

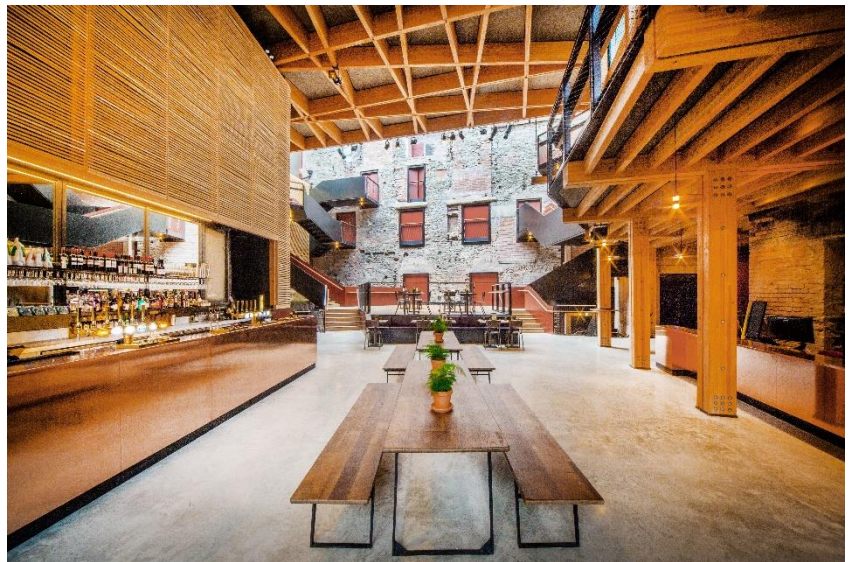
# BRISTOL OLD VIC ANNIVERSARY WORKS: CASE STUDY

## The Project:

Architects Haworth Tompkins have completed a new foyer and studio theatre for the Grade I listed Bristol Old Vic, the oldest continuously working theatre in the English-speaking world. The result of five years careful research, consultation, design and construction, the project aims to open up the front of house areas to a wider, more diverse audience and to place the theatre at the heart of Bristol's public life and public space.

The foyer is conceived as an informal extension of the street, as much a covered public square as a discrete building. The space is framed and covered by structural timber and glass to bring daylight deep into the room. The centrepiece of the space is the much-altered façade of the Georgian auditorium, visible from the street for the first time, illuminated by a large light well and punctured by new openings to overwrite the visible evidence of historic alterations.

Mezzanine galleries, winding timber staircases and viewing platforms allow the entire audience to move up, down and around a single, convivial space before and after each show, and the local community to enjoy the foyer throughout the day as a café, bar and meeting place.



The south facing street façade has been conceived as a public art work, consisting of moveable sun shading shutters, operated by hand and incorporating the text both of the inaugural address given by Garrick in 1766 and a poem by former Bristol City Poet Miles Chambers. The text highlights the importance of the theatre's long history but looks forward to its role in the current and future life of the whole community.

In addition to the main foyer, a new studio theatre occupies the former barrel store of the Coopers' Hall at ground and basement levels, enlisting historic wall surfaces and allowing daylight from street level windows. The original Coopers' Hall at first floor has been converted back to a grand public room overlooking the street, serving both as an extension of the foyer and as a self-contained function room.

### **The Architectural Design:**

Bristol Old Vic is the oldest continuously working theatre in the English-speaking world, completed in 1766. The auditorium has survived largely intact but successive alterations to the street frontage over the years culminated in 1972 with a new foyer and studio theatre by the respected British architect Peter Moro, whose scheme incorporated the neighbouring historic Coopers' Hall as the main entrance and circulation space. The auditorium and back of house spaces were renovated by architect Andrzej Blonski in 2012.

Increasingly, however, audiences had become disengaged from the theatre, which appeared sealed off from the street. The 1970s alterations, although conceptually clear and skilfully realised, divided the audience into two unconnected foyers, closed off the theatre's public façade with the new studio and over-formalised the arrival and circulation spaces via the converted Coopers' Hall, which as a consequence could no longer fulfil its historic purpose as a public room for the city.

Radical change was required to address these issues, and so the decision was taken to remove and rebuild entirely the 1972 foyer and studio, replacing them with a more welcoming and legible foyer space, a new studio theatre in the lower half of the Coopers' Hall and a reinstated grand public room as originally located in its upper half.

As with much of our theatre work, materials have been chosen for their durability and capacity to mature and change over time. The Douglas Fir structure will darken and deepen in colour, whilst a delicate oak lath screen along one side of the foyer is designed to bend and flex organically. A copper bar and concrete floor will become patinated with use, as will oak upper floors and painted stair balustrades. Detailing is direct and informal, allowing junctions to retain an almost outdoor language to heighten the sense of the foyer as a mediator between the street and the historic buildings that form its edges.

The scheme uses structural timber and timber linings for new elements including frame, roof, and external façade. The foyer and new studio are naturally ventilated via a large intake plenum and a pre-cooling labyrinth, with thermostatically controlled high level and low level opening windows. The moveable façade shutters are designed to optimise summer shading and winter solar heating. An exposed concrete floor and existing found masonry surfaces throughout the space contribute thermal mass, and brickwork from demolition operations was recycled and incorporated into new walls and masonry repairs.

### **Key innovative/ low impact design features:**

- Re-use of existing historic building fabric dating back to 1766 (Georgian Auditorium and Coopers' Hall walls exposed for first time)
- Removal of 1970s concrete and brick structure to create new public 'courtyard' connecting Auditorium to King St for the first time
- New Studio Theatre and 'public room' created in the existing Coopers' Hall with upgraded rehearsal/ performance space also created in the attic
- Green sedum roof above main foyer to increase biodiversity and visual amenity
- Natural ventilation system utilised to supply foyer and Studio Theatre with fresh air and reduce energy use (existing basement space with low head height reused as plenum)
- External corten steel shutters on main façade reduce solar gain and were commissioned as a public artwork
- Engineered timber 'glulam' structural frame in the main foyer to utilise pre-fabrication and rapid assembly benefits, act as a 'carbon bank', and provide warm, human material palette
- Existing 1970s foundations re-used to avoid unnecessary ground works and increased carbon footprint

- Sculptural steel stairs installed in the main foyer to resolve difference between historic Auditorium, 1970s and contemporary levels
- New lift core installed to provide universal access to all levels for the first time in the Theatre's history

#### **Costs:**

- Basic Building Cost - £/m<sup>2</sup> £4,439.18/m<sup>2</sup> (£9,246,811.51/2083m<sup>2</sup>)
- Services Costs - £/m<sup>2</sup> £790.30/m<sup>2</sup> (£1,646,201.13/2083m<sup>2</sup>)
- External Works - £/m<sup>2</sup> £9.73/m<sup>2</sup> (£20,266.25/2083m<sup>2</sup>)

#### **Areas:**

- Gross floor area – 2,096.6m<sup>2</sup>
- Total area of site – 2,910m<sup>2</sup> GEA (this is 0.291 hectares)
- Function areas:
  - o Foyer – 380.9m<sup>2</sup>
  - o Studio Theatre and Rehearsal Room – 318.9m<sup>2</sup>
  - o Coopers' Hall event space and The Foyle Room private meeting room – 180.2m<sup>2</sup>
- Area of circulation – 443.8m<sup>2</sup>
- Area of storage – 578.6m<sup>2</sup> (includes air plenum)
- % area of grounds to be used by community - None
- Area of buildings to be used by community – 380.9m<sup>2</sup>

#### **Energy and Environment:**

- Predicted electricity consumption - 30.41 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>
- Predicted fossil fuel consumption - 23.13 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>
- Predicted renewable energy generation – None
- Predicted water use - 7L/p/a based on a benchmark from Julies Bicycle for performing arts buildings. Julies Bicycle were a consultant working on the project.
- Predicted water use to be provided by rainwater or greywater – 0

#### **Social and Economic Benefits:**

- Steps taken during the construction process to reduce environmental impacts:
  - o 2hr on 2hr off Noisy work routine.
  - o No works during theatre Matinees.
  - o Use of None percussive equipment wherever possible.
  - o Separation techniques implemented to ensure safe demolition.
  - o Weekly liaison with neighbours.
  - o Daily inspections of site boundary.
  - o Considerate Contractor registration.
  - o Artwork/client advertising to hoarding.
  - o Waste Minimisation.
  - o Employment of local specialist contractors wherever possible.
- Social or economically sustainable measures achieved
  - o Considerate Contractor registration.
  - o Artwork/client advertising to hoarding.
  - o Employment of local specialist contractors wherever possible.

#### **BREEAM Rating and Score:**

- Interim rating: 'very good' (56.2%);
- Final score: TBC

Dated: March 2019 (ALW)

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## Interim Certificate – Design Stage

This is to certify that:

**Bristol Old Vic  
King Street  
Bristol  
BS1 4ED**

has been assessed to:

**BREEAM 2008: Bespoke  
(Fully Fitted)**

by a licensed assessor for:

**Bristol Old Vic**

and has achieved a score of **56.2%**

**Very Good**



Certificate Number: **BREEAM-0049-8774**

Issue: **01**

29 July 2016

Date of Issue

Signed on behalf of BRE Global Ltd.

Gavin Dunn

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Bristol Old Vic

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**Interim Certificate Number: BREEAM-0049-8774**

**Issue: 01**

**Bristol Old Vic  
King Street  
Bristol  
BS1 4ED**

Assessed for: Bristol Old Vic

by: Max Fordham LLP  
Assessor Company

Simon Hayes  
Licensed Assessor

SH55  
Assessor Number

**BREEAM 2008: Bespoke  
(Fully Fitted)**

Overall Score: 56.2%  
Rating: Very Good



Category Scores	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Management	83	<div></div>									
Health and Wellbeing	59	<div></div>									
Energy	19	<div></div>									
Transport	64	<div></div>									
Water	86	<div></div>									
Materials	73	<div></div>									
Waste	43	<div></div>									
Land Use and Ecology	80	<div></div>									
Pollution	23	<div></div>									
Innovation	10	<div></div>									

Gavin Dunn, Director, BREEAM, BRE Global Ltd.

29 July 2016

Date of Issue



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