

THE NEW CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE

Cleveland, Ohio

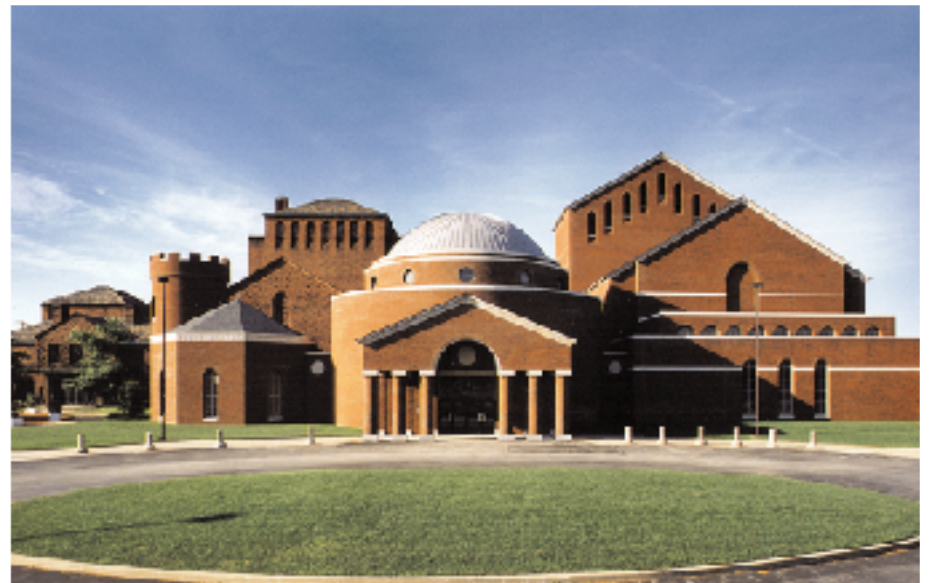
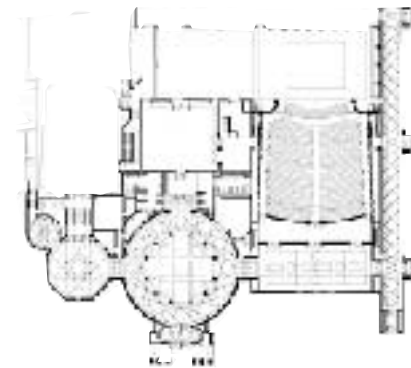
PHILIP JOHNSON • ALAN RITCHIE
A R C H I T E C T S



Cleveland Playhouse, one of the oldest repertory theaters in the country, had outgrown its theatre complex housed in a former church building. When it became possible to buy an abandoned Sears Robuck & Co. building adjacent to the old church, the organization made its renovation part of a major expansion. The program included a new 644-seat theater, a black box multipurpose studio, and a new lobby. The 200,000 square feet former department store space was renovated as a backstage facility with a set-building shop, truck dock, storage and dressing rooms, and includes a private club and revenue producing rental space. The club is connected to the theater lobbies by a long formal promenade.

The new structures maintain the irregular massing of the original but are both grander and more eclectic, with references to Medieval castles, Regency country houses, and the neoclassical style. Each lobby is geometrically distinct and each floor has a different terrazzo pattern.

A large rotunda pulls together the entire complex and provides a central entrance and vestibule. The form is inspired by Bernini's Santa Maria dell'Assunzione in Arccia, itself a reworking of the Pantheon in Rome. The plan of the interior is inspired by the fourth-century mausoleum of Santa Costanza in Rome.



Client: New Cleveland Playhouse
Completion Date: 1985
Area: 230,000 square feet (renovation),
80,000 square feet (new)
Associate Architects: Collins & Reimer