THE NEXT CENTURY

OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OGUNQUIT PLAYHOUSE'S *THE NEXT CENTURY* CAMPAIGN AND PLANS

Here are answers to frequently asked questions

Q: WHAT HAS BEEN THE PROCESS TO GET TO THIS DESIGN?

Playhouse renovation has been an ongoing project for almost a decade. There were campus renovation plans prior to 2020, which were stalled as we were coming out of Covid. We took some time to work on a strategic plan and conduct an Economic Impact Study and held a Town Hall in 2024 to elicit feedback. In 2025 we did a search for a new architectural firm, and our Board of Directors selected JCJ Architecture for the project. The past year has been spent listening to stakeholders, Playhouse staff, our corps of volunteers, and a Capital Campaign Committee was formed with our Board of Directors. Our technical staff has been working hand in hand with the design team to make sure that our stage and behind the scenes areas are well suited to our needs.

Q: WHY DOES THIS PROJECT MATTER?

For nearly a century, the Playhouse has operated in a structure that was never meant to last this long. What began as a 10 week summer theatre now is a 25 week season that attracts 100,000 visitors a year. Now it's time to build a permanent home in Ogunquit that reflects the permanence of our commitment to this community. This renovation ensures future generations can continue experiencing the magic of live theatre here for another century to come. We see a future where the deterioration of our current building is no longer sustainable and we are making changes now before we get to that point.

Q: WHEN WILL CONSTRUCTION BEGIN?

Contingent on reaching fundraising goals, we're hoping to begin construction in Fall 2027. We're excited about our 2026 season and looking forward to our upcoming 2027 season at the Playhouse.

Q: WHO IS PAYING FOR THIS AND WILL TICKET PRICES GO UP?

This project will be funded through a private fundraising campaign. Our commitment to making theatre accessible to everyone remains unchanged. We're proud to offer tickets starting at just $40 for Maine residents, and we'll continue working to keep live theatre affordable for our community.

Q: WHAT ARE THE TAX IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS?

Because this is entirely privately funded there are no tax implications for local residents. The Playhouse pays real estate taxes to the towns of Ogunquit and York for all of our owned properties.

Q: WHY CAN'T YOU JUST DO A SIMPLE RESTORATION?

What has carried us this far cannot carry us forward. If we do nothing, the Playhouse may not exist a decade from now. This is the assessment of structural engineers, code officials, architects and preservationists. The Hartwigs and John Lane would want the Playhouse to thrive for another 100 years. We cannot "patch" our way to safety, retrofit a foundation where none exists, and insulate a building that was never designed to hold insulation. And we cannot fully meet accessibility requirements without rethinking the structure from the ground up. Rebuilding the theatre while retaining all of the characteristics is the most responsible way to build a performance venue that will last.

Q: WILL IT LOSE ITS SUMMER STOCK CHARM?

Absolutely not. We are one of the last remaining summer stock theatres and we take that heritage to heart. Our building is being simply designed and the interiors will make it feel like it has existed since that wonderful time in our history. Having a drink outside in perfect Maine summer weather and seeing a show in a beautifully restored theatre is a tradition that we want to give to the next generation.

Q: HOW DOES THE SIZE OF THE NEW PLAYHOUSE COMPARE TO THE CURRENT FOOTPRINT?

The footprint is very close to the current footprint of the Playhouse with a 15% increase. To avoid making significant changes to the footprint, the height of the lobby and auditorium will increase to accommodate indoor restroom facilities, larger seats, wider aisles and meet ADA and code compliance. The fly tower which blew down in a hurricane in the 1950's will be restored and similar to its original height. A fly tower is necessary for our technical needs and allows us to hang our scenery up and down

Q: HOW WILL THIS PROJECT AFFECT THE ENVIRONMENT?

This project has environmental concerns as a priority – from Maine sourced lumber in our structure to the overall preservation of the natural ecosystem of our property. Environmental improvements include:

- Removal of 11,200 square feet of paved and gravel (impervious) surfaces which allows water to filter naturally through soil, removing pollutants before they reach waterways. Less impervious surfaces are also more adaptable to climate change, reducing damage to infrastructure and natural systems.
- Pavement to Plants: We are removing the old paved and gravel drives as well as removing crumbling structures currently in the river flood plan and replacing them with native vegetation.
- The "Greener" Parking Lot: Our South Parking Lot is being transformed with fiber-reinforced turf, which looks like a lawn but functions as a stable parking area—allowing stormwater to soak into the ground rather than runoff into the river.

- To support this new ecosystem, we are embarking on a reforestation effort. Our grounds will soon be home to 41 new shade and flowering trees, alongside 7 majestic conifers. These will be anchored by a sea of 925 new shrubs and over 4,000 perennials. By selecting native Maine species, we are creating a haven for local wildlife and eliminating the need for potable water in our irrigation systems.
- Inside the revitalized Playhouse, we are using 21st-century technology to respect our 20th-century roots.
- Maine-First Sourcing: We are using 100% Maine forestry products throughout the building, supporting our local economy and reducing the carbon footprint of transport.
- The “Brain” of the Building: For the first time in our history, the Playhouse will utilize a Building Management System (BMS) to optimize energy use in real-time.
- We are using only dark sky compliant light fixtures to avoid disrupting the night sky views and illumination.
- Efficiency by Design: From Low E glazing on our windows (to keep the heat out while keeping the views clear) to all-LED fixtures and low-flow water systems, every inch of this building is designed to be lean and green.
- Removal of all underground septic tanks.

Q: WILL YOU DO YEAR ROUND PROGRAMMING?

No, our programming will stay the same and we will remain a summer theatre destination with a season that spans May-October. We may however look at the possibility of a holiday show. We would have the potential with a winterized building to open our spaces to the community during the winter for gatherings, and are looking forward to discussing with locals and business owners on what that could look like.

Q: WILL THE PLAYHOUSE PERFORM WHILE CONSTRUCTION IS HAPPENING?

We are currently looking at other venues and performance opportunities during construction. We can’t imagine a summer without the Playhouse!

Q: WILL THIS CHANGE THE PLAYHOUSE EXPERIENCE?

No! Our goal is to preserve what you love while enhancing the audience experience. You’ll still enjoy the same intimate, authentic theatre setting in our renowned venue with:

- Larger, more comfortable seats, not stadium seating.
- Audience house raked so that everyone has a good view.
- A Mezzanine seating area so that all seating is closer to the stage.
- A Mezzanine lobby space will give patrons extra room to gather before the show and at intermission.
- Fully accessible in all areas of theatre, wider aisles and wheelchair access, and an elevator to reach the Mezzanine.
- Fully accessible outdoor walkways and parking areas.
- Many more bathrooms inside the building and no outdoor restrooms.
- A fully winterized facility allowing a holiday show to be staged in Ogunquit.
- Increased parking.

- Dramatic environmental improvements including removing 11,000 square feet in gravel and paved surfaces and replacing with grass, trees, and foliage.

Q: YOUR SHOWS ARE GREAT, WHAT WILL CHANGE WITH THIS NEW BUILDING?

We have been fortunate that our shows have been well produced even with all of our technical limitations. This project will have a lot of upgraded technical elements that are not always visible to the audience.

- We will have an Acoustician who will design the house to have improved sound.
- Lighting and technical equipment will all be upgraded.
- New Listening Systems for the hard of hearing.
- Larger Loading Dock to more efficiently load in our sets.
- An orchestra pit for our musicians.
- Newly built wig and makeup room.
- A basement under the stage to house our Costume shop, storage and technical offices.
- New dressing rooms for our actors.

Q: WHAT IS THE FULL CAMPUS MASTER PLAN?

In addition to the Playhouse, we are looking at other phases to this project which would include a renovation to our Arts Academy campus ("The Colony") and our housing units where we house our artists. These two projects have not yet advanced for design review, but we expect to start that process soon.

Q: WHY DO YOU NEED TO BUILD HOUSING?

Every great regional theatre in America now faces workforce housing challenges. Providing responsible seasonal housing helps us attract the actors, musicians, technicians, and educators who make Ogunquit's arts economy possible — while reducing pressure on local rentals during the busy summer season.

Q: WHEN WOULD WORKFORCE HOUSING HAPPEN?

The **Playhouse reconstruction and modernization** project remains the organization's immediate priority. Workforce housing is part of a longer-term planning effort and is still in the very early stages.

Because the Playhouse recently acquired additional off-site property and reassessed its operational needs, earlier exploratory housing concepts are being reevaluated. Before any future housing proposal moves forward, there would be additional studies, design work, traffic and infrastructure review, and a full public Planning Board process.

No final housing design has been approved, and there is no immediate construction timeline for workforce housing.

Our focus right now is ensuring the long-term future of the historic Playhouse itself — improving accessibility, safety, audience comfort, and preserving live theatre in Ogunquit for the next century.