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## Kripper Studio partners with the city of Boston to update The Strand Theater

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Boston, MA Kripper Studio has formed a partnership with the city of Boston to assess, identify and recommend solutions to enhance and expand the production capabilities for The Strand Theater.

Focusing on the theater's backstage area Kripper Studio, a minority-owned full-service architecture firm, is tasked to assess, identify and recommend solutions to maintain access to the theater's loading dock as adjacent development proposals take shape. The intention of proposed improvements is to benefit the theater's production capabilities. Ultimately, The Strand's goal is to better the experience for touring cast and crew and offer patrons a greater range of concurrent presentations.

Kripper Studio is recognized for their sensitive and creative approach to improving existing buildings for residential and commercial use. The engagement to focus on The Strand Theater is a natural evolution to performing arts venues housed in older buildings with considerable architectural personality and community affinity.

In finding design solutions to improve and enhance existing buildings, architect Amir Kripper, the founding principal of Kripper Studio, speaks of taking advantage of the constraints. Specifically for

this engagement, the constraints of The Strand's limited footprint and existing site conditions in relation to the needs of adjacent new development proposals are realities that motivate ingenuity. "Our work for The Strand Theater is a piece of a larger puzzle and my design approach to address the site's constraints is to combine architectural pieces that at first don't necessarily match."

A theater's backstage functionality is invisible to patrons but is fundamental to cast and crew and ultimately to the end result.

The seamless introduction of new, intricate mechanical systems requires a precise and logical design process focused on functionality. Advocating for the theater's programming needs within the context of the needs of neighboring construction is also a role Kripper Studio assumes at meetings.

Located at 543 Columbia Rd., The Strand Theater is owned by the city of Boston and managed by the mayor's office of arts and culture. It was built in 1918 as a movie and vaudeville house. It opened on the evening of Armistice Day (November 11, 1918) and was billed as Dorchester's million-dollar movie palace. The theater was designed by Funk and Wilcox in Boston and built by McGahey and O'Connor.

The current renovations to the building will benefit patrons as well as production cast and crew as have previous improvements including the 2008 efforts to replace the stage floor and orchestra pit and well as restore the façade and marquee. The Strand Theatre is a venue for a diverse range of performing arts, cultural programming, and community events. Its mission is two-fold: To engage the multicultural residents of greater Boston, with a special commitment to youth and to act as a catalyst in strengthening the fabric of the neighborhood.

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