. Downtown Duluth is made up of two unique sectors that attract varying levels of patrons, but operate relatively succinctly: Downtown Duluth and Canal Park.

Downtown Duluth is a dense environment with a tall streetscape offering a mix of offices, business, residential and restaurants. Downtown Duluth is what I would consider a "Mini Chicago"; the city feels very urban with a high building ceiling and large pedestrian activity. Also like Chicago, Downtown presents a very diverse population with a mix of locals, tourists, and transient groups. As discussed in the unifying idea, Downtown is coming out of an era of negative impacts and population groups that scared many of the locals out of the area. Downtown Duluth is emerging as a vibrant and popular urban area. Tourist activity is moderate, but scarce compared to Canal Park.

Canal Park is a tourists sector of Duluth populated with a smaller scaled buildings including hotels, shops, and restaurants. Summers bring in many tourists throughout the week and especially during the weekend in Canal Park. Winters are still busy, but not nearly to the summer level.

Overall, Duluth is truly a one of a kind city. The hilly, mountainous area fronting Lake Superior provides incredible picturesque environment. Both Downtown Duluth and Canal Park embrace the lake and take every opportunity to engage and interact with the natural wonder that represents their city.

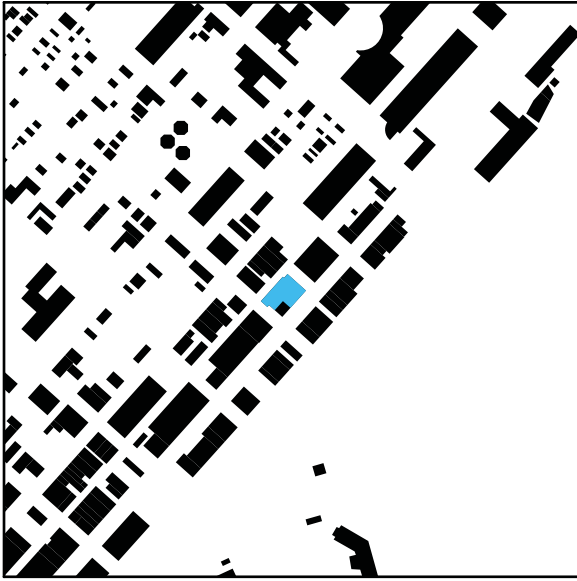


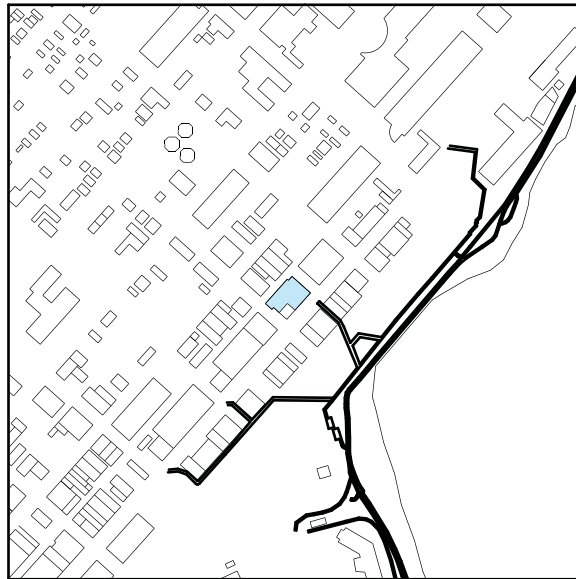
FIGURE / GROUND



ROADWAYS



LAND / WATER



WALK / BIKE PATHS

SITE ANALYSIS

FIGURE / GROUND

Downtown Duluth is a high density area, especially on Superior St. & First St. As blocks move away from Lake Superior it becomes less and less dense.

- Infill of lot to the northeast of Nor Shor is an option as a way of adding square footage to the program
- Because of the dense infill there are limited opportunities for parking or additional parking to service the new use

ROADWAYS

Interstate 35 runs southwest to northeast and splits Downtown Duluth from Canal Park; Duluth's major tourist hub. This unique circumstance would usually present a disconnect in the urban environment; however, smart planning has allowed the freeway to pass through the urban core relatively unnoticed. I-35 is masked by an overpass of pedestrian parks known as the Lakewalk, which creates a vegetative area on top of what would normally be a disturbance to the city.

LAND / WATER

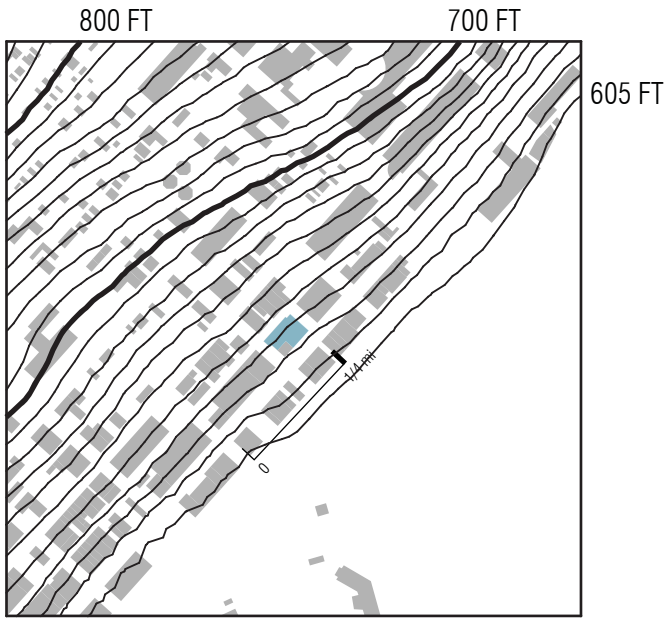
Duluth sits on the shore of the largest fresh body of water in the world, Lake Superior. From Duluth, the vastness of Lake Superior acts as if it is situated on the shores of Alaska instead of Minnesota. The views are breathtaking and give this city its own unique sense of place.

- Views to Lake Superior present sight lines from the building that are truly unique to Duluth

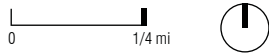
WALK / BIKE PATHS

The City of Duluth does an excellent job of embracing Lake Superior. The Lakewalk is a vast system of paths that allow for the pedestrian to interact with the lake; as also discussed it sits on top of portions of I-35 to mask the noise and high traffic volume. Limited entry opportunities exist to the Lakewalk because of perimeter buildings; luckily as shown in Figure 93c one Lakewalk entry point is directly across the street from the Nor Shor. This gives access to the site from Canal Park, Duluth major tourist hub. However, portions of the Lakewalk that cover I-35 have heavy vegetation (see Figure 95d); the day the area is pleasant, but in the evenings and at night it can be scary for pedestrians traveling from Downtown to Canal Park because of the sense of inclusion.

- The Lakewalk entry point across from the Nor Shor is the best possible opportunity to bring people from Canal Park to the Nor Shor; specifically visitors staying in Canal Parks hotels. What leverage is available to make the pedestrian path less intimidating at night to encourage use after dark?



TOPOGRAPHY



USE

- RETAIL / COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE / SERVICE
- FOOD / DRINK
- CULTURAL / ENTERTAIN
- PARKING
- RESIDENTIAL
- RELIGIOUS / EDUCATIONAL
- LODGING
- VACANT
- HEALTH / WELFARE



VEGETATION



TRAFFIC AMOUNTS

- LOW TRAFFIC
- MODERATE TRAFFIC
- HIGH TRAFFIC

SITE ANALYSIS

TOPOGRAPHY

The impact that Lake Superior has on Duluth is due in large part its terrain. Being perched on the side of a relatively mountainous slope allows Duluth to see Superior from virtually any vantage point in the city. As shown in Figure 78, the site has some manageable slope on the southwest side; enough to actually make up for one whole story in the building. The receiving dock in the backside (north) actually services the second floor, with entry on the southeast and southwest sides of the Nor Shor obviously being on the First Floor.

- Opportunities can be utilized if necessary to bring people immediately onto the second floor rather than having them enter on the first floor. This could be a private entry for a small business or servicing opportunities for deliveries.

USE

Downtown Duluth shows a healthy amount of offices and service buildings, many food and drink establishments and additionally a strong hospital and clinic presence, especially on the northeast end of Superior Street. Additionally, Duluth has what I would consider a large amount of parking structures Downtown.

However, if closely analyzed only two true cultural and entertainment related facilities exist in Downtown Duluth. A strong community has these sorts of activities to draw people to its urban core, and to engage in unique events.

- To bring an entertainment or cultural based program to the Nor Shor would open Downtown to new user groups that value these activities. When people come Downtown for a performance or a class they also eat at the restaurants Downtown and shop at the stores while Downtown.

VEGETATION

When perceived from lake side, the city of Duluth looks very populated with trees, especially towards the top of the hills (see Figure 50). Due to the large urban growth at the base of the hill and on the shores of Lake Superior the tree cover is obviously limited. However, as you can see there are many areas where trees and other vegetation give Duluth its stereotypical Minnesota character, including the Lakewalk paths and parks.

- Limited tree cover is offered on the sidewalks near the Nor Shor which is a nice touch for the pedestrian experience

TRAFFIC AMOUNTS

East Superior Street which fronts the Nor Shor to the southeast side is a high traffic area in Downtown, however, the speed limit is only 25 mph which helps make the area more pedestrian friendly. North 2nd Avenue which fronts the Nor Shor from the southwest side has a steep topography, but relatively low traffic volume amount. As discussed the high traffic volume of I-35 that splits Downtown Duluth from Canal Park is virtually unnoticed due to the Lakewalk park path.

The following traffic study was done around lunch time on a Monday afternoon in a three block span:

- E Superior Street (1st Ave to 3rd Ave): 61 Vehicles (Comparatively, 58 pedestrians)
- E 1st Street (one block north of Superior): 16 Vehicles (Comparatively, 42 pedestrians)



Figure 82 | Site Section Cut

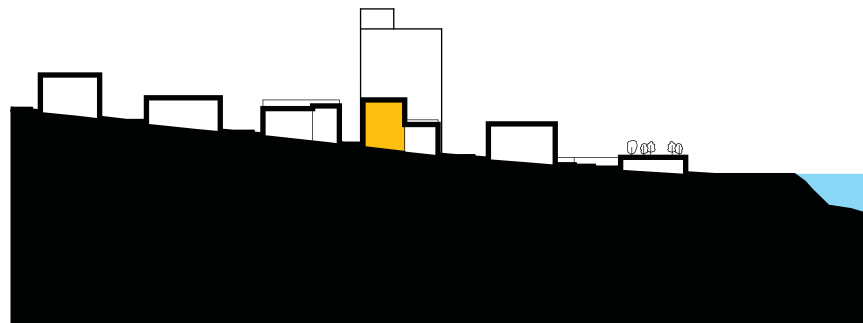
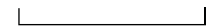


Figure 83 | Site Section Cut

 NOR SHOR THEATER

0  100 yrd

SITE ANALYSIS

Figure 82 gives a good representation of the scale of Downtown Duluth, especially near the Nor Shor. The building immediately to the northeast of the Nor Shor is the Greysalon Plaza Building, measuring almost 200 feet tall and 13 stories (Emporis Building Data). Further down East Superior Street to the northeast is another large Duluth skyscraper, the Sheraton Hotel, which measures almost 150 feet tall and 11 stories.

Figure 83 further expands on topics of interest already discussed. The steep topography as shown in Figure 83 slices a portion of the southwest facade of the Nor Shor, essentially cutting from the second floor down to the first floor grade level. These high grade streets demand cautious driving during the winter. Also shown in Figure 83 is the location of Lake Superior relative to the Nor Shor in a section cut view.

NOR SHOR THEATER Duluth, Minn.

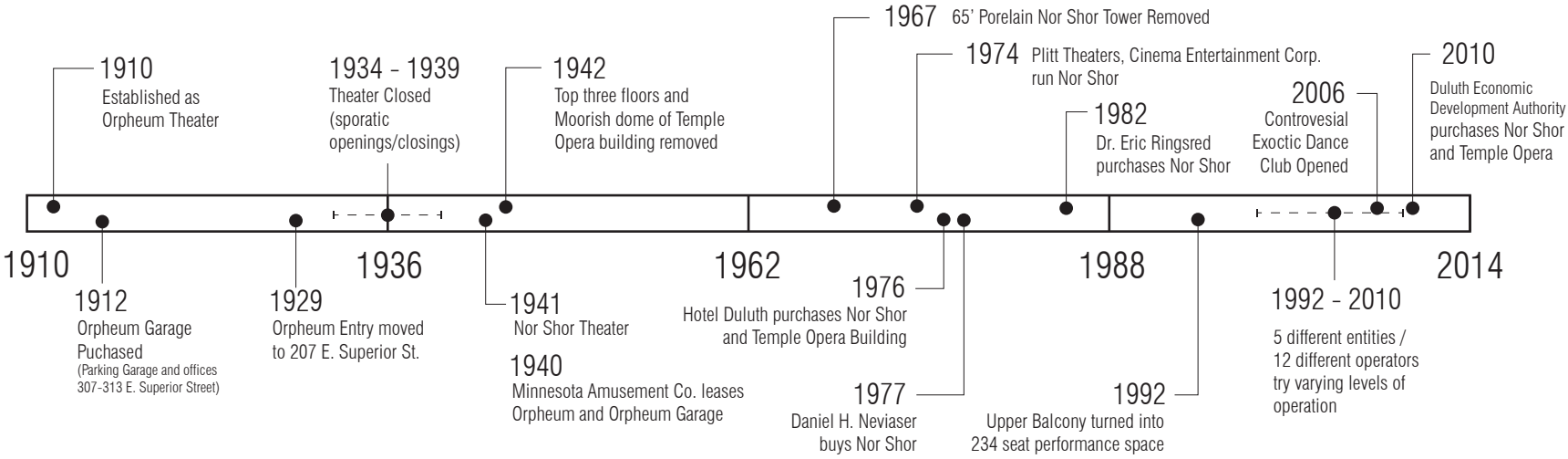


Figure 84 | Nor Shor Timeline

Sources: (Dierckins, 2010)

NOR SHOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES



Figure 85 | Nor Shor Auditorium

The interior of the Nor Shor reflects the designs of Liebenberg and Kaplans early 1940s renovation. The renovation moved the main entry of the theater to Superior Ave and in turn completely flipped the orientation of the theater; directly behind the stage on the photo showed would be the original facade of the Orpheum as shown in Figure 90.

Stair Mural

Interior Auditorium Wall Medallion

Wall Display Case

Auditorium Wall Light Detail



Figure 86a - 86d | Nor Shor Interior Character Defining Features



NOR SHOR CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Nor Shor Auditorium

Nor Shor Main Entry Elevation

Temple Opera Building

Figure 87 | Nor Shor Site Perspective



Figure 88 | Nor Shor Front Elevation

NOR SHOR MAIN ENTRY

Today's main entry is altered from the original marquee design by Liebenberg and Kaplan. Missing are the "Nor Shor" marquee letters along with the 65' porcelain tower that stood above the existing entry facade.

Porcelain Facade Panel

Stone Pilaster Detailing



Figure 89a - 89b | Nor Shor Character Defining Features



Figure 90 | Nor Shor Auditorium Elevation

AUDITORIUM

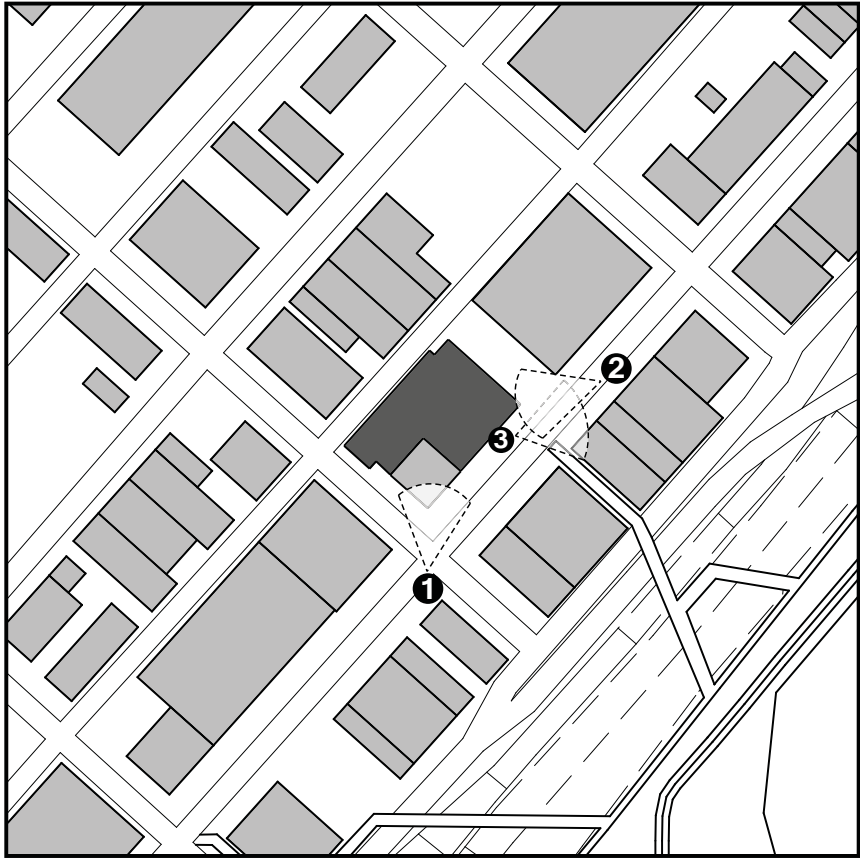
This neoclassical design was the main entry facade of the original theater, the Orpheum. The theater closed at the end of the 1930s and was renovated by the architects Liebenberg and Kaplan into the Nor Shor. The entry was moved from this 2nd Ave East location to the Superior Ave entry.

Facade Pediment

Facade Window Detail



Figure 91a - 91b | Nor Shor Character Defining Features



0 100 FT 100 YD



Figure 92 | Nor Shor Sire Context Views 1-3

VIEWPORT DIAGRAMS



1
Figure 93a | Nor Shor entry second building to right; auditorium second on the left. Temple Opera block on corner

Dark Sandstone
 (Brownstone)



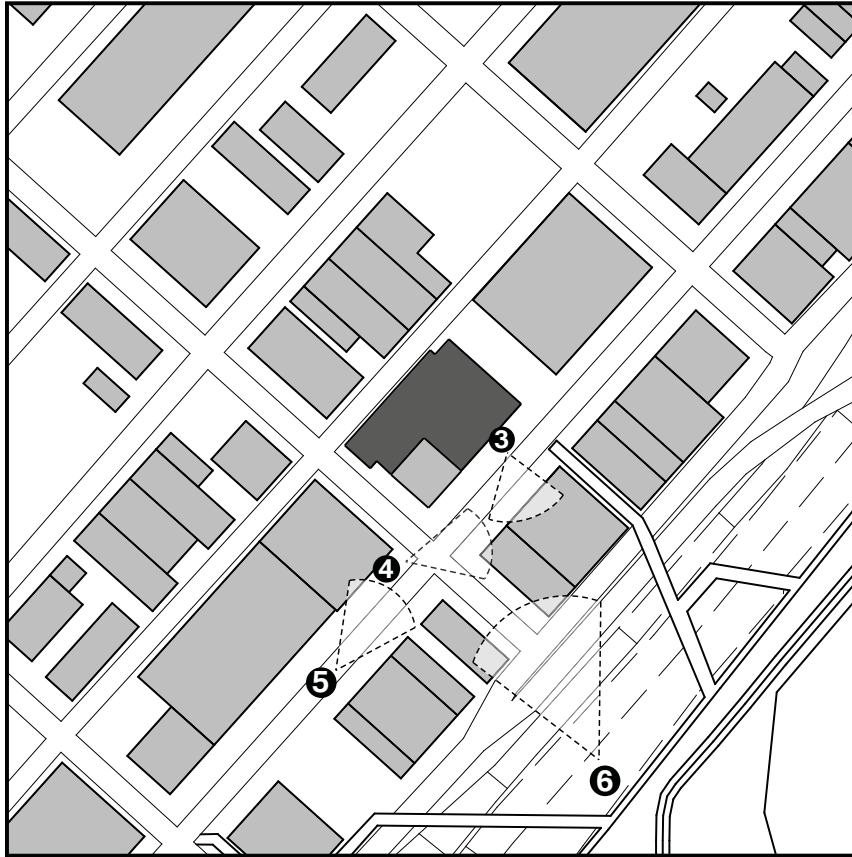
2
Figure 93b | Nor Shor entry on Superior Ave

Brown Brick
 Tan Porcelain Tile
 Glazed Ivory Block



3a
Figure 93c | Storefronts and Lake Place lake walk entry across street from Nor Shor entry

Tan Brick
 Painted White Brick
 Decorative Brick



0 100 FT 100 YD



Figure 94 | Nor Shor Sire Context Views 3-6



Figure 95a | Vacant Storefront across street from Nor Shor entry

Painted White Brick
Brown Brick



Figure 95b | Corner building across from Nor Shor (visible building to the right of View 3b)

Painted White Brick
Brown Brick



Figure 95c | Looking northeast down Superior (Nor Shor Entry at far left)

Orange Standard Brick
Red Sandstone
Glazed Ivory Block



Figure 95d | Looking north toward Nor Shor from Lakewalk

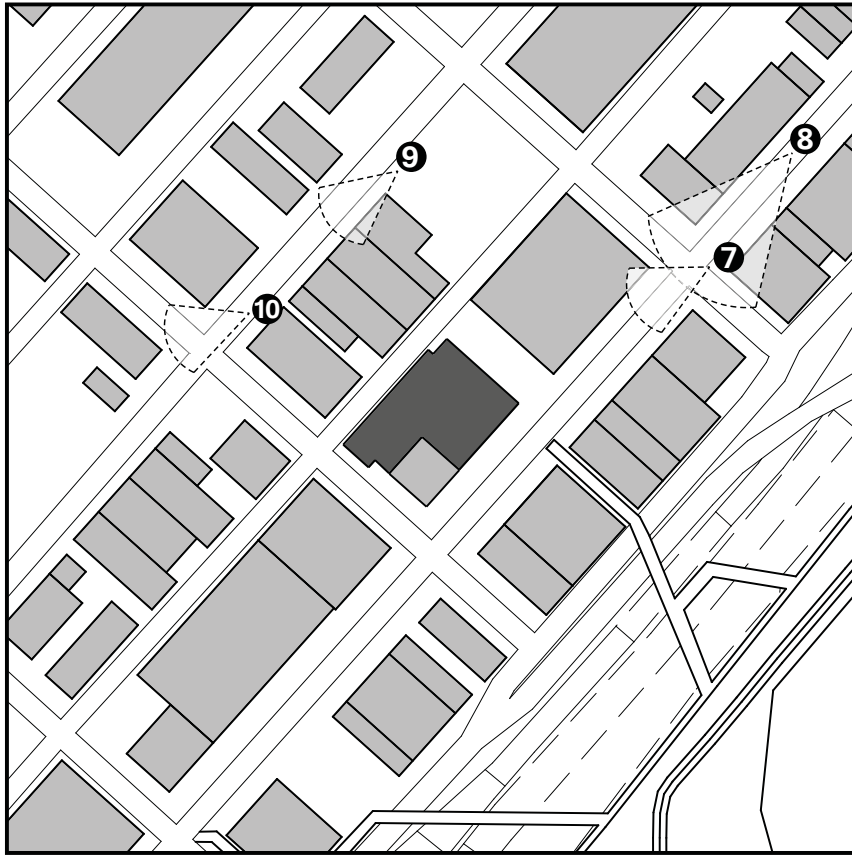


Figure 96 | Nor Shor Sire Context Views 7-10



Figure 97a | Looking south down Superior;
Nor Shor entry to right

Tan Standard Brick
Glazed Ivory Brick



Figure 97b | Vantage point further north on Superior looking south

Glazed Yellow Block
Orange Standard Brick



Figure 97c | Streetscape one block north of Nor Shor

White, Orange, & Tan Brick
Red Sandstone



Figure 97d | Streetscape corner northwest of Nor Shor auditorium

Red Standard Brick
Red Sandstone

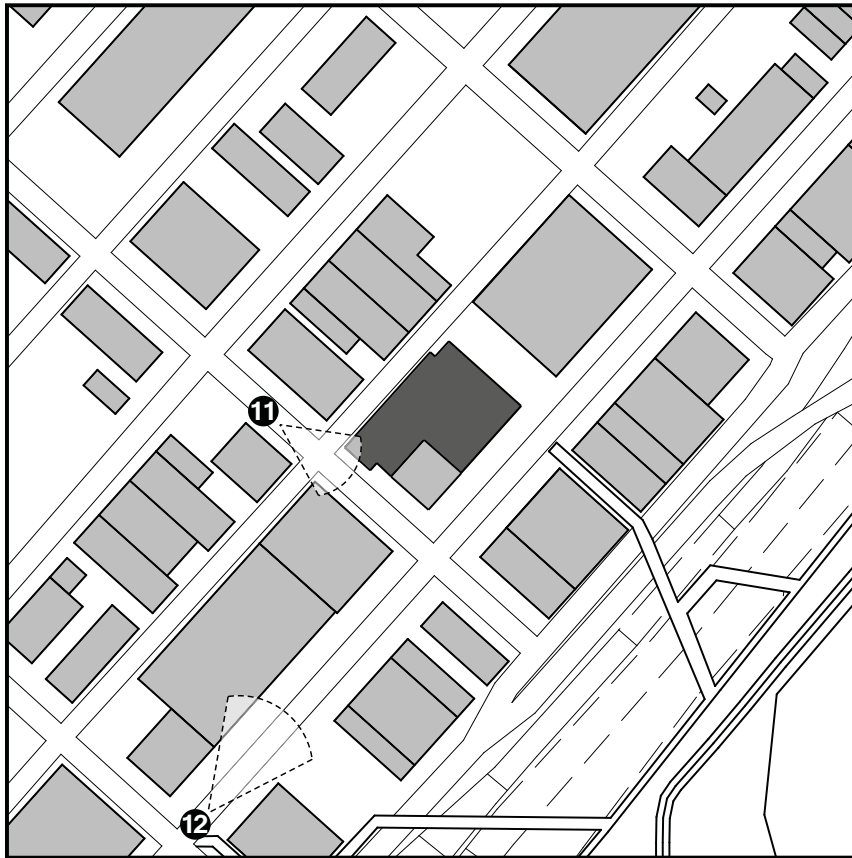


Figure 98 | Nor Shor Sire Context Views 11 & 12



Figure 99a | Looking east toward Nor Shor Auditorium
 Red Flemish Brick
 Ivory Stone Block
 Tan Brick



Figure 99b | Parking structure with streetscape vegetation south of Nor Shor
 Orange Standard Brick

Figure 100a | Annual Duluth Temperatures

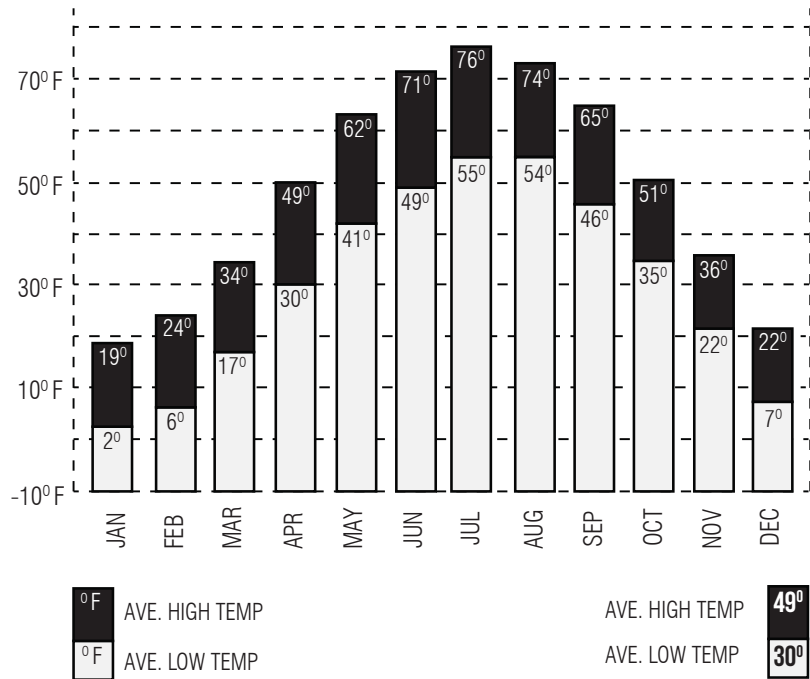


Figure 100b | Annual Duluth Precipitation

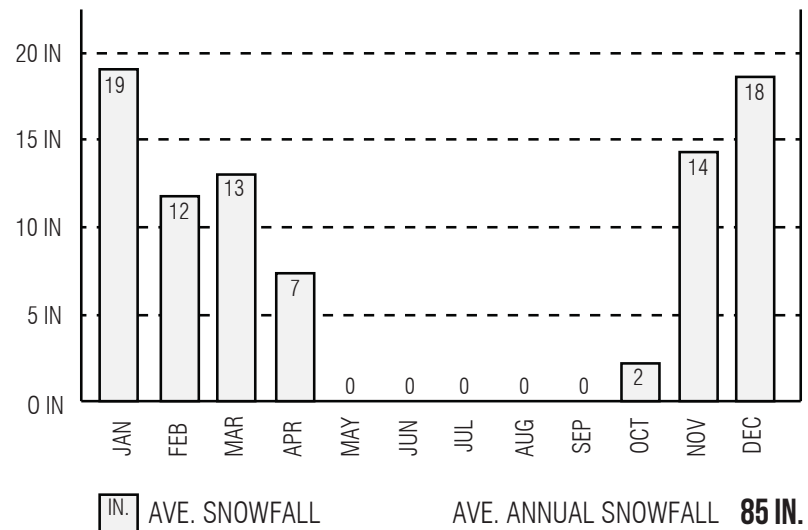
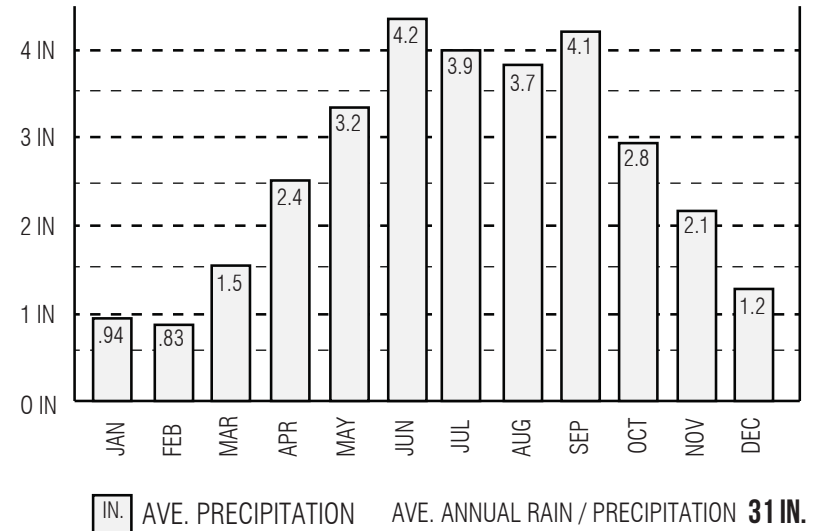


Figure 100c | Annual Duluth Snowfall

CLIMATE ANALYSIS

SUMMER TEMPS

Downtown Duluth has a unique micro-climate because of its adjacency to Lake Superior. As you can see this provides relatively balmy summer temperatures averaging low to mid 70s through the summer months.

- For this reason Duluth provides a good opportunity for passive energy solutions. Upper 60s and low 70s are perfect temperatures for naturally ventilating and heating a building which could be applied from mid to late May through September.
- Sun shading to prevent direct sun exposure may not be the best solution for the Nor Shor

SUMMER TEMPS

Many define Duluth by its brutal winter months with cold temperatures and a lot of snow. The average temp is below 10° between December and February and 85 annual inches of snow.

- Windows on the southeast provide opportunities for winter solar gain in the morning and the tall facade fronting 2nd Avenue on the southwest side will provide solar gain in the afternoon even with a lower sun angle during the winter.

WIND SPEEDS

Figures 101a & b indicate the high average wind speeds coming from the northwest in the winter and southeast in the summer. In many months Duluth averages double digit wind speeds. This keeps summer temperatures down because of summer winds come off of the lake and makes winter even more intense with strong winds from the northwest. Building's neighboring the Nor Shor to the north and northwest provide good protection from strong winter winds, but downtown areas can produce some wind channeling on some streets.

- Passive energy solutions should place winter heating as a priority with low temps and high winds.

Because of the Nor Shor's strong facade presentation on the southwest and southeast side, there are minimal openings (doors, windows) on the northern side of the building.

- This design feature during benefits the Nor Shor by blocking the strong north west winds and also provides opportunities for passive wind cooling in the summer with winds coming off of Lake Superior from the southeast and southwest.

SOLAR GAIN

Because of the moderate summer high temps in Duluth, solar shading is only a priority from late June to early August; a little over one months span (see Figure 102c).

Duluth averages only about 6 to 7 days of clear skies which obviously yield solar gain opportunities. However, Duluth is overcast half of the year.

- Design features can help the Nor Shor to passively heat interior spaces during the winter, but only if the sun is abundant. Efforts should be made to achieve this passive heating but cannot be a main source of heating

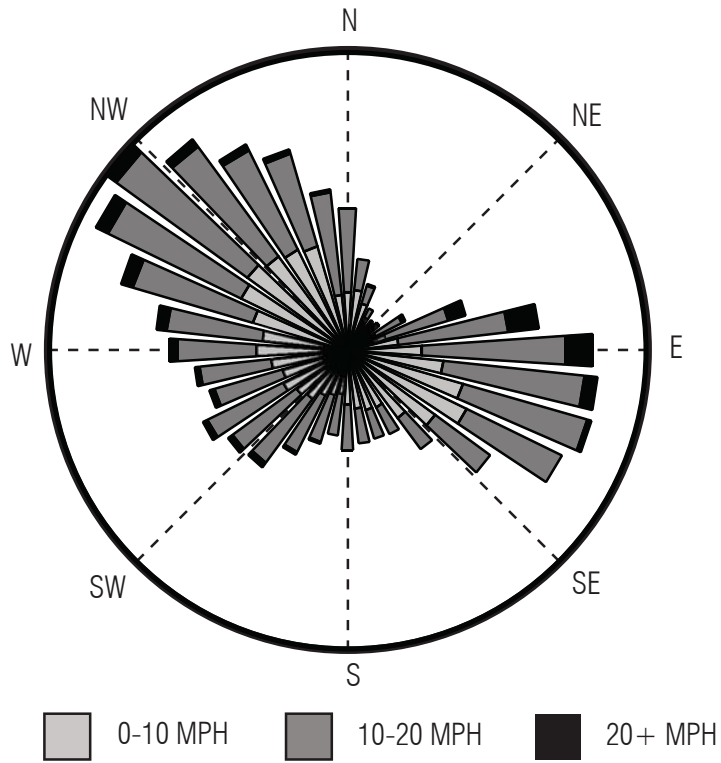


Figure 101a | Average Annual Wind speed and Direction

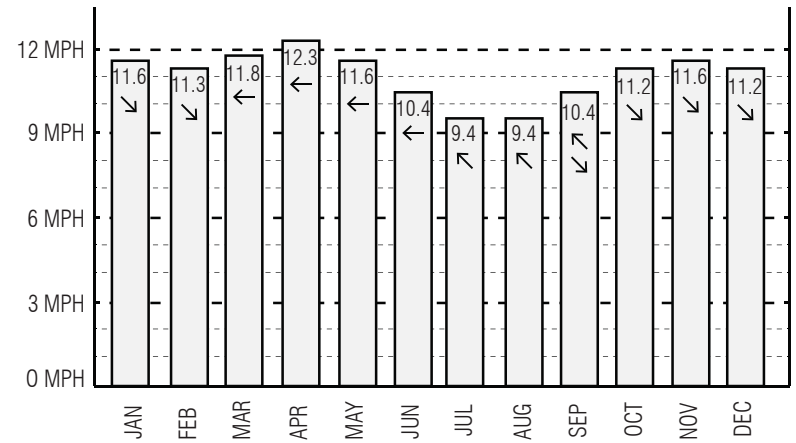
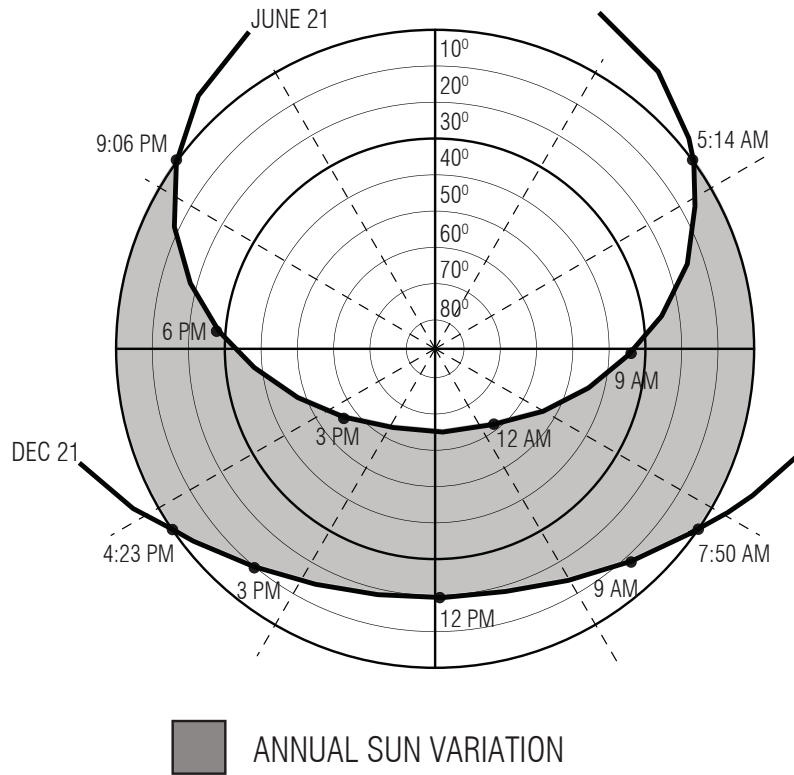


Figure 101b | Average Monthly Wind Speed and Direction



WHEN TO SHADE?: 75°F+ JUNE 30 - AUGUST 12

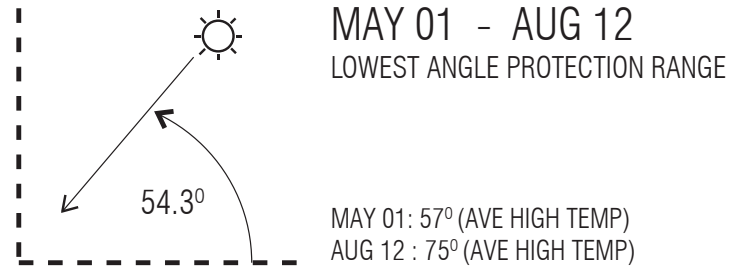
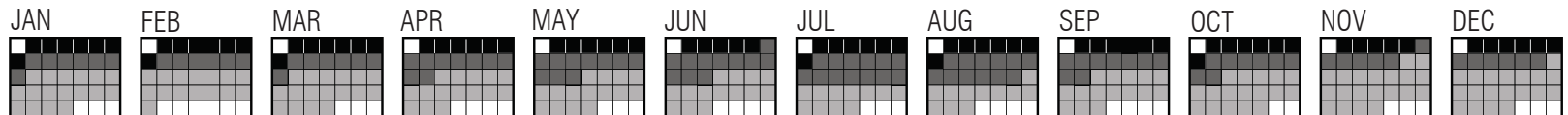


Figure 102c | Monthly Sun / Cloud Cover

■ CLEAR DAYS ■ PARTLY CLOUDY DAYS ■ OVERCAST DAYS



BUILDING PROGRAM

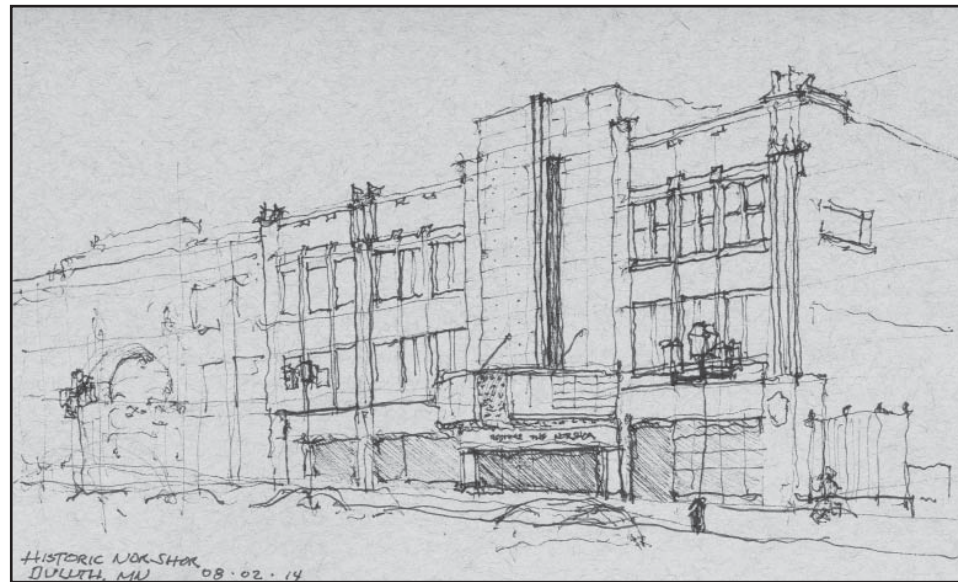


Figure 103 | Site sketch of Nor Shor

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

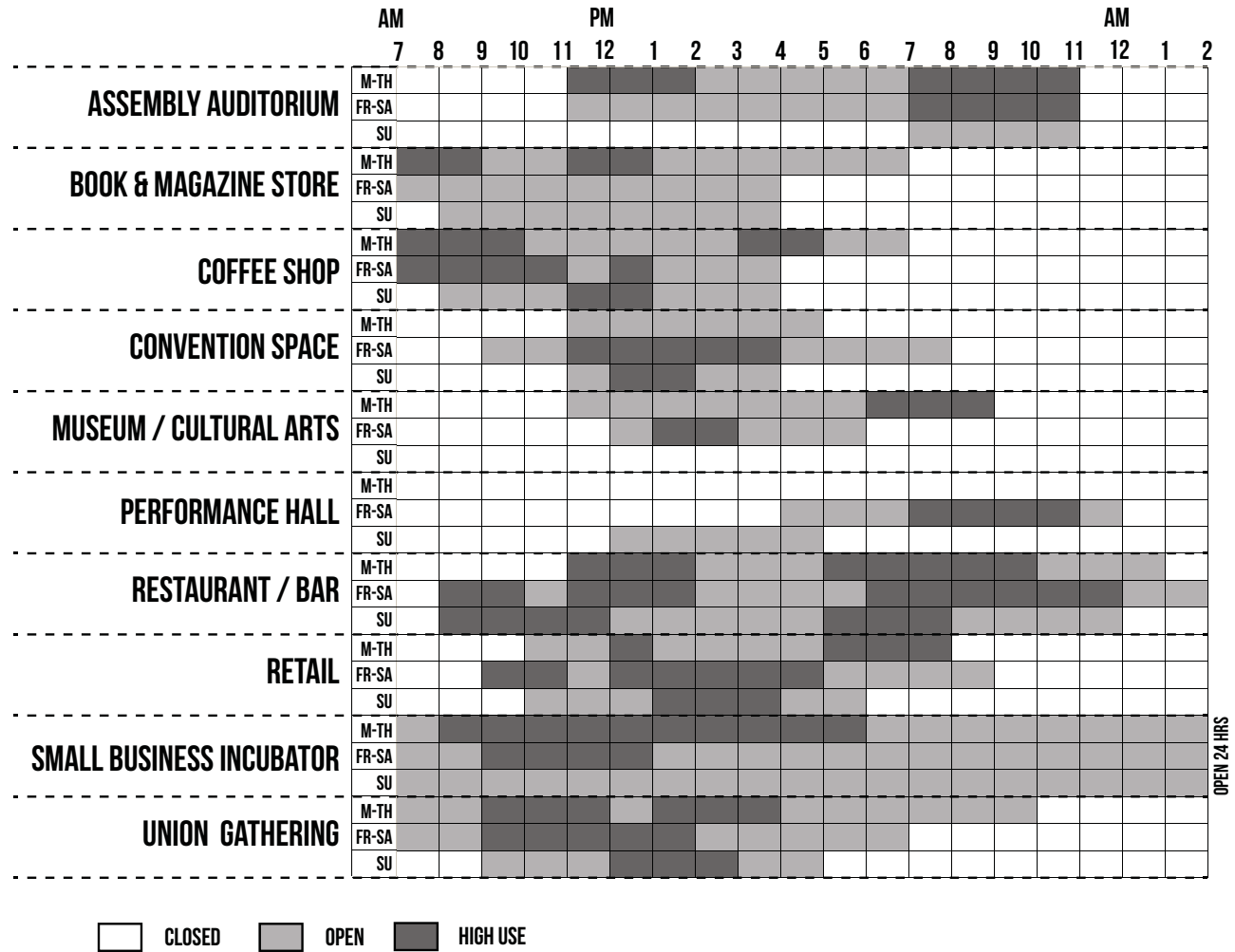
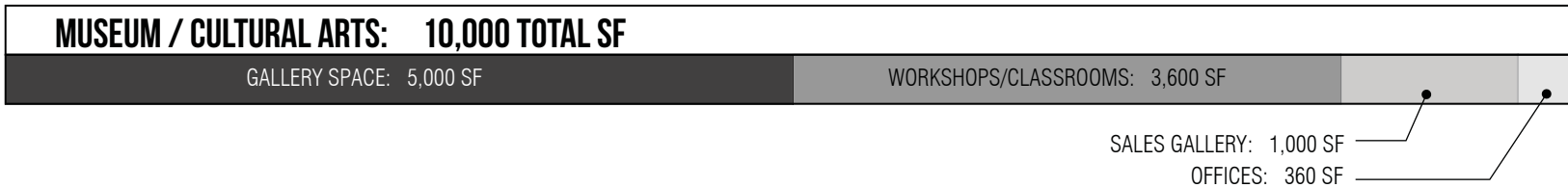
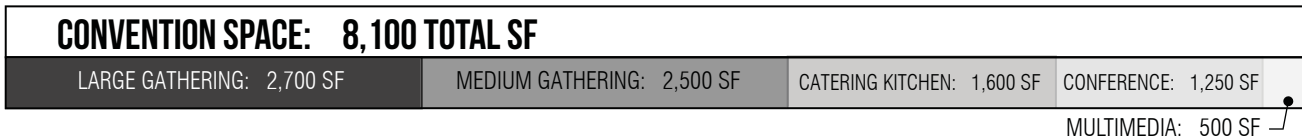
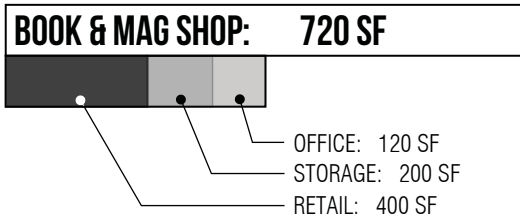
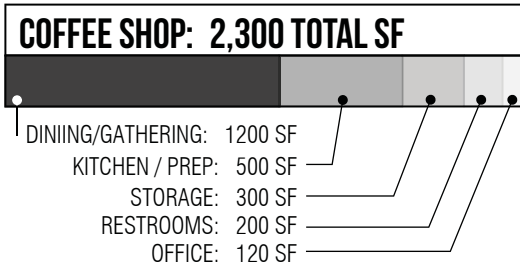
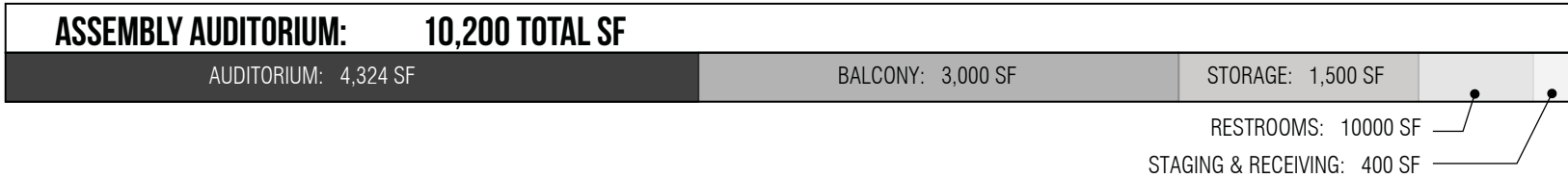
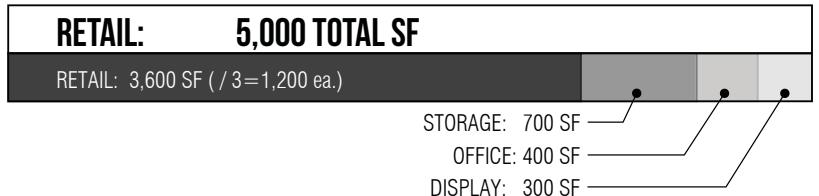
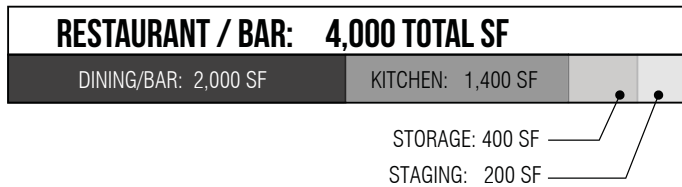
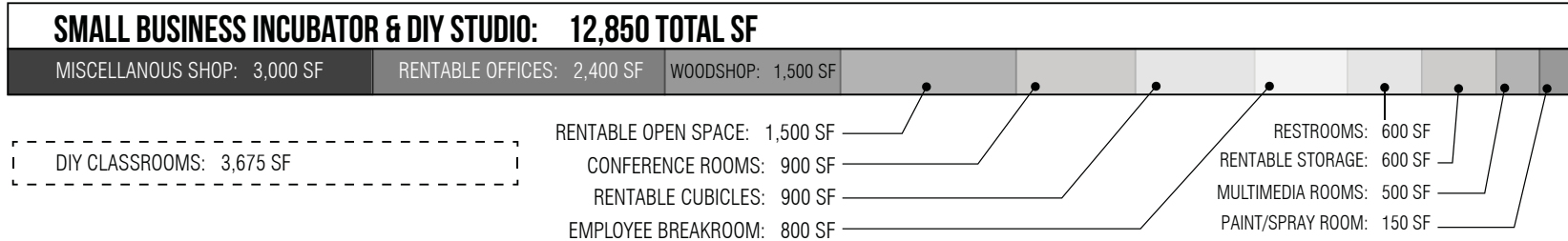
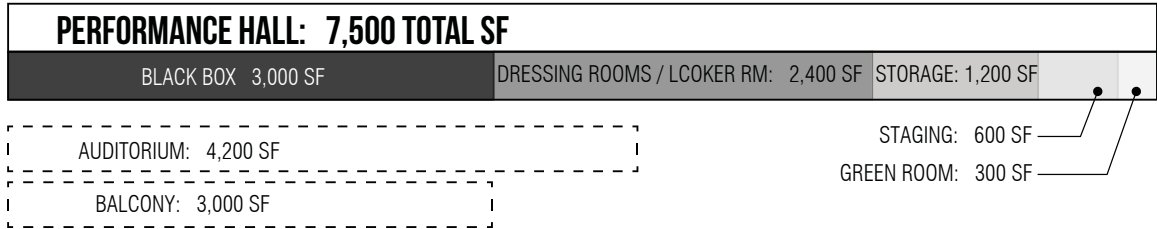


Figure 104 | Weekly Schedule - Nor Shor Community Union

PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS





EXISTING NOR SHOR SQUARE FOOTAGE:	53,520 TOTAL SF
TOTAL PROGRAMMED SQUARE FOOTAGE:	63,900 TOTAL SF

INTERACTION NET DIAGRAM

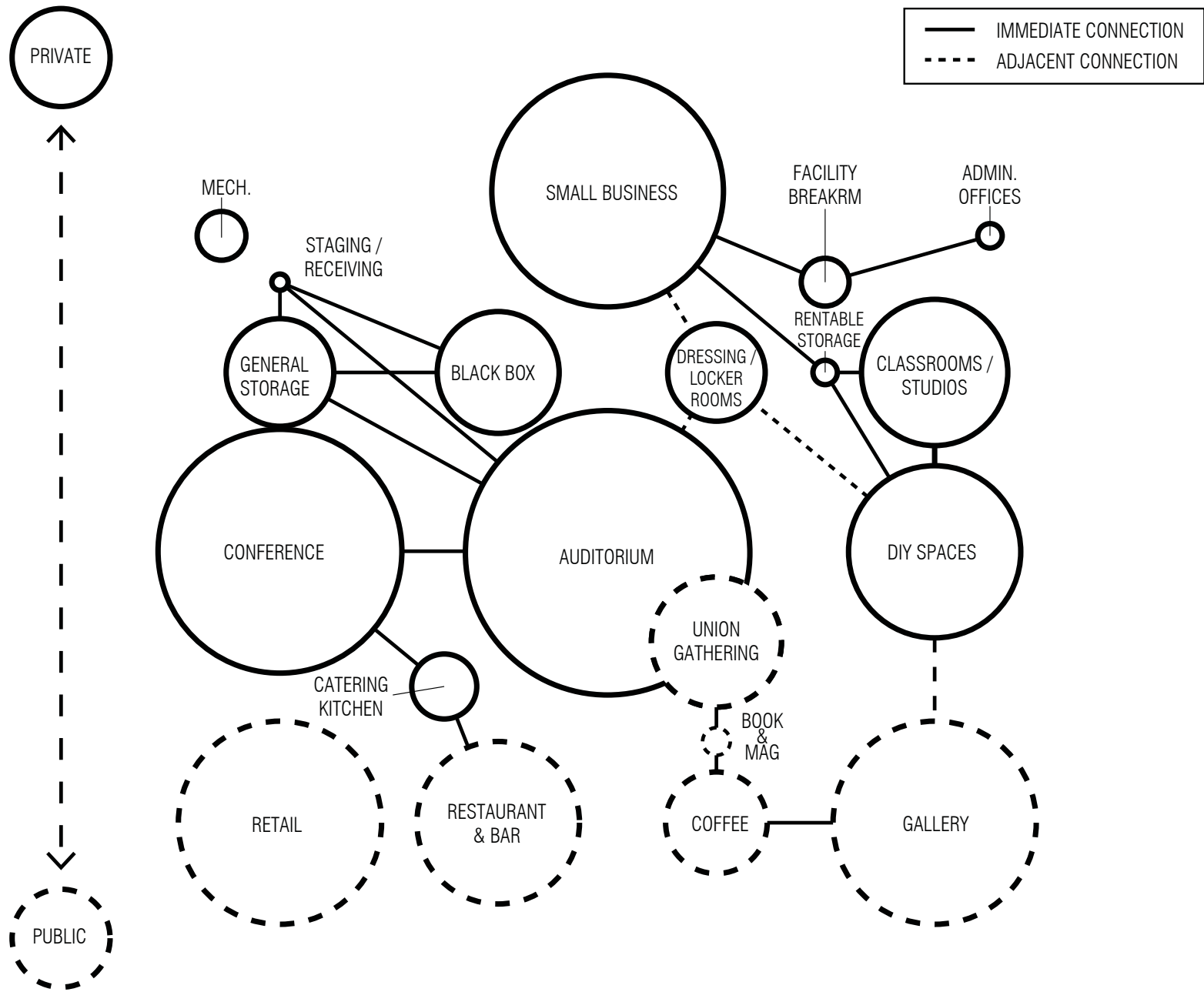


Figure 106 | Spatial Interaction Net

DESIGN INVESTIGATION



Figure 107 | Section "Sliver" Models



Figure 108 | Fargo Theater in Fargo, N. Dak with the marquee removed
Dennis Leung | original photo credit



Figure 109 | Krieger Theater in Gackle, N. Dak with the marquee removed

INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS: ANALYSIS

IMPACTS ON THE LANDSCAPE

An initial investigation was done as a way of understanding how the theater impacts the built environment of the downtown landscape.

Questions such as the following were asked as a way of understanding this analysis:

How important is the theater to the downtown landscape?

Would the character of our downtown's change without the theater?

How does the visual impact of the theater change with a larger density environment?

As I looked at these studies I discovered a few things:

Without the marquee our downtown loses a significant sense of place; this is due in large part to the presence of the marquee. Without the marquee the theater is difficult to distinguish as its respective typology.




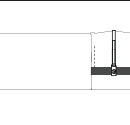
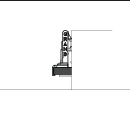
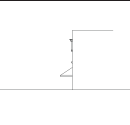
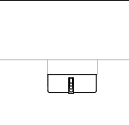







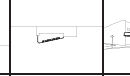
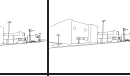
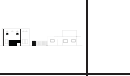








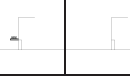

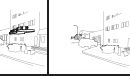
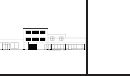







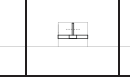
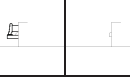
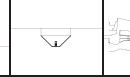









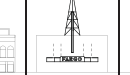

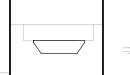



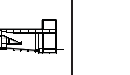





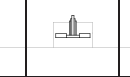
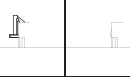

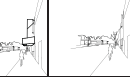

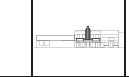








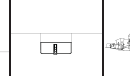














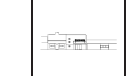






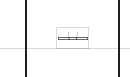



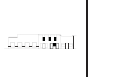
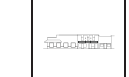
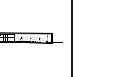





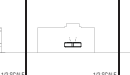





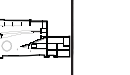





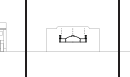

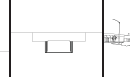

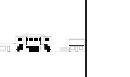
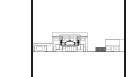






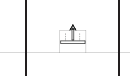

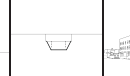


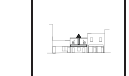






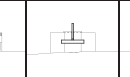
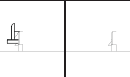
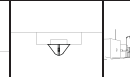
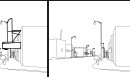








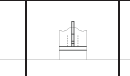
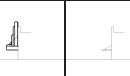









GRAND THEATER OAKES, N.DAK. PART TIME												
INFO (TOWN STATUS) <small>PT: PART TIME; FULL: FULL TIME; CLOSED: CLOSED; *INDICATES THEATER IS CURRENTLY CLOSED</small>	PERSPECTIVE PHOTO	ELEVATIONS	ELEVATIONS W/O MARQUEE	ELEVATIONS JUST MARQUEE	SIDE ELEVATION (MARQUEE)	SIDE ELEVATION (W/O MARQUEE)	MARQUEE PLAN	PERSPECTIVE *	PERSPECTIVE W/O MARQUEE *	WINDOW STUDY (THEATER) *	CONTEXT BLDG *	SECTIONS *
BELFIELD THEATER BELFIELD, N.DAK. CLOSED												
CAVALIER THEATER CAVALIER, N.DAK. PART TIME												
COMET THEATER PERHAM, MINN. FULL TIME												
FARGO THEATER FARGO, N.DAK. FULL TIME												
GOPHER THEATER WHEATON, MINN. CLOSED												
GRAND THEATER OAKES, N.DAK. PART TIME												
KRIEGER THEATER GACKLE, N.DAK. CLOSED												
MAYER THEATER HEBRON, N.DAK. PART TIME												
NOR SHOR THEATER DULUTH, MINN. CLOSED												
RIALTO THEATER AITKIN, N.DAK. PART TIME												
SCENIC THEATER LISBON, N.DAK. PART TIME												
SISTON THEATER SISSETON, S.DAK. CLOSED												
STRAND THEATER BRITTON, N.DAK. PART TIME												

Figure 110 | Existing theater condition analysis

THEATER THUMBNAI

As a way of understanding the commonalities that are present in downtown movie theaters I performed a series of comparative analyses. These drawings helped me to identify commonalities in the theater by comparing the theaters' elevations, marquee massing, context, perspective viewpoints, etc.

By placing the drawings in a grid, I was able to compare at an efficient level and as a result I was able to identify differences among what I had established as a study to find commonalities.



Figure 111 | Schematic Section Models

SCHEMATIC SECTION MODELS

The understanding of the section cut as a way of studying these theaters became an early priority in my investigation. Planning the arrangement of space section was just as important as in plan.

As a conceptual way of intervening within the constraints of the theater I built over 80 models with 3 different representative materials (painted wood block, tag board planes, and wire mesh). This iterative study was not only beneficial in the use of three distinct materials to generate ideas in how to intervene with masses, floor and wall plates, and organic forms.

Taking a step back from the process I realized its impacts on my overall design process. When I built these models for one theater, which ended up being between 15-20 models it was a easy process to generate quick ideas. As I progress through the different materials and the remaining theaters I soon realized that by generating 80-100 models required another level of more deliberate design decisions because of the need to differentiate each iteration from the next to produce as many ideas as possible.



Figure 112 | Duluth, Minn. Site Context Study



Figure 113 | Mayville, N.Dak. Site Context Study

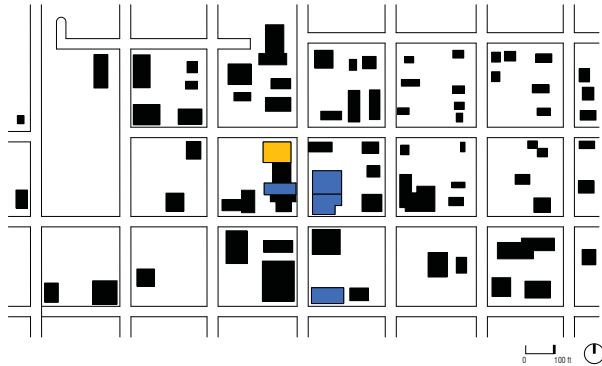


Figure 114 | Sisseton, S.Dak. Site Context Study

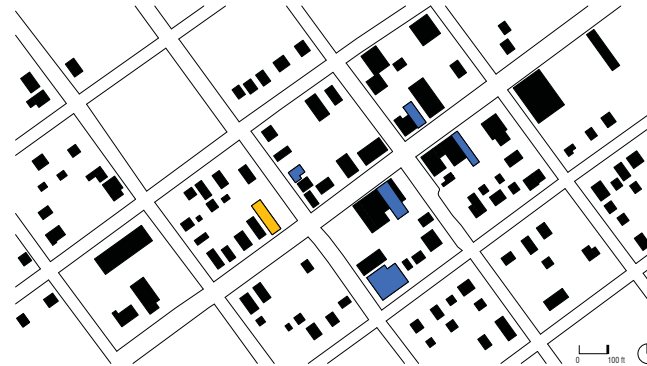


Figure 115 | Walhalla, N.Dak. Site Context Study



Figure 116 | Wheaton, Minn. Site Context Study

SITE CONTEXT

To ensure a focused and specific investigation for the project I narrowed my investigation to five theaters:

Nor Shor Theater in Duluth, Minnesota
Delchar Theater in Mayville, North Dakota
Siston Theater in Sisseton, South Dakota
Walla Theater in Walhalla, North Dakota
Gopher Theater in Wheaton, Minnesota

As a way of establishing differentiation for the programmatic needs of each theater I wanted to find what events, activities, cultural niches, and identities each one of these five communities had that would be specific in developing a program that would suite the needs and interests of the people that would support it.

For some communities the distinction was in existing amenities or attractions:

Mayville, North Dakota is home to the Delchar Theater, but also Mayville State University. The adaptive reuse of the Delchar could be a downtown student union that provided study spaces for group projects, class presentations or small evening concerts.

Wheaton, Minnesota had an active Senior Community Center, but is currently too small to host social events. By expanding to the Gopher Theater just one block down Broadway, the Wheaton Senior Center could host woodworking seminars or pinochle tournaments.

These community analyses also revealed specific cultural niches:

Duluth, Minnesota has a growing and active Downtown core with many shops, restaurants and tourist activities; however there is little cultural or entertainment opportunities. The Nor Shor Theater could be adaptively reused to be a Downtown Community Union that provided venue space for keynote speakers, conferences, weddings or luncheons.

Sisseton, South Dakota is located on the Traverse Indian Reservation in the Northeast corner of the state. The closest youth center is 12 miles south of Sisseton. My emphasis for the Siston Theater was placed in providing healthy, active spaces for the youth of the community.

Unique activities or events within the community provided a basis for programmatic adaptive reuse:

The Chamber of Commerce in Walhalla, North Dakota hosts many popular activities within the community such as holiday events like the Walhalla Pumpkin Festival, Light Up Walhalla, and the Festival of Trees. The current chamber facility is made up of small offices but does not have the space to host the wide range of activities it hosts. With an increase in space, including areas for large gatherings, the Chamber could host events within its facility at the adapted Walla Theater.

<p>WALLA THEATER Walhalla, N.Dak. 963 Pop. 6,000 SF</p> <hr/> <p>INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE: Positive social environment of the community in the theater</p> <p>TARGET: ADOLESCENCE (0-10) Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>NICHE EVENTS / COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: A. Strong Chamber of Commerce i. Light Up Walhalla ii. Pumpkin Fest iii. Festival of Trees</p> <p>ADAPTIVE SPACES: 1. Multipurpose Community Room 2. Community Conference Room 3. Chamber Employee Offices 4. Outdoor Activity Space`</p>	<p>SISTON THEATER Sisseton, S.Dak. 2,450 Pop. 5,300 SF</p> <hr/> <p>INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE: Lack of opportunities to interact and practice activities with peers</p> <p>TARGET: YOUTH (10-18) Youth Activity Center</p> <p>NICHE EVENTS / COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: A. Located on Indian Reservation B. Youth Center 12 miles south of Sisseton</p> <p>ADAPTIVE SPACES: 1. Art Focus 2. Homework/ Library/Computer 3. Weekly Speakers 4. Outdoor Activities 5. Indoor Gymnasium</p>	<p>DELCHAR THEATER Mayville, N.Dak. 1,905 Pop. 3,500 SF</p> <hr/> <p>INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE: Lack of opportunities to interact and practice activities with peers</p> <p>TARGET: COLLEGE (18-22) Downtown Studio Union</p> <p>NICHE EVENTS / COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: A. Mayville State University (3/4 Mile away from downtown)</p> <p>ADAPTIVE SPACES: 1. Coffee Shop / Study Space 2. Multimedia Spaces 3. Student Organization Rooms 4. Bar / Concert / Stage Space</p>	<p>NOR SHOR THEATER Duluth, Minn. 86,128 Pop. 53,500 SF</p> <hr/> <p>INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE: Positive business and social climate of Downtown Duluth</p> <p>TARGET: PROFESSIONAL (22-60) Community Collaboration Center</p> <p>NICHE EVENTS / COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: A. 86,000+ Population Community B. Thriving / Active Downtown</p> <p>ADAPTIVE SPACES: 1. Coffee Shop / Study Space 2. Retail 3. Small Business Start Up Space 4. Restaurant Bar 5. DIY Workshops / Studios 6. Performance / Conference Space</p>	<p>GOPHER THEATER Wheaton, Minn. 1,424 Pop. 6300 SF</p> <hr/> <p>INFLUENCING EXPERIENCE: Desire to meet fellow retired friends in a small community</p> <p>TARGET: RETIREMENT (60+) Senior Community Center</p> <p>NICHE EVENTS / COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS: A. 10-18 miles to Lake Traverse i. Cabins/Retirement</p> <p>ADAPTIVE SPACES: 1. DIY Workshops 2. Kitchen / Cooking Classes 3. Multipurpose Spaces 4. Misc. Educational Classes on recreation or learning</p>
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Figure 117 | Programmatic factors and priorities for all five theaters and their communities

PROGRAMMATIC DESCRIPTIONS: 5 THEATERS

Programmatic needs were inspired by the site analysis conducted. Spaces and allocations were based on programmatic studies and analysis done on the Nor Shor Program (see pages 117-123). Adaptive spaces were inspired by the activities that would take place within the adaptive reuse.

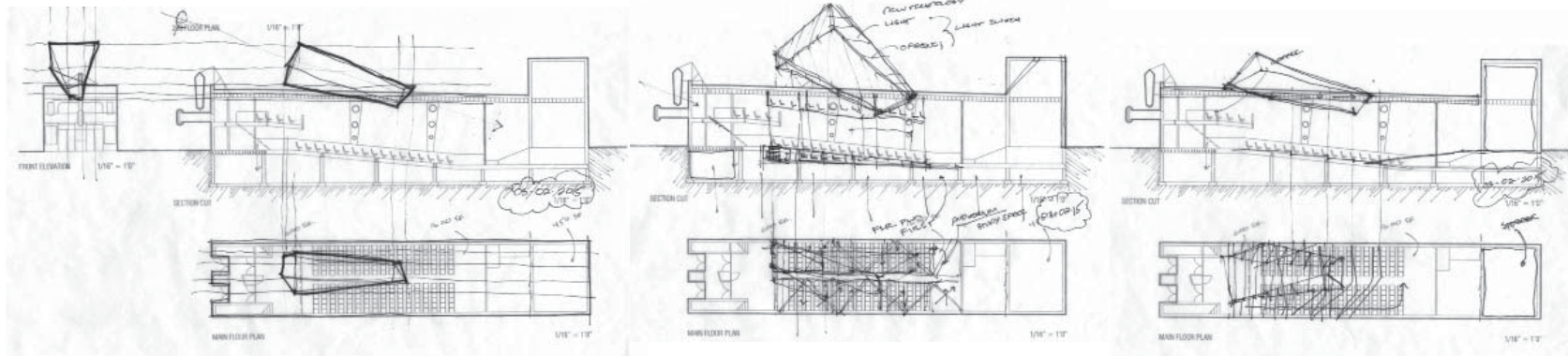


Figure 118 | Schematic investigations of the Delchar Theater

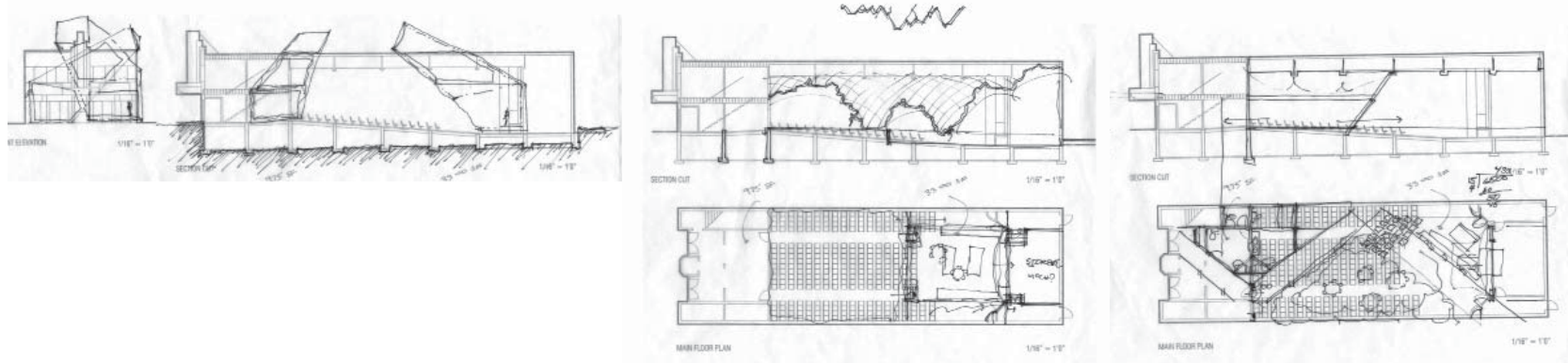


Figure 119 | Schematic investigations of the Gopher Theater

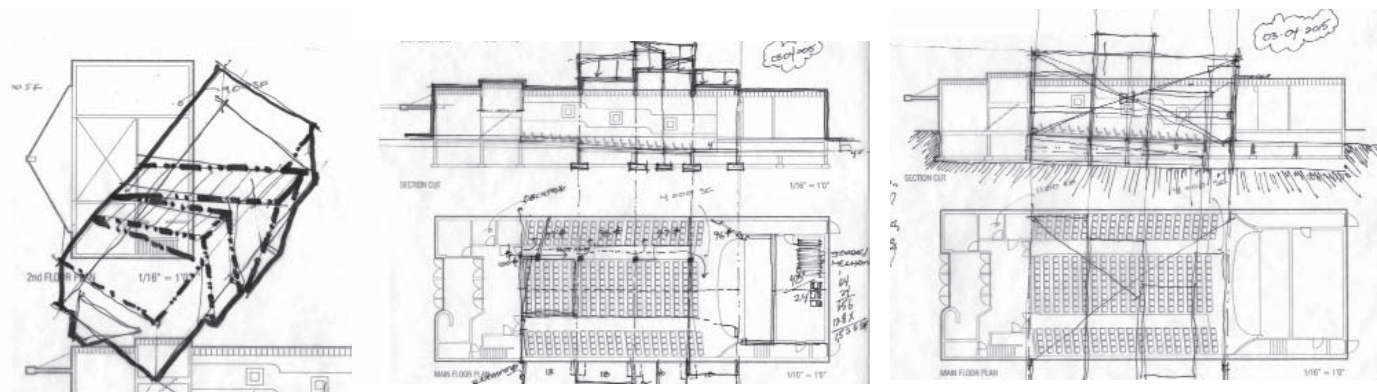


Figure 120 | Schematic investigations of the Walla Theater

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKETCHING

Throughout the course of the project, schematic and design development was carried out through the use of hand drawing and sketching. While other architects and students might be able to use computer programs as a tool for designing, I feel I am most efficient, productive and effective as a designer when I am able to translate ideas directly onto paper through the use of a pencil or pen. Whether in section, plan, axonometric or perspective the sketch has an intimate ability to do what a computer program cannot which is respond almost as purely to a designers thought process better than any other method. Throughout my process I used computer programs such as Illustrator, Photoshop, AutoCad, etc. to translate and represent ideas, but never as a tool for developing design ideas.

Sketching and hand drawing was done through a couple different ways of exploration; sometimes I would use trace paper and existing plans and sections to work through interventions within the theaters, other times I found axonometric and isometric drawings were helpful. Using existing drawings to develop design interventions was helpful to think about how a proposal would fit within the context of the existing theater, but the axonometric or perspective was helpful in working outside of the constraints imposed by the existing theater.


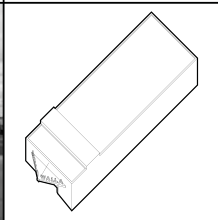
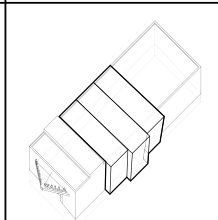
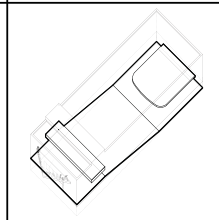
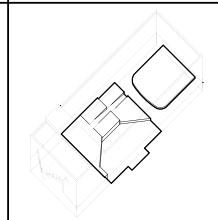
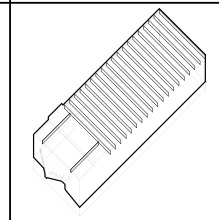
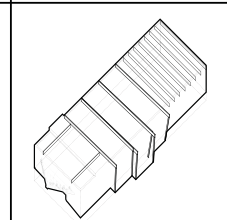

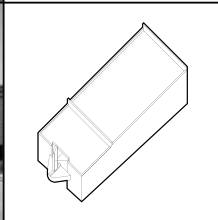
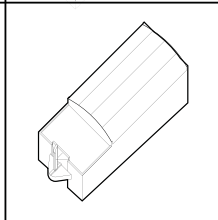
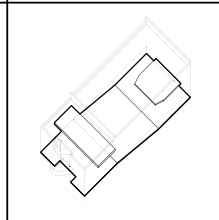
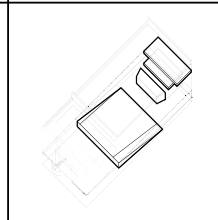
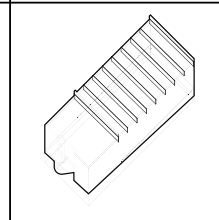
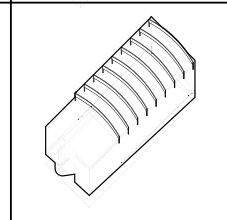

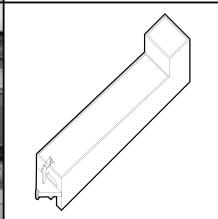
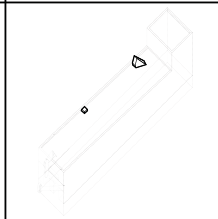
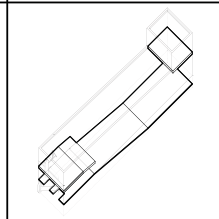
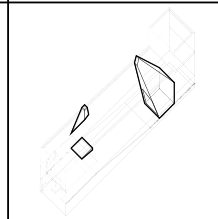
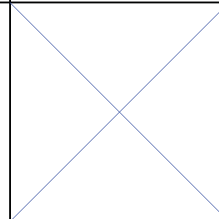
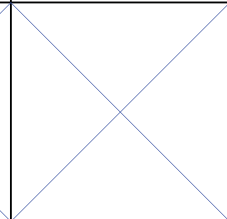

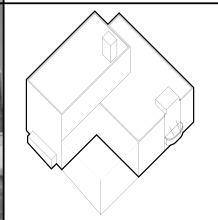
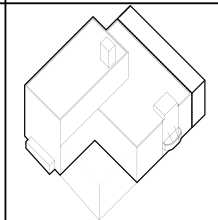
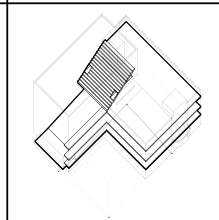
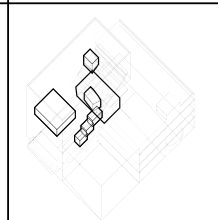
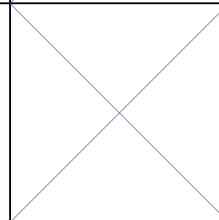
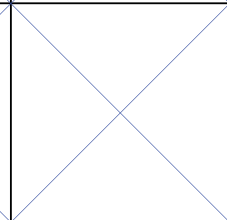

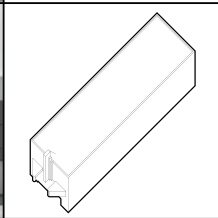
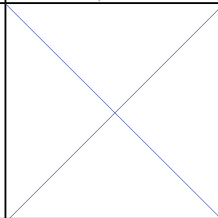
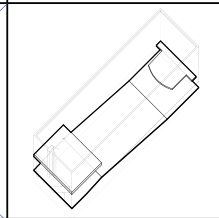
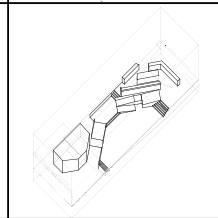
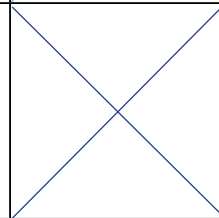
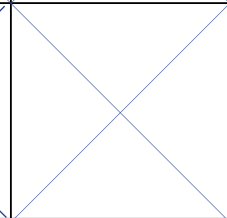
INFO (TOWN, STATUS)	PHOTOGRAPH	EXISTING OBLIQUE	PROPOSED MASSING	EX. INTERIOR CONDITIONS	PROPOSED INTERIOR CONDITIONS	EXISTING STRUCTURE	PROPOSED STRUCTURE
WALLA THEATER WALHALLA, N. DAK. CLOSED							
SISTON THEATER SISSETON, S. DAK. CLOSED							
DELCHAR THEATER MAYVILLE, N. DAK. PART TIME							
NOR SHOR THEATER DULUTH, MINN. CLOSED <small>(*) ALL CATEGORIES 1/2 NORMAL SCALE</small>							
GOPHER THEATER WHEATON, MINN. CLOSED							

Figure 121 | Midterm Matrix

MIDTERM PRESENTATION

I developed a series of axonometric, section and floor plan drawings for each of my five theaters for the Midterm presentation. The drawings were formatted in a matrix with both existing and proposed drawings presented as a way of comparing interventions to other theaters, but also existing and proposed.

These drawings also pushed me to bring the project to a temporary conclusion to allow for professional feedback. By taking my schematic and developmental design ideas and representing them in a way to communicate ideas, it allowed me to contextualize the project as a whole which was important because of the multiple avenues of study. In other words, with five theaters being studied, what have I accomplished with each, what are priorities moving into the second half of the semester, and collectively what lessons have been learned in dealing with schematic investigations of five theaters.

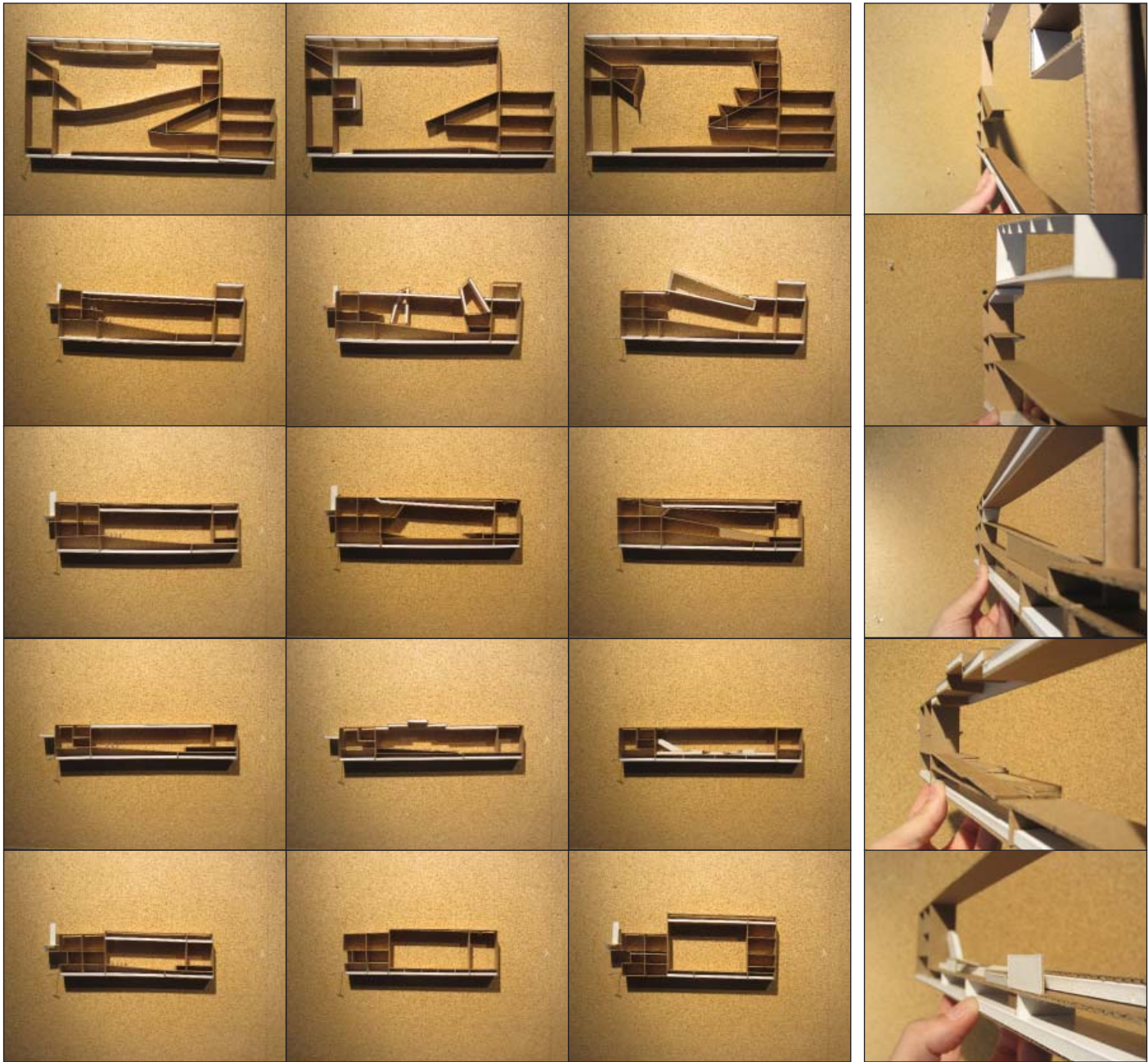


Figure 122 | Section "Sliver" Models

SECTION “SLIVER” MODELS

These section models were developed initially as a tool that would allow me, and others, to compare an existing theater section model with additional models of proposed interventions. With this strategy one could understand my design ideas through the use of a physical tool.

As a progressed in making the models they revealed new opportunities in the design process. Because the models were only one inch wide, they were easy to view from many angles into the space as a perspective, overall as an isometric, or as a section perspective.

SECTION SERIES

The initial section sliver models that I built became tools for developing new investigations. A perspective-like photo was taken of each model which was then traced as a line drawing and converted into a study of spatial and hierarchical analysis and expression. From this drawing it became easy to do a section perspective that allowed for structural and mechanical investigations to be done to see how they were assembled within the theater.

The initial value placed in building the sliver models was multiplied five times by the drawings that it was able to facilitate. Within an iterative, investigative process like mine was, being able to produce drawings and models that serve multiple purposes or can evolve to serve new purposes, becomes of value to the designer because more studies can be done with adapted, existing tools.

COMPOSITE IMAGES & SCENES

To understand how interventions would impact the existing interiors of the adapted theaters as well as how the various social activities might take place a series of composite images and scenes were done. The composite images attempted to merge existing conditions with proposed interventions in a way that would allow others to understand how the solution is successful with both. The additional scenes were assembled as simple line drawings that would allow others to understand how basic social activities might be arranged within these spaces. By creating them as vignettes they accompany the main composite image as a way of generating understanding and interaction as someone tries to read the drawings.

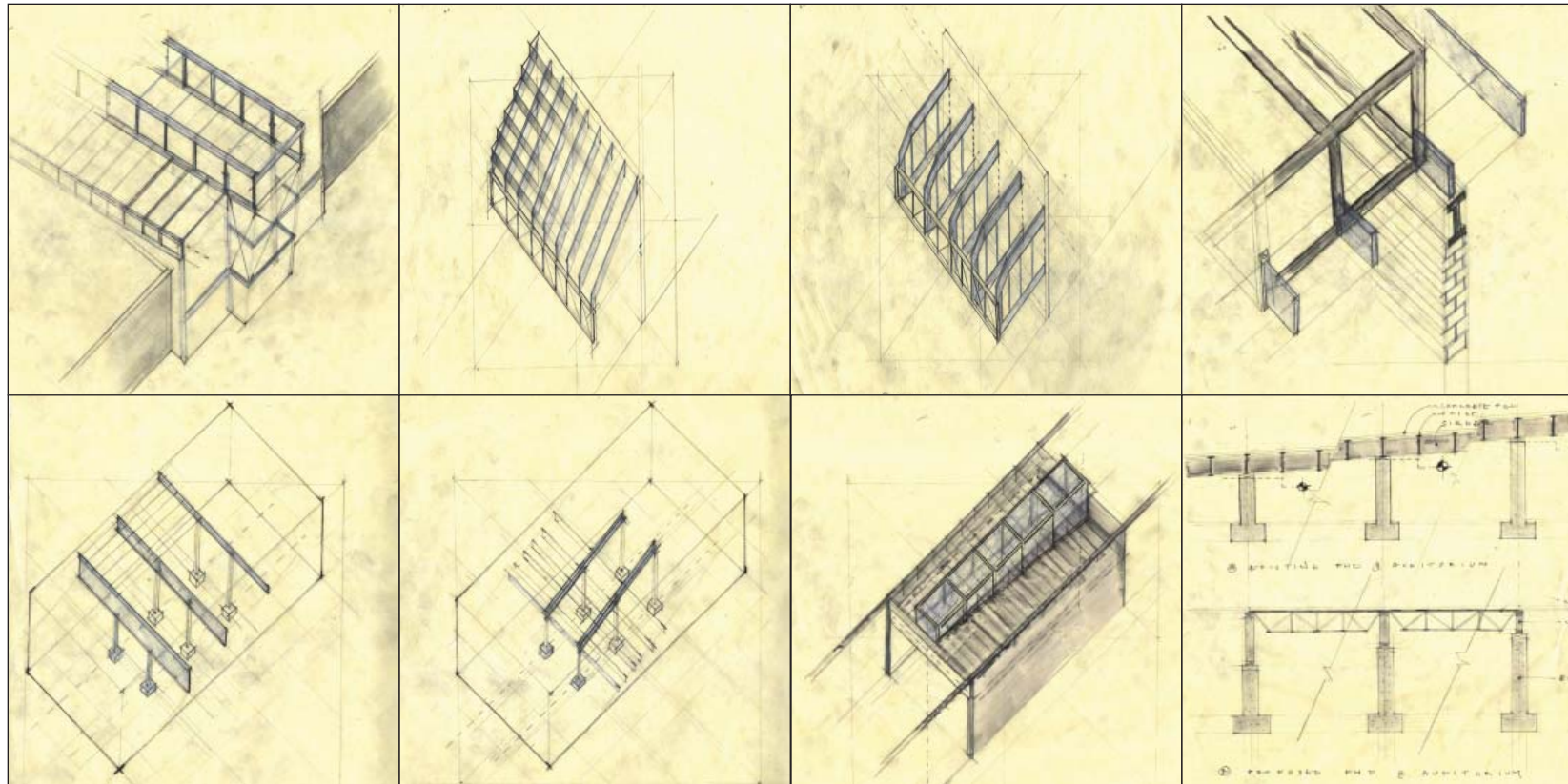


Figure 125 | Construction Assembly Investigations

CONSTRUCTION & ASSEMBLY INVESTIGATIONS

As a result of the proposed interventions disruptions of existing structure or assemblies would occur in all five theaters. I wanted to understand how new structure and materials might interact with the existing construction.

A series of black and white pencil drawings were done as a way for me to understand these proposed relationships:

How do new roof joists meet existing girders?

How can we modify the floor structure to make it flat instead of sloped?

How can we add new balcony girders to adapt the spaces that will fit inside and on top of them?

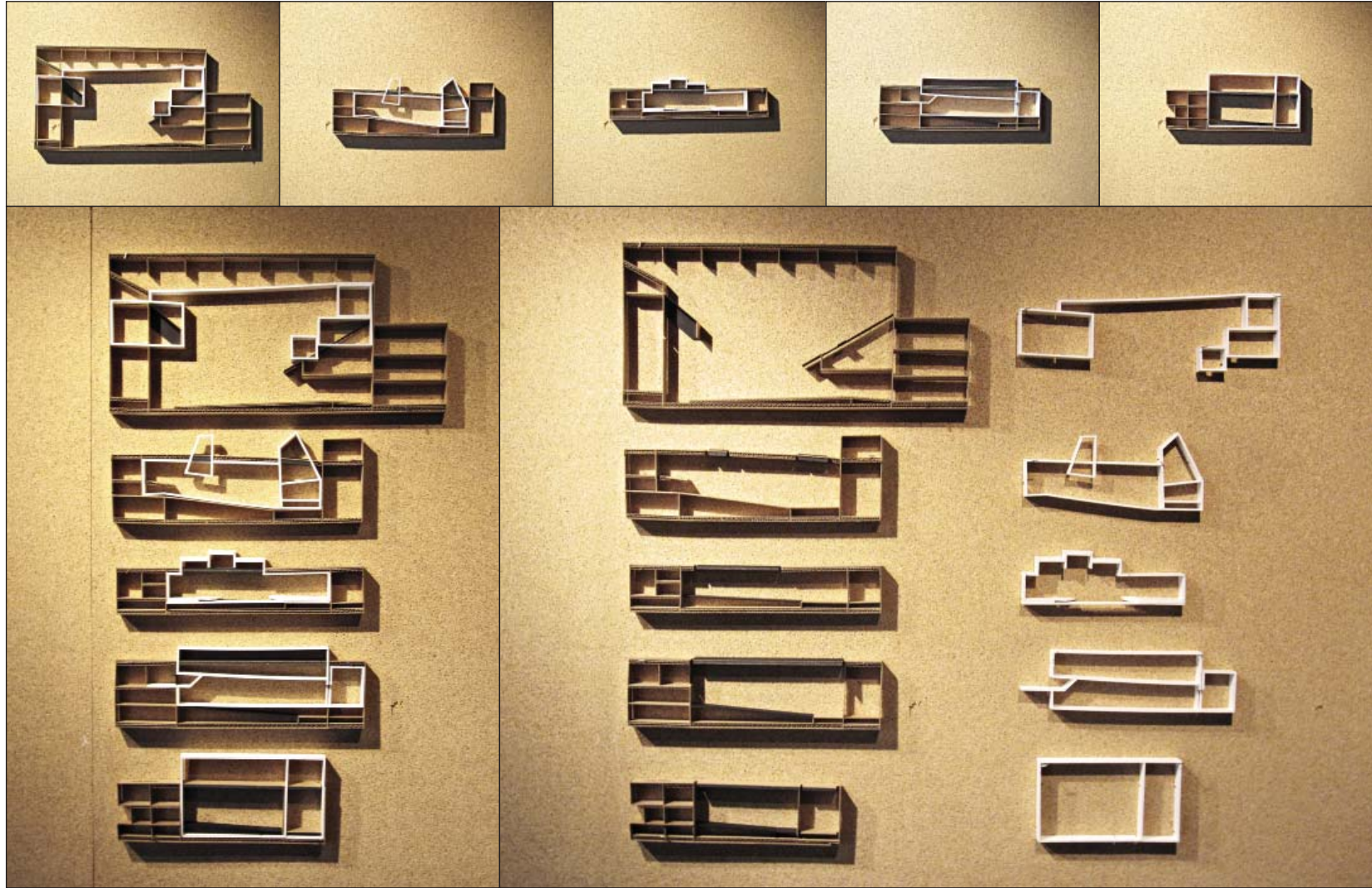


Figure 126 | Section Models

FINAL SECTION MODELS

Another series of section “sliver” models were built to be displayed on the final thesis show boards and used interactively in the thesis presentation.

The models were built as a tool to understand existing, proposed and demolished elements within the chosen section cut. The proposed interventions were built with white material that could be taken out of the model to see the existing section cut assembly with the brown material representing existing forms that will remain in the proposed adaptive reuse. The black material shows existing forms within the theater that would be demolished to accommodate the proposed interventions.

The ability to remove the proposed intervention provides another tool among the other drawings presented (floor plans, sections, separate models) to analyze what would be existing and what would be proposed in these adaptive reuse proposals. In addition, this method is the first that allows others to see specifically what would be demolished in my proposals.



Figure 127 | Final Presentation

Mike Christenson, Peter Atwood | photo credit

FINAL PRESENTATION

May 5, 2015

11:30 AM

CRITICS:

Lancelot Coar
Associate Professor of Architecture
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Ralph Nelson
Associate Professor of Architecture
Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, Michigan

Mark Barnhouse
Associate Professor of Practice, Architecture
North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota

FEEDBACK:

(Coar)
Does the proposed programmatic changes of these theaters eliminate the broader connection between the small town and the rest of society?

(Nelson)
How could the investigation change without a programmatic proposal?

How could the interior and volume support new interventions separate from programmatic restraints?

(Barnhouse)
Successful approach to the use of section

Wide range of investigations and focus shows ability to enter practice with the skills necessary to be successful

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PREVIOUS STUDIO EXPERIENCE

2ND YEAR

Fall: Joan Vorderbruggen

Tea House | Fargo, North Dakota

Site response and integration as a method of informing a conceptual building

Mpls Boat House | Minneapolis, Minnesota

Spatial relationships, anticipated movement through those relationships and their connection in design

Spring: Darryl Booker

Tap Dance Studio | Moorhead, MN

Incorporation of multimedia partis' as inspiration to inform design decisions

Paulo Mendes da Rocha inspired bird house

Designing for the needs of a specific "user"

Dwelling for the visual impaired | Marfa, Texas

Design on a micro scale and the macro affect on a larger context

3RD YEAR

Fall: Mike Christenson

Adaptive Reuse of Askanese Hall | Fargo, North Dakota

Incorporation and investigation of new interventions with old features;

Developing investigations that test design questions

Spring: Milt Yergens

Interpretive Center | Killdeer, North Dakota

Collaboration and designing in a team

Mixed Use Studio/Apartments | Fargo, North Dakota

Producing an intervention within strict site restrictions

4TH YEAR

Fall: David Crutchfield

Urban and Sustainable High Rise | San Francisco, California

Extensive design exploration within the constraints of a condensed timetable

Spring: Steve Martens

Adaptive Reuse of Fargo Foundry | Fargo, North Dakota

Integration of new design features while respecting historic characteristics

5TH YEAR

Fall: Mike Christenson

Oilpatch: Dwelling for 1000 People | Western North Dakota

Exploring alternative design tools as a way of producing unintended answers to design questions

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

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Figure 128 | Personal Identification
<http://www.helenske.com/team.html> | photo credit