embracing monumentality
a montpeller center for the arts
by
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ABSTRACT

Monumentality shares a connection with history in its relationship with time, but it is not limited by the association. The selection of durable materials, such as granite, can elevate a building through the suggestion of the stone and its historical qualities. However, in the making of a monumental structure, the prediction of the form can transform these limitations, resulting in architecture that stands with dignity upon the land. Thoughtful, conservative design that combines historically-specified materials with modern forms can result in worthy additions to even the most historic urban environment, if they are responsive to the context and the matter of their making.

As a thesis study, a theater complex for the city of Montpelier provides a suitable ground for testing the viability of this conservation approach. The capital of Vermont has a vibrant artistic community that has long existed in a perpetual search for an identity that is both historic and innovative. A theater complex, located in the historic Montpelier Center for the Arts and made of local granite, embraces monumentality and its ability to enhance the character of the downtown.

Introducing a grand theater to a city steeped in architectural integrity and rooted in struggle with challenges. The reconstructed patron of building forms and materials, when combined with the force of a public’s grandeur, redemonstrates, creating a pressure upon the architect to make inspired design difficult. It is incumbent on the architect to be aware of these influences, but to show them. Only then can the architecture achieve monumentality and, in the case of the Montpelier Center for the Arts, return monument to the theater-going experience.

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christopher j. gulick
This folio is for my parents William and Sandra, my sister Lin, my grandparents, and Anthos, without whose help, I could not have persevered.

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SITE

Despite the lack of urban density in Manchester relative to other sites, there are still opportunities for development. The concept is to create a mixed-use development that includes retail, residential, and commercial spaces. The site is located at the intersection of two major roads, providing easy access to the city center and surrounding areas. The design aims to integrate the new development with the existing urban fabric, creating a seamless transition between old and new. The proposed building will have a modern architectural style, with large windows and open spaces to maximize natural light and views. The project will also include green spaces and sustainable features, such as rainwater harvesting and solar panels, to minimize its environmental impact. The site plan includes detailed zoning and parking requirements, ensuring a functional and efficient use of the space.
ORIGINS

Early sections and study models explicate program and user needs through speculative and semi-detailed perspective and axonometric views. The sketches provide a first impression of the space, which subsequently evolved the design from a general concept and corresponding spatial and structural concerns. The information is organized within the drawings to convey the concept to the site and its potential development.

The development of the program begins with two distinct buildings separated by a common, unconnected interior to a structured organizational and design style.

Together, the design of the podium connects and visualizes the various elements of the building. From this, existing conditions are examined and integrated into the design concept. The resulting design concept is then translated into a detailed design for the building.
PROSCENIUM MODEL

Exploring contemporary aesthetics of architecture and stage design led to this conclusion.

1. Field sections, checkers, and grids for a variety of performance arts, such as theater, music, and dance, often incorporate different geometrical forms and spatial arrangements.

2. The flexibility and adaptability of a proscenium arch make it a versatile option for various performance types.

Designing an architectural prototype for an open-air theater was a novel proposal. However, understanding the space as an essential component of the overall performance and audience experience is crucial.

Model tests have been conducted for more than one type of performance. The design can be reviewed in relation to this project.
GROUND ARCHITECTURE

The image above demonstrates the relationship to the ground of the interior cavity volumes that define the legs and the surrounding face of the colonnade wall. The colonnade forms the scale of the structure. The slanted face of the legs and colonnade forms a stage for the walker. Stools are one yard trunks exported from the colonnade and split down toward the engine housing, creating seating for various events.
A generous stair opens the gap that interrupts the regular rhythm of the western colonnade, signifying entrance and leading to the elevated courtyard. The stair of the 500-seat movie theater connects the courtyard and leads the entrance to the restaurant and black box theater lobby to the fourth. The smaller black box theater occupies the second and third floors in order to allow more for the restaurant and ticket counter that serves both theaters.
LOWER LEVEL - GARAGE

From the South end, multi-level pathways provide access to the lower parking garage located a half-story below the resturants. Stairs in the space between the mezzanine level and the mezzanine level are accessible from the lobby above via a series of grand stairs and two elevator towers. The space below the mezzanine and the mezzanine level above the garage is dedicated to mechanical, art, and areas below the mezzanine.
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

The third floor of the smaller building is devoted to classroom space, enhanced events. It also provides access to the central stories for the new study and new administrative spaces.
At left, above the larger theater are two galleries divided by the fly tower column. Above the smaller theater is the great hall, an inappropriate civic space for the city. Like the fly tower, the various vertical circulation towers and service spaces form transitional nodes. All spaces are ornamented by the repeating carved towers that pierce the winter garden and encircle the two buildings. The roof of the towers is the flat surface of the roof beams, allowing the natural light from the regularly spaced skylights to illuminate the large gathering spaces below.

MEZZANINE LEVEL
SECTION THROUGH THE COURTYARD

SOUTH ELEVATION
WEST ELEVATION - RIVER SIDE
EAST ELEVATION - STREET SIDE
enlarged plan detail - typical exterior wall construction

From the beginning of the project, the purpose of the grand stone entrance has been formal rather than functional. From the moment one approaches the site, the stone entrance rises in a grand and regal fashion, beckoning the visitor towards the interior. The stone entrance is a focal point of the grand stone entrance, creating the main entrance for visitors. The stone entrance was always intentionally monumental.

DETAILING

A variety of solutions for the stone were explored, each as shown in the sketches above. After working with a structural engineer, it was determined that the stone entrance rested on a wall of hanging stone, thrust into the floor. The hanging stone wall required a solution that was both functional and visually appealing. The resulting entrance was created by separating the stones in a dramatic and intentionalith the rhythmic character of the Rockefeller Center for the 1930's.
ROOF TRUSS MODEL

This model and trusses are the structural counterparts to the stone colonnade, which together join the two theater building and structure to one deck. Each space incorporates a space and the whole made up of three distinct parts: the deck of the building structure, which in turn features two arches to support the load, clearly exhibiting the Roman ideal through the Roman theme. Each arch is made up of the combined tension and compression of the loads, which are both balanced by the space and the structural integrity of the whole.
TRUSS STRUCTURE

Each end truss is supported by the two rows of fins that comprise the interior walls of the building, a span of ninety-six feet. Although it may seem obvious to have the truss trusses open down in their smallest cross section at the peak of the roof, this came from examining the many trusses built where this style is not used. The truss design incorporates the use of mid-arch elements, for the structural advantage. A gap is left between the top chords of each truss to allow for narrower designs.
REFERENCES

images

[Define in leg]

selected readings


inspirations


APPENDIX A