Steppenwolf Theatre, one of America’s premier ensemble theaters, is in the midst of a $73 million campus expansion in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The first phase, completed in 2016, involved improvements to food and drink offerings within the existing footprint. The more ambitious second phase features a 50,000-square-foot performance venue planted between the main building and a parking garage, designed by Chicago firm Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture.

The shapely new structure, which broke ground in March 2019, includes an intimate 400-seat theater-in-the-round where no audience member is more than 20 feet from the stage. This will replace the 299-seat Upstairs Theatre. New education spaces will help Steppenwolf triple the number of youth served in training programs, and a two-level atrium lobby with a wine bar and sidewalk cafe lounge promises to further enhance the patron experience. The full expansion plan also calls for cosmetic upgrades to the neighboring garage. To help finance the project, Steppenwolf sold its historic Yondorf Hall property across the street, including a vacant lot being redeveloped as 92 transit-oriented apartments designed by Antunovich Associates.

Further reading:
Steppenwolf Theatre is set to expand in Lincoln Park. Stefano Esposito, Chicago Sun-Times, March 5, 2019.
Steppenwolf expands theater with dramatic, geometric design from Smith + Gill. Jay Koziarz, Curbed Chicago, March 5, 2019.
Steppenwolf Theatre Expansion. Architect’s project page.