The Red Hook area of Brooklyn is a long neglected neighborhood of Civil War era factories, shipping facilities, and a 1939 public housing project where 8,000 people live in 2,500 apartments. Since the budget did not permit a tear down of the site’s existing building, the architects made some minor renovations and added to the existing structure. The renovated building and additions create the 28,000 sf Red Hook Center for the Arts.

The center is an art gallery, performance space, recreation space, gathering space, and art education center. The building is divided by conceptual prosceniums conceived as stages for performances, displays, and gathering spaces.

On the main level, the architects renovated the existing building to make a large opening in the rear for a new stage that faces both inside and outside seating. The space also serves as a gym. The main level and upper level (not shown) both accommodate gallery spaces. The lower level of the building (not shown) accommodates a high school for the arts. There is an arts and crafts area, dining facility, dance studio, library, and computer graphic laboratory, and neighborhood radio station.

Legend for the main level:
1) entrance pavilion
2) office
3) locker
4) multipurpose space
5) indoor/outdoor stage
6) outdoor seating
7) walkway
8) gallery

The innovative design and ambience of the Red Hook Center for the Arts gives a renewed identity to the neighborhood. The project has drawn people away from the relentless brick towers of the surrounding housing projects.
The building uses light to "cut lines" through the site and activate the building. The glass curtain wall of the entrance pavilion frames the public art gallery (1). A rectangular sandblasted glass punch in this wall, framed in red, blurs the edge between the street and the gallery. Beyond the curtain wall, inside the gallery, a skylight cuts a "line of light" to mark the threshold between the gallery and the multipurpose space (3 & 5). The curving scfit, painted red on its inner face, reflects onto the white gallery wall creating an area of reflected light (6). A blue wall frames the stage opening in the multipurpose room (2) and also ventilates the space.

1) entrance pavilion
2) multipurpose room
3) line of light between gallery and multipurpose space
4) light wall
5) skylight
6) skylight
7) light study
8) lines of light diagram - activating the building through light
The Red Hook Center for the Arts relates the disparate parts of the project through various methods. The images at the right show how articulation provides identity between the new stage, the existing multipurpose space, and the new entrance pavilion. The image below demonstrates how materials differentiate between the existing building and new additions. The limestone clad new additions identify themselves against the old brick of the existing building. As light glows in different hues on various surfaces it marks the edges between functions.
OLD / NEW
The diagram shows the relationship of the old existing building to the new additions.

old
new

CONNECTION
The diagram depicts the connection between the exterior and interior activities of the building.

SERVICE/SERVED
The served space of the building flanks the service spaces, creating an efficient relationship.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE
Since the building serves as a type of hybrid community center the majority of spaces are public.

FLEXIBILITY
The building’s overall function required several separate functions. Due to the nature of the project, it was therefore necessary to make several spaces flexible to accommodate these various functions.
Understanding the relationship and interaction among the various elements of the Red Hook Center for the Arts is essential to interpreting the building as a hybrid. The interaction and relationship between the Center and the urban fabric explains the role the Center plays in the neighborhood and defines the building's various functions. As such, the project required a relatively small building to serve various functions. The relationships and interactions between the existing building and new building, between the inside and outside, between the service/served spaces, between public and private spaces, among the physical spaces themselves, and among the functions defines the role of a hybrid building in the renewal of urban space.

RELATIONSHIP TO URBAN FABRIC
The Red Hook Center stands out in the neglected urban fabric of the Red Hook neighborhood. The building and its outdoor activities are surrounded by the Red Hook housing projects of 1939, a dilapidated day care building, and a Civil War era former factory. The Center provides a renewed identity to the neglected neighborhood. It allows residents to escape the monotony of the surrounding brick housing towers into an urban oasis of vibrant activity.

- Red Hook Center for the Arts
- High density housing
- Day care center
- Other

HYBRID DIAGRAM
The diagram shows the volumetric relationship between the functions of the Red Hook Center.

- Arts High School
- Gallery
- Service Space
- Multipurpose Room
- Stage