

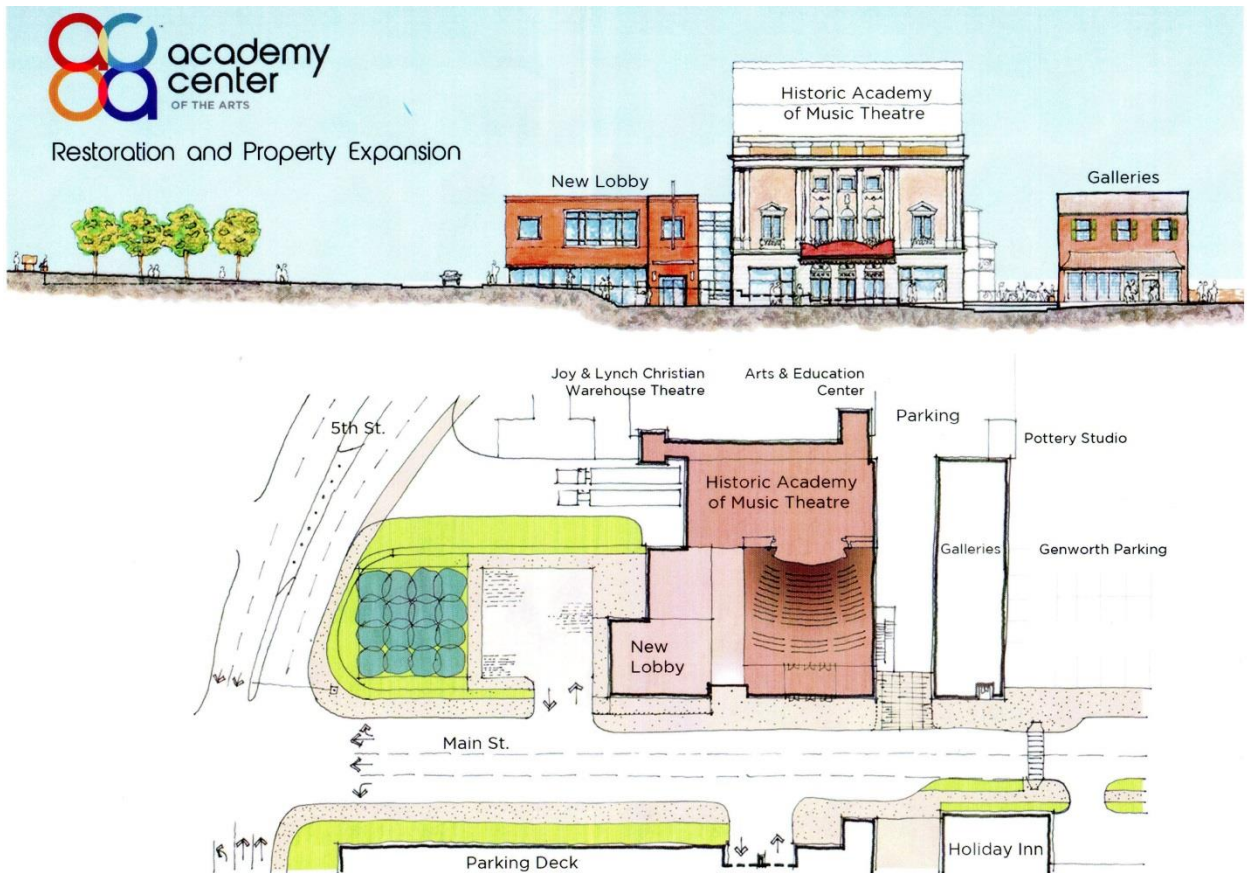
Common Wealth Award Nomination

by Katherine Knopf, Awards Chairman
The Roanoke Valley Garden Club

The Common Wealth Award Committee is excited to announce a finalist for the 2016 Common Wealth Award: The Academy of Arts Tree Garden, proposed by The Hillside Garden Club. There will be a first place award of \$8,000 given this year. The recipient will be announced at the Board of Governor's meeting this October.

This project is collaboration between Hillside Garden Club and The Academy of Arts in Lynchburg, Virginia. The Academy of Arts has undertaken a large restoration and reconstruction project to make the Arts building more accessible, attractive, and available: they want it to be *the place* to hold events in downtown Lynchburg.

The proposal is an excellent example of a garden club collaborating with a local organization and it meets all the criteria for the Common Wealth Award: conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation and education are all touched upon in this plan. This project will enrich the Commonwealth of Virginia by preserving a landmark building for future generations to enjoy. Please discuss this proposal in your clubs and vote on it in your September meetings.



The Academy Center of the Arts Tree Garden

Built in 1905, the historic theater at the Academy Center of the Arts in Lynchburg, Virginia is one of the only surviving theaters of the turn-of-the-century period in Virginia. Saved from destruction by leaders of the

Lynchburg community, including members of Hillside Garden Club, the theater was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. Since that time, while the adjacent Academy Center served as a performance and art class space, the historic theater itself sat quiet. But now, this jewel of Lynchburg is undergoing a transformation! Upon completion, the historic theater will reopen, once again able to welcome performances from local, regional, and national programs.

Inspired by the historic tree clumps discovered at nearby Poplar Forest, Hillside Garden Club hopes to partner with the Academy to plant a cluster of native trees and plants at the site of a plaza. This urban tree garden will serve as an entrance to the theater and an outdoor performance space as well as public green space. In addition, using permeable pavers, a cistern and solar panel powered watering systems, we will reuse and recycle run off waters. Our project would help to preserve this historic site, provide beautification to a gateway to the city and conserve water and natural resources in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson.