



The Grand
Theatre

Community Arts Centre
Submission to the City of London

Culture.
Community.
Excellence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Active art and culture within a community promotes diversity, creates a dialogue, increases creativity, provides an opportunity for civic pride, and improves general physiological well-being.
(Binder, 2012)

Vision:

A vibrant, inviting, architecturally-significant space for creative expression in the heart of downtown London.

Background

Much time and many resources have been spent exploring and measuring the need for a Performing Arts Centre in London over the last 25 years. As recently as 2004, Artec Consultants, Inc. prepared a study for London including a market analysis and an outline of London's current facility inventory. That review concluded that:

- London's performing arts market is strong and has potential to grow stronger in the future;
- London's demographic characteristics indicate the population is inclined to attend and support the arts; and
- London's location provides a unique opportunity to capitalize on thriving adjacent arts tourism market.

Artec Consultants, Inc. 2004

This same study concluded that London currently lacks appropriate performance venues and recommended the addition of a performing arts centre with a full fly tower to accommodate symphonic music, ballet and theatrical presentations.

The City's request for submissions to drive economic development coupled with these cultural indicators provided the perfect opportunity and impetus for The Grand Theatre to present its vision for a Community Arts Centre in the Downtown. The Grand Theatre is proposing the construction of an architecturally-significant, community-accessible, multi-discipline cultural venue to support and enhance London as a creative city.

Project Description

The proposal for this Community Arts Centre includes the following creative spaces:

1. The existing Grand Theatre with enhanced lobbies and Richmond Street profile;
2. A 1200-seat performance hall with a fly tower. Experts in theatre design and acoustic engineering will be consulted in the design and build of this hall to ensure the

acoustic integrity for voice and orchestral instruments. The addition of a fly tower will maximize the use and legacy of this centre. Broadway shows, rock shows, opera and ballet all require a fly tower. This flexibility is imperative to create a multi-functional centre that can address present needs and anticipate future possibilities;

3. A 150-seat theatre. The 150-seat theatre will be a flexible seating “black box” space capable of supporting productions from the community such as The Fringe Festival, local amateur and semi-professional theatre groups, as well as The Grand Theatre’s own productions, presentations, and the Studio High School Project. This theatre would replace and reposition the current McManus Studio Theatre with the added attraction of having a strong street profile on Dufferin Avenue. The design of this space offers the opportunity to open up to a courtyard green space for added flexibility and uniqueness;
4. Multiple rehearsal/studio/performance spaces will provide venues for small or large rehearsals and/or presentations. There would also be several rooms available for workshops or coaching in various arts disciplines. These spaces would be available to community groups, and access has been designed to be separate from the main Community Arts Centre for the ease and accessibility for the users.

The Community Arts Centre would also include:

1. Enhanced lobbies and public spaces;
2. A two-level underground parking lot;
3. A bar/café/ restaurant;
4. A courtyard;
5. A green roof;
6. Expanded Grand Theatre props and wardrobe facilities;
7. Expanded administration spaces;
8. A privately-funded residential tower.

This proposal recommends that the Community Arts Centre be located adjacent to the existing Grand Theatre site. This requires that The Grand acquire adjacent lands. This submission proposes that the City partner with The Grand Theatre to arrive at suitable arrangements to acquire the adjacent lands through possible land exchanges as the City’s investment in this multi-faceted, transformational downtown development.

OPERATIONS

The Grand Theatre's staff and board are perfectly positioned to take the lead on the design, build, and operations of the Community Arts Centre. The Grand Theatre team has a proven track record of owning and operating a performing arts venue and successfully delivering sound fiscal management and artistic excellence.

The Grand Theatre has, among its staff, expertise in many of the fields necessary to the successful operation of a Community Arts Centre, including lighting, sound, acoustics, production, as well as box office, security, front of house, and administration.

The Grand Theatre is also very interested in partnering with other arts organizations to provide shared services, cost efficiencies and through collaboration, a more effective delivery of the following:

- Rehearsal spaces;
- Box office services
- Bar and food operations;
- Common lobby space;
- Maintenance;
- Security;
- Administrative spaces.

ECONOMIC VALUE AND FUNDING

We are proposing that the current Grand Theatre Foundation assume control and ownership of, and ultimate responsibility for, the Community Arts Centre.

Over the last five years, The Grand Theatre has successfully raised over \$7 million to complete upgrades and renovations to its existing space. This success, coupled with 14 consecutive years of operational surpluses, clearly demonstrates The Grand's capacity to manage and fundraise a project of this magnitude.

The Grand Theatre's Boards are committed to this project and have approved pledging the entire Grand Theatre facility, including land and building, as its contribution to this development project. The facility has a current estimated market value in excess of \$25 million. This significant commitment provides a strong foundation to leverage further financial commitments.

We are proposing the following economic value and funding structure:

Economic Value		Funding	
The Grand Theatre	\$ 25m	Grand Theatre	\$ 25m
Private Residential Development	\$ 19m	Private Development	\$ 19m
City Land	\$ 5m	City, in kind contribution	\$ 5m
New Construction	\$ 60m	Provincial	\$ 25m
		Federal	\$ 25m
		Private Donations	\$ 10m
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Total Value of Project	\$109m	Total Funding Required	\$109m

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, London's Cultural Prosperity Plan recommends that London "leverage, sustain, maintain, enhance and celebrate existing cultural assets in order to promote economic growth." This proposal to build a Community Arts Centre on The Grand Theatre site addresses this key strategic direction.