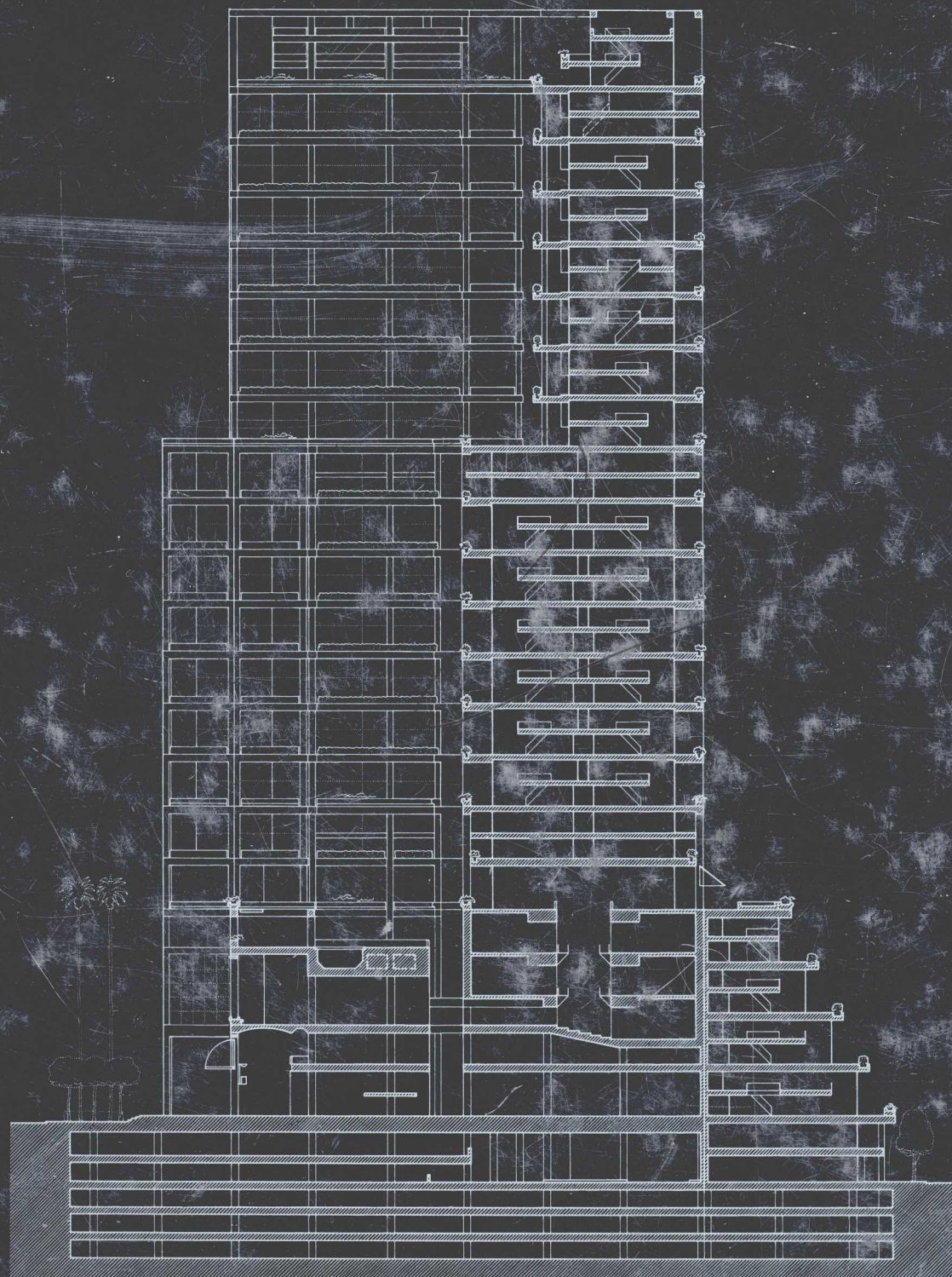


巴顿·迈尔斯

BARTON MYERS

当代世界建筑经典精选
Selected and Current Works



世界图书出版公司

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Introduction

Barton Myers — Shifting Perspectives

By John R. Dale



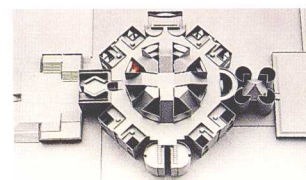
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With a career spanning more than 25 years of practice in Canada and the United States, Barton Myers has developed a thoughtful, rigorous architecture which defies popular characterizations and challenges conventional assumptions about the making of cities.

The common trend in Myers' projects is not an easily recognizable style or a repeated formula; rather, it is a carefully constructed syntax of how to make buildings and cities. This syntax unites construction techniques, materials, programmatic elements and design partis into an architecture which is at once informal and elegant, pragmatic and gracious, lean and accommodating. His ongoing quest to unite the opposing aspirations of communities and developers, and the conflicting priorities of art and economics, have led him to design solutions which are conceptually complex, innovative and reflective of his comprehensive approach to the design of cities.

Barton Myers refers to his work as "an architecture of accommodation". His plans are clearly ordered but spatially composite. His architecture is endowed with a sense of scale and ornamentation by means of elegant details and carefully juxtaposed fittings and finishes.

Stylistically the work combines multiple references drawn from historical, vernacular and contemporary sources to increase the possible meanings. The projects of the office attempt to achieve a closely knit social and physical matrix where form and program are mutually supportive and the important issues of contemporary cities are addressed.

(Barton Myers, *Contemporary Architects*, St Martin's Press, 1980.)

Underlying this multi-valent approach to architecture are diverse influences. In the 1950s Myers was educated at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland and then became a jet pilot in the United States Air Force, serving in the western States and in England.⁽¹⁾ Annapolis engendered in him a reverence for tradition and a respect for institutions; training on ships and in state-of-the-art jet fighters instilled in him a passion for technology and an admiration for its inherent elegance and economy of means. At Oxford and Cambridge⁽²⁾ he was inspired by the ability of architects to build in new ways within the strong framework of tradition. Oxford's University Museum, in its juxtaposition of Neo-Gothic masonry with brilliantly engineered glass and iron vaults, remains a favorite paradigm for the combination of old and new.⁽³⁾

As a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania (1961–64) and as an apprentice architect in the years immediately following (1964–66), Myers came under the spell of Louis Kahn.⁽⁴⁾ To Kahn's influence can be attributed his preference for pure geometries, strongly ordered plans and the search for a timeless architecture as the appropriate expression for great public institutions. However, Barton Myers' work has never been purely "Kahnian". The multiple influences of his upbringing and training have resulted in a more populist approach. Where Kahn carefully contained mechanical systems in servant spaces or customized them as highly refined elements, Myers' early architecture exposes and celebrates them as "found" objects with an intrinsic beauty of their own. Where Kahn's architecture is unified and self-referential, Myers' is inclusive: ready-made objects, "pop" icons, fragments of older buildings, are all skillfully woven into a carefully ordered, coherent assemblage.



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His fascination with popular artifacts parallels the explorations of another Philadelphia architect, Robert Venturi. A more abiding influence which underscores his fascination with old-new combinations and carefully refined detailing is his self-confessed admiration for the work of Carlo Scarpa.

Myers' pluralistic approach has earned him many labels, ranging from "High Tech" to "Post-Modern", but his architecture defies such restrictive definitions. It is, perhaps, the childhood memory of his native city, Norfolk, Virginia, which is at the root of Barton Myers' urban design preoccupations and his search for a denser, more diversified urban environment. A dense, bustling port city which grew to prominence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Norfolk literally pushed out into its harbor, forming a rich, continuous grid of quays, piers, streets and squares. Warehousing, offices and public institutions were tightly ringed by street-oriented housing. His own family home, a gracious brick townhouse from the Colonial era, stood near the center of town and survives today as a museum.⁽⁵⁾ Myers witnessed the subsequent destruction of his city due to wholesale urban renewal. The relentless pressure of highway and parking improvements cut Norfolk off from its waterfront and left gaping holes in its intricate fabric. This experience helped to shape his position as an advocate for preserving dense mixed-use environments. Moving to Toronto and setting up a practice with partner A.J. Diamond in the late 1960s, he was soon fighting to save his adopted city from a similar fate to his home town.

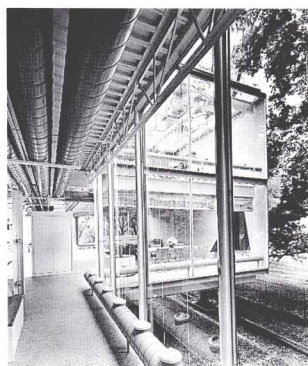
Shifting Perspectives: The Los Angeles Years

Toronto was Barton Myers' proving ground, first as a partner in Diamond and Myers from 1968 to 1975, and then as sole principal of Barton Myers Associates, from 1975 to 1987. It was in Canada that Myers established a body of projects which clearly demonstrated his urbanist credo and earned him international recognition.

Myers' participation in the Bunker Hill Competition in Los Angeles in 1980 propelled him into a new arena.⁽⁶⁾ As the master planner and lead architect on a developer team competing for a \$1 billion mixed-use redevelopment in downtown Los Angeles, Myers found himself collaborating with an "all-star" team including Cesar Pelli, Charles Moore, Frank Gehry, Ricardo Legoretta and Hugh Hardy (of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer). Encouraged by the late Harvey Perloff, then Dean of Architecture and Planning at the University of California, he began to shift his practice to Southern California, establishing his permanent home and base of operations in Los Angeles in 1987. Bunker Hill marked the first of a series of "mega projects" which characterized the evolving practice in the 1980s. Among them are the Phoenix Municipal Center, an opportunity to recreate Phoenix's identity through a master plan that included 12 downtown blocks; the expansion of the University of California's Northwest Campus, which infilled tennis courts between existing high-rise dormitories to form a village for 1200 students; a concept design for the CBC Headquarters in Toronto, encompassing over 3 million square feet of broadcast facilities, offices and housing in the central city; and, most recently, the 2700-seat multi-purpose Performing Arts Center, the first element in a major redevelopment of central Newark, New Jersey.

This new generation of projects has demanded a shift in design approach: their scale and complexity require in-depth collaboration between architect, client, consultants and, often, other architects and urban designers. Their sites are often clean slates made available by urban redevelopment programs. Weaving these projects into a larger community context is one of their most significant challenges.

Regardless of the scale, context or period, a number of familiar themes continue to permeate Barton Myers' work.



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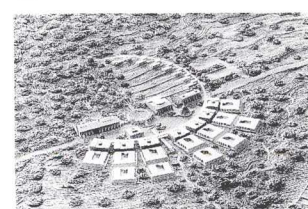
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"Off-the-Shelf" Components

There exist within the built environment a multitude of ready-made industrialized products—"off-the-shelf" components with an intrinsic beauty and utility. These have a potent role in the creation of the built environment. Myers' early explorations into the steel and aluminum industries led to the creation of astonishingly frank spaces ranging from houses to corporate interiors. Put in a new context, industrial light fixtures were treated as elegant sconces for restaurants and libraries; corrugated aluminum siding became handsome interior paneling (as in the Alcan offices) and 'T' beams served as the architraves of carefully crafted elevations (as at the Wolf House).⁽⁷⁾

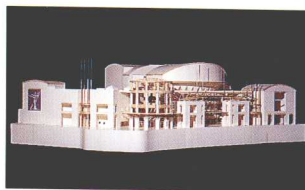
In the past, the frank use of industrial components was often a creative response to economic necessity; however, their continued use has become integral to Myers' design vocabulary. This approach creates a provocative tension in more recent projects where there has been greater opportunity to use a richer palette of materials and to employ decoration as an architectural device in its own right. The Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts is a case in point.⁽⁸⁾ The centerpiece of the complex is a multi-purpose theater capable of being re-configured in five different ways. In form, each of the five configurations echoes a traditional performance space, ranging from concert hall to lyric theater. The sense of tradition is reinforced through the use of columns, capitals, sconces and tiered box seating which line the sides of the hall. However, the fact that balconies pivot and slide on air casters is also clearly expressed in their architectural treatment. Wood columns, cornices and capitals are treated as paneled infill systems, clipped to a delicate tubular steel, self-bracing frame. Likewise, the ceiling is at once a traditional coffered ceiling and a versatile steel grid, capable of managing the endless variations of stage lighting and room configurations. Railings and sconces are of lacquered copper piping rather than the traditional brass or bronze. The warmth of traditional spaces is recalled in the rich and varied use of wood veneers, but the spirit of the detailing of balcony fronts and ceiling coffers is thoroughly contemporary.

Prototypical Building Blocks

Barton Myers' designs are rarely seen as "one-off" objects. They are usually conceived as prototypes reflecting a broader attitude about the making of private spaces, public institutions or urban spaces. His own house, a contemporary atrium house carefully inserted into a Victorian neighborhood in Toronto, became the generative element for some of his subsequent housing projects.⁽⁹⁾ When extruded, the section for the Myers Residence provided the basic sectional parti for his famous residential galleria at the University of Alberta, known as HUB (Housing Union Building).⁽¹⁰⁾

Whether he is developing a theater, an office block or a residential complex, Myers frequently searches for generative building blocks: lobbies become courtyards, penthouses are transformed into loggias, corridors are re-configured gallerias, and parking lots are defined as garden rooms. These become recurring devices which transform ordinary spaces into an architecture of urban significance.

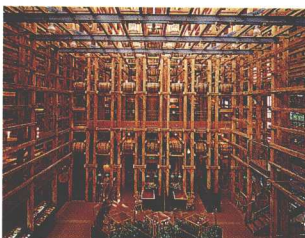
In recent years, with increasing emphasis on institutional work, Myers' architecture has gently but inexorably shifted away from the idea of prototypical loft buildings—warehouses for living and working, which are subject to constant transformation—to a search for permanence and a "timeless" architecture. A recent competition entry for a Native American Preparatory School in New Mexico places emphasis on a pure, ageless geometry, which expresses both the ancient building traditions of the region and the aspirations of a new kind of institution.⁽¹¹⁾ In its materials, planning and relationship to the landscape it is envisioned as a place which will outlast the institution itself, and as a ruin, become a part of the natural landscape.



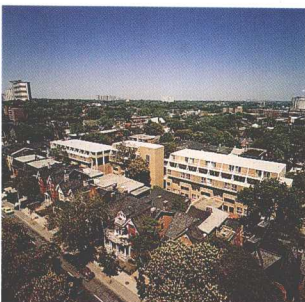
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In creating an architecture for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the emphasis is on a super-scaled architecture composed of discrete, timeless elements—building blocks reconstituted as architectural icons: a domed rotunda; a triumphal proscenium arch composed of masonry piers and a soaring, bridge-like steel truss; a vaulted banquet hall; brick arcades.⁽¹²⁾ The rhythm and scale of elements echo the turn-of-the-century facades which still dominate downtown Newark, but their transparency and accessibility are in marked contrast to their predecessors. This is a building which is intended to take a permanent place as an integral part of the city.

Adaptive Re-use: Old–New Combinations

A critical aspect of Barton Myers' work is his commitment to the adaptive re-use of the existing urban fabric. Buildings can be seen as super-scaled "off-the-shelf" objects with inherent qualities capable of re-interpretation. Seminal works like York Square⁽¹³⁾ and the Seagram Museum demonstrate Myers' sophistication in the creation of environments which combine old and new. At York Square the scale and texture of Victorian houses are used as the ordering device for a small commercial courtyard complex which is entirely contemporary in spirit and execution. At the Seagram Museum, the nineteenth century barrel warehouse of a historic distillery complex is hollowed out as an entry pavilion of monumental proportions.⁽¹⁴⁾

More recent projects have even involved the creative re-use of relatively modern buildings, for example the feasibility study for the Ahmanson Theater at the Music Center in Los Angeles and the recently completed Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. The re-interpretation and modification of existing buildings involves a selective layering of new and pre-existing. The past is never completely obliterated. The preservation of remnants of earlier building programs provides a meaningful measure of time and change in the midst of constant transformation. The layering of new galleries against the Brutalist additions of the 1970s at the Art Gallery of Ontario still echoes the rhythms of the existing wide-span structures as a conscious act of "humanizing" the recent past without totally erasing its memory. In that sense, Myers' architecture is mediating rather than revisionist.

Urban Infill

Another underlying preoccupation of Myers' work is the idea of urban consolidation. He argues for more intensely developed cities with a better balance between living and working environments, and favors a more even distribution of density rather than the sharp differentiation of uni-centered cities with high-rise, high density cores. As a result, his seminal work has to do with infill projects. The Dundas Sherbourne Infill Housing in Toronto is a testament to his conviction that urban renewal need not result in isolated housing blocks and empty streets.⁽¹⁵⁾ Here, as in many of his other housing projects, Myers demonstrated that it was possible to increase population densities while preserving the existing residential fabric. He did so by inserting linear mews housing in mid-block locations, thus preserving existing street frontages.

As the emphasis of Myers' practice has increasingly shifted towards major institutional projects, the interest in urban consolidation has remained constant. Thus, the newly completed Woodsworth College, in the heart of the University of Toronto's downtown campus, recalls nearby York Square, one of Myers' earliest infill projects. The college's new buildings are added incrementally and sensitively to existing buildings, preserving the streetscape and recapturing garden space behind. A row of Victorian houses is preserved and a new quadrangle created behind them, defined on two sides by a new L-shaped, cloistered academic wing. The resulting communal spaces, indoor and out, form a new focus of activity for the graduate liberal arts community and provide a strong sense of place for visiting alumni.⁽¹⁶⁾



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Contextualism

For Myers, the act of building in an urban context is essentially a collaborative effort which must take into account established patterns of development and the essential characteristics of the local architectural heritage. For this reason, the language of his architecture adjusts to each new context, seeking clues from its neighbors, reinforcing the patterns which promote a healthy urban environment. The Portland Performing Arts Center in Portland, Oregon⁽¹⁷⁾ and the renovation and expansion of the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto are two institutional projects of the 1980s which demonstrate his preference for contextualism over object-making. Both projects place emphasis on reinforcing the street edge and deferring to the scale, texture and colors of neighboring buildings. The work of past builders and architects who have shaped the urban context before him becomes a key reference and starting point for his own design explorations.

Today, a great deal of institution-making is taking place on the suburban fringes of the American metropolis. Myers' favored approach, searching for clues in the historical urban fabric and seeking consolidation of existing building patterns, is often put to the test in such challenging contexts. This was particularly true in the case of the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts. Cerritos is part of the suburban continuum that stretches between Los Angeles and Newport Beach to the south. The site was a cow pasture a few decades ago; car dealerships lining a freeway have been, until recently, the community's most recognizable feature. The city's master plan for a new civic center resembled a commercial office park with isolated object buildings in a sea of cars. Myers' response was to test a series of multiple building configurations capable of redefining the site. The result was not a single-statement object building, but a complex assemblage of elements, each a declaration of a particular role or function within the theater complex. The community meeting hall, the entrance lobby, stage house, actors' block and audience chamber are all designed as distinct, almost discrete elements which are composed to capture and define arrival courts and gardens, and respond to site alignments and key circulation points. The final composition of these building blocks is almost village-like—a matrix of well-defined indoor and outdoor spaces which act as an urban microcosm. The complex is nearly self-contained, yet fragmented to the point where it might ultimately contribute to a larger, denser city core.

Urban Rooms

Closely associated with his search for the correct contextual response is Barton Myers' desire to contribute to the public realm. His concern for the internal integrity of a project is matched by his desire to help define streets, squares and courtyards which contribute to the enjoyment of the city as a whole. For Myers, a parking lot has as much potential for an urban room as the forecourt of a theater. His project for the Phoenix Municipal Center is a prime example.⁽¹⁸⁾ Here, a central public plaza straddling a major artery and surrounded by four blocks of municipal offices becomes the "city room". The centerpiece of the complex is a permanent gathering place for the citizens of Phoenix; the symbolic focus of the municipal bureaucracy, its council chamber and offices, are pushed to the periphery to surround and reinforce the public square.

With the shift of his practice to Southern California, where the climate allows planted areas to be green year round, Myers has become increasingly influenced by the traditions of great gardens. Some of the greatest architecture in Southern California grew out of a rediscovery of Spanish building traditions. Architects such as Bertram Goodhue, Myron Hunt and the Zwiebels, placed emphasis on the arcade, courtyard and garden as prime organizing elements of both institutional and residential complexes. These are green spaces, more passive than the urban spaces of Italian piazzas; places of contemplation rather than venues for mass gatherings. Nevertheless, they are also well-defined and contained rooms. Myers' interest in garden courts is



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reflected in the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts; the University of California Northwest Campus expansion⁽¹⁹⁾; the Child/Family Development Center (completed 1993); and the Ivan Reitman Studio (completed 1993). The introverted image of buildings within buildings, as typified by the Seagram Museum and the Unionville Library (1981), both in colder climates, has given way to extroverted assemblages where indoor and outdoor spaces interlock in a continuous, well-defined spatial sequence.

The City as Laboratory; the Office as Studio

Barton Myers' work involves consciously integrating the practice of architecture, planning and urban design with teaching and research. Each new project is an opportunity to explore fundamental urban issues and to make broader propositions about the making of cities. If the city is a laboratory for his ongoing research, his office is a studio in which to explore ideas collaboratively. The office of Barton Myers Associates is modeled closely on the studios of architectural schools and on offices like those of Louis Kahn, where he worked after graduation from the University of Pennsylvania. Myers' Beverly Hills office is basically a single large room shared by the entire staff; there are no private offices. In this environment, the issues of one project frequently spill over into others. The studio environment allows Barton Myers to participate intensely in each project. At the same time, each individual project team is exposed to the themes and issues that concern the office as a whole.^{(20) (21)}

Given this approach to work, it is not surprising that Myers also maintains an ongoing relationship with the academic world. He continues to teach at the University of California and his work with graduate students often parallels the work in the office. Housing studios have been an opportunity to push research on new housing and mixed-use prototypes as the quest for consolidation in a largely suburban context continues. Los Angeles is frequently the focus of attention as a place both to learn from and, potentially, to modify in order to make it a more viable city. The academic studios consistently avoid object-making, favoring projects which demand reference to a greater urban context. Students are expected to incorporate rigorous research into their design explorations in parallel to the office, and, through case study analysis, contribute to a shared body of knowledge about the city and its institutions.

An Emerging Emphasis: Theater Design and its Implications for the Practice

Barton Myers' increasing focus on the design of facilities for the performing arts is an appropriate outcome of 25 years of practice. While Myers' practice continues to address a diverse range of urban design, planning and building projects, it is in the venue of the theater, whether as a room for concerts or a stage for drama, that so many of the themes and preoccupations of his work naturally come into play with each other. He considers the theater to be one of civilization's greatest institutions; its performance space the best of all urban rooms, because of its ability to unite a diverse citizenry with the arts at a single point in time and space. More than ever before, theaters unite tradition and technology to create settings which are simultaneously contemporary and timeless.

Performing arts centers have come to be prime catalysts for change in American cities. The Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts⁽²²⁾ has become a tangible focus of cultural activity for a suburban community dominated by freeways; the New Jersey Performing Arts Center is the optimistic harbinger of urban Renaissance in the heart of Newark's decaying core. These are institutions of civic and regional significance whose architecture must ultimately play a symbolic role in the identification of a community. They embody both the universal needs of multi-use performance spaces and the particular context of an urban setting.

John R. Dale is an Associate at Barton Myers Associates, Inc.

Selected and Current Works

Theaters/Performing Arts Centers

- 14 Citadel Theatre, 1973
- 20 Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1982
- 28 Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 1987
- 36 New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1990



Citadel Theatre

Design/Completion 1973/1976

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Citadel Theatre Company

Auditorium, back of house, fly tower: reinforced concrete frame

Lobby: steel frame

Red brick, clear glass, painted steel curtain wall,
glass and steel canopy

The commission for the Citadel Theatre resulted from a design competition victory. The theater is organized around a central pedestrian mall which leads from Churchill Square, facing the theater, through downtown Edmonton. Access to the lobbies for the main 700-seat proscenium theater, the 300-seat experimental theater and a 250-seat cinema/lecture hall, is direct from the central mall. Also located on the mall are a restaurant and lounge, the theater shop, and classrooms which form part of the ongoing educational program of the Citadel Theatre.

The lobby, which wraps around the main auditorium in the form of a city-scaled porch, is highly transparent, constructed of a lightweight exposed steel frame with a metal panel and glass skin. From the lobby, the surrounding streets, the square and the automobile entrance are all visible, giving a sense of the space as an active and dynamic link with the city. The main theater is raised over the pedestrian mall with the underside of the seating forming a dynamic sculpted roof, providing views between the theater lobbies and the mall.

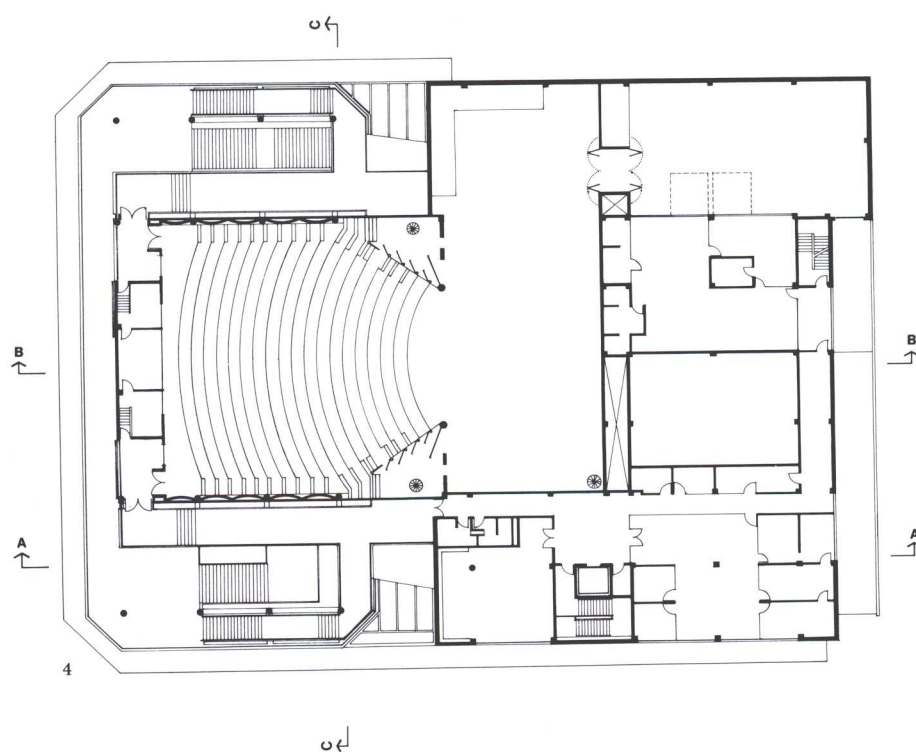
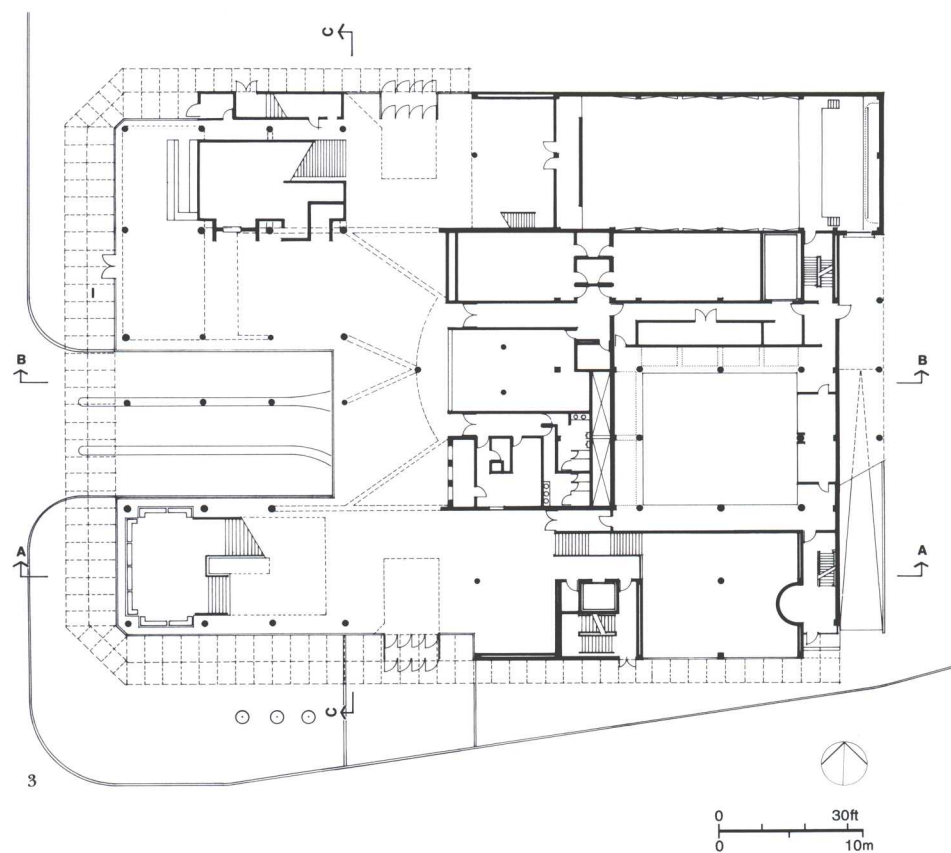


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- 1 The theater at night; view from the south-west
- 2 The theater seen from above, from the south-west
- 3 Street level
- 4 Upper level



- 5 The lobby and main staircase, during intermission
- 6 A view of the black-box theater
- 7 The theater at night; detail of the south-west corner with the upper and lower lobbies



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