

Plan for a Cultural Center in Medfield

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THE INSPIRATION AND VISION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Inspiration and Vision	1
Performing Arts Center	2
Floor Plans.....	3
The Site.....	4
Future Phases.....	5

How might we build on a legacy of innovative design to support health and well-being through the arts in Medfield today?

Studies show our zip code can be a more reliable determinant of health than our genetic code. While access to health care services remains imperative, the social factors and physical conditions where we live, work, learn, play and worship are stronger determinants of wellness. Simply put, humans need places to interact with each other, and with our surroundings. The expression of creativity is good for us and a sense of place matters.

The former Medfield State Hospital (MSH) site was closed in 2003. Owned by the town since 2014, it will undergo a transformation during the next decade. How the site is developed will make an enormous difference in the community and the region. The Cultural Alliance of Medfield (CAM) proposes to anchor the development with a major cultural facility and education center, which will improve the quality of life for MetroWest residents by providing a center for music education and performing arts and help to both spur and define the redevelopment of the site.

CAM will preserve and celebrate the former Medfield State Hospital's irreplaceable historic, cultural, and natural resources by creating a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, classrooms and studios for live music, literature, film, art, photography, lectures, and more. A multi-phased project will accomplish far more than simply saving the past. It will create completely new dynamic experiences for residents and visitors to make and enjoy art, discuss the issues of our time, generate ideas, and engage with each other and the land.



PHASE 1: The Performing Arts and Education Center

The reinvention of the campus begins by renovating the Lee Chapel and the Infirmary with a new connecting entrance, together encompassing about 24,000 square feet (sf).

Inside the Chapel, a technically sophisticated hall with flexible seating for 300 will provide live music performances with opportunities for additional film, storytelling and literary events. Gatherings may include pre-concert lectures, open rehearsals and free events for families, along with HD broadcasts. Residencies for professional musicians will support youth through in-depth workshops for jazz improvisation and music theory, listening/history classes, master classes grouped by instrument, or large ensemble workshops.

Outside, a modest seasonal tented stage will accommodate performance, outdoor movies and family events on the east side, with opportunities for annual festivals on the west to celebrate the seasons, harvests, regional artists, farmer's markets, and the like.

Chapel Interior



Cultural Center Rendering by DBVW Architects



"Medfield has always nurtured rising creative talent, but a cultural center like the one proposed could be a true game-changer. A meeting place for artists and lovers of the arts could be transformative for the cultural scene in suburban Boston."

Matthew Aucoin, Composer/Conductor, Pianist, Writer, Los Angeles Opera
Artist-in-Residence, Medfield High School Class of 2008

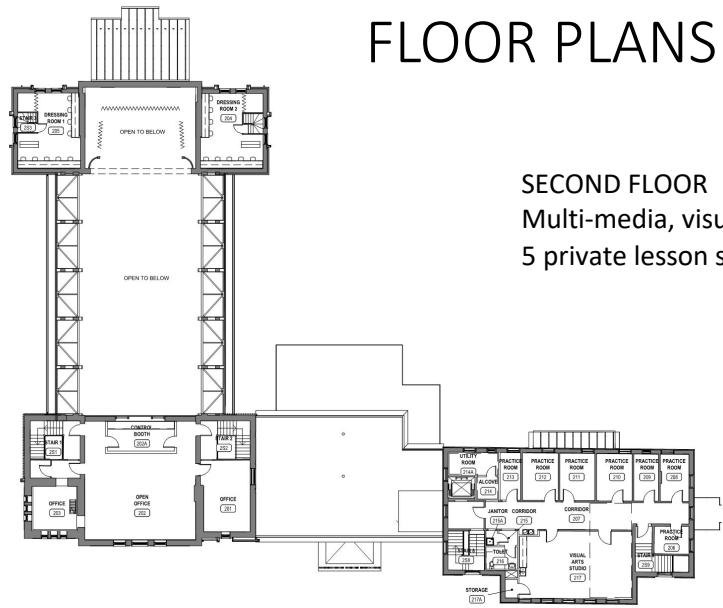
FLOOR PLANS

The Chapel will remain a community resource with opportunities for local educational, arts, business and civic groups to use the facility for meetings and special events. A catering kitchen off of the new lobby supports these activities.

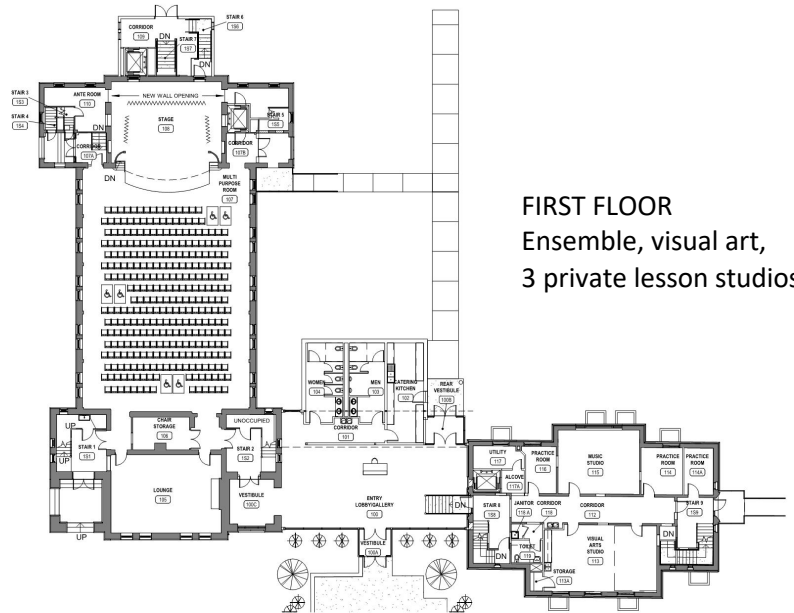
The Infirmary is the center of education for youth and adults with nine studios for private lessons, and separate rooms for ensemble, rock band, and multi-media for youth and adults. There are three additional flexible studios for hands-on art making classes like drawing, painting, printmaking, and more.

With 40% of Medfield designated as open space, and just 6% zoned for business combined with high real estate costs, few opportunities have existed for nonprofits to develop or expand facilities before MSH.

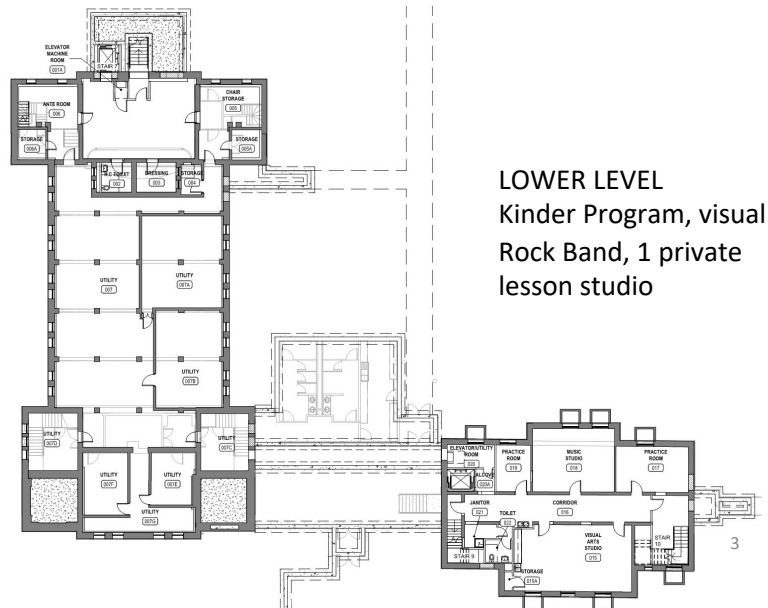
SECOND FLOOR
Multi-media, visual art,
5 private lesson studios



FIRST FLOOR
Ensemble, visual art,
3 private lesson studios



LOWER LEVEL
Kinder Program, visual art,
Rock Band, 1 private
lesson studio



THE SITE

MSH was the first hospital built using the cottage style plan, designed to ensure residents experience daylight, fresh air, exercise, and socialization daily. It is listed on both the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The core campus is perched atop the banks of the Charles River and located equidistant between Boston, Providence and Worcester. This is a bucolic site with rolling topography, mature trees, beautiful vistas and thirty-five buildings encompassing 90 acres dating to the late 19th century.

The Commonwealth closed the hospital in 2003; Medfield acquired the site from the state in 2014.



“As a mid-career artist now living in nearby Sharon, after living and traveling in culturally vibrant cities, I can attest to the artistic vacuum that exists between Boston and Providence.”

– Coral Woodbury, Artist

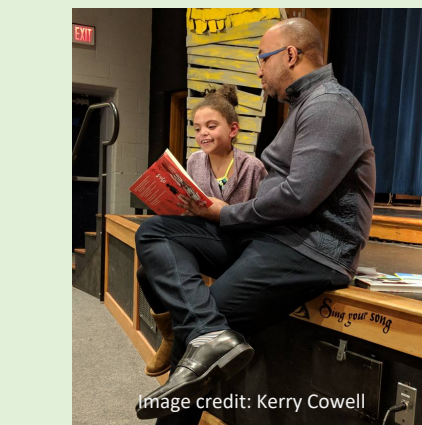


Image credit: Kerry Cowell

FUTURE PHASES

CAM thrives on helping artists make and present work to engage the mind, body and spirit. Future phases introduce the visual and culinary arts with places for artists to live, create, work, and engage colleagues and audiences alike, across disciplines. Audiences will have a range of free and fee-based programs and opportunities for planned and spontaneous encounters to experience both the inherent values of art and creative pursuits alongside the pragmatic benefits of connection with people and nature. An Architectural Feasibility Study on Buildings 26 and 27A begins in 2019.

Artist Studios (Building 27A)

The entire building is 49,283 sf. The upper two floors will provide 20-30 affordable work spaces. Studio sizes range from 500 - 1,000 sf each. Artists are selected through an application and jury-review process as studios become available. Artists will participate in Open Studios annually can teach small classes, workshops or private lessons out of their studios.

New Flexible Fabrication and Collaboration Space (Building 27A)

A 5,000 – 6,000 sf maker space is envisioned with shared fabrication tools and equipment in electronics, woodworking, jewelry and metalsmithing, welding, rapid prototyping, digital fabrication, filmmaking, a green screen, fiber arts and more. The lower level includes storage and flexible space for short term projects, and to support pop-up and rotating exhibitions, competitions, events, or fabrication of large-scale art works. Classes are available and a speaker series engages the community on new technologies, creative play and inventions. On-site material and project storage simplifies logistics while work is in process.

Culinary Arts (Building 27A)

Facilities include a 3,000-4,000 sf fully-equipped commercially licensed kitchen available to rent along with storage spaces and suites for those with their own equipment. The kitchen can also be used for TV shows, cooking classes, and hosting food tastings and other events. Classrooms support business planning and coaching and provides space for the public to learn about farming, nutrition, gardening and health. There may be an on-site CSA distribution, or small retail farm stand, and café, full-service restaurant, bakery or microbrewery tasting room featuring locally-grown ingredients.

Dance, Blackbox Theater (Building 26 is 11,834 sf)

The Clubhouse will include a 3,000 sf black box studio theatre to present experimental work to 100-150 audience members. Two dance studios are available for rent for rehearsals, classes and private lessons with locker rooms and additional offices. A competitive year-long Residency Program will support emerging and established artists with rehearsal space, business mentoring and production resources.

Artist Live/Work Space (Buildings 22 and 23 are 15,272 sf each)

The campus includes two buildings for designated for artists to rent residential space with four units on each of two floors; 16 units in total. Twelve units are one-bedroom averaging 800 sf, and four units have two-bedrooms, 1,000 sf each. Additional housing options are available.

Artist-in-Residence (Building 22A is 15,412 sf)

The first floor includes CAM-managed public amenities, gallery, and box office to support events on the adjacent 11.5 acre Great Lawn. The second floor will house administrative offices, non-profit spaces, and three furnished units for artists-in-residence, each with studio space.