

TEMPLE-PLAYHOUSE CONSERVANCY



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for HistoricDetroit

The Capital Campaign for The Bonstelle

HISTORY

Steeped in tradition and a cherished destination for the Detroit community, The Bonstelle was originally designed by Detroit architect Albert Kahn and constructed in 1903 as Detroit's first Temple Beth El, home to the oldest Jewish congregation in Michigan history.



In the 1920's, as the congregation outgrew the Temple, the building was sold to Detroit-born actress, producer, and director **Jessie Bonstelle** to convert into a theatre. She hired famed theatre designer C. Howard Crane to undertake the conversion. She named the property the "Bonstelle Playhouse" effectively moving the troupe of the same name she had created in New York.



The Bonstelle was later acquired by Wayne State University and used for much of the last 70 years as a venue for WSU's theatre and dance programs.

THE PROJECT

The Conservancy, in collaboration with Wayne State University, which owns the property, is undertaking a full restoration of the building and updating it to house both community events and live performances. The Temple-Playhouse Conservancy serves as the non-profit enterprise that will own, develop, and operate the Bonstelle.

This extraordinary project will include the restoration of the 1925 Bonstelle Playhouse interior, as well as the full restoration of the original 1903 Albert Kahn Temple Beth El exterior. The latter has been obscured by subsequent renovations for over 50 years. In addition, all mechanical systems will be fully updated, including the addition of air-conditioning to the property for the first time in its 120-year history, and updates to make the property fully accessible.



With excellent proximity to the Detroit Medical Center, Wayne State University as well as the balance of Detroit's larger entertainment district, the restored Bonstelle Playhouse will provide a much-needed non-profit venue for the hosting of live performances, civic, corporate, and private events, and will become a sought-after destination for community gatherings in the greater downtown area.



THE VENUE

The renovated interior of The Bonstelle Playhouse will have the capacity to host a sit-down event for up to 300 people, as well as a performance for up to 1,200, making it one of Detroit's most versatile and unique venues.

Additionally, main-floor connections will be added to the adjacent new construction "Conservatory", which will allow for expanded access to the Bonstelle, and provide full commercial kitchens and much needed congregating space to support theatre events and performances.

In addition to the decorative and mechanical improvements described above, the theatre's main floor will be leveled to allow for the flexibility of both performances as well as large-scale community, corporate and private gatherings.



A SENSE OF PLACE

The Temple-Playhouse Conservancy is now embarking upon a capital campaign to fund the restoration and renovation of The Playhouse and Temple Beth El façade.

The Capital Campaign for The Bonstelle will ensure the complete restoration of one of Detroit's oldest and most under-appreciated historic properties – one with deep ties to Detroit's Jewish community, as well as to generations of performers who learned their craft through the Wayne State Theatre program.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The Temple-Playhouse Conservancy project honors the storied history of this beloved landmark and ensures that future generations will be able to benefit from the remarkable facility created there.

We invite you to join us on this spectacular journey that celebrates The Bonstelle's past, present, and future brilliance.

The stage is set. The foundation is in place. It is through your generous support that the future of The Bonstelle will be transformed.