



POWER

THE TODD BOLENDER CENTER FOR DANCE & CREATIVITY





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For the past 14 years, since leaving our home of 18 years in Westport, the Ballet has been engaged in one stage or another of planning, design and refurbishing two structures to serve as temporary homes as prelude to our final destination....the Todd Bolender Center.

Each time, the detail of process that necessarily must be imbued with an intricate and intimate knowledge of the needs of dancers, was quietly but resolutely guided by Kansas City Ballet’s long time General Manager Kevin Amey. As much as anyone, Kevin’s love of dance and respect for dancers informed the pragmatic needs of each of these structures and in so doing, continually provided dancer-centric space in which they could successfully work. No small feat!

Jeffrey J. Bentley | Executive Director, Kansas City Ballet

POWER

THE TODD BOLENDER CENTER FOR DANCE & CREATIVITY

BNIM + Kansas City Ballet

FOREWORD

Steve McDowell, FAIA, LEED AP
Design Principal, BNIM



GENEROUS PRAGMATISM

“What a building does matters as much as how it looks”

Rodolphe el-khoury and Andrew Payne

A few years ago, in a book written about one of BNIM's projects, the phrase Generous Pragmatism was created by el-khoury and Payne. We were intrigued and honored by what they were observing and have come to accept it as a clear understanding of how we approach design and how our buildings perform as comfortable, welcoming and inspiring environments for people. The Jarvis Hunt design for the Power House layered with the BNIM design for the Bolender Center stands as a testament to the idea of Generous Pragmatism.

In its original use, the Power House was about refining energy from one source to another – coal to steam and electricity. The building was the high performing theater or factory, depending upon your point of view. It performed those

tasks with elegance and respect for the people working inside and operating the equipment. Daylight and natural ventilation systems were integral to the design and modulated the environment during winter and summer.

Today, the energy is different. The hard work and creative energy of dancers, young and old, is the refined energy, but once again the building is fulfilling its role in refinement of raw energy and power into something very precious and beautiful.

The building does its work by creating space that is daylight, generous, comfortable, quiet when it needs to be, loud sometimes and always inspiring. The building has a lot more to do – make people comfortable and happy, fulfill many other needs from dressing rooms to wardrobe and create a community for the company and school.

Beauty. There are many thoughts about what makes a building like the Bolender Center beautiful. Certain tenets define beauty in ways that apply to the new dance facility. One is that buildings should touch our senses. In the case of the Bolender Center, we think of the quietness that is often contrasted by the sounds of dancers moving across a studio floor and music floating through the spaces; how daylight fills the volumes of space; or the beauty of the juxtaposed tactile surfaces of old and new materials.

A second tenet is that the building – original Hunt design and new interventions – inspires mental or intellectual engagement that is pleasurable and interesting. The original building exhibits handsome proportions, rich materials and tectonics and spatial qualities that are remarkably

humane given the original purpose. The Ballet's interventions purposefully interact with the existing architecture and place new structure and other elements to complement Hunt's design while clearly introducing the new functionality and use for a much larger and diverse human population.

Community. Kansas Citians are always ready for a challenge. It may be a product of the condition that, as a community, we are often overlooked or, more literally, flown over when people are seeking art, creativity, innovation and beauty. However, this is changing, and Kansas City Ballet is very much part of that shift. Nonetheless, we continue to believe that we must outlive the past and work harder and more creatively to move forward in the world of art and in many other places. Some might say that is the Kansas City spirit.

The Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity is both rooted and elevated by its Kansas City spirit. This is not something new for the Ballet; it is a part of the legacy created by the founder Tatiana Dokoudovska, redefined by Todd Bolender and alive and thriving under the leadership of William Whitener, Jeffrey J. Bentley, the current company and staff, the board and supporters.

The Bolender Center embodies the Kansas City Spirit. Its roots as part of Union Station are emblematic of our forebearers' vision and spirit in placing Kansas City at the center of rail in the United States. Even today, the tracks north of the Bolender Center are the second busiest rail freight right of way in the US. The Bolender Center works hard to insure that what happens inside its walls elevates the hard work and creativity of the dancers to even greater heights in the world of dance and art.

THE BOLENDER CENTER WOULD NOT BE HERE TODAY WITHOUT THE UNCOMPROMISING DEDICATION AND UNWAVERING PERSEVERANCE OF A NUMBER OF PEOPLE. CHIEF AMONG THEM ARE JULIA IRENE KAUFFMAN AND JEFF BENTLEY. JULIA, FOR PROVIDING THE VISION AND RESOURCES TO KEEP THE IDEA ALIVE AND INSURING THAT IT BECAME A REALITY. AND JEFF, FOR MAINTAINING A PERSONAL FOCUS AND COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION THAT KEPT THE BOARD, PATRONS, VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND THE ENTIRE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM ALIGNED TO INSURE THAT THE BALLET HAD A HOME THAT WAS NOT JUST ANY HOME BUT ONE OF THE BEST DANCE FACILITIES IN THE WORLD.

1957

**DOKOUDOVSKA
ERA**

1981

**BOLENDER
ERA**

1995

**WHITENER
ERA**

01

A black and white photograph of a large industrial interior, likely a factory or warehouse. The image is dominated by a complex network of heavy steel beams and structural supports. A large, bright, circular light fixture hangs from the ceiling in the upper right corner. The perspective is looking upwards, emphasizing the scale and height of the structure. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

MIGHTY

THE HISTORY OF KANSAS CITY BALLET

Excerpted from *Kansas City Ballet: The First Fifty Years*,
by Wyatt Townley

DOKOUDOVSKA ERA



top Miss Tania checking makeup, *bottom* Mayor Ilus Davis proclaims "Civic Ballet Week." *from left* Mayor Davis, Tom Steinhoff, Tatiana Dokoudovska and Shirley Weaver (*photo* Wilborn and Fitzgeralds), *opposite page* Miss Tania teaching class in Treadway Hall (*photo* Kathe Hamilton)

Without Tatiana Dokoudovska's tremendous artistic talent, distinguished professional career, and unswerving drive for furthering her art, we might not have a professional ballet company in Kansas City.

Dokoudovska was born in France to Russian and Italian aristocracy. Children of artists (her mother was a godchild and student of Olga Preobrajenska and father was an actor and director), Tatiana and her brother Vladimir were sent to the famous Olga Preobrajenska's ballet class in Paris.

She was performing by age 12 and at 15 was touring with the Ballet Russe de l'Opera Comique and then Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In 1939, she joined American Ballet Theater and came to the United States. While Dokoudovska danced around the world, including at London's Covent Garden, she accepted a summer job at Kansas City's Starlight Theater.

During that summer in 1954, she did a television interview that would change her life. The director of the Kansas City Conservatory of Music saw the interview and offered her a teaching contract at the Conservatory. It was 1957 when Dokoudovska founded Kansas City Ballet Company. Her goal was to bring a regular ballet presence to the Kansas City area.

She would rehearse until 11 p.m. and then go home to cut patterns and sew costumes, which she paid for out of her own pocket. "I don't buy lavish clothes," she was quoted as saying, "I invest in the Ballet!"

For 20 years, as artistic director, advisor and choreographer, she nurtured the company with her time, love, talent, and the gift of her personal resources. She brought the company from an outgrowth of the Conservatory of Music's recital program, through gradual stages, to a metropolitan-area civic company, and then to the threshold of the company's first professional season.

In 1974-1976, she encouraged an across-the-board reorganization to create a professional ballet company. In the 1976-1977 season, Kansas City Ballet joined the growing ranks of professional ballet companies being founded throughout the United States.

Dokoudovska's contribution to dance cannot be over-estimated; nor is there any way to express the debt owed to her by all lovers of fine dance in mid-America.







above left to right, top to bottom Jean Quick Niedt, Sherrie Quinton, Melissa Kelly, Richard Noble and Maryhelen Hanson in James DeBolt's *The House of the Rising Sun*, *Mystic Journey*, Choreographed by Ronald M. Sequoia, 1980, Eric Hyrst's *Tangents* performed in 1977; opposite page, left to right, top to bottom Shirley Weaver and Rober Sullivan in *Aurora's Wedding*, Carol Kindell and William Carlyle as Estrella and Florestan in *Carnaval*, 1962, John Charles Smith and Dolly Allard in *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, 1975 (photo by Carter Hamilton), Connie Salley and Edward Mann in Michel Fokine's *Sylphides*, 1957, Flora Hall, Russ Voglet, and Carol Harrison in *Reflections*, 1977 (photo by Grodd Photo Industries, Inc.), Michele Hamlett, 1976





Debut Performance of Kansas City Ballet in *Les Sylphides*, 1957



BOLENDER ERA



top Bolender with Kansas City Ballet sign, 1982 (photo by Jim Szczepanski), bottom Donna Wood, Alvin Ailey and Todd Bolender, 1986 (photo by Don Middleton), opposite page Bolender rehearsing with Ellen Makarewicz, James Jordan and Helen Rosenthal, 1981 (photo by Jim Szczepanski)

Todd Bolender, dancer, choreographer, teacher and director, played an integral role on all four fronts in the development of ballet as an American art form. A protégé of George Balanchine during the founding years of the New York City Ballet, Bolender was an original cast member of the early masterworks of both Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. Bolender also choreographed for NYCB, on Broadway and at the Metropolitan Opera. In the 1960s and 70s, he brought American ballet and musical theater to the opera houses of Turkey, Germany, Austria and Japan.

Following Dokoudovska's retirement, KCB board of directors sought to revitalize the existing company. In 1980, several members met with School of American Ballet and NYCB co-founder, Lincoln Kirstein, who stated that Bolender was their man. He accepted the challenge but insisted that the performances be accompanied by an orchestra and Kansas City Ballet School be established. He invited Una Kai and Jonathan Watts, and later Diana Adams, to support his vision.

Bolender recruited dancers for his first company both locally and nationally. All became known for their vigorous athleticism, speed, dramatic range, and humor. The board secured the Westport Allen Center for the company and school; a building that sustained the organization for the next 18 years. Philanthropist Muriel Kauffman and Bolender became personal friends, and she inspired other community leaders to support the company's growth. He built a varied repertory with his own work as well as the choreography of Balanchine, Robbins, Alvin Ailey and others. Kansas City artist Dale Eldred was a vital, creative partner on several of Bolender's new ballets. Una Kai, ballet mistress, not only staged the company's Balanchine works but helped Bolender assemble Kansas City's holiday tradition of *The Nutcracker* that first season at The Music Hall.

During his 15-year tenure, Bolender created a dozen works to scores by Prokofiev, Bernstein, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and Beethoven. Pianist Francisco Renno was an essential part of those creations. Bolender staged many existing works including his signature ballets, *The Still Point*, with a score by Debussy, and *Souvenirs*, written by his friend Samuel Barber.



Also, the company and school maintained an annual presence in St. Louis and, for a time, changed their name to the State Ballet of Missouri.

Bolender's retirement in 1995 allowed him to assist the Balanchine Foundation with recreating his original roles, including the complete restoration of the lost Balanchine ballet, *Renard*. With Ballet Master James Jordan's assistance, the ballet premiered in 2001 for Kansas City's Stravinsky Festival. It then appeared in New York at the Wall to Wall Balanchine Festival.

In 2006, anticipating the opening of this building, the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, he attended the groundbreaking of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. He passed away the following week. The prestigious Dance Magazine Award was posthumously bestowed to an artist who committed 75 of his 92 years to the art of dance. Bolender's vision continues to influence and inspire Kansas City Ballet.

right In costume for Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* at the St. Louis Arch, Alecia Good, Laurinda Mackay, Gretchen Klocke and Douglass Stewart, 1991 (photo by Strauss-Peyton, Inc.), *bottom* Corrine Giddings, Susan Manchak and Jody Anderson in Todd Bolender's *The Still Point*, 1984 (photo by Don Middleton) *opposite page* Susan Lewis and William Dunne in Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, 1990 (photo by David Smalls, Hallmark)







above Scott Alan Barker in Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, 1990,
opposite page Bolender's *The Miraculous Mandarin* with Jody
Anderson and James Jordan, 1985 (photos by Don Middleton)





WHITENER ERA



top William Whitener with Julia Kauffman and Lauren LaPointe with daughter, Brittany LaPointe
bottom William Whitener (speaking) at Whitener's tenth-anniversary performance, 2002 (photo by Steve Wilson), opposite William Whitener in rehearsal with Kimberly Cowen and Logan Pachciarz (photos by Steve Wilson)

William Whitener has been active in the professional dance field for more than four decades as a renowned dancer, teacher, choreographer, and director. He has worked with the leaders who have shaped the face of contemporary American ballet. Whitener has danced and directed on Broadway, appeared in and directed for television and film, created and staged ballets worldwide, and guided top artists of the operatic stage. He also has participated in prestigious panels and judged international competitions.

As a young dancer at the Cornish School in Seattle, he was discovered and trained by Robert Joffrey, who invited him to join the New York City Opera Ballet, and subsequently the Joffrey Ballet in 1969. For the next eight years, he performed a wide range of principal roles in ballets by Alvin Ailey, Gerald Arpino, George Balanchine, Kurt Jooss, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, and others. Following a year in Bob Fosse's *Dancin' on Broadway*, he joined the Twyla Tharp Dance Company and toured the world for eight years as one of her leading dancers.

Following periods as artistic director of both Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal, Whitener was appointed artistic director of Kansas City Ballet in 1996. His rich and varied programs have encompassed a diverse retrospective of the 20th century's most pivotal works by Balanchine, Robbins, Tudor, de Mille, and Tharp.

He has brought national attention to the company with his unique programming and company tours to New York City and Washington's Kennedy Center. He has been a champion of major new voices in the field by inviting over a dozen renowned choreographers to create on Kansas City Ballet. Whitener also has developed a choreographic workshop that further develops the talents and imaginations of his dancers.

As of the opening of this building, Whitener had created 16 new works of his own here in Kansas City that reflect both his classical foundation and his more contemporary roots. After adding the new position of music director to the roster, Whitener has collaborated with Ramona Pansegrau to choose scores of distinction for his creations including Grieg, Scarlatti, Mendelssohn,







Takemitsu, Poulenc, and Glazounov. His collaborations with the Lyric Opera, Kansas City Chorale, Kansas City Symphony and Chorus and many individual artists have further woven the company into the fabric of Kansas City.

In 1999, Kansas City Ballet finally escaped the confines of the Westport Allen Center and, with strong leadership from Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley and the board of directors, proceeded to move the organization to two locations downtown over a 12-year period. Beginning in 2003, they also began to fundraise for a permanent home that was aptly named for Todd Bolender, an honor announced at his 90th birthday celebration.

Kansas City Ballet's future brightened with the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in fall of 2011. Whitener's new evening-length production of *Tom Sawyer: A Ballet in 3 Acts* with an original score by Maury Yeston, opened a new chapter in the company's future.

Since 1957, the Kansas City Ballet has been an esteemed but itinerant ballet company. At last, we have a secure home, a proper stage, and -- thanks to Kansas City's generosity -- a future filled with dynamic dance.

opposite page Whitener's *Tom Sawyer - A Ballet in 3 Acts*, 2011,
below Jerome Robbins's *The Concert*, 2004 (photos by Steve Wilson)





below Kimberly Cowen and Paris Wilcox in Vincente Nebrada's *Lento a Tempo e Appassionato*, 2004 opposite page top to bottom, left to right Caitlin Cooney, Matthew Powell and Amber Metiva in Fernand Nault's *La Fille Mal Gardée*, 2006, Lisa Thorn in Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, 1996, Stefani Schrimpf, Lateef Williams and Catherine Russell in José Limon's *The Moor's Pavane*, 2007, Ann Reinking's *Suite Kander*, 1999, Paris Wilcox and Lisa Choules in Merce Cunningham's *Duets*, 2003 (photos by Steve Wilson)





Dancer Kimberly Cowen

A black and white photograph of a modern building's exterior. The image features large, cantilevered concrete slabs and a complex network of steel beams and pipes. A worker is visible on a scaffold or platform, working on one of the concrete elements. The lighting creates strong shadows, emphasizing the geometric forms and textures of the architecture.

VIGOR

THE MAKING OF THE TODD BOLENDER CENTER

SPARK OF POSSIBILITY

"Home wasn't built in a day."

Jane Ace



Conversations about a new facility for Kansas City Ballet and School started fifty years ago. "There was always this idea that at some point, we would want to have our own place," said Kansas City Ballet Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. "A custom fit for the mission of the Ballet." Todd Bolender spoke of it in the mid-80s as a dream.

For decades, this dance company and school made due with makeshift accommodations. They were bursting at the seams in their various locations. Size restrictions prevented them from expanding the school. They lacked one large studio where they could easily load and unload large scenery and props needed for proper rehearsal. And the sizes of the professional rehearsal studios were woefully inadequate.

"Dancers literally hit the wall in large traveling dance phrases," said Artistic Director William Whitener, "because the studios didn't allow for what dancers would have in the theater, which was the off-stage space needed for dancers to build up steam before entering the stage and then exit with full energy."

When Kansas City Ballet (KCB) and School was located in the Westport Allen Center, there were conversations about buying the building and renovating, or buying the building and tearing it down. Then reality intervened and the Ballet received notice that the building had been purchased by another party – and they had sixty days to relocate.

"I remember some things about the Westport Allen Center that were appalling for a dance company," recalls Bentley. "Showers and bathrooms in particular were awful. When I first came to the Ballet in 1998, I remember saying to the company, 'I'm going to get you out of here.' Then

shortly thereafter, we were told to move!"

For forty-five of those sixty days, they looked at spaces – abandoned schools, storefronts, empty lots – and eventually moved to an existing building downtown on the corner of 16th Street and Broadway Boulevard. It was the Ballet's intention to inhabit this space for just three years as they sought a more permanent home, but due to a multitude of set backs, they stayed in the building for seven years and then moved to yet another temporary home in 2007, this time just across the street.

Early in their time at the 16th and Broadway location, the Ballet selected a site in the River Market neighborhood of Kansas City as a potential location for their permanent home. They placed a sixty thousand dollar deposit to purchase the site and called a meeting of the Ballet's Board of Directors to approve the purchase. This was in 1999, just as conversations had taken root and plans began to bloom about a new performing arts center in downtown Kansas City that would serve as the future performance venue for the Kansas City Symphony, the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Kansas City Ballet.

At the board meeting, Julia Irene Kauffman, Chairwoman of the Board and also primary champion and donor for the what would become the new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts (KCPA), first assured KCB that the Foundation's Board would fully support the Ballet's proposal to purchase the River Market property if that was what they wanted to do. However, Julia offered another proposal – to provide a piece of land on the KCPA's hilltop site overlooking downtown Kansas City to house a new facility for the Ballet. Without hesitation, KCB happily abandoned the River Market plan and set forth on an exciting path to build their new home as part of the KCPA complex.

DESIGN DRESS REHEARSAL

The implicit understanding was that KCB would utilize the same design team as that of the new performing arts facility, headlined by renowned Boston-based architect, Moshe Safdie. KCB retained Safdie Architects to design their new home in compliment to the neighboring KCPA, and the Kansas City architectural firm, BNIM, served as the local design representative to work with the Ballet and their project executive, MC Realty, as their project took shape.

Safdie's initial design for the facility looked promising. By this time, at the dawn of the 21st century, KCB had amassed more than four decades of knowledge and experience concerning what was needed to run a thriving ballet school and professional company. They had inhabited eight different homes in as many neighborhoods throughout Kansas City, and they had experienced the accommodations offered by other schools and professional dance companies in the U.S. and abroad. Indeed, the leaders of KCB had a clear vision for their new home, and their needs seemed remarkably simple: an urban context, ample free parking and what Bentley refers to as a "trinity of aesthetics" for studio spaces – spatial height, column-free studios and abundant natural lighting.

The overarching priority was always about the art form and the mission. "The studios had to be perfect. They had to be absolutely perfect," said Bentley. "If we had to give up a little in the office space, if we had to give up a little in other parts of the building, we were willing to do that. It was about the artist and the training of the artist. That was absolutely inviolable."

The initial concept for the Safdie design offered all of this. Located in Kansas City's urban core, the new building accommodated 60,000 square feet of

space for studios, offices and support spaces, which Bentley described as, "...not too big; certainly not too small. We knew we could use the space." The design team built a model, the Ballet kicked off a capital campaign, and the project took shape. "It was a beautiful design...a wonderful building," Bentley recalled.

As the design process progressed, however, a number of fundamental concerns emerged. Costs were beginning to escalate, with no end in sight. To bring costs down, the design team explored various value-engineering scenarios, but the culmination of these changes to the design began compromising many of the most valued aspects of the building: studios were downsized; windows and skylights were reduced or altogether cut from the design.

And then there was the concern about parking. Though seemingly a pedestrian concern, the reality was that free and ample parking was a lynchpin. Due to constraints and the layout and siting of the building, the Ballet facility would have a maximum of thirty parking spots, which was not enough to accommodate faculty, professional dancers, ballet school students and their parents, visitors and staff. Despite even the most enticing promise of increased studio space and other amenities, parking became a very real source of anxiety. Other schools offered it, and the leaders of KCB knew that without it they would be in trouble.

The design of the new facility on the KCPA site was unquestionably beautiful and offered unprecedented ties to the world-class accommodations offered by the adjacent performing arts facility, but as the building emerged in virtual form, its design began to drift farther and farther from KCB's core values and mission.



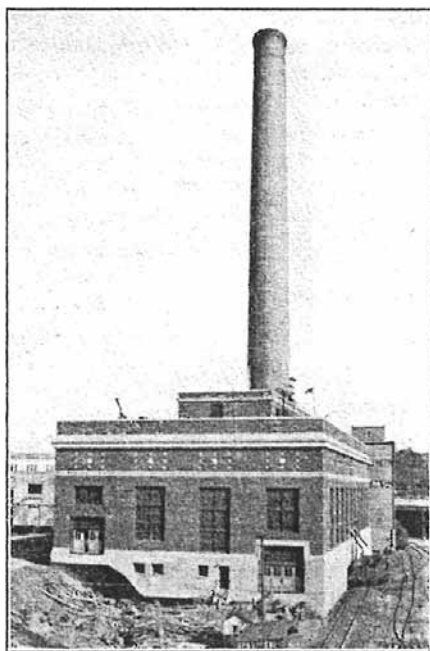
SERENDIPITY INTERVENING

Just as the leaders of KCB were grappling with these serious concerns, progress for the new performing arts center ground to a temporary halt. In the spring of 2005, due to budgetary concerns, the KCPA team placed the project on hold while they performed a due diligence process to explore alternatives to their current design and site.

In what now seems like a serendipitous turn of events, KCB felt compelled during this time to consider other options for their own facility. While they remained a part of the due diligence exercises in scenarios that would maintain their adjacency to the KCPA, they set off on a solo exploration as well. They consulted with a realtor, Bryan W. Johnson of Grubb & Ellis | The Winbury Group, who presented dozens of available properties across the Kansas City area.

“Our question was whether there was another option out there that provided a more accommodating fit for us. Would we be able to find an existing building that we could renovate? One that was also urban? That also had ample parking? And that had the trinity of aesthetics that we needed? That was a tall order, but we wanted to be sure that what we were doing was the right thing for the future of our company and school,” said Bentley.

Among the options presented was a seemingly forgotten and rapidly declining structure just a few blocks from the KCPA site – the old abandoned Union Station Power House. Completed in 1914, the Power House provided coal-powered, steam-generated electricity and heat to the Union Station complex until it was vacated in the 1970s. Even in decline, the building sat quietly noble – a testament to the skilled hand of the building’s original designer, celebrated architect Jarvis Hunt.



Indeed, the Power House stood out. Located in one of Kansas City’s most historic urban areas, the Power House was the final building in the Union Station complex to be restored. It offered sufficient parking. It was light filled. And its original industrial purpose provided an open, voluminous space for something new.

“This was the only building,” Bentley recalled. “It was clearly the only building for us.”

Coincidentally, in the mid 1990s, KCB had looked at the abandoned Power House as a potential new home. At the time, their budget was considerably less, and renovating the Power House was well beyond the means of the not-for-profit Ballet.

“When we first looked at the building,” said Bentley, “we knew that it met all the requirements for a new home for us, but it was an outlandish idea. Of course, very often it’s those outlandish ideas that are the right ones. It just takes a lot of courage to pursue them.”

In their present state of mind in 2005, however, and with fundraising well underway and a Board of Directors behind them, KCB, with guidance from MC Realty, looked more seriously at the Power House, this time as a viable option.

To explore their vision, KCB approached Steve McDowell, BNIM’s Design Principal who was leading local design efforts on the Ballet’s building on the KCPA campus and asked that BNIM perform a series of test fits to see how well the desired studio spaces, offices and



necessary support spaces would fit into the shell of the Power House.

For years, BNIM had looked at the Power House for a variety of uses – including a potential location for the firm’s headquarters. Throughout the last decade, BNIM had also been working on the ongoing renovation of Union Station and was deeply involved in the first steps of renovating the neighboring historic Railway Express and Main Post Office buildings. This familiarity gave McDowell and his team of designers reason to proceed with both enthusiasm and caution.

“We had climbed through the building many times over the years,” said McDowell. “We were familiar with the rational and beautiful industrial architecture, dense structural system of concrete, bearing masonry and steel, the remnants of its past life of energy production, and its surrounding site.”



Rick Schladweiler, Project Architect, recalls the initial conceptual design effort to evaluate the Ballet’s spaces fitting into the building. Having served an integral role on the previous Safdie design, he was able to quickly analyze the factors involved for a successful fit in the Power House.

“We first modeled the Power House in our 3-D modeling software and did a test fit using the building program from the KCPA site,” said Schladweiler. “We discovered that with the addition of new floor plates, we could accommodate their program.”

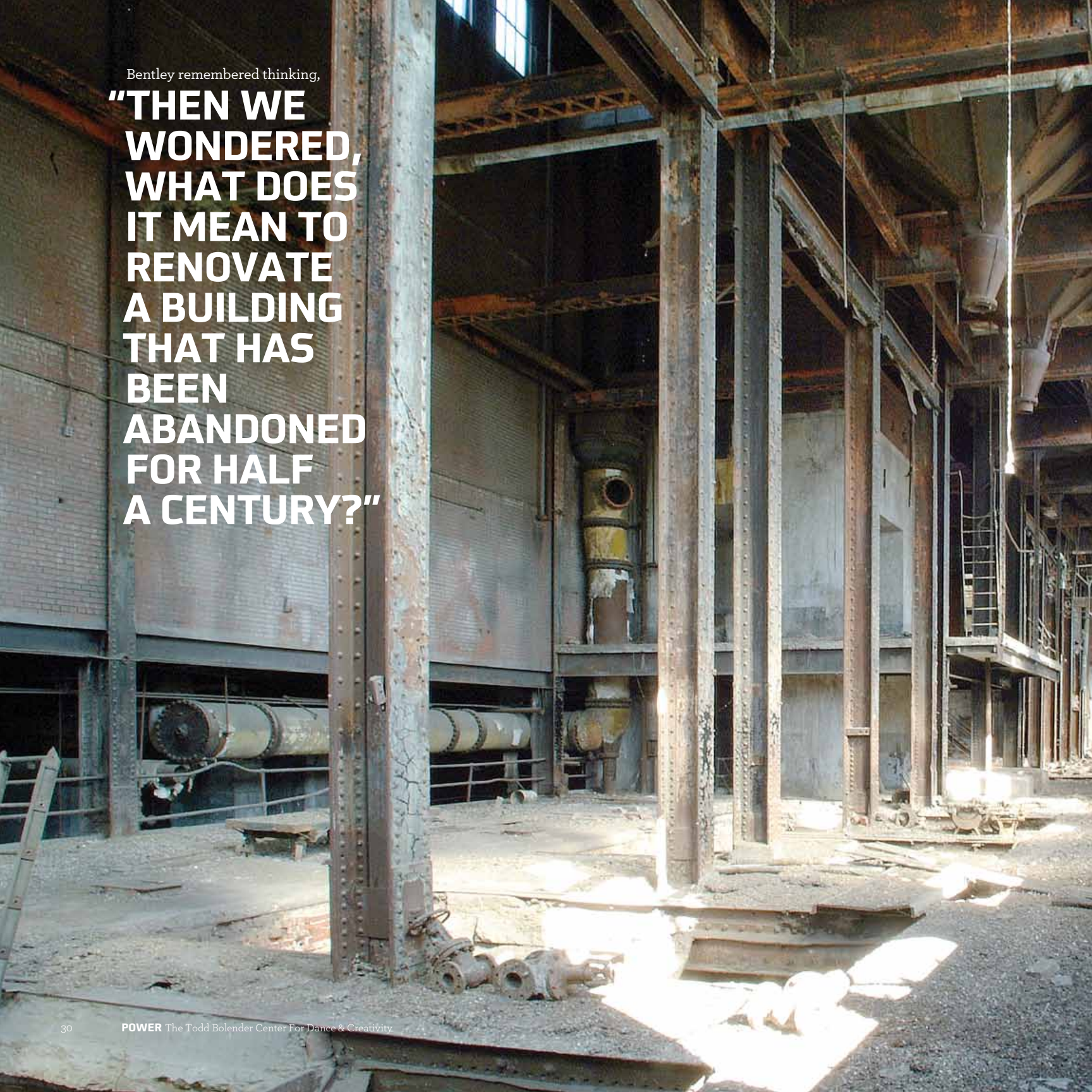
The north Engine Room became evident as the primary column free space, which exactly met the clear dimensional requirements for all the studio volumes.

Rather than on one level, the smaller studios would “float” above and within the larger studio volumes below.

Existing structural elements helped inform where the new floor plates would occur. Circulation connections in the south Boiler Room aligned perfectly with existing chimney arch openings and coal bunker and ash hopper structural steel elements. It was a complex assessment, but a simple solution. The building told Schladweiler it was made for this new use.

BNIM’s exercise generated several variations that appeared to work well and gave confidence that this would be a good home.

With some trepidation, KCB approached Julia Irene Kauffman, the Ballet board chair and CEO of the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, who on behalf of her foundation had pledged a generous seed gift to the Safdie-designed scheme. As the primary champion and donor for the new KCPA, Kauffman had a vested interest in achieving the most successful vision for the new performing arts center, and the Ballet faced a critical question of whether Kauffman’s generosity was exclusive to the concept of the Ballet residing on the KCPA site. To their delight, Julia’s response was one of gracious support and full trust that KCB should and would do what was best for the future of the professional company and school.



Bentley remembered thinking,

**"THEN WE
WONDERED,
WHAT DOES
IT MEAN TO
RENOVATE
A BUILDING
THAT HAS
BEEN
ABANDONED
FOR HALF
A CENTURY?"**



“We all truly wanted to do something monumental with this monumental building,” recalls McDowell.

But perhaps the most challenging task was proving to everyone – the board, patrons and even themselves – that this was not only feasible but also the right thing to do.

McDowell recalls one hot summer afternoon when a group from BNIM met with a group of Ballet supporters. “They wanted to see the building and hear our thoughts and vision about how ‘in their words’ this old, run down, industrial building could ever be made right for children and dancers in leotards and toe shoes. The train noise was only made unimportant by what they experienced entering the building—pigeons, filth and standing water greeted us, and there was little that we could say or do to be convincing that day.” Through Bentley’s perseverance, however, they agreed to give the building a chance.

This Power House option offered one additional benefit: historic preservation tax credits. Famously generous in the state of Missouri, these credits became a driving factor in the decision to transform the Power House into a new home for KCB.

Armed with financial backing, the blessings of the donors and Board, support of Downtown Council and renewed energy to realize their vision for a new home, KCB pulled their stakes from the KCPA hilltop and shifted focus to the historic Power House.

TRANSFORMATION

REINFORCE

The design process involved thoughtful integrated collaboration among the entire team of the client, designers, preservationists, engineers, builders and the project manager. Transforming the Power House, which had been lying fallow for so long, was a monumental task.

“The project team had the daunting task of turning generator rooms into dance studios, coal bunkers into dressing rooms, and fire pits into useable space while maintaining enough historical building aspects for the Ballet to earn federal tax credits,” said Chris Szeliga, Sr. Project Manager with general contractor, JE Dunn. “Our entire design, construction and client team performed pre-construction planning for over two years in order to complete the design required to convert the Power House building to the home of KCB.”

Working alongside BNIM, KCB and project executive MC Realty hit the ground running. But acclimating from a fully designed, shovel-ready project to a relatively blank slate was no easy adjustment. As the design team dug deeper into refining the layout of KCB’s spaces within the framework of the Power House, they also took the first steps in rehabilitation process.

Anyone entering the Power House was immediately struck by the massive amounts of steel framing used to support the functional elements of the building’s original purpose – heavy boilers, turbine generators and coal bunkers – set against a backdrop of soaring ceilings and remnants of the power plant’s operational

mechanisms and simple efficiency. The Power House had suffered severe deterioration, however, and attention shifted immediately to the building’s structural condition.

Over time, chemicals and heat from the coal-burning process followed by years of unchecked exposure to harsh elements had slowly eaten away at building components.

“A few of the steel columns in the basement had holes big enough to poke a hand through,” Schladweiler remembers. Despite corrosion, however, the building’s structural integrity remained relatively sound. The original function of the Power House required that its structure bear immense loads of machinery, equipment, coal and ash; without that weight, there was a great deal of structural redundancy in the building.

To understand a detailed scope of the rehabilitation, the team retained the services of Structural Engineering Associates (SEA) to perform a comprehensive survey of the building’s existing conditions – a task that bore its own obstacles. “Before we could even access the basement level during our field work,” recalls Rich McGuire, SEA’s Principal Engineer on the project, “we had to install two submersible sump pumps to remove standing water from the basement and south track hopper vault.” It was evident that water had flowed through the spaces for years.

SEA’s findings were not surprising, but they presented a daunting climb ahead. Rehabilitation would include an intensive and comprehensive reinforcement to the building’s structural elements, replacement of concrete, a new roof, and major repairs to masonry, terra cotta detailing and fenestration.





The structural state of the building and its components was of foremost concern. The “Texas Skylight” – raised portions of roof with operable glass windows that can be opened to release heat and allow natural sunlight to enter – had reached an advanced state of masonry wall failure due to corrosion and a flaw in their original construction. They needed to be replaced. Framed and structural elements showed corrosion and delamination so severe that replacement was the most economical option. Steel beams and plate girders required repair and strengthening at various levels of the building. And in addition to corroded steel columns, the waterlogged basement also revealed a need for replacement of all concrete components.

On the building’s exterior, a complete restoration required repair and replacement of the roof, concrete, brick masonry, decorative terracotta bands, parapets and wood windows on every façade.

The project broke ground on November 13, 2009, and construction kicked off with an entire year focused on remediation, demolition and removal of debris. The demolition and construction team, including JE Dunn Construction, DECO Companies and Kingston Environmental, coordinated this potentially hazardous process with efficiency and success. They safely removed asbestos, lead paint and tons of concrete and steel. Simultaneously, they began reinforcing the building’s structural elements and preparing its armature to support a new purpose.

“Our construction team did a remarkable job, not just with the restoration itself, but with their safety measures during the process,” noted Bentley. “I had no idea how perilous this renovation was until after the fact. Several structural elements were dangerously compromised as we began reorganizing the space to accommodate our space needs. If I had known this during the construction process, I wouldn’t have been able to sleep at night.”

Y BALLET



In the end, the construction team removed and replaced

17,500
bricks,

268
pieces of terra cotta and

158,000
linear feet of brick joint,

and they cleaned and sealed
134,000
square feet of brick and terracotta.

MASONRY WORK

RENEW

A predominant goal of this effort, for everyone involved, was to restore the historic Power House to its original condition. As part of the Union Station complex, the building embodied an important story of national significance, and both KCB leadership and the BNIM design team recognized the need to honor its history.

The project team solicited the services of Architectural & Historical Research, LLC, a Kansas City-based cultural resources consulting firm led by historian Cydney Millstein.

“Kansas City Ballet was not the first organization to approach me about an adaptive reuse of the Power House,” said Millstein. “But theirs was the best approach. It was a beautiful and respectful fit.”

Earlier, in 2004, Millstein had led the efforts to place the Power House – along with two other Union Station ancillary buildings, Adams Express and Railway Express – in the National Register of Historic Places. Millstein understood that from the perspective of the National Parks Service and *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* – a federal guideline of how to treat historic properties in order to achieve historic tax credits – the Power House embodied tremendous historic significance. Not only were there architectural elements to preserve, but


the volumes of space also became an interesting consideration.

On the exterior, the building’s fenestration was a primary historic element. The defining moment in the exterior articulation of the Power House – a rectangular brick building – lay in the cadence of its large, paned windows. Acknowledging their importance, the design team carefully maintained all exterior window placements and openings as Jarvis Hunt originally designed them.

In addition to placement, all of the building’s windows were meticulously replicated, and their extraordinary match to the original windows – in profile, configuration, materials and detailing – became a source of celebration for the design team. The window restoration also presented an opportunity to introduce new sustainable acoya wood sashes and insulated glazing systems, which provided an energy-efficient assembly while silencing adjacent train noise. Respecting both historic and modern considerations, they were a perfect fit.

The masonry repair on the building was an arduous endeavor and entailed careful research and testing to ensure proper restoration. The first task involved removing and replacing bricks and terra cotta with perfect replicas. Incredibly, JE Dunn was able to locate a match to the existing bricks from the original kiln and manufacturer in Bixby, Oklahoma, thereby replacing 822 damaged bricks.

The most time-consuming masonry repair involved a comprehensive tuckpointing of the exterior. JE Dunn painstakingly tested and matched the mortar to the original compound, and then raked and pointed every joint on the exterior of the building.



"By consolidating spaces and eliminating redundancies, we've created an efficient layout. We put every square inch of space in the building to good use."

Rick Schladweiler

The National Parks Service emphasizes that an adaptive reuse should fit within *the Standards*, not the other way around.

With a committed design team and KCB leadership in full support, not only did the Power House restoration fit within the Standards, but the design team also found ways to creatively weave historic elements into the design vocabulary of KCB's incoming spaces.

The Power House has been readapted from a power plant to a space dedicated to performance art. To help KCB and its group of stakeholders envision the transformation, BNIM utilized architectural precedents for similar adaptive reuse projects, including the Tate Modern museum. Though a much larger industrial power plant, the Tate Modern is dedicated to visual art.

On the interior, BNIM's design cleverly repurposed industrial remnants for new use or visual interest. This included salvaging the existing gantry crane and hook – formerly used to move heavy objects – for use as a visual element in the main dance studio, retrofitting original coal funnels into pendant light fixtures, turning original coalbunkers into dressing rooms, preserving a section of conveyor system that once transported ash and coal throughout the former power plant, and even adapting the pivot window hardware to support new light shelves. Also, to reference the placement of the Power House's original furnaces, BNIM integrated glass block infill to mark their former location in the new lobby space, allowing filtered daylight into the wardrobe workroom below.

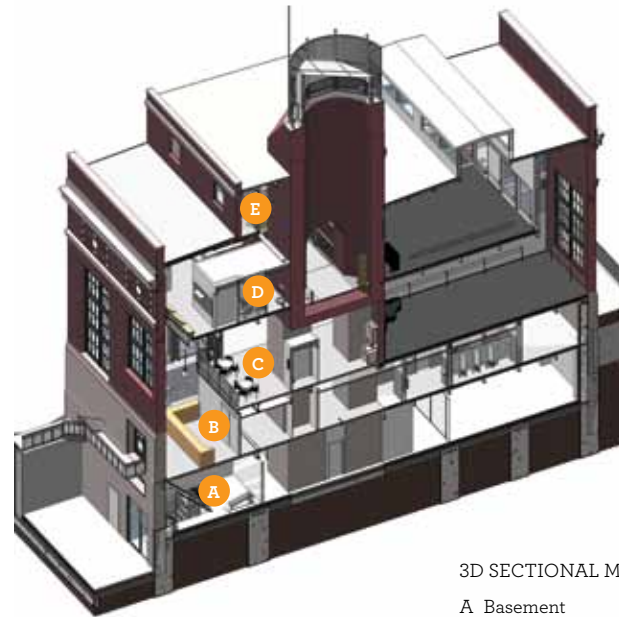
Adding their own layer of history and reuse, KCB contributed several pipe fitting ballets barres that had moved with them from facility to facility over the years. The design team had no doubt that they would reuse the barres and give them a permanent home. They were a perfect fit – industrial components in an industrial space now serving a new refined function.

In organizing KCB's spaces, the design team took great care to maintain a majority of the building's original volumes of space – an historic preservation element that has attracted more scrutiny from the National Park Service in recent years.

"It is significant that the large spaces were not divided and compartmentalized beyond recognition," Millstein commented. "Originally this building featured spaces with great height and width. If you look at historic plans and photographs, you see that the building's original spatial configurations as a power generation facility have not changed much with the Ballet's new home." The actual volumes of space are still largely intact.

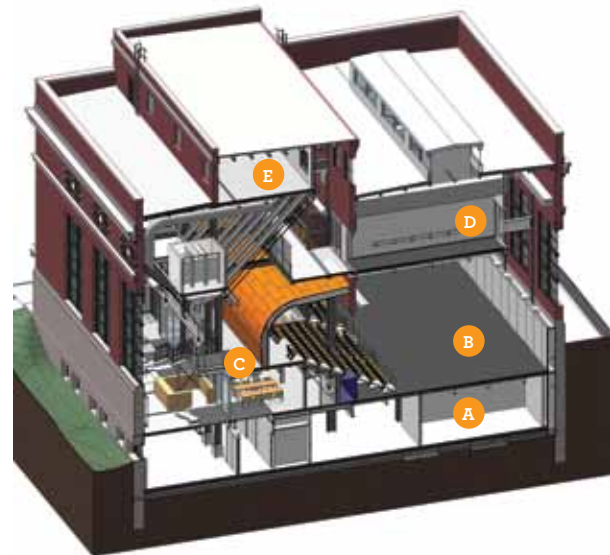
Everything was done right. The design team restored the Power House with the belief that anything done to bring this historic building back into reuse should maintain a sense of the building's original use. This building in its restored form is overwhelmingly historic. Even though the building clearly houses KCB, one could tour it today and, with a minimum of dialogue, understand its former use.

Sustainable design goals for the project were established very early in the design process. Redevelopment of an abandoned structure is inherently sustainable, adding density and community connectivity to an area. Thus, site selection alone helped the design team achieve many of the goals. In the building's rehabilitation, the team integrated a new white roof, which reduces heat island effect, and added native site plantings in the former railyard to minimize water use and help filter stormwater runoff. They reduced the building's energy consumption by installing efficient mechanical systems and took advantage of many of the materials already in the building, including the unique sloped steel elements of the bunkers to create functional spaces. The existing window frames, though approaching 100 years old, were in remarkably good shape, allowing the design team to reuse them. New window sashes were made with sustainable forest acoya wood in combination with high performance glazing. An efficient use of finish materials minimized resources and waste, along with low-emitting materials for the health and well-being of the occupants. Maximizing the use of daylight and views, which was offered by the huge expanses of existing windows, reduced artificial lighting use throughout the daytime and provided a connection to the outdoors for all. And, of course, the team configured the interior spaces to share and amplify natural daylight.



3D SECTIONAL MODELS

- A Basement
- B First Floor
- C Mezzanine
- D Second Floor
- E Penthouse



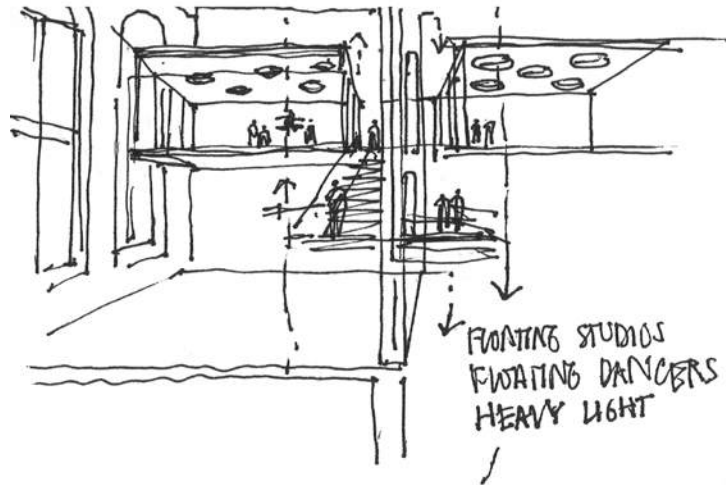
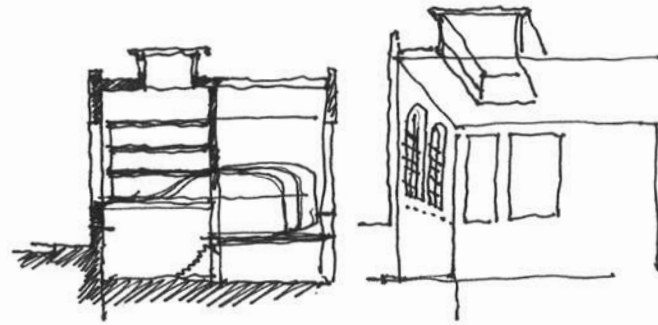
RECONFIGURE

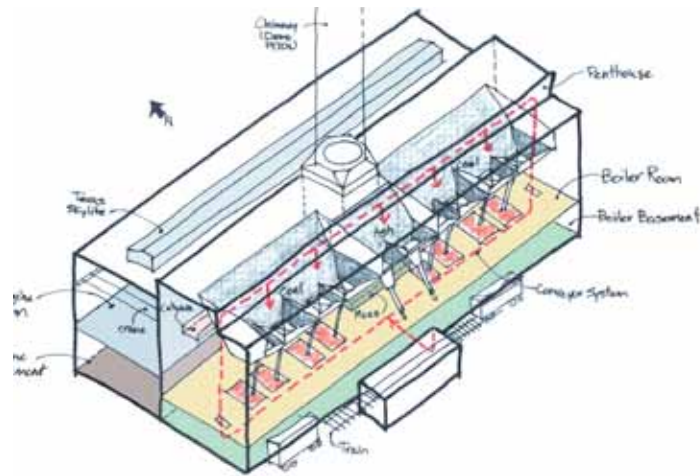
The Power House was an uncanny fit for its new resident, and understanding the goals and vision for the Ballet were crucial during the design process. In configuring the incoming interior spaces, BNIM found that they could meet, to precise measure, every programmatic requirement that KCB had originally defined at the outset of the design process more than five years earlier. But it took more than just square footage to create a lasting home for the Ballet.

BNIM's work with the Ballet throughout the rigorous design process on the KCPA site was very informative for their approach to the Power House. The primary new spaces were, of course, the studios and other spaces that directly support the professional company and the school, but BNIM also learned through this process that the new facilities had to be a welcoming presence for everyone – students, dancers, staff and parents.

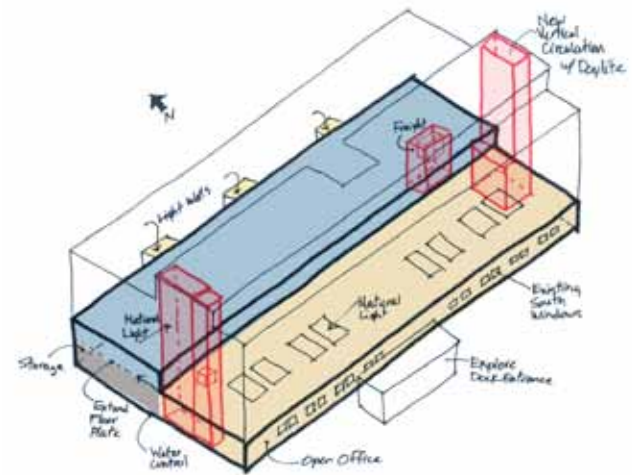
From the outset, the design of the building's spaces was informed by many meetings of the board, parent committees, professional dancers and staff, which imbued much deeper insight into the needs of the new facility. Meetings of the core design and client team were supplemented with Saturday and evening sessions to share the design concept with the larger group of stakeholders and to solicit feedback. Very thoughtful suggestions ran the gamut, from dancer experience, to places for parents to make their waiting time useful, to accommodations for students doing schoolwork, to exhibition space for archives, to insuring a well-organized and safe student pick up area. It was through this process that the design evolved from a detailed space program and historic building into the new home for dance and creativity.

The building's original spatial organization naturally lent itself to accommodate the programmatic needs of the company, school and staff. Through the design team's careful attention to flow and adjacencies and clever configuration of the building's volumes, studios, offices and common spaces fell into place.

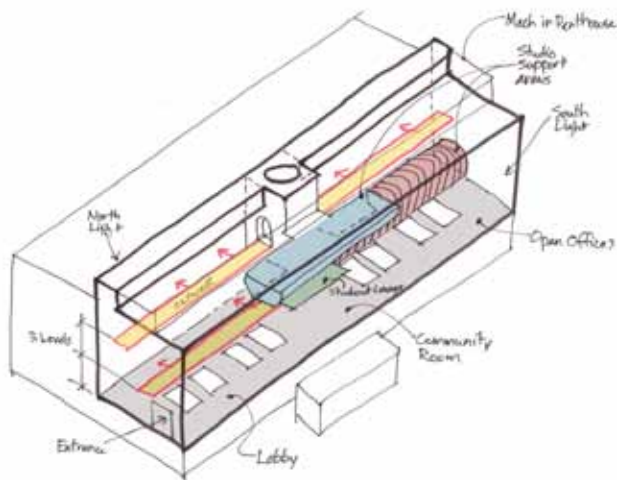




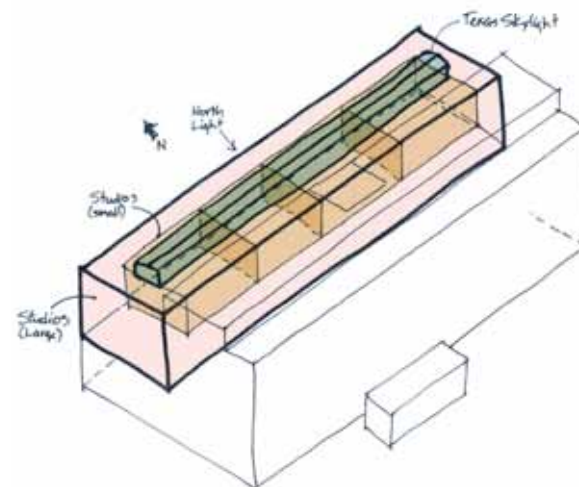
Major components of the original structure included two main volumes. The column free North Engine Room contained a massive gantry crane and a unique Texas Skylight, which were retained. The South Boiler Room presented a number of very unique elements, including eight coalbunkers, two ash hoppers, conveyor system, and a chimney base that once support an exterior smokestack removed in the 1970s. These elements were integrated, along with many others, into the new Bolender Center.



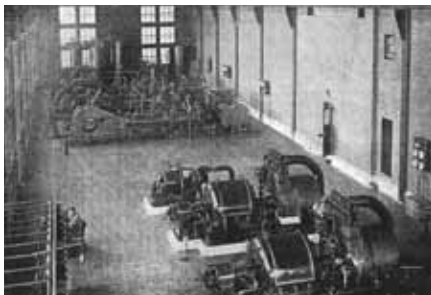
Early spatial studies identified areas in the basement level for storage, dock access, open office and lockers. The configuration of how these areas were connected vertically to the grand volumes above was critical.



South Boiler Room studies identified how the volume could be taken advantage of in creating new lobby areas, support spaces, open office and horizontal circulation.



North Engine Room studies identified how the column-free area could be used for studio configuration. The daylight and area requirements were achieved by floating the 4 smaller studios above and within the larger studio volumes below. This configuration created a vertical separation between smaller and larger studios, informing the location of children areas on the second floor.



The North Engine Room, once a vast space housing tons of whirring machinery and generators, ran the length of the building's north side and rose the full height of the structure. Lined with towering windows and topped with a Texas skylight, the space generously provided the all-important trinity of aesthetics needed for KCB's dance studios – daylight, height and column-free volumes.

The South Boiler Room presented a similarly appropriate fit for circulation, office and support spaces. In its former life, this area, comprising the south half of the Power House, had also served a circulatory function – conveying coal from a train dock on the south façade to feed eight coalbunkers that funneled into the steam generating boilers below. And in reverse, the same conveying system transported coal ash from the basement to two ash hoppers overhead.

Dividing the North Engine Room from the South Boiler Room is a massive wall of brick that was opened at strategic locations for connections between the two sides.

An orange “hood” cuts through the wall, carving out volume for the 180 seats in the main performance studio. The architecture was purposeful in encouraging openness and community.

Through this same wall of brick, a pair of large portal windows connects the public gathering areas on the mezzanine with an unobstructed view into KCB company's primary rehearsal space.

Though strongly linear and relatively easy to configure horizontally, the building presented a bigger challenge with vertical organization. The Power House was originally designed with floor plates that varied in elevation, with the north half of the building's first level sitting twelve feet higher than that of its south half. The design team toyed with a variety of schemes for configuring the north vertical space, and the process yielded a clear winner.

“We decided to drop a portion of the north floor slab by twelve feet,” recalls Bentley, “...much to the dismay of the contractor. As it turned out, even though the structure was sound, that floor slab offered the only conditionally sound floor in the entire building.”

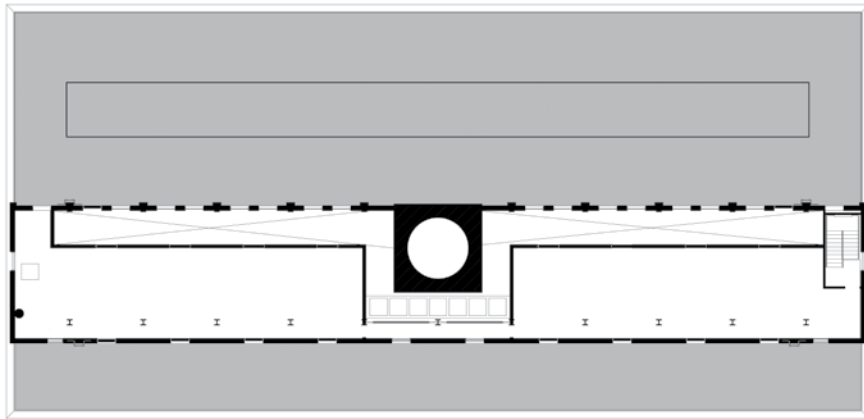


Michael & Ginger Frost
Studio Theater





The decision meant a lengthy and arduous demolition phase, but the twelve feet of additional vertical space allowed the north half of the building to accommodate three generous levels of studio spaces. This vertically oriented organization – totaling five levels from basement to mechanical platform in the former penthouse – strongly influenced the subsequent organization of KCB’s program. Working closely with the Ballet and MC Realty, BNIM developed a spatial layout that kept the professional company and larger spaces at the lowest levels of the building, while sending the smallest users to the top, utilized grand, open staircases to move visitors throughout, and maintained the building’s openness, both visually and acoustically, to encourage interaction between user groups.

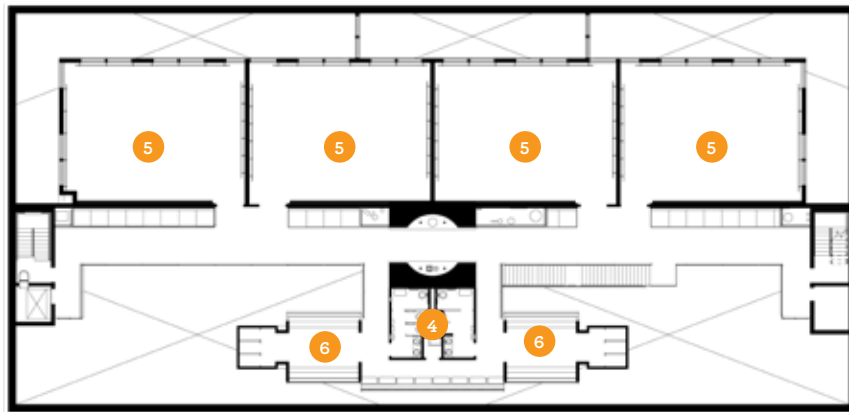


0 20'

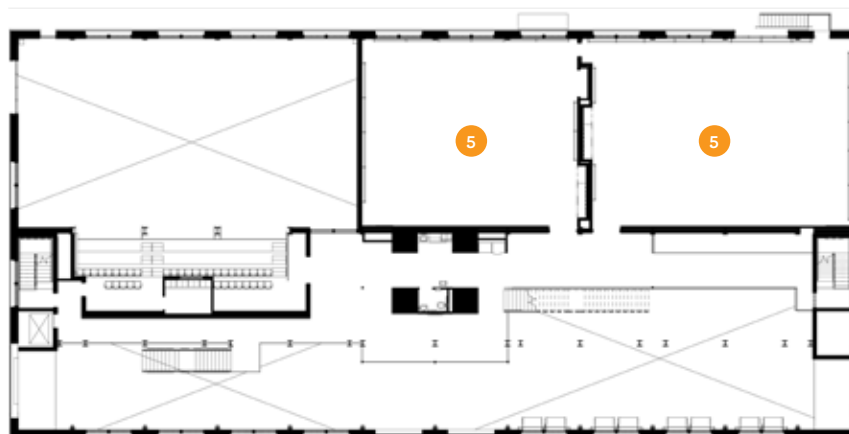


- 1 Entry Lobby
- 2 Multipurpose
- 3 Administration
- 4 Restroom
- 5 Dance Studio
- 6 Locker Room
- 7 Storage
- 8 Work Area

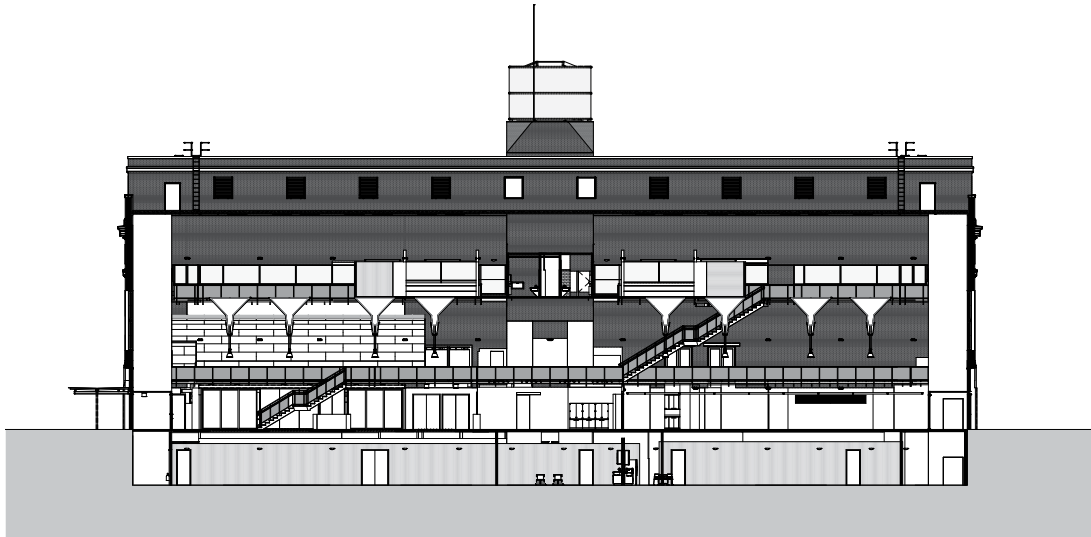
PENTHOUSE



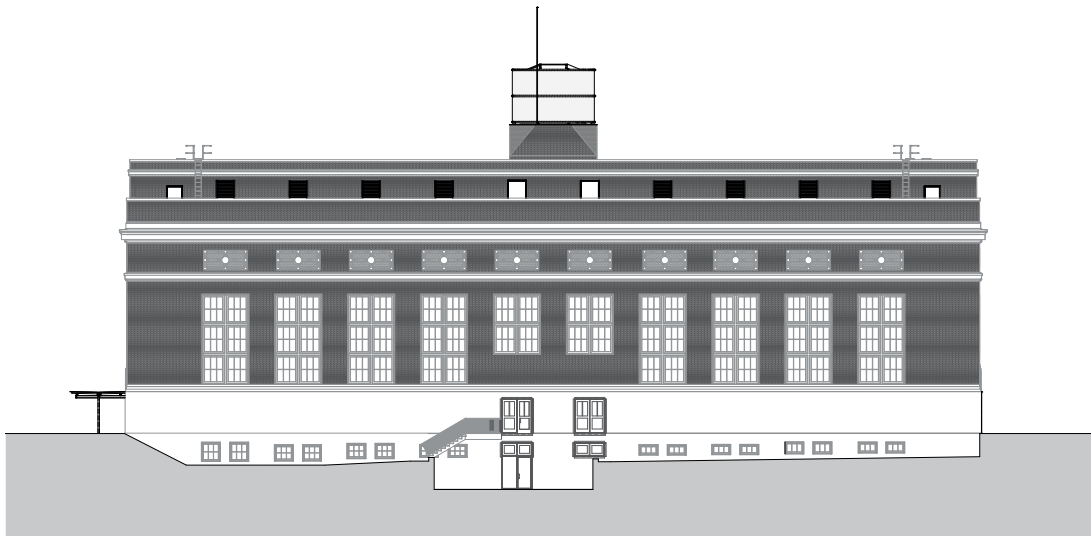
SECOND FLOOR



MEZZANINE

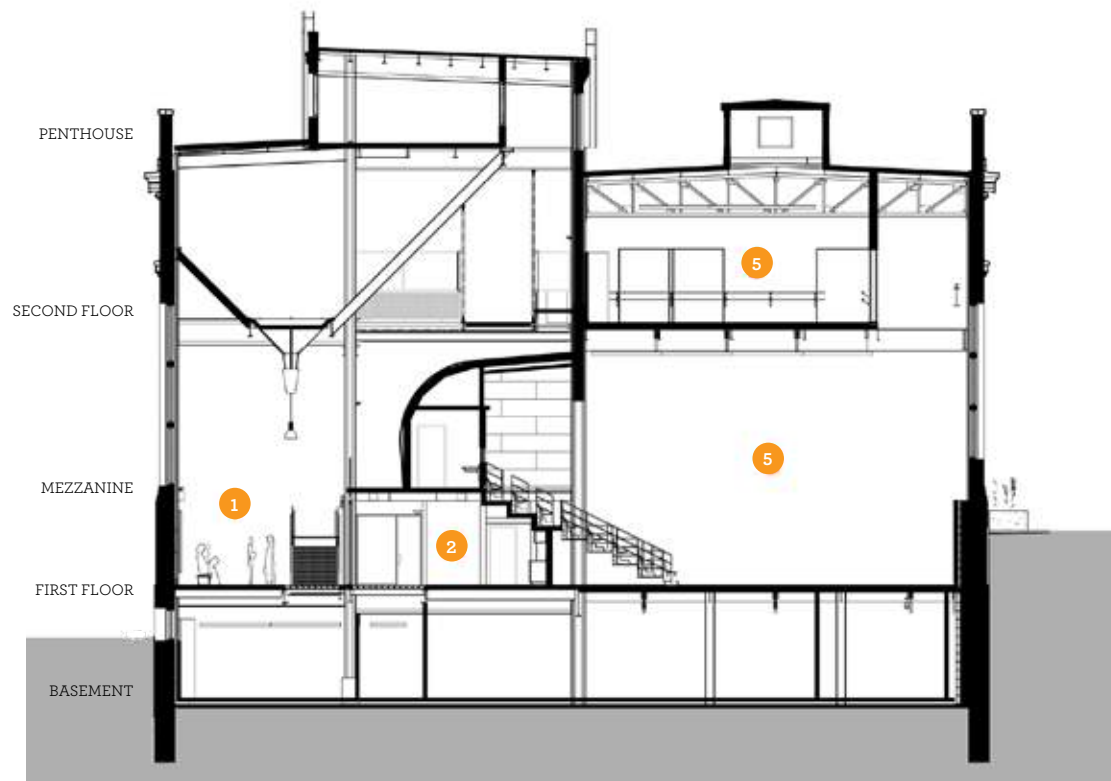


LONGITUDINAL SECTION



SOUTH ELEVATION

0 20'



BUILDING SECTION

0 20'

- 1 Entry Lobby
- 2 Multipurpose
- 3 Administration
- 4 Restroom
- 5 Dance Studio



Nesting beautifully in the northeast corner of the building, the main professional studio theater, named the Michael & Ginger Frost Studio Theater, immediately took shape in the design process as a soaring triple-height space brought to life by daylight from windows and skylight and views to the surrounding urban environment. The placement of the building's structural columns and the linear nature of the space informed the placement of the theater's 180 seats along the south wall of the studio. A gantry crane from the building's power plant days found its final resting place looking down over the new studio theater, which, by design, features a floor area that matches the performance stage dimensions at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

A major design decision that was weighed over and over involved how the main studio would be experienced. Should it be black box studio theater? Would patrons enter from the back of the seating directly from the lobby, or enter at dance floor level? Ultimately, the idea of a black box space was dismissed, as it would limit the amount of daylight in the space, and entry at the dance floor was determined to be the most enjoyable experience. This question had many repercussions regarding the overall design, and the decision would define the patron experience, a consideration that was not taken lightly.









**"THIS NEW FACILITY SURPASSES
OUR EXPECTATIONS. LARGE OPEN
STUDIOS, NATURAL LIGHT AS WELL
AS A 180 SEAT STUDIO THEATER
WILL NOW MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO
CREATE, REHEARSE AND PERFORM
IN AN EXPANSIVE ENVIRONMENT."**

William Whitener



“This was a true marriage of old and new,” said McDowell.

The final solution required preservation and substantial repair of existing systems and elements including the structure and creative new interventions such as the new floor structure for the studios on level two. The design of these studios allowed windows to be shared with the studio spaces below—and gives the students a preview of what they may be doing below as professional dancers.

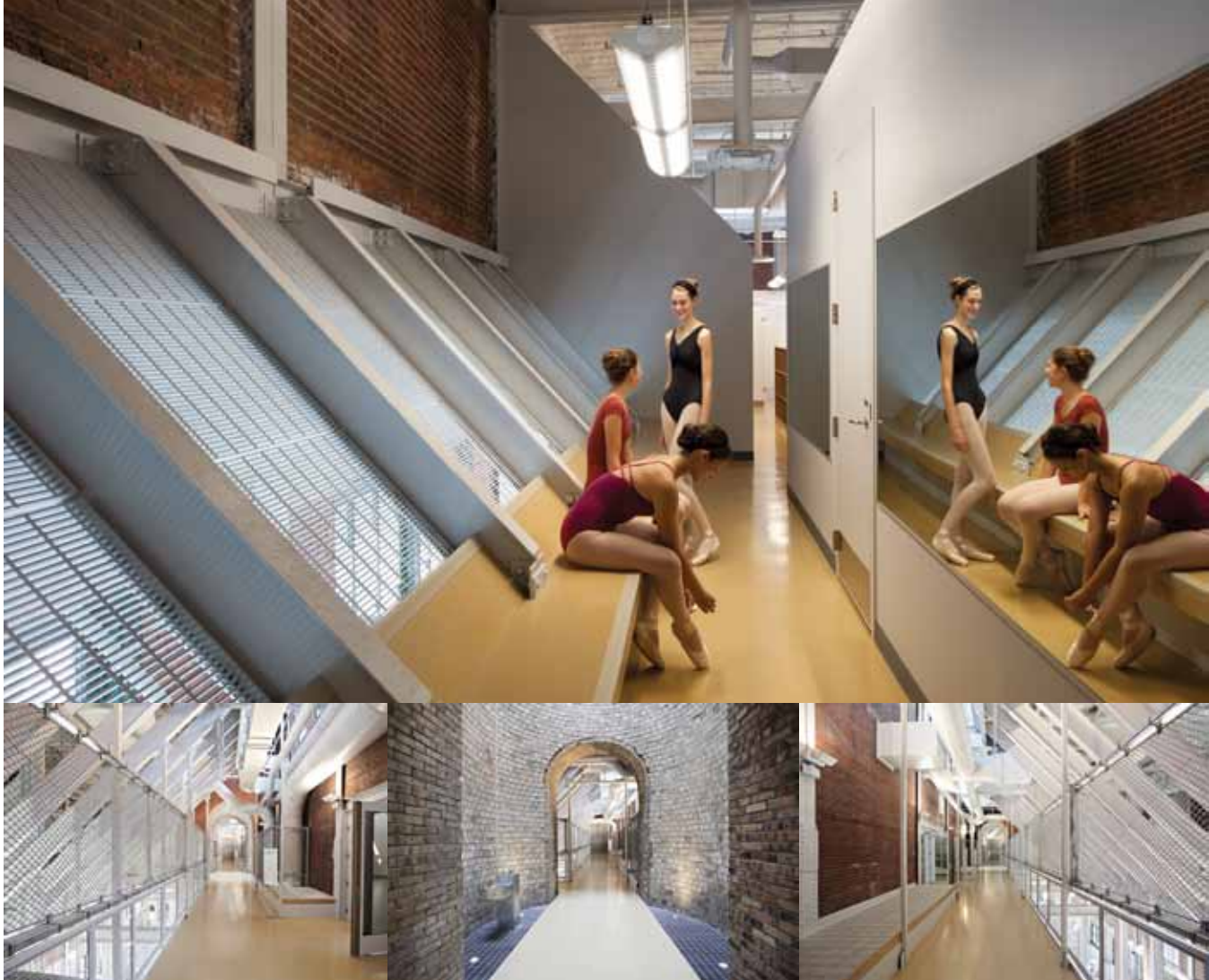


The mezzanine level houses two spacious studios, the western-most of which offers a view looking down into the Frost Studio space below. The circulation spaces at this level are open to the soaring south half of the building and provide access to the Frost Studio seating, space for waiting and informal gathering, and a portal into the professional studio where students and visitors can observe and be inspired by the rehearsals taking place.

The second floor studio level offers several of the building's most breathtaking moments. Maximizing the visual connections to the outdoors and the amount of northern light, a scheme was developed to share daylight from windows and skylights distributed thru three levels of studio space. BNIM's design team developed a beautiful and functional "floating studio" concept that provides a band of four smaller studios inset several feet from the west, north and east walls of the building. The resulting spaces, which are wrapped in glass, mirror and white surfaces share daylight they gain from the Texas skylight above while borrowing additional daylight from the large windows below. This solution also provides subtle but powerful visual connections between floors.



Early drawing to illustrate a "floating studio"



“The unique existing features of the Power House are rare opportunities. It’s not every day that one finds a building with a massive chimney volume or sloped steel coal bunkers.”

Rick Schladweiler

The catwalk circulation along the second level offers perhaps the most stunning feature in the building – the former Power House chimney. Once a towering brick smokestack, the chimney was shortened considerably in the 1970s. The design team topped the chimney with a custom designed glass cap, transforming the brick shaft into a glowing, glorified skylight, which also serves a functional purpose. Louvers at the perimeter of the chimney’s new cap provide relief air to the HVAC systems in the building. One can experience a very subtle airflow moving through the arched openings of the chimney and then up and out the top of the chimney – a reminder of its former function as a smokestack.



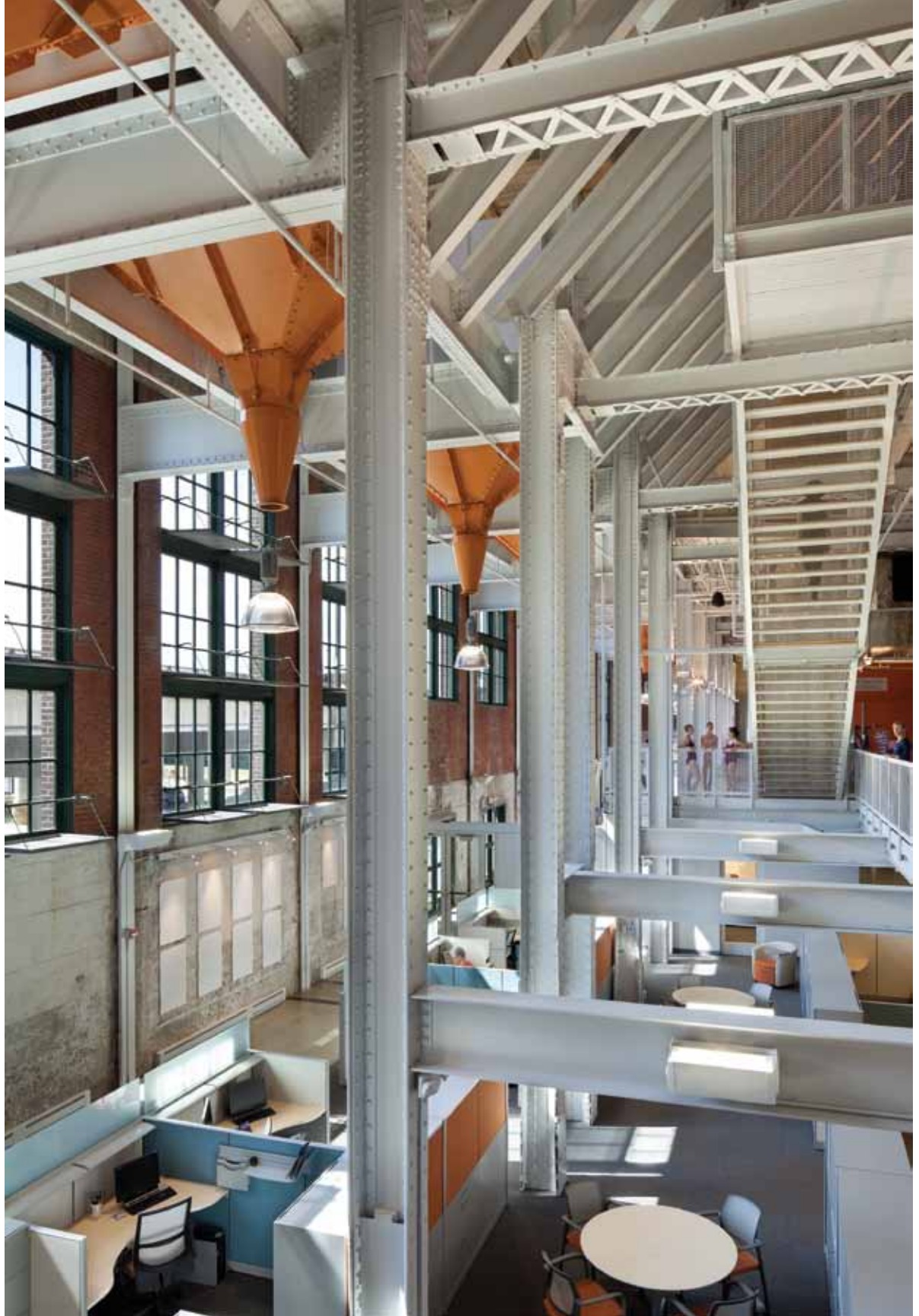


left view shows first, mezzanine and second floor with circulation zones flooded with natural light
right top Partially daylit basement wardrobe workroom
right bottom The Tatiana Dokoudovska Library for Dance. Coordinated by The Kansas City Ballet Guild, the library includes a display of certain historical collections and an archive room located in the basement. The archive space features module shelving and special humidity controls to house personal belongings from the artistic directors, as well as facsimiles of posters and photographs covering the Ballet's history.



The south half of the building was described during board presentations as the “living room” - an open social space conducive to gatherings. It serves as lobby, waiting areas, and generous space for queuing and circulation. The expanded mezzanine provides an intermediate space, connected with dramatic staircases. Layering the north half of the building to house the seven studios allowed the design team to leave the south half vertically open. The former South Boiler Room creates a new public realm that is unprecedented in ballet facilities. The volume and unique structure provides organization for a new lobby, offices and circulation zones that are flooded in natural light during the day and illuminated at night by eight pendant lights integrated into the former coalbunker metal plate funnels. Tucked above the lights at the second level, unique and prominent interior sloped steel structures – former coalbunkers and ash hoppers – now serve as children’s locker and dressing areas.

The building’s basement, once flooded with standing water, became a valuable source of space. The design team transformed the basement spaces into locker rooms and bathrooms for the professional dancers, an expansive wardrobe workroom that is partially day lit by the glass block flooring in the lobby above, and archives.





For KCB and School, the Power House provides 58,000 square feet of space, housing seven studios, a physical therapy suite, lockers and shower facilities for the company, a wardrobe workroom, pre-function space, the Estelle S. and Robert A. Long Ellis Conference Room, archives and office space for staff. And let us not forget parking...glorious parking. The Power House site affords 180 secure and free parking spaces adjacent to the building.







FLIPPING THE SWITCH

When the new home for KCB opened in August 2011, it received rave reviews for its beauty. But, beyond the beauty of the space and the important act of saving a treasured architectural relic, the facility is, as Bentley says, “the most significant event in the history of our company.” The Bolender Center has greatly improved the quality of life for the dancers who inhabit the space, by providing proper rehearsal spaces so the program can expand in proportion to the enormous support of the Kansas City community.

The Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, named for former Artistic Director Todd Bolender, who passed away in 2006, is a testament to the artistic vision Bolender imbued, which is adeptly carried on by current Artistic Director William Whitener.

At the opening, Michael Kaiser, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts summed up the project by saying,

“It is truly an excellent dance building. I’m lucky enough to travel all over the world and see dance facilities everywhere and I can’t think of one in the world that is more beautiful than this building.”

Energy. The reality is that “energy” is very much a part of this building’s story. There is a strong relationship between the present use of the historic building and its past. In dynamic contrast and, serendipitously, in parallel, the original use for the building was as a Power House. It employed burning coal in order to generate steam and electricity to power Union Station, the surrounding rail yards and buildings.

McDowell recognized this parallel:

“Very early in the process we realized that this was not just about transforming an important building in one of the most important and monumental districts of Kansas City. It was also about a new energy, a transformational energy that will propel this building and in many ways the arts and culture of Kansas City into the next 100 years. The old energy was coal that moved through the building by way of an elegant system of conveyors, steam boilers and steam driven electric generators producing much needed steam and electricity to power Union Station and the precinct. The new energy is a creative power that is the product of the students and professional dancers—beauty, creativity and art.”







A black and white photograph of an industrial interior, likely a power plant or factory. The image features a complex network of heavy steel beams and rivets. Several large, conical industrial lamps hang from the ceiling, casting a soft glow. The perspective is looking upwards, emphasizing the scale and structure of the environment.

MOMENTUM

GENERATING CREATIVE POWER IN KANSAS CITY





CREATE

2009/2010

527 STUDENTS



2010/2011

592 STUDENTS



2011/2012

1017 STUDENTS



STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Through design, the Bolender Center beautifully embodies and supports the mission of KCB's Company and School: to establish Kansas City Ballet as an indispensable asset of the community through exceptional performances, excellence in dance training and community education for all ages. Just as the building was carefully crafted to be a catalyst for growth and evolution, so was its name. The Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity moniker not only honors one of the Ballet's most transformative leaders and identifies the building as a venue for dance, but in the word Creativity, it also presents a positive challenge to KCB and a promise to the Kansas City community.

"We are a creative company and an incubator for the arts," said Bentley. "We must maintain an extremely high level of creativity – not only in what we do, but also in how we use this building. Right now, it's a blank canvas. It is our challenge to create something magnificent."

With nearly three times the square footage as that of KCB's previous facility, the Bolender Center allows a new density of activity. To a school looking to increase its student population, a professional

company eager to grow, and a dance organization hoping to expand its range of studio classes to community members, the new capacity offers untapped potential.

The opening of the Bolender Center marked an influx of new talent, triggering an explosion in the number and types of creative offerings on KCB School's Studio Class schedule. Teachers and instructors came forth with dance and fitness options, and, quite suddenly, KCB's studio schedule increased from four classes to thirteen including Boot Camp, Zumba®, Tap, Belly Dance, Yoga, Nia, Irish Step Dance, Flamenco, Jazz, Ballroom, Pilates, Hip Hop and Modern Dance. Enrollment in the studio classes skyrocketed from 187 in the 2010/2011 season to an astounding 535 in 2011/2012.

Similarly, the Ballet School experienced a significant increase in enrollment following the opening of the Bolender Center. In the 2011/2012 season, student enrollment – at the Bolender Center as well as the school's south campus in Johnson County, Kansas – climbed fifteen percent from the previous year.

But the new Bolender Center offers something more far-reaching as well.

As a home for dance, the Bolender Center facility rank among the best in the world. Ample, light-filled rehearsal spaces, an integrated theater, generously equipped locker rooms and showers, on-site physical therapy, and full access to Pilates apparatuses together provide accommodations that few other professional companies or schools can offer. For the professional company, this offers not only a world-class environment for creating and refining great artistic

works, but it also presents an attractive recruitment tool for professional talent. Although KCB built a national reputation and sought after company in its first fifty years, it had always lacked the accommodations and amenities needed to win out over other professional companies in the U.S.

Almost immediately after moving into the space, however, Whitener and his colleagues noticed a marked increase in the number of experienced professional dancers applying for positions within company. “We now have something unique to offer in that it’s an incredible place to work,” said Whitener. “The building is very positive with its light, space and design, its studio stage, urban location and, of course, its relationship with the Kauffman Center. It’s inspiring.” In a professional sense, the Bolender Center has transformed KCB from a career starting point to a destination.

Indeed, the challenge of creativity is ever present in the minds of KCB leaders. Their vision is to grow – the school, the company and studio offerings – but, as importantly, they hope to cultivate talent, exploration, beauty, art and connection.

“At a time when most cities are reducing investment in the arts, how refreshing it is to be in Kansas City where the arts are flourishing.”

Michael Kaiser
President, John F. Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts



Dancers performing during the opening activities of the Bolender Center on KC Dance Day

COMMUNITY

Though the purpose of KCB has always been about enriching its community though the art of dance, KCB's space was never seen as a community asset. The Bolender Center changed that.

KCB's relocation to the Power House created a small ripple that continues to multiply and affect its community in profound and powerful ways. It has become a hub where artists and community find a synchronicity – a community venue, with dance as the fulcrum. It celebrates and disarms diversity, inviting citizens, businesses and art, in their many guises, to interact and create within the building.

For Kansas City residents, the Bolender Center is far more than just a place where dance is born and refined. Through the array of community classes, community members now use the building as a source of physical health and an outlet for creative expression. Parents of ballet students linger during class time, finding abundant and inviting areas to wait. Businesses host special events and other gatherings in the Bolender Center's voluminous lobby, Ellis Conference Room and Frost Studio Theater.

Local universities are also discovering tremendous opportunities in the Bolender Center's studios and facilities. Students at the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Conservatory of Music and Dance, which shares a history of collaboration with KCB, are able to use the larger studios for showings or host performances in the Frost Studio.

For the cultural community, the new Center provides an invaluable resource. KCB offers the 180-seat Michael and Ginger Frost studio to smaller dance and theater companies as a less formal performance space for their productions.

Also, for the first time in KCB's history, they have abundant studio and schedule capacity to accommodate and sustain new artistic growth programs, offering unprecedented opportunity to aspiring choreographers or artists looking to expand their artistic range.

Even tourism has benefitted from the Bolender Center's opening. The very act of restoring the historic Power House forever changed Kansas City history and created a new point of interest for tourists and history buffs. The restoration was the final piece needed to rehabilitate an area of Kansas City that is steeped in historic significance. Today, and for years to come, anyone visiting the area can tour the building and experience carefully preserved moments from an earlier time.

Perhaps the Bolender Center's most transformative effect, however, is evidenced by a physical culture shift taking place in Kansas City. The opening of the new home for KCB, in conjunction with that of the nearby Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, created a powerful new mass in downtown Kansas City that is reorienting the city's arts community. Like a celestial body, this mass is attracting local and regional arts organizations and has spawned a civic movement to construct a cultural arts campus that will formally unite the Bolender Center, KCPA, the neighboring Crossroads Arts District and the Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.

What began as a small spark of initiative to house a ballet company and school eventually ignited an entire community. Kansas City's noble Power House has found new purpose and a new source of energy that transcends dance and art. The extraordinary Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity embodies the power of transformation.



**"THE BOLENDER CENTER IS
ONE OF THE BEST DESIGNED
AND THOUGHT-OUT DANCE
FACILITIES IN THE COUNTRY,
WHICH MEANS THAT IT IS ONE
OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD."**

William Whitener



KANSAS CITY BALLET

The image shows the exterior of the Kansas City Ballet building at dusk. The building is a multi-story brick structure with a prominent sign on the roof that reads "KANSAS CITY BALLET" in illuminated, stylized letters. The sky is a mix of blue and grey, suggesting twilight. In the foreground, there is a parking lot with several cars parked. The building's facade features large windows and a decorative brick pattern. A modern glass entrance is visible on the left side of the building.

KANSAS CITY BALLET

"EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS RESTORATION – FROM THE BUILDING’S USE, TO ITS DESIGN, TO THE POWER OF BALLET, THE POWER OF DANCE, THE POWER OF ART – ALL OF THIS RESTORES THAT ENERGY FOR WHICH THE POWER HOUSE WAS INITIALLY DESIGNED."

Cydney Millstein

ABOUT

BNIM

With the support of our visionary clients, BNIM is redefining the national and global agenda for progressive planning strategies, responsible architecture and design excellence. We design creative environments that inspire behavior change and enhance the condition of people and the planet.

With 42 years of experience, BNIM has a reputation for thoughtful and responsive design, thorough technical competence and conscientious service. Throughout its history, the firm has focused on building healthy facilities through a balance of social, economic and environmental solutions. BNIM has emerged as a national leader in sustainability and innovative design while remaining committed to the regional community.

BNIM is known for its excellent technical capabilities enabling the successful execution of unique design challenges with remarkable and enduring results. The firm has a proven ability to effectively manage projects and schedules, rigorous quality control procedures and project costs throughout the life of our projects.

BNIM possesses not only the operational precision, but also the design sensitivity and architectural sophistication essential to envision complex projects. We are proud of our reputation for precision and our documented record of adherence to schedule and budget. We have demonstrated that this kind of operational excellence can, and indeed should, be linked to an appreciation of the aesthetic and spiritual qualities of a place.

KANSAS CITY BALLET

Founded in 1957, Kansas City Ballet is a 25-member professional ballet company under the direction of Artistic Director William Whitener and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. KCB performs three repertory seasons per year as well as the ever-popular *Nutcracker*. The company also reaches over 25,000 Kansas City students and adults each year through its community education programs and provides dance training through Kansas City Ballet School.

Our new home, KCB's Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, which opened August 2011, in conjunction with our new stage at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, is poised to make Kansas City and KCB a true destination for dance.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kansas City Ballet gratefully acknowledges the following for their support in creating its new home

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2011-2012

Kaleena Burks
Stayce Camparo
Rachel Coats

Kimberly Cowen
Gabriel Davidsson
Marty Davis
Michael Davis
Michael Eaton
Arielle Espie
Travis Guerin
Aisling Hill-Connor
Nadia Iozzo
Geoffrey Kropp
Anthony Krutzkamp
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KCB regrets any inadvertent omissions.

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Owner's Representative MC Realty Group
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Design-Build MEP Contractors Gibbens Drake Scott, Inc, Mark One Electric Company, Inc., & US Engineering, and National Fire Suppression
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Construction - March 2010 to April 2011



front and back cover Looking up from the second floor catwalk into the former Power House chimney with a custom-designed glass cap (*right, refer to page 52 for more*). During conceptual design, BNIM considered several visionary design scenarios for the truncated chimney base. One option proposed using the base as a platform for a vertical wind turbine tower (*left and middle*), which would have created on-site renewable energy.



THE TODD BOLENDER CENTER FOR DANCE & CREATIVITY

The relocation of Kansas City Ballet to the new Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity involved the preservation and adaptive reuse of the former Power House at Union Station, a coal-burning power plant abandoned since the 1970s. The building was originally designed by architect Jarvis Hunt and was completed in 1914, representing an important era in Kansas City history.

Faced with daunting structural deterioration and drainage issues, the project team carefully upgraded and repaired much of the existing structural elements to maintain structural integrity and original building appearance. Approximately 85% of the first level structural framing from the original boiler room was saved and repaired, and the team located matching bricks from the original kiln/manufacturer in Bixby, Oklahoma, replacing 822 damaged bricks.

The challenge of creating an organized program diagram within an existing historical building was welcomed by BNIM and resulted in creatively reusing existing structure and interior elements in new applications. Six studios and a performance theater that seats 180 are large components of the program. The Ballet's new home also houses administrative offices, wardrobe, costumes locker and shower facilities, production areas and space for archives.

There is a strong parallel between the two dynamically different uses of the historic building. The original use for the building was the generation of steam and electricity from burning coal that powered Union Station, the surrounding rail yards and buildings. Kansas City Ballet has moved in and will create the next generation of dancers through artistic energy and hard work of individuals that benefits the Kansas City community.