

West Shore Performing Arts Centre

Greater Victoria, BC



Conceptual Approach

August 25, 2025



Bo|form

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS



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1. Overview

1.1 DESIGN & ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In March 2025, the Juan De Fuca Performing Arts Centre Society (PACS) engaged with Cascadia Architects (CAS) to plan and facilitate a one day Design Charette with local arts community members with the goals of capturing their ideas for a new performance and cultural centre to be proposed for the west shore. CAS was additionally engaged to review and work with the rich materials that were produced at the workshop and use them to develop a conceptual approach for the arts centre that responds to the community’s expressed vision and objectives.

The following document represents the final deliverable in this engagement and highlights the explorations and discussions that shaped the design evolution, leading to a proposed conceptual approach for the new arts facility. This document provides a summary of the consultation process that was followed and serves as a visual record of the priorities and feedback received from the community at the design Charette.

The PACS leadership team and CAS design professionals met several times in advance of the workshop to discuss the project history and work completed to date.

They closely reviewed the building program and imagined a facility that would invite community members of all ages, abilities and skill levels, from recreational to professional, to actively participate in the arts as creators, students and audience members.

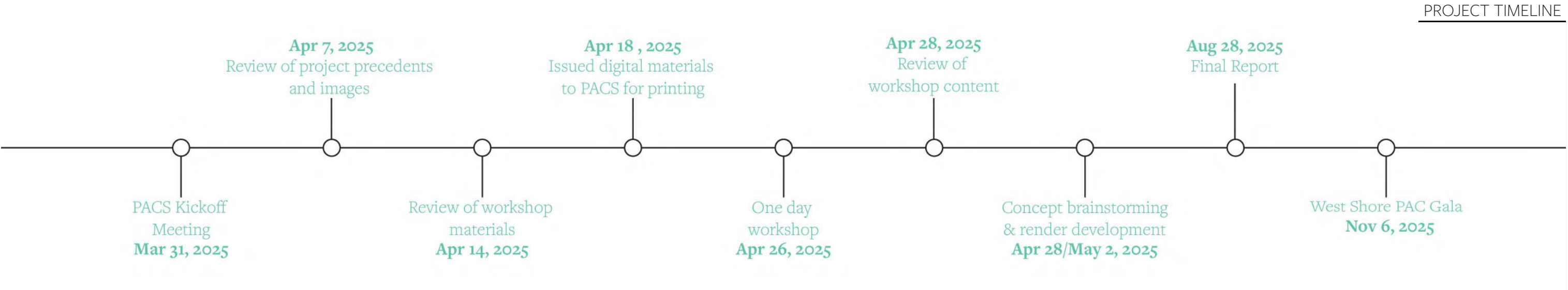
As no specific site had been secured or identified for the project the team discussed the desired attributes and scale of an idealized property. It was determined through these discussions that a level corner lot with high visibility and good vehicle and public transport access would be most desirable. Spacial analysis of the building program and review of the required spaces, including outdoor amenity, suggested a preferred site area of approximately 6,000 m2 (1.5 acres), exclusive of parking requirements.

The team built on these preliminary goals and assumptions to identify the specific objectives for the workshop and develop a practical structure for the sessions that would realize the maximum benefit from the assembled community. Using small and large group discussions and a collaborative approach to design we were able to capture the complex and overlapping priorities of community members, and anticipated users of the site.

These exploratory ideas and raw diagrammatic designs were subsequently refined by the CAS team into a robust concept that responds to the varied requests, suggestions, requirements and concerns put forward by the arts community members who attended the design Charette.

The conceptual design outlined in this document responds directly to these shared ideas and the clear direction and leadership of the PACS board in the expression of their original vision.

Moving forwards, PACS is preparing for a gala event to be held on November 6th, 2025 at which this design concept will be presented to provide a powerful visual representation of the community’s vision for a new regional arts centre to be established on the west shore.



2. Design Charette

2.1 SUMMARY

On April 26th, 2025 Juan de Fuca PACS hosted a public workshop to collect input from local arts communities on the needs, wants, goals and obstacles for a proposed West Shore Performing Arts Centre. The day was organized into two parts with an informative presentation by Alex Sarian, President of the Calgary Arts Common, in the morning to engage the group and a design Charette in the afternoon to capture the groups ideas for the proposed centre.

The workshop was open and inclusive, with CAS design professionals and experienced theatre designer Terry Williams (retired architect AIBC) facilitating group discussions with community members and exploring ideas together. This collaborative process enabled the design team to simultaneously listen to the hopes, concerns and priorities of the PAC board and community members, and ensured that all participants had a voice in the design evolution of the proposed arts centre.

The Charette began in small groups with a review of the proposed building program. People were asked how should this building work? What should it provide? What are the spaces that would support these activities? What sizes should they be? What relationships should exist between spaces? What are we missing?

Following a break the group reassembled at two large tables and began to explore ideas and design principles for the new building. The two groups worked closely with CAS architects to arrange the program elements developed in the first session on an imaginary site. Working together, the groups developed virtual representations for how the centre might appear and function.

The outcome of the Charette was a rich collection of materials, representing diverse ideas and approaches and providing the design team with a meaningful and well supported starting point for further exploration and refinement.



2.2 PROGRAM

The building program, refined through the Charette process, reflects PACS’ vision for a broad community-centred facility that supports a wide range of artistic interests across a variety of art forms including theatre, music, dance, visual arts, ceramics, spoken word, and written craft. The proposed arts centre would serve both as a creative, transformational space where art of all types can be explored, and a performance and presentation space where creative works can be publicly shared. The program includes learning spaces where art forms can be taught and practiced and community spaces including a cafe, gallery and outdoor amphitheater where the community can gather and share experiences.

JUAN DE FUCA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE - PROGRAM

Space	Description	Capacity	Area (m2)	Area (sft)	Adjacencies and Potential Overlap	Level
Public Areas						
Lobby	Entry processional experience. Ticketing. Coat check. Crush Space	300	300	3228	Theatre, Gallery, Exhibition Space, Café	Main
Gallery	Tall space. Indirect natural light. Rectilinear	60	300	3228	Lobby, Temp Gallery	Main
Exhibition Space (temp gallery)	Black box	60	300	3228	Lobby, Gallery	Main
Washrooms	Universal	To Be Determined	75	807	Lobby	Main
Café / Kitchen	Limited menu. Satellite wine / beer bar in lobby Outdoor seating area	60	125	1345	Lobby, Outdoor areas, Loading	Main
			Total	1100	11836	
Theatre						
Thrust stage	No fly tower or backstage area	30	150	1614	Dressing rooms, Storage	Main
Auditorium Seating	Raked with accessible seating at top and bottom	350	400	4304	Stage	Main
Dressing Rooms	Two plus green room	30	100	1076	Stage, Back of house	Main
Storage / Fabrication	Small workshop adjacent to storage room	5	100	1076	Stage, Loading	Main
			Total	750	8070	
Art / Learning Spaces						
Art / Pottery Studio	Natural light. Kiln. Storage. Sinks	10	100	1076	Classrooms.	Main
Multi Purpose Room	Natural light. Storage. Outdoor areas	60	100	1076	Classrooms.	Main
Classroom 1	Natural light.	25	60	646	Combinable with classroom 2	Second
Classroom 2	Natural light.	10	30	323	Combinable with classroom 1	Second
Recording Studio	Sound proof.	4	25	269	Classrooms.	Second
Dance Studio	Tall space. Sprung Floor. Mirror. Natural light. Storage	25	150	1614	Classrooms.	Second
			Total	465	5003	
Admin and Back of House						
Administrative Offices	Two small offices. One larger. Open plan area. Second floor	20	100	1076		Second
Storage	General storage.	4	100	1076		Below Grade
Building Services / Mechanical	Below grade.	2	75	807		Below Grade
			Total	275	2959	
			Total	2590	27868	
Gross Up						
Stairs, corridors and elevators	Approximately 25% of programmed area		TOTAL	3238	34836	
Parking						
Surface parking	Drop off area. Multi-use (weekend craft market)	To Be Determined				
Bike parking	Secure in building and temporary outside	To Be Determined				

MAIN FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

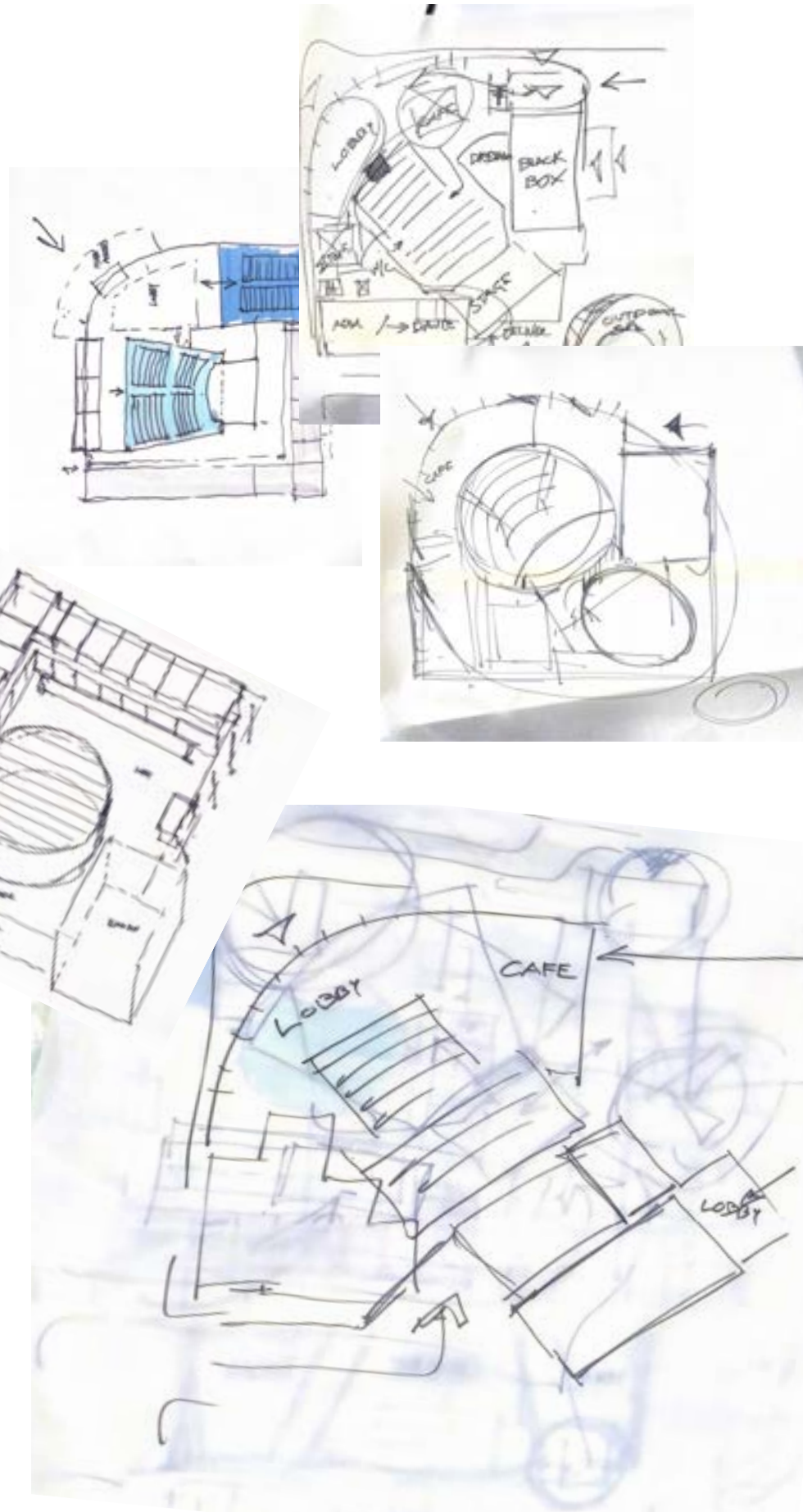


2 Design Charette

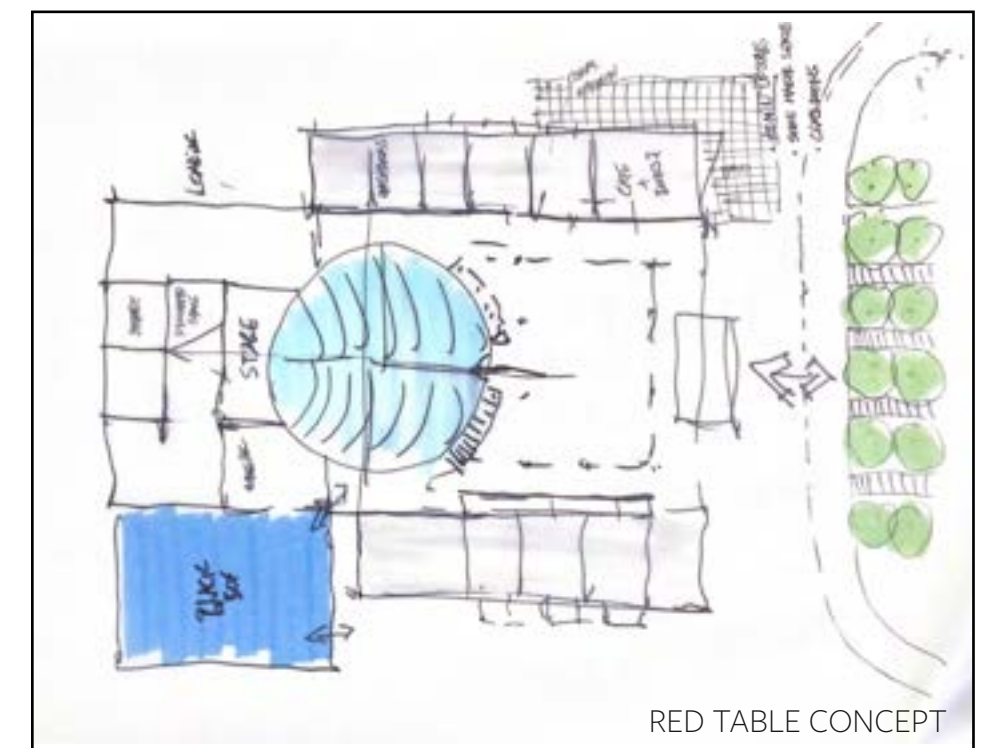
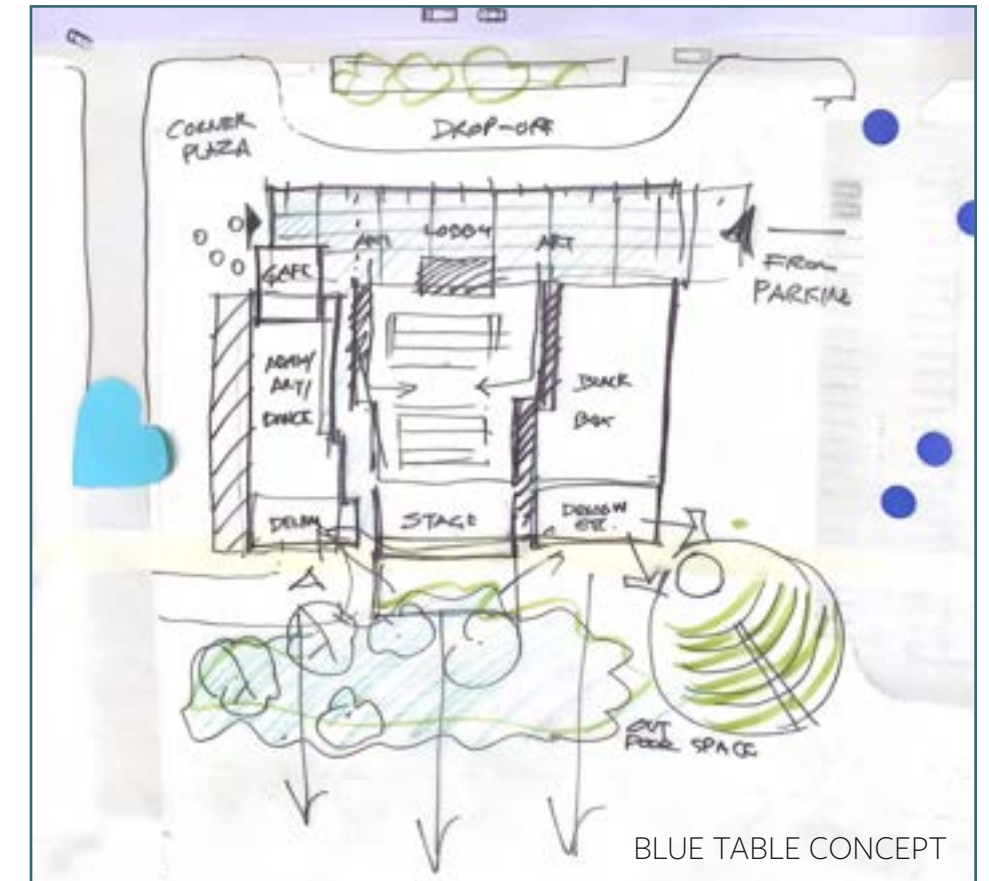
2.3 CONCEPT SKETCHES

Working with the program elements that were developed in the earlier afternoon session the CAS team led the group, divided over two tables, in an open and wide ranging exploration of design ideas. Comments, thoughts and suggestions were captured as they emerged from the group through sketches, diagrams and coloured drawings overlaid on an imagined site.

Toward the end of the day the groups reviewed their ideas and sketches and identified the one concept that they felt best captured their vision and aspirations for the project. The full group then reconvened and each shared their proposed approach and the process they had followed to arrive at their collective design.



WEST SHORE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE



3 Concept

3.1 PLANS

The CAS team reviewed the various design suggestions, concepts and plan diagrams that had been produced through the highly productive workshop, and refined them into a single coherent approach that responded thoughtfully to the community's expressed vision.

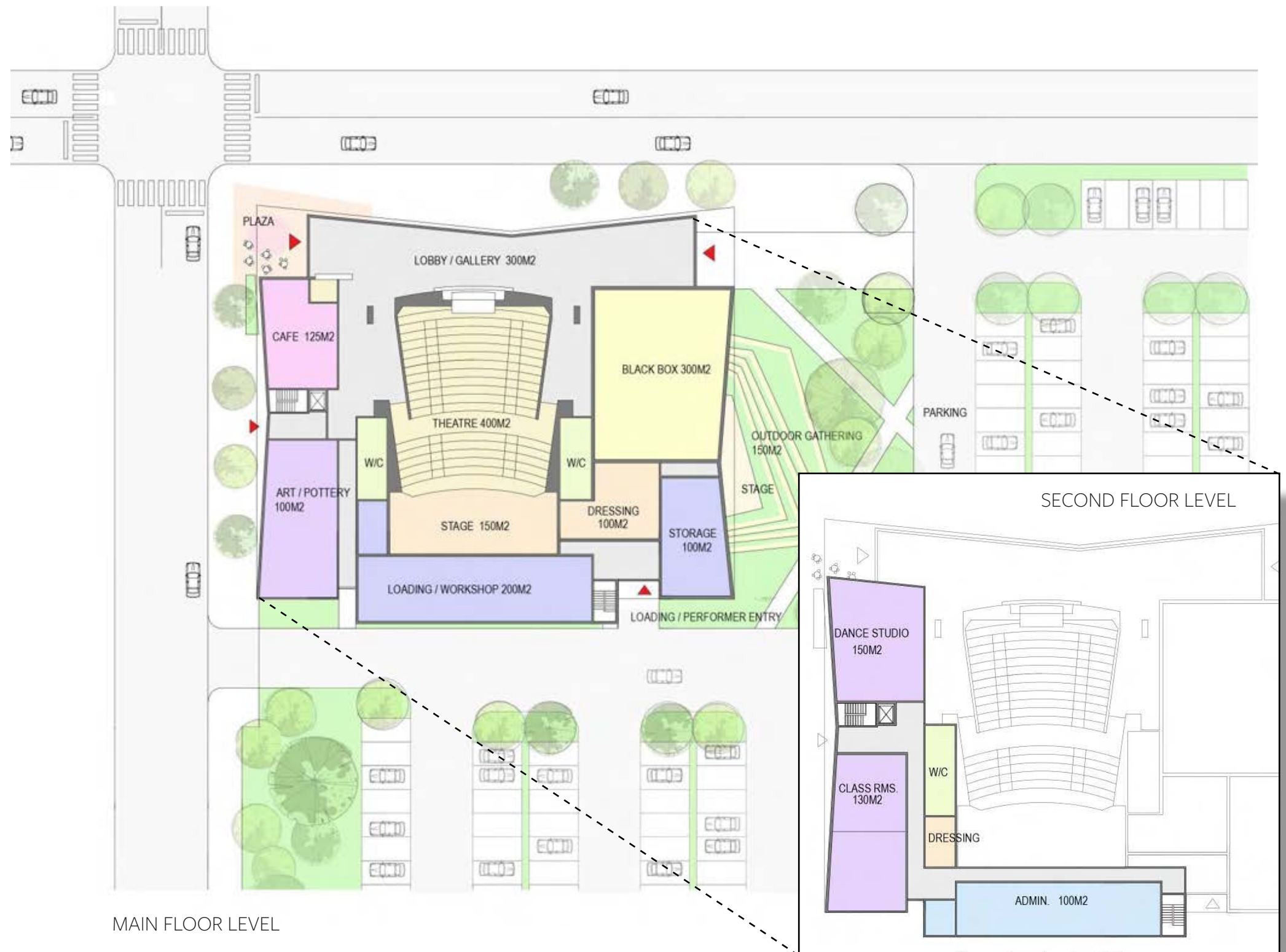
The resultant plan is centred around a new 350 seat theatre which anchors the program within a large, two storey, lobby and gallery space. The lobby runs the full length of the main street frontage and is accessible from both the prominent street corner to the west, where a cafe and plaza activate the main entry, and from the parking area to the east.

The building addresses the secondary street frontage with an extension of the cafe plaza that further draws life and animation toward the main entry. The building becomes more enclosed as you move away from the corner and transitions to support more introspective aspects of the program including art studios and a ceramics workshop. The core functional elements of the program including loading and storage areas are located at the rear of the building, accessed off the secondary road.

The eastern edge of the building is defined by the black box theatre which has direct entry and access from the lobby / gallery and shares the dressing rooms with the main theatre space. The solid exterior east wall forms the backdrop to a gracious outdoor amphitheater stage and community gathering space.

Classrooms and the administrative block are located on a second floor level, occupying the south west corner of the building away from traffic noise and activity.

A highly visible dance studio anchors the key north west corner of the second floor, overlooking the cafe plaza and main entry, and inviting the community to share in the experience of the arts.



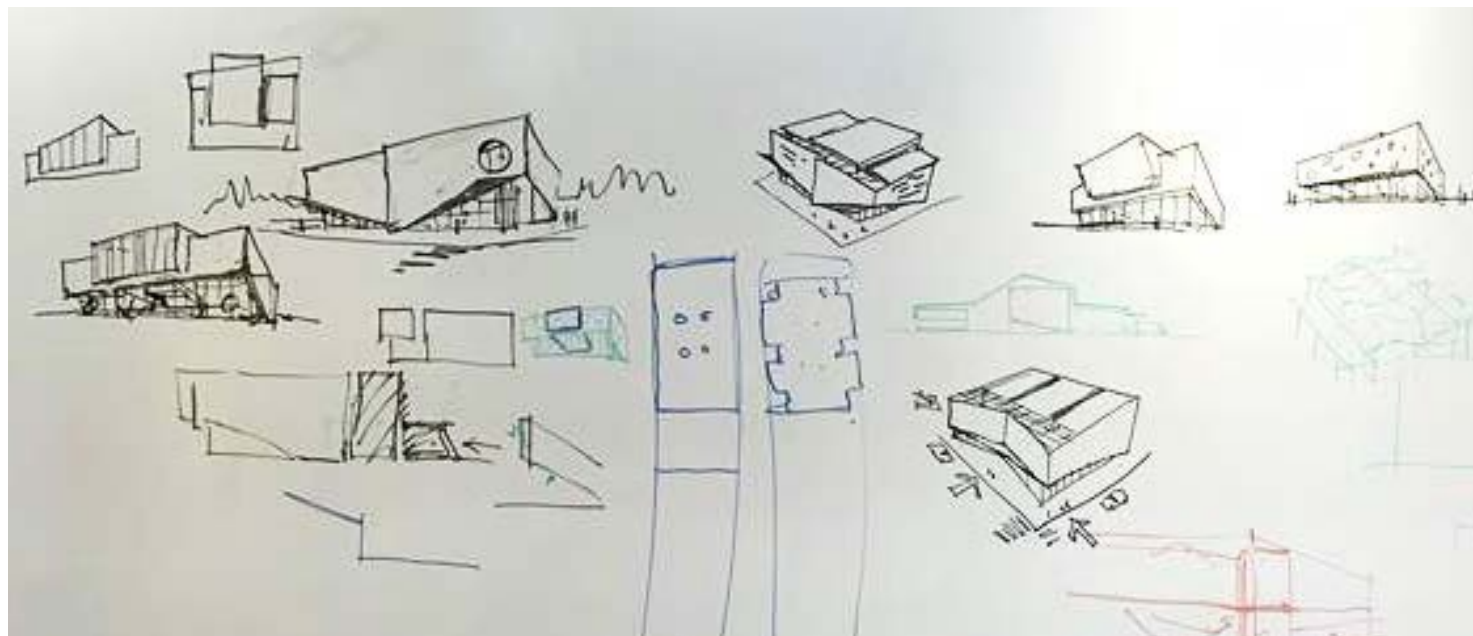
3 Concept

3.2 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

CAS worked with feedback from the PACS leadership team to envision the plan and programmatic elements for the new facility as occupiable, three dimensional spaces. They asked what will this building look and feel like? How will the community experience it? How will it reflect its existing context as a natural and welcome part of the west shore fabric? What will set it apart as an iconic feature of this growing community?

The team quickly gravitated toward the concept of an evolving Big Box, acknowledging the large retail buildings that have played a critical role in the establishment and growth of the west shore communities. The idea responds to the existing context while offering a rich and highly flexible framework through which to express new directions and energy.

The proposed design peels back the Big Box skin in a moment of transformation, to reveal a transparent world of light and art and culture.



4 Visualization

WEST SHORE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

4.1 INTERIOR MAIN THEATRE



4 Visualization

WEST SHORE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

4.2 BUILDING SECTION



4 Visualization

WEST SHORE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

4.3 LOBBY ENTRANCE - STREET VIEW





West Shore Performing Arts Centre

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