

Executive Summary

DALLAS THEATER CENTER
MASTER PLAN

KALITA HUMPHREYS THEATER AT TURTLE CREEK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REVIEW COPY 12-30-2010



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2006 Bond Program

Dallas City Council 2010

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1 Introduction



Aerial View from 3525 Turtle Creek Boulevard, 2005, Ann Abernathy

Background

Fifty years ago a group of visionary civic leaders created a modern theater, built for a cutting-edge director, Paul Baker, designed by an internationally famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. “This theater will be known throughout the world and by great actors everywhere,” actor Burgess Meredith said. Maurice Chevalier called the theater “fascinating and revolutionary.” (1)

The Kalita Humphreys Theater was designated by the City of Dallas as a Historic Overlay District in 2005, underscoring the importance of the theater as a master work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s later period, as a representation of director Paul Baker’s creative theater philosophy, and as a testament to the founders’ idea of a community-based theater in a cherished setting near the heart of the city.

Architectural and Cultural Significance

Within the evolution of the building over fifty years, could we predict what would be of lasting significance, what would endure? These criteria give the building significance:

The original Kalita Humphreys Theater is the work of a world renowned architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, who, over his seventy-year career, held national and international influence over modern architecture and was arguably the most acclaimed architect of his time.



Baker and DTC Committee Visiting Wright at Taliesin, Dallas Theater Center(DTC) Files

The Kalita Humphreys Theater is an important building of its type: Wright refined his concept of what he called the “New Theatre” for forty years prior to its realization in Dallas. The theater melded the ideas of Wright and Baker to “liberate the theater” by breaking down the barriers between actor and audience. The Kalita Humphreys Theater was a pivotal expression in the history of theater design of the environmental flexible theater.



Theater in Use c. 1959, Dallas Public Library

The original Kalita Humphreys Theater epitomizes an architectural style: Made of a reinforced concrete assemblage of angled and curved forms, it is emblematic of Wright’s later period public buildings, such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art in Manhattan.



Theater c. 1959, DTC brochure, HHHarris



Paul Baker, Sylvan Baer, Robert Stecker c. 1959,
Dallas Public Library

"The KHT was unique for its structural experimentation, its unusual theater layout, the spare simplicity of its concrete shell and muscular elegance of its dramatic forms. These qualities, even in its altered state today, are still apparent. The quality of the architecture along with the cultural importance of the theater organization, events, and director cannot be overstated."
Historic Designation Report (2)

The Kalita Humphreys Theater was the locale of important figures: The original director Paul Baker was a legendary risk-taking inventive director and educator, who created a diaspora of theater professionals from the apprentice program here in Dallas. The theater is also a testament to the founders' idea of a community-based theater.

Dallas Opportunity to Enhance the Cultural Asset

A Landmark Attraction

Among Dallas historic landmark structures the Kalita Humphreys Theater is probably the most significant in terms of its reach, already drawing a national and international group of tourists. In spite of the potential for widespread recognition, the Kalita Humphreys Theater now suffers from anonymity locally. The opportunity for heritage tourism is evidenced by our studies of the visitation to other Wright sites, and this visitation brings an audience for programs and benefits the community through a tourism multiplier effect. Significant landmarks stabilize urban areas and inspire improvements. A good example of this phenomenon is Millennium Park in Chicago, where cutting-edge new design gravitates toward unusual older historic areas.

A Unique Area

A sculptural building in a natural setting, the KHT is the nucleus of a park of rare beauty, so the KHT restoration/rehabilitation has the potential to positively affect one of the loveliest spots in Dallas. As the Kalita Humphreys Theater building is reintegrated into its site, the nature of the land will once again be revealed: the rocky outcroppings and undulating slopes will once again evidence the underlying primordial landscape.



Walking Distances over Aerial of Dallas, MESA

A Cultural Arts Venue Unlike Any Other

The innovative theater concept of Wright and Baker included elements of the circus arena, epic Greek and Elizabethan theaters and Baker's own U-shaped theater in Waco. With its panoramic modified-thrust stage and outstanding acoustical qualities, the auditorium creates an exceptional actor-audience intimacy. It lends itself to theater as well as dance and small music ensembles. It is absolutely unique.

Master Plan Process

With the Kalita Humphreys Theater celebrating its fiftieth anniversary, which coincided with the opening of the Dallas Theater Center's new theater in the downtown Arts District, this is an ideal time to assess the condition of the building and the possibilities for its future use. In 2006 the City of Dallas and its voters approved bond funding for a master plan to provide guidance for the next phase of this historic theater.

The project area of the year-long Master Plan study included the Kalita Humphreys Theater, originally constructed in 1959, the Heldt Administration Building, constructed in 1989, and the related parking areas and access drives. The focus of the project was the Kalita Humphreys Theater as a functional theater and significant building. The related support spaces, requisite access and parking areas, widened the scope outward to include patterns of use between Turtle Creek and the Katy Trail, as well as the much larger contexts of neighborhood and region, to understand the facility's potential to be an important cultural destination.

The *Project Team* included representatives from the Office of Cultural Affairs, which owns the building, Equipment and Building Services, which maintains the City's buildings, and the Department of Public Works and Transportation, the Project Managers, as well as the prime consultant, Booziotis & Company Architects, working with a team of multidisciplinary consultants from around the country. This Master Plan is not a plan for the surrounding William B. Dean Park but has attempted to be sensitive to and supportive of any future plans for the park. An *Advisory Group* included representatives of the Parks and Recreation Department, which owns the site, representatives from associated city agencies and their commissions, and the members of the board and staff of the current tenants, the Dallas Theater Center. Additional participants in the public process are described in the Acknowledgments, Section 7 of this Summary.

Goals established early in the Master Plan process:

- To maintain the Kalita Humphreys Theater as a working theater that realizes its unique qualities.
- To restore and maintain the building as an example of great modern architecture of organic design in a park setting.
- To increase awareness of the cultural asset.

2 Existing Conditions

Documentation

To understand and appreciate its potential for on-going vibrancy, one must peel back the layers of time, review and respect the building's original intent, and reconcile it with the current possibilities. The process began with an analysis of the existing condition involving a process of intensive research and documentation. The compendium of both existing and new data about the Kalita Humphreys Theater laid the groundwork for decisions about the landmark. Information from the Existing Conditions Phase, including scans of representative drawings from 1957 to the present, will be furnished to the City as the basis for a living, on-going documentation of the property for the future.



Main Entry Terrace 1959, *Files of Bill Carner, Construction Superintendent*



Current View of Main Entry Terrace

Building Description and Evolution

The original concrete structure was a medium-sized theater, seating an audience of approximately 450, built to the limit of the 1.2-acre site and the \$500,000 budget. The theater's concrete work includes several examples of rare ingenuity, including the cantilever of the concrete stage-loft cylinder over the modified-thrust circular stage that dispensed with the commonplace proscenium frame.

The relationship of the buildings to the site was especially important in terms of Wright's "organic design" principles. The site of only 1.2 acres was in the narrow middle of a tract of more than 13 acres of privately owned land. Constricted by Turtle Creek on one side and the MK&T railroad tracks on the other, the site was small for a medium-sized theater. Wright designed the building to be entered from parking areas on the uphill side, but the Dallas Theater Center never acquired the land for the parking.

Barely a year after its construction, the theater began to undergo additions and alterations to create the space needed for the repertory company and its

education programs. The historic structure has always been used as a theater, but the building has had to serve multiple changing needs even though the structure was not designed or equipped for them.

The first major addition occurred in 1968, when the Education Wing was built. This new wing was piggy-backed over the lobby and provided rehearsal rooms, a black box-type theater and offices. The wing was steel-framed with a stucco exterior finish and included a porte-cochere on the uphill side. The addition was constructed on top of the existing building in part because no additional land could be acquired.

In 1974 the Kalita Humphreys Theater was acquired by the City of Dallas and the site melded with the adjacent park lands. In 1989, after many plans for adjacent facilities were rejected, the porte-cochere was enclosed to form an extension of the lobby and new storefront-type entrances were added facing new parking lots.

The adjacent support facility, the Heldt Administration Building, was essentially a rectangular box that provided the volume of space necessary to support the theater with offices, meeting rooms, a rehearsal room, costume workroom and storage space. As a wood frame structure with a stucco cladding system exterior, it represented a cost-effective solution to the ongoing need for support space.

Current Conditions of the Buildings

The Condition of Kalita Humphreys Theater

The original concrete building and later additions are deemed by the structural engineer and restoration architects to be good structurally, based on observations (but not on additional invasive testing or diagnostics). Areas of reinforced concrete have been removed from the 1959 building including sections of exterior wall, windows and terraces (removed at the time of the Education Wing addition).

The Education Wing and the enclosure of the porte-cochere have superficial wear and moisture damage. Reports included in this Plan detail fire protection, safety, comfort, and accessibility issues that would have to be addressed if these additions remained. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing problems are found throughout the original building and later alterations. Specific reports on theater function and acoustical analysis addressed the evolution of theater use and placed a value on the exceptional quality of its original attributes, finding that perceived problems should be addressed, but in a way that is more sympathetic with the original architecture.

The Condition of Heldt Administration Building

The Heldt Administration Building was a low-investment wood-frame building with a stucco-system skin on concrete piers and slab. There are significant safety and comfort issues, and its siting is detrimental to the appreciation of the Kalita



View from Parking, Administration Building, 2009



Ramp to Level Two Entry, Administration Building

Humphreys Theater and interferes with the original direction of entry. A particular problem is the safety of the ramp used by those with mobility aids. There is also no interior accessible route to the rehearsal room and from there to restrooms. The open wood-truss ceiling creates acoustical problems and the spaces could not easily be subdivided for multiple tenants.

Site Description and Evolution

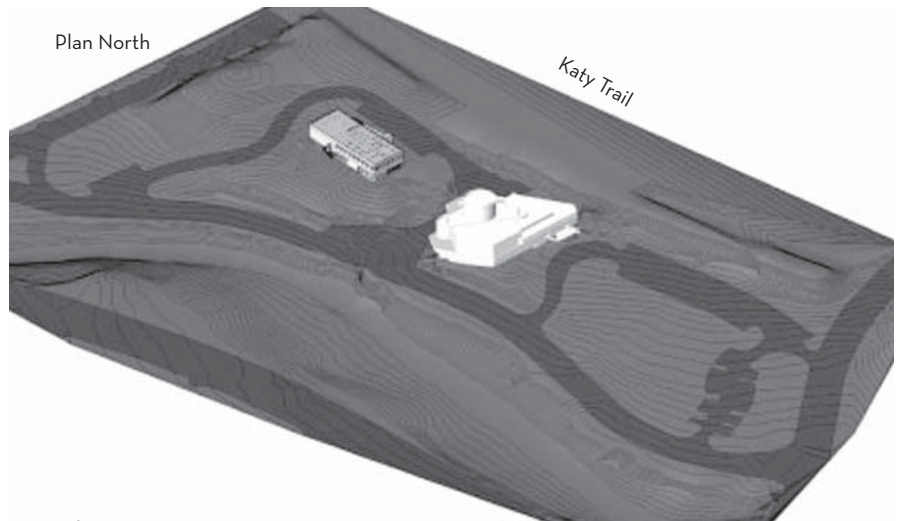
Wright was pleased with the naturalistic site, with its exposed bluffs, creek views and indigenous plantings. Now known as William B. Dean Park, the acreage was a remnant of the limestone bluff formations along Turtle Creek and a realization of the original Kessler Plan for Dallas parks.

Parking has historically been a problem for the theater center since its inception because easements were not acquired for parking either uphill or across the MK&T tracks as was originally planned. After the building and site were acquired by the City of Dallas in 1974, additional areas of the land were paved. Parking lots added in the 1980's created a major entrance on the side of the building that was intended to be the back, creating the misperception that Wright placed the building backwards.

The current site configuration of drives and parking to the north and south has altered the topography of the original undulating terrain. The contours of the original site, a series of tiers from the Katy Trail down to Turtle Creek that were crucial to Wright's sense of organic siting, have been changed through the cut and fill of building and paving.

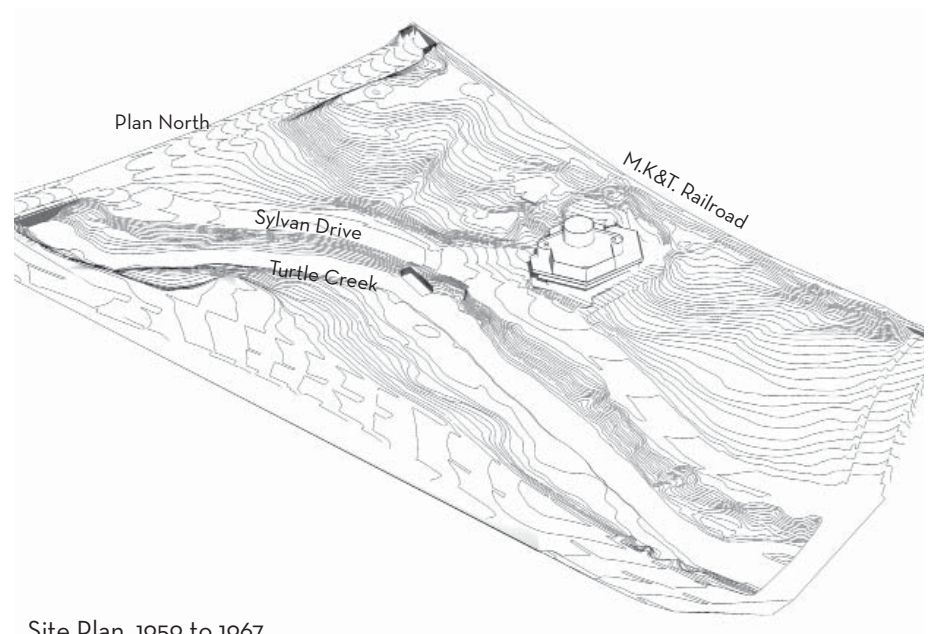
Within this park, the Historic Designation Overlay District established by the City in 2005, defined the limits of designation according to the original 1959 site boundaries, plus the access road, Sylvan Drive.

In the Park and Recreation Department's *Renaissance Plan*, this area of Turtle Creek and William B. Dean Park was identified as one of the seven "Signature Park" areas.



Site Plan, 1989 to Current

Composite computer model from available paper sources



Site Plan, 1959 to 1967

Composite computer model from available paper sources

Site analysis included the study of the topography, climate, drainage and vegetation, as well as the local and regional context.

3

Planning & Public Input

Input Gathering

In a series of information sessions and informal interviews, the findings of the Existing Conditions Phase were shared with the public, and comments were solicited. The participating groups included performing artists, architects, historians, educators, preservationists, environmentalists, neighbors, the Frank Lloyd Wright community, original founders, the Historic Preservation Office and other agencies and commissions that assist in maintenance, as well as the Park and Recreation Department and members of the *Advisory Group* noted above. There was a great deal of interest in the theater and its setting within this broad section of the community.

The input gathered from these constituencies was organized into a data base, the Information Framework, juxtaposing issues and interests. All ideas relating to future use were recorded in a chart, Scenarios for Use. Conflicts and commonalities led to certain repeated themes and these were recorded in a spreadsheet addressing Goals and Strategies. The Master Plan report and appendices include these documents.

Themes for Use

The Kalita Humphreys Theater's distinctive architectural design, spatial quality, and panoramic stage has created a world-class theater not replicated anywhere in the world. Based on this significance and input gathered throughout the Master Plan process, three themes emerged for use of the Kalita Humphreys Theater as described in the following statements:

Statement One: Maintain the Kalita Humphreys Theater as a working theater that realizes its unique qualities.

Promote an understanding of the unique and valuable nature of the theater not as a multiform but rather as a multiuse theater venue.

Statement Two: Restore and maintain the building as an example of great modern architecture of collaborative organic design in a park setting.

Promote an understanding of the potential of integrating theater, architecture and park in terms of architectural design, anticipating that this plan be sensitive to and supportive of a future master plan for the park.

Statement Three: Increase awareness of the cultural asset by promoting creativity in the arts through performances, educational classes, events, tours and integration into its setting.

Enable the understanding of the philosophy of organic design exemplified by both Wright and Baker through the arts and architecture.

Develop a new understanding of uses of the property to insure economic viability.

Historic Period of Significance

Combining the findings related to the theater's significant architectural features, original intent, cultural significance, current condition and potential for re-use, the Master Plan team reached a consensus that the Kalita Humphreys Theater's period of greatest significance was between 1959 and 1967. This was the period during which:

- The architect of greatest importance with the broadest impact nationally and internationally was Frank Lloyd Wright. (The addition, added in 1968, covered portions of the earlier Wright design.)
- The director who has had the greatest influence upon theater in general and who shaped the programs and performances of the Dallas Theater Center for the longest period of time since its inception was Paul Baker.
- The theories of design and creativity of these two men overlapped.
- The theater had a unique panoramic design and acoustic nature that influenced other theaters nationally and internationally.

The opinion of representatives of the Frank Lloyd Wright community (see Section 4.2 of the Master Plan) was that Mr. Wright's original structure, which included the cantilevered decks, the original sequence of entry, and the unique site relationship, was more significant than the later building alterations added over Mr. Wright's work.

The Master Plan recommends the restoration of the Kalita Humphreys Theater back to its period of significance, from 1959 to 1967, and the replacement of the Heldt Administration Building with a support building (or buildings) complementary to the theater and in no way compromising the site and its landscape.

Design and Regulatory Parameters

The Historic Ordinance for the Kalita Humphreys Theater mandates adherence to the Secretary of the Interior Standards, which codify four alternatives: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Master Plan describes the treatments appropriate for the interior and exterior of the building. While not in a position to make a final decision without additional comment, the general aim is to treat the exterior of the Kalita Humphreys Theater as a restoration and the interior as rehabilitation.

All plans for construction must be reviewed by the City of Dallas Historic Preservation Office and the Landmark Commission at the earliest possible time in the planning stages. Conceptual Plans of the Master Plan have endeavored to adhere to the Designation Criteria of the Ordinance.

Section 5 of the Master Plan develops general regulatory and design parameters to insure an achievable plan including: building statistics, relevant building codes, zoning issues, type of construction, type of occupancy, plumbing fixtures counts and exiting diagrams.

Theoretical Program

The following theoretical program was generated without a specific building tenant, but certain axioms were assumed:

Kalita Humphreys Theater

The Kalita Humphreys Theater would be restored as a working theater respecting its original intent, and the interior space of the building maximized for that function, removing uses (such as long-term storage) that do not contribute to theater performance, technical function, or use by the public.

Primary Use: The Kalita Humphreys Theater is a one of a kind theater where the audience surrounds the stage, but is also surrounded by the action. The theater is a panoramic modified-thrust stage with multiple entrances, processional aisles, and a live acoustical quality that is suitable for epic and Shakespearean drama and productions that do not rely on a strict proscenium envelope. The auditorium is also suitable for theater education classes and children's theater. It is not a multiform theater, but it is multiuse in the sense that it can accommodate many disciplines.

A participant in the Master Plan information articulated the concept: "Why would you take a unique theater and try to make it just like every other theater? As an alternative kind of space, it could be exciting and revelatory in that uniqueness."

Secondary Uses: The auditorium is also appropriate for other performing arts including small music ensembles, expressive dance performances, lectures, seminars, classes, film screenings for small audiences, alternative church services, special events, including private rentals, and heritage tourism. The Kalita Humphreys Theater should be able to accommodate small catered events, small exhibits, and workshops.

Heldt Administration Building

Conceptual Plans for the Heldt Administration Building are based on making minimal modifications to increase safety and comfort that do not result in

major investment in a building of limited life span with inherent problems. Temporary improvements would include ADA compliant restrooms, the removal of a noncompliant exterior ramp, and new mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment. The main public entrance would be relocated to the lower level, at grade, on the south side closest to the Kalita Humphreys Theater. The Heldt Administration Building will continue to contain the rehearsal hall, administrative offices, and conference room and allow for flexible use of other existing spaces.

New Support Buildings

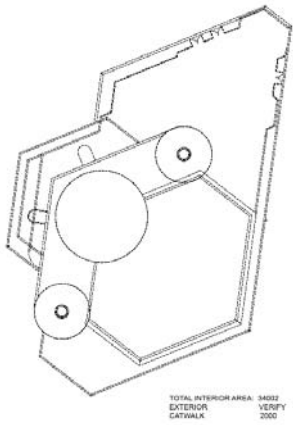
A fully-accessible and code-compliant building (or buildings) would contain space suitable for administrative uses to support the theater and heritage tourism, including offices, reception areas, storage, workspaces and areas for exhibits and gatherings.

Two scenarios for the support building include a minimal program including mainly theater support, or a maximal program that would include additional flexible space for performance and programming.

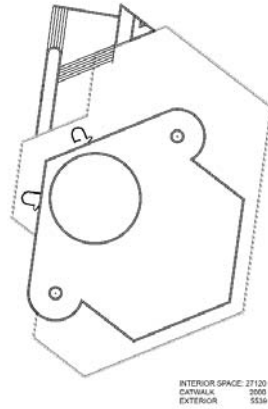
The site analysis from the Existing Condition Phase of the Master Plan indicated areas suitable for construction and recommended a new balance between built and unbuilt areas to maximize enjoyment of both the building and the landscape. Therefore a theoretical program capped the available space to be provided on the site in the vicinity of the Kalita Humphreys Theater at 12,000 square feet and determined that a second site uphill and to the north could also accommodate a building. The plan of support facilities may be phased.

Spatial Block Diagrams

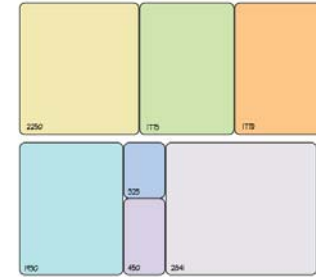
Future uses based on theoretical program area calculations are graphically illustrated by color in the chart, opposite page, to show space allocations for the following uses: reception, administration, performance, theater technical, heritage tourism, support space and flexible program space. Note, there is an evolution of use as the Kalita Humphreys Theater becomes more strictly a working theater and the property as a whole accommodates a greater number of visitors to the cultural destination.



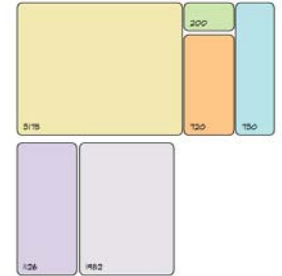
KALITA HUMPHREYS THEATER
EXISTING



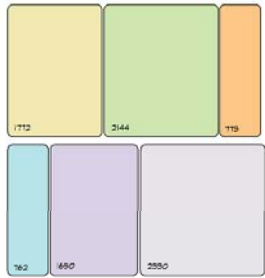
KALITA HUMPHREYS THEATER
RESTORED AND REHABILITATED



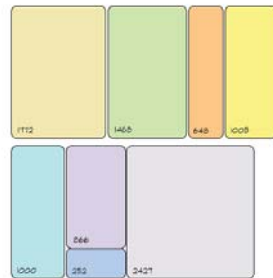
SUPPORT BUILDING



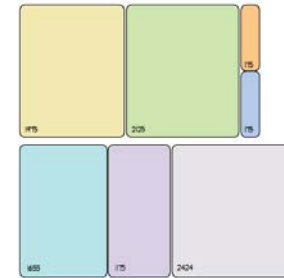
EXPANSION BUILDING



HELDT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
EXISTING USE



HELDT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
TEMPORARY RENOVATION



SUPPORT BUILDING



VISITOR'S CENTER

Current Condition • • • • • Phase I • • • • • Phase II Option B

Phase II Option A • • • • • Phase III Option A

Spatial Block Diagrams
Space Allocations by Use and by Phase

4

Conceptual Design

Contextual Site Plans

On the basis of the area calculations from the theoretical programs, uses were assigned to three floor levels in the proposed support building. As is the case in the Kalita Humphreys Theater design, utilizing the slope to create a multilevel building enabled the building footprints to be smaller, reducing building mass and preserving more of the site. These levels were shown as oval “bubble diagrams.” The sizes of the buildings shown on the Contextual Site Plan reflect the ability of the site to handle these uses in areas of the sloping site that are buildable and do not compromise overall site values.

Two Options for disposition of uses on the site emerged. Both of these options assume the replacement of the current administration building:

Option A

Administration and Rehearsal – Low-profile building, further downhill than the current administration building.

Expansion Space – Smaller footprint, multilevel building uphill, north side of the site.

Option B

Administration and Rehearsal – Larger building, uphill to the north side of the site.

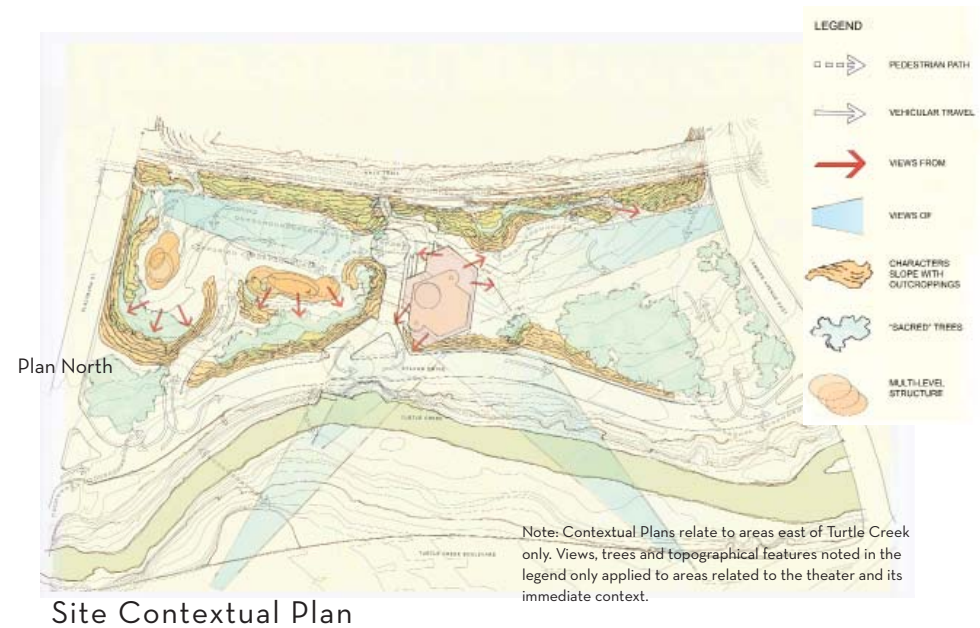
Visitor Center/Box Office – Placed above the below-grade parking area, near to the theater (not in sightlines).

Both options were delineated and priced for review in the Master Plan. Option A was chosen as the optimum solution for the future facility plan.

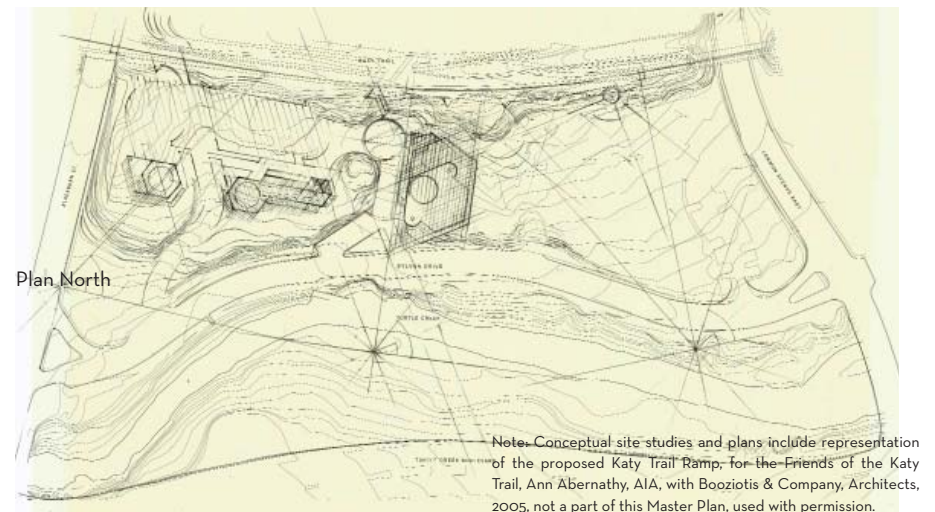
Site Contextual Analysis

The Site Contextual Plan, opposite, shows Option A, and highlights important site features such as view sheds from the site, “sacred” areas of trees and sloping areas of rock outcroppings.

The area to the south of the Kalita Humphreys Theater is treated as a park-related domain because it includes an existing glade of trees to be preserved, is close to the proposed Katy Trail connection, and the parking is easily seen and accessed from adjacent streets.



Site Contextual Plan



Site Geometries Plan

Geometric Building Diagrams

Ultimately conceptual footprints for buildings took angular forms in response to site conditions and the architectural context. These multilevel shapes respond to the directions of the topography, pathways and circulation routes and the geometries suggested by the existing architecture, in the Site Geometries Plan. The plan was drawn with pencil and T-square to simulate and explore the ways that Wright would have originally worked with geometric relationships.



Site Conceptual Plan - Option A

Wright believed buildings should be so harmonious with nature that the landscape would be enhanced by the buildings, as much as the buildings were enhanced by nature. This reciprocity is at work in the Conceptual Site Plan, as built areas follow the natural contours and array themselves according to the suggested existing geometries.

Option A was chosen as the most advantageous plan: It locates the new support building conveniently close to the Kalita Humphreys Theater in an area already disturbed by construction. The Expansion Building uphill would be in an area of existing parking that is underutilized. On a relatively flat part of the site, the new support building would afford spectacular views, and a close connection to trails and parking.

Both Options A and B Conceptual Plans restore the original direction of entry and create an entry from the south that welcomes the visitor but respects the natural setting. On the south side, one driveway is removed to enable the restoration of the landscape and tree canopy. The geometry and direction of Wright's earlier unbuilt designs influenced the concept for surface parking on the uphill sides, but the plan envisions additional parking located below grade to maximize the landscape. Because of the sloping terrain and existing excavations for the current administration building, this single level of covered parking is below grade only the uphill side; on the downhill side it would be at or above grade, bringing in natural light, enabling ease of entry.

An arts venue in a central location in a beautiful landscape will be a cultural asset unlike any other in Dallas.



Existing Tree Canopy

Plans for the site will enhance existing tree stands and augment tree canopy. Particular attention is paid to relandscape of areas along the upper slope where cut and fill for paving has altered the original vegetated bluffs.



Proposed Tree Canopy

Conceptual Design of the Kalita Humphreys Theater Exterior

Kalita Humphreys Theater - Exterior Character-Defining Features to be Restored/Rehabilitated

The exterior of the building would be restored to its original configuration, with most patrons arriving from the parking to the north, which was Wright's original intention. The sequence of discovery of the main entry would be enhanced by the removal of later additions, and restoration of the sloping landscape. Outdoor spaces were juxtaposed with landscape features and can only be fully appreciated if the original land features are intact.



View of Kalita Humphreys Theater looking South, 2009



View of Kalita Humphreys Theater looking South, Proposed,
All renderings next three pages by Samuel C. Ringman

Once again, visitors will approach the entry doors past a grotto filled with greenery containing a restored fountain, entering an area sheltered by a cantilevered deck and guarded by gold columns.

The entry terrace is scored in a grid of equilateral parallelograms (diamonds) that reveal the unit system that organizes the building geometry and unifies the scale. Areas of the main entry terrace will be restored to reveal these underlying patterns. With no right angle turns, the space will flow toward the auditorium entrance, accentuated by the restoration/recreation of missing banquettes in the lobby.

The simplicity, near austerity, of the building's planar surfaces is a minimalism unmatched in any other Wright buildings and makes the theater one of the most modern of his works. All exterior surfaces will be repaired, coatings replaced and finishes restored.



View of Kalita Humphreys Theater from the North, 2009

Areas to the north of the theater - Option A

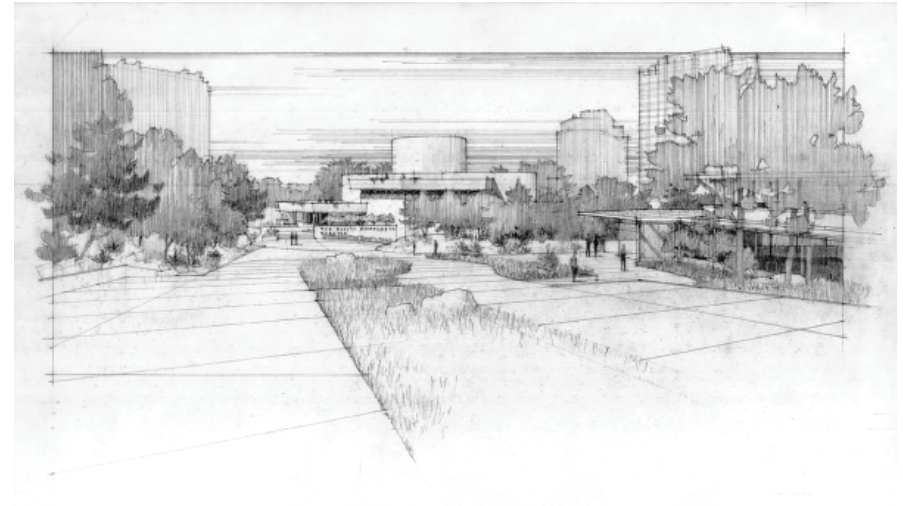
It is critical that a Support Building located to the north of the Kalita Humphreys Theater be of lower profile and further downhill than the current administration building. This is to ensure that it does not intrude on the sightlines to the historic building, or overshadow its importance in scale. The proposed Support Building in Option A would include a rehearsal room, reception area, exhibit space, and administrative areas. It would feature views of and connections to the outdoors.



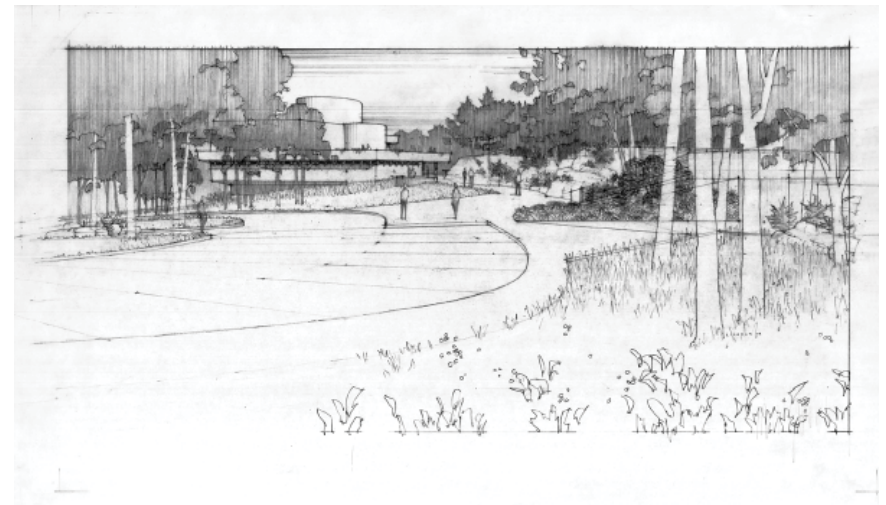
View of the South Entry from Parking Areas, 2009

Areas to the south of the theater

From the southern parking and drop off areas, a new path would gently slope to the Main Entry, revealing a secondary approach, retaining the feeling of the sequence of entry as a mysterious journey, but one that has a clear destination. Future way-finding systems could enable better orientation to zones of the site.



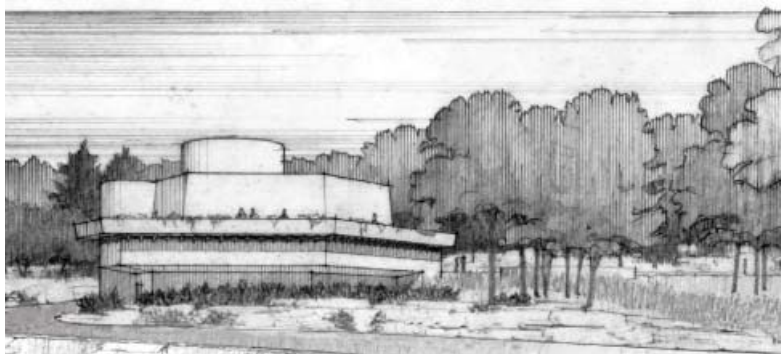
View of Kalita Humphreys Theater from the North, Proposed
(Parking areas based on Wright's original documentation)



Proposed View of the Kalita Humphreys Theater from the South
(from Lemmon Avenue, with Katy Trail to the right, drop-of area and path to the theater beyond)



View Looking East from Sylvan Drive, Stan Cowan
(View shows 1989 driveway to the south of the theater.)



View from Sylvan Drive, Proposed
(View shows restored landscape, rock ledges, existing foreground trees and additional trees and landscaping to the south.)

On the southwest side of the Kalita Humphreys Theater, additions both under and over the cantilevered terraces would be removed to reveal the original strong and shadowed horizontal lines of the Balcony (Patron) Terrace. The landscape along Sylvan Drive would be knitted back together, restoring the outcroppings, knoll and natural vegetation that created a green setting for the facade of the south side of the building.

Conceptual Design of the Kalita Humphreys Theater Interior

Given the goal to restore to a period of significance, maintain a working theater, and with the knowledge that supporting uses could be located in adjacent areas, the plans for theater interior will maximize space for theater operations and create a comfortable and enlivening experience for patrons and visitors. Improvements for comfort, convenience and efficient space utilization would be incorporated in ways that solved for the original intention while making modifications sensitive to the historic building fabric where necessary.

Conceptual floor plans within the Master Plan report show in detail the proposed restoration and rehabilitation for each level of the theater building. Some missing elements, such as the original seating, several window units, and the shimmering gold stage curtain, would be recreated.

Reallocation of space would enable the basement to be used flexibly as a load-in area, workshop and occasionally a secondary performance space (originally known as the “Down-Center Stage”). By creating compliant restrooms in the basement, and restoring the stage to its original level, the theater could be accessible for all actors for the first time.

Of particular importance to the function of the theater would be the addition of an ADA compliant passenger elevator for the public to access restrooms, the basement and the restored third-floor library and small event space. The stage elevator would also be ADA compliant.

The lobby areas would be restored to the original smaller footprint, but functional space would be enlarged by means of an adjacent lobby extension, increased space of the interior rear aisle of the auditorium, restoration of the Committee Room and the ability for the public to use restored exterior decks. The exterior Balcony Terraces would be accessed by the passenger elevator and rehabilitated side stairs.

Narratives included in Section 7 of the Master Plan further expand upon the treatments related to building safety, mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems (MEP), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) options, acoustical treatments, audio/visual systems, theater technical considerations and structural conditions.

Kalita Humphreys Theater - Interior Character-Defining Features to be Restored/Rehabilitated

Moving inside the lobby, the visitor would once again experience the continuous line of the plush gold banquette seating under the ribbon of windows pointing the way to the auditorium doors. The geometry of the space created a spiral path to the

audience chamber. Missing sections of wall would be replaced, and window shutters restored. Other important interior nontheater spaces for restoration include: Paul Baker's Office, the Committee Room, and the third-floor backstage Library, all of which contain original built-in furnishings.

The Kalita Humphreys Theater auditorium is a wonderful and unusual stage, as described above. Wright created intimacy between audience and actor by pushing the stage into the audience chamber and cantilevering the 120-ton upper stage loft over it so that there is no proscenium arch and no sides to frame the view. It was a structural feat used only in this theater. The environment and geometry of the stage had a unique point of view as described above in the Planning section of this Summary.

Subsequent directors increasingly needed the stage to operate more like a proscenium theater with an acoustic that was "modern," relying on amplified sound. The panoramic aspect, extended by side stages and the flat floor detracted from the focus of the modern drama and musical. Elevating the rake, adding partitions, extending the balcony, and increasing the seating capacity, which is no longer a high priority, all changed the spatial volume. It created a tunnel effect at the rear and a focus on the stage, which was the opposite of the original intent.

A three-dimensional model of the theater was used to study the effects of the floor slope (rake), balcony location, and seating arrangements on the theater sightlines. The *Project Team* concluded that dual goals of restoring the theater and facilitating modern theater use could be met, with relatively minor modifications to the original design. The rake would be modified to be closer to the original, though not as flat, and the stage lowered to the original height, but equipped with mechanical lifts to easily raise part or all of the stage. (This also enables the stage to be used by a mobility impaired actor.)

The original intimate relationship of audience to actor was enhanced by perfect acoustics of a hard ceiling balanced by angles to reduce reverberation. In the rehabilitation, the acoustical finishes would be restored per the original specifications, but acoustical treatments such as drapes and baffles would be added to modulate the acoustic for amplified sound situations.

The interior balcony would be restored to the former function of primarily technical space, with loose seating on either side of the existing Light Booth. Loge seating covering the vomitory wells, would be removed to recreate sightlines to the side stages and to once again enable multiple entrances and exits for actors.

Using modern equipment would improve operations and dramatic possibility. Plans for the rehabilitation of the theater include 17 winches, with reliable mechanisms that can lift from multiple points. These would replace the rope and pulley systems,



Auditorium c. 1960, DTC Files



Auditorium, 2009, Steve Clicque

using current technology to accomplish the original intention of Paul Baker and George Izenour, technical designer, and also improving safety.

Added platforms in the stage right tower would utilize empty space in the existing wing, lifting the burden from the Committee Room, which now functions for performance support. The committee room, also known as the Stecker Library, included built-in furnishings and a bar, and could once again be used as an intimate space for small meetings and refreshments during intermissions.

The restorations and modifications that are detailed in the Master Plan would restore the spatial volume, acoustical properties and processional aisles characteristic of the earlier days of the theater, while greatly improving technical systems, safety and flexibility for use. For many companies this unusual venue would be a distinctive alternative, an asset to extend their season's offerings.



Auditorium - Proposed, (Image is based on a 3-D computer scale model of architectural modifications, with seating based on original prototype, and rendering applied to indicate color palette.)

5 Statements of Probable Cost

For the Kalita Humphreys Theater, detailed statements of probable cost were based on comprehensive reconnaissance of the existing conditions; however, the costs are based on similar experience as this is not a construction project, and only order-of-magnitude estimates are possible until the project is further delineated. The summary of recommendations for the Master Plan is found in Section 8.1 of the Master Plan, Review and Conclusions, with a summary of probable costs quantified in Section 8.2, Recommendation Recap.

Phase One would include restoration and rehabilitation of the Kalita Humphreys Theater, including equipment and modifications, such as the addition of an elevator, that would increase comfort, safety and function. The Heldt Administration Building Temporary Renovation during Phase One would provide administrative space for staff on site during the restoration of the Theater.

Work on the original driveway would proceed, along with the connecting pathways necessary for compliant access to the building. Paths from both north and south parking lots to the theater and to the existing administration building would be included. This phase would include the historic stair to the Katy Trail reconstruction, but not the ramp to the south, which is shown on our plans, but is a project of the Katy Trail and PRD. Phase One costs would total approximately \$16,541,000.

Phase Two of Option A would include the Support Building and, integral with its construction, the below-grade parking for approximately 50 autos. The modifications to drives to the surface parking above and all landscaping around this Support Building are included. It is assumed that the Support Building would be of high quality design and construction, with glazed areas and exterior terraces to promote connection to the site. Costs assume finishes of moderate expense and sustainable design features. Phase Two costs would total approximately \$5,852,000.

Phase Three of Option A would include the Expansion Building uphill to the north, of similar design quality, attributes and construction. This building may include space for performing arts with resulting higher costs for technical equipment. There could be some parking below the structure, utilizing the slope of the site; however, the costs include adjacent surface parking and do not factor in additional below-grade parking. Phase Three costs would total approximately \$2,598,000.

The total for all three phases, in constant dollars, would be approximately \$25,000,000.

Cost Projection Worksheet

Estimated Items	Sub-Total	Total	Total Phase 1-3
Phase I			
Phase 1 Restoration & Rehabilitation - KHT	13,286,241		
Phase 1 Temporary Renovation - HAB	497,343		
Phase 1 New Construction - Lobby Extension	174,289		
Phase 1 Site & Landscape - KHT	2,400,664		
Phase 1 Site & Landscape - HAB	149,851		
Totals Phase 1		\$ 16,508,388	
Option A			
Option A Phase 2			
Option A Phase 2 Support Building	2,531,287		
Option A Phase 2 Below Grade Parking	1,175,000		
Option A Phase 2 Site & Landscape For Support Building	2,144,875		
Phase 2 Option A Sub-Total		\$ 5,851,162	
Option A Phase 3			
Option A Phase 3 Expansion Building	1,717,097		
Option A Phase 3 Site & Landscape for Expansion Building	880,692		
Phase 3 Option A Sub-Total		\$ 2,597,789	
Total Option A Phases I, II & III			\$ 24,957,339

Estimates of cost for the Master Plan are order-of-magnitude prices based on known conditions of the property and for planning purposes only.

For design and construction, the City of Dallas policy for funding is 60% maximum public contribution and 40% minimum private sector contribution. Specific levels of City funding would be determined at a later time and would be defined by an agreement with the private fundraising entity and the City.

A list of specific master plan reports, narratives and other supporting materials, which were used in determining cost, is included on page 20 of this Summary.

6 Strategic Planning

The scope of work of the Master Plan did not include a full strategic planning study. The architectural team used instead a case study method to identify the questions for a future study. Theaters and performing arts venues, publicly owned Dallas cultural sites, and publicly visited Wright sites were studied.

The factors reviewed for each study property included:

- Primary and secondary use
- Ownership public, private, multiple
- Type of tenant or resident
- Operations responsibilities
- Maintenance provisions
- Program management
- Private support entities, advocacy and affinity groups

As a next step, a strategic plan should be undertaken that includes a market and demographic studies, economic feasibility projections, and analysis of potential management and operations organization, including possibilities for public/private cooperation.

The following is a summary of issues raised through our case study approach, outlined in Section 4 of the Master Plan.

1. Assumptions for Future Uses

Theater

The theater would be used as a unique type (panoramic modified thrust) with multiple secondary uses (lecture, small music, small dance, etc.).

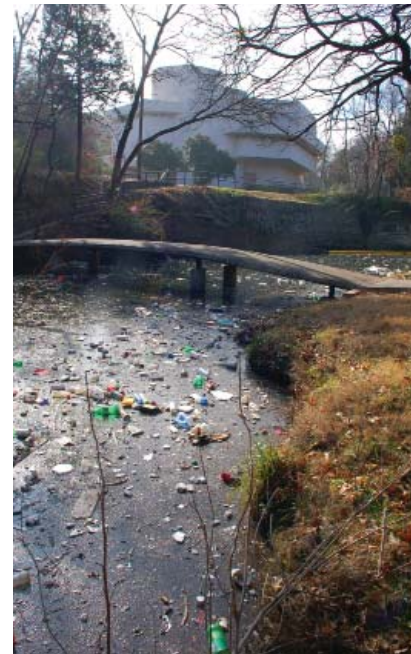
Theater Support and Expansion Space

A future support building should first facilitate the use of the theater and its larger new mission as a destination, but the space program should anticipate the possibility of expanded use such as additional administrative space, workspace, program areas for the arts, or theater education, for visitors and exhibits, and for additional rehearsal or performance space.

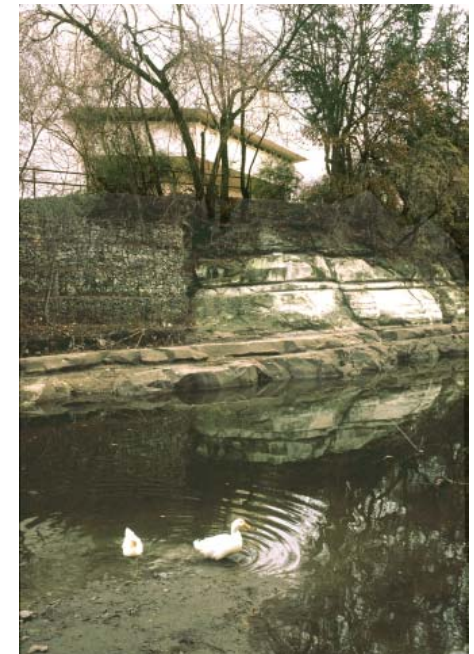
Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism visitation to the Kalita Humphreys Theater building (not including theater patronage), based on these statistics of similar projects, could be in the range of 5,000 to 20,000 per year. This is highly dependent on management

"Integration means that no part of anything is of any great value in itself except as it be an integrate part of the harmonious whole. . ."
Frank Lloyd Wright (4)



View from Turtle Creek



View from Turtle Creek, 2005

objectives for tourism related to secondary schools, cultural arts and architecture, heritage tourism, Dallas tourism and international Frank Lloyd Wright tourism marketing. And it is dependent on the extent to which the building is restored with significant features and a restored relationship to the landscape emblematic of Wright's design.

Future historic designations may include state and national and even international designations given the fact that this is the only completed theater fully designed by Wright according to his "New Theatre" concept. With future restoration and designations, heritage tourism visitation could increase dramatically, and new sources for funding expand.

Park Context

A future strategic plan also should explore the synergistic relationship to the uses of the William B. Dean Park and the program and management implications

The Conceptual Plans of the Master Plan take into account the minimum space required as well as the possibility of expansion. Prior to a building campaign, and in conjunction with a strategic plan, a more detailed program for use would be required.

2. Ownership: Public, Private, Multiple

Multiple owners, assisted by multiple maintenance contractors, plus new

private partnership components, and the interest in the property of multiple stakeholders, all suggest the need for a carefully tuned management organization that can respond to and coordinate multiple interests.

3. Building Use and Operations Management for Arts and for Architecture

Since the theater does not lend itself to every kind of drama performance, a single primary lease is not a likely tenant scenario at this time. With multiple users it becomes even more important that those caring for the building must maintain continuity and standards.

Without knowing all possible uses of the property, it is nevertheless possible to recommend some goals for the Kalita Humphreys Theater program management and operations. The staff should:

- Be able to coordinate scheduling for multiple users
- Be responsive to a dual mission of both theater and architecture
- Value, identify with, have pride in their facility
- Feel that the Kalita Humphreys Theater is their home and keep long-term solutions in mind
- Safeguard the investment in the landmark building, its contents and its equipment
- Maintain an on-site presence at all times, as gatekeepers to all users and contractors
- Be permanently funded so that continuity is maintained
- Have expertise in both theater and historic building maintenance issues
- Understand and involve the larger community

Combining all of these approaches would maximize use and help safeguard the historic property in perpetuity.

4. Building Maintenance and Capital Improvements (Restoration) of a City-owned building

Those who manage interventions at the Kalita Humphreys Theater should:

- Adhere to guidelines and standards
- Maintain records of all work
- Develop expertise and maintain continuity of personnel
- Be available on-site to facilitate and monitor the work

It takes dedicated funded staff to be able to coordinate the multiplicity of city departments that respond to requests for repairs.

5. Partners and Support Groups

A not-for-profit entity can provide a fund-raising capability for grants and private philanthropic gifts. Private funding can be advantageous to building maintenance and improvements, filling economic gaps; can encourage volunteer, in-kind and

pro bono assistance; can often move more quickly, and demonstrates community support to grantors of public funds. “Friends of” organizations also can provide expertise and hours to help safeguard a historic landmark, facilitate communication of stakeholders and encourage community involvement. Our study found that all publicly accessible Wright sites had associated not-for-profit organizations.

Whether the not-for-profit support entity that represents the landmark theater is independent or associated with the owner what is key is that:

- There is demonstrated community involvement, the mission draws on community demand
- The potential of the community to assist the owner in raising funds is explored
- The entity has expertise in interpreting the cultural heritage aspects of the historic property
- The entity includes a range of stakeholder viewpoints

Many existing affinity groups, in the course of informal input gathering for this Master Plan, have expressed an interest in supporting heritage tourism or other interpretive programs that would be developed by the Kalita Humphreys Theater organization.

6. Economic Feasibility

Earned Revenue

Sources of revenue for theaters and Wright sites in the study included: event rental, tours and public programs with tourism component, venue rental for non-theater special events (with restrictions), private concessionaires, concession management, income from educational programs, licensing rights, advertising sales, merchandise sales at venue and web-site, and equipment rental.

Marketing for both theater and heritage tourism could be supported by the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau to increase visitation and potentially increase revenues.

Public-private partnerships that include potential investment for retail, restaurants or other services or concessions were not considered likely sources of revenue at this time.

While earned income is an important indicator of success, there are other benefits to be gained from the multiple uses noted above. In Oak Park, Illinois, the 80,000 visitors to the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio annually have had a large impact on the economy of the town of Oak Park. They make purchases on-site, on-line and in the area, and make repeat visits to the programs offered, adding vitality to the area as a whole.

Funding Opportunities

The investment in the future of the Kalita Humphreys Theater as a theater and as a historic building can draw on many sources in addition to municipal funds including:

- Federal or state funds for historic landmarks for “bricks and mortar,” as well as development, education, interpretation, training and marketing for heritage tourism. These may include: the Texas Historic Commission, the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife.
- Theater advocacy organizations that provide specific grants for restoration of theaters.
These could include: THC grants for Texas theaters, the Texas Commission for the Arts, the Theatre Historical Society, a member of American Association for State and Local History and the League of Historic American Theatres.
- Private foundations that favor grants specifically for historic theaters, historic landmarks, and arts and culture. Examples in Dallas include organizations such as the Summerlee Foundation, Hoblitzelle Foundation, Meadows Foundation, or the Communities Foundation of Texas.
- Private arts affinity groups that contribute to arts and culture, such as TACA, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting performing arts in North Texas)
- Partnership with a not-for-profit entity specific to the Kalita Humphreys Theater.
 - A non-profit can help fill economic gaps in the budget for restoration and new construction.
 - A non-profit entity with targeted expertise can solicit, accept, track and manage donations to the building restoration, special improvements, exhibits and programs. The association with a non-profit or private entities can result in volunteer and pro bono involvement to help tourism, programming, professional services, and in-kind donations.
 - Corporate sponsorships for non-profits can fund restoration, performances or programs.
 - An endowment held by a non-profit could subsidize the operations of the theater and other programming and provide some security so that a fledgling organization could concentrate on its mission.
- Subsidies available at the City or State level to non-profits for expenses, utilities, cleaning, maintenance and some kinds of improvements.

Grants or revenue sources for site-related projects could include local foundation grants, conservation funds, watershed and flood protection, special use permits, local and state outdoor recreation grants and other funds. These are not the purview of this plan, but could be explored in conjunction with perimeter uses (such as the historic stair to the Katy Trail, designed in conjunction with the Friends of the Katy Trail) or the restoration of perimeter landscape areas.

Planning Goals

- Synergy
Multiple synergistic revenues are needed for the Kalita Humphreys Theater at Turtle Creek to remain viable. The management should endeavor to maximize uses compatible with the primary theater use.
- Philosophical Vision that includes Arts and Architecture
Realizing the full potential of the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the architecture, the philosophy that binds them, in its natural setting, will address the interest demonstrated by multiple groups evidenced throughout the Master Plan process.
- Unique Quality of the Sculptural Building in the Natural Setting
The theater is a unique work of architecture, but the location of the theater is also part of its ethos. This area along Turtle Creek, part of the original Kessler plan for Dallas green space, provides a unique setting, an alternative to more urban venues, evocative of underlying topography of the area.
- Integration/Coordination
There needs to be clear agreement and lines of responsibility, among the multiple owners/entities of buildings and site, adjacent trail and private access road owners, tenants, rental users, historical regulatory agencies, transportation networks and major grantors.
- Clarity
The plural mission and the Master Plan Conceptual Plan for the property needs to have clarity.
- Landmark Designation
Wright's architecture contributes to the brand image of all Wright sites. Among the sites chosen as representative in the Wright Public Sites Case Studies, Section 4.4 of the Master Plan, all are designated at the national level. National Historic Landmark status brings wider visibility, and also qualifies the building for greater program and restoration funding.
- Continuity of a Building-Specific Organization
The Mission to promote uniqueness and values of venue must reside with the Owner and non-profit organization dedicated to the property. Staffing for operations, management, marketing and development should not be dependant on the characteristics of any particular transient tenant, but a building-specific organization.

- **Public and Private Cooperation**
The need for a public/private partnering has been demonstrated in other projects in Dallas, in theater projects across the country, and in the care of other Wright sites. This is critically important in ensuring continued stewardship and to foster a sense of community ownership.
- **Economic Security Long-term**
The vision for the future would be secured with both governmental subsidy as well as the creation of an endowment for the operation of the facility.
- **Unique Combination**
The management structure that can carry out that Mission will be unique to the Kalita Humphreys Theater—the building, the site and the context.

Does the making of history stop when the original owner departs? An organizational structure with a compelling mandate is needed as the new driving force, to realize the inherent potential of the theater, architecture and site to be a key cultural asset for Dallas.

“The Kalita Humphreys Theater is a testament to Wright’s evolved theories of theater design; these ideas simmered during his career and exploded into reality here in Dallas at the end of his life. The building in its natural setting is a mature expression of the principles of organic architecture Wright developed over his lifetime, while being a unique response to this particular site....”
Historic Designation Report (3)

7 Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

How much effort and expenditure will be necessary to make the facilities safe, comfortable, enabling and energy efficient? How much effort and expenditure would be necessary to create inspiration and enhancement? Could greater effort bring the facility to the tipping point of long-term economic viability?

To this end, the Master Plan recommends:

1. Enhance the Unique Theater

The significant history of the theater should begin anew. The new vision is based on realizing the highest and best use of the theater aligned with the original intent, as a unique alternative venue that uses modern technology to facilitate use.

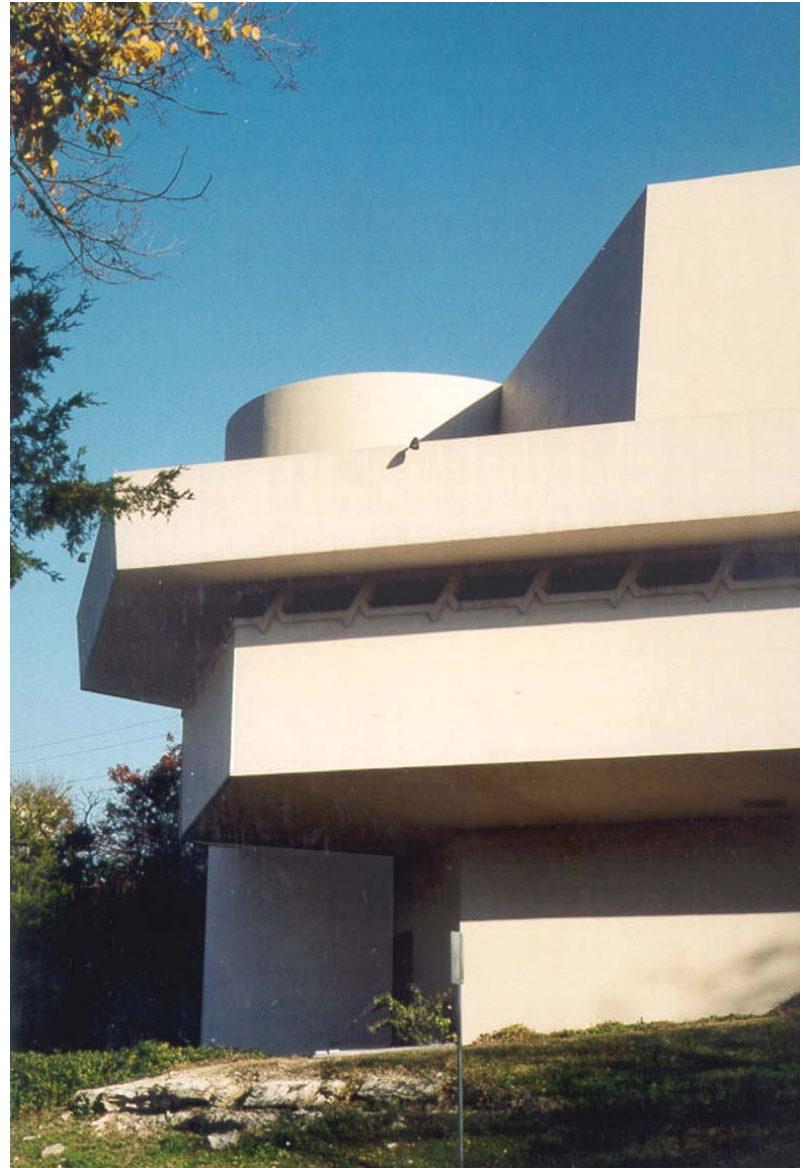
2. Recognize the Synergy of a Plural Mission

The facility should realize its potential as a vibrant cultural asset, as a long-term goal, with a vision that will give the place a powerful identity as part of a greater community and sustain it well into the future. To do so, it must also endeavor to serve the needs of multiple potential users including theater patrons, visitors to the architectural destination and visitors to the Park.

3. Strategic Plan

The capital campaign for 1957 illustrates the champions of the project fifty years ago. Who will be the champions to restore the vision fifty years later, or to create a new one? The Master Plan lays the groundwork and guidelines for the care and enhancement of a major cultural asset to the City of Dallas, in a signature park, surrounded by a vibrant community. This project is worthy of broad support in its implementation and sustained support for continued vitality. Wright said of his solid concrete structure, “One day this theater will mark the spot where Dallas once stood.” A plan for sustained stewardship must also stand the test of time.

What’s old can become new again—welcoming, inspiring, enlivening—as well as comfortable, serene, safe and thoroughly functional. A great work of architecture, an incubator of the arts, a place of pastoral beauty, a testament to community pride, an international destination, the Kalita Humphreys Theater at Turtle Creek can be one of Dallas greatest enduring treasures.



Master Plan Reports and Supporting Materials:

The Master Plan includes two final reports:

- Record Report and Appendices

- Master Plan Synopsis Report and Appendices

Master Plan Section 2 - Existing Conditions

- Bibliography

- Drawing Index

- Technical Data Index

- KHT -Understanding Its Historical Context & Theatre Conditions*

- Acoustical Narrative*

- Summary Assessment of KHT*

- Preliminary Evaluation of Building Safety*

- Mechanical Design Narrative KHT & HAB*

- Electrical Design Narrative KHT & HAB*

- Site Analysis for Phase I*

- DTC Existing Conditions, Accessibility*

- Structural Conditions Assessment KHT & HAB*

Chronological Floor Plans - Kalita Humphreys Theater

Existing Conditions Floor Plans and Sections - Heldt Administration Building

Master Plan Sections 3, 4 & 5 - Planning - Input Gathering, Goals and Themes and Parameters

- Unabridged Information Framework

- Historic Ordinance for the Kalita Humphreys Theater Historic Overlay District*

- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Preservation*

- Selected Frank Lloyd Wright Public Sites, Case Studies*

- Dallas Existing Building Code, Excerpt*

- Design and Regulatory Parameters, with Tables

- Space Review Worksheets

Master Plan Section 6 - Conceptual Plans

- Conceptual Floor Plans and Sections - Kalita Humphreys Theater

- Conceptual Floor Plan - New Construction Lobby Extension

- Conceptual Floor Plans - Temporary Renovation Heldt Administration Building

- Conceptual Site Plans - Options A and B

- Phasing Plans - Options A and B

Master Plan Section 7- Statements of Probable Cost

- Statements of Probable Cost Worksheets - KHT, HAB, New Construction

- Statements of Probable Cost Worksheets - Site Landscape, Options A & B

- Consultant Narratives

- Review of Renovation Concept, Code Narrative*

- Acoustical Treatments and Performance Audio-Video*

- Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Narrative*

- Theatrical Equipment Narrative*

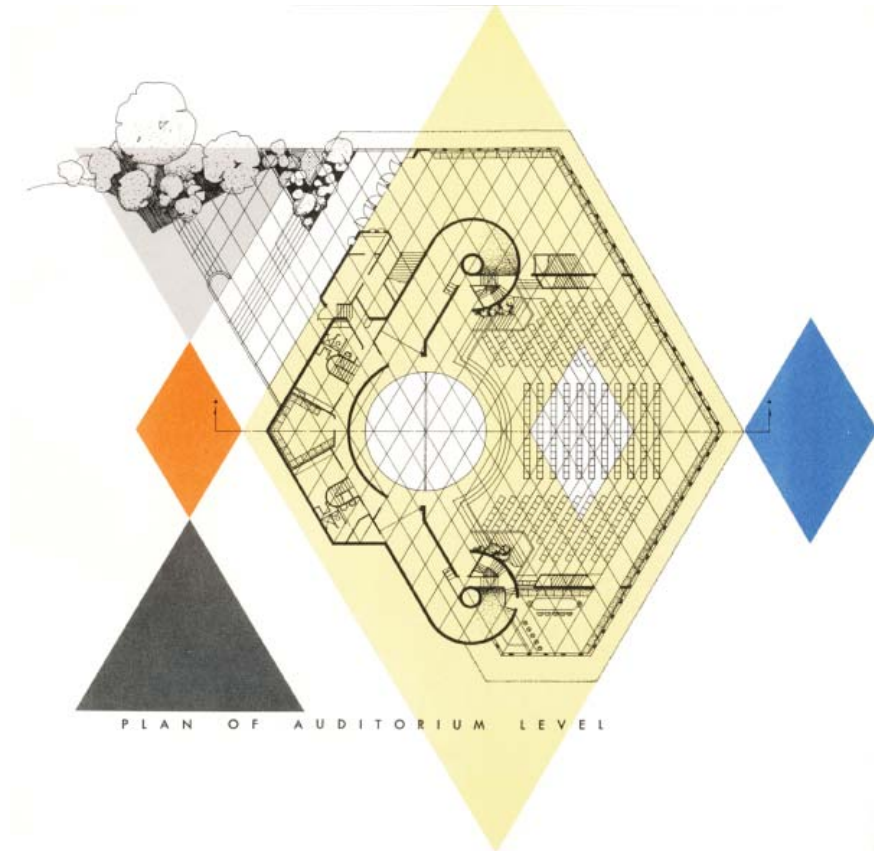
- Accessibility Narrative*

- LEED Phase III Summary of Issues and Strategies*

Master Plan Section 8- Review and Conclusions

- Source List

- Appendices Index



Kalita Humphreys Theater, Floor Plan, *Dallas Theater Center Brochure*, 1959, DTC Files

Footnotes:

1. Joyce Burke Cory, *The Dallas Theater Center, An Idea That Was Big Enough*, Dallas: The Dallas Theater Center, 1980, pp. 65-66.
2. Ann Abernathy, AIA, *Exhibit E, City of Dallas Historic Designation Report*, Dallas: Jan. 2005, p. 11.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
4. Frank Lloyd Wright, *The Natural House*, "Organic Architecture," p. 24, 1954, Bramhall House, by arrangement with Horizon Press, New York.

8

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DALLAS THEATER CENTER
MASTER PLAN

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