



# The Creativity Center

2025 ULI Baltimore Wavemaker Awards



# The Creativity Center

137 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore Maryland 21224

## PROJECT INFORMATION

Completion Date: September 30, 2022

Construction Cost: \$3,200,000.00

Project Size in Square Feet: 6,600

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Creativity Center is a new cultural anchor for Baltimore's Highlandtown neighborhood—a flexible arts and education hub developed by the Creative Alliance, a longstanding nonprofit arts organization. Located directly across from their historic Patterson Theater headquarters, the building extends their mission with spaces designed for visual arts, dance, culinary classes, and community gatherings. Completed in Fall 2022, the project offers a fresh yet contextually sensitive addition to the neighborhood fabric and a new platform for creative expression.

## Applicant Information:

### QUINN EVANS

*On behalf of the entire project team shown below.*

## Point of Contact:

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## PROJECT TEAM

### CREATIVE ALLIANCE

Client

AMY BONITZ, BOARD MEMBER &  
BUILDING COMMITTEE LEAD

**Proutt Consulting**  
Owner's Representative

#### Quinn Evans

Architect  
Ethan Marchant, AIA, LEED  
AP BD+C

**Lewis Contractors**  
Construction Manager

**Mincin Patel Milano**  
Structural Engineer

**MK Consulting  
Engineers**  
Civil Engineer

**TAI Engineers**  
Mechanical, Electrical, and  
Plumbing Engineer

**Photographer Credit**  
Karl Connolly Photography

**Photographer Credit**  
Sid Keiser





## COMPLETENESS

The Creativity Center embodies a resourceful, resilient approach to nonprofit development. Constructed with conventional wood framing, the design team maximized spatial efficiency and visual impact within tight budget parameters. A key strategy included a fully detailed, “plug-and-play” third story—designed from the outset to be easily removed if required. When budget constraints emerged, the third level was omitted without redesign, extra coordination, or added cost—showcasing built-in flexibility and design foresight.

Early momentum was supported by comprehensive, high-quality renderings and immersive flythrough videos that played a crucial role in securing 100% of project funding from public grants, foundations, and individual donors. The result is a fully realized, mission-driven facility serving as a highly utilized civic space—delivering sustained cultural, educational, and economic value. As a result, the project 100% funded by government, foundation, and individual support.



# Thank You to our Campaign for Creativity Donors

≥ 500,000

Mayor Scott & the  
Citizens of Baltimore  
Southeast CDC with  
funding from the Baltimore  
Regional Neighborhood  
Initiative, a program of the  
Maryland Department of  
Housing and Community  
Development  
State of Maryland

250,000 → 499,999

France-Merrick Foundation  
Middendorf Foundation, Inc.

100,000 → 249,999

Millicent & Peter Bain  
Ellen & Ed Bernard  
The Hughes Family Fund  
Jacob and Hilda Blaustein  
Foundation  
Maryland Department of  
Housing and Community  
Development  
Neighborhood Business Works  
Robert W. Deutsch Foundation  
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T. Rowe Price Foundation

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+ Anonymous

25,000 → 49,999

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5,000 → 9,999

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The Thalheimer-Eurich Fund  
Jess & Michael Vess  
Roberta F. Wilson  
Carol & Jonathan Zenilman

+ Anonymous





## A SENSE OF PLACE AND QUALITY

The Creativity Center is deeply rooted in its neighborhood and intentionally distinct—a standout civic building that reinterprets Highlandtown's vernacular through bold, contemporary moves. Its massing and materials respond to the rhythm and scale of surrounding row homes, while vibrant red accents create a visual dialogue with the historic Patterson Theater. The unique corner treatment—an “eroded” edge forming a generous front porch—draws inspiration from Baltimore's corner stoops and storefronts, transforming a transitional threshold into a public invitation.

This exemplifies “non-contextual contextualism,” where the building's identity is interpretive rather than mimetic—drawing from the spirit rather than the form of its surroundings. It clearly belongs but elevates civic architecture expectations locally.

Interiors emphasize transparency and inclusion: generous windows and glazing reveal arts programming—dancing, painting, cooking—turning the creative process into a community-facing experience. Signage is trilingual (English, Spanish, Braille), and non-gendered restrooms with inclusive language extend the building's social mission into every user experience.

Though modest in its materials, the design achieves a high level of refinement through thoughtful composition and precise, disciplined detailing. The exterior combines fiber cement and single skin metal panels, installed with care to emphasize clean lines, subtle shadow, and the inherent texture of each surface. Fastenings and transitions are treated with restraint, allowing the materials to speak for themselves and express a quiet confidence. This simplicity, executed with clarity and intention, creates an architecture that feels both contemporary and rooted in place.

Inside, polished concrete floors and exposed structural elements continue the theme of straightforward, durable construction. These components are not concealed but revealed, highlighting the building's logic and making its construction legible to those who use it. The consistent material language creates a cohesive experience throughout, demonstrating how accessible materials, when carefully assembled, can convey dignity, permanence, and creativity.

The Creativity Center does not mimic its context, but amplifies it—responding to its surroundings with clarity rather than imitation. Its simple, expressive form and honest palette establish it as a confident new landmark, deeply connected to its setting and open to the community it was built to serve.







Site



Existing Center



FLEET ST.

EASTERN AVE.





## SUSTAINABILITY

Situated on a redeveloped infill site, the Creativity Center makes thoughtful use of existing infrastructure to reduce environmental impact and limit site disturbance. The project balances community, environmental, and cultural sustainability by addressing immediate neighborhood needs while minimizing long-term resource use. Its compact footprint and efficient layout support both ecological responsibility and social vitality, contributing to the area's ongoing revitalization. A super-insulated envelope, combined with full compliance with Baltimore's IgCC standards, ensures excellent thermal performance, reduced energy demand, and enhanced year-round comfort for users.

Materials were carefully chosen for durability, cost-effectiveness, and low maintenance. Polished concrete floors, exposed wood elements, and fiber cement cladding establish a restrained yet refined material palette that reflects a commitment to honest, efficient design. Fixed glazing and strategically placed skylights introduce generous natural daylight, decreasing the need for artificial lighting and creating bright, welcoming interior spaces. Passive design principles—such as

optimized solar orientation and natural ventilation—work with a high-efficiency, zoned HVAC system to maintain occupant comfort and maximize energy performance.

At its heart, the Creativity Center promotes community arts as a vital and unifying force. The building offers an accessible, inclusive, and flexible space where residents from all backgrounds can gather, create, and collaborate. A carved corner porch—framed by a large overhead door—opens the building up to the street and surrounding neighborhood, blurring the boundary between interior and exterior. This architectural gesture invites interaction and supports shared ownership and place. Educational programming, public art access, and hands-on workshops respond directly to local needs, building cultural resilience and strengthening social connections. Workforce development initiatives, including training and employment opportunities, further the Center's mission by investing in long-term community capacity. Through these integrated strategies, the Creativity Center is a resilient, welcoming, and energy-conscious civic anchor supporting creativity, connection, and opportunity for all.





## VISIONARY AND EMULATION

This is not a typical community arts center. The Creativity Center redefines civic engagement by exposing the creative process through visual transparency, dynamic programming, and seamless integration with the street. A small-footprint, high-impact project, it optimizes every inch across art forms, ages, and users. It transforms an underutilized site into a vibrant cultural anchor that connects deeply with its neighborhood, serving as a gathering place and a catalyst for creative expression.

This building is a strategic investment in the neighborhood, community, and city, anchored by an established nonprofit with decades of successful engagement and arts programming. Building on this strong foundation, the Center expands into a new education-based annex, broadening opportunities for

learning, collaboration, and creative development. The inclusive design process involved artists, educators, neighbors, and youth, ensuring that the space reflects and responds to evolving community needs.

Its innovative use of standard materials and compelling architectural language creates a welcoming and durable environment. Transparent architecture and a carved corner porch invite everyday interaction, fostering a sense of community ownership and resilience. By thoughtfully balancing environmental responsibility, social equity, and cultural access, the Creativity Center offers a replicable, visionary model for arts-based placemaking in urban neighborhoods nationwide—one that nurtures a vibrant creative culture while strengthening the city's social fabric.









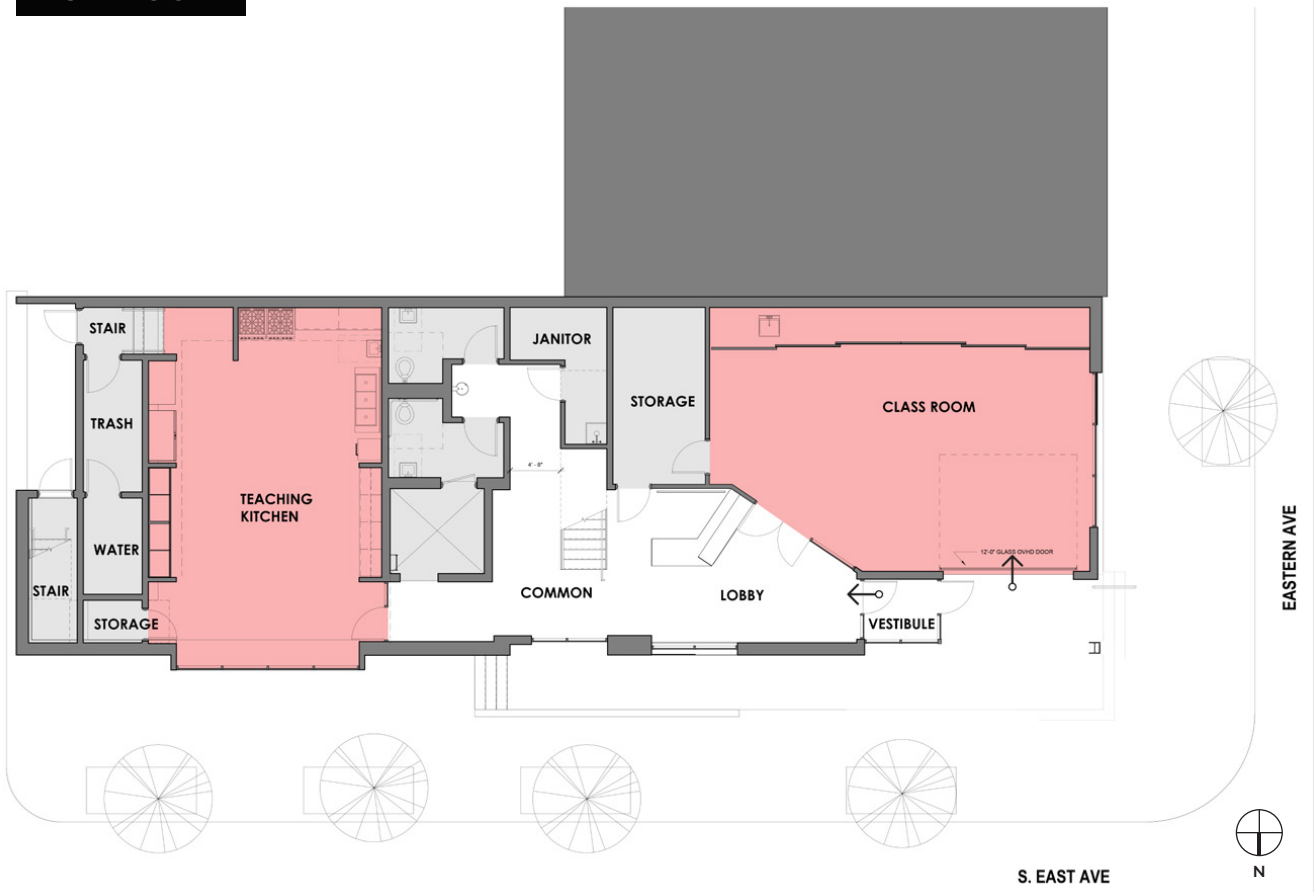
## A NEED

Creative Alliance's sustained success and growing demand for arts education exposed spatial limitations in its original facility, prompting a carefully planned expansion to meet increasing programming needs. Located in Highlandtown, a culturally diverse and evolving neighborhood, this project addresses a critical shortage of inclusive, high-quality cultural infrastructure serving a broad community spectrum. Developed through a collaborative, community-driven process with local artists, educators, and stakeholders, the facility's program and design are deeply rooted in the neighborhood's identity, values, and aspirations.

Extending beyond Highlandtown, the facility serves Baltimore's wider arts community, establishing itself as a vital hub for creative collaboration and education citywide. This expansion alleviates capacity constraints and elevates Creative Alliance's role as a key civic institution—offering flexible, adaptable spaces that foster creative exploration and social connection across generations. By balancing functional programmatic needs with architecture that celebrates community heritage and vibrancy, the project catalyzes ongoing cultural growth and neighborhood revitalization.



## 1ST FLOOR



## 2ND FLOOR

