

BERKELEY CARROLL SCHOOL

## 1100 Architect transforms 80-year-old church into a performing arts center

By JASON SAYER (@JSAYER94) • November 28, 2016

1100 Architect transform 80-year-old church into a performing arts center. (Courtesy 1100 Architect)



The Berkeley Carroll School, Performing Arts Center—located on the northern ridge of Park Slope in Brooklyn—was once a church. Originally built in 1936, the structure has been transformed by New York firm 1100 Architect into a flexible theater and performance space.

The former 80-year-old church can now provide the pre-K Berkeley Carroll School with seating for 396 through a staggered seating arrangement that uses space freed up by the removal of the existing raised stage. Subsequently, the space can be reconfigured to serve as a lecture hall or venue for music, theater, events, and multi-media audio-visual performances.

After 1100 Architect responded to an RFP in 2014, construction began in March 2015. The center has now been open since September. “Both the faculty of the school and the student’s parents are very impressed with the space that they now have,” said associate principal Gwendolyn Conners, talking to *The Architect’s Newspaper*.

Conners also explained how lighting and acoustic devices made the former church suitable for the school’s needs. “The back wall required sound absorption most of all,” she said. “We specified a perforated metal system with acoustic material behind. The perforated metal was ideal due to the school needing for it to be durable.”



Sound absorbing panels also hang from the ceiling inside. The panels have been arranged by their density and distance from the stage: No panels are located at the front of the stage in order for sound to be reflected back to the immediate audience, meanwhile, to the back, the panel density is staggered to 50 percent coverage and then to 75 percent. Visually, this arrangement also

allows members of the audience to glimpse the pre-existing dome above (which has now been illuminated from the inside with cove lighting).

In addition to the dome, the church's simplistic neoclassical windows are a dominant feature both inside and out. Though they were never, as Connors said, "an ecclesiastical masterpiece," the windows illuminate the space with daylight—such as when the stage hosts theater and stage set classes. For performances, double-layered curtains are capable of shutting out sunlight when necessary, while also doubling up as sound absorbers.

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***Consultants:***

**Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing Engineers:** EME Group

**Structural Engineering:** Hage Engineering

**Theater Consultants:** Fisher Dachs Associates

**Acoustical Consultants:** Lally Acoustical consulting

**Audio Visual Consultant:** Boyce Nemec Designs

**Code and Expediting Consultant:** William Vitacco Associates Ltd.

**General Contractor:** Shawmut Design and Construction

**Owners Representation:** Seamus Henchy and Associates Inc.

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***Products and Vendors:***

**Acoustic panels at Ceiling:**

**Fabric:** Guilford of Maine

**Acoustic panel:** Kinetics Noise Control HardSide

**Acoustic panels at wall:** Pani-Sorb modular Acoustical Wall Panels

**Fixed seating:**

**Seating:** Steeldeck Tip Up Bench Seating

**Fabric:** Knoll Hourglass

**Loose seating:**

**Chairs:** Knoll Spark Chairs

**Fabric:** Knoll Hourglass

**Theatrical fixings**

**Lighting:** Barbizon Electric

**Theatrical Lighting boards:** Barbizon Electric  
**Rigging and Lighting Pipe Grid:** I Weiss

**Curtains:**

Fabricator: I Weiss  
Fabric: KM Fabrics, Seattle Fabrics Athletic Mesh

**Flooring:**

**Stage Flooring:** Oil-Tempered Hardboard on Robbins Flooring BioChannel  
**Linoleum Flooring:** Forbo  
**Carpet:** J&J Flooring Group, Broken Slate, Modular

**Paint:** Benjamin Moore

**Signage:** ASI New York

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