

a cultural center for new brunswick

A Report of  
the New Brunswick  
Arts Development  
Commission

Studies for the:

# NEW BRUNSWICK CULTURAL CENTER

New Brunswick Arts Development Commission

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# A CULTURAL CENTER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of a Cultural Center in New Brunswick has been considered in varying degrees of seriousness over the past decade. It has been studied by consultants, debated by committees, and discussed and promoted by almost every formal and informal organization in the New Brunswick Community. It has generated great periods of excitement and anticipation, only to slip away into the limbo of false hope. Once again, through the New Brunswick Arts Development Commission, from which the initiative of this report has come, the Cultural Center -- its reality and future -- is considered. Many who might be a part of making a Cultural Center a reality are at the crossroads of a decision, and their future actions will make it attainable or simply a concept of opportunity lost.

At the crossroads.....

The Mason Gross School of the Arts requires a permanent home with adequate space for its future growth. Clearly, the School, by itself, cannot commit to a permanent presence in the downtown alone, and Rutgers University cannot alone take on the financial responsibility of a Cultural Center. In many ways, the simplest solution would be to construct a Graphic Arts Center and Theater on the Douglass Campus. If plans and commitments for a downtown Cultural Center are not put in place now, that course of action would be inevitable, for the first priority of the School is, after all, the attainment of greater excellence in fine arts education; facilities are an intrinsic part of that excellence.

- The George Street Playhouse must be relocated. Relocation will determine whether the Playhouse can remain a viable force in the cultural life of the community, and, indeed, whether it will survive at all.
- The Crossroads Theater is hampered by its present facility and location. To survive it must become a part of a larger whole.
- The resident companies of the State Theater, The Princeton Ballet, Opera Theater of New Jersey and The Garden State Symphonic Pops Orchestra, are looking for leadership, progress and commitment and the development of an arts patrons organization. Another cancellation like their joint gala could well be the last.

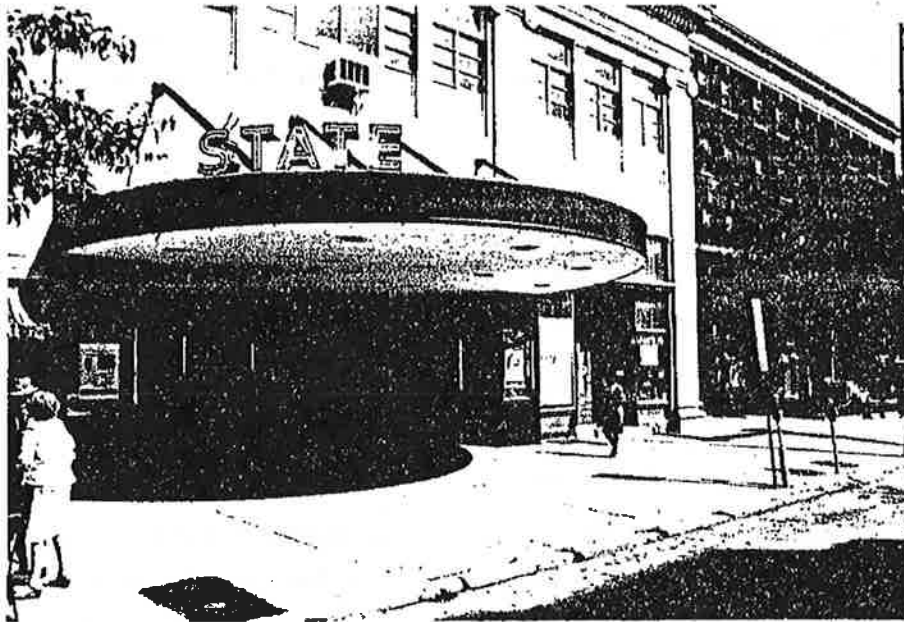
At the same time, all of the ingredients to achieve success are in place. These represent great opportunities.

- Devco owns the State Theater which protects future options for its use.
- The YMCA is for sale, and it, along with other properties around the State Theater, are adaptable to Cultural Center use.
- The City has designated the Ballet, Opera and Orchestra to be resident companies of New Brunswick. They have all established bases in New Brunswick and the Ballet has also established a school here.
- The Mason Gross School of the Arts is committed to remaining in the downtown area, but is in need of permanent facilities.
- The Arts Resource Center at 146 George Street provides gallery, office and conference space for five professional arts organizations; Women's Caucus for the Arts, Opera Theater of New Jersey, Garden State Symphonic Pops Orchestra, New Jersey Designer Craftsmen, and Young Audiences of New Jersey. This highly successful Center resulted from the

collaborative efforts of New Brunswick Tomorrow, Devco, Johnson & Johnson, and the Arts Organizations.

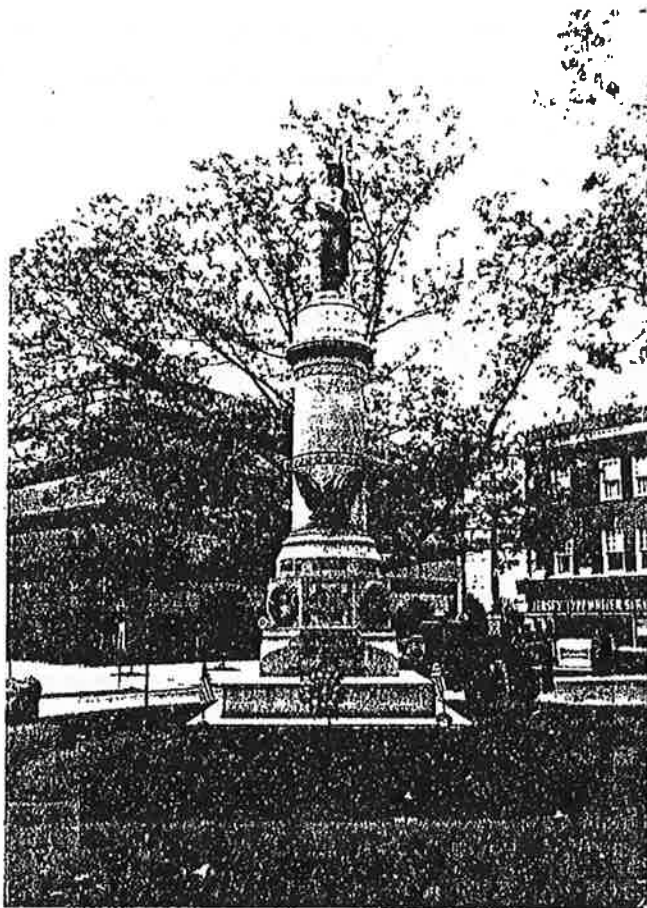
The George Street Mall is under construction in the Livingston Avenue area which, with the monument square improvements, will establish a major focal point in that part of the downtown.

The development of a Cultural Center in the City of New Brunswick can become a reality, however none of the potential partners in this venture; the City, the County, the University, Johnson & Johnson, Devco, the independent theaters and all of the public and private interests that make up New Brunswick, can alone undertake the development and operations of the Center. It must be a cooperative effort.



*the State Theater on Livingston Avenue*

The following narrative and plan concepts relate to the creation of a Cultural Center in downtown New Brunswick. It is a concept for a Center that would fulfill the needs of all interests, one that would bring the resources of those interests together. It is not necessarily the ultimate form that the Cultural Center may take in terms of facilities and programs; it is, rather, a point of departure, a statement for the end of this century, and a vehicle for experimentation and recreation of the wide range of cultural programs that have grown out of the American experience. The Cultural Center would be a vehicle for testing community response to programs at a substantially lower cost than would be necessary if new, more elaborate facilities were initially planned and built. The Center would use to the greatest advantage existing physical and human resources prior to embarking on untested programs and the establishment of a priority system for these programs.

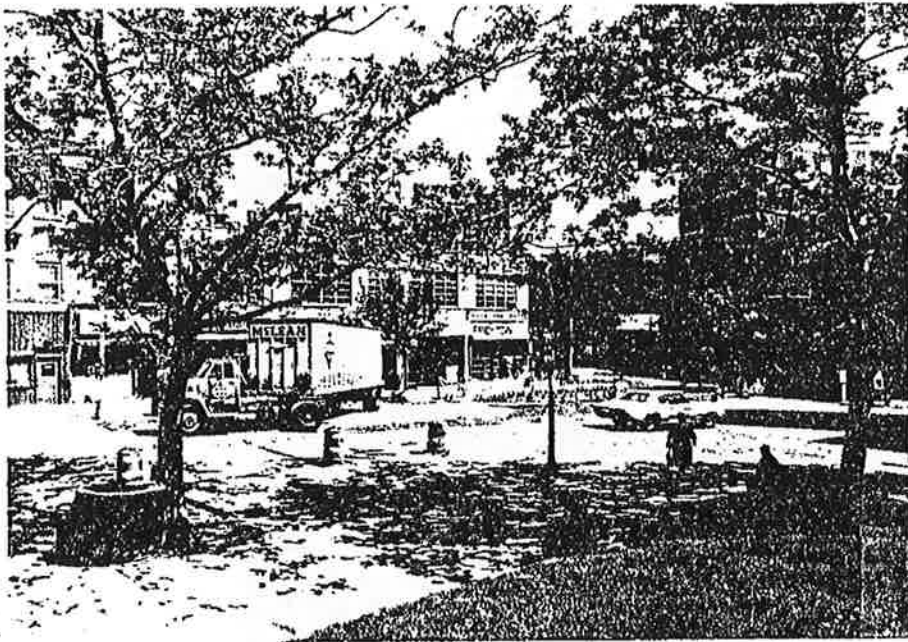


*Monument Square*

## THE CONCEPT

The basic concept involves the creation of a Cultural Center using a combination of existing and new facilities in the area of the State Theater on Livingston Avenue. Including the State Theater, there are a number of buildings within its immediate vicinity that could be adapted for Cultural Center use. These include; the YMCA Building, the Sisser Brothers Warehouse and the former Arnold Constable Department Store. If the initial phase of the Cultural Center is a success, using renovated structures, additional land must be acquired for expansion area and to construct new facilities for those entities whose use of renovated facilities would only be a short-term solution.

Preparatory to reviewing the concept plan for the Cultural Center, a brief review of the Existing Physical Characteristics of the Livingston Avenue area and the proposed Elements of the Cultural Center is presented to set the stage for the Plan.



*George St. & Livingston Ave. from Monument Square*



## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: STATE THEATRE AREA

### LAND USE

The area around the State Theater is, at the present time, characterized by "mixed" land use patterns. These patterns are illustrated on the accompanying "Land Use" map, which also defines the area as that bounded by Bayard, George, New and Kirkpatrick Streets. However, within an overall configuration of widely varying uses on relatively small lots, it is clear that the area around the theater already contains a large share of New Brunswick's special and public use facilities. The City Hall, the Post Office, the Elks, the YMCA, the YWCA, and three well established churches are found within, or immediately proximate to the area. Even considering these facilities, however, the activity generating potential of the district is barely realized. In large part, this is due to the daytime activity patterns associated with many of the above land uses. In addition, what commercial services that do exist do so primarily to service the daytime population. Commercial uses are concentrated on George Street.

With the exception of the Plaza office complex, the permanency of area land uses is related to the distance of the subject parcel from City Hall. The most permanent use patterns exist on the City Hall block itself, while the most transient and speculative uses are found on the New Street side of the VIP block and nearby areas. It is interesting to note that the area's most stable uses are either government related or subsidized.





The uncommonly diverse mix of uses, ranging from residential to modern office and even warehousing, combined with a trend in the area toward a type of adaptive reuse that downwardly impacts on the value of the structure and its surroundings, are symptomatic of a real estate environment that would benefit from additional investment and a more focused form of development.

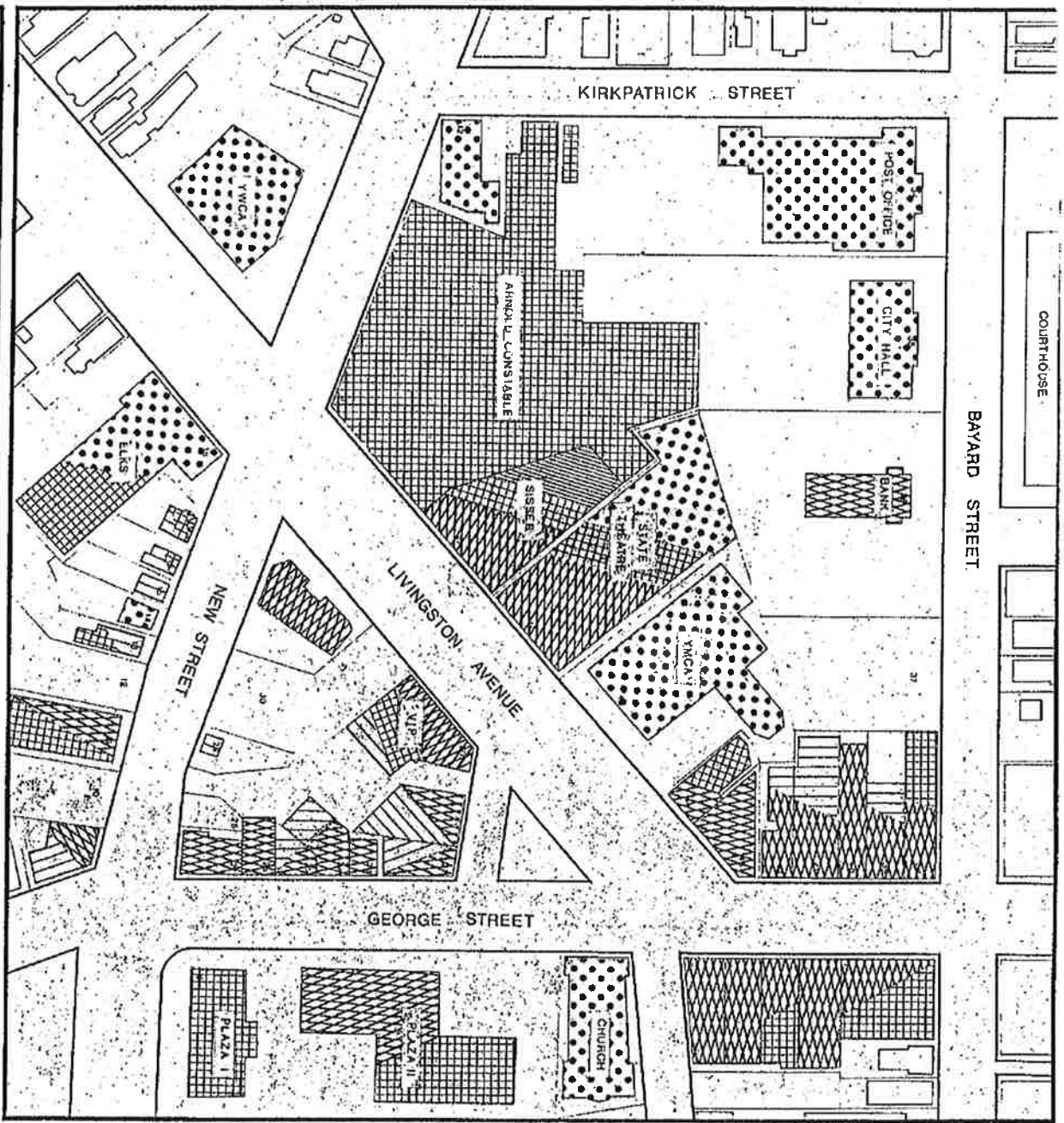
While vacancies and deterioration are under control in the area, the economic usefulness of many of the existing uses tends to be minimal. The existence of such low level economic activities as social

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Office of Planning and Land Use Administration, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

**EXISTING LAND USE**

-  RESIDENTIAL - PUBLIC
-  OFFICE
-  COMMERCIAL
-  WAREHOUSE

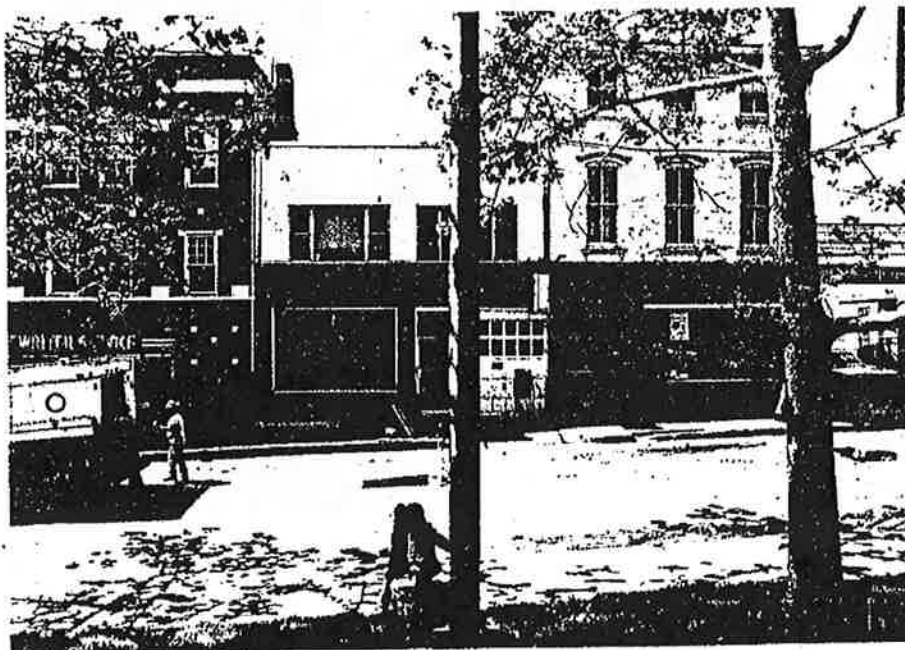


and political clubs in what should be prime ground level retail space, and the underutilization of the upper stories of commercial structures, are evidence of this tendency.

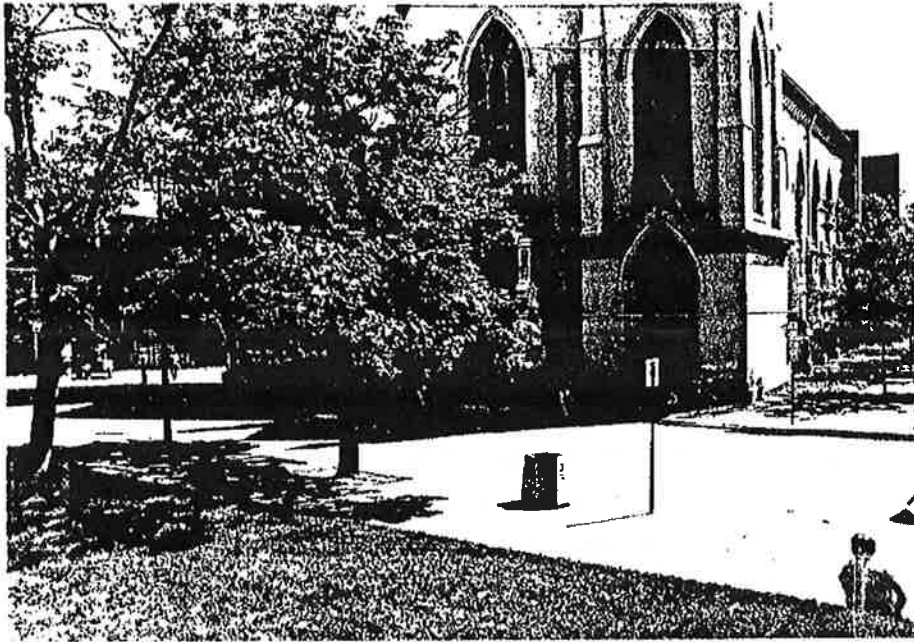
#### BUILDING CONDITIONS

The condition of most of the key buildings in the area around the State Theater is excellent. Exceptions are, the VIP Hotel, the two story commercial building on the north side of the George Street-Livingston Avenue intersection and an adjacent residential structure converted to commercial use, certain other commercial/residential buildings are on the same block as the VIP Hotel.

In general, lot size tends to be smaller on the VIP and Elks blocks than elsewhere in the area of the State Theater. It is the smaller buildings on these lots that are typically in the poorest condition. In part, this is a reflection of the age of the buildings, many of which have undergone several use conversions over an extended period. It also reflects the somewhat negative presence of the VIP Hotel, the largest structure in the southern part of the area around the Theater. The building conditions evaluation is subjective in nature, the result of a field survey and in most cases without benefit of interior inspection. It was done, however within the context of what the area should be like to best respond to the development of the Cultural Center.



*Buildings along Schureman Street -- Monument Square*



*United Methodist Church - Monument Square*



*New Street: South side between George and Livingston*

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Office of Research and Capital Planning, August, 1980. The City Commission

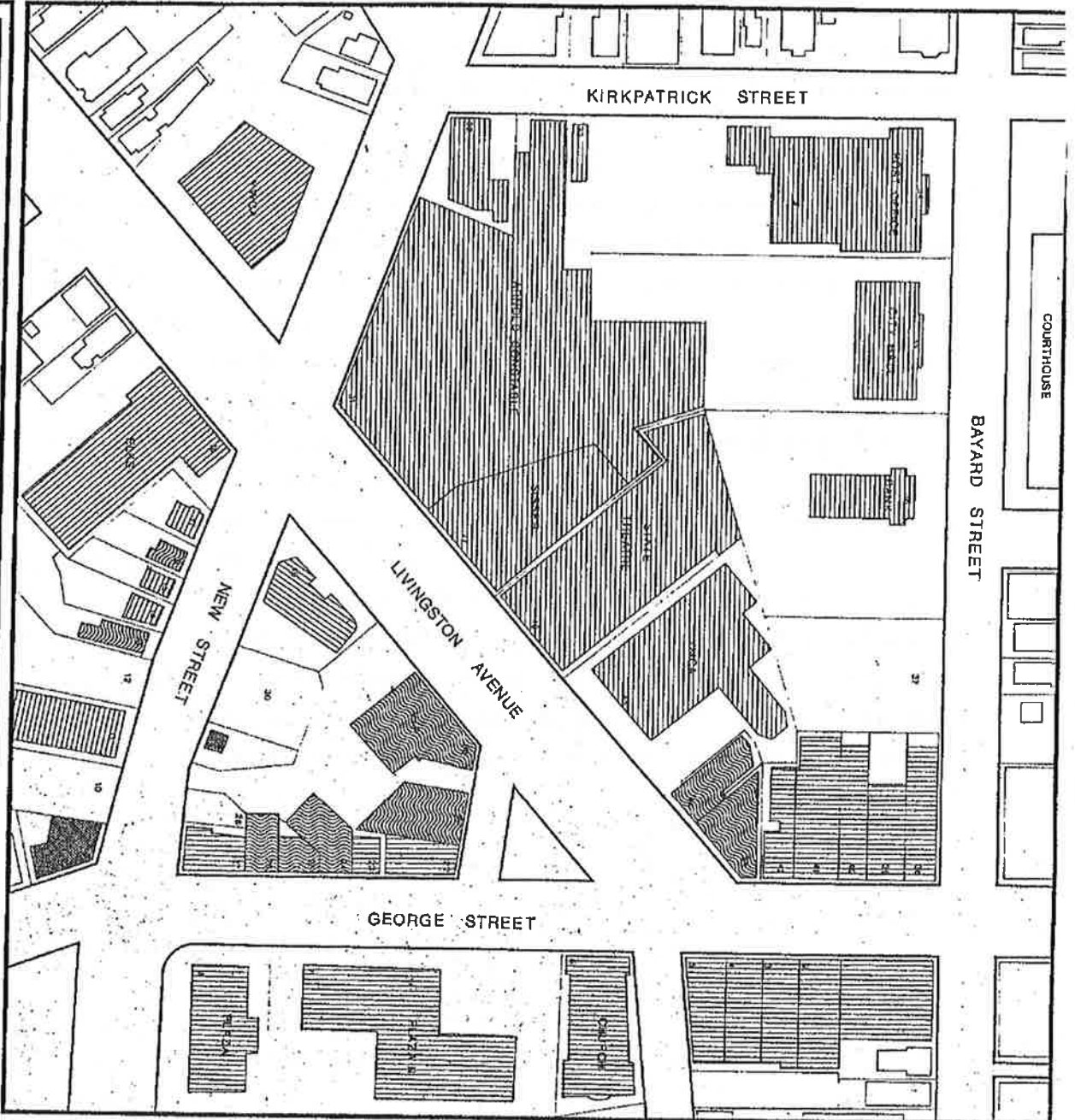
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GOOD

FAIR

POOR

BUILDING CONDITIONS



## PARKING AND CIRCULATION

There are over 2,000 parking spaces in the lots, parking structures, and on the streets within a five minute walk of the State Theater. This includes parking available in the Wolfson Parking Deck and the lower Plaza lots. Another 1,250 spaces are available in the Ferren Parking Deck which is only slightly farther away. The accompanying map and Appendix II details the exact number and location of these spaces. There is then more than adequate parking to support the simultaneous happening of a number of cultural activities in this area.

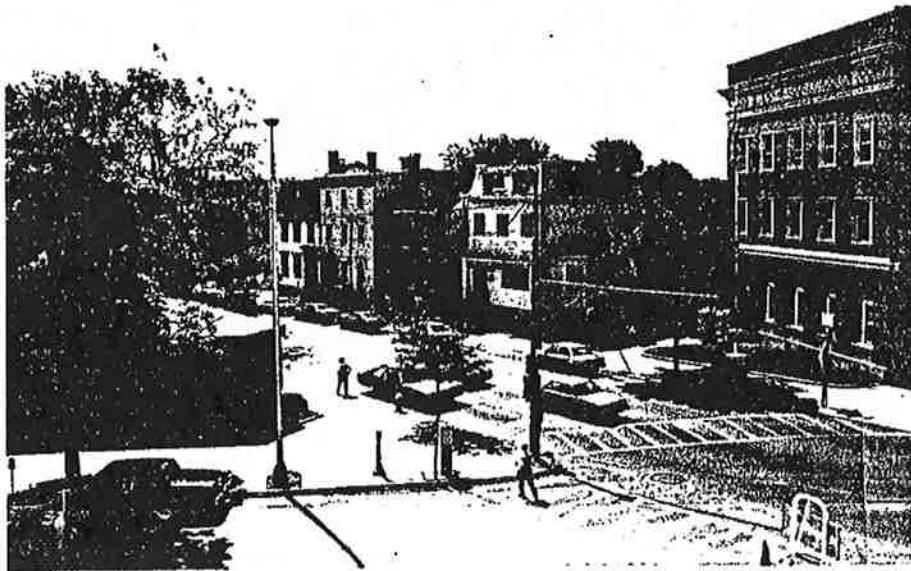
One of the major entrances to the downtown district is New Street, which connects with Route 18. It is therefore possible to travel directly to the immediate vicinity of the State Theater and find a parking space no further distant from the ultimate destination than would be found in the typical regional mall. Also, access via Livingston Avenue and Route 1 provides an excellent tie to the area south of the City.

Public transit, most notably the Rutgers University "A" bus, and the Middlesex Metro #14 serves the area, using both Livingston Avenue and George Street, which are principal access routes to the State Theater area. The new George Street Mall contains accommodations for mass transit.

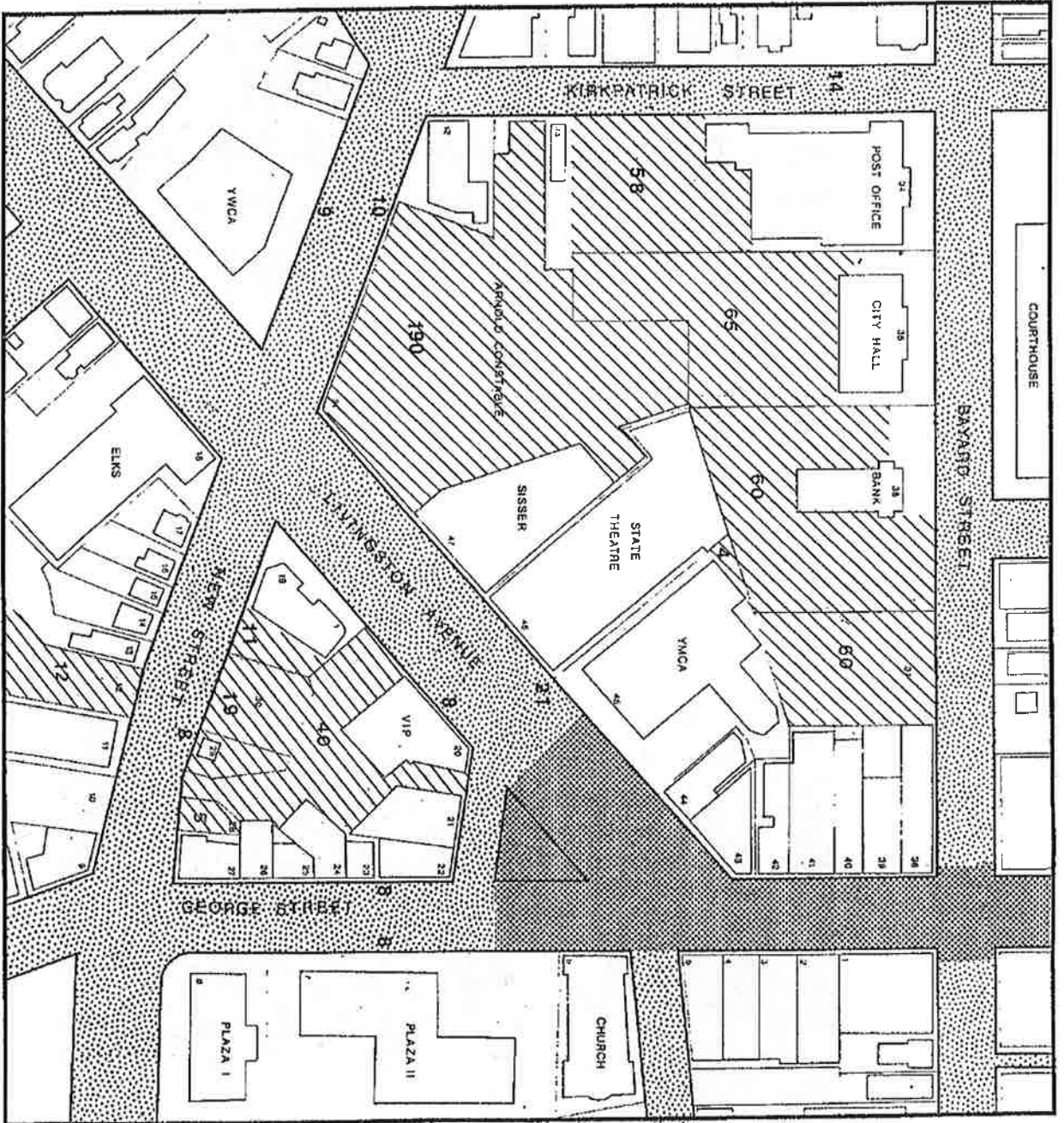
Perhaps the weakest aspect of area parking and circulation is the lack of a through connection on the City Hall block between the State Theater and the parking area immediately behind it and the further Ferren Deck. Users will have to walk around the periphery of the block to their destination if they park in these locations. This is however not a severe inconvenience and might well be solved as detailed studies and design of the area is undertaken.



*Parking atop Arnold Constable Building*



*Intersection of New Street & Livingston Avenue*



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 New Brunswick Arts Development Commission

Howard Needles Tammen Bergendoff Architects Inc. New Brunswick, N.J.

**EXISTING CIRCULATION & PARKING**  
 STREET  
 GEO ST WALL  
 PARKING





## ASSETS AND PROBLEMS

An investigation of existing conditions is a prerequisite for future planning. These conditions can be categorized into three groups: Facts, Assets and Problems. The Facts are those existing conditions that are not necessarily assets or problems, but which must be considered in developing the plan. The previous discussion of Land Use and Parking are Facts. Assets are those characteristics making a positive contribution to the environment or to the workings of the plan. Problems are those negative elements that are in direct conflict with the stated goals relative to achieving the plan. In planning, the Facts are ground rules, the Assets are to be retained and built upon and the Problems must be solved. The State Theater area is not without its problems, but it also has significant assets that can be captured and enhanced.

In summary the Assets are:

There is extant a group of buildings consisting of the State Theater, the former Arnold Constable Building, the YMCA Building, and the Sisser Brothers Warehouse, all contiguous to one another, in excellent structural condition that appear to be adaptable for Cultural Center uses. They compose what could become a "Cultural Block" in downtown New Brunswick.

Access to the State Theater area is excellent, with direct connections to Route 18 via New Street. Good access is also provided via two of the City's major thoroughfares, Livingston Avenue and George Street. The intersection of George Street and Livingston Avenue is and will continue to be a transit stop for the University bus system and for regional buses using George Street.

The State Theater area is located at one of the primary open-space focal points in downtown New Brunswick...Monument Square. The existing open space already provides a sense of place that could only be accentuated by the creation of a Cultural Center on the square.

The George Street Mall, now under construction, penetrates what could become the Cultural Center District on Livingston Avenue.

There is adequate parking within a five minute walk to accommodate a number of simultaneous evening performance activities in the State Theater area.

Parking is available on the roof of the Arnold Constable Building which would make it particularly attractive to educational use for commuting faculty and students.

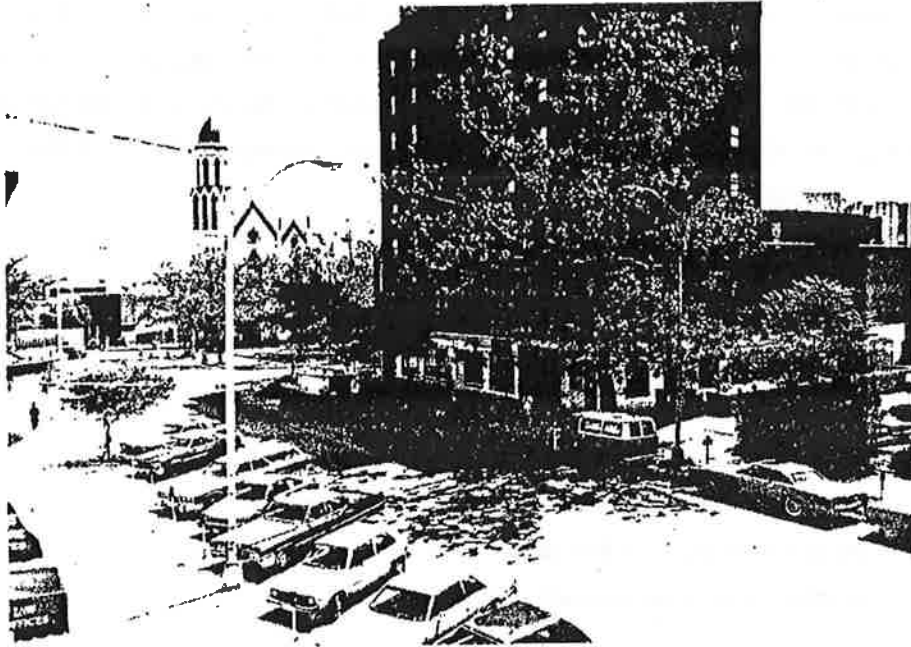
The surrounding environment is generally in good condition and any change is likely to be positive. Redevelopment has already occurred on one side of the area in the Plaza Office Building complex, and Livingston Avenue continues to be an attractive urban thoroughfare.

The primary problems are:

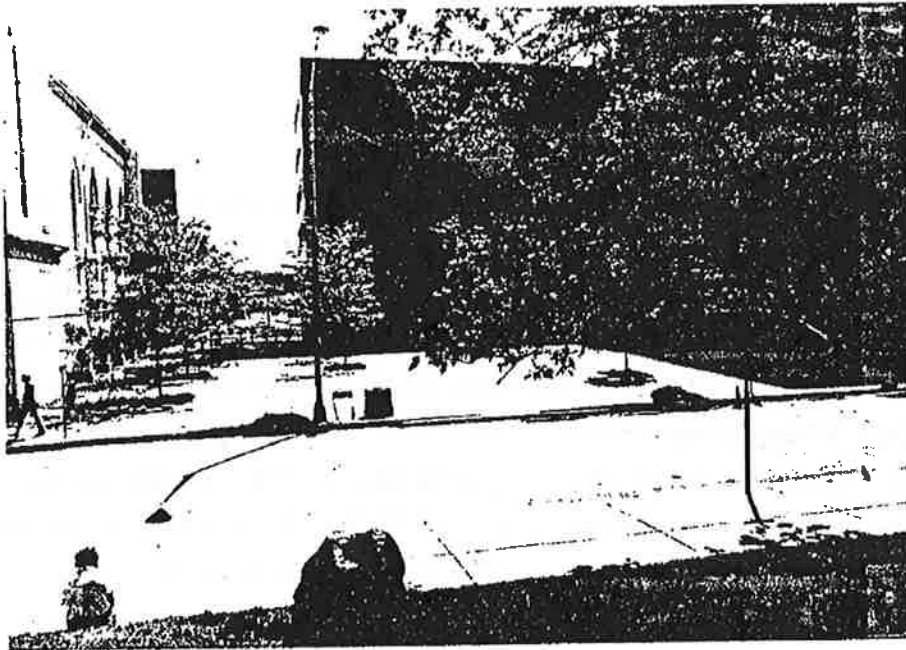
There is no readily available vacant land for expansion of the Center immediately contiguous to the State Theater and its adjacent buildings.

A number of the surrounding commercial buildings are in poor condition and are on a line between being barely acceptable and being an eyesore. This conclusion is based on field surveys and although subjective in nature, does pinpoint some of the problem areas.

The VIP Hotel appears to have no potential for conversion to a Cultural Center use or a supporting use such as housing, yet it occupies a prime site within a potential Cultural Center District.



*VIP Hotel*



*Plaza II from Monument Square*

## ELEMENTS OF THE CULTURAL CENTER

The elements that would make up the Cultural Center as prescribed by the various arts organizations and the Mason Gross School are as follows. They are categorized as Public Sector and Private Sector facilities. Although there could be commingling of the public and private facilities in the design of the various facilities, the private generally provide support for the day to day activities and enhance the quality of life for those attending Center events.

### PUBLIC SECTOR

1. 1,800-2,000 Seat Performing Arts Hall (STATE THEATER)
2. 700-800 seat Proscenium Stage Theater
3. 400-500 Seat Thrust Stage Theater
4. 200-300 Impromptu Theater
5. Mason Gross School: Graphic Arts Center
6. Media Center: Television and Arts Resources
7. Administrative Center for the Arts

### PRIVATE SECTOR

1. Commercial Art Galleries
  2. Restaurants/Clubs
  3. Retail Service
1. The Performing Arts Hall (STATE THEATER)

The limiting factor in the use of the State Theater as the Performing Arts Hall is the number of seats that can be provided -- 1,800-2,000, depending on the final design. Still, in the overall picture, the options are not unlimited. A new performing arts hall would today cost \$8,000-10,000 a seat, or for a 2,500 seat hall, \$20-25,000,000. Estimates to renovate the State range from \$2-4 million. The answer is obvious -- the State Theater should be the Performing Arts Hall. This is not inconsistent with past findings and recommendations. In 1975, Allen Sapp, Consultant on the Arts to Rutgers University, in his recommendations on facilities

for the then new Mason Gross School listed an 1,800-2,000 seat hall third in priority behind a proscenium theater and a teaching building. The teaching building is temporarily provided in the P.J. Young Building. Mr. Sapp stated:

"An 1800-2000 seat Hall would make possible the flowering of a major opera program within the University, suit an expanding orchestra and major faculty recitals, relate strongly to the importation of a variety of visiting events such as: Dance Company residencies, Opera Company residencies, serve as a regional home for a permanently associated Symphony Orchestra or Ballet Company, and provide the University with a place for the major speakers and lecturers as well as popular events."

The New Brunswick Tomorrow Cultural Center Study Group, chaired by Ernest Johnson, stated in their 1979 Recommendations and Findings:

"The study group recommends as a second priority cultural capital facility the establishment of a 1500-1800 seat theater for the performing arts."

In these studies and others, the primary caution has been that cultural facilities and performing arts halls in particular are not self sustaining.

Allen Sapp went on to say:

"It would involve a professional management structure and would put the University into the area of management-labor relations, heavy subsidy, uncertain income off-set, and other sociologic questions of some difficulty."

The Cultural Center Study Group said:

"It must be clearly understood that this particular size hall represents a compromise in the judgement of the consultants and the study group. This size facility would be most appropriate both from financial and market viewpoints to serve the greater New Brunswick region. A concert facility of this type generally operates at substantial deficits. Those deficits can be reduced if careful attention is paid to maximize programming for this particular size facility. It is felt that with a 1500-1800 seat theater, programming opportunities will be maximized and potential operating deficits minimized."

Recognizing that there are pitfalls and that the income may never meet the operating expenses of the Hall, it is clear that if New Brunswick is to have a Performing Arts Hall as the centerpiece of a Cultural Center, the State Theater may well represent the first and last opportunity.

2. The 700-800 Seat Proscenium Theater

An 800 Seat Proscenium Theater is a high priority for the University's Mason Gross School. One of the keys to excellence in the School is to provide the widest possible range of theater experiences. In order to make these opportunities available, it will be essential that a proscenium theater be constructed in the future. A theater of this size and type would complement the Cultural Center.

A freestanding 800 seat theater with all of the appropriate support facilities would require a building of approximately 35,000 nasf (50,000 gsf) and would cost \$6,000,000-7,500,000. A typical space program for a theater of this type is outlined in Appendix VI:

3. The 400 Seat Theater (Thrust Stage)

This theater would be the permanent home of the George Street Playhouse. The Playhouse must be relocated for the redevelopment of the block on which it is located. The Playhouse currently has 249 seats which is insufficient to sustain its program. This theater too must contain or have access to normal theater support facilities such as costume and set shops and storage. The Playhouse now occupies approximately 7,000 nasf. In a new theater it would be expected to at least double this space to 14,000 nasf (20,000 gsf). A facility of this size would cost \$2,500,000-3,000,000.

4. The 200-300 Seat Theater

A 200-300 seat theater is required to serve the needs of Crossroads Theater. This theater is currently housed in a building on Memorial Parkway, adjacent to the new Hyatt Regency and in the Hiram Market area. Crossroads would benefit from a more suitable location and access to other theater support facilities.

Overview: The Theaters

Concentrating theaters of different size and type in one area could be beneficial to the theaters as well as to the environment and excitement of the Cultural Center as a whole. Together the theater could be used interchangeably by the various groups based on their program needs. Also, there would be opportunities to share some of the more specialized space such as costume and set construction, storage and rehearsal space. Initially, adequate space would have to be provided to minimize scheduling conflicts, especially in those spaces used for teaching, however, considerable savings could be realized from operating the four theaters out of one or two set construction areas instead of four separate areas. The sharing of facilities is not without its problems, however reasonable approaches to scheduling and facility use would result in substantial savings in space and thus in the initial capital cost and the continuing operation and maintenance of the space.

5. Mason Gross School: Graphic Arts Center

The Graphic Arts division of the Mason Gross School is presently housed in the former P.J. Young Building on George Street. The University leases this building from the New Brunswick Development Corporation. Although not without its problems and limitations, the building has served the School well during its formative years. The Mason Gross School enrollment continues to grow and it is rapidly outgrowing the building. That combined with the desire to return the building to retail use means that a permanent home of sufficient size will have to be provided for the School. A preliminary program document, included as Appendix VII, indicates a long-range space need of 45,000 nasf for the graphic arts.

6. Media Center: Television and Arts Resource Center

The University continues to operate its television/radio activities out of antiquated facilities. There is a pressing need to provide appropriate space for television production and broadcast studios that will be used for teaching as well as public service. It is estimated that approximately 7,500-10,000 nasf will be required for activities of the University's Office of Television and Radio.

Long-range plans should include provisions for a number of arts resource activities such as access to computer terminals and word processing equipment, print media, and a variety of library materials, script and music collections used in support of cultural programs.

7. Administrative Center for the Arts

A number of offices and office suites are required to house the many arts groups now in New Brunswick and those that will come as a result of the Center. These would include organizations such as Young Audiences, Princeton Ballet and New Jersey Designer Craftsmen. The Center would also house the management entity for the State Theater and the City's Arts Development Commission staff.

In addition to office and meeting space for the arts organizations, the Administrative Center should either contain or have available to it gallery space that could be used by these organizations or by artists and artisans in the Central New Jersey region.



*"the Cultural Center" from Monument Square*



## THE PLAN

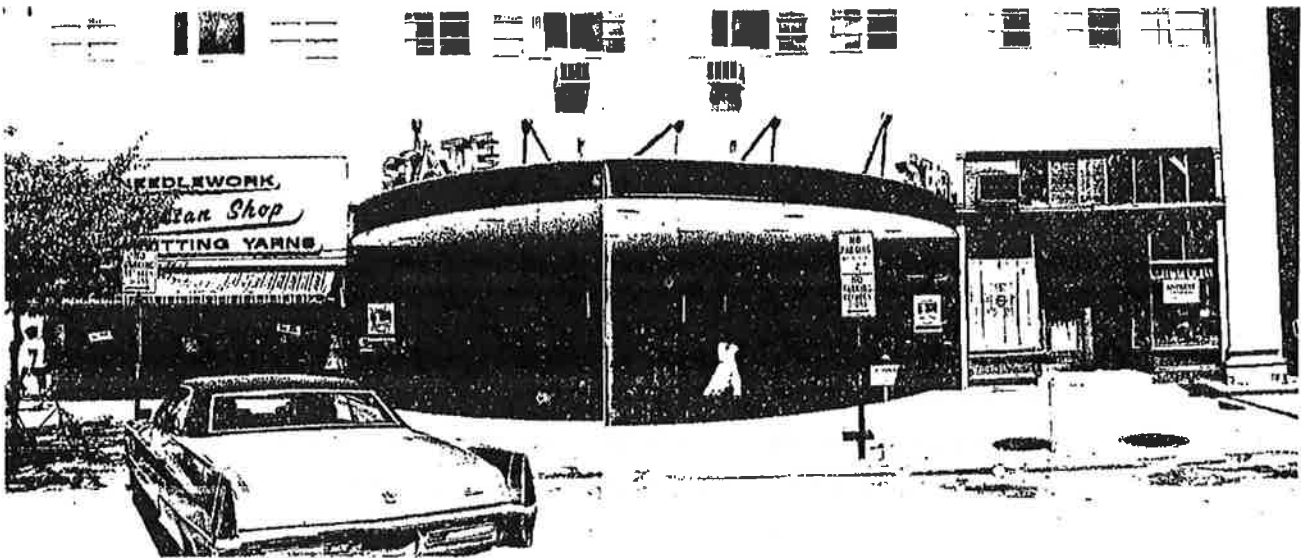
The Concept Plan, illustrated on the following map, envisions the following:

A Cultural Center District would be established within the area encompassed by the solid line on the map and generally along the rear property line of the Arnold Constable, State Theater and YMCA Buildings to George Street; George to New Streets, and New to Kirkpatrick Streets. Within this District would be located all of the facilities described in the previous section, Elements of the Cultural Center.

A second District, an outer perimeter, or zone of influence, would be established over which control would be exercised as those areas redevelop to make them compatible with the Cultural Center environment. This area is illustrated by the dashed line and is bounded by Bayard and George Streets, the rear property lines of the properties fronting New Street, and Kirkpatrick Street.

Within the Cultural Center District, the following would occur:

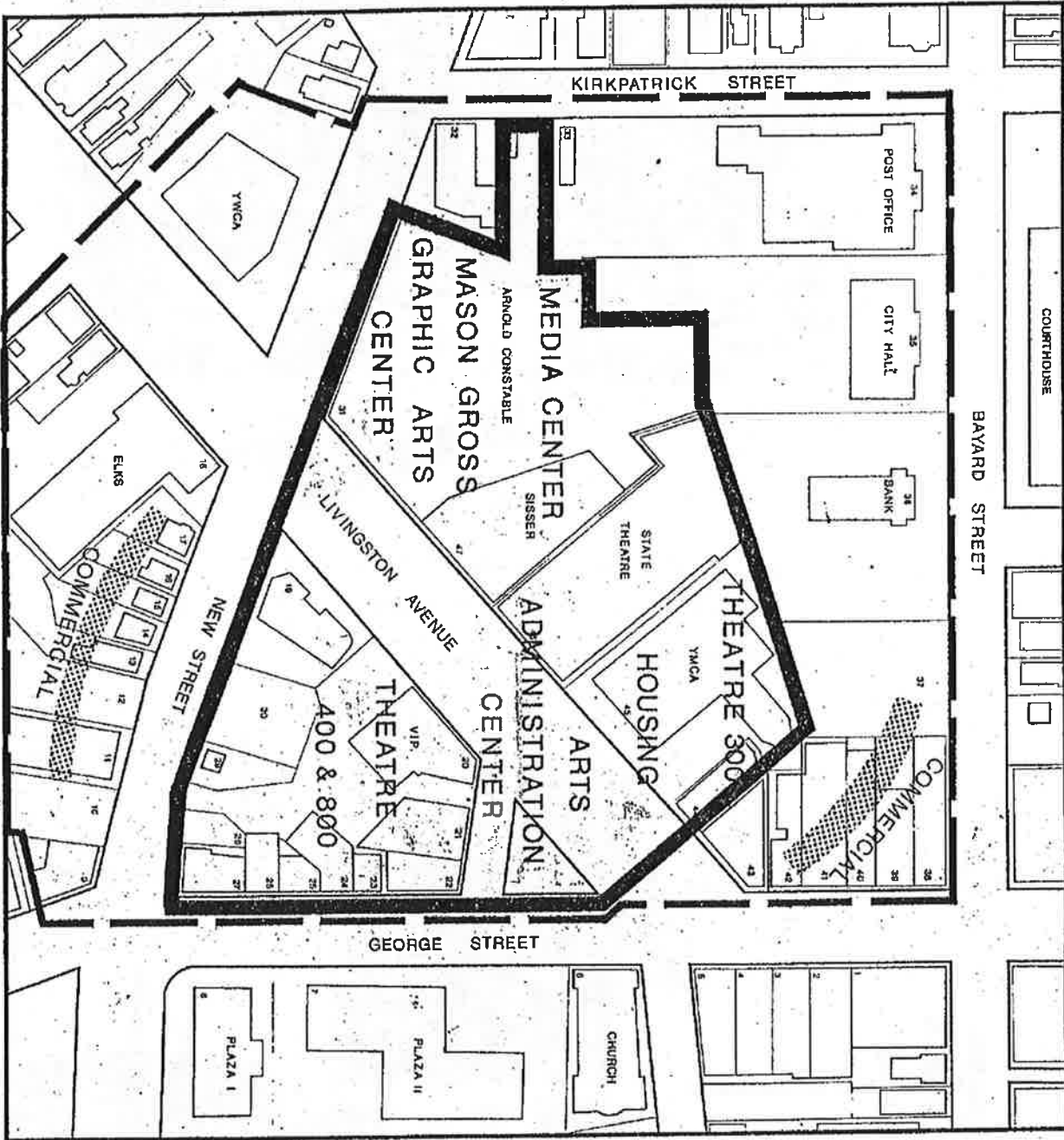
The State Theater would be renovated to provide a hall of some 1,800 seats for the performing arts. Symphony, light opera, dance, drama, Broadway type musicals, solo concert performances, and other classical and contemporary musical events would be staged there.



*The State Theater*



*Sisser Brothers Warehouse*



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CONCEPT PLAN

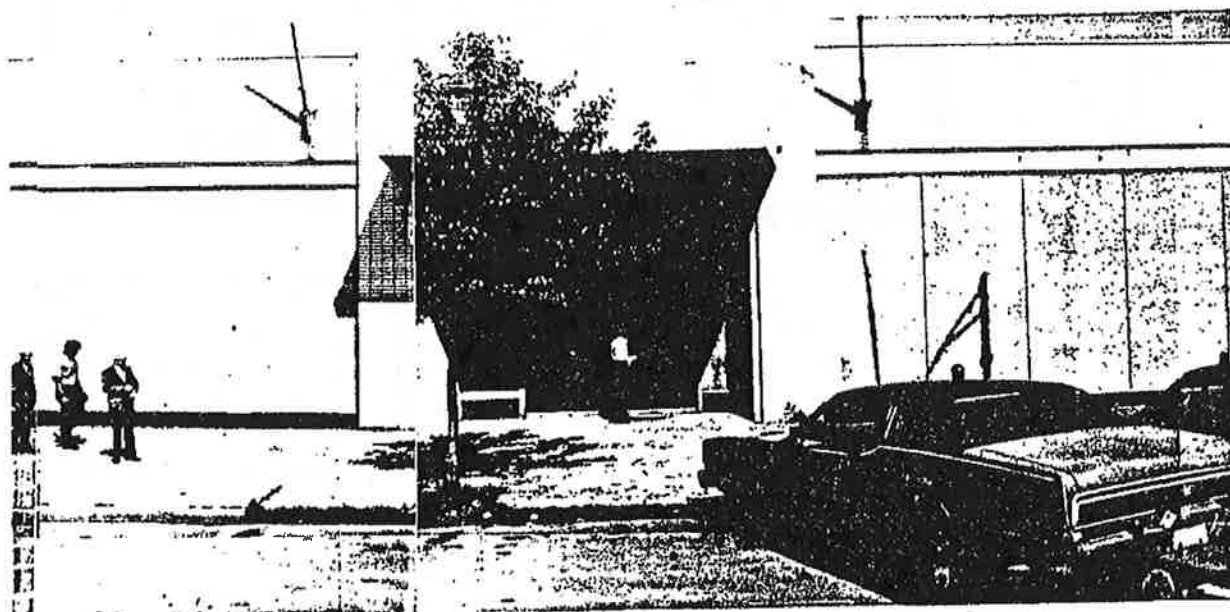
Original Prepared and Checked: Parsons, Arup, The City University

1 2

The YMCA would be converted to housing on the upper floors and a 300+ seat theater and theater support on the ground floor.



The Arnold Constable Building would become the permanent home for the Graphic Arts division of the Mason Gross School.



- The Sisser Brothers Warehouse would be converted for use as an Administrative Arts Center to house the various arts organizations in New Brunswick, including providing rehearsal and studio space for the Princeton Ballet and the New Jersey Pops Orchestra. This building could also house a small repertory theater, and a variety of Media and Arts Resource activities.
- The land occupied by the VIP Hotel and the commercial structures on George Street would be acquired, the existing buildings razed and a new 800 and 400 seat theater complex would be constructed on this site. The 800 seat theater would be the primary proscenium theater for the Mason Gross drama program and the 400 seat theater would, on George Street, serve the George Street Playhouse.
- The commercial structure at the corner of New Street and Livingston Avenue, although in the district, would remain as currently used for the foreseeable future.
- In the design of the theater complex, consideration should be given to providing additional housing, either graduate student or market housing.

Within the secondary district, the primary concern is that at such time that redevelopment occurs, some measure of control should be exercised to ensure that these areas are developed in a manner compatible with the Cultural Center environment. This would include:

- Commercial redevelopment should occur adjacent to the YMCA at George Street and Livingston Avenue, and across New Street opposite the Center. These commercial uses should have as their focus, facilities and services that would supplement activities at the Center, such as restaurants, clubs, art galleries and selected retail services.



*Livingston Avenue -- future mall extension*

- Greater attention to landscaping compatible with the design standards established in the George Street Mall should be extended to all areas of the District and its perimeter.
- Investigations should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of providing additional graduate student housing for the Mason Gross School within the immediate area of the Center and potentially as a part of the redevelopment of the commercial area.

The following sections contain a more detailed review of the existing buildings in the "Cultural Block" and present some preliminary concepts for their future use and renovation.



*Commercial buildings - Livingston at George*

# THE STATE THEATER: ADAPTING FOR MULTIPURPOSE ACTIVITIES

## BACKGROUND

The State Theater opened in 1920. It was originally constructed as a live performance house along the pattern of the many commercial theaters constructed throughout the country in the early part of the 20th Century. The State served for a short time as a vaudeville house, however, the 1920's was a period of decline in vaudeville and the beginning of the boom in movies, especially after the introduction of movie sound. By the 1930's, houses like the State were being made over to respond acoustically to movie sound. At the State, heavy drapes, fabric panels and acoustical tile were installed to deaden the hall. One of the primary criticisms of the State, when it has been used for live performances, is the acoustics. Still, under the cosmetics of the drapes and fabrics is a hall with much potential. Movie houses of the same era have been adapted for the performing arts in other cities, and in some cases they did not have the physical resources extant in the State Theater today.

## THE STATE THEATER

Three major areas -- stage, audience and technical -- need to be considered in determining the suitability of using the State Theater as a multipurpose hall. Following is a summary of the findings in this preliminary review.

### Stage Requirements

#### Size

Most movie-theater stages constructed prior to 1930 were 50-80 feet wide, but at most 20-30 feet deep. Requirements for a 70-100 piece orchestra, ballet company, or Broadway show necessitate a minimum of 35 feet in depth and up to 60 feet for grand opera.

The State Theater has a proscenium opening of 45 feet and a stage depth of 38 feet which indicates the stage is adequate to meet most performance requirements. The stage and wings measure 88 feet across.



### Orchestra Pit

Orchestra pits in old movie houses permitted a maximum of 20-30 musicians, and seldom extended below or behind the front edge of the stage. Many of today's productions require 40 musicians and 60-80 for opera.

The existing fixed pit in the State Theater measures approximately 8 feet by 35 feet (280 square feet) which would accommodate 20-30 musicians. The pit is reached via a corridor running under the stage from the dressing room wing (stage right).

The pit could be expanded to accommodate 40-50 musicians, either in a fixed position or in a movable position. In either case it would be necessary to remove the first few rows of seats, however, if the pit were rebuilt to incorporate a mechanical lift, the seating could be restored when the pit was not in use. Also, if the pit area could be lifted to stage level, it would provide a thrust area into the house that would help overcome some of the acoustical problems for orchestral performances.

### Stage House

In old movie theaters, stage houses usually included little area other than the stage itself. Today, off-stage space for the movement of performers and scenery is a necessity.

The State Theater has little off-stage space. The stage right wing, the entrance to the dressing room area, measures 15 feet by 38 feet (570 square feet) and the stage left wing measures roughly 28 feet by a diminishing 38 feet to 20 feet at the outer wall (730 square feet).

The juxtaposition of the State Theater in relationship to the YMCA Building would make it possible to add approximately 1,500 square feet to extend the stage house and provide appropriate area for scenery, as well as other functions.

### Dressing Rooms

Most old movie theaters had only a few dressing rooms which accommodated 2-4 people. The dressing rooms most in demand now are at the stage level for use by stars. These usually include private bathrooms. Next in demand are chorus dressing rooms accommodating 20-40 people.

The State Theater has four dressing rooms at stage level and four at one level above the stage. None of these have private baths, however there is a single toilet and shower on each level. The dressing rooms are small and, with the exception of one room on the second level, would not accommodate more than 1-3 to a room. The areas of the rooms are: on the first level, 127 sf, 119, sf, 119 sf, 155 sf; and on the second level, 289 sf, 176 sf, 100 sf and 100 sf. The dressing rooms are in poor shape and unfortunately the building cannot be easily expanded on this side without the taking of private property.

The existing dressing room area must be totally renovated and planned for greater efficiency, and with private bath facilities added for at least two rooms.

There is presently no basement below the stage level. Further study should be undertaken to determine the feasibility of excavating this area to provide additional support space. A part of this space could be used to provide two chorus dressing rooms totaling 1,500 square feet. Another possibility for additional dressing room space would be to use a portion of the addition between the State and the YMCA.

#### Green Room, Warm-up Rooms, Rehearsal Rooms

These were rarely included in old movie theaters and are not to be found in the State. They are in demand by resident companies and touring groups and are absolutely essential for using the theater for multipurpose activities. The theater could operate without a green room or warm-up room, however a rehearsal room should be provided.

These facilities could be provided partly on a second level of the expansion of the stage house discussed earlier. They could also be partly provided if the under stage excavation would prove feasible.

#### Construction Shops and Storage

These facilities were never included in movie theaters, and today it is primarily resident companies that require them for the production and storage of sets and costumes. Most of this activity could take place off-site provided adequate loading facilities are provided.

Without the taking of private property, the existing site would not accommodate an addition for these activities. In lieu of a major addition, some space should be reserved in the previously discussed additions for storage and a small lighting shop. Some set construction could be accommodated at the stage level of the stage house addition. Also, in an addition that would actually link the State and the YMCA, these types of spaces might be provided in the "Y" as well as in the addition. Costume shops and costume storage should also be planned in a multipurpose center of this type, and could be housed in an adjacent building.

### Audience Requirements

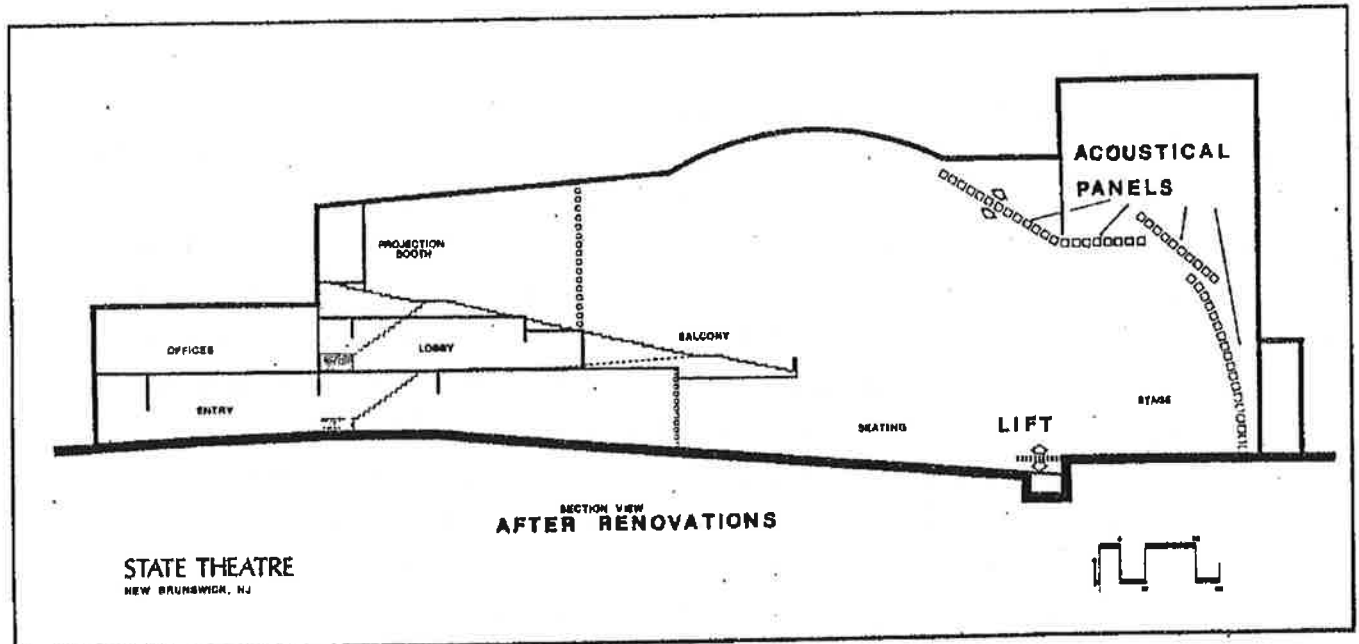
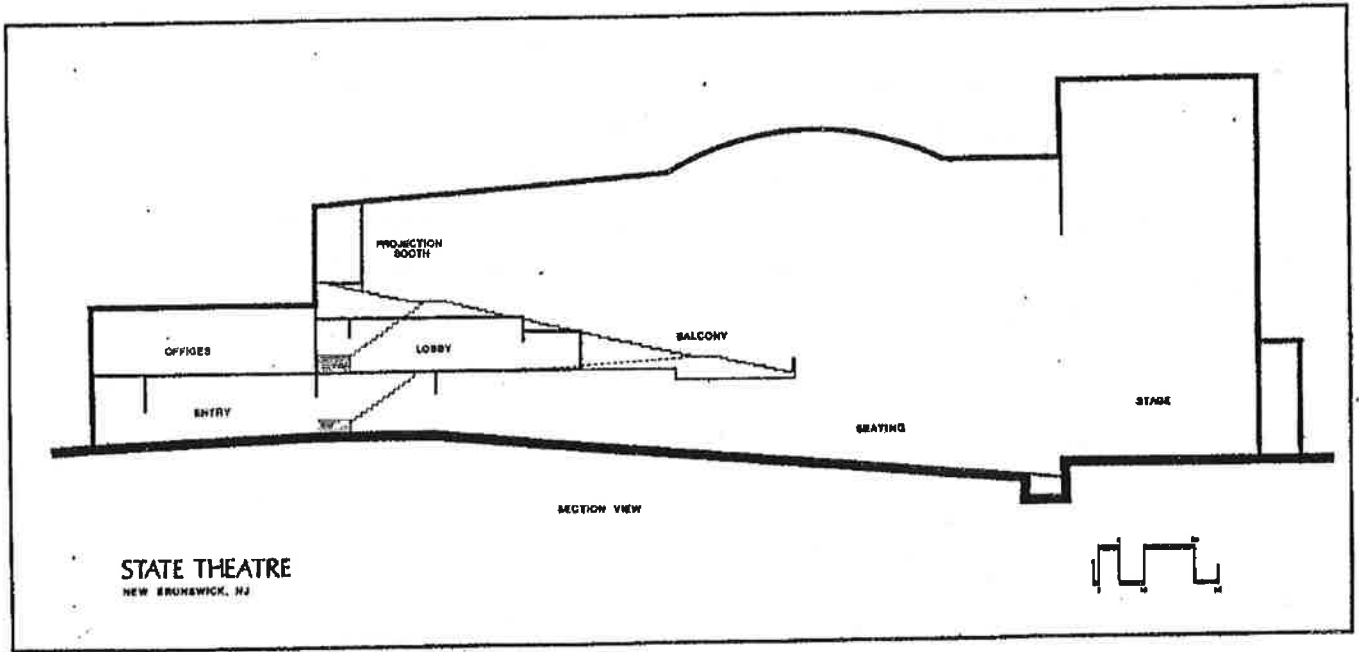
#### Seating

The 1920's and 1930's provided us with movie theater seats that were generally 18-20 inches wide, with back to back spacing of 30 inches. Contemporary standards demand 20-22 inch wide seats with a back to back measurement of 34 inches. These dimensions can be accommodated with a reduction in the number of seats in the orchestra level, but not in the stepped balconies or loges. Overall, the capacity of the theater would not be appreciably changed. The existing seating arrangement at the State is satisfactory, but could be improved in the future.

#### Lobby

Lobbies in old movie houses functioned primarily as a place to hold patrons awaiting between continuous shows. For live performances a lobby must comfortably accommodate all of the patrons prior to performances, during intermission and may also function as a place for community events. The lobby also typically includes refreshment areas, box office and coatroom. As a standard, 2.5 square feet of lobby space is provided for each seat.

The State has generous lobby spaces that provide more than the minimum required space. The lower lobby, including the entry area, is 2,500 square feet, and the mezzanine level lobby provides another 2,500 square feet. On either side of the entry area is a retail store of approximately 1,400 square feet each. One or both of these could be taken to create a larger, grander entrance to the theater as well as create a space at the entrance for other activities, such as gallery display area or theater cafe.



### Toilet Facilities

The existing toilet facilities are accessed from the mezzanine lobby. Building codes change and so have the public demands for these facilities. Further investigation will no doubt show the need to construct additional toilet facilities.

### Technical Requirements

#### Rigging

The 1920's theaters were equipped with stage rigging to meet the requirements of vaudeville. A hemp-type system with a pin rail at stage level, with several special wire-guided counterweight sets for border lights, picture screen, screen masking, a house traveler track with curtain and a fire curtain. Today, production requirements for theater or opera include a counterweight rigging system with sets on 6 inch centers capable of handling 800-1,000 pound loads. A loading bridge should also be provided. Fly galleries should be on both sides of the stage with pin rails to handle spot lines and special rigging.

The rigging system in the State would have to be brought up to these standards.

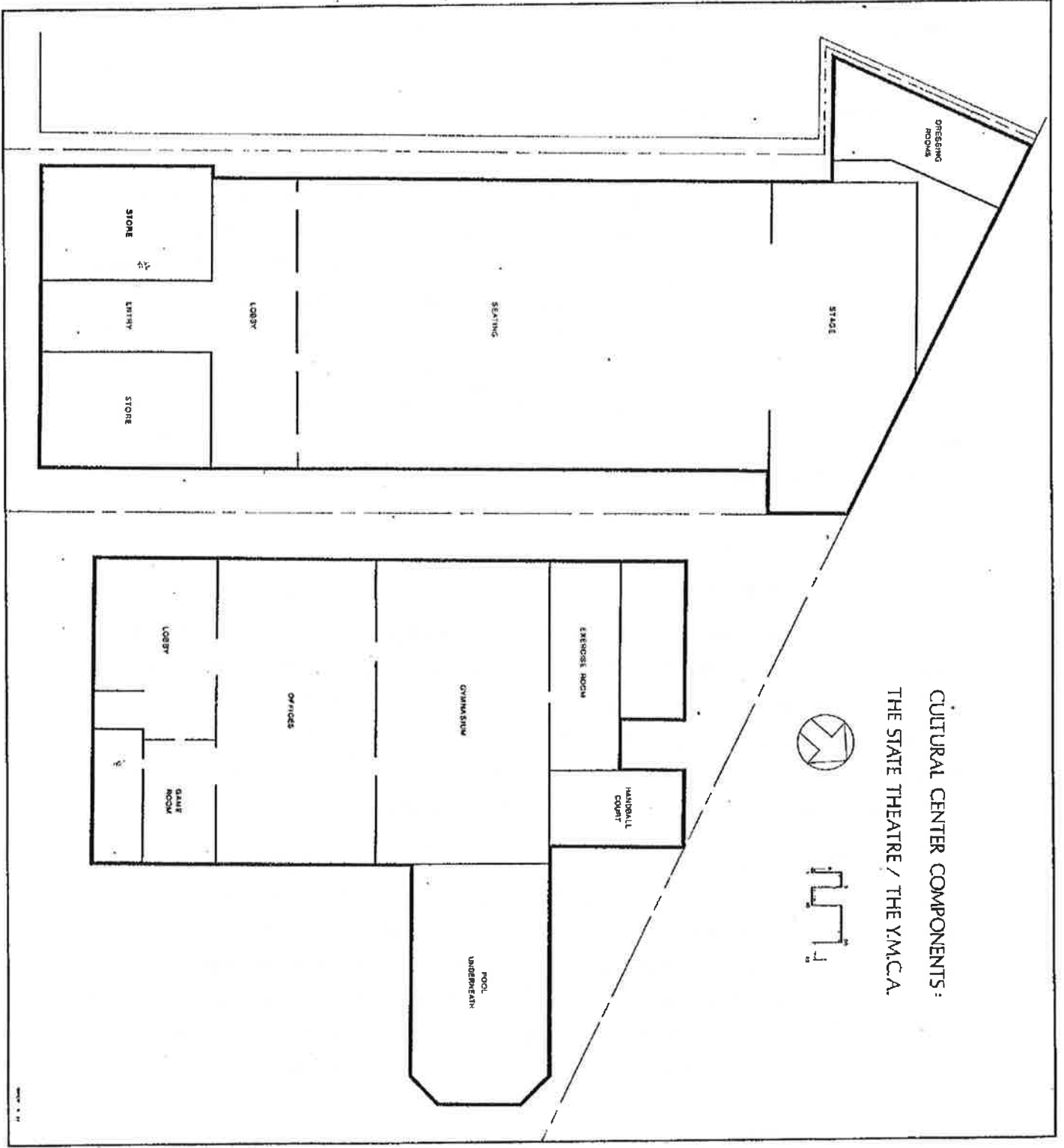
#### House Lighting

Requirements for seeing in a multipurpose hall far exceed those conditions suitable for movies. Supplementary lighting systems must allow patrons to read printed programs, identify reserved seat numbers, and mingle during intermission. The house lighting at the State appears minimally adequate for these purposes, and is geared more for movies than live performance. Some upgrading of the house lighting should be planned.

#### Stage Lighting

Most of the existing lighting equipment at the State is located on stage and has seen 50 years of diminishing use. Power requirements in a multipurpose facility are many times that of the original equipment. Today, as much as 30 percent of a stage lighting system, including its control, is located on the audience side of the proscenium. Adequate space must be found for new equipment that is accessible for maintenance, aesthetically

CULTURAL CENTER COMPONENTS:  
THE STATE THEATRE / THE YM.C.A.



DRESSING ROOMS

STAGE

SEATING

LOBBY

STONE

ENTRY

STONE

EXERCISE ROOM

HANDBALL COURT

GYMNASIUM

OFFICES

LOBBY

GLASS ROOM

POOL UNDERDECK

compatible with the house decor and located in the correct relationship and distance to the stage.

Little can be expected to be recovered from the existing lighting system. New installations should include; memory control console, patch panels, dimmer and relay racks. Stage lighting in the house might be mounted on two pairs of ladders adjacent to the proscenium, placed on extensions to the front of the balcony, and mounted near the ceiling and in the follow spot booth.

#### Mechanical Systems

An engineering evaluation of the mechanical system has not yet been undertaken. Engineers will have to evaluate the systems to determine their existing condition and adaptability to the live performance situation. It is likely that major reconstruction of these systems will be required.

#### Acoustics

Acoustics is a major concern for live performances. Although theaters like the State were not designed to strict acoustical parameters for live performances, they did accommodate a variety of musical and speech presentations, and their volumes are often similar to those specified today for opera houses. Fortunately the State is more rectangular than fan shaped which enhances its acoustic potential.

The University had earlier asked acoustical consultants, Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc., to examine the State Theater and give a preliminary report on the acoustical problems and solutions that would make the hall acceptable. This was later followed up by Devco getting a more detailed analysis from the same consultants. These reports continue to be valid and in essence recommended a number of remedial renovations that would remove the "soft" surfaces installed for movies. These reports are attached as Appendix V.

### Other Theater Renovation Projects

Vaudeville to Movie to Performing Arts Hall is a concept that has been successfully applied to theaters from Oakland, California to Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The Capital Theater in Madison, Wisconsin, the Paramount in Oakland, California, the Carolina in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the Orpheum in Omaha, Nebraska, the Pabst Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the Ohio in Columbus, Ohio are just a few examples where a movie house has been adapted to Cultural Center use. In almost all cases the decision to renovate versus build anew was an economic decision. A new hall of 1,500-2,000 seats would today cost \$15-20 million, whereas the renovation of these theaters has been accomplished for one-fourth that cost.

Following is a summary of some of these renovation projects. Although none of them will be exactly applicable to the New Brunswick situation, it will be valuable to review experiences where it has been successful.

#### The Carolina Theater: Winston-Salem, North Carolina

There are certain remarkable parallels between what has been accomplished in Winston-Salem and the potential in New Brunswick. The Carolina is a 1,500 seat theater built in 1929, converted to a movie house and used for that purpose until the early 1970's. The owner, one of the major newspapers in the area, gave the building to the North Carolina School of the Arts. The City in exchange gave the newspaper a property on which to expand their printing plant. Winston-Salem, a city of approximately 140,000 people, has the oldest Arts Council in the nation, four colleges and universities, a symphony orchestra, and the North Carolina School of the Arts; a state-supported school for performing arts for grades seven through college and a member of the greater University of North Carolina system. The School gives over 250 performances annually in dance, music and theater. In addition to the 1,500 seat Carolina, the School has a 260 seat theater for dance and drama and a 516 seat hall for music performances; and uses a 420 seat theater for drama. The Carolina is being renovated at a project cost of approximately \$6,000,000, of which a \$3,000,000 EDA grant was provided. In 1980, a feasibility study indicated that a new 1,500 seat theater would cost \$12-15 million.



Concomitantly with the theater renovation, the Arts Council built a \$5 million center for the visual arts, art gallery and an office complex for local art groups. The City, for its share, has provided land, and is building an "Urban Park" nearby. All of the facilities constitute Winston-Salem's "Cultural Block," with the Carolina as the centerpiece. The Carolina will open in April 1983.

The Ohio Theater: Columbus, Ohio

The Ohio is a 2,900 seat theater in the Capitol Square District of Columbus. It is the home of the Ohio Symphony and a corps de ballet. Moving into the theater entailed putting on a new roof and general cleaning. Subsequent improvements have been implemented on a pay as you go basis. The theater has received two UDAG grants and assistance from EDA.

Planning is now underway on a multi-million dollar "Arts Pavilion" with a new four story lobby, two floors of offices and a basement for rehearsal space.

## THE YMCA: ADAPTING FOR A NEW USE

### EXISTING SITUATION

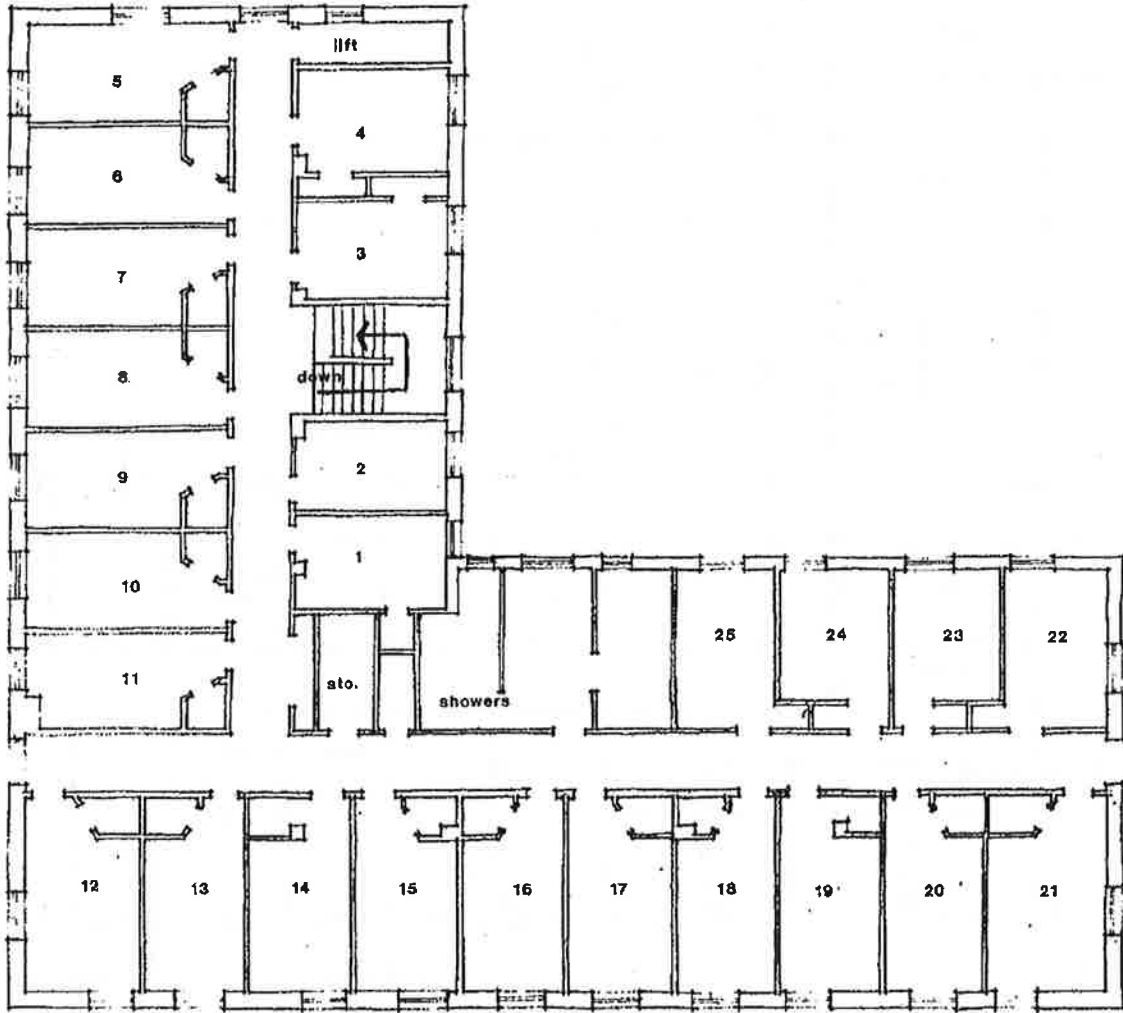
The YMCA Building was built in 1917. It is a four-story building, plus basement, and contains 43,600 gross square feet and an estimated 31,000 net assignable square feet. The first floor front contains a number of large rooms used in the past as club rooms, reading rooms and game rooms. There are also a number of offices in this area. The first floor rear contains a large gymnasium, exercise rooms and handball courts. The basement contains a pool, the mechanical equipment rooms, a large meeting room and health club type facilities. An "L" shaped three story residential tower extends above the front of the building and contains 25 small rooms and gang shower-toilet facilities on each floor. The single residential rooms measure 8-9 feet wide and 12-15 feet long, averaging 110 square feet each. The residential floors are not now in use. Approximately \$100,000 in code renovations is required to make them habitable.

Structurally, the building appears in excellent condition. The mechanical systems have been well maintained and the basement has been recently remodeled. There is no elevator, however, a large dumb waiter is used to move furniture and equipment to the upper floors.

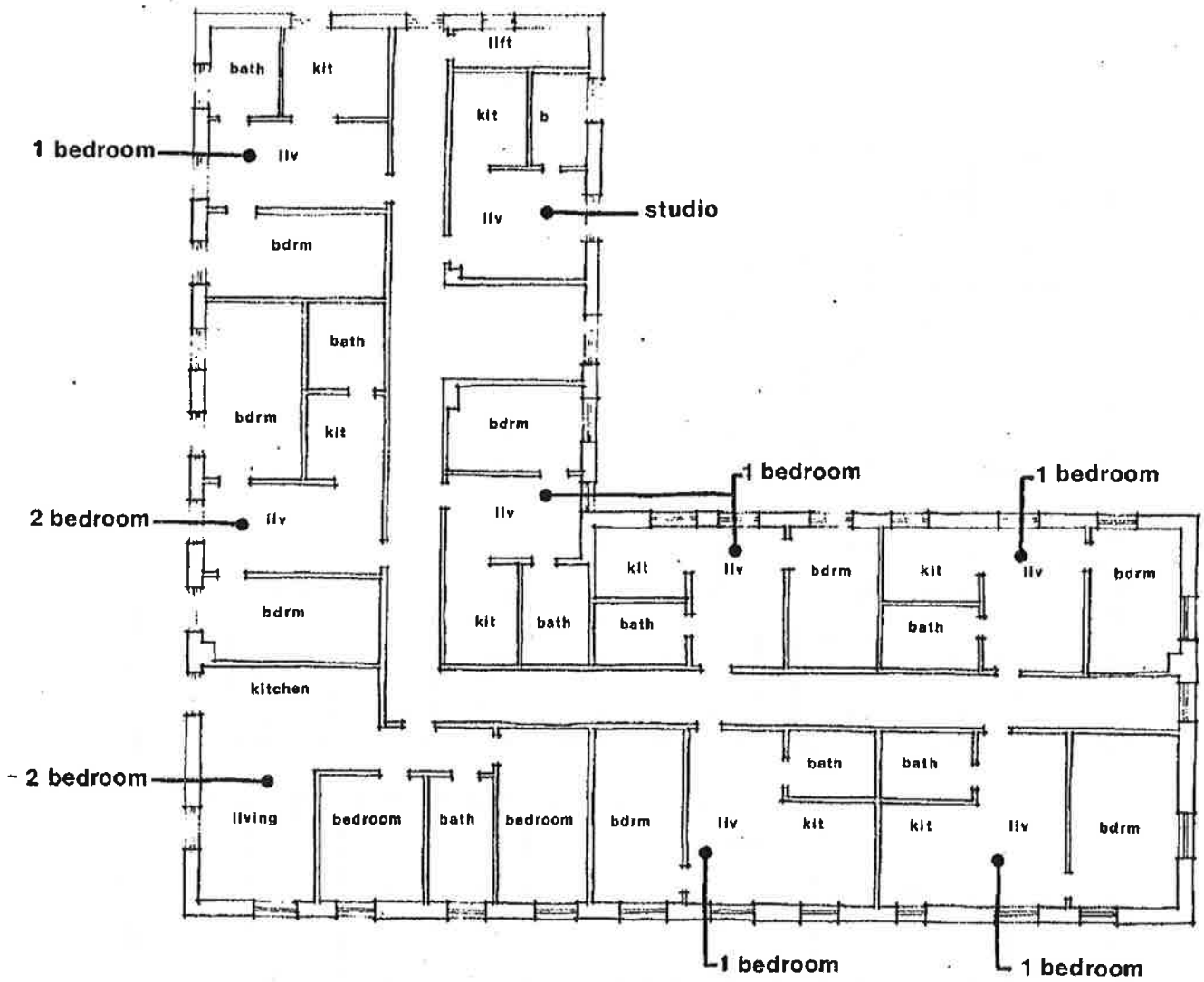
The building was recently put on the market with an asking price of \$950,000. The final sale price appears to be negotiable. The YMCA has some desire to retain use of the pool and health club facilities and to continue to operate a downtown health club.

### OPTION: THE RESIDENTIAL FLOORS

The residential floors could be used for residential purposes in either their present configuration of 75 single rooms, or through conversion to small efficiency apartments which would generate about half as many or 35 bedrooms. They could also be renovated for office use or for an educational use such as music practice rooms. One of the goals in developing the Cultural Center and the downtown as a whole is to provide life in the downtown by having people live there. Too, the opportunity of locating



YMCA: EXISTING TYPICAL RESIDENCE FLOOR



YMCA: TYPICAL FLOOR-APARTMENT CONVERSION PLAN

elements of the Mason Gross School in the Cultural Center automatically generates a demand for graduate student housing. Planning for the use of the present configuration of single rooms for graduate students presents two major problems. First, a dormitory would require the provision of some type of food service. It would not be economically feasible to provide food service for only 75 students and both the College Avenue and Douglass Dining Halls are too remote to be considered. Second, the graduate student tends to reject dormitory style living, wanting instead a more traditional apartment environment.

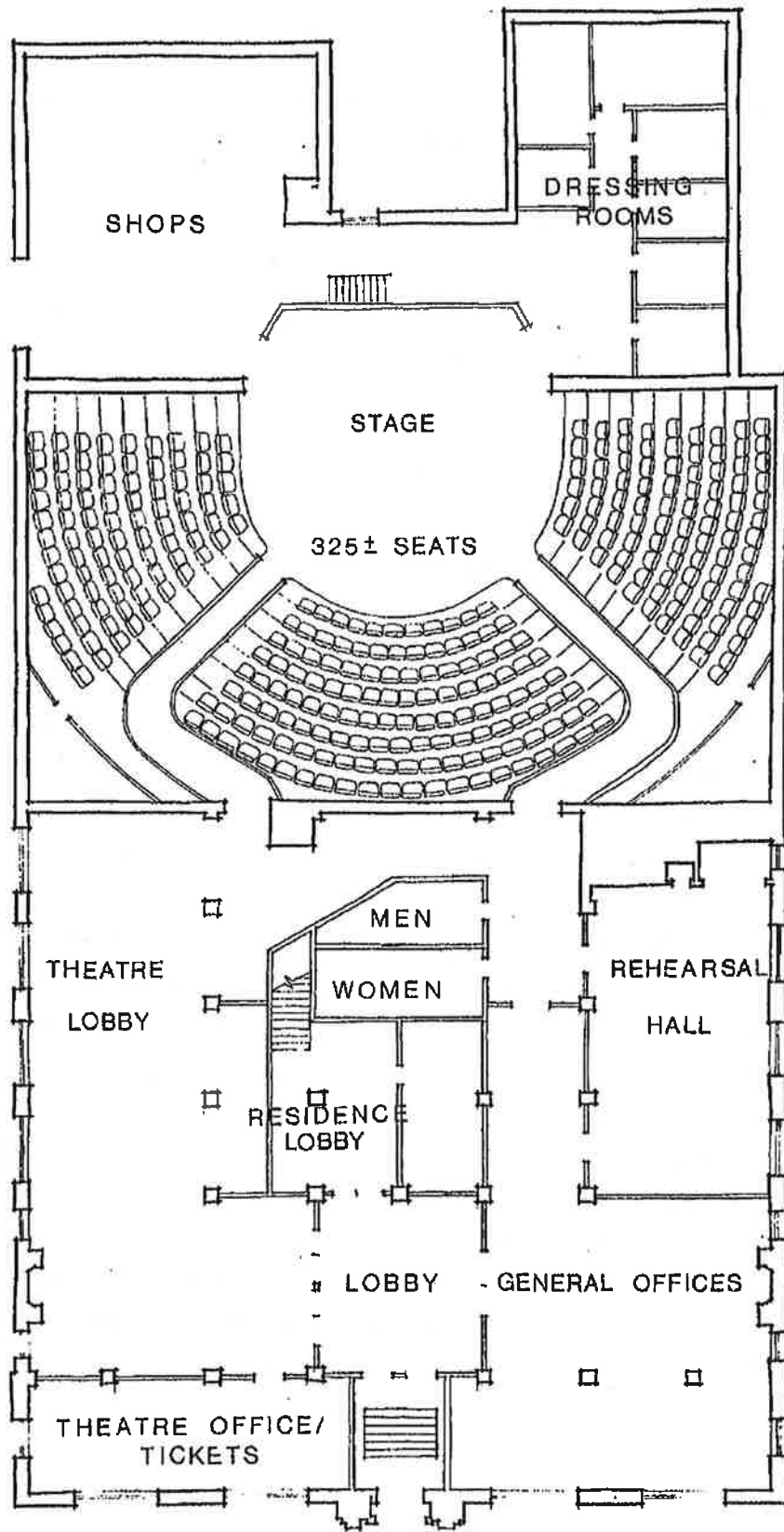
An option best suited for graduate student housing would be the conversion of the residential floors to small one and two bedroom apartments by combining a suite of 3-4 of the single rooms. A scheme such as the one shown here would provide approximately 33 residential opportunities in offering one bedroom and two bedroom units.

#### OPTION: THE FIRST FLOOR, GYMNASIUM AND BASEMENT

The first floor front could be used for offices, a variety of teaching facilities or for certain commercial activities. The rear of the floor, the gymnasium and exercise rooms could be retained in conjunction with the basement to provide a downtown health club. Another option would be to use the first floor and the basement to support the Cultural Center concept. This would mean adapting these spaces to provide space for a cultural center function, either one connected with the Mason Gross School, a private use such as the George Street Playhouse or the Crossroads Theater, or a combination of public and private.

The scheme shown in the following illustration suggests one option that would make this building a true part of the cultural center. The gymnasium would be converted to a small 300-325 seat thrust theater. The exercise rooms and handball courts would become the "behind the stage" support for the theater. The first floor front of the building would become the lobby area for the theater, lobby for the residential area above, and space for theater office, ticket sales and rehearsal.

The basement would provide additional space for theater support such as additional dressing rooms, costume shops and storage and rehearsal

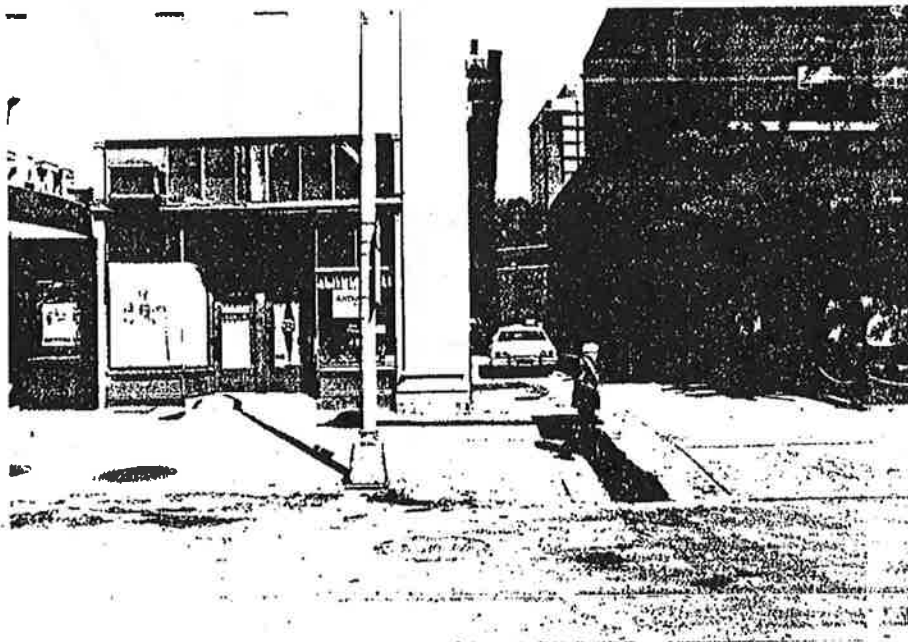


YMCA · 1st FLOOR CONVERSION PLAN

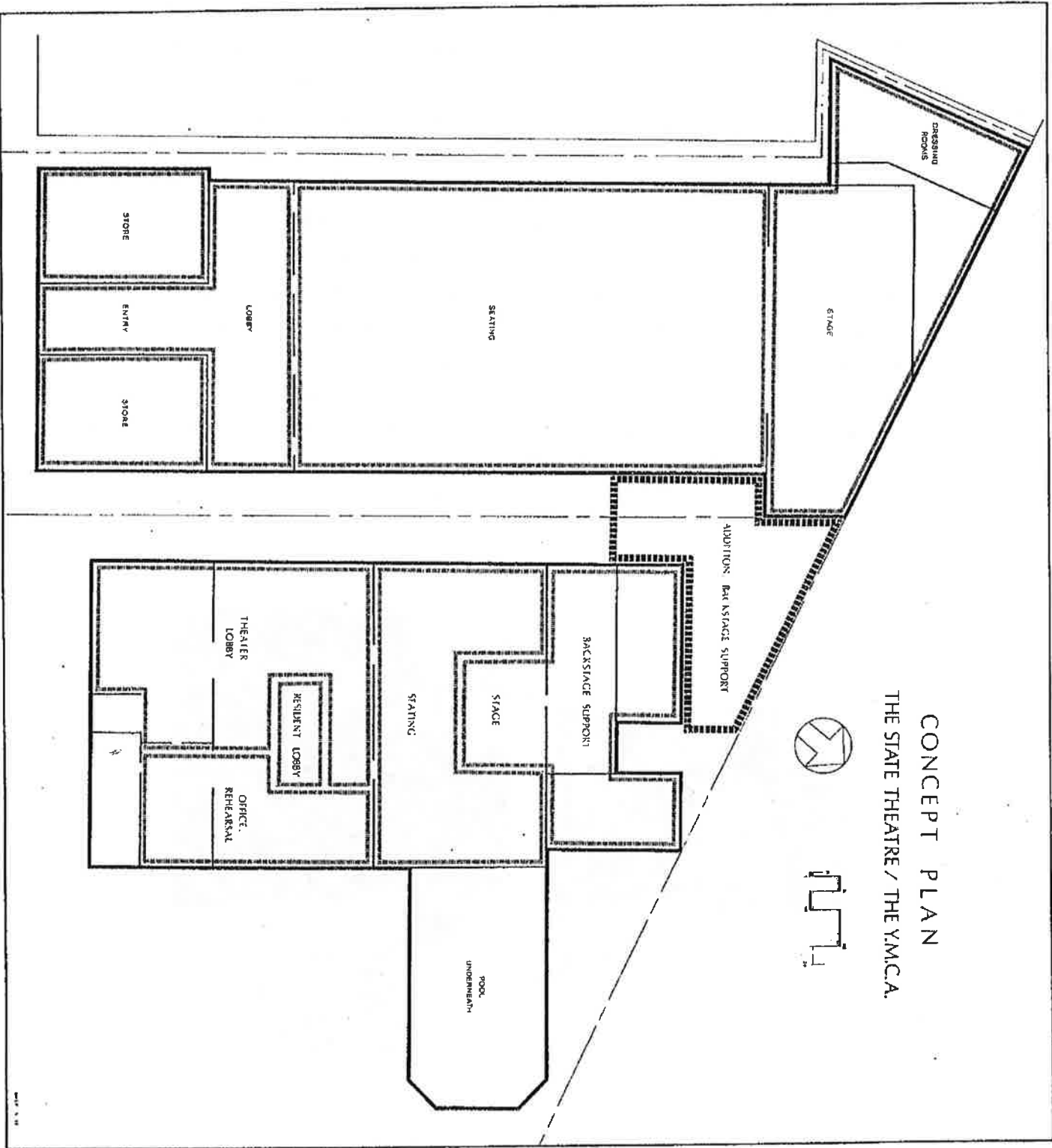
space. The swimming pool could be used for additional support space or could be converted into a more intimate 200 seat theater.

#### THE STATE THEATER AND THE YMCA

The physical relationship between the State Theater and the YMCA offers an opportunity to link the two through an addition. This addition would provide the added wing space needed for the State, but it would also provide a physical link that would make support space available in the "Y" such as dressing rooms, rehearsal space and shops directly accessible to the State Theater. This link would provide the facilities necessary to make the State a multipurpose hall. The link is shown on the following map as "Addition, Backstage Support." It would provide approximately 2,050 square feet per level. A two story structure with basement could provide additional wing space at stage level as well as some set construction area, dressing rooms on the second level and additional shops and storage at the basement level. It would, of course, also provide a direct link with the "Y" for overflow of these activities. An addition of this type would cost approximately \$740,000.



CONCEPT PLAN  
THE STATE THEATRE / THE Y.M.C.A.





## ARNOLD CONSTABLE: THE GRAPHIC ARTS CENTER

The Arnold Constable Building is ideally suited for conversion to a Graphic Arts component of the Mason Gross School now housed in the P.J. Young Building. The building contains some 62,000 square feet, and would provide adequate expansion area for the future growth of the School. The interior layout of the building is particularly conducive to creating large studios. Too, its one story height would make possible more economical venting of the solvents, cleaning fluids and other chemicals used in the arts, an aspect of the program which has been a problem at the P.J. Young Building.

An element of the Arnold Constable Building that makes it attractive as a teaching facility is the availability of the 190 parking spaces on its roof. This would provide adequate parking for the faculty and commuting students. Also, a large portion of this parking would be available for public use during evening performance time.

The space needs program for the School, Appendix VII, would not initially use all of the available space in Arnold Constable. Space in excess of those needs could be used to replace some of the University's antiquated facilities. A prime candidate would be the facilities of the Office of Television and Radio now housed in World War II barracks on the Kilmer Campus. Relocating that component into Arnold Constable would fit well into the creation of a Media and Arts Resource Center within the Cultural Center.

The building would generally be renovated to provide a wide variety of art studios for group instruction and individual studios for graduate students. Also, office-studios would be provided for the faculty. In addition, gallery space would be provided for display of the artists work.

This project must have a high priority in order to allow adequate time to phase out existing leases and plan for the relocation of the graphic arts.

## SISSER WAREHOUSE: FUTURE USE

The Sisser Brothers Warehouse has not been studied to the degree of adjacent buildings, however enough is known about the building to know that it is structurally sound and has a variety of spaces that could be used in support of the Center. The large garage space at the rear of the building has potential as a small theater. The front of the building contains offices which could serve as the Administrative Center for the Arts, and the warehouse space could be used for a number of activities from rehearsal rooms, dance studios, media and arts resource space, galleries, to just what it is, storage, always a space use in high demand in any theater complex. This space could also be considered to provide theater support for the new theaters, such as costume construction and storage and the various shops required. Those elements that can be located apart from the theaters would help cost avoid new construction.

In terms of priority, this would rank below the State Theater, YMCA and Arnold Constable and would be an option for later consideration.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### The Cost Factor

New space for cultural facilities would today cost \$100-150+ per square foot. The cost for new construction for a major performing arts hall could easily reach \$12,000 per seat. To build all new facilities for the Cultural Center elements described in this report would approach \$50 million, exclusive of land cost. Promoting a plan of this magnitude is simply chasing rainbows. The demands placed on the traditional funding sources, the competition for the dollar for other worthy causes, and the limitations on the ability of the partners in a New Brunswick Center to commit large sums of money, make it unlikely that funds for an entirely new Center could be generated in this decade. Too, the longer decisions are delayed relative to any segment of the Center, the higher the cost and the less attainable it will become.

In view of the high cost of new construction, the concept of recycling existing buildings offers the opportunity to establish a Cultural Center for a fraction of the cost of new facilities. The adaptive reuse strategy as applied to the creation of a Cultural Center offers several advantages. Some of the more important are:

- It allows implementation of the Center to proceed on an "as needed" basis, and avoids the prospect of having costly new facilities stand vacant while awaiting the attainment of program utilization that would justify their operation.
- Individual renovation projects could proceed incrementally. Although the ultimate expenditure at the State Theater may be \$4 million or more, initially, half that much would make it a workable facility.
- Lower initial capital outlay means lower financing cost, and lower rents and user fees; savings that can be passed on to the patrons as well as the users.

It allows the testing and changing of the concept as a whole before massive amounts of capital are committed. The plan contains enough flexibility to allow changes and expansion as the programmatic requirements change.

It is more likely to be accomplished than a plan that would require embarking on the more uncertain path of massive fund raising.

Following is a preliminary estimate of the cost of replacing the same spaces in the "Cultural Block" with new construction and of recycling that space for the proposed uses.

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>RENOVATION*</u>	<u>NEW CONSTRUCTION*</u>
State Theater (Performing Arts Hall)	\$ 3 - 4,000,000	\$ 20 - 25,000,000
Arnold Constable (Graphic Arts Center)	1 - 1,500,000	6 - 7,000,000
YMCA (Housing & Theater)	1.5 - 2,000,000	5 - 6,000,000
Sisser Brothers (Admin., Resource Center)	1.5 - 2,000,000	4 - 5,000,000
Subtotal	\$ 7 - 9,500,000	\$ 35 - 38,000,000
New Construction		
(800 Seat Theater)	5.5 - 7,000,000	5.5 - 7,000,000
(400 Seat Theater)	2.5 - 3,000,000	2.5 - 3,000,000
TOTAL	\$ 15 - 19,500,000	\$ 43 - 48,000,000

\* Exclusive of building or land acquisition. These estimates are based on the most recent experience of the University in the renovation and construction of facilities and are in terms of 1982 dollars. Over the past few years, these costs have been escalating at the rate of approximately ten percent per year.

### Acquisition Costs

In addition to renovation and new construction costs, there would also be acquisition costs involved in putting together the Center, first for the buildings that will be used initially, and in the longer term for the land for new construction. Following are acquisition estimates for all of the Cultural Center properties. The source of the estimate is shown in the footnotes.

<u>PROPERTY</u>	<u>ESTIMATED ACQUISITION COSTS</u>
State Theater	\$ 490,000 <sup>1</sup>
Arnold Constable	1,250,000 <sup>2</sup>
YMCA	950,000 <sup>3</sup>
Sisser Brothers	1,100,000 <sup>4</sup>
Subtotal	<u>\$ 3,790,000</u>
VIP Hotel Block	<u>\$ 2,600,000<sup>5</sup></u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 6,390,000</u>

1. Owned by Devco: their acquisition cost plus capital cost
2. Estimated from sale of building in 1981
3. Asking price
4. Assessed value x 2.5\*
5. Assessed value x 2.5\* (not including Bruskin Agency Building)

\* Estimating formula used by New Brunswick Parking Authority in recent acquisitions.

In the actual acquisition of these properties it would be hoped that overall, the cost would be lower than the estimate and in specific cases, such as the YMCA, an acquisition price significantly less than the asking price could be negotiated.

Operation and Maintenance Cost

A significant cost which must be considered is the annual operation and maintenance of these facilities. This does not include program costs which can only be determined after a thorough study of the individual programs and activities that will take place in the Center. Too, each user would be responsible for their individual program cost. They would also be responsible for the operation and maintenance cost associated with their use of the facility. For purposes of this study, and to show the relative magnitude of costs to operate these facilities, the University's annual 1982-83 O & M cost of \$4.00 per square foot has been used.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Estimated Square Feet</u>	<u>Annual O &amp; M Cost</u>
State Theater	32,000	\$ 128,000
Arnold Constable	60,000	240,000
YMCA	43,000	172,000
Sisser Brothers	25,000	100,000
		<hr/>
		\$ 640,000

The State Theater could be higher than the figure indicated here, depending on the frequency of use. It would not however be used to the extent of the Arnold Constable Building and thus may balance out at somewhere near the average per square foot cost used for other buildings.

Economic Impact

It is not within the scope of this study to project the economic impact of the development of a Cultural Center, however, once the Center is operational there should be positive economic benefits to the City through revenue generation in private redevelopment surrounding the Center and in audience development or markets. Further study of the economic impact should be undertaken as a next step by recognized experts in the field, and would be required in order to apply for Federal and State grant funding.

In a very similar situation, the development of the Cultural Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina projected the following economic impact.

"A total construction impact of \$6.1 million and employment for 220 to 290 construction workers.

The generation of an annual first-round recurring direct economic impact of \$1.5 million in revenues with an indirect annual impact of \$1.4 million generated by theater patrons through unrelated purchases downtown.

A 2.0 multiplier effect on the construction impact, or \$12.2 million used to purchase homes, food, services, transportation and other goods.

Second and subsequent rounds of direct and indirect recurring impact that would normally create a 2.0 to 2.5 multiplier effect, or \$5.9 to \$7.4 million annually.

Employment for 16 to 25 people by the renovated theater, restaurant, educational and residential facilities planned as part of the renovation as well as 46 to 57 persons working in retail sales, services, food and drink establishments related occupations resulting from the renovation.

The encouraging of increases in adjacent property values of \$230,000 and more."

This is a preview of what a Cultural Center in New Brunswick could expect to generate, and with the ultimate redevelopment of surrounding areas, the potential would far surpass the North Carolina experience.

#### Funding Sources

The Introduction to this report stressed the cooperation that would be required to make the Center a reality. Rutgers may have the expertise to program and manage most of the facilities in the Center, and in the case of Arnold Constable becoming the permanent quarters for the Mason Gross School of Fine Arts, recognized its responsibility to acquire, renovate and operate the facility. However, neither can Rutgers or any other single entity generate the capital and operating costs required for

the Center as a whole. Cultural facilities are in very rare instances self-supporting and in almost all cases require major subsidies to maintain their operation.

The inevitable question is then, once the plan is accepted, how will the money required to accomplish it be generated? That question would have to be faced whether the decision is to use existing buildings or attempt new construction as the means of providing the absolutely necessary space for education and public service. The chief difference is that the course recommended here is far less costly, much more attainable and, in the end, more justifiable in terms of uses and general community benefits.

First, all Federal and State sources should be explored. Although the availability of capital funds from these sources have become limited and the program's future life span appears uncertain, similar programs have been funded in this manner. Normally, HUD required at least a 3:1 ratio of private to federal funds for a UDAG application to be competitive. The UDAG approach should be fully explored and the combined strength of Rutgers, Devco and the City, a competitive application may be a possibility. Symphony Hall in Newark recently received a \$300,000 EDA grant to completely re-rig the hall. EDA is certainly a source that should be considered.

Second, the State should be approached for one-time capital funds and recurring operating costs. The concept of this Center is very much in line with the State's latest plans for the development of regional Cultural Centers. New Brunswick, and particularly this Center, should be designated by the State as the regional Cultural Center for Central New Jersey. Also, the State through the issuing of bonds, one-time capital appropriations in the General Budget and annual operating appropriations must be persuaded to support the Center. Community leaders should take this issue to the Governor and the political leadership of the State as soon as possible.

Third, Rutgers, the City of New Brunswick and Middlesex County are potential sources of support. Rutgers has already indicated its willingness to consider lending support via the dedication of certain land development revenues to the project. The City and the County both have the capacity to issue general obligation bonds for public facilities. Certain components of the Center and particularly the State Theater will largely serve a public purpose.



Lastly, private individuals, corporations and institutions looking toward the future of the arts in New Brunswick, Central New Jersey, and the State must be persuaded to join in the effort to first create this Center and then to sustain its future.

#### OVERVIEW

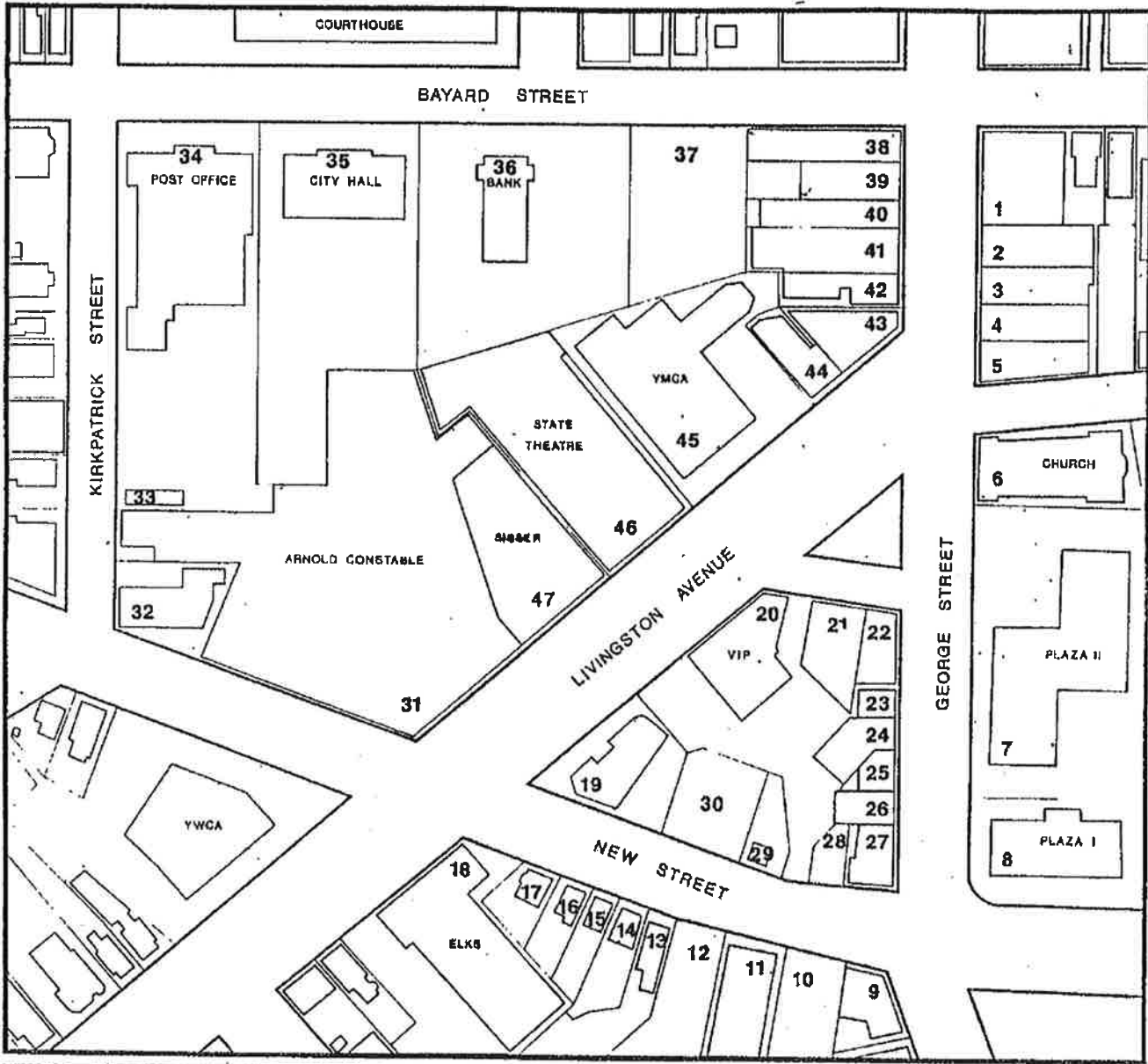
This report represents but the first step in the development of a Cultural Center for New Brunswick. Its purpose has been to outline an attainable concept and to point the direction to the next phase of work. More detailed studies by architects and engineers are required of the various buildings in order to prove the feasibility of the concept and to develop more detailed cost estimates. Study of the economic impact of the Center and of financing vehicles most appropriate should be undertaken. And finally, although perhaps the most important, the primary actors must make that initial commitment that will mark the true beginning of a Cultural Center for New Brunswick.

ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS

Office of Physical & Capital Planning staff support in the development  
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APPENDICES



Studies for the  
**NEW BRUNSWICK CULTURAL CENTER**  
 New Brunswick Arts Development Commission

**KEY MAP**

Office of Planning and Capital Planning, Rutgers, The State University      1 30

APPENDIX I

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

BUILDING OWNERSHIP AND GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANCY

<u>KEY</u>	<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANTS</u>
1	8 12,13,15	Pavlov Partners/Bruskin 74 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Accessories Restaurant Greeting Cards/Jewelry Clothing Clothing
2	8 11	Tassos Corp 1040 Hoover North Brunswick	Vacant Restaurant
3	8 10	Pecks Pharmacy Inc. 335 George St New Brunswick	Pharmacy
4	8 9	Rackmill/Schumann Gateway 1 Newark	Clothing Printing
5	8 8	Mills 77 Richardson New Brunswick	Clothing Hairdresser
6		Methodist Church	Church
7	117 2.1	Devco	Bank Law Offices
8*	105 1.2	Devco	Army Recruiter Stockbroker Offices
9	129 12	300 George St Corp 300 George St New Brunswick	Pet Supplies
10	129 11	New Brunswick Parking Authority 16 Joyce Kilmer Ave New Brunswick	Vacant Lot (Parking)
11	129 10	78 Carroll Pl Inc 78 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	Vacant Travel Agency

\*George Street frontage only

APPENDIX I

(continued)

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

BUILDING OWNERSHIP AND GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANCY

<u>KEY</u>	<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANTS</u>
12	129 9	Catholic Church	Vacant Lot (Parking)
13	129 8.1	Rosenthal 801 S. Ocean Hollywood, FL	Vacant
14	129 8.2	Catholic Church	Rectory
15	129 7	Lovas 88 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	House
16	129 6	Belsky 92 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	Medical Office
17	129 5	Belsky 92 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	Medical Office Hairdresser
18	129 4	Elks Corp 40 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Elks Lodge Restaurant County Offices
19	128 5	Bruskin Agency 24 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Insurance Agency Travel Agency
20	128 2,6,7,8,9	V.I.P. 10 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Hotel Lobby Vacant
21	128 10	Reng 308 Euclid Loch Arbor	Office Equipment Social Club
22	128 11,13,14	Reng 308 Euclid Loch Arbor	Typewriter Service Shoe Repair Restaurant Liquor Store

APPENDIX I

(continued)

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

BUILDING OWNERSHIP AND GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANCY

<u>KEY</u>	<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANTS</u>
23	128 15	Ftikas 314 George St New Brunswick	Restaurant
24	128 16	Anklowitz 312 George St New Brunswick	Food Store Printing
25	128 17	Snyder 310 George St New Brunswick	Jewelers
26	128 18	Mid State Photo Inc. 306 George St New Brunswick	Hairdresser Art Gallery
27/ 28	128 1,19,20	Freese 306 George St New Brunswick	Camera Shop
29	128 3	Larson 107 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	House
30	128 4	78 Carroll Pl Inc. 78 Carroll Pl New Brunswick	Vacant Lot (Parking)
31	12 2.1,25.1,26	c/o Bruskin 24 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Offices
32	12 1,28	Episcopal Church	Church
33	12 2	Rosta/Kollar Attys Kirkpatrick St New Brunswick	Law Offices
34	12 9.1	Post Office	Post Office

APPENDIX I

(continued)

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

BUILDING OWNERSHIP AND GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANCY

<u>KEY</u>	<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>GROUND FLOOR OCCUPANTS</u>
35	12 3,10	City Hall	City Hall
36/ 37	12 12,13,14,15	New Brunswick Savings Bayard St New Brunswick	Bank (Parking)
38	12 16	Birnn 344 George St New Brunswick	Bank Camera Shop Optician Hearing Aids
39	12 17	Mair 18 S. 2nd Ave Highland Park	Ladies Shoes Sandwich Shop
40	12 18	Greenfield 131 N. 6th Ave Highland Park	Shoes
41	12 19	Targia 679 Main St Bayhead	Clothing
42	12 20	Baumer 3 N. Woodland East Brunswick	Tobacconist
43	12 21	Tanaco Corp 313 State St Perth Amboy	Accessories Democrats Venture/Benture Vacant
44	12 22.1	Knauer 815 Main Ave Springfield	Pizza Restaurant Medical Office
45	12 22,23	YMCA	
46	12 24	Devco	State Theater
47	12 25	Smith 25 Livingston Ave New Brunswick	Sisser Bros. Warehouse

SOURCE: City of New Brunswick 1982 Tax Records  
Field Survey May, 1982



APPENDIX II

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

PARKING LOT INVENTORY

PARKING LOTS

<u>Key</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Capacity</u>
12		12
28		5
	Area surrounding #29, not including #19 and #30	40
19		11
30		19
31	Roof of Arnold Constable Bldg.	190
34	Post Office	58
35	City Hall	65
36	New Brunswick Savings	60
37	Proprietary Lot	60
45	Rear of YMCA	4
	Subtotal	524
	<u>Street Spaces</u>	
	George Street (Livingston to New)	16
	New Street (George to Livingston)	8
	New Street (Livingston to Kirkpatrick)	19
	Kirkpatrick Street	14
	Livingston Avenue (New to George)	29*
	Subtotal	86
	Plaza	700
	Ferren Deck	1,250**
	Wolfson Deck	500
	Joyce Kilmer	94
	Schwartz	NA ***
	Subtotal	2,544
	TOTAL	3,154

\* Prior to construction of the George Street Mall

\*\* After expansion

\*\*\* Under development

SOURCE: New Brunswick Parking Authority  
Field Survey May, 1982

APPENDIX III

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY  
ASSESSSED PROPERTY VALUES

KEY	LOT SIZE Sq. Ft.	BLOCK/LOT		ASSESSSED VALUE (in thousands)		DOLLAR VALUE Sq. Ft.
				LAND	BLDG	
1	8,076	8	12,13,15	156.0	56.0	25.7
2	4,181	8	11	83.6	56.2	33.4
3	1,747	8	10	69.8	56.1	72.1
4	4,042	8	9	79.2	60.4	34.5
5	19,428	8	8	69.3	65.8	143.8
6	132,997	117	15 /	Methodist Church - Exempt		
7	48,774	117	2.1	4,855.0	Building Abated	
8	435,600	105	1.2	2,000.0	2,850.0	11.1
9	1,755	129	12	23.7	56.5	45.7
10	10,799	129	11	48.6	151.2	18.5
11	14,649	129	10	84.0	933.0	69.4
12	2,836	129	9 /	Catholic Church - Exempt		
13	6,983	129	8.1	15.4	27.4	6.1
14	8,263	129	8.2	11.4	19.7	3.8
15	2,836	129	7	10.0	18.6	13.6
16	2,757	129	6	10.4	29.3	14.4
17	9,474	129	5	12.9	43.0	5.9
18	24,311	129	4	132.0	230.0	14.9
19	6,930	128	5	88.7	129.1	31.4
20	17,315	128	2,6,7,8,9	154.9	285.8	25.5
21	4,844	128	10	30.0	81.8	23.1
22	2,962	128	11,13,14	29.5	109.4	46.9
23	1,198	128	15	8.6	31.1	33.2
24	1,337	128	16	14.7	48.3	47.1
25	1,742	128	17	11.8	67.7	51.3

APPENDIX III

(continued)

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY  
ASSESSSED PROPERTY VALUES

<u>KEY</u>	<u>LOT SIZE</u> Sq. Ft.	<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>		<u>ASSESSED VALUE</u> (in thousands)		<u>DOLLAR</u> <u>VALUE</u> Sq. Ft.
				<u>LAND</u> /	<u>BLDG</u>	
26	884	128	18	11.5	38.2	56.2
27/28	2,688	128	1,19,20	29.5	55.9	31.8
29	1,607	128	3	11.3	34.0	28.2
30	3,241	128	4	24.1	-	7.4
31	56,432	12	2.1,25.1,26	483.9	966.1	25.8
32	11,029	12	1,28 / Episcopal Church	- Exempt		
33	3,751	12	2	14.4	28.6	11.5
34	43,691	12	9.1 / Post Office	- Exempt		
35	45,294	12	3,10 / City Hall	- Exempt		
36/37	53,927	12	12,13,14,15	461.9	345.4	15.0
38	5,998	12	16	92.1	345.4	70.8
39	4,500	12	17	45.0	104.0	33.1
40	4,613	12	18	45.0	113.2	34.3
41	5,889	12	19	58.0	222.0	47.5
42	3,624	12	20	37.9	59.3	26.8
43	12,480	12	21	88.2	141.8	18.4
44	2,879	12	12.1	21.4	90.1	38.7
45	28,240	12	22,23 / YMCA	- Exempt		
46	12,262	12	24	106.2	193.8	24.5
47	6,364	12	25	105.1	340.5	70.0

SOURCE: City of New Brunswick 1982 Tax Records

APPENDIX IV  
 CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

THE YMCA  
 Room Inventory

FIRST FLOOR

<u>ROOM</u>	<u>DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>NASF</u>
Reading Room - left	35' x 12'	420
Reading Room - right	35' x 12'	420
Lobby & Game Room - left	40' x 19'	760
Lobby & Game Room - right	40' x 19'	760
Club Room	34' x 20'	680
Alcove	5' x 8'	40
Billiard Room	19' x 33'	627
Workroom	8' x 10'	80
Office	9' x 20'	180
Office	8' x 9'	72
Office	8' x 9'	72
Office	9' x 9'	81
Office	8' x 11'	88
Coatroom	9' x 8'	72
Coatroom	10' x 9'	90
Examination Room	6' x 9'	54
Exercise Room	17' x 32'	544
Gymnasium	40' x 80'	3,200
Handball Courts	(2) 20' x 30'	1,200
	TOTAL	9,440

APPENDIX IV

(continued)

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

THE YMCA

Room Inventory

BASEMENT

<u>ROOM</u>	<u>DIMENSIONS</u>	<u>NASF</u>
Pool	35' x 92'	3,220
Boiler Room	32' x 17'	544
Remainder (Lockers, Health Club, Meeting Room, etc.)		9,874
	TOTAL	13,638

TYPICAL RESIDENCE FLOOR (4th Floor)

401 - 402	(2) 7' x 12'	168
403 - 404	(2) 8' x 12'	192
405 - 411	(7) 16' x 8'	896
412	9' x 15'	135
413 - 420	(8) 8' x 15'	960
421	9' x 15'	135
422	8' x 12'	96
423 - 424	9' x 12'	216
425	8' x 12'	96
Linen & Storage	7' x 9'	63
Janitor	3' x 6'	18
		2,975
	TOTAL RESIDENCE FLOORS (3)	8,925
	TOTAL NASF	32,000
	TOTAL GROSS SQUARE FEET	43,600



**BUY  
\$950,000  
YMCA  
BUILDING  
NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.**

**43,600 SQ. FT. — 4 FLOORS**

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For further information call or write:

**MR. JAMES BLAND, Executive Director  
Raritan Valley Y.M.C.A.  
9 Livingston Avenue  
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901  
(201) 545-1900**

Subject to errors, omissions, change and withdrawal without notice.

APPENDIX V

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

CONSULTANT REPORTS: STATE THEATER

March 1981: Report on State Theater

To: New Brunswick Development Corporation

By: Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc.

October 1977: Report on State Theater

To: Rutgers University

By: Bolt Beranek and Newman, Inc.

RECEIVED  
MAR 10 1981

11 March 1981

Mr. Paul Abdalla, President  
New Brunswick Development Corporation  
390 George Street  
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Subject: New Brunswick Development Corporation  
BBN Project No. 137562

Dear Mr. Abdalla:

This letter presents the preliminary recommendations of Bolt Beranek and Newman (BBN) for acoustical modifications to the New Brunswick State Theater. They are based on our observations at the site, on discussions with interested future users of the facility, and on measurements of the existing reverberation time in the theater, on 23 February 1981.

#### I. Introduction

It is just as well to emphasize at the outset the preliminary nature of these recommendations, because no architectural drawings of the theater can be found and the lighting in the building was so dim at the time of our visit that it is hard to be sure what the details of the upper part of the hall are like. In other words, there is considerable uncertainty as to what is actually there, at present.

For this reason, we would like to present our acoustical recommendations in two phases: the first involves those changes that should be made if (like the Orpheum Theatre renovation in Vancouver) the renewed State Theater will serve only un-staged events, such as symphony orchestra, chorus, organ, chamber music, recitals, pops, rock, etc. These recommendations can be made with some confidence at the present time, because they are relatively straightforward, do not entail significant interaction with other kinds of use, and do not immediately require further detailed knowledge of the building structure and configuration.



The second phase involves additional changes that would be required to accommodate staged events, such as opera, ballet, musical, comedy, drama, etc. These recommendations will depend on a "feasibility study", not from the acoustical viewpoint (which we believe can be handled satisfactorily as in the Milwaukee hall if there is enough room) but from the production viewpoint. I don't mean to alter the position I took during our meeting, and I realize the seriousness of the need to accommodate staged events, but it is simply not clear at the moment whether there is actually enough backstage space (dressing rooms, scenery and props storage, etc.) to allow reasonably comfortable production of all the kinds of shows you may wish to handle.

As acoustics specialists, we are not in a position to make those judgements, but would strongly recommend that Mr. Florey, Mr. Bergacs, and other interested users study this question carefully. Do not fail to explore the possibility of expanding into adjacent buildings or spaces. We must be sure, before we get into a fully multi-purpose undertaking that will significantly complicate the design for renovation, that it is certain to turn out to be as useful a facility for staged productions as they are hoping for.

Accordingly, we begin with a consideration of the elements that will be required, whichever direction you go. It was clear from our visit, and it was brought out during our discussions, that the control of both the outdoor traffic noise and the noise of the mechanical equipment will be of great importance to the ultimate success of the hall. So, also, is the provision of a good sound system. This letter, however, concerns itself only with room acoustics, since these matters will have great impact on visual changes to the interior. Our final detailed recommendations will depend upon the results of further careful study when drawings of the building and details of its configuration become available. However, we are confident that the

\*One already existing effort in this direction is the sound lock at the mezzanine cross-aisle, at house right. Similar (or equivalent) measures should be provided at each exit to the outside.

preliminary recommendations, given here in order to assist you in budget planning, will not be significantly changed in scope by our subsequent studies.

There are four areas of concern with respect to the room acoustics of the present State Theater that affect its use as a concert hall: (1) the small size of the stage, (2) the low reverberation time of the hall, (3) the absence of a stage enclosure and suitable reflecting surfaces to clarify the sound in the middle of the main floor, and (4) the probable existence of acoustical "hot spots" in the balcony created by focussed sound reflections from the curved surface above the pit.

These four problems are of about equal importance and should all be dealt with during the renovation. There is also a problem of echoes returning to front seats of the main floor from the rear wall of the theater, but these can be corrected with "cosmetic" treatment (that is, proper choice and shaping of the finish surfaces) and do not represent a major cost item. The four most important recommendations are discussed below, Sections II through V; other considerations are taken up in Section VI. Section VII discusses the additional requirements for staged events.

## II. Stage Size

The New Jersey Symphony, according to John Hyer, numbers between 80 and 100 musicians. It was evident during my visit that the present size of the stage would be inadequate for many of their performances and will be quite impossible when large-scale orchestral/choral works are performed.

In order to realize a stage of a size that will accommodate the typical repertoire of a modern symphony, we recommend that you extend the performing area to the rear wall (taking account of the irregularity of shape of that wall) and into the hall to the downstage edge of the existing (but covered, pit.)

We did not have an opportunity to measure the existing stage dimensions, but we estimate that this modification will yield a final stage width of about 60 feet at the front of the stage and a stage depth of about 38 feet. (For comparison, the stage at Boston Symphony Hall is 60 feet wide and 34 feet deep; Royal Festival Hall is 60 feet wide and 37 feet deep; Philharmonic Hall in Lincoln Center is 62 feet wide and 40 feet deep.)

We recommend that the downstage extension take the form of an elevator that can be lowered to serve as an orchestra pit, or be used at the level of the main floor to carry more seats, or be raised to the stage level to accommodate more musicians for large-scale works.

Our recommendation for the provision of an orchestra pit, rather than a fixed extended stage, stems from the current and increasing trend to unusual dispositions of musical forces in new orchestral compositions, and also because it will be essential if you also plan to include staged productions in the Theater program. If you can possibly include a pit elevator of this scale in your budget, it will greatly increase the flexibility of use of the Theater for the current repertoire, and will better serve the future repertoire that none of us can now predict, even if you decide against staged events.

The downstage extension of the stage has some sight-line implications for seats near the top of the hall. Listeners in those seats may find that they cannot see the bottom few inches of the conductor's podium, though they will see all of the conductor. We do not recommend raising or raking the stage floor to correct this problem, because at present there appears to be a very favorable relation between the present height of the stage and the height and inclination of the balcony soffit. As a result, the sound in the under-balcony seats is far better than we would normally expect. Rather than tamper with this fortuitous relationship, we would prefer that the minor sightline problem in the balcony simply be accepted, keeping the present stage height.

A small screen enclosure should be provided for recitals, chamber works and other small-scale performances; this item would be portable and stored backstage as a piece of stage furniture when it is not in use.

The design for this small enclosure, as well as the large stage enclosure that we recommend for blending the stage sound and directing it into the audience chamber, will be provided later. (See Section V, below.) If the Theater serves only for un-staged productions, this stage enclosure will be permanent; otherwise it must be removable and preferably flown automatically.

### III. Reverberation Time

When the State Theater was converted for use as a motion picture house, massive amounts of sound absorption were added in order to reduce the natural reverberation of the hall, which was a great disadvantage to sound motion pictures. As a result, the present reverberation time is very far below the value regarded as optimum for concert music. In addition, the dynamic level of orchestral music in the occupied hall is likely too low; loud passages will not be full enough to be as exciting as they should be, because the sound is quickly absorbed instead of developing into the rich, warm reverberance typical of well-liked halls.

The present value of reverberation time in the empty hall at mid-frequencies (500 to 1000 cycles per second ... this is the figure usually quoted for characterizing the reverberation time of a hall) has been measured at 1.15 seconds (see enclosed figure 1), corresponding to 1 second in the occupied hall. A more suitable value for the occupied hall would be 1.6 to 1.8 seconds for romantic works and 1.4 to 1.5 seconds for classical works.

We recommend that all absorptive material not associated with the audience seating be removed from the hall in order to increase the reverberation time; this includes all the absorptive material added for motion picture use, and all drapery. The areas that are currently carpeted may be recarpeted with thin carpet; and the present upholstery on the seats may be renewed, but should not be increased in amount. The naugahyde should be replaced with porous fabric.

A small amount of specially designed absorptive material may be needed to control the existing echoes from the rear wall, but basically there should be a minimum of absorptive material in the renovated hall that is not associated with the audience.

Since we do not know the acoustical properties of the materials used in "deadening" the Theater for motion picture use, it is not possible to predict how much the reverberation time can be increased by removal of the undesired absorptive material from the hall. For this reason, we feel it is very important to be able to return for listening tests and repeat measurements of the reverberation time after all the existing absorptive treatment has been removed, but before the final design is settled. As a practical matter, since the acoustical measurements and the listening evaluation will be impossible with scaffolding in place, we hope that the

absorptive treatment can be removed with the use of "swung staging", before the installation of the staging that will be required for re-finishing the ceiling and upper side-walls.

We hope that the State Theater's reverberation time will come up to a value somewhere between that of the Academy of Music in Philadelphia (1.4 seconds) and that of Boston Symphony Hall (1.8 seconds), both of which are among the finest halls in North America. The current trend in concert hall design is toward longer reverberation time, however, so that if, by any chance, the final reverberation time of the Theatre should exceed these values, there would be no problem that cannot be solved in the final acoustical design. It is simply a matter that cannot be resolved until we can assess the effect of removing the absorptive treatment.

(Note that it is possible, by a handclap anywhere in the rear of the seating on the main floor, to excite a strong repeating "flutter echo" between the parallel sidewalls. This flutter is not excited by sounds from the stage, however, and will not have a deleterious effect on the hall acoustics. Such flutters are observed in the audience portion of many halls.)

#### IV.

##### Focussing

There appears to be a large curved surface near the stage in the ceiling of the hall that may have the undesired effect of creating some acoustical hot spots in the front of the balcony seating. It was not possible to see this area clearly during our visit, so it is not sure how much of a problem this may be. When such focussing occurs, each affected seat has a favored relationship with a corresponding location on stage, such that sound from that location is very strongly concentrated at the seat, while sound from other stage locations is unnaturally weak. This focussing of sound has no undesirable effects: (1) the balance of sound from various sections of the orchestra (and even from individual instruments) is distorted in the affected seats; and (2) the apparent location of the instrument can shift in a disconcerting manner as the listener moves his position slightly, often seeming to jump up to the ceiling where the focussing occurs.

Such problems can, in principle, be controlled in simple ways such as covering the offending surfaces with acoustical absorption. That solution would not be acceptable in this case because we are trying to remove absorptive materials to increase the reverberation time. Instead, we recommend that the surfaces that are presently concave be "turned inside out" to present convex scattering surfaces to the hall. Such a treatment would add desirable diffusion to the hall and thus turn an acoustical defect into an acoustical advantage. Alternatively, replacement of the surfaces with perforated metal may be suitable.

The extent to which this recommendation can be made consistent with the architects' design will depend upon close collaboration in the preliminary design phase between the architects and the consultants.

V. Early Reflections and Cross-Stage Communication

At present there exists no stage enclosure to capture and blend the sound of the orchestra before distributing it to the audience seating area. As a consequence, the greatest part of the orchestral sound energy is lost into the absorptive rear curtain, the fly tower and the wings. Only a small fraction of the sound flows out to the audience; this limitation, together with the great amount of sound absorptive material in the hall, leads to the complete lack of liveness and the low dynamic level of the music, mentioned in Section III, above.

There is danger in having a stage enclosure that is too small, however. The presence of sound-reflecting surfaces very near the musicians would make the on-stage sound unbearably loud and would upset good cross-stage communication. The stage enclosure should, therefore, form as nearly as possible a smooth continuation of the audience chamber rather than be a "dog-house" appended to one end of the hall. For example, a stage enclosure ceiling starting from the height of the present proscenium arch would be appropriate. The side and rear walls of the enclosure should be basically plane vertical surfaces (no concave curvature!) with diffusing elements applied at a scale of approximately 1 to 6 feet; recommendations for the details of the enclosure will be subject to further study and collaboration with the architect.

One of the intended purposes of the enclosure is to blend the orchestral sound before it is distributed to the audience, But this has, as a side effect, a lessening of the ability of the musicians to hear clearly across the stage. To remedy this problem and also to direct "early reflections" to seating areas in the middle of the main floor (which reflections bring clarity and intimacy to seats that presently suffer from rather muddy and confused sound), we recommend an array of reflecting surfaces over the stage and extending somewhat out into the hall from the stage lip, at a height of 26 to 30 feet above the stage floor.

The nature of these reflectors is open to a wide range of design choice; in some halls they have been called "clouds", but at the present stage of design we would prefer not to bias the final design by using special names of that kind.

The general requirements are that the reflecting surfaces be rather sparsely distributed, be of size ranging from 8 to 12 feet in minimum dimension, be shaped so as to scatter sound rather than yielding specular reflection, and be so mounted as to permit an initial adjustment in angle and height before the hall re-opens, after which time they would be permanently locked in place.

This part of the design is most critical, because the ultimate musical quality of orchestral & choral sound in the hall is extremely sensitive to the balance and time-of-arrival of these early reflections, the so-called "acoustical signature" of the hall.

Remember, too, the need to accommodate a central cluster of loudspeakers for the sound reinforcement system at approximately the position of the center of the proscenium arch, about 10 feet above the stage. We may be able to conceal this usually conspicuous cluster within the arch itself.

#### VI.

#### Other Considerations

John Hyer mentioned the possibility that risers would be desired possibly for upstage orchestra members and certain for chorus. Such stage furniture is normal and acceptable, but should not be installed permanently, because it would impose too rigid and inflexible a constraint upon orchestra seating and would be incompatible with staged events (see below). In fact, it would be better to wait until the renovation is finished, then install risers at first to see whether they are, indeed,



useful, before investing in their cost.

He also mentioned the desirability of a pipe organ to be installed eventually. The best location for a classical organ, whether for solo recital or for use with orchestra, is at the center rear of the stage with the pipes starting about 16 ft. above the stage. This is probably possible if there are to be no staged events in the Theater (even in this case, we must confirm that enough space is available); but a organ at that location presents very serious problems if the stage enclosure must be removed for stage events.

An alternative would be to investigate whether there is still enough room in the spaces at the sides of the hall just downstage of the proscenium. These spaces apparently originally accommodated a theater organ which has been removed to make room for ventilation ducts in those areas.

Two other possibilities won't work here. The organ in Uihlein Hall in Milwaukee is on an elevator that drops below the stage floor when it is not needed; this works badly because stage dirt falls into the organ pipes between the cracks around the elevator. The organ at Grady Gammage Hall in Tempe, Arizona, is fixed at the rear of the stage; the orchestra enclosure and staged events simply go on around it. This works only because of the enormous amount of backstage area available. It is not feasible for the State Theater.

A final consideration would be an electronic organ of high quality.

We discussed with Bill Atwell some things that might be done to improve the State's acoustics for orchestral concerts in the interim, before the renovation goes ahead. The most serious difficulty, besides the lack of an orchestra enclosure to send sound out into the hall, is the combination of velvet draperies and sound absorptive acoustical tile on the angled walls just downstage of the proscenium. These surfaces are acoustically important for sending sound out into the middle of the hall, but at present this function is thwarted by the sound absorptive treatment on them. It would be easy to remove the velours and the acoustical tiles, and then, instead of going to the expense of refinishing the plaster at this time, you could hang a very light scrim in front, to hide the patchy plaster. If the scrim is light enough, it will hide the blotches without interfering with the sound reflections.



#### VII. Provisions for Staged Events

All of these recommendations given above pertain also to staged events in the State Theater. The chief difference is that the stage enclosure, which is absolutely essential for orchestral concerts, must be removable for staged events, to allow free use of the existing wings and flies. Preferably, the enclosure should be automatically removed at the push of a button, although a number of facilities use manually-erected enclosures with success. (It is, as John Hyer pointed out, a question of "how many stage hands must be used?"). Also, in order to be fully effective for orchestra sound, the enclosure must be large enough that the orchestra and the audience are essentially in the same room (not with the orchestra tucked into a small "doghouse" enclosure, appended to the auditorium). The enclosed illustration shows a very effective realization of this concept in Uihlein Hall in Milwaukee.

It will require careful study to determine how large an enclosure there is room for and how heavy a structure can be supported (and even flown) in the State Theater.

In addition, there may be potential conflicts between lighting and acoustical requirements, particularly in the area just upstage of the proscenium wall, as well as on the sidewalls near the front and at the ceiling (light-bridge). If there is space to include these lighting elements outside the auditorium inner boundaries, we are probably in fine shape; but if they must project into the auditorium, they may obscure the critically-important acoustical reflecting surfaces.

For these reasons, recommendations to provide for staged productions will require more information about the existing building than we now have, and will need detailed cooperation between us and the persons responsible for theatrical design.

#### VIII. Architects and Theater Consultants

You have asked that we mention the names of one or two architects who might be especially qualified to work on the renovation of the State Theater. We have worked on a number of performance facilities, including the new (under construction) Maryland Concert Center in Baltimore, with Jung/Brannen Associates, Inc., 177 Milk Street, Boston; they have also done considerable work recently with us for Rutgers University, including a music recital hall for Douglass College.

Mr. Paul Abdalla, President  
11 March 1981  
Page 11

We have also worked with Evans, Woolen & Associates, 104 Fort Wayne Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204 on a number of similar projects, including the opera house for Indiana University in Bloomington, the Indiana Repertory Theater in Indianapolis, Clowes Hall (concert hall) at Butler University, Indianapolis, and a lecture/concert hall for Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

In addition, we have been in contact with the firm of Volk and Keown in Cedar Grove, N.J., who, as you know, have already expressed interest in working on the project.

In the event that your users for stage events wish to seek the advice of a theater consultant about whether there will be adequate room in the State Theater for the ancillary spaces that will be needed to accommodate a variety of staged events, you might contact Brannigan-Lorelli Associates, Inc. (Robert Brannigan: 212/265-2846) or Jean Rosenthal Associates, Inc. (Dr. Clyde I. Nordheimer: 201/674-1530), both in the New York area.

IX. Predicted Acoustical Results of the Renovation

The successful realization of the changes recommended above will, we believe, make the State Theater into a very fine hall, indeed, certainly for orchestral/choral concerts, but also, depending entirely on the adequacy of the backstage space and equipment, for most kinds of staged events. Its size and general rectangular shape, not to mention the basically solid structure, lend themselves exceptionally well to the achievement of the fine acoustics typical of some of the older and renowned European halls, without sacrificing the creature comforts demanded by American audiences today. The results of our initial acoustical measurements confirm that it should be readily possible to recover the intrinsic good sound of the Theater at a reasonable cost, and that the investment in this restoration will be amply justified.

Sincerely yours,  
BOAT BERANEK AND NEWMAN INC.

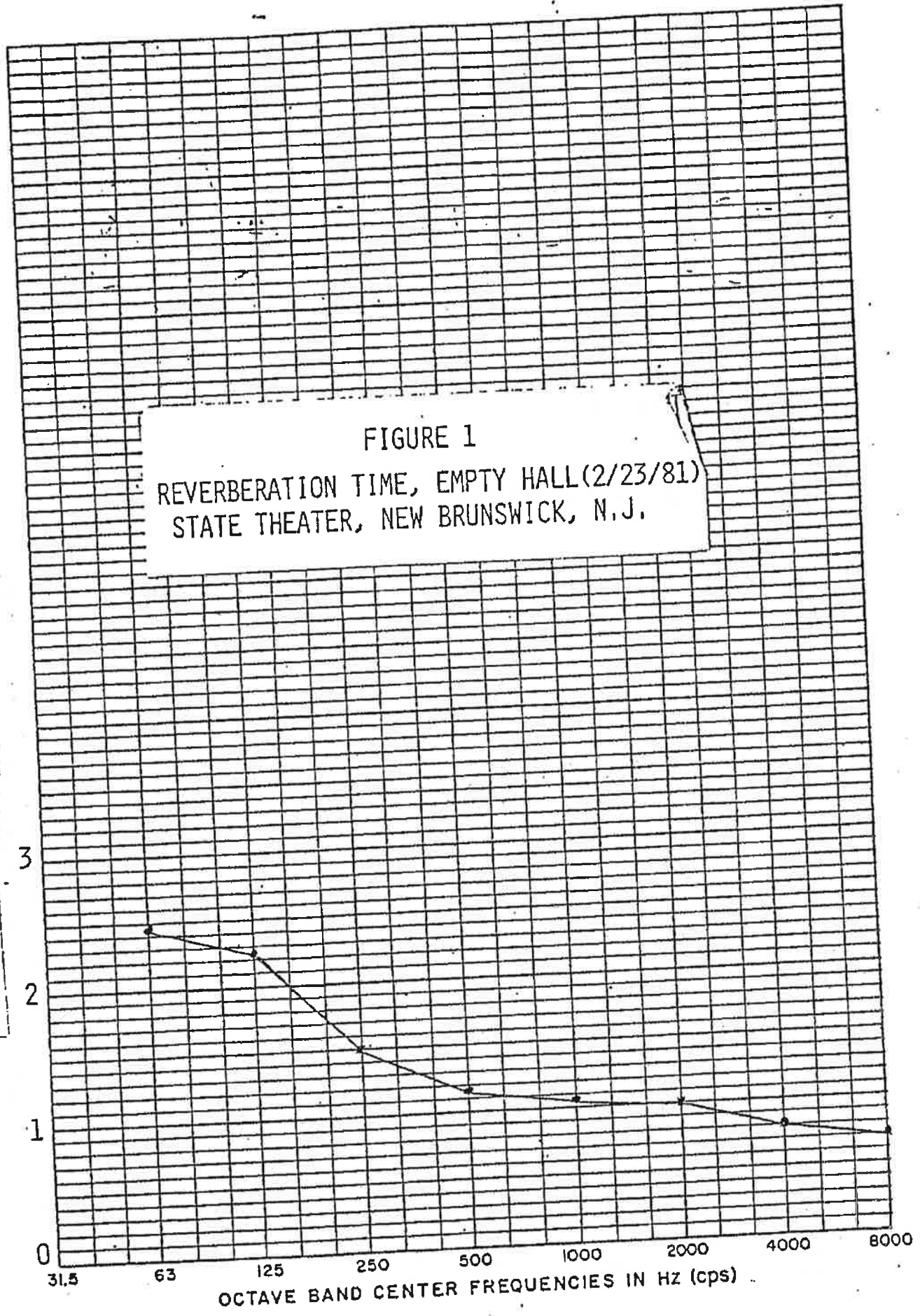
Theodore J. Schultz  
Theodore J. Schultz

TJS:lab

encl: Figure  
Drawing

REVERBERATION TIME (SECONDS)

FIGURE 1  
REVERBERATION TIME, EMPTY HALL (2/23/81)  
STATE THEATER, NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.



50 Moulton Street  
Cambridge, Mass. 02138  
Telephone (617) 491-1850  
Telex No 92-1470

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

13 October 1977

Mr. Robert Totten  
Physical Plant Division  
Building 4117K  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick 08903

Subject: State Theatre Evaluation  
BBN Job No. 136811

Dear Bob:

We are writing to provide an evaluation of the feasibility of renovations to the State Theatre in New Brunswick for possible use as a music performance hall. Our comments are based on a short inspection visit during showing of a motion picture, and on rough plan and interior sketches by the realtor and a former member of your staff. We have not been able to perform acoustical measurements of any type, nor inspect drawings indicating the materials, construction, or dimensions in section of the hall. More detailed drawings would be required before the complete extent and feasibility of the renovation work necessary can be determined. Nevertheless, we have arrived at preliminary conclusions regarding the potential acoustical qualities of the hall, assuming that certain obvious needed work is carried out and that no unforeseen problems become clear after more detailed information is available. Our basic conclusion is that the theatre could be renovated so as to be good to excellent for performance of popular music, and mediocre, at many seats, for serious classical music. Some seats could be quite good even for classical music.

Requirements for Good Hearing Conditions:

Any space for music listening must provide certain acoustical qualities. Perhaps most basic of these is the requirement for quiet. Absence of irritating background noise from air-conditioning or other building mechanical system noise, and freedom from noise intrusion from outside sources, is absolutely essential. Secondly, sound must be sufficiently loud and evenly distributed throughout the audience area, without "hot" and "dead" areas. The reverberation time--time for sound to decay after a source stops sounding--must be long enough to contribute "liveness"

Mr. Robert Totten  
13 October 1977  
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to music but not so long as greatly to reduce clarity and intimacy. The frequency balance, or ratio of bass to treble, must be adequate. Finally, the direct or "early" sound from the stage area must be in correct balance with sound reflected from the room surfaces.

#### Acoustical Conditions at the State Theatre

Since we were not able to make any acoustical measurements we must estimate probable hearing conditions on the basis of limited observations during our visit and review of the sketches provided. The overall rectangular shaping of the hall appears to be satisfactory. Except for a large barrel-vaulted ceiling over the pit area (discussed below), there were no obvious large concave surfaces which might focus sound energy in certain areas of the seating at the expense of others.

The theatre sounded quite dead. Typical of motion picture theatre practice large amounts of sound absorbing material have been applied to the side and rear walls, which accounts for the lack of liveness. Toward the rear of the hall the treatment consists of a fabric over either glass fiber or mineral wool. Near the front, perforated mineral fiber acoustical tile has been applied to the sidewalls. Both treatments are quite effective sound absorbers and would have to be removed. The treatment appeared to have been installed directly over plaster although we could not be sure of this. If so, and if the plaster is sufficiently thick so as to not contribute too much absorption at low frequencies by itself, the reverberation time might be satisfactorily increased by removal of the treatment. Some touch-up work would undoubtedly be required.

There were no apparent sources of excessive background noise, either from within the building itself or from outside. However, the motion picture soundtrack noise at the time of our visit may have masked some sources of intrusive noise. Most heating and ventilating systems would be unsatisfactorily noisy for concert halls unless specifically designed for this purpose. Air conditioning system noise can be highly dependent on the amount of air supply, and would possibly become objectionable during conditions requiring greater heating or cooling.

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13 October 1977  
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The stores and large lobby areas at the front of the theater and adjacent buildings provide good acoustical isolation from traffic noise on Livingston Avenue and surrounding streets. However, although it was not apparent during our visit, we would expect that noise entering from the alleys through the emergency side exits would be sufficient to be objectionable during serious music performances. Suitable isolation would probably require special sound-rated acoustical doors at minimum. An enclosed exterior walkway would be a great help in controlling noise from outside.

The most serious problem for good music acoustics is the lack of sufficient ceiling height over many of the seats. Approximately two-thirds of the orchestra level seating is below the single large balcony. The ceiling height of the underbalcony space at the balcony line is only about 12 feet, rising to perhaps 15' at the rear of this level of seating. Near the top rear of the balcony, the ceiling height also appears quite low. The acoustical effects of low ceiling height are to reduce the loudness of sound, and to restrict the direction of its arrival to a listener to a narrow angle in front of him, promoting a sense of isolation and lack of warmth.

A proper sound amplification system can largely overcome the effects of low ceiling height, but this solution could be highly controversial for classical music performance. Because there are very few satisfactory systems of this type and a great many unsatisfactory ones, we would not expect many classical musicians to approve of such a method, at least initially. On the other hand we do not believe that many popular musicians would object to its use, and we know of several systems which have been well received even for classical music.

Finally, the stage or "sending" end of the hall would have to be substantially altered for satisfactory music performance of any type. While we were not able to inspect this area during our visit, it is probably safe to assume that it is typical of a vaudeville theater, with no orchestra enclosure or means for reflecting sound out of the stage and into the audience. The large barrel vault over the pit area would focus sound along the centerline of the hall, resulting in spotty coverage and poor balance among sections of performers at different locations on stage.

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### Required Changes to State Theatre and Estimated Cost

It is clear that substantial work would be required for providing an orchestra shell, removal of the sound absorptive material, changes to the ceiling over the pit area, and enlarging the proscenium opening.

Possibly, the proscenium wall could be removed, making the stage area a part of the main room, rather than fitting a shell into the proscenium. A sound reflecting stage ceiling, and side walls and rear walls would be required in this case. This would probably be a somewhat better solution acoustically if it is structurally feasible.

If the existing plaster is sufficiently rigid (probably the case), removal of the absorptive covering and patching and painting may be all that is required for wall treatment. This would be the most economical. If the plaster is too thin or not rigid enough, a more extensive wall treatment would be required--for example, thicker plaster or a heavy wood construction.

The ceiling over the pit area in front of the proscenium opening would have to be reshaped to avoid focussing and to provide proper distribution of sound from both the stage and the pit. The new shape would most likely be flat, or a series of nearly flat surfaces, depending on the available above-ceiling space. Similarly, the ceiling at the rear of the hall should be raised and reshaped if possible.

The air conditioning system would most likely require substantial upgrading, although this would not be completely clear until details of the system are available. At minimum, we would expect that ducts would have to be lined with sound absorbing material and/or sound attenuating duct silencers installed.

A high quality sound amplification system would be essential for all music performances, with the possible exception of classical music. The main loudspeaker system would have to be integrated into the new ceiling at the forward part of the hall and should be designed during architectural design of that area.

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These changes comprise the major acoustical work required. Many smaller, but important, details would undoubtedly be required as well. These would include, for instance, control of other building noise sources and treatment of auxiliary spaces such as lobbies, corridors, and dressing rooms.

Without more detailed information about the existing conditions, it is difficult to estimate the scope of cost of changes needed for acoustical purposes. Based on our work with similar projects, we would expect that a minimum of \$50,000-\$100,000 would be required for the basic architectural changes described.

The cost of mechanical system noise control would vary widely depending on existing conditions. If a minimum of treatment is required, this might amount to between \$5000 and \$10,000. If more major changes are required, mechanical system noise control work conceivably could amount to \$40,000, although this is unlikely. If it should be determined that the existing system required replacement, this might amount to \$300,000-\$350,000, a small part of which would be for noise control provisions.

An appropriate high quality sound amplification system could cost between \$60,000 and \$80,000. This amount assumes that an "ambience" type section would be provided for improving the under-balcony and low-ceiling acoustical conditions.

You have asked about the cost of renovations to the Vancouver Orpheum Theatre. Like the State Theatre, the Orpheum was formerly a vaudeville theater, and was recently renovated as the new home for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The work included major changes to the stage area, new air conditioning system equipment, new seating, an elaborate sound amplification system, extensive restoration of murals, gold leaf, and ornate plaster work, and remodeling of all auxiliary spaces. As a large city's major performance space, little expense was spared in assuring that the hall was excellent both acoustically and aesthetically. At a cost of \$3.3 million, the cost may seem high, but many consider it a bargain compared to the \$20 million which probably would be required for a new facility of similar quality. Several years ago we acted as acoustical consultants for the remodeling of Fair Park Music Hall in Dallas, Texas. The interior of this hall was completely revised and a number of auxiliary spaces added, including new rehearsal halls. New air conditioning and sound systems were installed. The cost of this project amounted to approximately \$5 million.



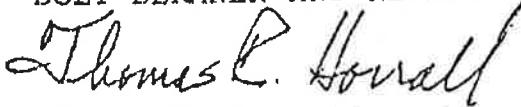
Mr. Robert Totten  
13 October 1977  
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We do not believe that the cost of renovations to the State Theater would approach these figures, but it is not inconceivable that \$1 million could be expended. The actual cost would depend strongly on the existing structure and condition of the building, and on aesthetic and other factors not necessarily related to acoustics.

We would be happy to assist in a more complete evaluation of the theatre if desired. As suggested, we would need more detailed architectural information for this purpose. Access to the theater during non-business hours would also be of great value in more accurately determining the probable scope of renovation. Please call if we can be of additional help on these aspects or elaborate on any of the points made in this letter.

Sincerely yours,

BOLT BERANEK AND NEWMAN INC.



Thomas R. Horrall

TRH:mf



APPENDIX VII

CULTURAL CENTER STUDY

MASON GROSS SCHOOL SPACE NEEDS: GRAPHIC ARTS CENTER

Informal Submission by Mason Gross School on Long-term Space Needs

Requested By: William Wright, Director  
Office of Physical & Capital Planning

RECEIVED  
APR 9 1981

MAR 2 - 1981

OFFICE OF PHYSICAL AND  
CAPITAL PLANNING

MAR 31 1981

MASON GRUSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS - 1000 UNIVERSITY AVENUE - NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. 08902 - 933-2075

March 27, 1981

Kenneth Wheeler  
Provost  
18 Bishop Place

Dear Kenneth:

I recently toured the Arnold Constable building to assess its suitability as an arts facility. Since we must be out of the Downtown Arts Building by 1987, it is essential that the University begin planning a replacement facility. As I see it, we have two choices: either build a new facility on the Douglass Campus or acquire a facility in downtown New Brunswick. My Visual Arts faculty has clearly expressed a preference for the latter alternative.

The Arnold Constable building admirably suits our needs. Not only is it inexpensive and easy to renovate, but it contains sufficient space to permit our programs to develop to their full potential. The urban environment would be stimulating to our students and faculty. The presence of such a facility on Livingston Avenue would have a major impact on the redevelopment of New Brunswick, and be the first step toward the location of a major cultural center in the area around the State Theater. This is one project which will immensely benefit both the University and the city.

I have attached a brief program document describing the potential use which we would make of the facility. These are all spaces which we will require in the near future.

I want to emphasize that we are interested in Arnold Constable not because it is available, but because we actually prefer renovated urban space to a new campus facility.

I will be happy to discuss our interest in this facility with you or other University officers, if you wish. I want to assure you that we actively support your efforts to maintain an urban presence for the School. If I can be of any assistance to you in pursuing this objective please let me know.

Cordially,

John Bettenbender  
Dean

Attachment  
JB:cb

Proposal to Establish  
A Downtown Arts Center

RECEIVED  
JAN 26 1981

OFFICE OF PHYSICAL AND  
CAPITAL PLANNING

The Mason Gross School of the Arts has been located in downtown New Brunswick since its inception. Adjusting to such a location has not always been easy, but the School remains committed to the retention of a strong urban presence. With the opportunity provided by academic reorganization, it is appropriate to seek a way of defining that commitment for the future. The University must also recognize the temporary nature of the School's location in the Downtown Arts Building and begin planning soon for a permanent facility. We strongly urge that the new facility be in downtown New Brunswick on Livingston Avenue, and be provided through the renovation of one of the existing structures there.

Although we are committed to a downtown Arts Center, we recognize that our presence alone will not be sufficient to regenerate the Livingston Avenue area. The arts center we propose is only feasible if there is a concurrent commitment to renovate the State Theater and to relocate the George Street Playhouse and Crossroads Theater. Together, these organizations and facilities would have considerable impact on the area and create a true Arts Center for the entire area.

There may be two potential locations for the Arts Center we propose: the YMCA, and Arnold Constable. The YMCA has the advantage of having living facilities, which would enable us to house graduate students. Arnold Constable has better space for the studio facilities we need and would be more efficient to program. We would be willing to make the decision between the facilities simply on the basis of opportunity.

The School does hope that eventually the Arts Center would provide graduate student housing as well as studio facilities. Students would thus be in proximity to their work space, and their constant presence would have a positive impact on the Livingston Avenue area. Such housing need not be in the same facility as the studios.

We have very little idea of either the quality or type of space which might be available on Livingston Avenue. We have therefore not designed a program to fit a space, but instead simply assessed our space needs. Obviously we would modify our proposal on the basis of a specific facility. The amounts and types of space described below are, however, realistic and derive from program needs.

The proposed Livingston Avenue Arts Center would contain a variety of studios, rehearsal and performance spaces, classrooms, and office. It would house a large portion of the Visual Arts instructional program, the entire Visual Arts graduate program, and a limited number of rehearsal/performance spaces for Dance and Theater Arts. A program analysis of the School's requirements for the Arts Center follows.

Media Center 10,000 nasf

The development of a University-wide Media Center is a University priority. To locate such a facility in conjunction with the Visual Arts Department makes eminent sense. The space estimate was provided by Mr. Wright.

Dance 1,000 nasf

1 Rehearsal/Instructional Studio for use by students

Theater Arts 2,000 nasf

4 Rehearsal/Instructional Studios for acting students for scene rehearsal and individual or group work (500 nasf each)

Visual Arts 30,250 nasf

Visual Arts Department Office (500 nasf)

Shop for construction (750 nasf)

10 Visual Arts faculty combination office/studios  
at 300 nasf each (3,000 nasf)

50 individual graduate student studios for Visual  
Arts students at 175 nasf each (8,750 nasf)

5 open studios for Visual Arts students at 750 nasf  
each (3,750 nasf)

Instructional studios to house the Visual Arts  
programs in painting (4,000 nasf), drawing (2,000 nasf),  
commercial design (1,500 nasf), and graphics (6,000 nasf)

General Academic

5,800 nasf

2 seminar rooms at 350 nasf each (700nasf)

4 classrooms at 800 nasf each, 1 classroom at  
1,500 nasf (4,700 nasf)

1 conference room (400 nasf)

Performance

6,500 nasf

Art Gallery (3,000 nasf)

Theater/Dance/Art/Music performance space (3,500 nasf)

Total Space Required - 55,550 nasf

The facilities described above would have a tremendously positive impact on the Mason Gross School of the Arts, as well as on the community. Students in the arts would have adequate facilities in an environment particularly suited to their needs and desires. The facility would bring together practitioners of different art forms, enhancing artistic interaction and creativity.

The impact would be particularly profound in the Visual Arts. The various campuses would still be the sites for a variety of introductory courses, but much advanced instruction would be conducted in the new downtown facility. Specialized programs such as sculpture, ceramics, photography, and media would be left on the campuses in their present locations because of the expense involved in relocation. The graduate students would be centralized in the new facility.

The community would benefit not merely from the presence of large numbers of students and faculty in the area. The facility would contain two areas designed to enhance the cultural life of the general public: an art gallery, and a performance space suitable for experimental theater, dance, concerts, etc. The performance space would be informal and largely unstructured to better serve a variety of forms.



AN ORDINANCE TO-AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT  
 AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED, "THE REVISED  
 GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF NEW  
 BRUNSWICK, 1970," ADOPTED: OCTOBER 6,  
 1970, CHAPTER II, ADMINISTRATIVE CODE.

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Municipal Council of the City of  
 New Brunswick, New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION I

Section 2-5.2, is hereby amended to read:

s. Arts Development Commission. There is hereby established  
 an Arts Development Commission consisting of nine (9) members to  
 serve, without compensation, staggered terms of three (3) years  
 each, to be appointed by the Mayor, with the consent of the  
 Municipal Council, commencing January 1. Initial appointments  
 to said Commission shall be less than three (3) years for some  
 members so as to immediately create a Commission with staggered  
 terms of appointment. Due to the technical nature of this  
 Commission and its regional purpose, appointees shall not be  
 limited to City residents. Vacancies shall be filled by  
 appointments to unexpired terms. A Commission member may be  
 removed by the Mayor and the Municipal Council for good cause  
 shown, upon written notice and a hearing thereon.

The purpose of the Commission is to establish, and  
 coordinate the long-range development of the creative and  
 performing arts, major arts programs and the cultural centers  
 within the City of New Brunswick. The Commission shall be  
 responsible for making application for grants in aid from  
 Federal, State, Corporation and Foundation levels, and to  
 distribute said monies in accordance with its long-range  
 development, which can include granting monies toward the  
 New Brunswick Arts <sup>Community</sup> Council Program.

In accordance with the long-range development of the  
 arts, the Commission shall also be responsible for the general  
 operation of the New Brunswick <sup>Community</sup> Arts Council.

SECTION II

<sup>Community</sup>

t. New Brunswick <sup>Community</sup> Arts Council. There is hereby  
 established a New Brunswick <sup>Community</sup> Arts Council consisting of eleven  
 (11) members to serve, without compensation, staggered terms of  
 three (3) years each, to be appointed by the Mayor, with the

consent of the Municipal Council, commencing January 1. Initial appointments to said Commission shall be less than three (3) years for some members so as to immediately create a Commission with staggered terms of appointment. Membership shall be limited to City residency. Vacancies shall be filled by appointments to unexpired terms. A Commission member may be removed by the Mayor and the Municipal Council for good cause shown, upon written notice and a hearing thereon.

The Council shall be under the direction of the Arts Development Commission in order to maintain coordination and uniformity of the City of New Brunswick/Community Arts and Cultural Development.

The purpose of the Council is to establish and maintain local, school, library and neighborhood arts programs.

The Arts Council Director shall be responsible to report its budgetary expenditures to the Municipal Council of the City of New Brunswick and to report to the Arts Development Commission as to its programing goals and progress. The Director shall also be a non-voting member of the Arts Development Commission.


SECTION III

All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION IV

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon passage and publication according to Law.

ADOPTED ON FIRST READING  
DATED: May 5, 1982

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
GEORGE F. HENDRICKS, JR.  
Council President

ADOPTED ON SECOND READING  
DATED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
GEORGE F. HENDRICKS, JR.  
Council President

APPROVAL OF MAYOR ON THIS

DAY OF

, 1982.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN A. LYNCH, Mayor