



**Town of Aurora**

**General Committee Report**

**No. PDS18-076**

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**Subject:** Library Square

**Prepared by:** Fausto Filipetto, Senior Policy Planner

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** June 19, 2018

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## **Recommendations**

- 1. That Report No. PBS18-076 be received; and**
- 2. That the current design for Library Square be approved; and**
- 3. That the Option 1 schematic design for the expansion to the Church Street School which includes the three (3) floors and theatre be approved; and**
- 4. That the allocation of existing project funding for the tendering of the parking lot, the laneway and the components of the square which would provide connections to the square/library be approved, and that Council commit to funding for the square and building, which will come back in new year for final funding approval; and**
- 5. That the above budget includes a 1% contribution to the Town's Public Art Reserve Fund in accordance with the Official Plan requirements.**

## **Executive Summary**

The intent of this report is to seek Council approval of the current design for Library Square as well as the schematic for the Church Street School expansion. Furthermore, the intent is to also seek budgeting for the tendering of the the parking lot, the laneway and the components of the square which would provide connections to the square/library.

The report can be summarized as follows:

- The concept plan for Library Square has been modified to include a vehicle “turn around” to allow for book drop offs currently being used in the current configuration by the library;
- the construction costs for the square are approximately \$5,000,000;

- staff are recommending that Council approve a schematic design for the expansion to the Church Street School which includes the three (3) floors, with a theatre on the top floor;
- the construction costs for the three (3) floor building which includes a theatre would be approximately \$21,300,000;
- some sample uses for the square include ; special events, concerts, fairs (arts and otherwise), family events, passive gathering spaces, plein air painting classes, movie nights and fitness classes; and
- the proposed theatre is designed to be an adaptable space (retractable seating) which would allow for a multitude of events from theatrical and concert performances to lectures, film screenings and ceremonies.

## **Background**

On December 5, 2016, Council provided direction regarding a concept plan for the Cultural Precinct that would involve the demolition of the former library and former senior's centre. This decision was made taking into consideration public input obtained from the vast public consultation that took place in 2016 as part of the Council endorsed public consultation strategy with respect to the Cultural Precinct. Fotenn Planning + Design prepared two alternative revisions of the Library Square Concept Plans which were presented to Council on May 16, 2017. At that meeting, Council received the revised concept plans and directed staff to move forward with the procurement process for design services in the next planning stages for Library Square. The contract for the detailed design phase was awarded to The Planning Partnership on September 5, 2017.

Two design options were presented to Council at the meeting held on December 12, 2017. The first option included an elevated or upper square, while the second included a lowered Square. Council endorsed the lowered square option as the preferred option. Council also asked staff to examine the acquisition of a small portion of the property to the north to allow for additional parallel parking spaces and improved connection through the site from Yonge Street to Victoria Street. The concept was therefore revised as requested by Council and was approved on January 30, 2018.

At this meeting Council also increased the budget for design work for the project to \$1,077,500 to allow for additional work with respect to detailed drawings, specifications, and tender documents. Council also approved additional funding from the Council Discretionary Reserve Fund to allow for detailed design of Library Square. Council has now approved a total of \$2,340,135 in support of the Cultural Precinct.

## **Analysis**

### The Square

Since the last approval of the Plan in January, the concept plan for Library Square has been modified to include a vehicle “turn around” to allow for book drop offs currently being used in the current configuration by the library. This is proposed to be located at the easterly end of the laneway into the square from Yonge Street. This revision was prepared to address concerns raised by the Aurora Public Library and staff understand that the revised Plan is now acceptable to the Library. Staff are recommending that Council approve the current design of Library Square. However, this does not preclude Council from making future decisions such as the inclusion of a skating rink during the winter. The plan has been attached to this report as Figure 1.

### Sample uses of the Square:

- special events, concerts, etc.
- fairs (arts and otherwise)
- family events
- passive gathering spaces
- plein air painting classes
- movie nights
- fitness classes

### The Addition to the Church Street School

At this time staff are also asking Council to approve the schematic design with respect to the addition to the Church Street School. The addition is proposed to be connected to the existing building by way of a glass atrium which would serve as access into the square from Victoria Street. This design would also give prominence to the existing historic building by separating it from the proposed addition. The building addition would be used for additional community space, which was widely stated as required by both staff and residents. Staff are putting forward three alternatives for the new building at this time, being:

- Option 1: a three (3) floor building with a theatre on the top floor;
- Option 2: a two (2) floor building with a theatre on the top floor; and
- Option 3: a two (2) floor building without a theatre.

The addition to the Church Street School would provide a number of opportunities for Town and community uses

The Town of Aurora prides itself on the quality programming it offers to the community. Cultural programming has been identified through corporate planning documents as an area to build upon and enhance in part of its effort to provide an exceptional quality of life for all. Currently the Town provides a variety of cultural programming through its service agreement with the Aurora Cultural Centre, but also on its own account offering programs.

Expansion in this area has been limited by the availability of suitable, purpose-built space. The expansion of 22 Church Street would provide just such needed space and amenities.

The Cultural Master Plan highlights the communities support for community, cultural and performance spaces through the following statements:

- Cultural resources and amenities as essential to the quality of life that makes Aurora a place where people will want to live, work and invest;
- Downtown needs a new 'marquee' attraction to succeed; it was in this context that many raised the issue of a potential new performing arts centre;
- Cultural Master Plan - Strategic Direction #2: Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development:
  - Leverage Cultural and Heritage Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization - consistent with recommendations in the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan; examine opportunities to extend cultural facilities and opportunities in Library Square.

The proposed theatre is designed to be an adaptable space (retractable seating) which would allow for a multitude of events from theatrical and concert performances to lectures, film screenings and ceremonies. The design also allows the room to completely transform into a space that could accommodate an endless array of activities including meetings, gatherings, and banquets at an affordable cost for internal and external users.

Sample uses of the Theatre space (black box):

- live performances, (community and professional) including theatre, music, comedy, improv, variety acts, etc.
- movie screenings
- presentations/ceremonies
- recitals/rehearsals
- auditions for various events
- acting lessons

- panel discussions/debates
- workshops/lectures
- dinner theatre

Sample uses of the multi-purpose/community programming rooms:

- theatre and music programs
- summer camps (dance, theater, arts)
- visual arts programs and lessons
- leadership courses and camps
- gross motor programs for preschool
- language classes
- small seminars/presentations
- media arts (television, filmmaking, photography, etc.)
- fiber arts
- music lessons

A proper dance studio (including proper flooring, mirrored wall, etc.) will enhance the Town's ability to offer dance and fitness classes.

The proposed expansion will also provide much needed storage space for the Aurora archive collection, but more importantly, will allow the Aurora Museum & Archives to provide heritage programming to schools and other users groups that is currently not possible due to lack of space. School groups will once again have a place to come and learn the stories of their own community.

The three (3) floor option in combination with the ancillary spaces such as reception, office, storage, maintenance and café/multi-purpose area, elevator, washrooms, etc. will make the Church Street School a central hub for cultural activities in Aurora. The Town will be positioned to be the lead force that can help bring all of the partners together as envisioned through the Cultural Master Plan.

Staff are recommending that Council approve the schematic for three (3) floor building with a theatre on the top floor, which has been attached to this report as Figures 2 to 6. With the loss of community space (approximately 20,000 square feet) thorough the demolition of the former library and former seniors centre, the three (3) floor addition (approximately 26,000 square feet) would not only replace but plan for the increasing demand for community and cultural spaces of our growing population.

### Project Phasing and Scheduling

At this time, staff are requesting that Council approve the current design of Library Square and approve the building schematic with respect to the expansion to the Church Street School. Staff are also requesting Council's approval of the procurement of the new parking lot, the laneway, as well as some pedestrian connections through the square to the Library. This would allow for the required phasing during construction. Staff are recommending the final budget and tendering approval for the square and building occur in the new year. This proposed scheduling would allow for portions of the square to be used for staging during the construction of the new building.

A proposed timeline for the phasing of the project is as follows:

#### Summer 2018

- approval of the Plan for Library Square
- approval of the Schematic for the new building
- approval of funding for tendering and construction of the parking lot, laneway and connections
- tendering and construction of the parking lot, laneway and connections
- submission of application for the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF)

#### Fall 2018

- response with respect to application for CCSF

#### Winter 2019

- approval of funding for tendering and construction of the square and new building, *including 1% of the capital budget for the new building to be dedicated to public art, in accordance with Subsection 4.4.a.iv of the Official Plan*
- tendering for construction of the square and new building

#### Spring 2019

- commence construction of new building
- commence construction of portions of the square not being impacted or used for staging for construction of new building

#### Fall 2021

- construction completion for both the square and new building

## Budgeting and Funding

Staff reported previously on the general cost of construction of the square as well as the new building. The costs were reported to be approximately \$5,000,000 for the construction of the square, not inclusive of a skating rink, and \$10,000,000 for the construction of the new building and atrium. The cost for the construction of the square remains at approximately \$5,000,000. However, the cost estimate for the new building did not include a theatre and consisted of a two floor design; consistent with Option 3 in this report. The additional floor and theatre recommended in this report is the result of discussions between Town Departments and partners with respect to their programming needs.

Option 1: Three floor building with theatre \$21,300,000, with 25% soft costs

Option 2: two floor building with a theatre \$13,792,187, with 25% soft costs

Option 3: two floor building without theatre \$9,200,000, with 20% soft costs

With respect to funding sources, Council has endorsed some funding for the project from the Hydro Fund. Furthermore, staff are currently drafting an application for funding through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (CCSF). The objectives of this fund are to contribute to improved physical conditions for professional arts and heritage related collaboration, creation, presentation, preservation, and exhibition; and to provide increased and improved access for Canadians to arts and culture. Funding through CCSF is available to cover up to 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$15,000,000. This funding pool aligns with the strategic objectives expressed through various Council approved documents including:

- The Town of Aurora Strategic Plan which identifies the goal of supporting an exceptional quality of life for all and objective of celebrating and promoting our culture under the first Pillar of Success: Community;
- the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan which seeks to leverage the distinct heritage and culture of Aurora as an attraction through enhancing the Cultural Precinct with additional facilities and enhanced public spaces; and
- the Cultural Master Plan which aims to attract new and creative talents, boost tourism, and enhance quality of life, cultural resources and opportunities in Aurora - the plan also cites the expressed community need for a cultural hub to support networking and collaboration through the development of a multi-use cultural facility within Library Square.

It should be noted that one of the criteria for the awarding of this grant is that the Town would have to demonstrate that funding is available to carry two thirds of the project.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

The current design for Library Square was before the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) on May 9, 2018 and the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) on May 14, 2018.

The HAC received the memo from staff for information. Overall the AAC did have some concerns with the accessibility of the plan as proposed. One of the concerns was the distance of the new book drop off compared to the existing one. The AAC also requested that the number of barrier free parking spaces be increased. While increasing the amount of barrier free parking spaces could be accommodated, the current book drop off would have to be eliminated to create the new square.

### **Legal Considerations**

None.

### **Financial Implications**

As mentioned, Council has now approved a total of \$2,340,135 in support of the Cultural Precinct. Staff are recommending that Council approve the allocation of existing project funding for the tendering of the parking lot, the laneway and the components of the square which would provide connections to the square/library. Staff believe this amount to be in the \$1,000,000 range. The \$1,000,000 in funding originally allocated by Council in support of the development of Library Square could be applied to this tender.

### **Communications Considerations**

The plans included in this report are a result of a vast amount of consultations with general public, stakeholders and the Town's partners. Furthermore, the Library Square project has a webpage on the Town's website.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

The Cultural Precinct Plan, including the redesign of Library Square and expansion of the Church Street School, supports the Strategic Plan goal of Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all through the following key objectives:

- Develop a Cultural Master Plan that includes heritage, music, and art to promote more cohesive and coordinated cultural services;



- expand opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community; and
- actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown that includes culture.

### **Alternatives to the Recommendation**

1. Council has the options of making further revisions to the plan for Library Square;
2. Council also has the option of not including a theatre in the Church Street School expansion, as well as proceeding with a two floor design instead of three. However, as stated in this report, there is a need for a theatre as well as an increased amount of community space to serve the growing population of Aurora; particularly in the Downtown.

### **Conclusions**

As detailed in this report, the the concept plan for Library Square has been modified to include a vehicle “turn around” to allow for book drop offs currently being used in the current configuration by the library. Plans have also been prepared for the addition to the Church Street School. The plans consist of a three (3) floor schematic with a theatre on the top floor. Two other options are also provided to Council; consisting of either two (2) floors with a theatre or two (2) floors without a theatre. Staff are requesting Council’s approval of the three (3) floor schematic at this time.

### **Attachments**

- Figure 1 - Design for Library Square/New Community Facility
- Figure 2 - Basement Floor Plan
- Figure 3 - Ground Floor Plan
- Figure 4 - Second Floor Plan
- Figure 5 - Conceptual Section

### **Previous Reports**

- PBS17-066 - Award of Contract for Library Square Site Plan, September 5, 2017;
- PBS17-096 - Preferred Design for Library Square, December 5, 2017;

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- PBS17-100 - Preferred Design for Library Square - Additional Information December 12, 2017; and
- PDS18-014 - Updated Design for Library Square, January 30, 2018.

### **Pre-submission Review**

Executive Leadership Team review on June 12, 2018.

#### **Departmental Approval**



**Marco Ramunno**  
Director  
Planning and Development Services

#### **Approved for Agenda**



**Doug Nadorozny**  
Chief Administrative Officer

# PARKING AND LOADING CURRENT CONCEPT

— Accessible Parking

— Parking

— Deliveries

A. 57m drive in from Church Street

84 TOTAL PARKING SPACES (not including street parking)



FIGURE 1



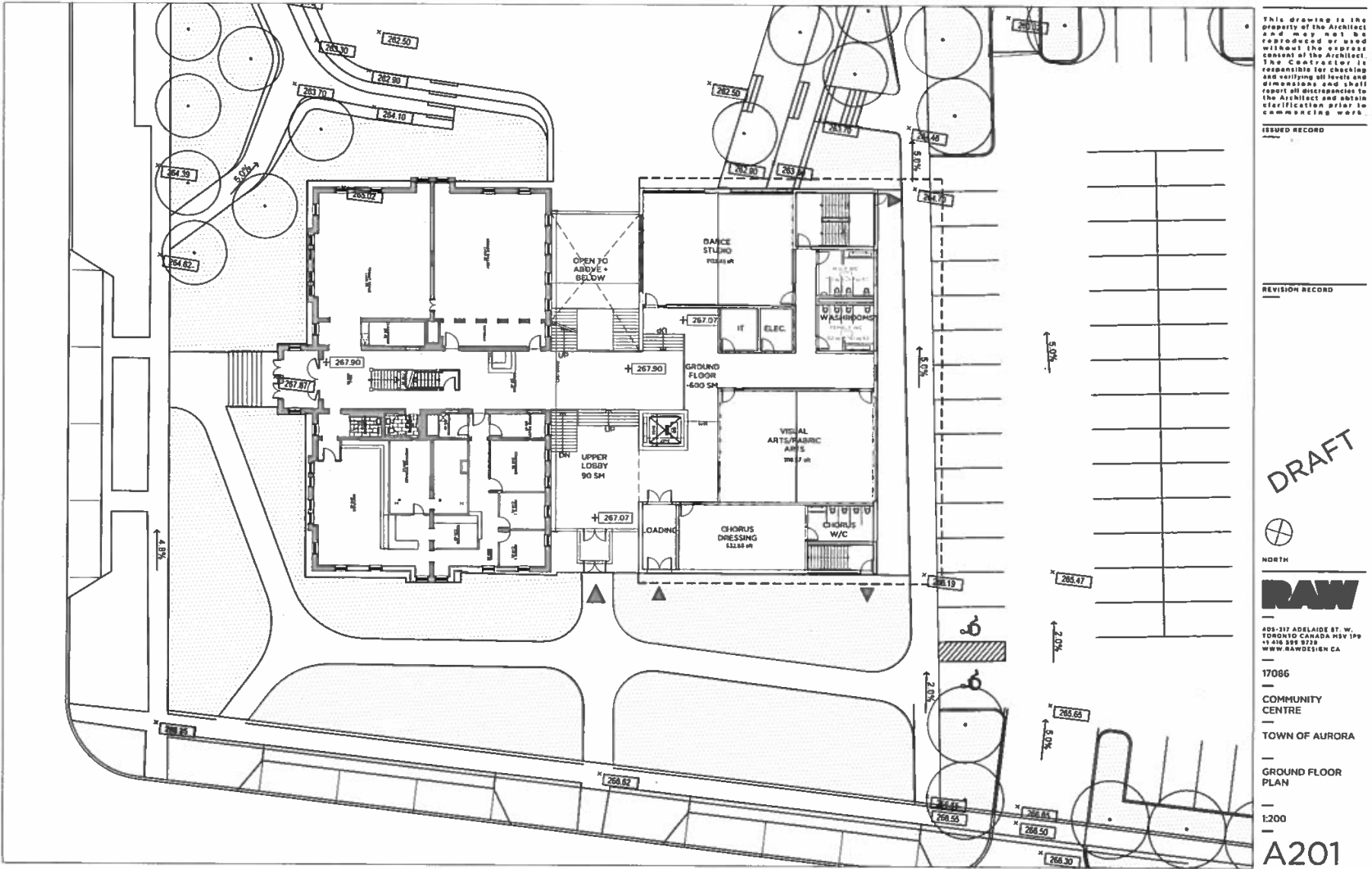
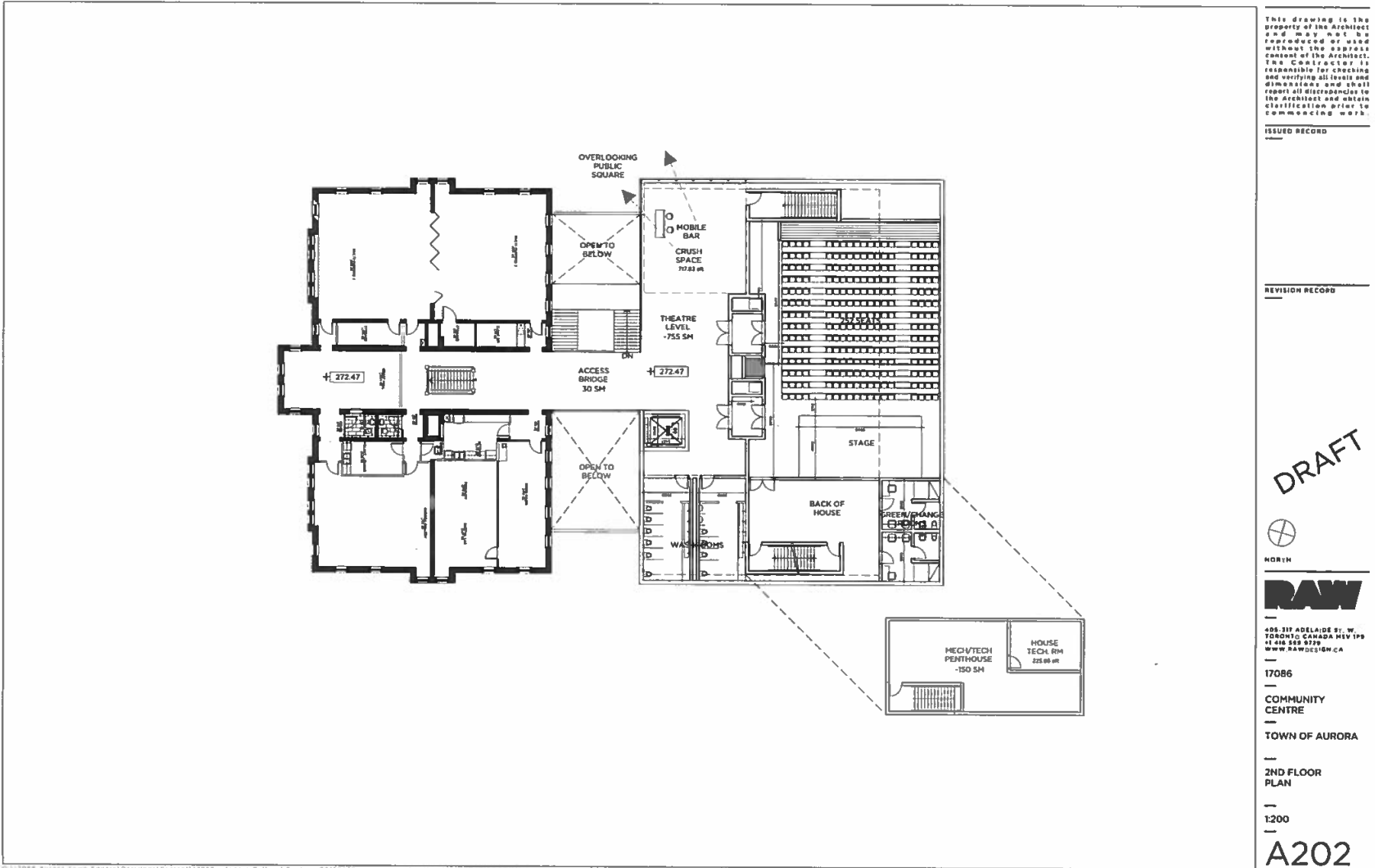


FIGURE 3



C:\3068 Aurora Town Square\Drawings\Current\17086 Aurora Cultural Centre 20180522.dwg / May 24 2018 10:24:52 AM

FIGURE 4





This drawing is the property of the Architect and may not be reproduced or used without the express consent of the Architect. The Contractor is responsible for checking and verifying all levels and dimensions and shall report all discrepancies to the Architect and obtain clarification prior to commencing work.

ISSUED RECORD

REVISION RECORD

**DRAFT**

**RAW**

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17086  
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1:250  
**A500**

**FIGURE 5**