

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre

Other names/site number: The Arts United Center of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

Name of related multiple property listing:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 303 East Main Street

City or town: Fort Wayne State: IN County: Allen

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this    nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property   X   meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

  X   national    statewide   X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

   A    B   X   C    D

<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u>  </u> meets <u>  </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____ <b>Title :</b>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEVENT/Brutalism

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Cast Concrete with Brick/CMU Wall Assembly

walls: Cast Concrete

roof: Built-up, Ballasted Roof System

other: Oak trim (interior)

\_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theater (which comprises the theater and a separate boiler house structure) is the sole built component of a complex of cultural buildings that was envisioned by the Fine Arts Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana beginning in the late 1950s. Today known as The Arts United Center, it functions as a performing arts venue that is the home of the Fort Wayne Ballet and Fort Wayne Civic Theatre and also hosts other community and civic events. The theater was designed by internationally renowned architect Louis I. Kahn and completed in 1973. It is a two-story brick building, essentially rectangular in plan, with a flat roof. It features a distinctive façade with central entrance and large keyhole-shaped windows at the second story. The side and rear elevations are simple and unadorned with the exception of grouped window openings with flat-arched brick lintels. The plan of the interior is largely symmetrical, and visitors move through the building in a ceremonial, proscribed way. The auditorium occupies the center, or heart of the building, and is, in Kahn's own terminology, the most significant "served" space that is supported by a number of "servant" spaces including box office and concessions, dressing rooms and green room, a gallery and rehearsal rooms. The simplicity of the details; the use of geometry and symmetry; a material palette that includes concrete, brick, and oak; and the careful consideration of light and the way it moves through the building are all features typical of Kahn's most significant work.

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## Narrative Description

### SETTING

The theater is located at the northern edge of downtown Fort Wayne. The south foreground of the theater has a drivable, level, red brick plaza with grid and circular pattern at the center. This area has been altered from its original configuration, which included an asphalt driving lane with curbs and two rectangular, landscaped islands between the building and East Main Street. A lawn and juniper hedge now separate the brick plaza from the street. A contemporary sign on a concrete base is visible from East Main Street. The building is set on level grade at the south (Photo 1); the grade drops at the north half of the structure. On the east side of the theater is a Japanese garden, a driveway and large parking lot shared with the Fort Wayne Museum of Art (Photo 2), completed in 1984. Parking, loading dock access, and a brick trash enclosure are located on the north (Photo 3). The elevated Nickel Plate Railroad is just beyond the northern edge of the parking area. On the west side of the theater is a lawn with a monumental red steel sculpture by Mark diSuvero titled *Helmholtz*. Beyond that to the west lies Freimann Square Park (Browning-Day Associates, Inc., Landscape Architects, 1973), a public park featuring a large fountain and geometric reflecting pool and plaza, which was constructed concurrently and forms a landscape backdrop for the Performing Arts Center (Photo 4). The brutalist City-County Building (Strauss Associates) that stands to the west of Freimann Square Park was completed in 1971 as part of the redevelopment of Main Street and is part of the larger setting for the theater.

### EXTERIOR

The plan of the theater is essentially rectangular, with a service wing projecting eastward about two-thirds of the way back from the front elevation. It can be divided into three main components (Lobby/Front-of-House, Auditorium, and Back-of-House) and two smaller "servant" components (the scene shop and the boiler house). Twenty-two, six-foot-wide, 118-foot-long prestressed concrete tee beams, each weighing 25 tons, support the roof. The beams are arched slightly to provide for roof drainage. On the exterior, the components are expressed within distinct cubic volumes. The exterior primary structure is bearing brick and concrete block masonry wall roofed with precast concrete beams. The secondary auditorium structure is a separately formed poured-in-place reinforced concrete slab, sidewall, and beam slab system. The interior and exterior structures are completely separate.

The principal (south) elevation, which provides access to the lobby and box office spaces, is two stories tall and features a central, recessed, rectangular entrance bay capped by a heavy concrete lintel (Photos 1 and 5). An arched window opening surmounts the lintel, and two larger, punched, arched keyhole window openings are located above to each side, braced against a central concrete pier centered on the entrance. The exposed concrete exhibits imperfections from casting, faint score lines, and a pattern of regularly spaced small holes for keying together the concrete formwork.

The reddish-brown Roman brick walls are set in a one-third offset running bond with a light-colored mortar. The masonry arches of the south façade are composed of stacked headers, four high at the main entrance arch and nine high at the two large keyhole arches. The exterior brick walls rest directly on the level brick ground plane and are capped with a low-profile metal coping at the top of the wall. In an interview with Kahn shortly following completion of the building, he was asked about the efflorescence on the brick, to which he replied that

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“it will eventually wash off...in 100 years, I think.”<sup>1</sup> Ten years after the completion of the theater, in 1983, damage was evident at many of the bricks, and investigation was carried out by the firm of Wiss, Janney, Elstner and Associates, Inc.<sup>2</sup> Evidence of brick replacement and repointing can be seen in several localized areas of the facades.

The glazing above the main entry has thin, nearly invisible from the exterior, vertical mullions; the glazing of the keyhole windows has vertical and horizontal mullions, only the vertical mullions appear in early photographs. The glazing has a UV film applied which is deteriorating in some locations and gives the windows a cloudy appearance.

The recessed entry features two arched openings (Photo 5). Each masonry arch of five stacked headers bears on a concrete springer block and has an arched transom glazing above a set of two glazed, aluminum double doors. The ceiling of the recessed entry is scored concrete with battens featuring rows of small, non-original exposed light bulbs. The paving at the entry transitions from a large slate paver the depth of the exterior wall to a brown brick paver with mortared joints.

The east elevation is composed of a south block (corresponding to the lobby and auditorium) with fenestration, a high stage house volume, and two low volumes at the north – a scene shop and boiler house (Photos 2 and 3). The south volume of the east elevation has two groups of punched window openings at the north and south ends, each featuring paired windows at the second and third levels above a set of double doors at the ground floor (Photo 2). The oversized fixed windows and door openings feature brick jambs and subtle, jack arched brick headers, three-and-a-half courses high at the first and second levels, four courses high at the third level. The scene shop is a rectangular-plan, flat-roofed wing that extends to the east of the stage and has no fenestration. The boiler house is a separate, rectangular-plan brick masonry building with flat roof. The southern half of the boiler house is one story in height; the northern half is two. The one-story wing has a pedestrian entrance at grade on its south elevation. The two-story volume features a large arched window that appears to emerge from the one-story volume; the arch itself is concrete. The masonry on the boiler house appears to have been replaced in large sections, particularly at the cornice and along the corners of the taller volume.

At the north side of the theater is a loading bay that separates the boiler house volume from a low brick volume at the rear of the theater (Photo 3). The loading bay has an overhead metal door to the power plant at the east and loading dock and overhead metal door into the scene shop and stage, and an actor’s entrance through a recessed door at the south. The north elevation of the low, backstage volume (green room) has a group of five windows centered on the elevation a few feet above ground level. The center window is square with two horizontally oriented windows to each side. The jack arched headers of the openings are four-and-a-half courses high. A brick ventilation shaft is centered on the elevation just beyond the building footprint.

The north half of the west elevation features a low two-story volume that transitions to a high fly tower at the center. The low volume has one window and one door at the ground floor and six windows at the second level.

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<sup>1</sup> “Architect Kahn Answers Questions,” *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 27 October 1973, 7.

<sup>2</sup> C. Krueger, “Arts Center Bricks Deteriorating,” *The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, 6 January 1984, 1A; Wiss, Janney, Elstner and Associates, Inc., “Investigation of Shale Brick for Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation,” 2 March 1983, AU Archives.

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The door is recessed from the façade and has a lower header height than the adjacent window. A prominent jack arched header at the door recess is three-and-a-half courses high. The fixed window at the ground floor is the full height of the first level from grade and has a jack arched header, three courses high. At the second floor, the two center windows are fixed. The two windows to each side are fixed in the upper portion with operable hopper sash below. The second-floor openings have jack arch headers, three courses high. The fly tower has a large expanse of brick that is only differentiated by a horizontal band of exposed concrete at the height of the top of the auditorium block (Photo 4).

Very few exterior fixtures on the building are original, except for a ring of step lights at approximately waist height around the perimeter of the building.

## **INTERIOR**

### Basement

The basement, which is located beneath the stage and scene shop, as well as the back of house, includes scenery storage, costume storage, laundry, mechanical equipment, and general storage. The materials include exposed concrete floor slab and poured-in-place concrete walls. A perforated concrete deck (an open plenum for heating and air) is located below the auditorium seating.

### First Floor

On the first floor, moving from front-of-house to back-of-house, are the main vestibule, several lobby spaces, the box office, and the grand staircases (east and west). Long, narrow lobbies on both the east and west sides of the building provide access to the auditorium. The stage is at the north end of the auditorium and is flanked to the east by the scene shop (which includes loading access). Beyond the stage is a transverse corridor that extends the width of the building, and as one moves further north, men's and women's dressing rooms to either side of a central corridor, and finally, the green room with actor's entrances at east and west and small offices in the northeast and northwest corners.

The interior walls are a mix of brick, block and exposed concrete. The brick walls are a red Roman brick set in one third offset running bond with grapevine tooling at horizontal mortar joints and v-groove scoring at vertical joints. The concrete blocks have an 8x10 face size and an 8x 16 face size.

The entry vestibule/box office (Photo 6) has brown brick pavers at the floor and a concrete block wall with staggered joints at the ticket windows. The two square ticket windows have a common brick surround and (non-original) radiused counter of white laminate. The end walls of the entry are brick with an arched opening and concrete lintel over double aluminum glazed doors. Each doorway leads into the east and west lobbies and grand staircases at the east (Photo 7) and west. These lobbies feature brick walls with monumental arched and flat jack arched openings into the stair lobbies. The outside wall is exposed concrete masonry unit block with stacked joints with the square end of the block exposed and a thinner stretcher course of block every five rows. Oak benches throughout the lobby complement the architecture but are not believed to be original and do not appear in photographs taken shortly after the building's completion. Aluminum glazed doors lead to the exterior.

The lobby corridor behind the box office retains its original parquet floor. A gypsum wallboard partition now blocks off the former cloak room/concession stand which had originally been open to the corridor, separated only by a low wood counter; this is one of the only changes to the building since its construction.

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At the north end of the east lobby there is a set of four brick steps and a landing leading to a door to the stage (Photo 7). The stair features a painted metal railing with a circular clear finished wood handrail.

The tee beams at the high ceiling are exposed concrete. The floors throughout the lobby spaces are carpeted. The stairs that lead to the auditorium are constructed of exposed concrete and carpeted; the brushed aluminum stair railings have circular oak handrails. Flush, oak doors lead into the auditorium. Above each landing is wall mounted signage. The lighting within the lobby spaces is the original, oversized, circular ring chandeliers with exposed bulbs.

The auditorium (Photo 8) is a proscenium theater and recital hall with a raked concrete floor and no center aisle. There is a concrete proscenium and exposed concrete, faceted sculptural piers at the side aisles. The concrete is scored and displays a pattern of regularly spaced holes from the formwork used in its construction. The ceiling features four catwalks (Photo 9), "each one a hollow walking light bridge that incorporates auditorium downlights and air supply duct in monolithic casting of in-site reinforced concrete."<sup>3</sup> Seats are fixed. Originally, the theater accommodated 775; seating was replaced in 1989 and occupancy is now 655. The floor is carpeted.

The stage has a painted wood floor with fly tower above. The back wall of the stage is exposed concrete with a large triangular opening at the stage balcony that Kahn referred to as the Actor's House (Photo 10). A metal stair with open pipe railing at the back of the stage accesses the stage balcony; this stair was added sometime after the building was completed and is not original. The concrete has an exposed finish with score lines and formwork holes. The side walls of the stage are constructed of concrete block. A spiral stair at stage right accesses the fly tower.

Behind the stage is a transverse corridor that connects the stage to the back of house dressing rooms and green room via a central corridor. The transverse corridor is carpeted and has exposed concrete walls at the south and block at the north wall. The central corridor has running bond block walls with brick door opening enframements with clear finished oak doors and frames. The ceiling is exposed concrete with flush mounted lighting fixtures; the floor is carpeted.

Dressing rooms flank either side of the central corridor. The flooring in the dressing rooms is linoleum. The men's dressing room has an alcove for an electrical closet while the symmetrical women's dressing room houses a janitor's closet. There are clear finished oak doors and frames throughout the dressing areas. Within the dressing rooms, the restrooms feature 2x2 square white tile which continues up the height of the wall to the ceiling. The ceiling is exposed concrete. Dressing rooms have white plastic laminate counters with mirrors above.

At the north end of the central corridor is a set of eight steps leading down to the green room (Photo 11). The walls of the corridor continue into the green room as brick bearing walls with large arched openings at each side with exposed concrete lintels. A square window is centered at the north end between the brick walls. The green room is symmetrical to either side of the open corridor and features block walls at the south. The walls at the north are block with brick window surrounds and paired horizontal windows that appear to intentionally frame and allow observation of trains as they pass by on the elevated Nickel Plate Railroad. The east and west end walls have one floor to ceiling internal fixed window with thin clear finished oak trim at the north and a glazed

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<sup>3</sup> G.C. Izenour, *Theatre Design*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1977, 437.



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wall and door at the south framed in aluminum. The ceilings are exposed concrete with surface mounted track lighting at the center.

The glazed doors from each end of the green room lead to an actor's entrance vestibule with a pair of offices and access to a recessed exterior vestibule. The floors of the interior vestibule are slate. The walls are both brick and block. The brick wall separating the vestibule from the offices intersects a brick arch and concrete lintel. The line of intersection in the wall features a slit window opening framed in wood within the arch and below the arch. The ceilings are exposed concrete with flush mounted light fixtures.

The scene shop that extends to the east from the stage has exposed block walls, a painted concrete floor and access to the loading dock. The boiler house has an unfinished concrete floor and ceiling with exposed beams.

### Second Floor

The Second Floor, accessed via the east and west grand staircases, incorporates a large gallery / reception lobby at the southern end of the building. The second floor of the back-of-house wing includes the stage balcony and two rehearsal halls.

The gallery is a U-shaped, double-height space that features the dramatic arched windows of the entry façade at the south elevation (Photo 12). This space was clearly carefully considered by Kahn to take best advantage of the light; the space itself changes and is enlivened in various ways as the sunlight or moonlight moves across the walls. The windows frame views of the sky and connect the occupants to nature. The walls are predominately brick with partial height brick walls at the east and west with arched openings to stair lobbies beyond. The back wall is block set in a running bond with larger block "quoins" at the outside corners. An applied wood "picture rail" has been added. Brick surrounds with jack arches are typical at door openings. There are exposed concrete tee beams at the high ceiling and two oversized, circular ring light pendants with exposed bulbs within the gallery space. Lighting is mounted to I-beams. The gallery has a wood parquet floor.

A serving kitchen and elevator are located just north of the gallery. The kitchen has a concrete floor, exposed concrete slab ceiling, kitchen equipment, and non-original wood cabinetry with stainless countertops. The elevator lobby has running bond block walls with a brick surround at the elevator door opening.

On the second floor above the dressing wing are two rehearsal halls (Photo 13) separated by a narrow corridor. Both feature wood strip flooring, block walls, and brick feature walls with brick arches with concrete lintels. The ceilings feature acoustical treatment on concrete and round flush mounted lighting fixtures and linear grilles. The west rehearsal hall incorporates a distinctive, oversized, half-arched wooden door and fixed half arched wood panel set within an arched brick opening.

The back-of-house stairs and landings are polished concrete with exposed concrete and block walls. The railings are aluminum open pipe railing.

The theater retains a considerable degree of integrity, specifically of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The overall design and prominent architectural characteristics of the theater are intact. There have been no additions to the exterior of the building and no major modifications of spaces within the building. The building's original concession stand has undergone minor renovation with the

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creation of an office space, and seats at the rear of the auditorium were removed to accommodate an audio operator location.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1973

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1973

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

Kahn, Louis I.

Hagerman Construction Co.

\_\_\_\_\_

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### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance selected reflects the year that the building was completed, 1973.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

In 1959, the Fine Arts Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana began to envision in earnest a new, multi-faceted cultural complex. It was to be the centerpiece of Fort Wayne's ongoing program of urban renewal. The ultimate result of this vision was not a complex, but a single performing arts facility, designed by the world-renowned architect Louis I. Kahn (1901-1974) and dedicated fourteen years later, in October 1973. The theater in Fort Wayne was one of Kahn's last works; the architect died five months after its dedication. In many respects, it was a typical commission for Kahn, characterized by years of planning and design, construction of only a portion of the original concept, a minimal architectural expression informed by classical principles, and a material palette focused on brick, concrete, and oak. The Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre (more commonly known as The Arts United Center of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.) is nationally significant as Kahn's only purpose-built performance venue and his only major work in the American Midwest. The theater is also locally significant as one of the city's few high-style examples of Brutalism.

### Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### ARCHITECT AND SITE SELECTION

Like many urban centers across the country in the late 1950s and early 1960s, The Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation had a vision for a new, downtown cultural complex. The foundation was formed by community leaders in 1955; it had the distinction of being the first arts council in Indiana. In the mid-1950s, Fort Wayne was considered the "industrial, retail and social center of northeastern Indiana..." with a "firmly established art school and museum, a growing symphony orchestra, thriving community theatre programs, and a fledgling ballet company."<sup>4</sup> Most of these organizations were, however, presenting their work in older and unsafe buildings. The Fine Arts Foundation was committed to creating a new center for the arts, and they were also committed to doing so in the existing downtown.<sup>5</sup> The advantages of Fort Wayne, as summarized by one writer

<sup>4</sup> K. Nadolny, "Fort Wayne Insures Central City Arts Development," typescript, AU Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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in the mid-1950s, included its “strategic location; at the junction of the rivers, on the crossing of important railroads, close to large cities but not too close so that we still have a large thriving territory of our own in the heart of a prosperous farming and industrial section of our country.”<sup>6</sup>

The Fine Arts Foundation made the planning of the Fine Arts Center their highest priority, and by the first half of 1957 had studied the needs of the groups involved and prepared a general concept for the center, although selection of a site was still in progress.<sup>7</sup> The project began in earnest in 1959 with the selection of a designer.<sup>8</sup> A number of well-known and respected architects were considered for the project from the outset, including Marcel Breuer, Paul Rudolph, Edward Durell Stone, Minoru Yamasaki, Philip Johnson, Eero Saarinen, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe,<sup>9</sup> which indicates the progressiveness of the foundation and their desire to create a world-class building in the heart of Fort Wayne.<sup>10</sup> The director of the foundation’s building committee, Irving Latz, knew of Louis Kahn’s work at the Yale Art Gallery and invited him to consider the project. Kahn’s first meeting with representatives of the foundation was in June 1960, and in October 1960 several committee members visited Kahn’s Philadelphia office and had the opportunity to tour several of his commissions (including the Richards Medical Research Building, recently completed, and the somewhat earlier Yale Art Gallery, completed in 1953). Kahn was awarded the project in January 1961, beginning work in 1962.

Louis Isadore Kahn (1901-1973) was a native of Estonia; his family immigrated to the United States in 1905, settling in Philadelphia. Kahn studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania (graduating in 1924), most notably with the French architect Paul Philippe Cret, and was trained in Beaux-Arts principles, which informed his design process and his architectural solutions throughout his career. Kahn opened his own practice during the Depression, and his initial work focused on low-cost public housing. Stylistically, he was influenced by the International Style and the work of Le Corbusier. In 1947, Kahn began teaching at Yale. In 1950-51, he spent time in Rome as a Fellow of the American Academy and traveled extensively in Italy, Greece, and Egypt, which proved to be very influential in shaping his later work.

His first significant commission was the design of an extension to the Yale University Art Gallery in 1951 (Photo S1). When the project was completed in 1953, it brought Kahn considerable attention and exemplified the way in which the architect brought together a minimalist style and modern materials with more traditional principles based on a thorough understanding of historical precedent.

The design of the Trenton Bath House and Day Camp Pavilions between 1954 and 1957 for the Trenton Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Ewing, NJ, followed the work at Yale (Photo S2). Today, these small buildings and

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<sup>6</sup> W.S. Mossman, “The Future of Fort Wayne,” Quest Club Paper (typescript), Presented 6 January 1956, AU Archives. (Also available online from the Allen County Public Library Digital Collections:

<http://contentdm.acpl.lib.in.us/digital/collection/p16089coll2/id/17686/rec/19>.)

<sup>7</sup> Report of Executive Director, Annual Meeting, 24 April 1958, Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation, Inc., AU Archives.

<sup>8</sup> An excellent chronology of the building’s design was prepared by C. Yanni in D. B. Brownlee and D. G. De Long, *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture*, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1991. See also J.P. Brown, “Louis Kahn in the Midwest,” ex. cat., The Art Institute of Chicago, 1989.

<sup>9</sup> Yanni, 346.

<sup>10</sup> Columbus, Indiana was growing its own body of modernist works by well-respected, nationally known architects beginning in 1942 with the completion of the First Christian Church by Eliel Saarinen. The commissioning of such architecture in Columbus, however, was principally led by a single wealthy and influential patron, Irwin Miller of Cummins Engine, and the impact of what was happening in Columbus was not felt or widely acknowledged for several decades.

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shelters are of international importance and renown, and the work is often referred to as a turning point in Kahn's career, reflecting an important stylistic advancement in the way modernist principles were infused with tradition. It was also at the Bath House where Kahn developed his concept of "servant" and "served" spaces that would provide an organizing concept for all of his work that followed.<sup>11</sup>

From 1956 until his death in 1974, Kahn served as the Cret Professor of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, simultaneously taking on important and complex commissions. One of the first during this period was the design for the University's Richards Medical Laboratory (1957-62, Photo S3), which "quickly became a mecca for architects, who came to study its austere and imposing duct towers; the abstract, rhythmic interplay of its glass, brick, and concrete facade; and the elegant articulation of its served and servant spaces. It was also the subject of an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that brought international attention to Kahn."<sup>12</sup> William Martin, writing in *The Christian Science Monitor* shortly after Kahn's death recalled that "Until about 1960, no one except Kahn's own students had heard of his concept of architecture. But by then, with his design for the Richards Medical Research Building at the University of Pennsylvania under construction, architecture's geography had shifted glacially to the kind of offerings Kahn, over many silent years, had geared himself to make."<sup>13</sup>

As Kahn was completing his work at Richards Medical Laboratory, he was also working with scientist Jonas Salk to design a new research center in La Jolla, California (1960-1963, Photo S4). Salk envisioned an environment that was not only collaborative but was also beautiful, and together he and Kahn created a facility that took advantage of a breathtaking site on the edge of the Pacific Ocean to create what would quickly become one of Kahn's master works.<sup>14</sup> The project had many features that had come to define Kahn's projects: a complex program with multiple components incorporating servant and served spaces; simple geometry; reliance on simple materials such as concrete and wood, honestly presented; and, particularly dramatic here, the framing of vistas that emphasized the building's connection with nature.

The 1960s were a very fruitful decade for Kahn, opening with the completion of the Richards Medical Laboratory and the Salk Institute, in addition to being selected to design a new dormitory for Bryn Mawr College (Erdman Hall, 1960-1965) and the cultural complex for the City of Fort Wayne. Kahn also received commissions in 1962 to design the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, India, and the capital building in Dhaka, East Pakistan (what would become Bangladesh) (Photo S5), which would keep him busy through the end of his career.

## PLANNING AND DESIGN

Kahn began his work in Fort Wayne in 1962, assisting initially with the identification of an appropriate site for the complex, which would include a philharmonic hall, theater, museum, school of art, dormitories, art alliance and a parking garage.<sup>15</sup> Kahn first worked to understand the city's overall urban plan, focusing on a railway known as the Nickel Plate Railroad that was underutilized and attempting to better incorporate it into a larger

<sup>11</sup> The Bath House and Day Camp were listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1984.

<sup>12</sup> "Louis I. Kahn Biography," Kimbell Art Museum (<https://kimbellart.org/content/louis-i-kahn-biography>, accessed 21 March 2023). Richards Medical Laboratory was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009.

<sup>13</sup> W. Martin, "Louis Kahn: Humble Titan of World Architecture," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 May 1974, F1.

<sup>14</sup> The Salk Institute is listed on the California State Register of Historic Places and has been determined eligible for, but is not listed on, the National Register of Historic Places.

<sup>15</sup> A. Pellecchia to S. Mendenhall, undated (circa 2022), AU Archives.

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urban network that would include the cultural center. The railroad was constructed of concrete and steel and was elevated; Kahn undoubtedly saw it as an important, active architectural element that could frame his new complex. While views of the railroad - and the "theater" an element such as this could provide - must have been interesting to Kahn, mitigating associated noise became a concern. An extensive urban plan was more than Kahn had been commissioned to design, however, and ultimately the committee settled on an area alongside the Nickel Plate Railroad bounded by the railroad to the north, Main Street to the south, Clay Street to the east, and Calhoun Street to the west.<sup>16</sup>

Kahn's design team included Harry Palmbaum, Structural Engineer, and Fred S. Dubin Associates (West Hartford, CT), Mechanical / Electrical / Plumbing Engineer. Kahn had worked with Fred Dubin (1914-1992) at the Richards Medical Building.<sup>17</sup> The team also included the renowned acoustical consultant Dr. Cyril Harris and theater consultant George C. Izenour Associates, both of whom were added to the project team later in the 1960s by the foundation.<sup>18</sup> Harris was concerned with sealing the auditorium from all noise above (such as airplanes) and beyond (such as the elevated railway) and encouraged Kahn to thicken the roof slab and extend the auditorium walls to the roof slab, introducing a flexible connection between the two. He also recommended minimizing the size of the light bridge openings to improve the reflective area of the ceiling, and to design irregular flat surfaces at the lower section of the side walls of the auditorium that would better reflect sound.<sup>19</sup> Izenour worked with the team to reduce the volume of the auditorium, and to "humanize the stage and auditorium spaces to something appropriate in scale where the actor could be recognized as human and his small voice could be heard in the void."<sup>20</sup> Kahn's Project Coordinator was Anthony Pellecchia;<sup>21</sup> the Kahn design team was supported locally by consulting architect T. Richard Shoaff (1909-2005), who, among other cultural interests, served on the board of the Civic Theater, one of the organizations that would occupy the new cultural complex.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The site selected was part of the Main Street redevelopment area, a 24-acre site on Main Street from Clay to Calhoun Streets that was principally non-residential, but also included 85 housing units that were classified by the 1960 US Census of Housing as deteriorated or dilapidated. Clearance and redevelopment was recommended. The proposed plan for the Main Street redevelopment area, prepared by the Redevelopment Commission staff and firm of Blair and Stein Associates, called for a new city and county office building or buildings, a Fine Arts Center, a motel, and other commercial uses. (City of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Department of Redevelopment and Hammer and Company Associates Consultants, "Fort Wayne Community Renewal Program," March 1964, 174-175,

<https://www.genealogycenter.info/fortwayne/comdevlib/00737/00000001.pdf>, accessed 24 March 2023.)

<sup>17</sup> M. S. Chalifoux, "Upgrading the Mechanical Systems in Louis Kahn's Richards Building," Docomomo US, 21 April 2016 (<https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/upgrading-the-mechanical-systems-in-louis-kahn-s-richards-building>, accessed 21 March 2023). Dubin would also work with Kahn on the Phillips Exeter Academy Library (1965-72), the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, and the Salk Institute, and with a number of other leading Modern-era architects throughout his career.

<sup>18</sup> G.C. Izenour, *Theater Design*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1977, 318.

<sup>19</sup> A. Pellecchia to Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation, 13 August 1969, AU Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Izenour, 319.

<sup>21</sup> Pellecchia studied architecture at The University of Illinois and began work for Kahn in 1967. He became the Project Coordinator for the Fort Wayne project in 1968 and saw it through to completion. After Kahn's death in 1974, Pellecchia's new firm, Pellecchia Meyers (which included another former Kahn staff member, Marshall Meyers), completed the work at the Yale Center for British Art. (Letter, A. Pellecchia to Susan Mendenhall.)

<sup>22</sup> Shoaff was a Fort Wayne native. He attended Williams College and Princeton University, completing graduate work in architecture there in 1934. He opened his own office in Fort Wayne in 1937 and was a president and founder of the Fort Wayne Ballet. Shoaff also served on the boards of the Fort Wayne Art School, the Fort Wayne Art Museum, and the Civic Theatre. ("Thomas Shoaff Obituary," Legacy.com, 14-16 May 2005, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/fortwayne/name/thomas-shoaff-obituary?id=26970175>, accessed 21 March 2023).



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In designing the new cultural complex, Kahn first worked toward an organization of the buildings, initially working with geometric shapes and their patterns and placements and using three-dimensional models to convey his intent.

Like most Kahn projects, a large number of sketches and more formal drawings were produced for the work in Fort Wayne. Single details – an entrance, an elevation – would be worked and reworked a number of times. Plans would share space with sections and elevations on the same drawing. His approach to each project was grounded in his Beaux-Arts training, but the solutions that he would produce were fully informed by the modernism that he had seen in Europe and in America, as well as the classicism he had studied in Italy, Greece, and Egypt during his year at the American Academy in Rome in 1950-51.

The earliest sketches for the project, principally site plans, date to 1963 (Figure 8).<sup>23</sup> These drawings show Kahn organizing parking, landscape, and buildings to define a thoughtfully arranged precinct with limited access points. Buildings are generally grouped according to program, with performance venues and the school for performing arts in one zone; the art school in another; and the art and historical museums sharing a third zone, typically along the most highly trafficked, city-facing edge. Courtyard spaces are formed within these zones that serve to link one to another and also provide sheltered outdoor space that complements the indoor activity and is separated from the city beyond the borders of the cultural complex.

An undated site perspective, likely created in 1963/64, helps us to understand what Kahn felt this cultural complex might look like from a distance (Figure 9). It shows several groups of buildings of varying height set within a landscaped area; a small city unto itself. Several entry points are visible and clearly defined by arched openings. No context or setting beyond Kahn's complex is provided. Both the sketch plan and site perspective are similar to the model published in the Fine Arts Foundation's 1964 fundraising brochure (Figure 10), which offers a helpful key to building function. The model also underscores Kahn's love of geometric pattern, and his ability to create open spaces, or voids, that contribute in subtle but significant ways to the overall design effect.

Late in 1963, the foundation had determined that building the entire complex at once was not likely to be financially feasible, and thoughts of phased construction were being considered, with the civic theater and art museum to be the first buildings erected.<sup>24</sup> In January 1964, Kahn sent a letter to all the Fine Arts Center member organizations noting that the program requirements for the center had changed significantly from the original program assembled in 1961 and that the project was taking a "more modest approach" to the planning of the center. Each member group was asked to review their program needs and specify actual space required. The goal of the exercise was to be able to identify overlapping needs and then ultimately to prepare a revised (and presumably smaller, more efficient) scheme.<sup>25</sup>

The foundation's 1964 fundraising brochure is an interesting document, graphically engaging and full of the facts that one would expect to see in a publication designed to entice investors. The most interesting aspect of the brochure, however, is the fact that the first page celebrates the architect. It features an attractive photograph of Kahn himself, accompanied by a philosophical, thought-provoking quote intended to put the

<sup>23</sup> There are a many iterations of these early site plans, each slightly different, in various collections, including the Louis I. Kahn Collection at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania and the Art Institute of Chicago.

<sup>24</sup> Yanni, 349.

<sup>25</sup> Roy Vollmer, Jr., "Summary Letter to All Member Organizations," 23 January 1964 (AU Archives).

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reader into the proper frame of mind for viewing the work within: "An architect expresses things a certain way, as a musician expresses them a certain way. A musician sings the song of the soul. You can feel it. You don't have to use language for it because all language is inadequate when you speak of art."<sup>26</sup> The foundation is clearly hoping to capitalize on the fame of their designer and emphasize the virtuosity of his work. The quote may also have been chosen to prepare potential donors for the overall modernist tone of the building.

Kahn appears to have turned his attention to other projects for a time between 1964 and 1966. As Jack Perry Brown noted, "Over more than a decade, coinciding with Kahn's period of greatest fame and productivity, there were times of activity followed by hiatus and resumption."<sup>27</sup>

In October 1966, the Building Committee determined that the 2500-seat philharmonic hall was too large, and resolved to instead build a version of the Civic Theater that was slightly larger; 1000 seats instead of the original 500.<sup>28</sup> This decision set Kahn on the final design path, creating a Theater of the Performing Arts that could accommodate dance, orchestral performance, and ballet. Several additional years of design work would follow, and in fact, most of the drawings within the University of Pennsylvania's archives are dated 1966-1970.

While the design of an entire arts complex had been a new project type for Kahn when he was initially hired, the design of a theater of the performing arts was even more specific and certainly not something he had been called on to design in the past. Some of his most recent, successful experience had been the work at Richards Medical and the Salk Institute, where he had been creating complex program spaces for scientific use. Fort Wayne was something completely different. He approached this as he did all his projects, with myriad studies and in dialogue with others in his office. But theaters have very specific program requirements with which Kahn was not familiar, so he was required to rely on the input of his consultants (specifically his acoustical consultant Cyril Harris and his theater consultant George Izenour, both of whom were brought to the team by the foundation) and his clients. It proved to be a frustrating exercise for some, as Izenour reports in his 1977 book, *Theater Design*, "Here there was a confusion of both ideas and intent among (1) a willing but uninformed client whose desires and actual needs were inadequately expressed; (2) a famous architect whose romantic conception produced an unrealistically designed group of buildings; and (3) a pragmatic theater consultant who too late tried his best to bring order to a floundering building program."<sup>29</sup>

As for the clients, they too expressed frustration, less with Kahn's understanding of the project type than with his perfectionism and lack of attention to deadlines and budgets. Their frustration mounted as the project dragged on; Irving Latz wrote to Kahn in November 1968:

We have extremely important decisions to make and they must be made now. They are almost entirely dependant (sic) upon you, and I believe that the success, or failure, of our entire project lies in the balance. For over a year we in Fort Wayne have given you a figure of \$1,700,000 for the Theatre. We must stick with this figure even though we know that building costs have risen since we gave you that amount....Lou, I know that I am giving your office a difficult problem, but you simply can't fail me. I called a meeting last Sunday, and we had asked for sketches and estimates to be here by that time. The information arrived after the meeting. I was embarrassed

<sup>26</sup> *A Home for the Fine Arts in Fort Wayne*, The Fine Arts Foundation, AU Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, unpaginated.

<sup>28</sup> Yanni, 349.

<sup>29</sup> Izenour, 318.

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as I had asked people to give up a Sunday afternoon for a very special meeting and then I didn't have the information from your office in order to conduct the meeting. I can't keep crying "wolf!" and expect the Board to respond.<sup>30</sup>

Letters such as this did not seem to motivate Kahn; he continued to work through his design process and produce numerous sketches and studies. Lacking a background in the design of performance spaces did not deter him, and, as Jack Perry Brown points out, he instead brought his experience as a theater-goer to bear on his design. Brown observes that the building users in fact were part of the theater, from the time they entered the building to their experience as an audience member in the auditorium. In a sense all of Kahn's work was theatrical; he reveled in the idea of a building's plan unfolding gradually for the visitor, of a choreographed procession through layers of space, and of the invisible hand of the director (designer) as experienced through the framing of views. Undoubtedly this small theater, for Kahn, brought together all of his interests and passions, and as such it is somewhat more understandable that he was not willing to rush or to compromise.

There are a large number of archival drawings of the theater from the late 1960s; looking at these as a group, several themes emerge: a commitment to arched openings, both on the building exterior and interior, and particularly as an entrance motif (Figures 11-14 show a range of options, with something close to the final arrangement exhibited in the September 1969 drawing); an unwavering devotion to the idea of a stage balcony, or "Actor's House;" and of course the design of the ultimate "servant" and "served" spaces: the violin within the violin case, as Kahn referred to the auditorium.

Kahn's final concept for the theater began to come together in 1968; as Project Coordinator Anthony Pellecchia recalled:

Around 1968 the program was reduced to two buildings, a theater and a fine arts school. I was made the project coordinator for the project starting that same year. In the end only the theater would be realized. Due to the closeness of the site to the neighboring railway lines there was a concern to isolate the theater. This need led Kahn to the concept of a building within a building, 'the violin in the violin case.' This became an architectural concept of significant influence throughout the global architecture community.<sup>31</sup>

The violin – the auditorium itself – was to be constructed with simple, unadorned concrete walls and ceiling. It would sit within a brick masonry enclosure (the violin case). A section drawing dated February 12, 1968 (Figure 15) shows this relationship; Carla Yanni offers that "the violin/violin case idea was simply a musical referent for Kahn's longstanding interest in 'served' and 'servant' spaces."<sup>32</sup> The case served to isolate the auditorium acoustically.

A 1968 sketch of the auditorium (Figure 16) shows Kahn considering the form of the stage balcony, showing it with an arched opening; another undated sketch (Figure 17) of the auditorium shows a triangular balcony, the form it would ultimately take. Despite Kahn's enthusiasm for this feature, it seems the client never fully grasped its utility; it was one of the items identified by Latz in his November 29, 1968 letter to Kahn that in the committee's view could be reduced or removed from the plans.<sup>33</sup> Kahn was, however, committed to keeping it,

<sup>30</sup> G. Irving Latz, 2<sup>nd</sup> to Louis I. Kahn, 29 November 1968, AU Archives.

<sup>31</sup> A. Pellecchia to Susan Mendenhall.

<sup>32</sup> Yanni, 350.

<sup>33</sup> G. Irving Latz, 2<sup>nd</sup>, President, to Louis I. Kahn.

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noting that “this feature of the stage is symbolic of the presence of the Actor’s House when it is used, and I do believe it will be in ways yet not predictable being so dependent on who and what qualities a director envisions. Ways will be found to make it acoustically effective.”<sup>34</sup> The stage balcony remained in the plans. It was a highly unusual feature, but one that set Kahn’s theater apart and one that he was committed to keeping.

## CONSTRUCTION

After more than ten years of planning, no part of Fort Wayne’s new Fine Arts Center had been constructed. An article by Marjorie Barnhart for Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, published January 1, 1970, asked “What About Culture Boom of 1960s.” Barnhart reflected that “ten years ago, we were going to have one of the very first Fine Arts Centers in the country....Our buildings were going to inspire the masses around the world.”<sup>35</sup> The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette, later that same month, reported that the Fine Arts Foundation still planned to put the proposed 767-seat theater out to bid to meet a March 1 deadline.<sup>36</sup>

By this time, in the early 1970s, at what would be the end of his career given his untimely death in 1974, Kahn was also extremely busy with other commissions, including the design for the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas (completed 1972) and a second museum for Yale University (New Haven, CT), the Yale Center for British Art (completed posthumously in 1974).

There was one final push to reduce the plans for the theater prior to bidding to bring the total closer to the budgeted \$1.9 million. The design drawings were finalized March 1, 1970, and put out to bid. Mechanical and electrical bids were received on April 21 and the general contractor bids were received on April 28. Hagerman Construction Company was awarded the contract for \$1.9 million dollars and the project was scheduled to be complete by 1972.<sup>37</sup>

Construction finally began on June 1, 1970. Newspaper photos documented the construction progress, beginning with the groundbreaking ceremony held on June 2, 1970. The construction process was not entirely smooth, however; a letter from the foundation lawyers to Anthony Pellecchia (Kahn’s Project Manager) in August 1970 expressed frustration with Kahn’s office in their delays to deliver working drawings. Milford Miller, then Executive Director of the Fine Arts Foundation, continued to express dismay with the delivery of drawings through the end of 1970. Another point of contention with Kahn’s office was their refusal to accept extruded aluminum windows although it would save money.<sup>38</sup> It was clear throughout the design and construction process that once Kahn had made decisions regarding design and materials, he was very unlikely to compromise, regardless of the opinions of the foundation or the cost.

The progress of construction was delayed somewhat in the summer of 1971 due to labor strikes. By September 1971, the exterior walls of the dressing wing were complete. In October 1971, the 118-foot-long prestressed tee-beams were each carefully lifted into place.<sup>39</sup> The beams, provided by Masolite Concrete Products, Inc, were designed with a six-and-a-half-inch arch in order to provide roof drainage. Standard roofing material was

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Pellecchia to Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation.

<sup>35</sup> M. Barnhart, “What About Culture Boom of 1960’s,” *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, 1 January 1970, 6B.

<sup>36</sup> “Foundation Still Plans on Theater,” *The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, 22 January 1970.

<sup>37</sup> Industrial Piping and Engineering were the mechanical contractors and H & W Electric Company was the electrical contractor.

<sup>38</sup> Milford Miller to Anthony Pellecchia, 30 December 1970, AU Archives.

<sup>39</sup> “Fine Arts 25 Ton Ts ‘Going Up,” *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, 24 October 1971.

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A coat of paint had to be applied to the cast concrete ceiling of the auditorium which came out of the formwork stained and “full of blowholes that no amount of cleaning and patching would help its brutal appearance.”<sup>40</sup> While the transverse air supply ducts were cast in concrete, the main longitudinal air supply duct was ordinary lined steel metal duct. Outlets below the seating provided for heating and air conditioning.

The lighting for the new theater, designed by theater designer George C. Izenour, was deemed revolutionary, making use of a new system that employed 60 dimmers, each to control a light or series of lights that could provide a range of intensities. Izenour’s system made use of IBM-type punch cards and was known as the Izenour Reader and Recorder Pre-Set System.<sup>41</sup> The new Performing Arts Theater was one of the first two theaters in the world to use this system; the other theater was at Yale University.<sup>42</sup>

Kahn cared deeply about the construction process and the character of the materials with which he worked. The reinforced concrete, faceted wall construction of the theater exhibits the honesty and integrity of the process of making it. The formwork, the key holes, even the construction drawings indicated “surface imperfections permitted.” Kahn stated, in what could be taken as a testament to a Brutalist aesthetic:

In order to give the concrete the very primitive look that it must have, when it is only beginning to show its face on earth, so to speak, you must show all the means of making it. The holes you see are what keep the forms together so that you can pour inside them. An artist always makes apparent how he makes things. He never veneers anything.<sup>43</sup>

Kahn also “explicitly integrat(ed) mechanical systems with structure”<sup>44</sup> as seen in the construction of the transverse light bridges of the auditorium ceiling which incorporate lighting and air supply ducts. Of the construction of the transverse ceiling beam light bridges in the auditorium, George Izenour wrote that, “no amount of reason could persuade Kahn” to use light weight cement plaster for the auditorium ceiling in place of cast in place concrete.<sup>45</sup> Carpeting was installed in the auditorium in January 1973.<sup>46</sup>

The final cost of the new theater was \$4.5 million, more than double the targeted amount of \$1.9 million. Even with the cost increases, Kahn ultimately did not get his entrance court, the synergy that would have come from multiple buildings with interrelated uses, or even a formal, processional space to prepare the visitor to leave the city and enter the theater’s precinct.

## THE THEATER IN USE

The first play in the new theater was “Butterflies are Free,” with performances beginning on February 23, 1973.

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<sup>40</sup> Izenour, 437.

<sup>41</sup> None of this system remains. Use of the IBM punch card controller was discontinued in the late 1980s or early 1990s and the dimmers were replaced in the mid-1990s. The only original dimmers that remain control the lobby/auditorium lighting and not the stage lighting.

<sup>42</sup> M. Barnhart, “New Stage to Really Light Up,” *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 8 March 1971.

<sup>43</sup> “Architect Kahn Answers Questions,” *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, October 27, 1973.

<sup>44</sup> Frampton, 244.

<sup>45</sup> Izenour, 437.

<sup>46</sup> “Carpet Goes Down in Arts Theatre,” *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 4 January 1973.

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The Director of Civic Theatre, Richard Casey, was quoted in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* regarding his initial impressions of the new building:

I find the interior dynamic and those lines and planes exciting...The public traditionally resists change...They are used to thinking of theaters with marble floors and lots of glop like painted plaster cupids. But I have been taught to believe that the focus of a theater should be on what is happening on the stage. Mr. Kahn's décor is unobtrusive. I find it dynamic and original. The severity doesn't bother me a bit. I find it warm and interesting. Once the public becomes used to it, most people will like it.<sup>47</sup>

The member organizations of the Fine Arts Foundation had priority for the use of the building, although the foundation intended it to function as a public building and it was designed to be used as a community resource. Thus, the building's name was changed from the Fort Wayne Theatre for the Performing Arts to the "Community Arts Center" in 1973. It was felt that the new name better reflected the building's main purpose.<sup>48</sup>

Although performances were staged in the building beginning in February 1973, it did not officially open until the week of September 30-October 6, with a planned schedule of free events.<sup>49</sup> The first such event was a performance of "Death of a Salesman" by the Civic Theatre. Each day opened with a 'parade of performance' on the steps of the nearby City-County Building, and the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra offered afternoon and evening performances. Other events ranged from building tours to open rehearsals by the Fort Wayne Ballet, Civic Theatre, the Civic Youtheatre, and the Philharmonic. Local churches and schools also participated in the opening week by staging events of their own.

The dedication ceremony took place on October 5, 1973, with John B. Hightower, head of the Associated Councils of the Arts and former director of the Museum of Modern Art (New York) as dedication speaker.<sup>50</sup> Hightower expressed his respect for Kahn's work, noting that he considered Kahn "the greatest living architect in the world today."<sup>51</sup> As one-time head of the New York State Arts Council, Hightower had also participated in the opening of the Rochester NY Unitarian Church designed by Kahn. Hightower spoke on a "Strategy for the Arts," explaining how his association (comprising all the state arts councils as well as approximately 250 community arts councils) would advocate for and work with local, state and federal arts programs.<sup>52</sup> Artist Robert Indiana attended, and Roger Manges, dean of Indiana University/Purdue University Fort Wayne and president of the foundation, made opening remarks.

Kahn also participated in the dedication events in person, arriving in late morning on October 5 and making remarks at noon in the theater. He answered a range of questions from the public regarding the building's design, which were memorialized in an article in *The Fort Wayne News Sentinel*.<sup>53</sup> He described the building: "It's a brick and block building. The blocks are used for insulation purposes in all the walls where arches are not. Brick is used on the outside. Where the arch occurs, you see the brick come through because the arch would not be

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<sup>47</sup> M. Barnhart, "New Kahn Theater Excites Casey," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 15 February 1973.

<sup>48</sup> "Theatre Gets New Name," AU Archives.

<sup>49</sup> M. Barnhart, "Art Center Group Plan Week-Long Dedication," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 2 August 1973.

<sup>50</sup> "Arts Council Head Will be Center Dedication Speaker," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 26 September 1973.

<sup>51</sup> M. Barnhart, "Arts, Kahn Noon Dedication Topics," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 5 October 1973.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "Architect Kahn Answers Questions," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 27 October 1973.

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true if it were just paper thin. It's all expressive of the way it's made. I offer space."<sup>54</sup>

When asked if he intended for the building to have a face/theatrical mask, he responded no, that the façade evolved as a solution to supporting the principal arch; the concrete lintel that appears as part of the face resulted. As for his intentions for the landscape, he envisioned a circular drive and a tall fountain to "screen out the clutter" (the buildings across the street). One person asked him to explain why the walls would not be finished any further. Kahn replied "I think they are very finished. I would say concrete is miraculous material. You are looking at molten stone, stone which is able to take whatever shape you wish. It is a most worthy material. It would be criminal to cover it with anything." To the question "why are there two roofs," Kahn responded:

The concept I had from the very beginning was that the auditorium should have a sound-making shape. I call it a violin. I call all outside, a violin case. The best case doesn't touch the violin at all, the instrument is sort of suspended. Not a single pipe or anything which would cause distractions of sound touch the auditorium. It is suspended in the case. The roof you see is not the roof of the building. There's a roof beyond it.<sup>55</sup>

Kahn further explained that the auditorium walls were not merely decorative, but rather that the interior was faceted for reasons of acoustics: "What you must do is crumple it up like a piece of paper, so the sound is homogenized."<sup>56</sup>

Responses to the new Community Arts Center were mostly positive. Cheryl Josse wrote to the Editor of *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*,

I should like to commend architect Louis I. Kahn and Fort Wayne on the Community Center for the Performing Arts. At first, I thought it was ugly and unfinished, but after giving it a little thought and consideration, I found that it is really beautiful. The world it (*sic*) too much marble and glass. We need a change from all of this. The Fine Arts Building is a fine example of how beauty can be expressed without all of the fancy trimmings.<sup>57</sup>

However, George Izenour, the theater consultant for the project, criticized the design process and the resulting structure in his 1977 publication:

This very conventional and expensive little 'court' theater could have been designed and built in half the time and at half the cost but for Kahn's agonizing over its 'honesty,' 'integrity,' and a phony rationale that somehow the interior structure was the instrument (God only knows what kind) while the exterior structure functioned separately as its case in this otherwise perfectly straightforward proscenium theater...High-powered, romantic nonsense?<sup>58</sup>

Only five months after the completion of the theater, Kahn died on March 17, 1974, in New York City en route

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> C. Josse, "Arts Building Fine," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 12 November 1973.

<sup>58</sup> Izenour, 437.

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from India. His work in Bangladesh and at the Yale Center for British Art remained under construction.

### HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Theaters and performing arts spaces designed and built in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s represent a range of Modern expressions. A few, such as the Sydney Opera House (Jorn Utzen, 1973), have been recognized for their outstanding historical or architectural significance, while others, such as Lincoln Center, are world renowned as important cultural landscapes. Important pieces of this heritage have already been lost, however, including John Johansen's Mummers Theater in Oklahoma City, OK (1970) and Perkins & Will's Edens Theater in Northbrook, IL (1963).

In general, this period did not witness a high volume of theatre construction, which makes those that remain even more valuable. Central to this trend was a growing preference for recorded drama viewed via the television and a population shift from urban to suburban areas that reduced audience numbers and slowed the growth of new venues.

Some of the themes that define the Modern-era theater include experimentation with form and the centralized plan type (such as Harry Weese's Arena Stage or Frank Lloyd Wright's Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium), which was seen as more democratic and provided greater audience involvement and participation; the importance of colleges and universities as patrons of both Modern design and the performing arts (examples include Edward Durrell Stone's Beckman Auditorium at Caltech or Minoru Yamasaki's DeRoy Hall at Wayne State University); and urban renewal and the development of the cultural island.

Kahn's work in Fort Wayne is a strong and interesting example of the cultural island theme that was exemplified across the country beginning in the late 1950s and reaching its zenith in the 1960s, defined by large scale urban renewal that resulted in a "cultural complex" in the heart of the city. Stylistically, these cultural complexes often looked to the Modern Classical for inspiration and shared certain qualities, like the creation of a distinctive precinct, raised up from and set apart from the rest of the urban environment.

Fort Wayne's theater consultant, George Izenour, recalled "This project, like Milwaukee, Wichita, and many others of similar intent, was part of a general urban renewal scheme where what was torn down was in many ways kinder and more humane than much of the mock heroic architecture commissioned to replace it."<sup>59</sup>

Lincoln Center (Photo S6) was one of the first, followed in quick succession by the LA Music Center. Lincoln Center opened in 1962, more than a decade before Kahn's work in Fort Wayne would be complete. A group of civic leaders including philanthropist John D. Rockefeller III guided the project, which was part of Robert Moses' larger program of urban renewal during the 1950s and 60s. The architects selected were at the forefront of the profession at midcentury, and some competed with Kahn for the Fort Wayne commission: Wallace K. Harrison, Eero Saarinen, Philip Johnson, Max Abramovitz. The making of the New York City arts complex included the still-controversial razing of a number of buildings (an entire neighborhood known as San Juan Hill) and the creation of a distinct zone, raised up from the darker, older city that surrounded. It has been an active, thriving part of the city's cultural life since its completion, and although not officially landmarked, Lincoln Center is widely

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<sup>59</sup> Izenour, 318. Interestingly, as urban renewal was underway in Fort Wayne, as in other cities, there was also a movement to ensure that historic places and neighborhoods would be more thoughtfully considered in the larger planning process. Fort Wayne adopted its first historic preservation ordinance in November 1965, making it the first such ordinance in Indiana.



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viewed as an important architectural component of New York City's history.<sup>60</sup>

The Los Angeles Music Center represented the singular vision of cultural patron Dorothy Chandler, who began planning and fundraising in the mid-1950s (Photo S7). It was to be a focal point for the downtown, and culturally, it was meant to demonstrate that Los Angeles was not just an entertainment capital, but also an intellectual capital and could, at least on some level, compete with New York City. The architect Welton Beckett was hired, and the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion opened first, in 1964, followed shortly by the Ahmanson Theatre and the Mark Taper Forum. The complex had a spatial organization that was similar to that at Lincoln Center; it stood at the top of Bunker Hill, on the edge of downtown Los Angeles, separate and distinct, with a large open plaza edged with thoroughly modern (yet classically inspired) palaces for the arts.<sup>61</sup>

Houston created its own, less cohesive, cultural district in Caudill Rowlett Scott's Jesse H. Jones Hall (completed 1966) and the Alley Theatre (Ulrich Franzen, 1968), a distinctive example of the Brutalist style and now a designated City of Houston landmark (2014). Jones Hall, like the buildings at Lincoln Center and the LA Music Center, features a light-colored (in this case Italian marble) exterior and is an imposing, multi-story building defined by its modern interpretation of classical design (Photo S8). The Houston Theater District has grown over time to incorporate a seventeen-block area in the downtown, and supports nine professional performing arts organizations, making it one of the largest cohesive cultural complexes in the country.

The creation of Washington DC's Kennedy Center is somewhat different from other examples of the cultural complex phenomenon in that it was created by national legislation in 1958, with fundraising spearheaded by President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy (Photo S9). The development of the center took on even greater importance following the assassination of President Kennedy, and it was designated a living memorial. The location selected was on the banks of the Potomac in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood, outside of the city center, and the large, white, columned complex was opened in the fall of 1971. The Kennedy Center's website notes: "The occasion enabled Washington to begin earning a reputation as a cultural hub as well as a political one; as *The New York Times* wrote in a front-page article the next morning, 'The capital of this nation finally strode into the cultural age tonight with the spectacular opening of the \$70 million [Kennedy Center]...a gigantic marble temple to music, dance, and drama on the Potomac's edge.'"<sup>62</sup>

In addition to being part of the cultural island movement of the 1960s, Kahn's work in Fort Wayne, despite the fact that what was built was only a fragment of a larger planned complex, is one of the most mature expressions of the principles that he explored and developed throughout his career. The concept of the theater, and the design process itself, was grounded in history while being modern in its execution. Kahn's Beaux-Arts training was revealed through the creation of plan hierarchies, a sense of balance or symmetry, and clear circulation. Kahn's concept of "servant" and "served" spaces, first fully acknowledged in the 1955 Trenton Bath House, are

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<sup>60</sup> Lincoln Center was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 by the New York State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO).

<sup>61</sup> The Los Angeles Music Center is identified as a contributing element of The Los Angeles Civic Center Historic District, which was evaluated in 2009 as part of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Regional Connector Transit Corridor project. It was determined eligible through the Section 106 and CEQA review processes for the National Register and California Register under Criteria A/C and 1/3, respectively.

<sup>62</sup> "History," The Kennedy Center website, <https://www.kennedy-center.org/our-story/history/>, accessed 23 March 2023. The Kennedy Center is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places but has been determined eligible for listing.

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at their most effective here, with the entire auditorium – the heart of the project – essentially served by the support spaces that encircle it. His reliance on simple materials such as concrete and wood, simply and honestly presented; and the framing of vistas through deep and thoughtfully placed openings that emphasized the building's connection with nature and encouraged the movement of natural light through the space are themes that recur over and over again in his work.

All of these themes are repeated in his National Assembly Building of Bangladesh in Dhaka (completed in 1982), one of his projects undertaken during the same period that he was at work in Fort Wayne but still in progress at the time of his death (Photo S5). The two projects share much in common, but in particular the monumentality brought by the long expanses of masonry, a playful use of geometry on both the interior and exterior, and the way in which the light is filtered through the geometry to become one of the principal building "materials" used to shape the space.

The theater is also significant within Kahn's oeuvre as his only purpose-built performance venue. Kahn's only other auditorium space is the 200-seat lecture hall that he designed within the Yale Center for British Art. Design work began in 1970, as Kahn was nearing completion of the Fort Wayne project, and was certainly influenced by all that he had learned during that effort. Both auditoria make use of cast-in-place concrete walls, and although originally intended for the presentation of slides and art historical lectures, its uses expanded to include film, drama, music, and dance.<sup>63</sup> But this theater was one component of a larger commission, and was not the focus of that commission; Kahn's innovations in this project were centered on the display of an important collection of art; the lecture space was secondary.

The Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre is also Kahn's only major work in the American Midwest. With his early partner Oscar Stonorov, he contributed to the design of industrial housing in Willow Run, Michigan in 1942, but his other commissions in the Midwest were never built: a library for Washington University in St. Louis (1956) and an office tower for Kansas City (1966-1974).<sup>64</sup>

While Kahn's singularity of vision was unique and inimitable, his work in Fort Wayne – like his work in Philadelphia or Bangladesh – was studied thoughtfully by the next generation and his theories inspired a range of designers in both Europe and America. By the 1980s, a decade after the work in Fort Wayne was completed, some of the larger performing arts centers had adopted the concept of constructing a building within a building for better acoustic isolation; they are more contemporary versions of the "violin within the violin case." The Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall (San Francisco), designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Pietro Belluschi (opened in 1980) or The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (Philadelphia), designed by Rafael Vinoly (opened in 2001) are significant examples of this approach in the United States. In Europe, Rafael Moneo's L'Auditori (Barcelona, completed in 1999) overcomes the acoustical challenges of its urban setting through the separation of exterior volume and interior space. Moshe Safdie's Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City (completed 2011) envelops two separate concert halls with a shared lobby, and brings Kahn's concept into the twenty-first century. Of the project, Safdie, who apprenticed with Kahn in 1962 when Kahn was beginning his work in Fort Wayne, noted "Each hall reads as a distinct volume; metaphorically evoking a musical instrument and visible through the glass shell."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> G. Knight, "The Yale Center for British Art: A Building Conservation," in *Louis I. Kahn The Permanence*, Docomomo Journal 58, 2018/01, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Brown.

<sup>65</sup> "Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts / Safdie Architects," *archdaily.com*,

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Thomas Hine authored an article in Fort Wayne News-Sentinel in March 1984, ten years (to the day) after Kahn's death, reflecting on the architect's significance and influence. He noted that at the time of his death, Kahn was "generally considered America's greatest living architect and one of the greatest architects anywhere."<sup>66</sup> With the passage of ten years, he observed that he had "joined the ranks of the past masters," and signs of a "revival" were evident: his work was being published in Japan and Europe, he was about to be the subject of the inaugural issues of a new Italian journal, and a significant multi-volume publication of his drawings was being planned by the University of Pennsylvania. Hine noted that formal evidence of his influence could be seen in the work of contemporary architects from Mario Botta to Michael Graves to Philip Johnson, but that the "philosophical dimensions" of his architecture were of another level: "It was as if everyone else were doing tool sheds and Kahn was working on the Pantheon. Some of Kahn's buildings have functional problems, but their expressive force has not diminished over the years. Only a few architects today even aspire to make buildings as rich and deeply considered as were Kahn's."<sup>67</sup>

### CURRENT AND PLANNED USE

The Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, known today as the Arts United Center, is an active presenting organization, housing numerous and varied performances in a 660+-seat auditorium. These spaces currently house musicals; dance and dance festivals; ballet, modern, stomp/step; youth theatre; meetings and community events; speakers/presentations; and orchestra.

In 2016, as Kahn's building approached fifty years of age, Arts United Center staff began to thoughtfully consider a program of renovation and restoration in order to improve patron experience, accessibility, and theatrical production. Planning work has been undertaken, with renovation, restoration, and a small program of expansion considered within the context of its important history and use. Plans are nearing completion and construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2024; the project will pursue historic tax credits and consequently undergo review by the Indiana State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service.

Planned improvements include a small addition to the east for Civic Theatre use (production shop, costume shop); an expanded loading area with new freight elevator; a new public entrance along the west façade to serve as a secondary entrance on non-event days; and a new connecting corridor at the west elevation to provide accessibility for front and back of house visitors and staff. The front entrance drive at the south will also be reconfigured to eliminate confusion and vehicular cross-traffic. On the interior, the front of house ticket booth, elevator, etc. will be renovated, as will the concession area, and within the auditorium, accessible seating will be provided. These improvements are not intended to significantly alter any of the spaces designed by Kahn

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<https://www.archdaily.com/151008/kauffman-center-for-the-performing-arts-moshe-safdie>, accessed 29 August 2024.

<sup>66</sup> T. Hine, "1984: Evidence of Kahn Revival," *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 17 March 1984, 9S.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. The Architectural Archives at the University of Pennsylvania includes Kahn's Fort Wayne work among his major built works: "Yale University Art Gallery; Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building, University of Pennsylvania; Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla, California; First Unitarian Church and School, Rochester, New York; Performing Arts Theater, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Eleanor Donnelley Erdman Hall, Bryn Mawr College; Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India; Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Library, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire; Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas; Yale Center for British Art." ("Kahn, Louis I.," Architectural Archives, Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania (<https://www.design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/collections/kahn-louis-i>), accessed 23 March 2023).

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or result in any fundamental changes to the original plan. The lighting approach, which is of great importance within the Kahn-designed spaces, is also being designed in keeping with the original intent envisioned by Kahn and Izenour.

Paul Edmondson, President and CEO of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, commended and supported the ongoing work of Arts United to preserve Kahn's Fort Wayne work, noting: "Louis Kahn is considered one of the United States' most influential twentieth century architects, known for a style combining Modernism with raw materiality and monumentalism."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> P.W. Edmondson to Susan Mendenhall, 13 April 2021, AU Archives.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark



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\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

\_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office  
\_\_\_ Other State agency  
\_\_\_ Federal agency  
\_\_\_ Local government  
\_\_\_ University  
X Other

Name of repository: Arts United Archives; Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Louis I. Kahn Collection

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 003-215-55247

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately .88 acres (less than one acre)

Use the UTM system

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 656512 | Northing: 4549478 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property includes the entirety of the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre as shown on the Boundary Map located in the Accompanying Documentation. The nominated property includes

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the entirety of the building and associated features at the north, south, east, and west elevations of the building. At the south, the nominated property incorporates the entrance plaza and driveways (a 147'1" by 213'3" plaza). At the east, the boundary is 44'5" off the east wall at the southern end of the building, and 11'1" off the east wall at the northern end of the building and the same distance from the east wall of the Boiler House. At the point where the boundary approaches the south wall of the eastern extension of the building, the boundary follows an east-west line 3' away from said wall. At the north, the nominated property incorporates the parking area to the north of the building, extending 64'7" from the north wall to the edge of the parking area. At the west, the boundary line is drawn 10'2" from the wall of the building at its southern end, and 24'7" from the wall of the building at its northern end to encompass existing walkways. At the northwest corner of the nominated property, the boundary line follows the existing property line.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire built resource (Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre) and site and landscape features at the north and west elevations that have been associated with the building throughout its history.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Meredith Arms Bzdak, PhD, Partner and Katherine Frey, Senior Associate  
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date: August 2024

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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## Photo Log

The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre

County and State: Allen, Indiana

Name of Photographer: Meredith Arms Bzdak

Date of Photographs: 28 November 2022

Location of Photograph Negative/CD: Indiana State Historic Preservation Office (Indiana Department of Natural Resources / Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology)

Photo locations are shown on Figures 4, 6, and 7 in the Accompanying Documentation.

Photo Number	Description of View
.0001	View of south and east elevations, looking northwest.
.0002	View of east elevation, looking northwest.
.0003	View of north elevation, looking southeast.
.0004	View of west elevation, looking east.
.0005	South (main) elevation, looking north; entry detail.
.0006	Lobby/box office looking west.
.0007	Grand staircase (east), looking north.
.0008	Auditorium, looking south from stage.
.0009	Transverse light bridge, looking east.
.0010	Stage balcony, looking northeast.
.0011	View of first floor green room, looking west.
.0012	Second floor gallery, looking east.
.0013	Second floor rehearsal hall with arched opening and oak door, looking northeast.

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

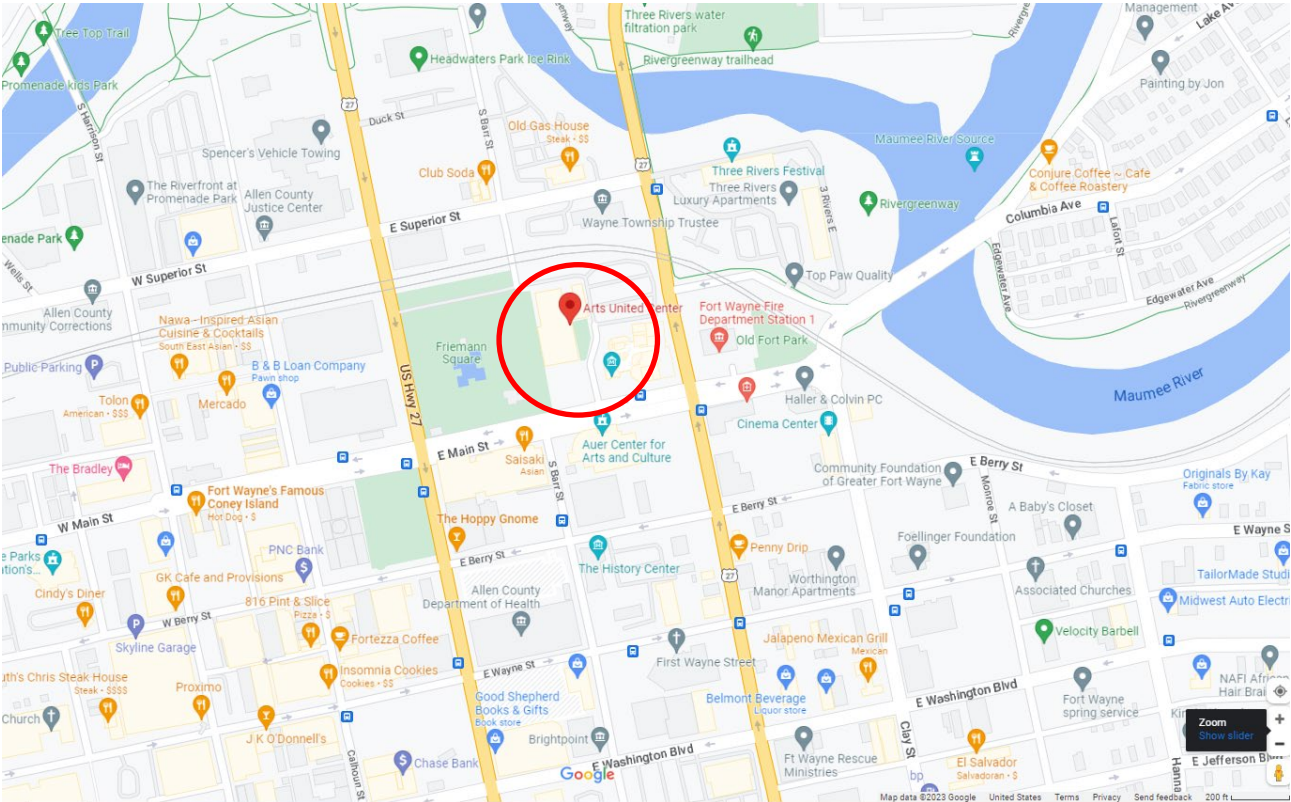


Figure 1. Location of Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theater (Allen County), Indiana. (Property circled.) (Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Arts+United+Center>, accessed 9 March 2023)

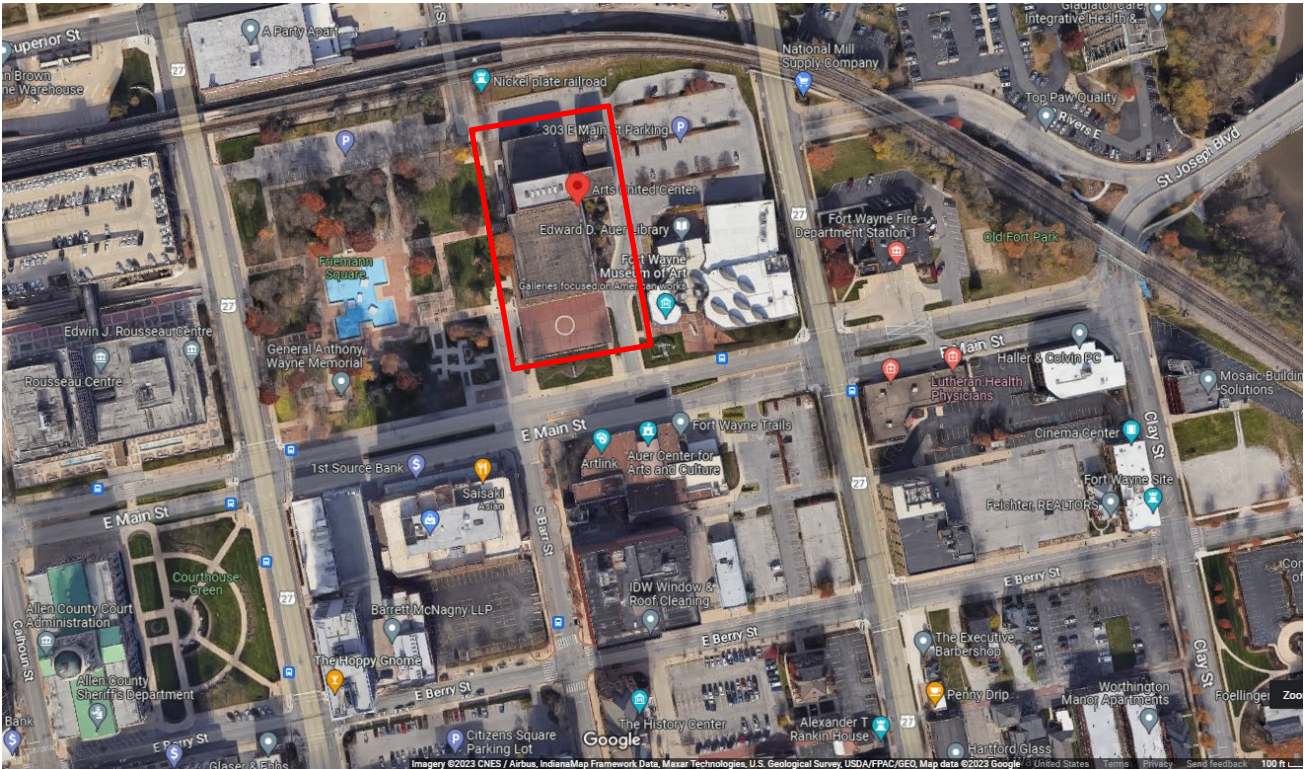
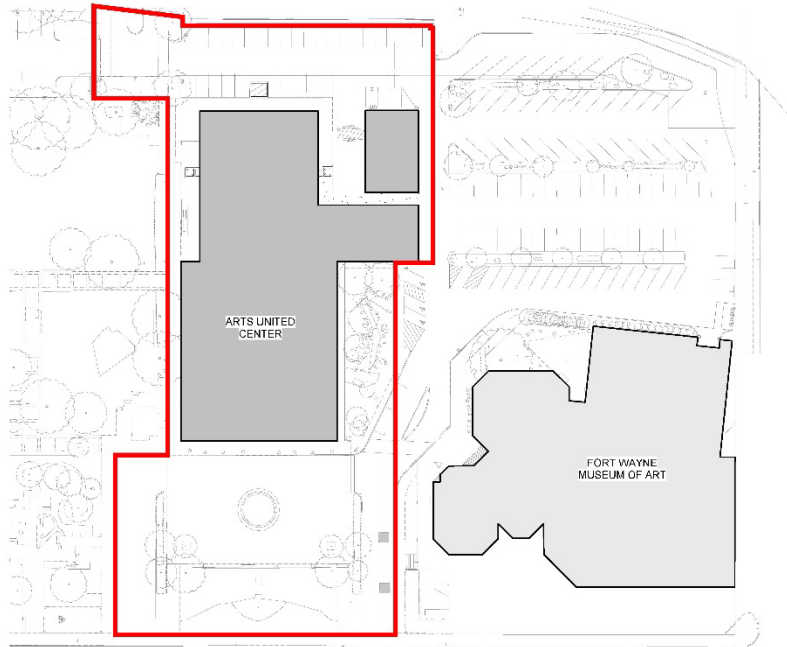


Figure 2. Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theater, aerial view with property outlined in red. (Source: Google Maps, <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Arts+United+Center>, accessed 9 March 2023)

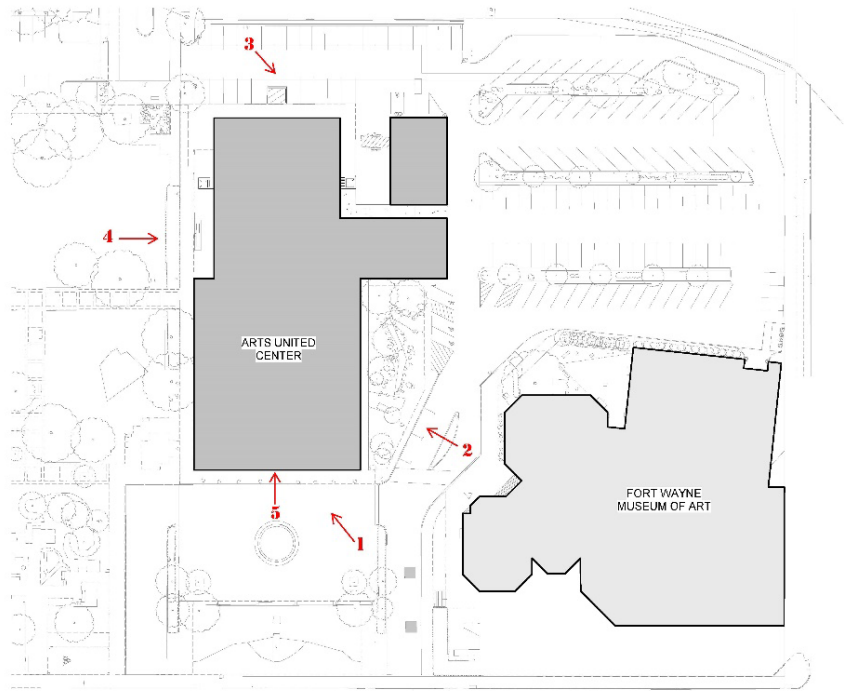


 **EXISTING SITE PLAN**  
1" = 60'-0"  
NORTH

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Figure 3. Site Plan and Boundary Map; nominated property outlined in red. (Source: MKM Architecture + Design.)



**EXISTING SITE PLAN**

1" = 60'-0"



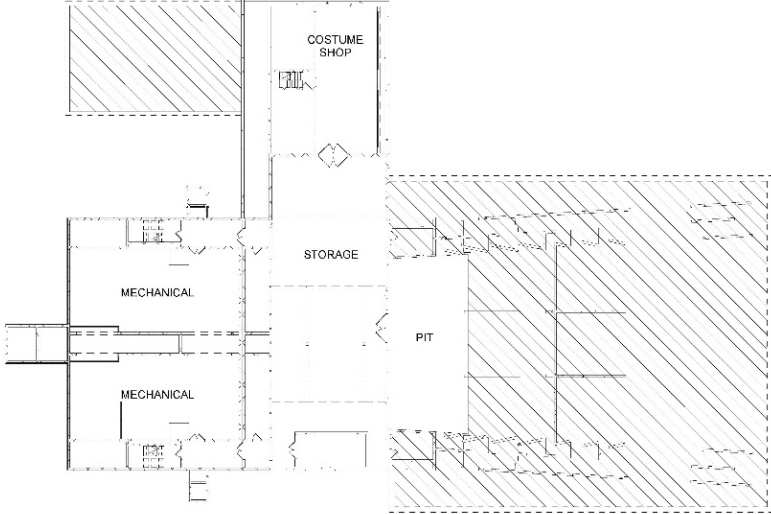
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Figure 4. Exterior Photo Key.





**EXISTING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN**  
1" = 30'-0"

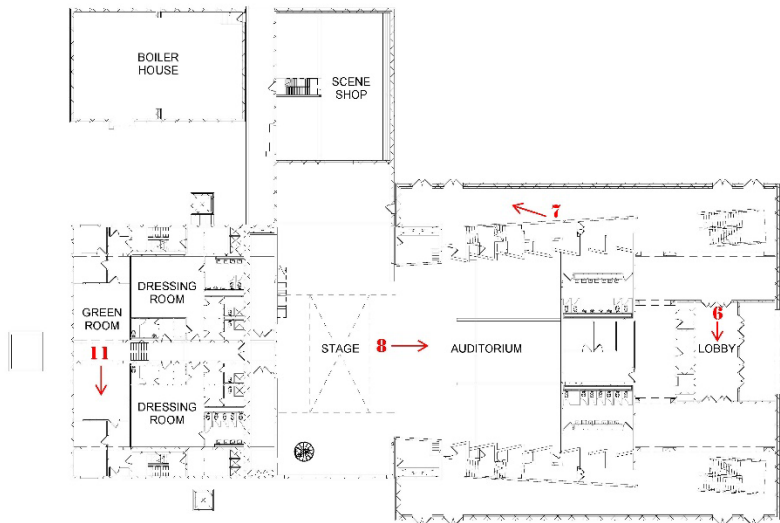


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Figure 5. Basement Floor Plan.



### EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1" = 30'-0"

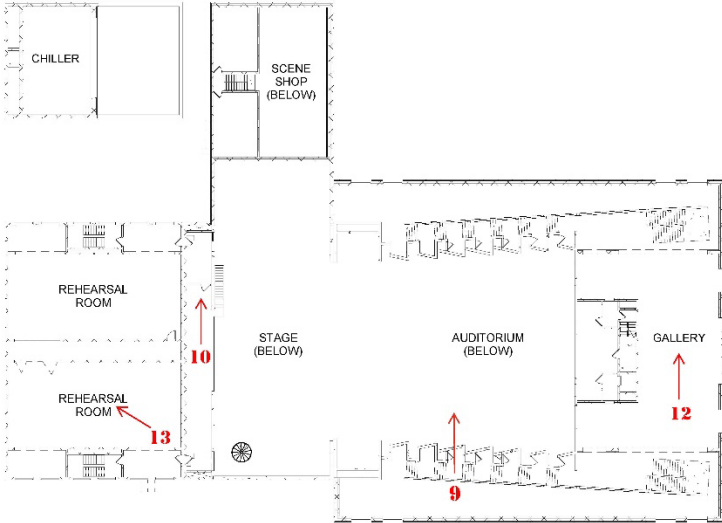


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Figure 6. First Floor Plan and Interior Photo Key.



 NORTH  
**EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
1" = 30'-0"



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Figure 7. Second Floor Plan and Interior Photo Key.

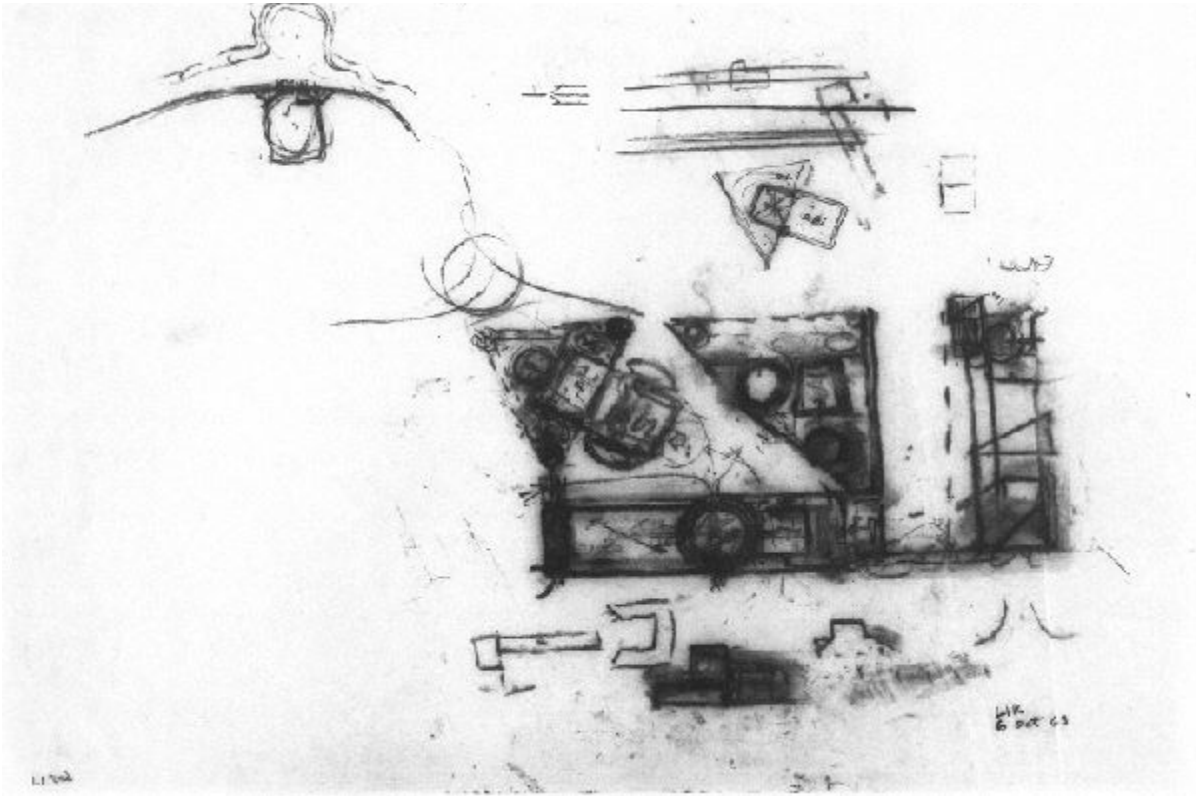


Figure 8. Louis I. Kahn, partial site plan and elevation, October 6, 1963. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

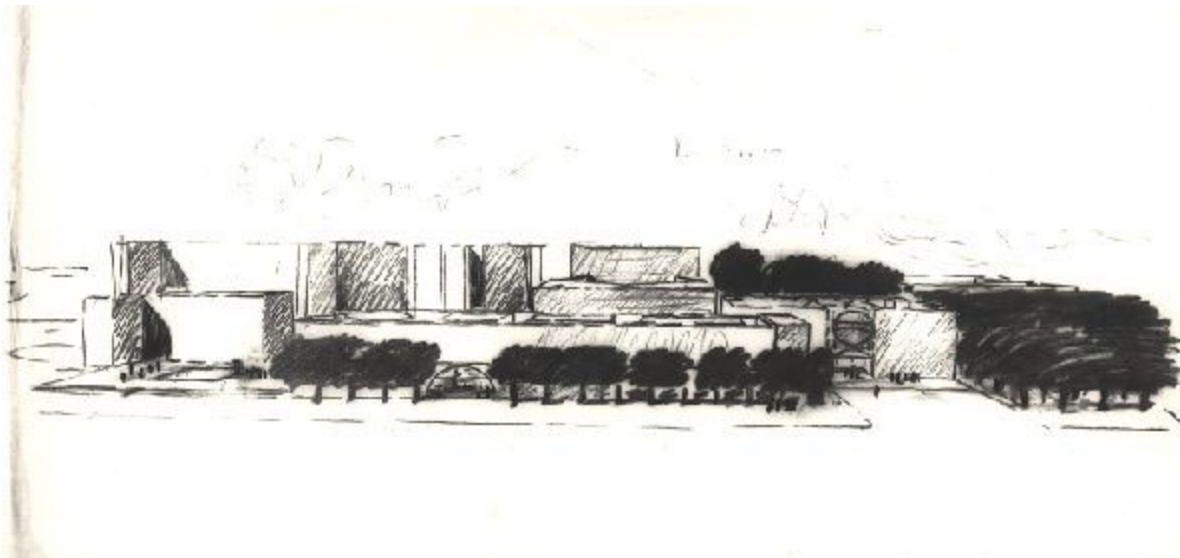


Figure 9. Louis I. Kahn, site perspective, undated. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)



Figure 10. Model of the Arts Center as planned (Theater of the Performing Arts shown as Number 4) printed in "A Home for the Fine Arts in Fort Wayne," a fundraising campaign brochure dating to 1964. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)

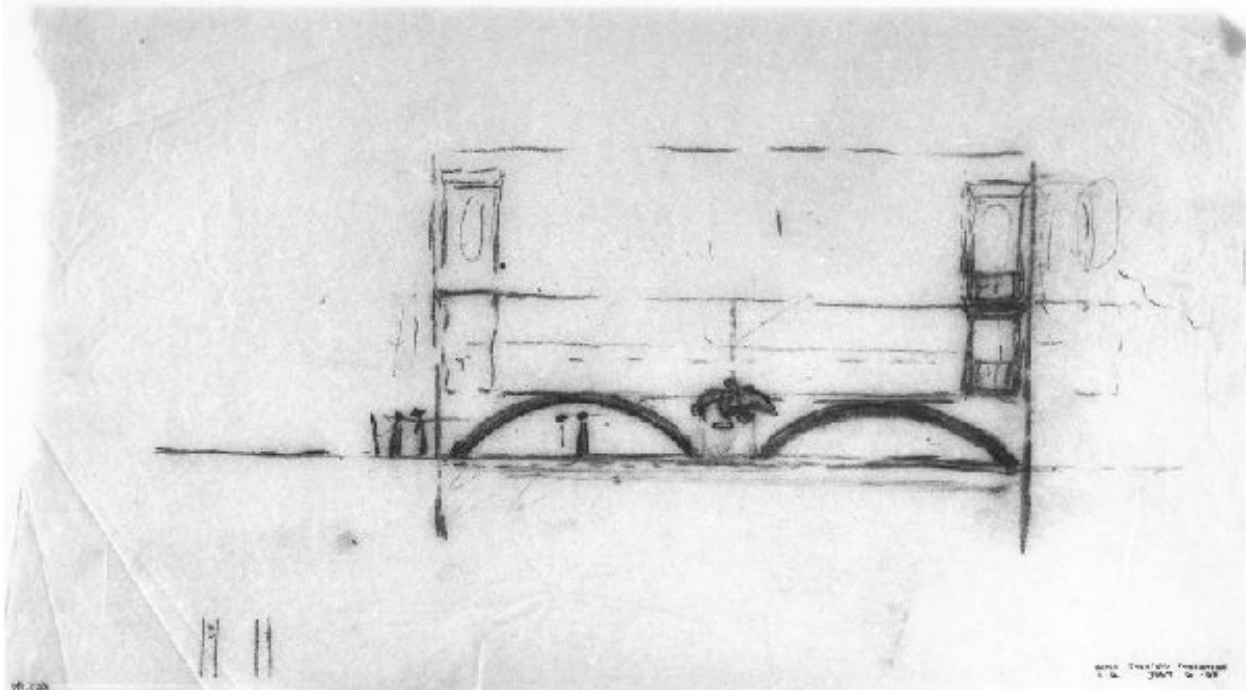


Figure 11. Louis I. Kahn, front elevation, July 6, 1967. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

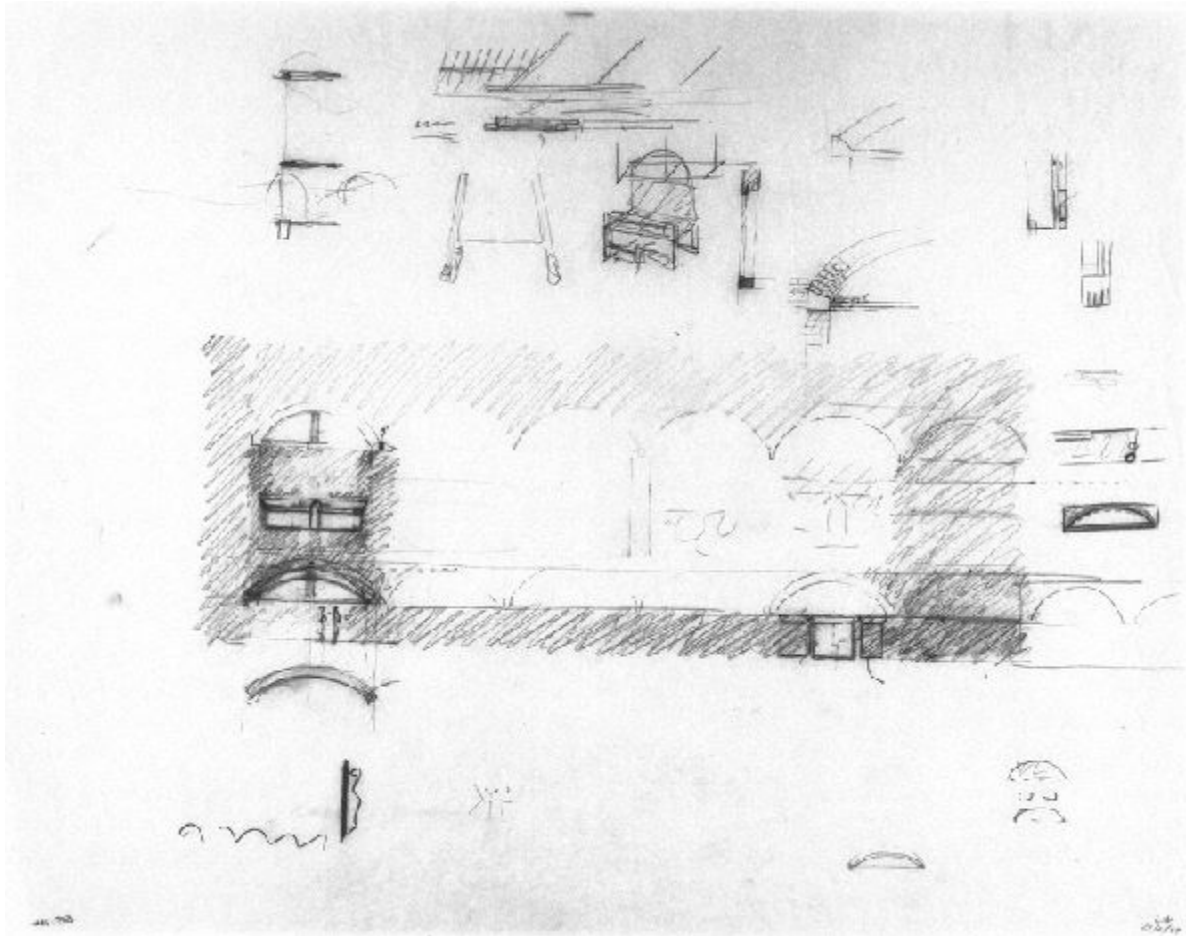


Figure 12. Louis I. Kahn, elevation, opening studies, detail, June 26, 1969. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

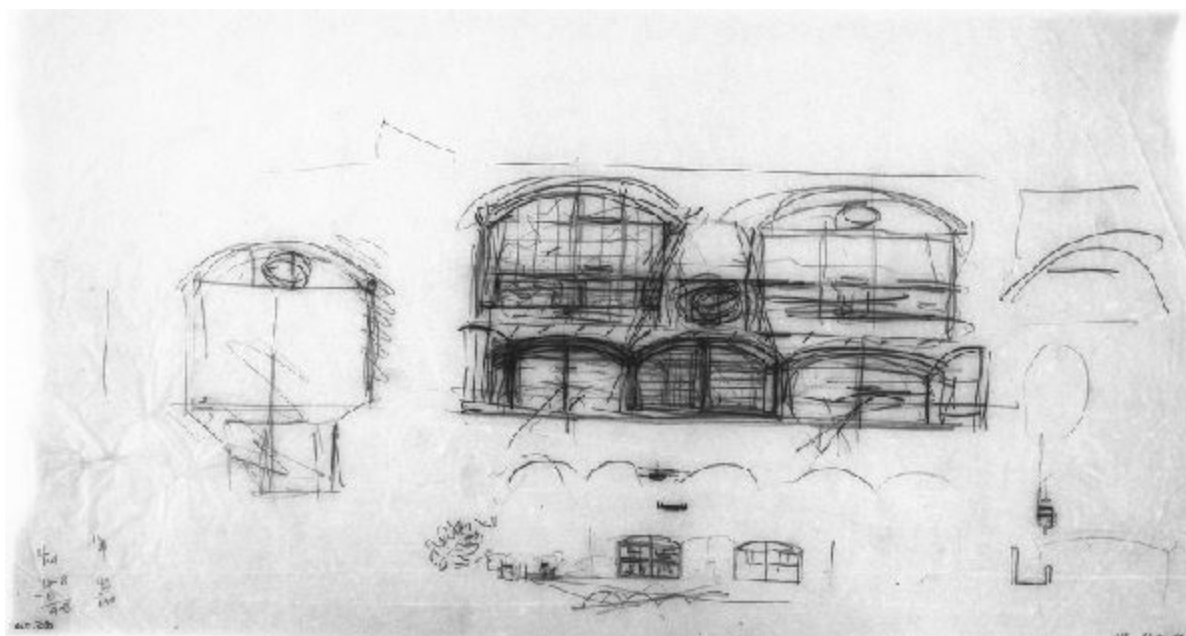


Figure 13. Louis I. Kahn, elevation, opening studies, August 1969. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

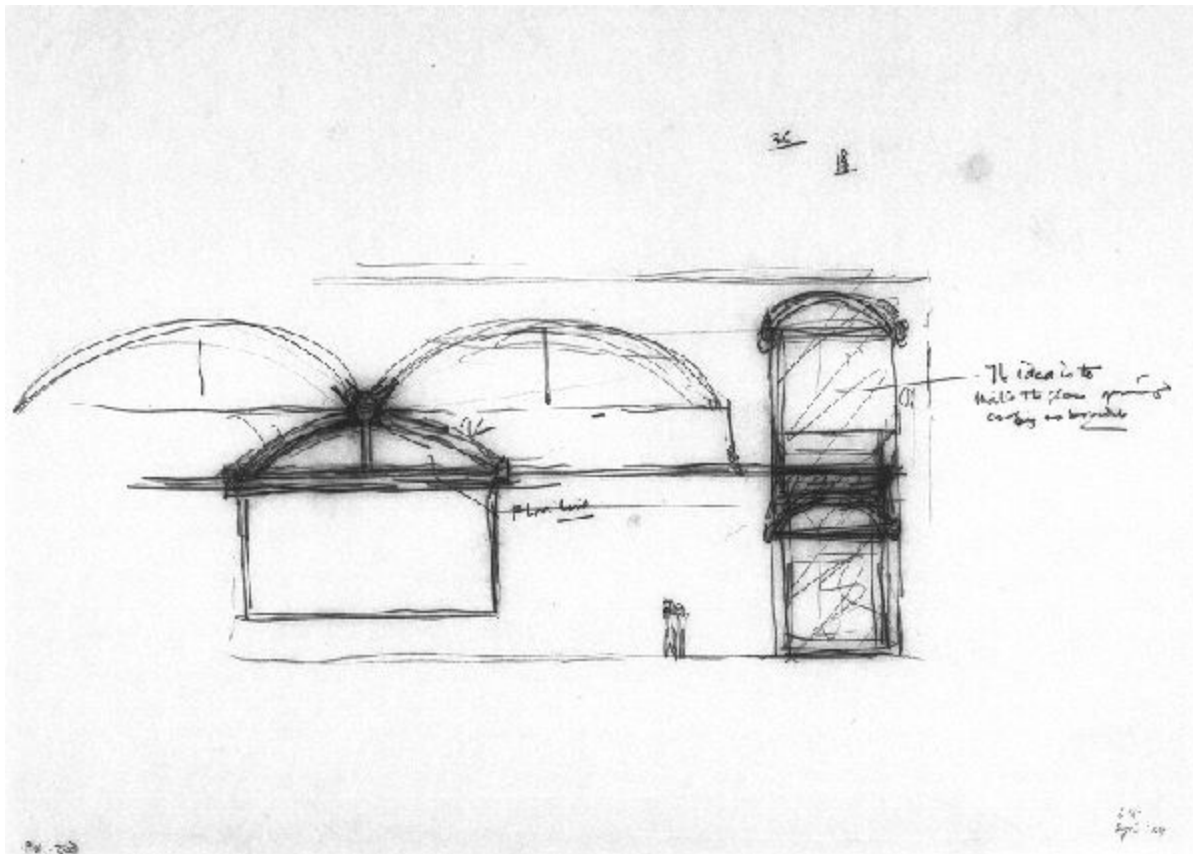


Figure 14. Louis I. Kahn, front elevation, September 1969. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

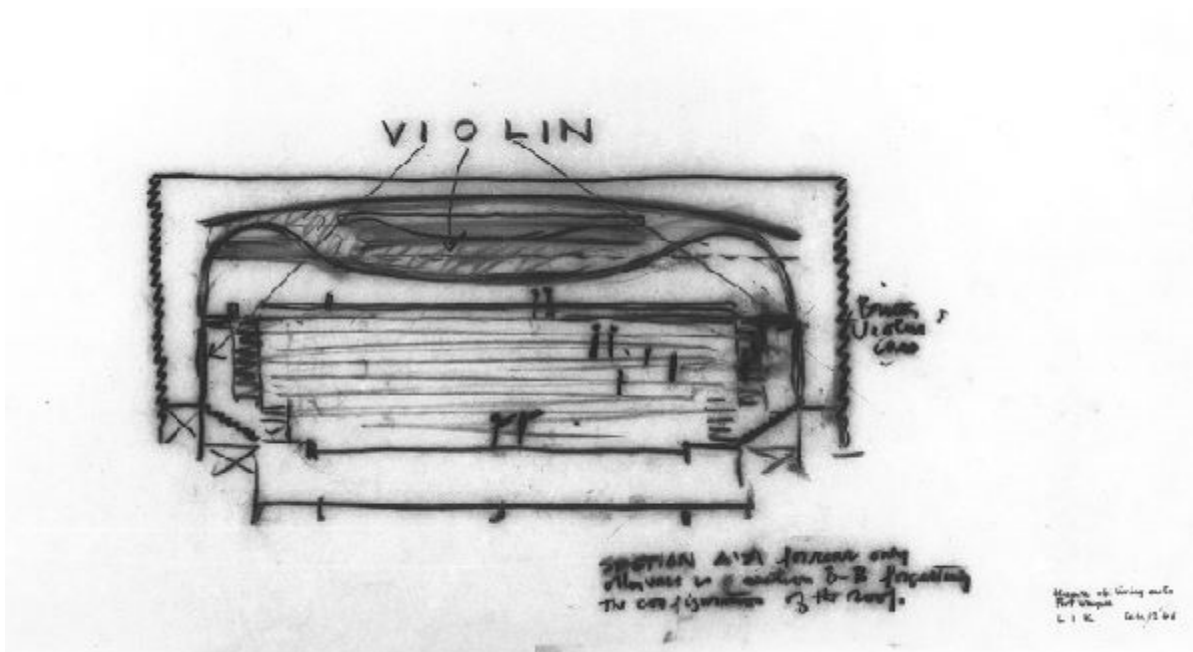


Figure 15. Louis I. Kahn, section (auditorium), February 12, 1968. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

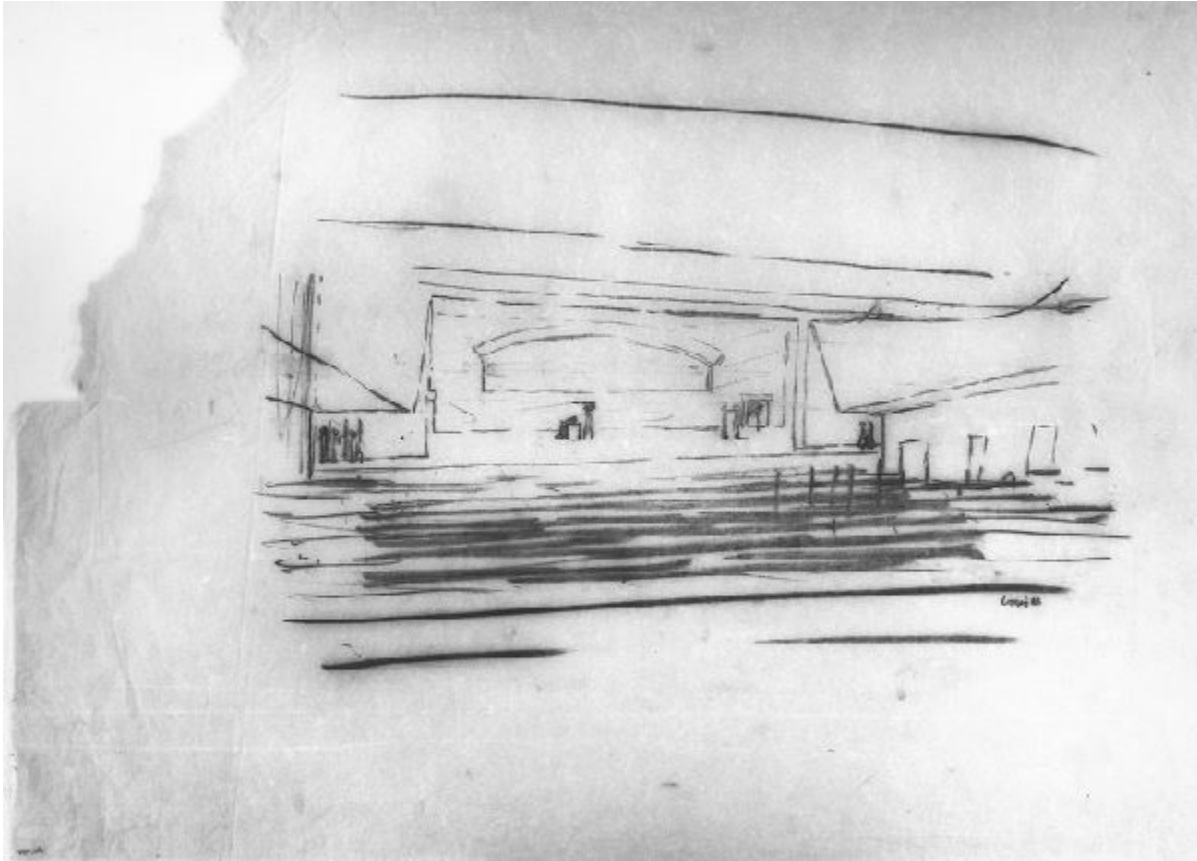


Figure 16. Louis I. Kahn, interior perspective (auditorium), 1968. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)

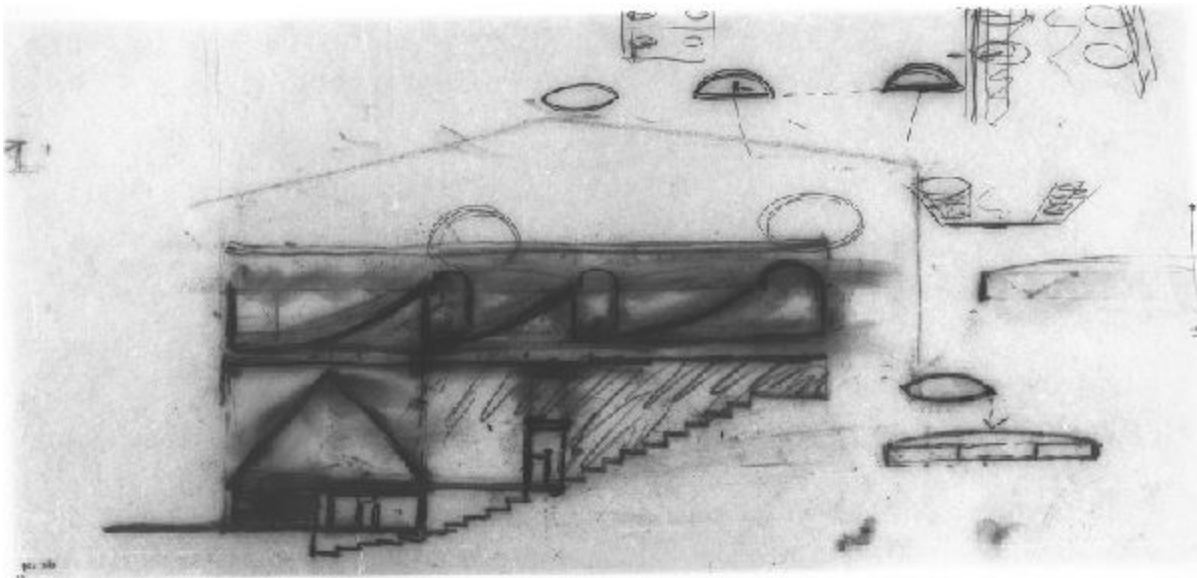


Figure 17. Louis I. Kahn, section (auditorium), undated. (Source: Louis I. Kahn Collection, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.)



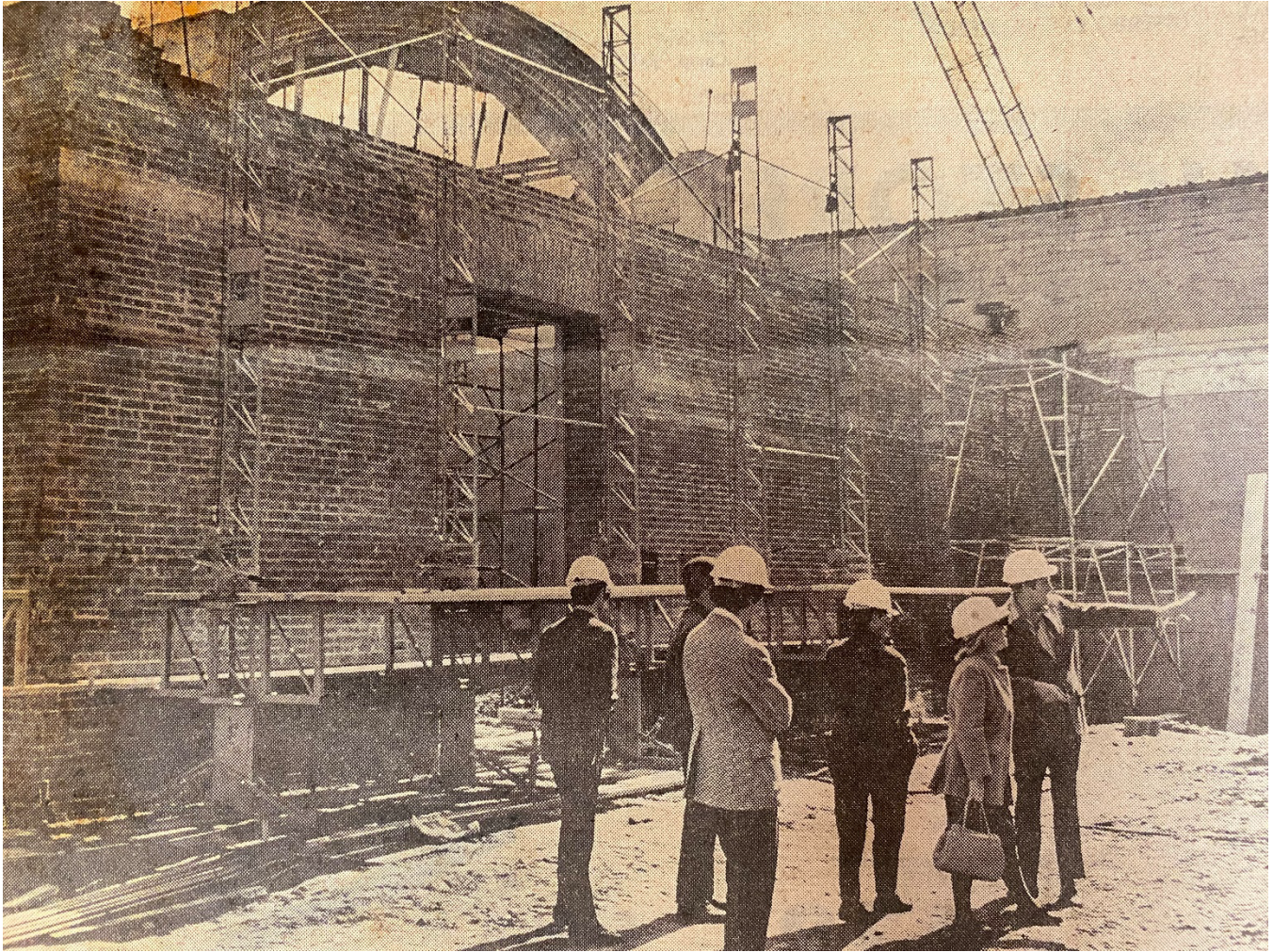


Figure 18. Members of the Fine Arts Commission took a hardhat tour of the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre under construction as reported in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 15 October 1971. Photographer Carl Hartup. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 19. A concrete tee beam is lowered into place during construction of the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, as published in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 24 October 1972. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 20. Aerial photo showing the recently completed Fort Wayne Performing Arts Center and, in the foreground, Freimann Square Park, circa 1973, and the City-County Building, 1971, all part of the City's Main Street Redevelopment Plan. Note original landscape treatment at the entrance to the Arts Center. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 21. Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, main (southern) elevation and entrance circa 1973. Photo by Gabriel Delobbe. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 22. Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, auditorium, circa 1973. Photo by Gabriel Delobbe. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 23. Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, east lobby, looking south, circa 1973. Photo by Gabriel Delobbe. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Figure 24. Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre, lobby corridor/cloak room looking east in undated (circa 1970s) photo showing original configuration. Photo by Gabriel Delobbe. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)

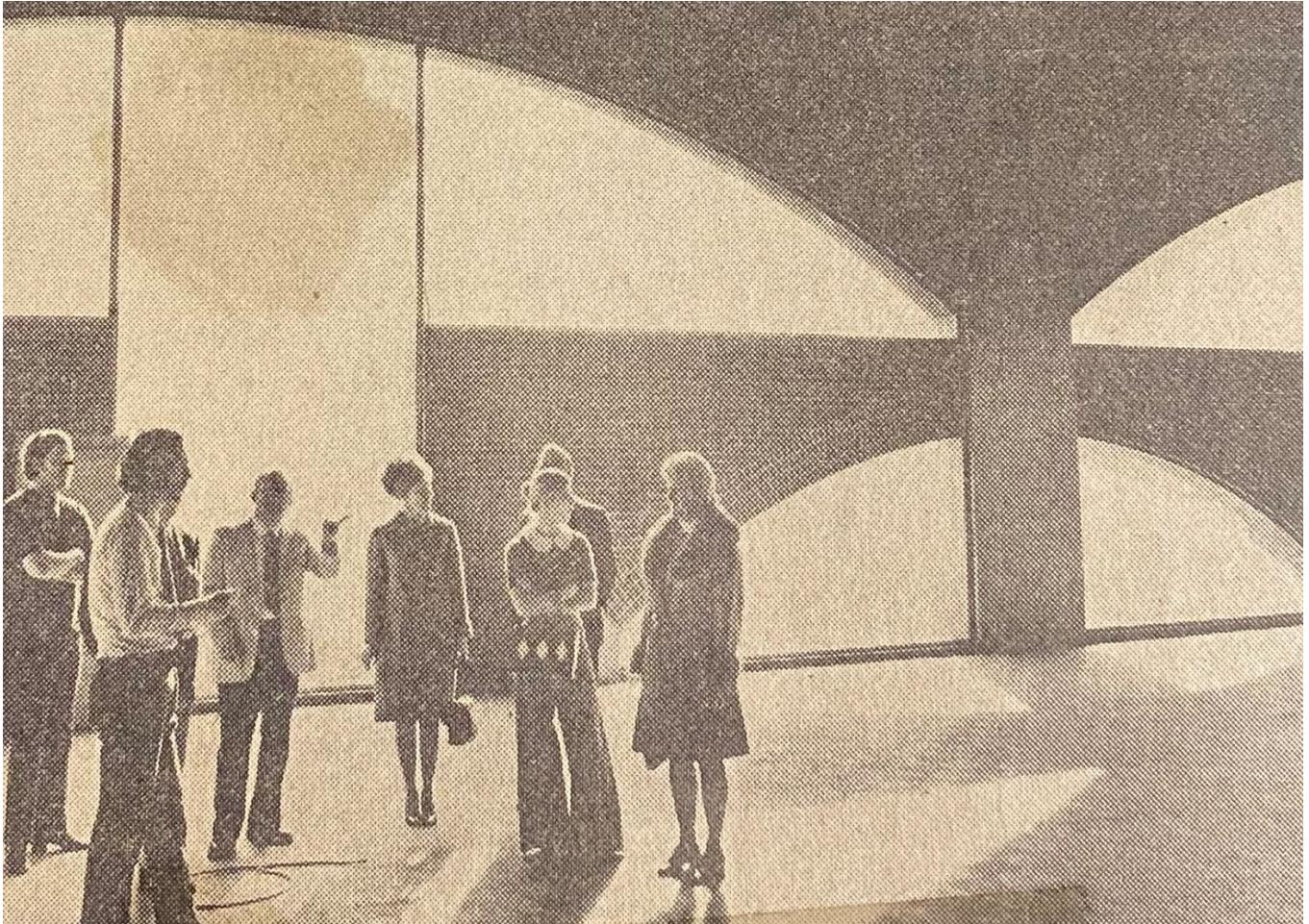
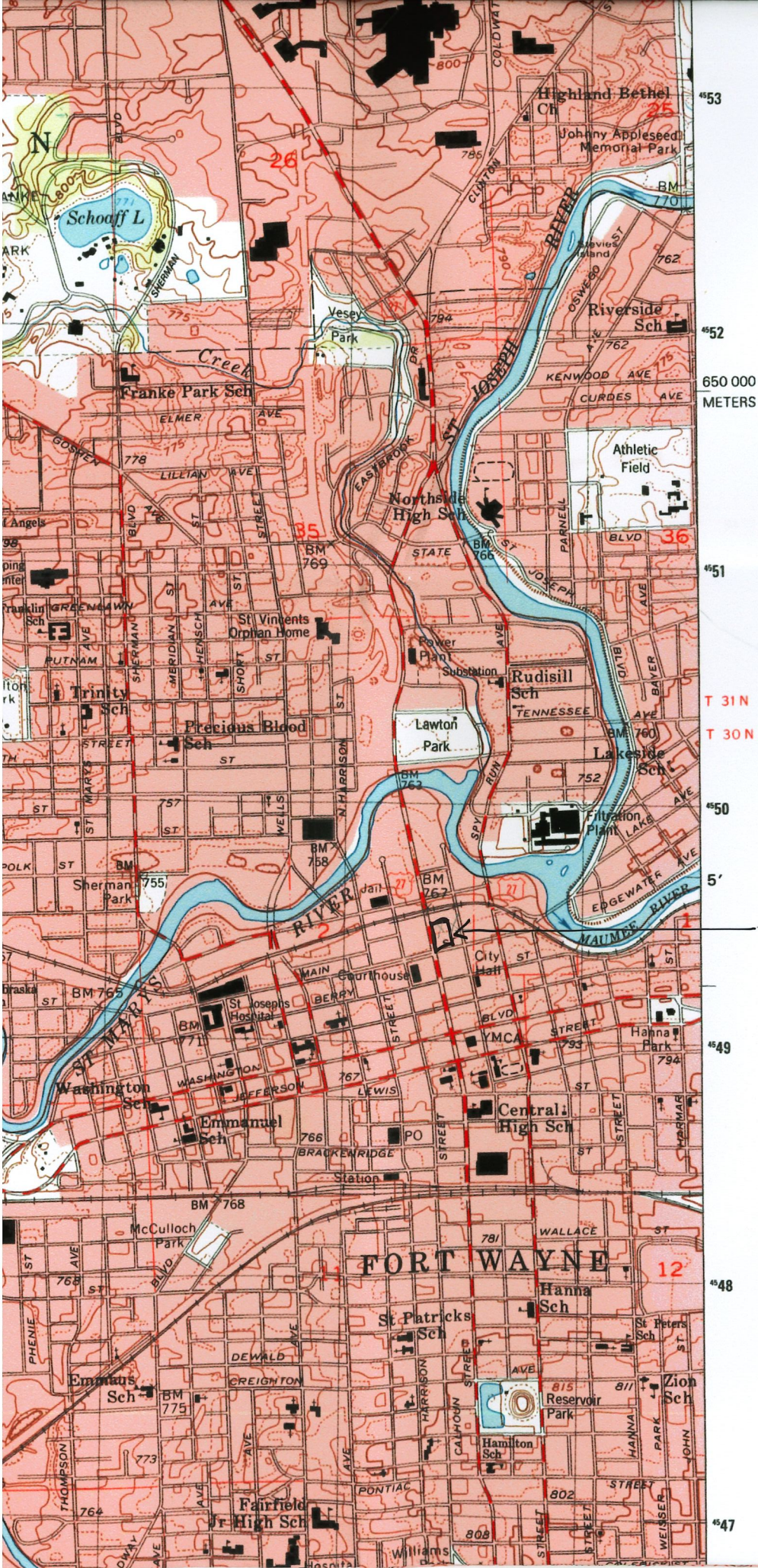


Figure 25. Representatives of organized labor toured the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre shortly after its completion and prior to its official opening, as reported in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* on 15 January 1973. The photograph was taken in the second floor gallery, looking southwest. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)





Figure 26. Louis Kahn and his wife Esther attending dedication ceremonies at the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Theatre and being greeted by G. Irving Latz, former building committee chairman, as reported in the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, 5 October 1973. (Source: Arts United Center Archives.)



Fort Wayne Performing  
 Arts Center  
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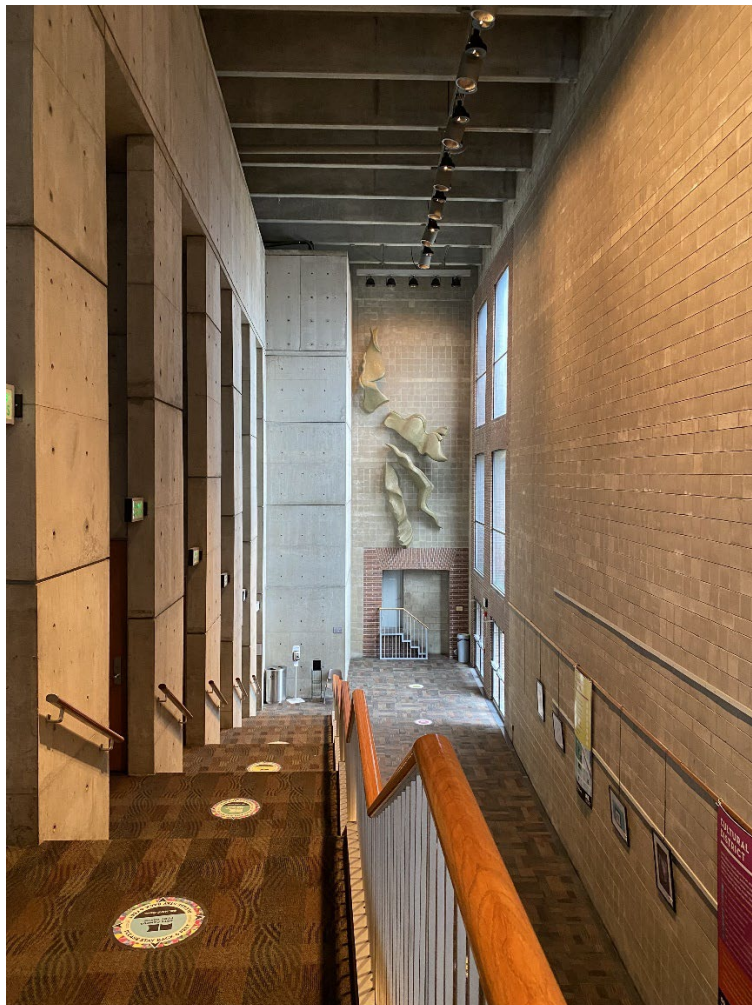
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