



REVITALIZATION MODERNIZES TORONTO'S HERITAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE

PUBLISHED BY:
CONSTRUCTION CANADA

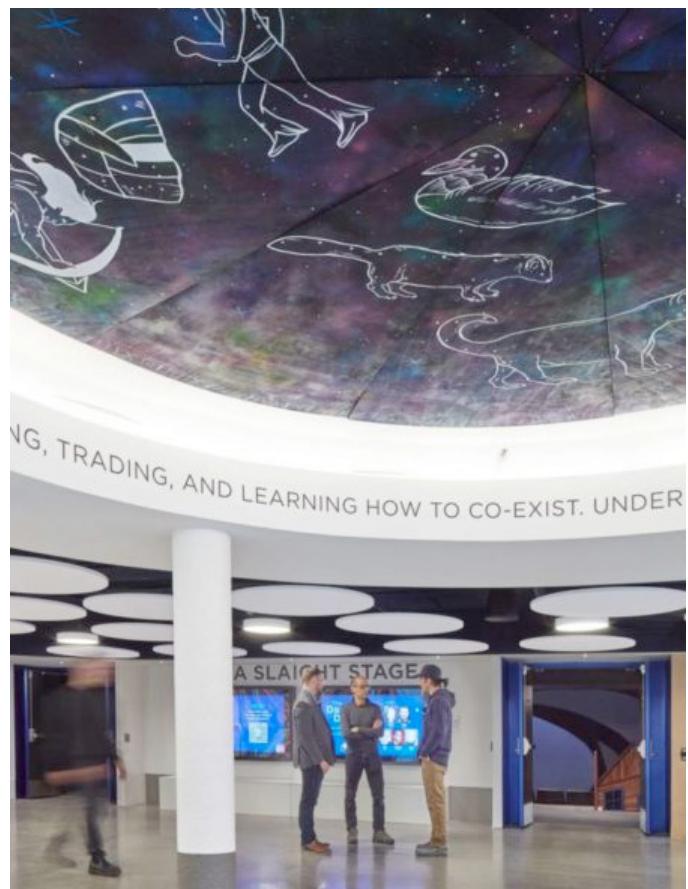
DATE:
JUN. 21, 2023

The revitalization of the heritage venue, Young People's Theatre (YPT), in downtown Toronto, includes a new building across the street and renovated crucial features to the existing 1977 building, with retention of some characteristic aspects, to bring it up to date for modern use.

The venue has been revitalized and expanded by the Flat Iron Building Group, in partnership with KOHN SHNIER Architects, and Nexus Project Management.

This \$13.5 million project aimed to breathe new life and create more space for the YPT, Canada's oldest and largest professional theatre company for young audiences. The successful renovation and construction project now provides future generations with an enhanced venue to enjoy.

The repositioning project, known as the "Room for Imagination" expansion project, was driven by YPT's vision to open its doors to a wider community, including young people, schools, and artists, while establishing itself as a global leader in theatre for young audiences. With an annual audience of more than 100,000 young



people, YPT's award-winning programs and plays perform a significant role in their development.

Collaboration and meticulous planning were crucial in overcoming the challenges posed by renovating a heritage building. The outdated infrastructure of the original building, used since 1977, necessitated the creation of additional space to meet the evolving needs of the growing community. The construction team, along with the theatre and architect, unanimously agreed that expanding the venue was the primary objective.

The lobby area underwent significant transformation to create a community-oriented space that prioritized comfort and accessibility for theatregoers. The acquisition of a new facility across the street allowed for the relocation of classrooms, rehearsal areas, and wardrobe space—freeing up the existing building for improved amenities.

Special attention was given to sound control within the new building to minimize noise disturbance for neighbouring tenants. Measures such as isolators, acoustic panelling, and vibration-limiting substrates were implemented. Another key aspect of the renovation was enhancing wheelchair-accessible seating.

Thorough pre-construction work was essential for the project's success, allowing the construction team to understand the existing infrastructure and avoid unforeseen issues that could affect the budget and timeline.



Flat Iron emphasized the importance of early involvement to eliminate variables and ensure a smooth construction process. For instance, thorough pre-construction work revealed there was a lack of fireproofing below the seating of the stage area and changes were accordingly made.

Preserving the heritage building's esthetic and classic theatre ambiance was a fundamental aspect of the renovation as well. The original brick walls were carefully maintained, while strategic decommissioning highlighted key elements for visibility and accessibility. The collaborative efforts of all stakeholders ensured a cohesive and successful project that will benefit the Toronto community, especially the youth.

These transformative renovations have positioned the YPT as a vibrant cultural landmark in downtown Toronto, with two interconnected buildings.