

Capital Works!

Digging Deeper

Evaluation of Arts Council England's capital investment, 2012 -2018

Case Studies

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Digging deeper - capital case studies

The following case studies inform and accompany the wider 'Capital Works' evaluation report. They are intended to provide a deeper insight into the experiences and achievements of a range of large and small capital projects. They were purposefully chosen to illustrate the variety of the projects supported by the capital programme since 2012 and include a range of different artforms, beneficiaries, stakeholders, scales and geographic locations.

They have widely differing ambitions and demonstrate a number of possible approaches to developing and delivering capital projects. It could be argued that other than their capital project they have little in common, indeed these case studies are designed to be insights into particular experiences and approaches.

The case studies necessarily capture a moment in time; each is part of a continuously unfolding story with on-going impacts. Some projects are works in progress, others more recently completed and others have had several years of usage to reflect on.

The case studies explore:

- > The purpose and scope of the individual projects
- > How the teams involved experienced their different projects
- > The outcomes achieved to date

In reviewing the case studies, while acknowledging their differences, common themes have also emerged:

- > A focus on people: much of the ambition is based on how to get more people to enjoy more of the buildings more of the time
- > People make it happen: these projects are driven by the imagination, vision, tenacity and the passion of teams and individuals. There are also human foibles to navigate such as maintaining the purity of vision, managing power relationships, navigating issues of expertise and control
- > Idiosyncratic buildings: the buildings themselves can be a wonderful source of both creativity and of challenge. The projects highlight the need to know and understand your building as a capital client
- > A continuum of change: these projects require constant iteration, chunking tasks and processes, developing agile approaches to a relatively fixed process, and on-going organisational change throughout the project

A warm welcome

- Different forms of value: from life changing experiences and personal affirmation, to improving basic hygiene factors like food and comfort, and adding functional value such as convenience and ease of access
- Future facing: going beyond addressing current needs to considering future possibilities and opportunities, from the perspective of the people involved and the business model
- A very warm welcome: The most common shared feature is that of providing a 'welcome.' A warm welcome was a particularly important element for some of the projects because of a recognition of spaces that can be intimidating, large scale and/or reconfigured and complex

These projects demonstrate that organisations want to be proud of their spaces and what they can offer their visitors.

Acknowledgement

The evaluators would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of all the organisations that have shared their capital project experiences. It has been a genuine privilege to visit your buildings and to hear your stories and experiences. We trust we have done your achievements justice.



Picture 10. Aspex Family Saturday

Aspex, Portsmouth

It is just before Christmas 2017 and the building is vibrant. People are chattering as the Generate group (an inclusive arts group for people with dementia) enjoy their Christmas get together. There is a steady stream of people visiting the exhibition, taking advantage of the food offer or buying last minute gifts. Aspex's welcoming approach and pet friendly policy is also evident as three women chat to Jo Bushnell (Aspex Director) with their dogs beside them waiting patiently. They are asking about courses and other Aspex activity. There is a warm sense of a building that is fit for purpose and that people feel comfortable in.

About Aspex

Aspex has always occupied distinctive and idiosyncratic buildings. Originally, based in a converted Chapel in the Southsea area of Portsmouth, Aspex first opened its doors in 1981. Created by the artist members of Art Space Portsmouth Aspex has, from the beginning, had artists and creative practice at the core of its work. The Chapel, while an important home, had a number of limitations as the organisation grew. The commercial redevelopment in the north-west of the island that is now Gunwharf Quays offered the opportunity for relocation and expansion.

In 2006 Aspex moved into its current space, a converted naval storehouse that sits on the boundary of Gunwharf Quays just behind the main shopping area and within the residential development. While Aspex is in an area of significant footfall it has to manage being on the periphery of the main shopping site, and sustaining good relationships with its residential neighbours. The building provides an exhibition space, a learning space, a café area, an artist's studio, ground floor and mezzanine offices.

In recent years Aspex has been refining its vision and consolidating its place within the cultural ecology of Portsmouth. This has involved changing and developing its organisational design, building new partnerships, testing new models of programming, and reinventing its retail offer.



Picture 11. Aspex annual Chernobyl workshop

As Jo Bushnell points out that the path of change is never straightforward and the unforeseen always emerges, for Aspex it was adapting to changes in staffing, the catering offer going through a number of iterations, and financial challenges being ever present as public subsidy is reduced.

Aspex has a clear vision and mission underpinned by an underlying belief that art can enrich lives, challenge preconceptions, encourage learning and make new connections.

Vision: supporting and developing the visual arts ecology and engaging audiences through meaningful experiences.

Mission: supporting emerging artists and revealing the creative process.

The Aspex business plan outlines a well-developed approach to programming that has been refined in recent years. Aspex takes a holistic approach to programming across three distinct strands: art, participation and artist support.

These overlap and interconnect. Our most meaningful projects happen in the centre, involving artists and audiences. Our core intention was to make physical our business plan. We were living it in programme terms but the public couldn't see it because the building wasn't right.

It was also about giving our participation work the same status as our exhibition programme. Participation is 50% of our work and should have 50% of the space.



Picture 12. Aspex mobile learning studio

Capital Works

The Aspex capital project was multi-faceted and included a number of areas for improvement that were all rooted in delivering the organisation's mission and vision:

- > Developing a new learning space to increase reach and diversity
- > A digital upgrade to increase capacity
- > Improving environmental sustainability
- > Providing visitors with more open access to artists and creative practices
- > Extending reach through a Mobile Learning Studio
- > General space improvements: moving the café servery and space, relocating the shop, updating the toilet facilities, reconditioning doors, improved electrical installation

The project was very much a jigsaw with a number of interdependencies that needed all the pieces to fit together. The servery had to be moved to allow the learning space to move from one end of the building to the other, which in turn allowed the old participation space to become the new artist studio.

Another important aspect of the project was the overall upgrade of Aspex's digital capability. This included the upgrading of projection and exhibition equipment, new audio technology for use in the gallery

space without disturbing tenants on the mezzanine level, and new participation equipment including iPads for audience engagement. In a major cultural shift Aspex has moved from Apple computers to Chromebooks/Google and cloud computing with the advice and support of Portsmouth University.

Project statistics

- > Contractor: Building IS
- > Advisory Architects: Manalo & White
- > Planning permission: Portsmouth City Council
- > Funding Match: Aspex reserves; Foyle Foundation; Garfield Weston Foundation

The original budget for the project was £222,658, the final outturn being £200,086.

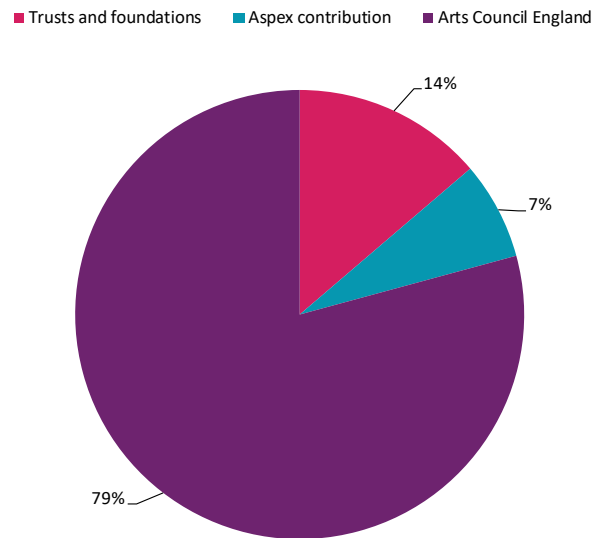


Figure 1. Aspex capital project income breakdown

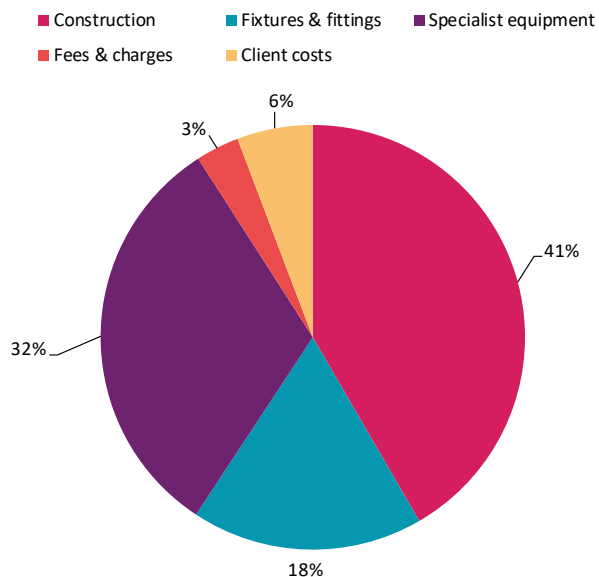


Figure 2. Aspex capital project expenditure breakdown

Variances in the project expenditure came about for a number of reasons:

- > Varying success with fundraising from Trusts and Foundations
- > Increased construction costs due to specification changes
- > Reduced expenditure on the external space because of planning restrictions
- > Purchase of a higher specification vehicle for the Mobile Learning Studio
- > Increased design fees
- > Increased in-kind and cash support from Aspex
- > Change to Aspex's VAT status
- > Google Tour and launch event was not included in original budget

The space feels exciting, lively and welcoming now. It's not as austere as it was. It's all about the visitor experience, down to the sparkly tiles in the accessible toilet. It's about it being clean, accessible and ensuring quality without it feeling exclusive.

The capital project has delivered the infrastructure and the tools we need.

Project achievements

The development of the Learning Space has really transformed and opened up the whole organisation. It is everything we had hoped and planned for and has already had a significant impact on the participatory work we can offer.

Aspex has faced a number of challenges in delivering the capital works, a key one being how to keep the building open as the physical improvements were happening. Having had a previous relationship with the contractors helped facilitate this dialogue and meant the contractor understood the needs of Aspex. While working on adapting the servery and catering area they erected a false wall to allow the gallery, offices and studio space to remain in use. The large internal windows were then added to the studio at a time of least disruption to the organisation.

Perhaps surprisingly the biggest challenge became the external seating area that required planning permission and bespoke planters (used to define the perimeter) because of being based in a heritage area and their proximity to the residential area.

There is no question in walking around the building and talking to Jo that the work has made a positive difference to how Aspex views itself, how it operates and how its customers/participants now experience the building. The flow of the building is more coherent and the spaces better defined.

What is notable in seeing the space and hearing about the project is some of the ingenious solutions that were devised for maximising the benefits of the works; joinery design that created a mobile coat rack/room divider/notice board and extensive storage space; using deckchairs for the outdoor seating area that can also be transported in the Mobile Learning Studio; and the addition of a giant yellow Anglepoise® (donated by Anglepoise®). These solutions help give a domestic feel to a public space that might otherwise feel unfamiliar and uninviting to some visitors.

In thinking through what Aspex might have done differently around its capital project the main issue seems to have been that of capacity. The Director and Participation & Learning Manager worked very closely on the delivery of the project but with hindsight and given all the challenges that happened early in the project some backfill of those roles would have made the task easier.

Overall, the striking element of the Aspex capital project is how much can be achieved with a comparatively modest level of investment. The project has delivered across a number of strands from environmental sustainability to the outreach delivery of the Mobile Learning Space, and from technology led culture change to a greatly improved catering offer. This has put pressure on the organisation in terms of the time, money and effort it has had to contribute but the view seems to be that it was well worth taking on the challenge.

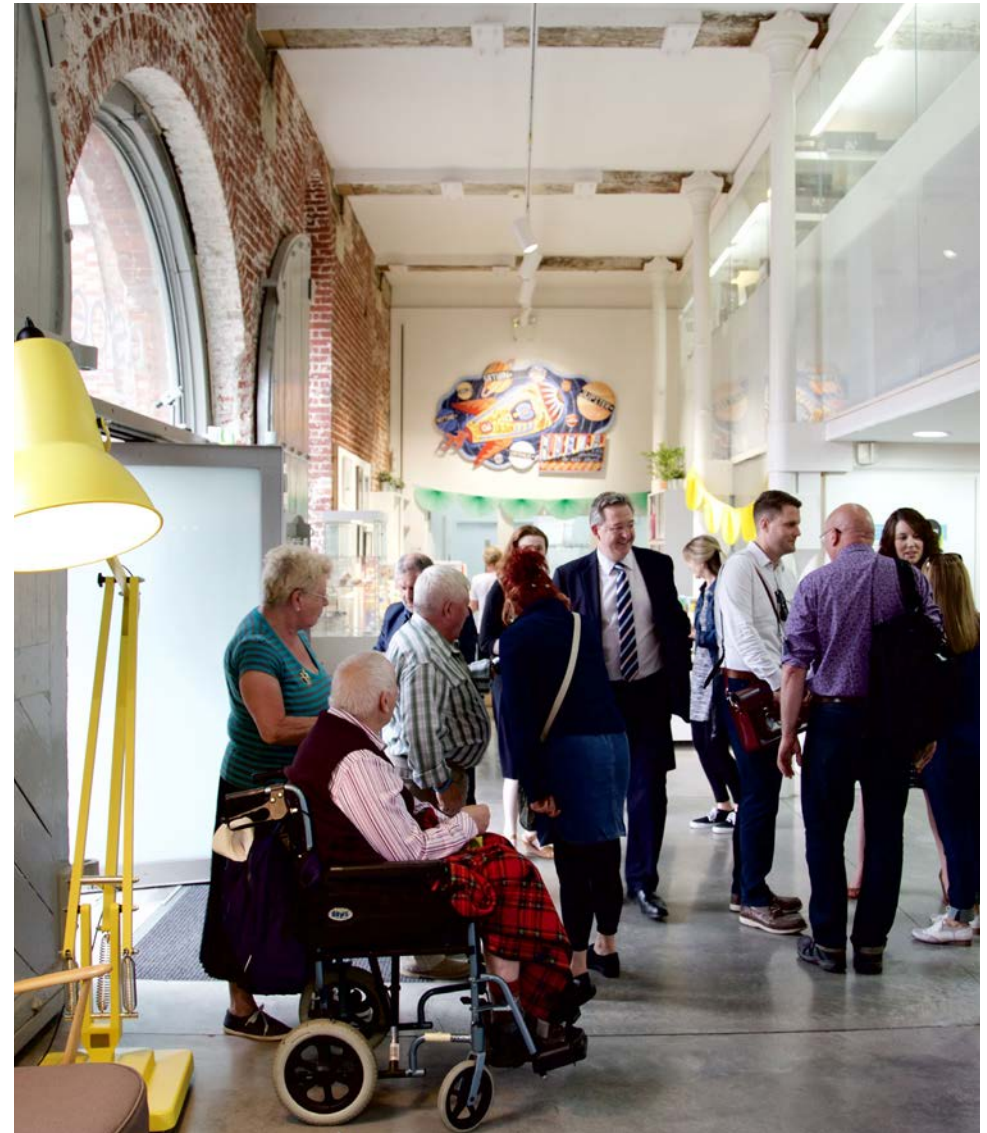
Sharing the experience

It's a miracle we completed given everything else that was happening at the time.

Aspex would share the following lessons learnt with others contemplating a capital project, particularly smaller scale cultural organisations:

- > Buy yourself time. Make sure those responsible for the project have the time available to focus on the project and back fill where possible particularly if it involves members of a small team. Even if you think you have covered this you probably need more and not recognising this can lead to health issues for those involved
- > It can be hard putting all the pieces of the jigsaw together at the right time, plan ahead as much as you can and expect there to be some changes on the way
- > Fundraising for small organisations with Trusts and Foundations without a track record can be hard, be ready to develop a clear case and allow the necessary time

Without the funding we would have done something but it wouldn't have been what the city deserves or what our audiences deserve. We were already committed to removing the servery, whatever happened but this achieved more than we could have done on our own.



Picture 13. Aspex launch

Soft Touch Arts

Vince Attwood is giving me a tour of the building; we're in one of the music production rooms and he's brilliantly creating the image of the Friday night sessions, with the room full to bursting of energetic young people, full of chat, who have come to the building to make and play music together. He has been struck by the way they have come to use the term 'soft touch' –as an active verb- 'I've been doing Soft Touch' and this is thrilling to him because it underlines how important and consistent the activity in the building has become to them.

About Soft Touch Arts

Soft Touch Arts uses arts, media and music activities as a tool to engage with and change the lives of disadvantaged young people, by supporting them to develop creative, social and employability skills. The team at Soft Touch believe their projects unlock untapped potential and support a more positive outlook and sense of purpose. “We believe it because we’ve seen it happen.” They are based in Leicester City with levels of deprivation amongst the highest in England. Some 30,000 children are estimated to live in poverty and Soft Touch engages many of these young people in their programme.

The organisation started up in 1986, thanks to the Enterprise Allowance Scheme which enabled the founder members to establish a base and purchase their first vehicle to undertake work on an outreach model. Soft Touch was set up as a co-operative, it is now a registered charity and company limited by guarantee with a co-operative working ethos at its core.

The founder members Vince Attwood and Sally Norman continue to be part of the leadership team as the organisation has grown and now includes, staff, volunteers and a freelance pool of workers. Young people are encouraged to move from being project participants to peer mentors and volunteer roles as they develop skills and confidence. The organisation is characterised by long-serving individuals in the staff,

sessional workers and management board.

Their activity is largely project based, and they work with a range of agencies and schools. Prior to the capital project, the work was delivered on an outreach basis, with the team going out to the community and some projects delivered from their building in an area just outside the city.

The company base had moved (locally) several times over its lifetime to accommodate growth in the staff team and in 2009 the organisation agreed it needed to find a fit for purpose city centre building to support improved quality of delivery and future sustainability.



Picture 14. Soft Touch Arts building

Capital Works

The capital programme provided an opportunity to secure and refurbish a bigger base, with space to accommodate arts activity in the building, with a city centre location.

At the point when we started, we were growing and changing, wanting more activity in the building, to bring kids into the building and to make it easier for them to come. We didn't want to be tucked away outside the city centre anymore and we needed to be more visible.

The refurbishment of the city centre building acquired by Soft Touch was funded through the large capital programme, within the second round. The total project cost was £1,209,816 and Arts Council England contributed £650,000 including a development grant of £30,000.

The project was long in the making. Early gestation began in 2009, more than three years before the actual application to ACE, with a premises options appraisal and initial consideration of a different listed building that turned out to be difficult to secure. After a period of looking again for a suitable site, the New Walk building which was owned by Leicester City Council and previously used as a nursery, came up for sale.

The organisation secured a bank loan through a social lender to purchase the property and a Grants for the Arts award supported a feasibility study, a key element of which was the consultation with the young people with whom Soft Touch was working. The architects firm r g + p offered some pro-bono support facilitated through Leicestershire Cares to help shape the plans. The same architect won the contract through the procurement process – an important part of their bid was the commitment to working with Soft Touch and their users, the young people, to develop the plans.

The works encompassed:

- > Refit of the main exhibition space and workshop room (ground floor)
- > Provision of storage, shower and access (ground floor)
- > Installation of a new professional kitchen (ground floor)
- > Changes to the layout of office space and meeting rooms (first floor)
- > Refit of basement spaces for arts, music and media activities
- > Creation of a self-contained office space to provide rental income
- > Outside fencing and bike storage, front garden access

Project statistics

- > Architect: r g + p
- > Main contractor: Smallman & Son

The property was purchased in 2013 and the work took place over the period September 2014-May 2015 with the building officially opened by HRH Earl of Wessex on 22nd June 2015. The snagging process has been protracted and at the time of writing, the final retention fee is outstanding.

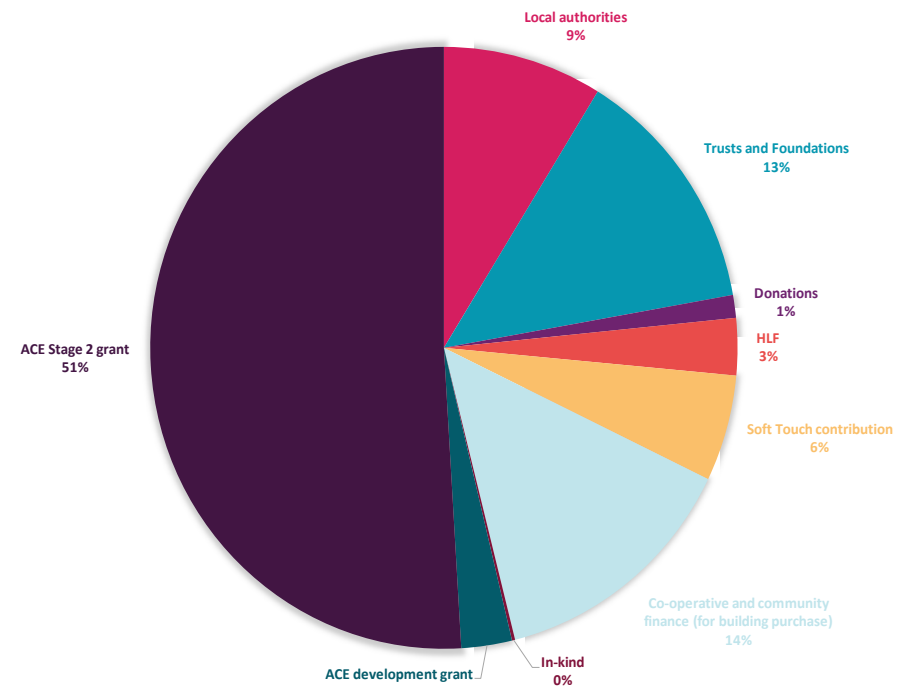
There were two other significant pieces of work leading up to the actual planning and build process. One of these was the registration of the company as a charity:

We had recently become a charity. This change was a long-running process alongside [the capital]. We realised we were excluding ourselves from funding from trusts and foundations and business and individual giving. We would never have raised what we needed without being a charity. It's brought in lots of changes about the way we operate.

There was also a fundraising and profile-raising campaign. Soft Touch were successful in obtaining three year funding from the Arts Council's Catalyst Programme, which was an important component of gearing up and diversifying their fundraising confidence and capability.

The total income from other sources was £559,816 including finance for the property purchase, local authority support of £106,200, Trusts and Foundations of £162,188, donations of £14,831 and an HLF contribution of £37,065. Soft Touch committed £69,147 from their reserves.

Figure 3. Capital Project Other Income Sources



Project achievements

The works have resulted in a significant change to Soft Touch's operation. Formerly the majority of work was conducted out of the building, with increasingly limited scope to accommodate the different groups of young people. They now have larger, fully accessible spaces in which to show young people's work, and spaces to cater to a variety of creative activities.

The building is in use during the day and evenings, with some weekend regular users and one-off events. Mission delivery has been materially boosted with the opportunity to literally make visible the work of young people to passers by in Leicester's city centre. The young users of the building have adopted the space as their home, as Vince explains:

Young people can stay with us for longer and we see better progression. Here they feel like they're family (sometimes too much.) There are young people who would be here everyday if they could. We have to turn groups away and explain 'Thursday is your day', today we're doing something for someone else.

Whilst overall numbers have not increased significantly from 2014 levels, frequency of participation has changed, with 30% being engaged in 3 or more activities per annum in 2013/14 to 47% in 2016/17. As a result, Soft Touch has now developed and articulated a

new model to guide its work with young people, based on a progression route from access to development to progression. This will underpin their future fundraising strategy.

The building has also contributed to the increased profile of the charity.

We are punching above our weight. Like we've won a number of local and regional awards. We've really pushed our profile in these areas, considering we're only a small arts charity. And we're up against some other big charities. I think people know us now, even if they don't know everything that we do! It has taken a lot of work. And we couldn't have done that without the building. Without the profile it brings. We're visible, central with some high-profile businesses and partners working with us.

The proximity to a new range of partners, in particular businesses located close by has also brought benefits. The fundraising campaign involved many profile-raising activities, and these have continued. The relationships established during the capital project have also been sustained through the establishment of a Business Development Board made of up local business leaders. Both the architects and contractor remain active supporters.

Sharing the experience

The business model that underpins the operation has started to change. Projects and activities are paid for with a broader mix of fees, trust and foundations grants, pro-bono or in-kind contributions and revenue generated from the rental income, hires and events. The team believes the building has been an important factor in relation to maintaining their NPO status.

However, with only 22.5% of income to support core costs (£117,810), of which £88,510 in 2017/18 was from ACE National Portfolio funding), the reliance on full-cost recovery applications for funding is still greater than the team would wish. There is significant pressure to secure annual or multiyear funding from a wide range of sources, without simply increasing project delivery demands.

There were three major areas of challenge for Soft Touch during the project:

1. Managing the demands of the build project with a small team at the same time as continuing to deliver their full programme, as well as securing funding for the build and refurbishment and managing organisational change and development. They have, at many points, had to rely on the commitment and dedication of the staff to turn their aspirations to reality, for example doing the interior decoration themselves in the evenings in the weeks before the opening.
2. Developing skills in and appropriate approaches to fundraising, supported by the Catalyst programme. The adoption of charity status has brought new opportunities for fundraising, but profile-raising was a necessary pre-requisite. Chris explains:

“One of the biggest challenges has been raising our profile and people getting to know who we are and what we do outside of the public sector contacts we had. Public awareness was very limited, unlike the New Walk museum across the way who are open to the public and therefore have a large audience that get to know about their exhibitions and workshops. As our work is project-based and focussed on meeting local need through engaging disadvantaged young people, we rarely run public workshops and activities as this doesn't fit with our delivery model.”
3. The need for and impact of value engineering. The gestation of the project coincided with a change in the economic climate of the building industry. Between design and procurement, costs went up dramatically as the building trade came out of recession

When we first started, the building trade locally was very depressed but during those 2 years, the situation had changed and therefore costs of raw materials had gone crazy - even for things as basic as bricks. There was a huge difference between the architect costings when the project was ready to go out to tender compared to the original estimates. So the tender process was elongated and fraught.

We had to start building our profile by attending business networking events and running our own engagement and showcase events at the building. We managed to get our first patron on board, Lady Gretton, the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire and this helped with attracting more people to events. There was a lot of work to do to market ourselves as a charity without a dedicated marketing budget or role.

With the budget for works set at £650,000 and all the tender bids coming in at over £1m, there was a significant job of value-engineering to do. The project budget rose to £750,000 but there were a number of knock on negative impacts of this:

- > The organisation had to deploy its reserves and now finds its leeway to innovate is limited, as there is a shortage of capital to invest in further growth

- > Many items had to be taken out of the brief and workarounds had to be found. For example the team had to decorate the space themselves and the specifications for windows in the main exhibition space had to be downgraded. They are still finding ways to fund remaining elements as discrete projects such as completing the fence panels at the rear
- > The brief was subject to change as the build process was unfolding – this has led to post contract snagging issues being time-consuming and difficult to resolve

It [cost cutting] meant we were constantly re-designing. It was all I [Vince] worked on - everyday I was on site. Re-drawing on the hoof... In fact, we still haven't finished the snagging process 2 years on! We've dealt with many things in the last couple of months but one item - the lift - is still in negotiation. It goes back to those changes.

For the team at Soft Touch, adapting to the new building and new ways of working is still a work in progress.

They feel there is much to do in:

- > Shaping the organisation to inhabit the building, to adapt to the organisational changes the capital project has brought, and prepare for the future. This includes reviewing distribution of functions such as building management and the balance of employees to freelance and sessional staff

- > Innovating in revenue-generating activities to maximise the opportunities the building presents
- > Finding the balance between mission-driven and commercial activities

We have a self-contained office - it's 'stand alone' and let out. It brings in stable income - rent is £6-7k per year. We also rent out other spaces on an adhoc basis. This is starting to pick up now. It's difficult to balance it with our mission driven work and it also becomes a whole other job to market it.

Excited by all the potential that the space is offering, the team members at Soft Touch are looking forward to making the most of the new building.

We've had a huge amount of change with more to come to remain sustainable and relevant in a changing external landscape of funding. Now we're looking to the future and thinking how will we operate? The building has given us huge potential... there's so much more we can do. So we've got to spend the next 5 years making that happen.



Picture 15. Soft Touch Arts

Towner Art Gallery

The front of the building proudly announces the presence of the new auditorium. As we pass through the shop on the ground floor walking towards the gallery, the double doors to the auditorium are on our right. A visitor approaches Niamh Pearce (Acting Director) as she shows me around and asks about the auditorium. She remarks brightly to Niamh that she hasn't seen it yet and is looking forward to using it. We pass through a lobby area and enter the auditorium. Mixed hues of lavender and purple and the softly covered seating create a comfortable and cosy feel to the space. It has a warmth and intimacy that sits in delicate balance with the grander scale of the rest of the building.

About Towner Art Gallery

Towner Art Gallery is a well-established Eastbourne institution. The organisation was set up in 1920, following the bequest of 22 paintings by Alderman John Chisholm Towner. The paintings were left to the constituents of Eastbourne with some funds to establish “an art gallery for the people.” In 1923 a converted Georgian Manor House became home to the collection and was opened to the public.

Some eighty years later it was evident that the Manor House was no longer fit for purpose and Towner had outgrown its original home. In April 2009, Towner reopened in a Richard Mather purpose built space near the seafront and in the heart of Devonshire Park, in front of the Devonshire Park Lawn Tennis Club (host to the International Eastbourne Tennis tournament) and next to the Eastbourne Theatres. The modernist building cost £8.58m and provides fully accessible galleries, a café, shop, learning spaces and museum quality storage for the collection.

In 2014 Towner became an independent Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee having been run directly by the local authority until that point. In 2015/16 Towner had a turnover of just under £1.4m, with 77% of its income being derived from grant funding (project and revenue).

Towner’s programme includes a mix of contemporary and historic visual art; which features works from its permanent collection as well as visiting exhibitions and commissions. The collection contains around 4,500 works and is best known for its modern British art, including the

broadest and most significant body of work by Eric Ravilious (1903-1942). It welcomes 140,000 visitors a year, over 50,000 participants, and has been recognised for its work with young people, marginalised groups and those less likely to access cultural provision.

Towner’s mission is to support, develop and promote international, national and local artistic practice and partnerships, enabling artists of every culture, discipline and background to create and present work within an environment committed to excellence and best professional practice.



Picture 16. Towner Gallery Auditorium (Pete Jones)

Capital Works

Towner's new 84 seat Auditorium is now complete. Located on our Ground Floor, it offers excellent accessibility and state-of-the-art cinema facilities in a beautiful, comfortable environment. In addition to the Jarman Award Touring programme and Andrew Kötting Film Season, the venue will host a regular film programme and an exciting line up of one-off screenings, talks and live performances. Towner publicity

The statement in the current seasonal brochure highlights how integral the vision for the auditorium is to Towner's developing programme. It is seen as having income generating capacity in terms of box office and hires and building partnerships but it is primarily regarded as augmenting and expanding the programme. The aims for the project were twofold in terms of increasing commercial income and developing programme strands to target specific audiences.

Moving image has already been a key part of our programming and going forward some may still be appropriate in the gallery spaces and some may be better in the auditorium. It opens up a different way of working with artists and offers new opportunities like the recent season curated by Andrew Kötting that has run alongside his exhibition in the gallery.

Project statistics

Architect: Simon Barker of Barker Shortern Architects LLP

AV contractor: Art AV

Main contractor: Cheesmur

Specialists: Stage Solutions

The new space will be an incredible asset for both the gallery and Eastbourne. Having a dedicated, fully accessible auditorium, equipped with high quality AV will allow us to deliver a richer and more diverse programme of moving image and digital works, support artists' professional development and create new audiences.

Following a tendering process Cheesmur was appointed as the main contractor as the company provided a cost effective quote, is well known in the area and has a track record of working at this scale. The Towner project was being undertaken at the same time as major works on the wider Devonshire Park site and as such it was also important the Cheesmur could establish relationships with other contractors working on the site. This was necessary in order to identify interdependencies and address any access requirements.

Towner had worked with the architects before so they already had knowledge of the building.

The tendering process took a while and work began on site in late 2016. As a result of the location of the auditorium internally and the desire to keep the building operating during the works the Towner staff team had to undertake a lot of preparatory work.

This involved finding new storage spaces, particularly for shop stock and gallery equipment and the time taken had not been factored into any budgeting so it became an additional cost to Towner.

It was probably toughest for the staff. The contractors were really good. We had one site manager whom we got to know really well, they were always on site and we could ask for work to be held off at certain times to enable us to keep our programme running.

An internal Project Board consisting of the Director, General Manager, a Trustee, the architect and a representative of Eastbourne Borough Council oversaw the project. Several Board members also have construction industry expertise. The project faced a number of issues that were dealt with during the build process:

- > The initial proposal included a separate street entrance to the auditorium. It was advised that this would require planning permission and that the local authority was unlikely to be supportive (both as landlord and planning authority). It was therefore decided that this would not go ahead, which resulted in cost savings
- > The AV supplier did not want to be part of the main tender and fol-

lowing a period of negotiation they were appointed independently. Their quote price also increased as a result of the falling value of sterling due to Brexit

- > The original M&E contractor designs were flawed and had to be revised by the architect
- > An internal wall had to be strengthened and the designs were adjusted to ensure the remaining gallery space was not unduly compromised
- > The bar and lobby fittings were a source of much debate by the Project Board because of the very different customer groups at Towner and as such have only just been finalised

The original projection for expenditure on the project was £638,000, with the final cost being £603,466. A mix of internal and external factors caused the variations:

- > Construction costs were lower than estimated because of the decision not to go ahead with a separate street entrance
- > There was an increase in some costs as a result of the fall in value of sterling due to Brexit
- > The contingency was increased to cover bar fit out and decoration
- > VAT recovery of 72%

There were also some variances in income with Eastbourne Arts Circle providing an additional £20,000; and other projected funding being reduced from £88,000 to £33,500 to reflect the changed costs.

■ Eastbourne Arts Circle ■ Individuals/T&F ■ Arts Council England

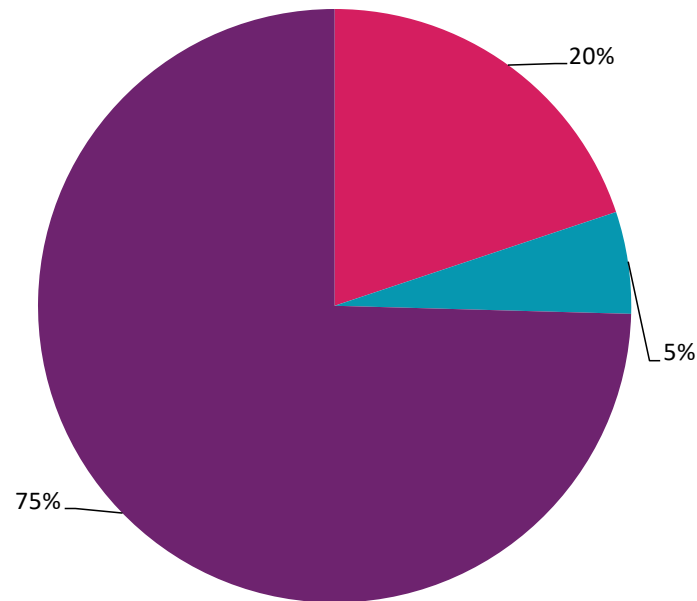


Figure 4. Towner Capital project income breakdown

■ Construction ■ Specialist Equipment ■ Fees & Charges
 ■ Contingency ■ Irrecoverable VAT

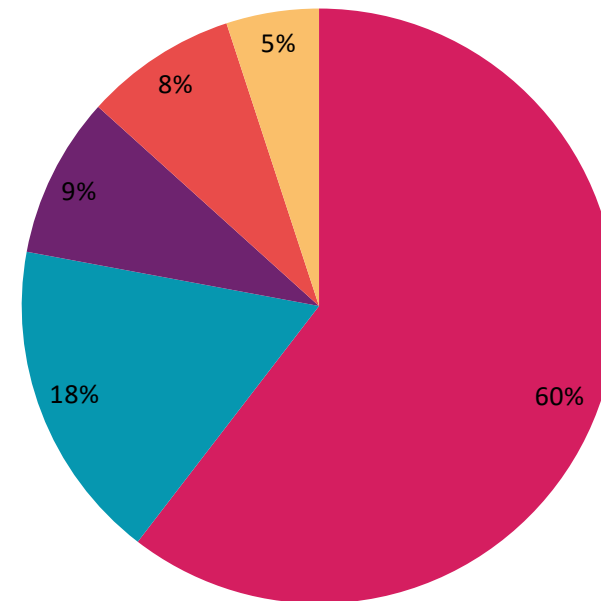


Figure 5. Towner Capital project expenditure breakdown

Project Achievements

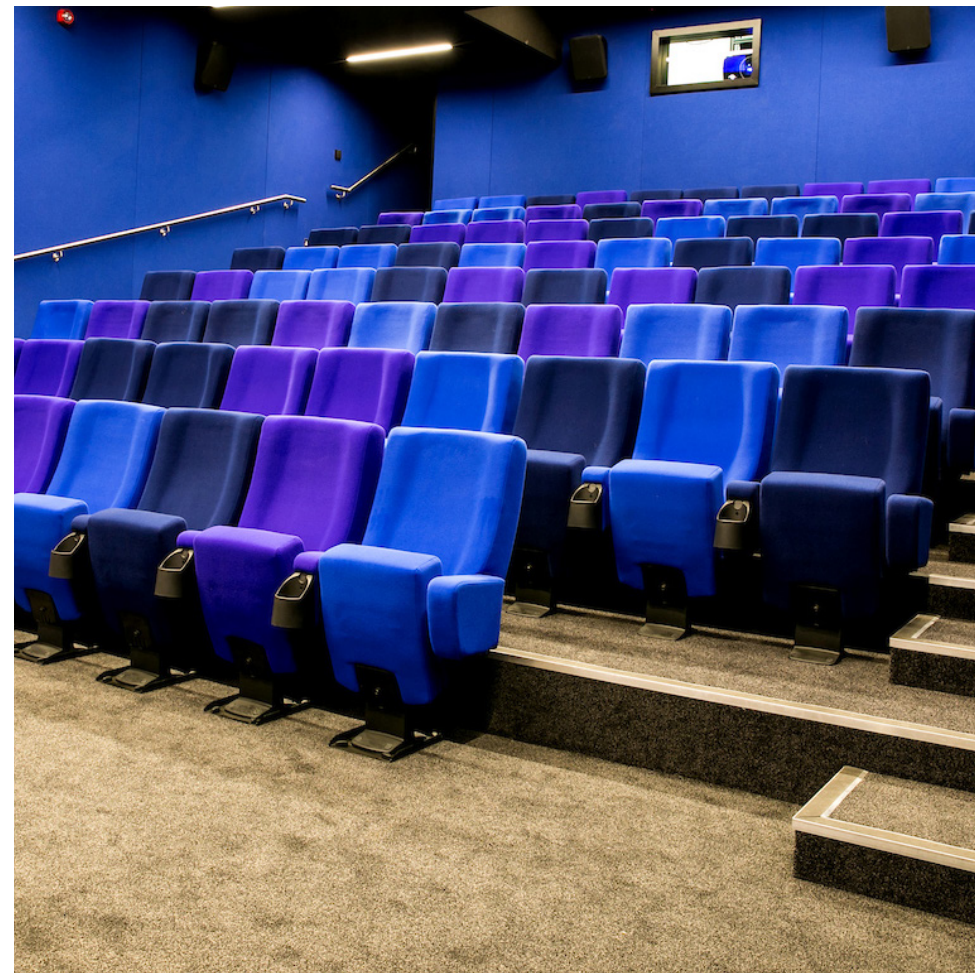
It's a huge, huge asset that we'd never have been able to taken on in the early days. People have been bowled over by it and it is helping us to grow our income. Most importantly it is providing a high quality experience for our visitors.

The project has successfully achieved a number of benefits for Towner and its visitors:

- > The auditorium has provided additional accessible facilities on the ground floor
- > It is a fit for purpose space that provides dedicated facilities for talks, screenings, events and hires. It can also act as a point of welcome and introduction, with groups having a space to meet before they explore the rest of the building
- > It is a soft and warm cocoon like space within the wider building with its modernist lines and concrete
- > Providing a film programme is opening the building up to audiences that might not otherwise come to a 'gallery'
- > It has also provided opportunities for new partnerships

It is opening up our partnership working. We now have a shared Co-ordinator role with Cinecity, who is working to develop the programme.

That wouldn't have been able to happen without the auditorium and our ability to put on screenings. There is now scope to extend the programme beyond the building.



Picture 17. Towner Auditorium (Pete Jones)

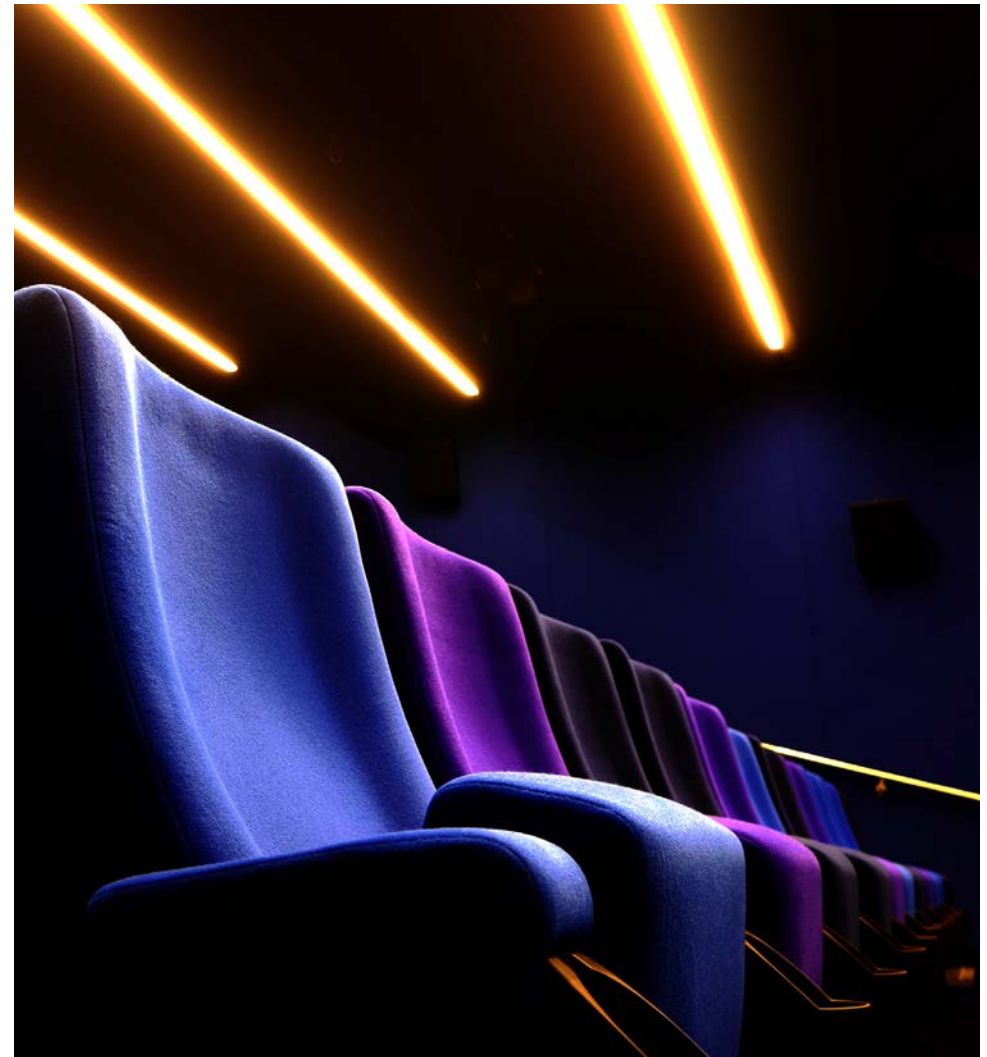
Sharing the experience

The advice that Niamh offers reflects the lessons learnt during the process of the project:

- > Don't underestimate the time it can take and the fact that the time needed spans project development, preparation for works, the build and snagging following completion
- > Think about other issues that are not part of the contract – what do you need to do to really prepare the space?
- > Be really clear about what you want the space to do – that's what determines the finishes
- > Think about the running costs – have you factored in opening hours and the resourcing needed?
- > Be flexible, it may not be possible to get exactly what you want and you may need to make some adjustments along the way. This requires a good relationship with your contractors too

First visit to the Towner, very impressive ... light, airy and although on several levels, all were easily accessible for visitors with mobility problems. The place was alive and buzzing with people of all ages.

Customer feedback



Picture 18. Towner auditorium (Wilma Waumannumi)

High House Artists' Studios – High House Production Park

Given its overall scale High House Production Park is quietly self-contained, nestled between commercial warehousing and a collection of historic farm buildings. On entering the site you are immediately struck by the presence of an intriguing and eclectic, yet complementary group of buildings.

About High House Artists' Studios

Being an artist at High House and affiliated with Acme has opened potential pathways with local bodies such as the council, access to local sites to make work, etc. The potential for collaboration with ROH bodies has been constructive for other artists I can see. There is a good work-ethic at the site as a whole which is beneficial too! Acme Artist-Liaison team are excellent, efficient, act quickly and are very helpful/supportive. HHAS artist

High House Production Park (HHPP) is one of those projects that really demonstrate the distinctive nature of the creative and cultural capital assets developed with the support of the Arts Council's lottery funding. Standing on a 14-acre site in Purfleet adjacent to the Dartford River crossing it has evolved from a desolate patch of land to a vibrant arts and cultural campus that continues to grow.

Since its opening in 2010 HHPP has expanded to offer an impressive range of training and production facilities, including: The Royal Opera House's (ROH) Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop, restored Grade II listed farm buildings; Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre (ROH) and Creative and Cultural Skills National Skills Academy. In 2013 HHPP opened the High House Artists' Studios (HHAS), in partnership with Acme Studios (Acme).



Picture 19. High House Artists' Studios (Alchemy)

These purpose built studios offer 39 self-contained studios and four work/live units. The studios took less than a year to construct, mainly as a result of the specifications being kept simple and a design based on a straightforward format. Individual studios come in a range of sizes, with the largest on the ground floor, and have light, power and a sink with communal welfare areas.

We went through a tender process for the operator and ACME Studios expressed an interest. There were some discussions at the time about the level of risk it represented and whether artists would move out to that area of east London. HHPP

We were told that a feasibility study had been done on the area that showed that there were two artists in the whole of Purfleet; the studios are now around 50% occupied by artists based in Thurrock or neighbouring areas. They are all people who wouldn't have been able to access affordable studio space before; they were there but wouldn't have had access to facilities to support a practice. Acme

The building filled quickly when it opened in the summer of 2013. We were very pleased with the take up and are now considering more space as we have another plot. It has been a big success. HHPP

Two organisations have been involved in realising the vision of the HHAS, High House Production Park Ltd (HHPP) and Acme, which through their close partnership have been able to deliver fully occupied artists' studios.

Acme's mission is to relieve the financial hardship associated with a career as a professional artist Acme supports the development and production of art by providing the time, space, financial support and other opportunities artists need. We believe that by reducing the practical challenges that artists face, we increase their ability to take greater creative risks.

- > **Visual culture:** we believe in the importance of visual culture to society, in freedom of expression and the independence of artists
- > **Integrity:** we are independent. We promote equality of access in all aspects of our work. We treat all artists equally. We strive to achieve the highest standards of professionalism and value in our operations
- > **Self-sufficiency:** We plan our projects and resources to be efficient, secure and sustainable. We minimise our financial risks to maximise the benefits we can offer artists. We are agile and promote innovation in all we do

- > **Generosity:** We were founded by artists for artists. We are not-for-profit. We dedicate all of our resources to supporting artists to succeed. We listen to artists and are flexible in response

HPPP was established to support an international centre of excellence for creative industries in Thurrock that will inspire a new generation. We work in partnership with the Royal Opera House, Creative & Cultural Skills, Acme Studios and Thurrock Council to:

- > Develop a shared vision and strategy for the production park
- > Broker wider relationships and resources to advance joint priorities
- > Champion the work and achievements of High House Production Park.

The development was very much a partnership from the beginning and drew on Acme's expertise and research into the specific needs of artists.



Picture 20. High House Production Park before construction



Picture 21. High House Production Park Back Stage Centre plans

Capital works

The outcomes that HHAS was designed to achieve were identified as:

- > Provision of more than 40 affordable artists' studios providing high quality spaces for artists
- > Securing of sustainable, permanent studios within the best purpose built studio space in the country
- > Further embedding of the vision for the Production Park as a centre for Creative and Cultural Industries
- > Generation of opportunities for artists to engage with the public through residency programmes, exhibitions and events

The partnership was based on a mutual need – HHPP could draw on capital funding through Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation but did not have access to revenue funding; Acme did not have access to capital funding but had extensive experience of operating artists' studios on a financially self-sustaining basis, has strong relationships with artists, and had a waiting list of artists looking for affordable studio spaces.

It was recognised from the outset that the primary risk to both HHPP and Acme was the level of occupancy that could be achieved given the location of the Production Park. Throughout the project detailed financial modelling was undertaken and the budget at Stage 2 application was based on 80% occupancy (against Acme's typical

occupancy of 99%).

The anticipated outcomes also highlight a tension that other capital projects have experienced in that the inclusion of social goals within the remit of HHAS requires some form of revenue funding that requires additional investment of time to generate, and cannot be met by the rental of the building because of its tight margins.

Project statistics

The building is the first purpose-built studio complex in Acme's 45 year history, and the first concrete manifestation of the brief developed through evaluation of all their existing studio spaces as part of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Central St Martins. At a construction cost of £850/m², the low-cost, robust quality of the building is essential to both its business plan - keeping rents down for the artists, and expressing the primacy of the work contained within. Clad in profiled metal sheet and common bricks, the design is unashamedly functional - a container for, not a representation of, creative work. HAT projects

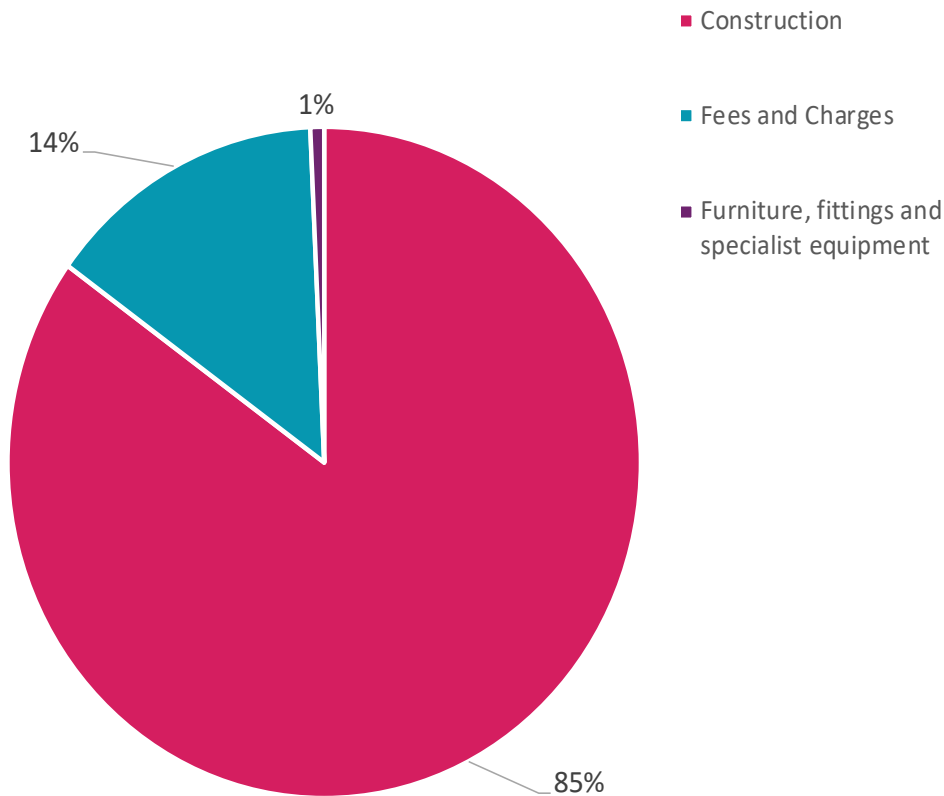


Figure 6. HHAS final costs breakdown

- > Architect and Lead Consultant: HAT Project
- > Project Management: Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation
- > Contractor: RG Carter

Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation project managed the building with Acme overseeing the design.

The ambition for the project was to bring the building in at low cost, what some might say was an unheard of low cost.

This set the architects, HAT Projects, a singular goal meaning the team had to keep to budget and the construction used only off the shelf materials. This was successfully achieved in that the building was delivered for £2.1 million against an original budget of £2.4 million (Figure six).

The building fabric was kept simple, as durable as possible and drawn from standard stock so any damages can be easily repaired/replaced. Plant and machinery was kept to a minimum through the use of natural ventilation and maximising natural light. Fixture and fittings have also been kept as standard as possible, using mass-produced white goods etc., for easy and inexpensive replacement.

Project achievements

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has named Acme Studios' purpose-built artists studios in Purfleet, Essex as one of 10 winners of the RIBA East Regional Awards. HAT Projects, the architects behind the 43-studio, three-storey design also won Emerging Architect of Year, while High House Production Park – who alongside Arts Council England have funded the project – won Client of the Year.

Praised by the judges for its “elegantly rational composition” and for being an “extraordinarily economical scheme”, ... Based on extensive research into the needs of artists by Acme, HAT Projects' design aimed to make the spaces as functional and flexible as possible, while referencing the aesthetics of the traditional industrial studio building.” a-n News

Our wonderful studios combine our workshop, storage space and our office HQ. They're all brand new, and already providing us with exciting opportunities to embrace a world of creative opportunities in the East of England, all the way from the City to the Sea!

Kinetika



Picture 22. HHAS (Alchemy)

Relatively unusually, among the wider capital portfolio HHAS was not built by the cultural organisation that would be the ultimate occupier/operator although Acme did work in close partnership with the Development Corporation, HHPP, the architects and the contractors.

It has gone beyond our expectations; we thought it might be slow to take off. Acme now has a waiting list and several artists have moved into the area. It has also worked well for local Thurrock artists..

HHPP

We are discussing a longer-term lease, 100 years plus, then we can be confident we will have a place for artists. We have met the local need now we are looking to extend interest. We now want to increase the scope to provide the sorts of very low-cost large-scale workshop spaces being lost elsewhere and increase affordable housing options for artists. Acme



Picture 23. HHPP virtual plan



Picture 24. HHPP (Alchemy)

Chester Storyhouse

After many false starts and much anticipation we finally got to enjoy our first trip to the much hyped Storyhouse Chester to watch the Secret Seven. It's a wonderful renovation and extension of the old cinema. Impressive, airy, energised and bursting with creativity...I feel the brilliance of the building is matched by the spectrum of people who utilise it. I saw families sat reading books, an older gentleman using the internet to find a new job, students studying, couples courting, the building absorbs them all.

Trip Adviser review

About Chester Storyhouse

Chester Storyhouse has been open since May 2017 and brings together, as a new offer, the library service, cinema and theatres in one city-centre building. The cultural offer in Chester had been depleted by the closure of the local Gateway theatre and the cinema in 2007 and there were also concerns that the public library building was considered no longer fit for purpose, whilst audiences for Chester Performs work was increasing. The key opportunity for the team behind Storyhouse was to imagine what the real integration of theatre and library services might bring, and to go well beyond basic co-location.

An original 1930's Art Deco Grade II Listed Odeon cinema that had closed in 2007 has been refurbished and opened out onto a newly built extension; the 7,000m² footprint now includes:

- > An 800 seat proscenium arch theatre, convertible to a 500 seat thrust stage
- > A 150 seat studio
- > A 94 seat cinema
- > Adult library 'wrapped around' the cinema and theatre spaces
- > A children's library located downstairs, with storytelling room
- > A cafe, a bar and foyer

The building is owned by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) and operated by Storyhouse, hitherto called Chester Performs.

Storyhouse is a producer of theatre, music, festivals and site-specific art. Prior to the Capital project, Chester Performs was also running Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre and Ensemble Deva, the MBNA Chester Music Festival, and Chester Literature Festival; its work was largely seasonal.



Picture 25. Chester Storyhouse

Capital Works

- > Architects - Simon Erridge of Bennetts Associates
- > Building contractor - Kier Construction
- > Theatre specialists - Charcoalblue
- > Stage lighting and audio-visual specialists - Stage Electrics
- > Project Director - Graham Lister
- > Project Management – Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) Capital Delivery team
- > Strategic project Manager's (up to construction) BuroFour

The project was majority funded by CW&C, it was its vision to create a significant cultural offer in the city, announced in 2012, and major commitment with a budget allocation and ongoing revenue commitment that kicked off the project. The original scheme was scoped at £43m. When an application for Arts Council support was submitted in late 2012 and rejected, the plans were reappraised and new proposals developed fairly rapidly in the period January to July 2013, under the direction of Graham Lister.

Work at this stage involved:

Work with the architect and QS on new designs to integrate the offers efficiently, to shrink the overall footprint and reduce the cost envelope to £37m.

The team took the approach that all components had to fully earn their place within the building.

- > Work with Chester Performs and an external consultant on the business plan that would align with an exciting, credible artistic plan
- > Identifying the needs of the future operating company and determining a preferred supplier (Chester Performs).

CW&C committed £29.55m in July 2013 and on the basis of the revised plans and Stage 2 application, ACE agreed to contribute £3m from the third round of the Capital Programme to the project. Detailed design work was able to proceed from October 2013 and work began to clear the site at this point. A significant public consultation exercise took place in Spring 2014 and construction started in February 2015. Practical completion was in March 2017.

Joint go-see visits and design meetings were held in locations across the country, such as Birmingham Library and Birmingham Rep, and Corby Cube, in order to fully scope the opportunity and learn from experience elsewhere. They also brought in a consultant Erik Boekesteijn, Senior Adviser at the National Library at the Netherlands and DOK Delft from the Netherlands to bring different insight to the question 'how do you meaningfully integrate a library service into a cultural organisation.'

The building works involved:

- > Clearance of the site and demolition of existing buildings and archaeological dig
- > The refurbishment of the original Odeon cinema and repairs to art deco features including 1930's hexagonal cinema clock, ceiling coves, staircases and windows, completed heritage plasterwork to Odeon cinema's walls, and repointed brickwork using thousands of carefully selected reclaimed bricks.
- > Opening up the entrance of this to marry onto the creation of a new part of the building housing the 800 seat theatre with full height flytower, studio and bar
- > Creation of a lobby space to allow for central orientation but also for performances and informal screenings.
- > Installation in the main theatre of an innovative thrust stage, which can be dismantled to accommodate larger touring shows or smaller productions.
- > Creation of a new cafe/restaurant which can cater to 150 covers. This takes up the theme of social sharing and connecting which runs through the building with its Levantine shared platters.
- > Installing 700m of library shelf space that wraps around the restaurant, upper foyer and cinema.

A number of environmental features had to be discounted due to constraints of the site, such as Biomass and Ground Source Heating. Instead, the focus was on low energy lighting with daylight sensing and PIR sensors, BMS and Sub-metering to allow energy monitoring and

reporting and Air Handling Units and Heat Recovery.

Key components of the delivery model were:

- > The establishment of a Partnership board where senior decision-makers from all parties were represented; it was chaired by an independent member, Grahame Morris.
- > A strong commitment to collaborative working between all parties and articulating in written and agreed statements how they would work together, there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the council and Chester Performs, as well as a Shared Use agreement for the library, Chester County Council and Chester Performs
- > Commitment from C&CW elected representatives and the Deputy Chief Executive and strong relations between the Project Director and Chief Executive which enabled clarity of leadership and decision-making, the relationship was based on an understanding of, and absolute commitment to, the agreed budget envelope on both sides
- > The opportunity to appoint an experienced team with a proven track record and commitment to projects of a similar innovative, exciting and complex nature.
- > A design and build contract where price was agreed at the outset.

Project achievements

This was a major project for the local authority, its biggest in 50 years and it was inevitably high profile within the local community. The project team was mindful of the need to exercise real care and attention with regards to impact on the local community and stakeholders throughout the process; this played out for example when considering road closures, how consultation events were advertised and conducted, and relationships with local suppliers and contractors.

The fundraising operation was led by a small Board incorporating senior Council representatives, Tarnside fundraising (external consultants) and Chester Performs, chaired by the council's Chief Executive, Steve Robinson. The fundraising campaign included a large donation of £600,000 from MBNA, a major local employer, as well as support from large number of Trusts and Foundations.

Chester now has a cultural centre that has doubled in size and public access to culture and to the library collections has improved. Visitor numbers are strong in the first year of operation: by the end of the first month, 80,000 visitors had passed through the doors. In six months the visitor figures stood at over 500,000. There are some library users for whom the change to a 'wrap around layout' is less positive, but in the first month 10,000 books were loaned and 1,000 new members had subscribed - within six months loan figures stood at 140,000.

The building is fully accessible and is open day and evening six days a

week, with some activities also on Sundays. A key change therefore is that library services are available both during the day and as long as the building is open at night for performances (unstaffed, but through automated borrowing and return facilities). Storyhouse will be tracking the cross over in audience/users – and initial signs are positive in this respect. The opening of the building generated a great deal of interest, including in the national press where the merits and execution of its design were debated. Its profile has been further raised by winning several awards including Best Refurbishment at the National Building Awards (for Architects Bennetts Associates) Best Public Building at the Brick awards, and Best Sign for the iconic LED illuminated lettering (by IS Group).

The public perception of the new building has been very positive, with the local newspaper The Chester Chronicle, describing its first six months as 'an unqualified success'. Social media comments testify to the sense of civic pride it has generated. Particularly striking is the extent to which it is perceived as a single offer and new organisation - exemplified by the way people have quickly adopted its new name; this change has been achieved faster than the team had imagined would be possible.

In programme terms, the project has delivered a flexible offer, particularly for the theatre spaces, accommodating intimate work on the thrust stage and a variety of incoming touring work.

There has been a significant change for staff working for both library service and the operating company. Whilst there was some concern about the new arrangements, staff are feeling the benefits of the integrated model and have said that they would now never want to revert back.

Insights from the project Director include:

- > Have ambition and 'think big'
- > Have a crystal clear understanding that is firmly shared amongst the project team and staff and all stakeholders of what you are trying to do, and what you're prepared to pay
- > Pay attention to the way the building project affects the local community - not just on completion but all the way through the build process. Set the highest possible standards for the way you interact with the public, contractors, and the press



Picture 26. Chester Storyhouse construction



Picture 27. Chester Storyhouse Library

Sharing the experience

Two challenges were distinct through the location and nature of the project:

- > Building over a site of archaeological interest: initial excavation works revealed two Roman roads underneath the main Odeon building, located 12 inches below ground. In 2014 the 12 week archaeological dig took place to ensure the highly complex underground foundation design was going to be possible; remains dating back to the Bronze Age were discovered
- > Working through the challenge of accommodating the library collection. The scheme required a reduction of capacity from 1000 to 830 linear metres. This meant work to look at trends in lending data to inform decisions about disposal and retention ahead of the move, as well as to inform strategies for future growth in service use

There was also a process to work through in relation to options for staffing structures and the particular consideration of whether or not to integrate library staff within Storyhouse. Naturally this created uncertainty and anxiety for staff involved and had to be weighed against efficiency and a sense of organisational coherence. Ultimately the decision was to keep library staff within the library service. An exercise as part of the branding process showed however a very high (even surprising) level of consistency in terms of how organisational

purpose and values were described by internal stakeholders.

Although this was a significant project, managing the timeframe was not considered one of the major challenges. In 2016 a decision was taken to delay the opening, planned for December 2016 until Spring 2017 and the building did reopen in May 2017 with no further delays.

Instead, there were warm up events, tours and 'sharings' that ran alongside the testing programme to ensure the centre's complex mechanical and electrical systems were working ahead of the full and very public opening.

As Michael Green, writing in the Chester Chronicle enthusiastically suggests to the local community:

Now the rest is up to you and me. We need to borrow from the library's resources, we have to pop in for a cuppa and a snack, we must resurrect the cinema-going habit in the city centre and we have to book tickets for the shows, both in-house and touring productions. Chester finally has the cultural centre it deserves - it is up to us to make sure we use it.

Octagon Theatre Bolton

The Octagon Theatre is a family theatre. Not just in offering family shows. Literally. The previous Chief Executive (to 2011) was nicknamed 'Dad'. There are families with several generations of connections, or combinations of siblings and cousins. As with any family there is great loyalty. Some individual's commitment to the theatre goes back 40 years.

About the Octagon Theatre Bolton

The Octagon Theatre was the first post-war theatre built in the North West, opening in 1967. It is a regional producing theatre with a flexible main auditorium theatre space, which seats between 300 and 390. Both seats and stage can be reconfigured from production to production; the three main configurations being in the round, end-on and thrust stage. The space creates a particularly intimate setting for theatre. After two extension projects in the 80's and 90's, there is also a small studio theatre (a capacity of 100), rehearsal space and production facilities including a large workshop, a small sound engineering studio, a wardrobe department and a prop store where furniture and smaller items are housed. The theatre has a cafe, open for daytime trading as well as pre and post-show and a bar open for performances.

Their website explains in simple terms what they strive to do - "We tell stories brilliantly, and we make them here in Bolton." The work includes 8-9 main house productions a year, an mixed Studio programme, a significant community, education and participatory programme, a Youth Theatre, support for artist development and since 2014 the Octagon has co-delivered a BA (Hons) Theatre course with the University of Bolton.

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, with a trading subsidiary and is a registered charity. Its annual turnover in recent years has been over £2m. It is revenue funded by Arts Council England and Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC).

The Capital Projects

The Octagon has two capital projects which just fall within the timescales of the programme. The first was a small scale project in 2012. The total value of the project was £750,000 and it was focussed on improvements to the lighting rigs and an upgrade of the cafe and FOH area. The second project is a major scheme supported through the large grants programme involving demolition of some parts of the building and rebuilding around a refurbished auditorium. The application was submitted in 2015 (round 4 of the programme) and work is due to begin on site in May 2018, when the existing building will close, and be completed by March 2020. Total project cost is budgeted at £10.363m, of which the Arts Council contribution will be £4.3m, announced in January 2016.

Small scale project 2012

Project Statistics

There were two very strong business drivers for the 2012 works. The first was related to the health and safety risks of the auditorium lighting grid - and by implication the insurance cover and thus ultimately mission-critical. The second was the need to increase revenue, in particular to deal with a loss-making cafe bar offer (through Octagon Catering Services, the trading subsidiary). It was key therefore that the works enabled:

- > Replacement of the auditorium lighting grid and electrics (that would positively affect electricity use)
- > A new box office
- > Substantial improvements to the space and decor of the cafe and bar areas.

Alongside capital improvements, there were a number of other changes:

- > a re-organisation of staffing structure with the catering and customer services departments merging to achieve greater efficiency, involving a small number of redundancies
- > Staff training and provision of new uniforms and clarity of roles

- > An improved food and drink offer with a greater focus on quality and local produce and to position the cafe to compete better in the daytime market

The matched funding for the works was achieved through a combination of

- > Grants from BMBC, Garfield Weston, the Monument Trust and Biffa
- > Utilisation of reserves
- > Donations and sales on equipment no longer required

The project is described as 'relatively straightforward' by the Chief Executive, Roddy Gould, who was just three months in post when the trigger for the project happened - a risk of not securing insurance cover. He found the application process, monitoring and completion requirements manageable and the officer support from ACE very positive.

The building contractors were Hall Engineering and it was project managed by Roddy.

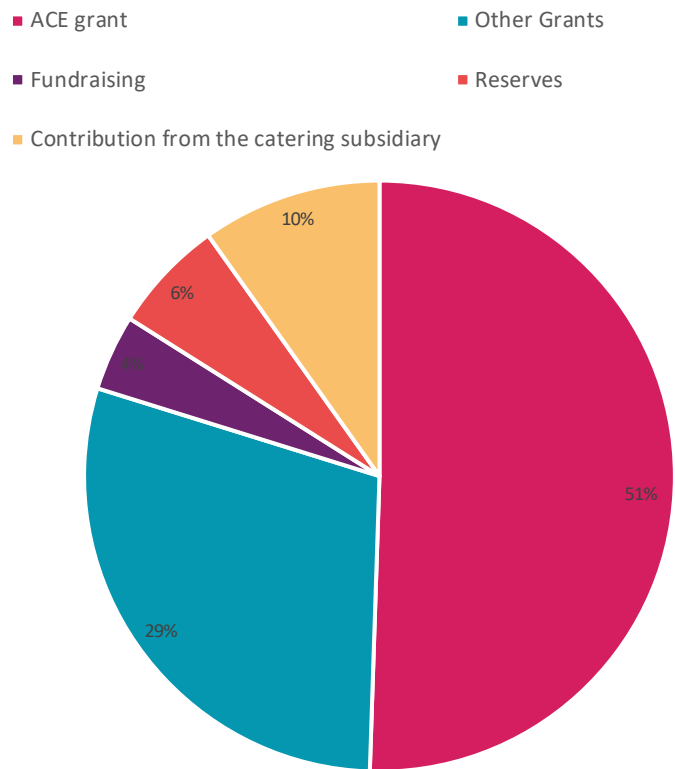


Figure 8. Project income (small)

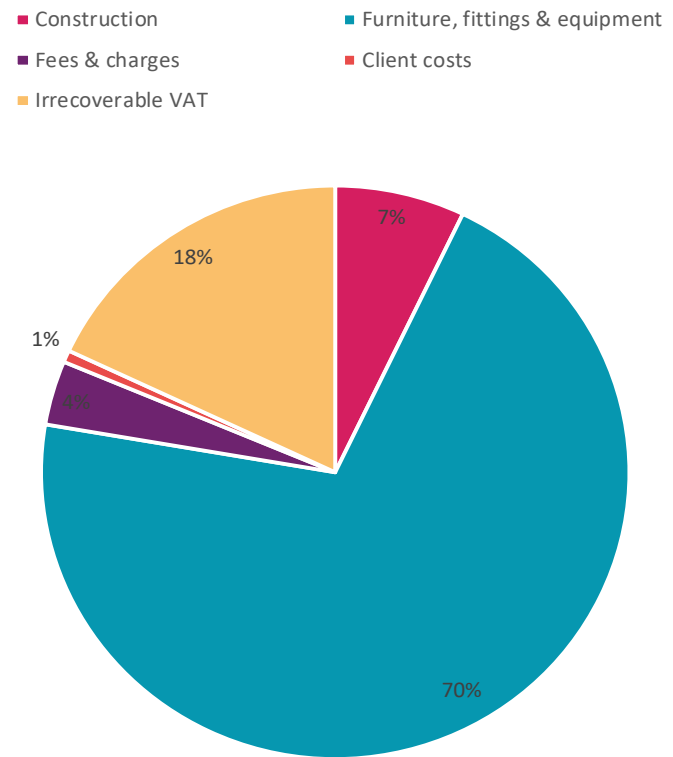


Figure 7. Project expenditure (small)

Project achievements

This project had positive short and longer-term outcomes. In the short term: the result was a safer and more practical auditorium for technicians and designers to work in. It also led to a reduction in electric usage, thereby saving costs and improving environmental impact.

The immediate impact on trading in the cafe bar was positive as sales increased by 36% from September to the end of the year and customer satisfaction also improved. However, challenges for the trading operation remained post project, until after an independent review led to operational changes in 2015. The 2015/2016 financial year saw the highest ever turnover of £332,078 which generated a profit of £15,036.

The longer term outcomes have been very significant, in particular the difference the successful completion of the project on time and on budget, has had on organisational confidence and the relationship with BMBC.

This project gave us lots of confidence. Up to then, there had been quite a risk-averse culture, a fear of ambition and spending money. To pull off something like this moved our relationship on with the Council. They could see our work meeting their needs and the proven track record of delivery was important.

The scheme also allowed the Octagon to begin building its fundraising capability. The contribution through the Monument Trust was considered a major win, with the Trust offering double the amount initially requested by the Octagon. Whilst they had some difficulty converting capital support into revenue support, they believe that the credibility of a successful project under their belt has been important in the larger project. They also learnt the value of setting up the development team well ahead of the project and thinking about the long term staffing structure for post-completion.



Picture 28. Octagon team ready for the refurbishment

Sharing the experience

Roddy explains that the single biggest lesson has been about the selection of the project team. The Octagon has been involved in all the decision making and has found people 'we want to spend time with'. He is firmly of the view that the uniqueness of individual projects means making individual judgements about the team that are appropriate to your context and values.

He also points out that the impact on staff time is immense. Continuing to sustain the ongoing operation and run the project takes a toll, sometimes with deadlines running close together.

We thought we'd estimated well on time, but in fact the pressures cascade all the way through the organisation, for example our Head of Production has to spend time poring through the plans, our fundraising team take a hit balancing revenue and capital demands. More than that, the sheer uncertainty and hopes and fears there are to manage - a lot of time is required to deal with 'soft issues'.

Roddy is clear that a major challenge was the Arts Council application process. The request for permission to apply was lodged as soon as the round opened. By the time it was granted, there was a six week window

over the summer holidays in which to complete the application.

Securing the absolute commitment to matched funding from BMBC on a practical level was then difficult in that timescale.

The process put significant strain on staff resources in the short term, but Roddy fears that there are longer term consequences:

It was a very complex piece of work to take the feasibility study to RIBA stage B and we were hammered by the timescales. I think we're still back-peddalling. The quality of the overall scheme was affected.

Stakeholder management has also been demanding in a number of other ways:

- > The Arts Council was not initially receptive to the proposals, and the theatre had to press its case over 2014 and 2015
- > The political context in Bolton also led to some concern that ear-marked funding might be withdrawn, with the plans being discussed at a full Council meeting. In actual fact, BMBC increased their commitment by 100% over a two year period

- > In addition, representatives of ACE and BMBC had not formally met until 2017. The Octagon was therefore to-ing and fro-ing between the two parties particularly in the process of identifying the necessary scale of the project and its concomitant costs
- > Whilst the funding commitment and support in general is good, Roddy finds a number of issues problematic in dealing with the Arts Council - from highly prosaic issues such 'translating data' for the format of the reporting templates, to understanding who to go to for what (referring to the interplay between regional, area and national officers), and from lack of investment in feasibility work to the parameters set around procurement routes.



Picture 29. Octagon Theatre Bolton reimagined

Large scale capital project 2015 onwards

- > Architects: Feilden Clegg Bradley
Building contractor: Willmott Dixon,
Project Managers: Gardiner and Theobald
Theatre Consultants: CharcoalBlue

The successful completion of the 2012 project gave Octagon Theatre Bolton the opportunity to discuss long term future requirements and support with BMBC, with particular regard to the plans for city centre regeneration. This was the start of a process of studying feasibility, economic impact appraisal and building options to achieve the objectives. These have been described in overview as:

- > Ensuring the building is fully accessible, as well as improving environmental sustainability and digital capability;
- > Modernising the 50 year old auditorium seating system, enabling greater artistic flexibility, alongside expanded backstage facilities;
- > Improving provision for youth, community and learning work in the building;
- > Increasing earned income, including through increased bar and catering facilities.

BMBC invested £50,000 2014 into the feasibility study which enabled the team to come up with a scheme. BMBC had pledged £2m of support in the year 2014/15.

Importantly, this was committed from revenue budgets, not their capital budget. This allowed feasibility work to progress. Arts Council England support was announced in January 2016, £0.43m to support development work with £3.87m for the fully worked up scheme.

One of the interesting features of the project is the creation of a Business Director post.

Rather than just looking for backfill for the staff team during the capital project, we created a fixed-term post to be a change agent. This was to be someone who could bring fresh thinking and approaches and take responsibility for maximising the revenue and business opportunities we have. We deliberately sought someone from outside the arts, and by offering it as a part-time role, could target people wishing to change circumstances or have a portfolio career. We were fortunate to find the ideal candidate – someone with a wealth of experience of business change at the highest level, a passion for theatre, and a desire to make a difference!

York Art Gallery

All those who worked at York Art Gallery prior to the development were aware of a small window that gave way to a huge, open space affectionately known as the 'Secret Gallery.' The only way to reach this was to climb into the roof space, through a hatch and onto some scaffolding. Here was a space that had not been seen by the public for decades.

York Museums Trust

About York Art Gallery

The Grand façade of York Art Gallery proudly displays the fact that this is an award winning building. It gives the suggestion that there is something special within. The interior does not disappoint and given the significant presence of the front of the building, inside it is surprisingly light and airy. There is an enticing but subtle waft of fresh cooked food from the café as I am greeted by one of the team who helpfully explains how best to navigate the building.

A small but unexpectedly excellent collection housed in a modern refurbishment of a beautiful old building. The staff were friendly, knowledgeable and very informative.
TripAdviser

York Art Gallery has a long and distinguished history having opened in 1879 for the second Yorkshire Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition, inspired by the Great Exhibition of London. It holds a collection of paintings that spans 600 years ranging from 14th century Italian panels to 17th century Dutch masterpieces, and from Victorian narrative paintings to the likes of LS Lowry and David Hockney.

The gallery also holds the most extensive and representative collection of British Studio Ceramics, thanks to the acquisition of collections from Dean Milner-White, WA Ismay and Henry Rothschild and the recent

long-term loan of Anthony Shaw's collection.

The gallery is based in Exhibition Square, created for its opening, the centrepiece of which is a statue of York artist William Etty which was erected in 1911. York Art Gallery holds the largest collection of work by Etty, a Royal Academician attributed with founding the York Art School, and a somewhat controversial artist in his day as a result of his paintings of nudes.

York Art Gallery sits under the wider umbrella of the York Museums Trust (YMT) which exists to deliver the following vision and mission:

Vision: Our Vision is for York Museums Trust to play a major part in positioning York as a world-class cultural centre

Mission: Our Mission is to cherish the collections, buildings and gardens entrusted to us, presenting and interpreting them as a stimulus for learning, a provocation to curiosity and a source of inspiration and enjoyment for all.

Capital works

The objectives of YMT highlight its commitment to access, protection and conservation in relation to its cultural assets. There is also a strong emphasis on learning opportunities and partnership working and locating the work of YMT within the economic and cultural life of the city and the region. Underpinning these objectives is the need for YMT to raise the substantial funds required to fulfil its vision and mission effectively.

There had been a programme of ceramic exhibitions in the past but now we can really demonstrate its importance through the display cases and the open display. We couldn't have done that, opening things up and getting the message across, without the beautiful building. YMT

The project went through a detailed development process over a number of years including a broad scoping exercise and a more detailed options analysis. YMT's forward plan, drafted in 2005, set out the aspirations for the project that have been sustained throughout the design and delivery of the refurbished gallery.

Develop York Art Gallery to its full potential with an exciting intervention to create a contemporary mezzanine gallery above the main gallery, and a series of new galleries in the present Archives space. Create a Galleria in the

South Gallery that links to Abbey Gardens with a possible extension to the footprint. Develop a public programme for Exhibition Square and the Abbey Gardens with other partners in the Cultural Quarter. YMT Stage Two application

There were three clear drivers for the project - environmental, audiences and financial. Environmentally, there was a desperate need to improve energy performance. There was also a desire to improve the visitor experience in terms of exploiting the full footprint of the building, opening up access to the collections and improving flow. The financial imperative was based around offering a cultural experience that would see a growth in day-trips and overnight stays.

Project statistics

After the closure we invited the public to come and paint their own artworks on the walls. Over 2,000 people joined in. YMT

- > Architect and Lead Consultant: Ushida Findley Architects
- > Conservation Architect and Lead Consultant: Simpson Brown
- > Quantity Surveyor: Davis Langdon
- > Structural and M&E: Arup

The total project expenditure was £8.1m, which required YMT to raise £4.6m in partnership funding. A mix of legacy, local authority and trusts and foundations generated the matching funding required (Figure Nine).

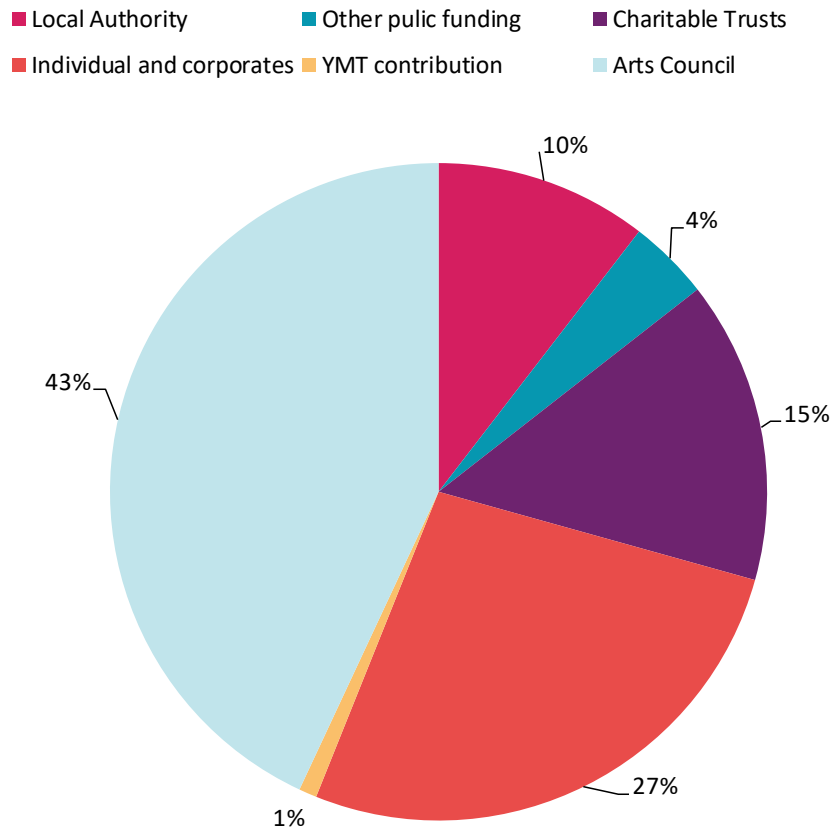
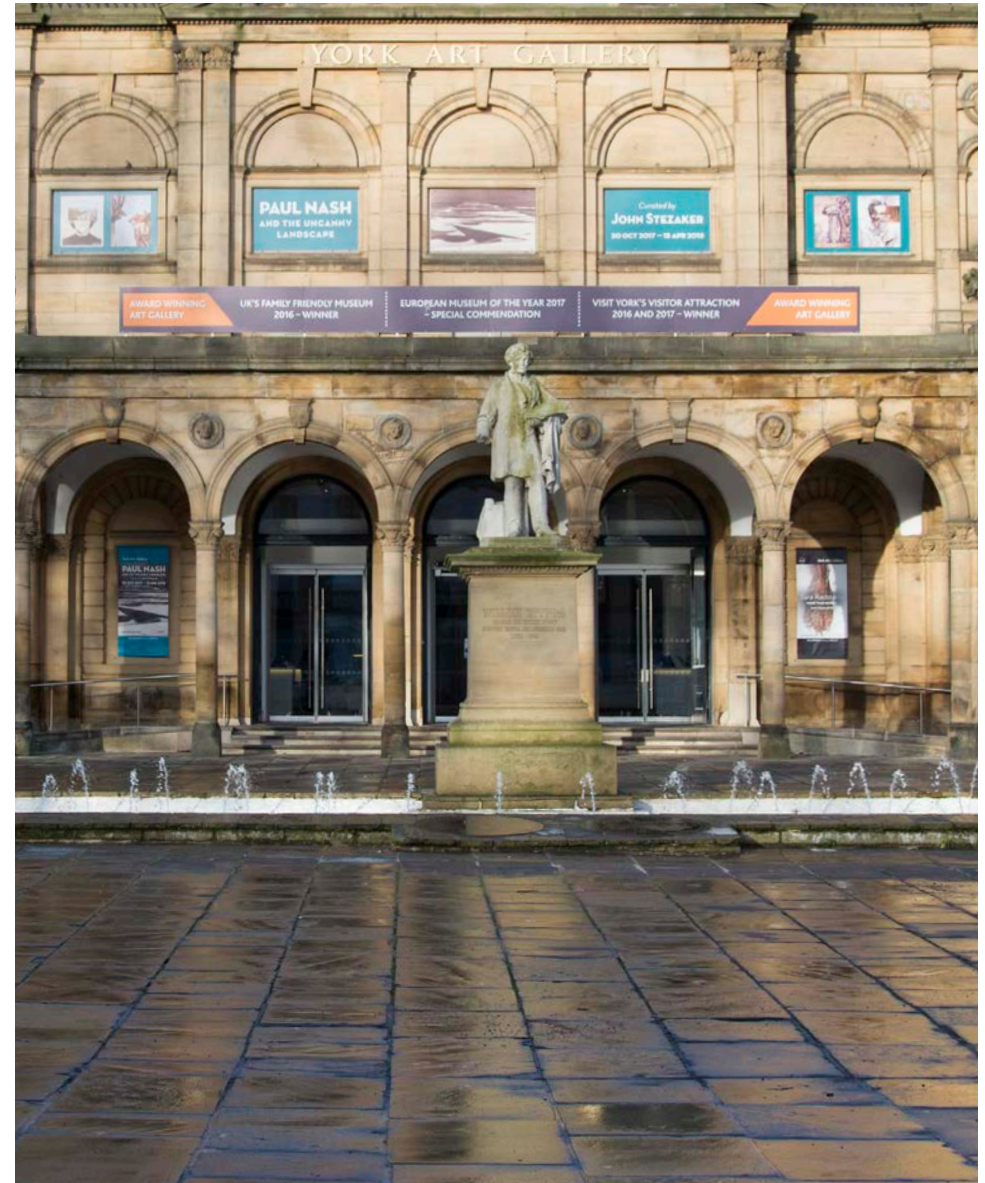


Figure 9. York Art Gallery project income



Picture 30. York Art Gallery facade (Alchemy)

Project achievements

Last Friday my husband and I visited your newly refurbished York Art Gallery. It was a wonderful experience. Not only because of your fabulous collection but also because of the terrific staff you have working there...The staff were all so proud to be working there and expressed their ownership of the gallery. Visitor feedback

The York Art Gallery is now fit for the 21st Century, with all its services renewed and our environmental controls and security in accordance with the most exacting international standards for the loan of works of art. YMT

Voted Most Innovative Enterprise (Turnover under £1 million) Retail outlet at the Centre for Ceramic Art (CoCA), selling original ceramics and ceramic related products at York Art Gallery. Association for Cultural Enterprises

The project has achieved a number of important outcomes for YMT. The display space has increased by 60% and the new space has enabled the launch of the Centre for British Studio Ceramics. CoCA is sited in two new galleries on the first floor, fully exploiting the splendour of the Victorian roof trusses and wash of natural light. The siting of the additional galleries now allows the visitor to circulate easily through a series of interlinked spaces. It also provides for new views over St.Mary's Abbey.

On the ground floor three new exhibition spaces have been created, providing 600m² of connected, high security, climate controlled galleries. This has enable visitors to have greater access to the collections and to experience a wider range of contemporary visual arts. The new galleries are supported by study and activity areas, digital interpretation resources, a new painting store, a café, two shops and improvements to public facilities.

The project has also created a new garden entrance opening up 2 acres of public land (for the first time in 60 years) and providing access to St. Mary's Abbey. This has developed the largest area of public realm in York for many years. The Artists Garden and Edible Wood have become an integrated part of the Gallery's programme allowing for artist commissions, installations and community engagement projects.

The refurbishment works have also enabled the gallery to significantly improve its environmental impact in a number of areas:

- > Glazing: improvement to internal and external glazing. This has reduced the glazing G value from 0.8 to 0.4, facilitating a 27% reduction in total peak cooling load
- > Insulation: 90% of the gallery spaces have been upgraded in terms of insulation
- > Plant: the art store, and three galleries on the ground floor are fully air conditioned with close temperature and humidity control and
- > monitoring
- > Passive control: the use of passive natural ventilation has been maximised and wind catcher ventilation is used in two gallery spaces
- > Renewables – lighting and PV: Two photovoltaic cells have been installed on a south-facing roof. LED lighting has been used throughout and in public areas and the offices these are fitted with motion detection

Since opening York Art Gallery has seen over 100,000 visitors come through the doors, nearly 23,000 of whom have become YMT cardholders. Nearly, 3000 children have attended practical activities with their families and 1,000 children have participated in schools workshops. The learning and outreach programmes have provided 64 days paid work for 20 artists. In addition the gallery has hosted workshops and events for people with a range of access needs and worked in partnership with a wide variety of local and regional support agencies.

It is clear that the refurbishment of York Art Gallery has taken its work and profile to a new level, as well as creating a beautiful space that is open and welcome to visitors. The awards that have been achieved as a result of the building works have also had a positive impact; helping to reinforce the pride the team feels in the gallery and recognising the hard work that has gone into creating its latest transformation.

The building has opened up partnerships and given us bigger opportunities like the project with the Imperial War Museum. They wouldn't have happened without the new building. We now have a gallery that can showcase international work and ceramics, as well as being family and visitor friendly. YMT

The building is just lovely, the galleries easy to navigate, and the curation of both fine art, ceramics and pottery so fresh and inspiring – both the museum collection and the changing exhibitions. Staff are friendly and it is easy to find, so go on and pay them a visit! TripAdvisor

It's a heart-warming achievement...The whole place is suffused with gently creative energy, old art stimulating new art. The example of York shows how much art museums have to offer. Country Life

Chesterfield Theatres

We're on the balcony looking at the Pomegranate Theatre, with its high ceilings and trusses and ornamental panel work. There's a strong sense of the continuum of history here - from the use of the Pomegranate Tree, which featured on the ancient borough seal, the design of the originally named Stephenson Memorial Hall used for lectures, the public entertainment of the day through to the present day, with Front of House staff down in the stalls preparing for an afternoon film screening.

About the Chesterfield Theatres

The Chesterfield Theatres consists of two venues, the Winding Wheel and the Pomegranate Theatre; both occupy Grade II listed buildings within the town centre (about 150 yards apart) and are owned and managed by Chesterfield Borough Council.

The Winding Wheel (WW) is in a former 1920's Odeon, and contains an 850 seat auditorium with a flat floor at ground level and a raked circle, a ballroom with 1930's decor which can accommodate 200 people for performances, and a function room. It has a mixed programme including West End Musicals, stand-up comedy, music concerts talks and community events. In 2016/17 it hosted 149 performances seen by 37,745 people. The Pomegranate Theatre was built as a public lecture hall in 1879, established as a theatre in 1949 and is the oldest civic theatre in Britain. It is located within a complex that houses the museum and former library and has a Victorian proscenium arch auditorium with a capacity of 590 seats. It presents touring drama, music, dance, a pantomime and film screenings and broadcasts and it is also hired by local amateur groups. In 2016/17 it hosted 300 performances and 350 screenings seen by 83,522 people.

In 2010 in light of pressures on local government income and expenditure, Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) decided to commission an external consultant (Artservice) to help consider and plan for the future viability of the two venues, which were then run separately. The review concluded that three things would need to

happen:

1. the two venues needed to be managed together under the leadership of a single venues manager,
2. that an integrated programme strategy and staffing structure should be developed
3. that there should be capital investment in both venues.

If these were achieved, there was an opportunity to create a cultural hub in the town to meet the demands of local people, who at this time were keen to see a separate arts centre established. CBC accepted the recommendations and was keen to support the plan but aware that it would be unable to fund the entirety of the capital costs.

Once appointed, the new venues manager with responsibility for both venues, Anthony Radford, established contact with the Arts Council in 2011. Neither theatre was a national portfolio organisation, but early engagement was, in Anthony's words 'responsive and helpful'. The Arts Council made it clear that a number of requirements had to be met before an application could be considered. CBC decided to invest circa £40,000 in a feasibility study working with Artservice and Glenn Howells Architects as well as Carr and Angier theatre consultants. Following this process, an application was made to the Small Capital Programme in November 2012.

Capital Works

The aims of the project were to make the theatres more sustainable by:

- > Improving the performance facilities in order to cater to a broader range of product, including addressing issues of electricity supply, stage size and capacity to take weight, as well as installing equipment to make cinema screening and broadcasting possible
- > Increasing capacity and improving sightlines
- > Improving backstage and technical facilities at the Winding Wheel, installing a new light and sound room and an audio description room at the Pomegranate
- > Redecoration of some front of house areas and refurbishing auditorium seats

Anthony explains

Some of these things were about very basic needs. At the Winding Wheel, there was insufficient electrical supply for larger shows like musicals. We were hiring generators for the runs and keeping them in the car park. The theatre wasn't designed for the kind of product now available. Similarly, the stage was restricted in size and was limited in the weight it could take. Modern shows involve heavier sets and equipment and we needed to retrofit this in.

He also points out:

Our ambitions were - and are - bigger than the scope of the project that was funded, but we went for something we thought was achievable, it was a pragmatic bid.

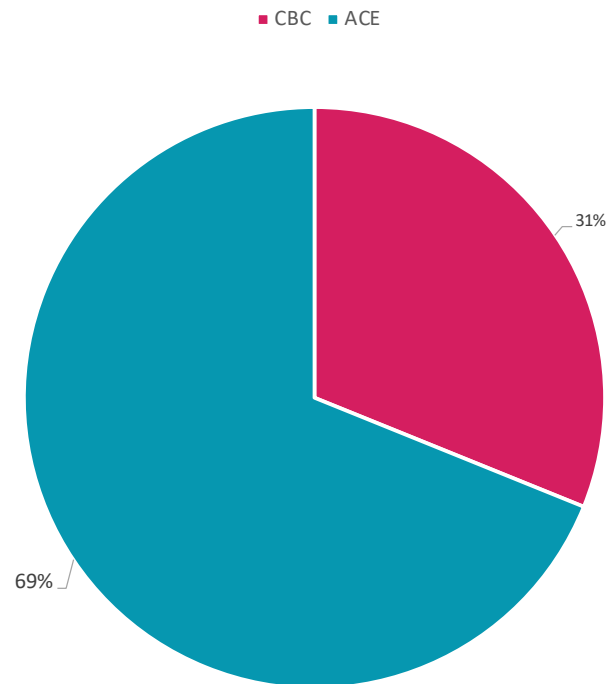
The project was a package of smaller projects that required a building closure period for both sites. The team decided on a sequential approach. The grant was agreed in early 2013 and they planned for the works to happen over the summer of 2014, in order to allow time for Historic England to consider the proposals.

Timing was a big consideration because it meant closing both buildings for at least six weeks and taking tickets off sale. Works began on site in May 2014 and a sequential approach was adopted with work starting in the Winding Wheel and taking place over 6 weeks before moving to the Pomegranate Theatre. The project was completed on time, reopening on 19 September 2014, on schedule and on budget. Snagging was resolved within the twelve month period after re-opening.

Project Statistics

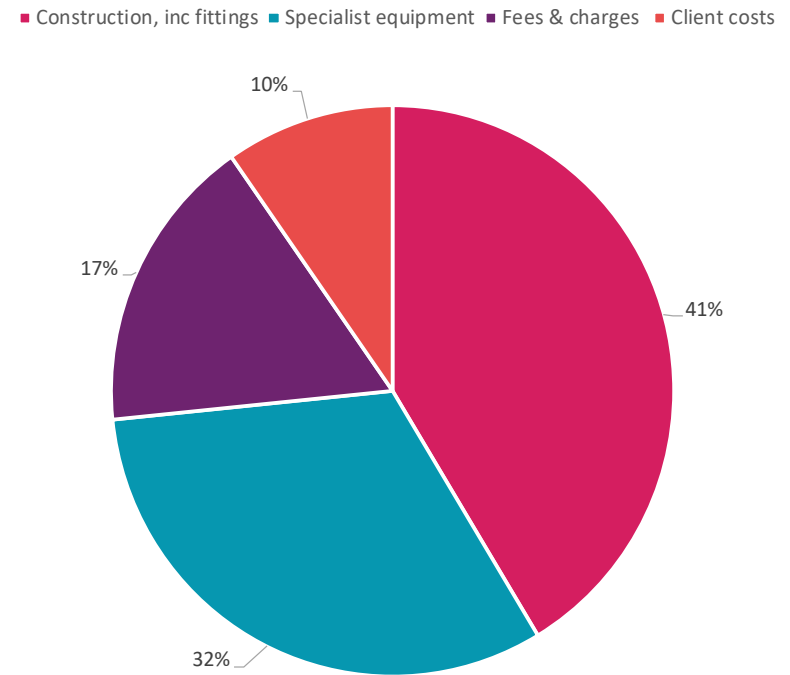
- > Architects Glen Howell
- > Specialists Carr and Angier
- > Project Management Turner and Townsend

Figure 10. Project income



The total project cost was £750,000; Arts Council contributed £495,000 and Chesterfield Borough Council committed £250,000 (although ultimately the project came in under budget) and its final contributions was £223,621 (Figure Ten)

Figure 11. Project expenditure



Project Achievements

Although the project was relatively straightforward, the greatest challenge was the process of obtaining Listed Building consent, in particular for the Winding Wheel. The project managers and team worked well together, and worked well with the relevant local authority teams, but there was a process to go through to put in supplementary justifications for some elements, in particular the additional lighting rig, on the basis that this obstructed the view of the original plaster work.

Finding a suitably experienced contractor had been a concern, The theatres knew that they would need to find one that both could cope with the Listed building aspects as well as managing specialist technical contractors. In the event, they were able to appoint a local supplier and there were no major issues with the contractor.

The costings also changed in a number of areas:

- > Construction costs changed as a result of final designs and the tender process
- > Specialist equipment costs were higher after final designs and the tender process
- > Fees increased due to the competitive tender process for the consultant team, the inclusion of the planning application fee and Western Power charges
- > Client costs were less than budgeted because venue costs were lower than anticipated.

While these changes had to be accommodated, no major element had to be removed and none of the discrete projects had to be cut.

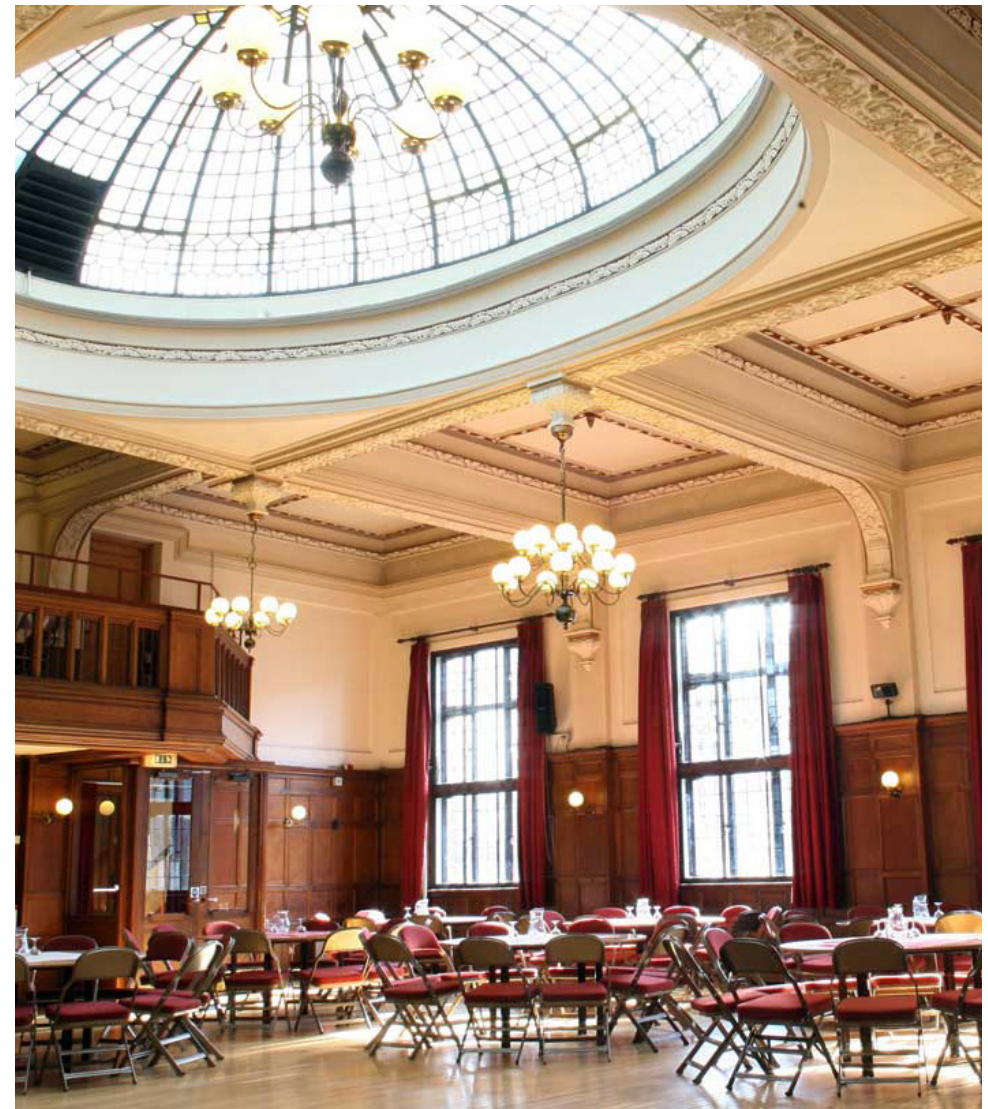
There have been important gains in a number of areas:

- > An improved offer for production//visiting companies which places Chesterfield Theatres in a stronger position to compete with other local venues
- > Greater flexibility to programme a wide range of work, serviced by appropriate stage and electrical provision. The WW now has an automated stage extension which is easy (and cheap) to install to cater for different product.

For orchestral concerts, musicals, the operations team also needed to extend the stage. Up until the capital project, this had to be manual. But now this is automatic, at the press of a button. The offer to visiting companies and production companies has greatly improved. When planning to show 'Avenue Q', they had a last minute realisation that the stage was too small, and it nearly scuppered the show - but with the automatic stage extension, we had a quick solution. The flexibility to do these things is so important.

- > An increase in capacity in the Pomegranate Theatre from 546 to 590. This capacity can be deployed flexibly - installing central aisle seats for busier shows or removing them for audiences for whom the access provided by a central aisle is important. In the WW, moveable rostra have been installed, which improve quality sight-lines for shows in the main auditorium.
- > The opportunity to show cinema screenings and broadcasts in the Pomegranate Theatre, including a film programme as well as live broadcasts of theatre, opera, ballet and visual arts. There is some evidence of cross over audiences and the lower ticket price for screenings means the venue is now available to a wider group of people.
- > The number of performances and screenings has increased dramatically. While average capacity per performance has not materially changed as a result of the project, there are many more people coming through the buildings. In the year after the completion of the project there was an increase of approximately 15,000 attendances at the two theatres, which equates to a 14% increase on the year before.

The number of our performances and screenings has increased dramatically. Average capacity hasn't necessarily changed but we have more on offer, we're a more relevant choice.



Picture 31. Winding Wheel Theatre Ballroom

Sharing the experience

Anecdotally, I was in for a Saturday night event in October meeting customers. One couple said to me 'Do you know, this is the third time we've been to the venue this week'. This is being a relevant choice.

The impact of these various changes has been growth in overall income. Overall earned income for the two theatres was approximately £196,000 higher for the year after the completion of the capital project (October 2014 to September 2015) compared to the previous year (October 2013 to September 2014). This was an increase of 13%.

Another change, which did not originate with the actual project but which has been driven further by it, is the extent to which consultation with customers is an embedded practice. Before the project was funded in 2012, a detailed exercise was conducted to explore with customers their likely response to a Theatre Restoration Levy. A finding of this process, to the surprise of the Theatre team, was the overwhelming support for a levy in the range of £1-£1.50 per ticket. Many people also signed up as willing to be consulted in future and the theatres now conduct an annual customer survey. This has been very helpful:

It means we can consult very quickly now around certain changes [for example on the current capital works]... The mix and match approach to the aisle seating was an example of where we've adopted their suggestions. It has really been worth it and brought the customer with us. With the film programme it has also been helpful as it has been a journey to develop the broadcast audience in particular.



Picture 32. Pomegranate Theatre film screening (CBC)

Since the small grants capital project has been completed, Chesterfield Theatres has also completed further works of varying scales. Anthony is convinced of the necessity to be thinking in terms of 5-10 year upgrade and maintenance cycles, which include horizon scanning for changes in trends that will dictate whether the building is fit for purpose.

We still need to keep making changes [...].In the Pomegranate Theatre, we've been interested in the big development in forms of circus and are keen to book a group in but can't because of the stage's current weight bearing capacity. It will take another £3k of work to make it possible. And the integration of cinematic and live performance, that could have massive implications for Edwardian and Victorian venues.



Picture 33. Pomegranate Theatre stage

Attenborough Arts Centre

I arrive on a Tuesday morning and the place is abuzz. The tables in the warm inviting café are all occupied. In the Diana Princess of Wales Hall, off the café, the regular tea dance is taking place where a young adult group are enjoying moving to a pop soundtrack with carers and artists. The upstairs workshops have groups working away in them, and in the main exhibition space a new show is being installed. The combined possibilities of seeing, doing, being is alluring, even on a cold January day.

About Attenborough Arts Centre

The Attenborough Arts Centre (AAC), located in Leicester, pioneers new approaches to the arts in an inclusive and welcoming space, breaking down barriers to access. Opening in May 1997, it was originally conceived and built as an adult education centre. Its first patron, Sir Richard Attenborough said in his speech for the official opening:

Here was an irresistible opportunity - to make higher education in the arts fully accessible to those with disabilities and to create a brand new building with their needs, for once, at the very forefront of the design.
(displayed on the foyer wall of the centre)

Since its establishment, the centre had become a hub for arts activity with a particular strength in delivering visual arts courses alongside a small programme of performing arts. With its commitment to inclusive practice in arts and disability there was a high proportion of disabled people accessing the centre both to take courses and present work. The first professional Arts Director was recruited in 2006 to lead on future development and specialist staff were appointed to lead on aspects of the programme including a dedicated visual arts manager to work alongside the specialist part time lecturers delivering visual arts courses.

In 2010 the Director's post became a job share allowing for a broadening of expertise on art form with the new Director taking the lead on visual and Live Arts and campaigning for the new gallery development. The arts programme expanded to include creative learning, performance art, music, spoken word, experimental theatre and contemporary dance – and has a particular goal of championing disabled talent and disability-led companies as well as local emerging talent. The centre is part of the University of Leicester and currently sits within the External Relations Division. AAC is also an NPO of the Arts Council. For the period 2015-18 its annual grant was £50,090, and for the period 2018-22 will receive a grant of £270k per annum, an increase of 312%.



Picture 34. Attenborough Arts Centre cafe

Capital Works

The original building, designed by Bennetts Associates was split into three parts; at the heart of the centre is a double-height, sky-lit hall, flanked by two rehearsal spaces that all open into one and on the upper level can be enclosed or overlooked by galleries. There are rooms on the first floor used as studios and workshops.

The intentions behind the capital project were to provide an opportunity to build audiences and broker partnerships with increased provision for the visual arts and to address some access issues for the exhibition of visual arts work. There were a number of related aims:

1. To increase exhibition space to draw high profile events and exhibitions of significant scale
2. To improve accessibility by creating new spaces in addition to the existing narrow gallery which limited opportunities for disabled people to fully engage with the work, particularly for group visits.
3. To offer provision in view of the recent closure of the City Gallery, which had attracted 25,000 visitors per annum.
4. To provide more opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists to exhibit and sell their work

5. To create a mix of flexible spaces that would provide more scope for experimentation

It was also important to consolidate and increase storage provision and improve the income generating opportunities in terms of café, shop and hires. The refurbishment of the café was funded outside of this project, but the works happened concurrently so as to limit disruption. The commitment to access and inclusivity remained absolutely central to design and delivery of the scheme.

The extension comprises of a 2 storey steel framed extension on the West side of the existing building with a small external sculpture court facing onto Lancaster Road. It has increased the size of the building by more than 50%, from 1093m² to 1640 m² and provides three new interlinked gallery spaces, each with different characteristics. The gallery is now the largest contemporary art space in Leicestershire and one of the largest in the East Midlands.

The new exhibition programme will significantly contribute to the University's corporate social responsibility, wider public engagement and strategic research goals. It will specifically explore issues of human identity and inter-cultural interactions, promote inter-discipline, attract high-calibre collaborators, and encourage new imaginative approaches that culminate in exhibition projects.

University of Leicester

The gallery spaces are deliberately designed for flexibility and to be able to accommodate different and combined art forms.

Project statistics

- > Architect: GSS Architecture
- > Construction: Stepnell Ltd

The original project cost was projected to be £1,581,423 and the final project cost was £1.8m, of which the Arts Council contributed £600,000 (Figure Nine).

The primary reason for the difference between original budget and final cost was that initial plans to build on the East side had to be changed after objections at the planning stage. This required a redesign and working round the challenge of the slope on the West side.

There was a process of value engineering and some difficult decisions about where to economise. Access provision, including for example in terms of the size and fire-safety of the lift, were prioritised with this being central to mission delivery, as were components considered hardest to retrofit such as air-handling units to meet Government Indemnity environmental conditions for high value loans.

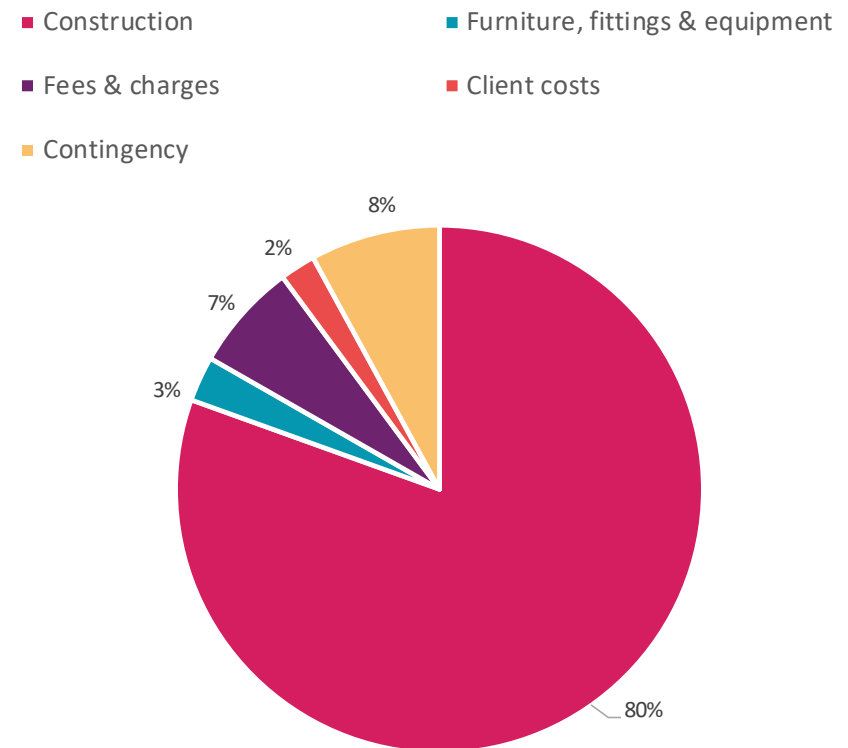


Figure 12. Project expenditure

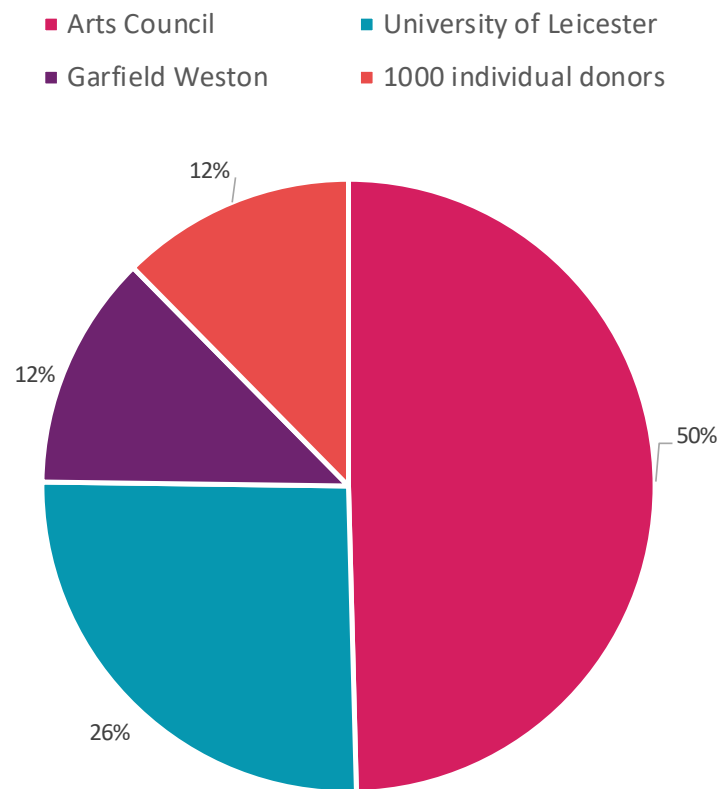


Figure 13. Project income

The £1.2m funding requirement was met by funds from the University of Leicester including an existing endowment (from the original building project), and a bequest, as well as Trusts and Foundations grants of £150,000 and public fundraising of £150,000 from approximately 1,000 donors. (Figure Ten)

The fundraising campaign was led by the University Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) and managed by a seasoned Deputy Director of Development. The appeal was also supported and overseen by the executive Strategic Fundraising Committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Access to a professional team was considered by the team to have been an important success factor.

The project was procured under a traditional JCT contract. Work started on site in January 2015 and the extended building was opened by Sir David Attenborough in January 2016. The Project was managed by the University's in-house Estates Team, and specifically supported with a Project Manager.

Project achievements

Visitor numbers since the opening of the extension have exceeded written targets. Over the period 2010 (pre-capital) to 2017, visitors to the building have increased from 25,000 to 85,000 in 2016 and 118,000 in 2017.

We had our first Christmas Craft fair this year - it was a great surprise success with 6,000 people coming to the building. Many said they didn't know we were here, but now they did, they would come again.

The building is busier more of the time and is catering to a broader range of groups, for example running children and family workshops at weekends as well as enabling them to begin to build a substantial schools education programme linked to Arts Mark and Arts Award. The increased use has knock on impacts for revenue-generation in the café and shop as well as their ability to secure additional grants from Trusts and Foundations such as Paul Hamlyn, Start and BBC Children in Need.

I thought I knew Leicester well, after numerous visits over the last 20 years, but I had never been to this gallery before today (July 2016). A light and airy exhibition space with a fascinating show currently - we had a very illuminating talk with a couple of the artists featured. Also

- an excellent cafe! Very good coffee - we had nothing to eat this time, but I expect to be back soon to sample the cakes! Trip Advisor review

The physical size and visibility of the organisation now appears to be positively affecting its profile both with the community and for the University as well as take a leadership role in wider Visual Arts Development across the city.

Now there is real clarity about our role in the community, in corporate social responsibility and they are mindful that our profile is rising and that this has a positive impact on the University's image and identity.

This is boosted by the opportunity to more effectively host student activities, to link the programme to their studies.

We are now getting more applications for placements and more proposals are coming through for working together with academic departments

The increased scale of the building and capacity to take larger, higher profile exhibitions is building in impact.

Sharing the experience

The building re-opened with an exhibition called Art, Life, Activism, which drew on their history as a centre for inclusive art practice, providing thought-provoking look at art and disability. The exhibition featured selected works by major artists within the disabled community such as Tony Heaton, Noëmi Lakmaier, Aaron Williamson, Bobby Baker, Simon Raven, David Hevey, Adam Reynolds and Liz Crow.

AAC has also been able to establish relationships with national organisations such as Shape and Unlimited (who will be launching their new commissions programme at the Centre, the first time they have done so outside of London.)The building re-opened with an exhibition from Laura Swanson, a first solo show in the UK, attracting positive critical attention. Michaela Butter MBE, the Centre Director says

We're on a long curve - it might take ten years, but we're building towards it...

One piece of advice from the Director is to have absolute control of the brief and to monitor the contractor's commitment to it closely. "If they promise three decorators over the weekend, you have to get on site to make sure they deliver." Aware of problems in previous projects elsewhere from discussions with venues like the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the brief specified "a level and smooth quality concrete floor" which resulted in the AAC securing a higher spec polished concrete floor

when the original pour was proven not to comply to the brief and the company had to polish it at their expense.

AAC stress that prior experience was a key component of success. The team had personal experience and insight into processes and challenges of similar projects and sought out examples with go-see visits. Their consultant team was experienced and it had access to professional project management and fundraising teams through the University. Listening to technicians from other organisations that had been through a capital project was particularly valuable.

Michaela is passionate about the value of artists' involvement in the planning of the project. AAC invited Jo Fairfax and Threshold Studios, both already known to the organisation, to be paid advisers. Their contribution was invaluable particularly around the fit out of the exhibitions spaces and technology requirements. With their advice, and that of technicians they met on 'go-see' visits, the Centre opted for a 'plug and play approach'. They limited spend on equipment (beyond the basics) and instead considered infrastructure requirements such as broadband speeds.

The need to re-think the design and swap the works from the East to the West side of the buildings, and the implications this had for the budget, were clearly the biggest issues. Like many projects, AAC found that the workloads associated with managing the project, the fundraising and a day to day programme in place. The organisation also instigated a staffing and structure review to prepare for occupation of the building.

Two main financial issues remain part of the post-project challenge:

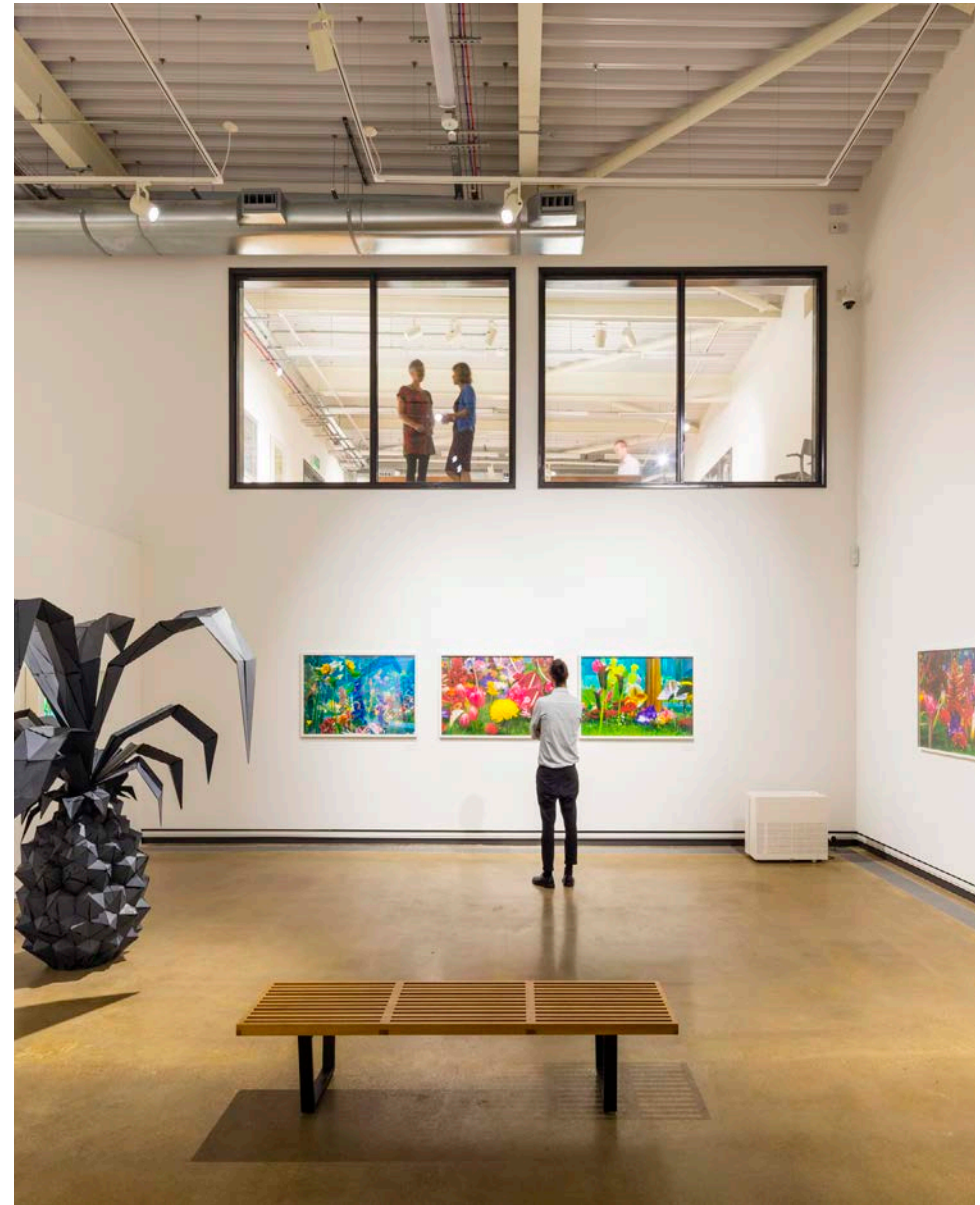
- > Firstly, getting to grips with the complexity of VAT exemption and how this affects their ability to charge (or not) for certain activities in certain parts of the building. Exemption made a material difference to the budget (taking out circa £300,000 of cost) but the team has been learning to understand and absorb the restrictions that it imposes
- > Secondly, the AAC needs to ensure that the exhibition programme is sustainable over the longer term. Whilst AAC won a major uplift from the Arts Council in their NPO funding in the 2018-22 investment process, the funding agreement specifically prohibits them from using this to support the exhibition programme. There is currently a commitment from the University to contribute £40,000 per annum for this



Picture 35. Attenborough Arts Centre

The team is continuing to explore and find benefits of the flexibility of the spaces and the opportunities for the education and artistic strands to play off each other. There is clearly a sense of even greater potential. And they haven't lost their appetite for capital projects either:

We're actually just beginning the process of a third phase of capital work. We'd like to do work to the other side of the building (where the current extension was originally planned) as part of a wider scheme across the university to promote arts and well-being. There's an opportunity around consolidating the student cultural offer of the University into one place - music rehearsal spaces and a small studio theatre, craft centre, dance space which can be used by the wider community out of term-time.



Picture 36. Attenborough Arts Centre Gallery

Bristol Old Vic

The Old Vic has gone out of its way to make itself accessible while major transformation works are carried out. It was easy to find the way in (this was detailed in the information given out with tickets), there was plenty of room inside (even in the ladies toilets) and the whole place was warm and inviting - specially so considering the bare walls and wiring hanging around. Can't wait to go and see what they are doing when it's finished!

Audience Member

About Bristol Old Vic

Bristol Old Vic's mission is "to create pioneering twenty-first century theatre in partnership with the people of our energetic city; inspired by the history and magical design of the most beautiful playhouse in the country."

It describes its core business in the following strands:

- > Bristol Old Vic Productions: new and classic work, founded on the opportunities of live performance, the Theatre Royal space and the city of Bristol.
- > Bristol Ferment: an artist development programme of newly written and devised work, for artists from Bristol and the South West
- > Bristol Old Vic Engagement: creating shows and participatory opportunities with and for young and disenfranchised people from across Bristol and the region.
- > Inspiring Visitors: theatre shows and Festival programming that inspires artists and audiences to new possibilities in live performance.

Bristol Old Vic's annual turnover is in excess of £5m p.a. and the organisation is in receipt of revenue funding from Bristol City Council (BCC) and Arts Council England.

Located in the centre of Bristol, Bristol Old Vic is the oldest continually operating theatre in the UK, first opening in 1766. It consists of a 540

seat main proscenium arch Georgian auditorium and 150 seat studio theatre. In the early days the theatre was hidden behind the impressive façade of Coopers' Hall and access to the theatre was through a private house facing King Street, Bristol's most important thoroughfare in the 18th century. In the 1970's a brick built extension meant that there were extensive front of house facilities but these have had many limitations theatrically and practically.

In the period 2009-2012 Bristol Old Vic undertook a major £12m scheme in the main auditorium to increase capacity, extend the forestage, improve sightlines and refurbish the decor, as well as to create additional flexible performance spaces, improve rehearsal and back office facilities within the building. This first phase project is an important backdrop for the second phase of the scheme funded through the 2012-15 Capital Programme, which is still in delivery, with re-opening planned in September 2018. The accessibility, comfort and sophistication offered by the first phase refurbishment drew greater attention to the inadequacies of the front of house facilities. The project was also a material learning experience for the new leadership team and the execution of the second phase sought to build on many of the hard-learned lessons of the first.

Capital Works

I'm looking out of the window as we speak, and by and large it has progressed very well...At Christmas it felt like it stopped being a pile of rubble, and is properly a building you can walk around in. I can't wait to get it open. Emma Stenning, Chief Executive

We've come from a place where we were open from 6pm onwards, not a civic resource at any other time. There are many changes that have led us away from that... And we've also got to make the building make money when it would otherwise be dark.

hidden gem', introducing glass frontage so that from the outside of the building people have a better idea of what is going on inside, and with the name clearly visible. The imposing frontage has been at odds with the aims to attract a wider spectrum of individuals than is currently the case.

We wanted to make an obvious public building... The beautiful but grand listed part... it has overtones of a grand civic building, but not one you're particularly comfortable about entering. The brown brick building next door looked more like a magistrates court. Neither said 'this is Bristol Old Vic, come in, there's something for you. BOV

The intentions behind the project fall into five interrelated areas:

- > Income: To generate additional revenues through higher quality catering and events space hires
- > Occupancy: To create the opportunities for the space to be used by the public more of the time, by improving navigability, raising the quality of Front of House space and making it suitable for informal performances for example in music or spoken word.
- > Welcome: Increase visibility and transparency – instead of being 'a

The outcomes are based on work still in progress and currently include:

- > The enhancement of the skills base and confidence of the leadership team
- > A positive impact on revenue fundraising capacity The capital campaign has been transformational in raising Bristol Old Vic's fundraising capacity
- > Successful interim trading within the Backstage Bar
- > Successful ongoing delivery of programmed work.

- > History: providing a more accessible historical narrative that goes beyond a guided tour and undertaking some conservation work.
- > Environment: Delivering a building that uses less energy and costs less to operate than the existing one. Modifications for example to air supply, a sedum roof, underfloor heating and the use of air source heat pumps.

Specifically, the project involves works to:

- > A temporary conversion of the Paint Shop area (backstage facilities) into a bar for the duration of the works, to sustain some revenue from beverages
- > The front facade of the building
- > Interior FOH spaces, including the former staircase area
- > Improved catering through location, ambience and facilities
- > Upgrade event spaces - refurbish the Coopers Hall with a view to accommodating banqueting and conference events
- > Creation of a purpose built new Studio space, to support Bristol Old Vic's intention to be an incubator for talent,

Project statistics

- > Architects Haworth Tompkins - Steve Tompkins, the lead architect.
- > Specialists (Theatre consultants, accoustics) Charcoalblue
- > Project Director, Jack Tilbury of Plann Ltd
- > Project Manager, GVA Acuity

There is an extensive additional team providing inputs on specialist areas such as access, sustainability, party wall advice, legal and catering.

The budget for the scheme is £13.5m of which Arts Council is contributing £4.65m. The Heritage Lottery Fund have granted £2,264,200 (Figure 14)

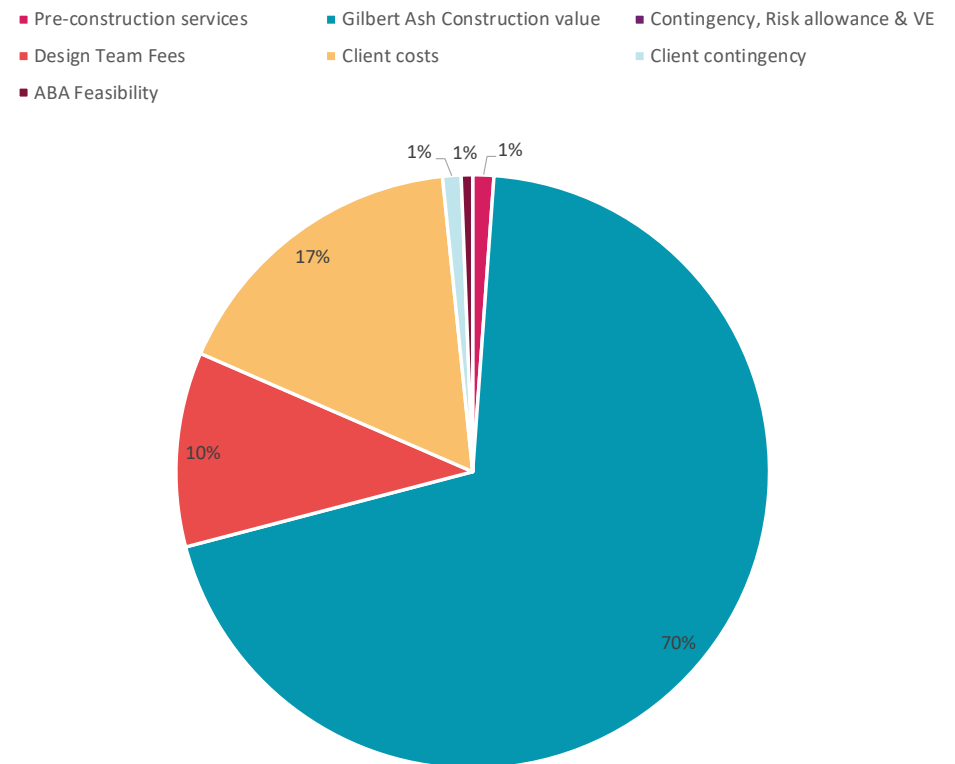


Figure 14. BOV Planned expenditure

The capital fundraising programme has been a material workload and development work had to pause to 'allow fundraising to catch up,' (this has extended the overall timescales, the application proposed completion in November 2016).

Last year saw a re-structure of the team and appointment of a new Director, a revised implementation plan for the final stages of the capital appeal, as well as preparation for the achievement of increased revenue targets. The campaign has had a large focus on individual giving, particularly high net worth individuals with strands such as the Silver and Gold Ticket campaign, and a Sponsor a Seat appeal.



Picture 37. Bristol Old Vic (Haworth Tompkins)

Project Achievements

It makes so much difference having experience under your belt...For the Phase 1 works, I was struggling to feel it was under my control. I thought 'I know how to produce shows, I know how to run a theatre' but I found myself having conversations where I genuinely didn't understand the language. I was relying on contractors and suppliers to interpret... Now, because I have more experience, we're managing it on time, on budget and with a happy team.

- > A new procurement process and the appointment of a new team
- > A two-stage design and build contract at a fixed price

We took lots of advice and had a lot of debate about the contract structure, particularly after what we felt was a punitive structure for phase 1.

It means that there was some tough value engineering to do before the price was decided, but it also meant we knew when we pressed go exactly what we were building.

Since work started on site, the project has stayed to schedule and the team are optimistic about re-opening on time and on budget.

Emma offers the following reflections and advice

1. Acquire experience in as many ways as you can, from the board, mentors, the consultant team and external advisers.
2. Educate yourself so that you can control decision making, not delegate this to others who do not have the same long-term interest in the building and organisation that you do.
3. Limit the number of people who can take financial decisions about the project, ideally to just one.

Features highlighted as key to this phase include:

- > Strengthening board experience and capacity to support the project (access to valuable construction expertise in Paul Morrell OBE has been important).

There are a few challenges front of mind at the time of writing.

One challenge we're grappling with at the moment is around operational costs...it's hard to predict these accurately. Things like lifts and more sophisticated equipment mean that maintenance and overheads will go up, putting pressure on the revenue budget. BOV

Aside from planning for the post-opening operational costs, Emma feels that managing the cash flow has been the other significant challenge. In part this is due to the approach adopted in fundraising, where donors have the option of a five-year payment plan for their donation.

She also refers to the policy of many trusts and foundations of holding back some proportion of the grant until the end of the project. The role of the City Council in supporting interim cash flow has been invaluable.

In spite of all the challenges and lessons learnt, Emma is a true convert to capital projects.

... it has been good fun, which is important to say. It will be our defining through line in our time here. It is a precious building and it is a privilege to give it a face lift. Even though I can't wait for it to open, I'll be sad when the project is over. I've become a capital project addict. There's something really fulfilling about doing something that lasts, especially when your artform by its nature is temporary, transitory.



Picture 38. Bristol Old Vic Foyer visualisation (Haworth Tompkins)

Northampton Theatres Trust

... if you want memorable entertainment, just look at the Royal & Derngate's forthcoming offerings - great website too. There are two cinemas as well, so your choice appears endless.

You will find the staff friendly and accommodating, many are volunteers as the Theatre runs as a registered charity and does much to provide artistic training for youngsters.

TripAdviser review

About Northampton Theatres Trust

Picture 39. Royal & Derngate facade (Royal & Derngate)



Sitting in the vibrant café it is clear from my conversation with Martin Sutherland (Chief Executive, Northampton Theatres Trust) that the Arts Council's investment of just over £500,000 in two small capital projects has delivered what was hoped and more. He talks animatedly about the new connections they have facilitated and the possibility of further growth on a regional basis.

Northampton Theatres Trust ("Northampton Theatres"; trading as Royal & Derngate) operates four main spaces in central Northampton – the Royal auditorium, the Derngate auditorium and Underground, plus the two screen Errol Flynn Filmhouse adjacent to the theatre. The complex sits in the heart of Northampton's cultural quarter.

The 450 seat Victorian Royal auditorium was opened in 1884 and houses a mixture of presented and Made In Northampton productions,. The multi-purpose Derngate (maximum capacity of 1500) was opened next to the Royal in 1983 and welcomes large scale touring shows, orchestral visits and an array of one-night events. The first 88-seat screen of the Errol Flynn Filmhouse was added in 2013, opening on the birthday of Hollywood icon Errol Flynn. The second screen (83 seats) opened in 2017.

A clear vision for Northampton Theatres underpins a commitment to its region and a high quality programme, as well as a determination to be a nationally recognised cultural centre.

Royal & Derngate inspires audiences locally in Northamptonshire and more widely across our region and the UK by creating, staging and screening excellent live performances, creative projects and films.

Northampton Theatres has five aims that focus on being resilient; delivering a quality programme; developing audiences and offering a great customer experience; and increasing engagement with young people, families and the wider community.

In 2016/17 the Royal and Derngate auditoria welcomed 474,000 people through their doors. Total attendance for the same period at the single screen Errol Flynn Filmhouse was 53,467 (an increase of 8% on 2015/16). The success of the first screen laid a strong foundation for the addition of the second screen and the development of a diverse film audience.

It is estimated that Northampton Theatres had an economic impact of £26.6M in 2016/17.

Picture 40. Derngate Auditorium (Royal & Derngate)



Picture 41. Royal and Derngate Cafe (Royal & Derngate)



Capital Works

World class artists and actors have been (and continue to be) regular visitors to Northampton for over 125 years, but perhaps the most famous of all is Tasmanian born Errol Flynn, who spent 6 months as a member of the acting company of Northampton Rep (now known as Royal & Derngate), before heading to Hollywood where he made his name and fortune. (Northampton Theatres Trust)

Northampton Theatres Trust was successful in gaining two small capital grants through the Arts Council's strategic capital programme. One enabled the refurbishment of the stage lift equipment in the Derngate, the other allowed the purchase of a digital control centre for the Errol Flynn Filmhouse.

Project statistics

- > Cinema contractor: Elite Systems
- > Cinema architects: One17
- > Digital and AV contractor: Future Projections
- > Derngate contractor: TV & Theatre Services
- > Derngate specialist contractor: Serapid
- > Project management: Northampton Theatres Trust
- > Planning permission: Northampton Borough Council

Errol Flynn Filmhouse

The second phase of the cinema saw Elite Systems working on-site for six months undertaking foundation works, installation of the portal frame, pre-cast concrete tiered floors, SIPS and roofing as well as cladding and internal works. Featuring horizontal Western Red Cedar cladding to blend with the first phase. (Elite Systems)

Through the establishment of Screen One Northampton Theatres was able to grow initial audiences and test demand for the potential addition of a second screen. The Arts Council's contribution to the project supported the purchase of specialist equipment related to digital cinema and broadcasting. As a result of some project savings it also contributed towards the refurbishment of the adjacent toilets.

Figure 15. Errol Flynn Filmhouse small capital income

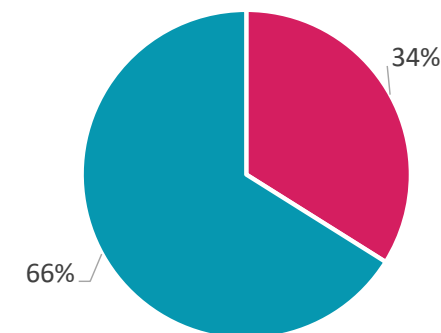


Figure 16. Errol Flynn Filmhouse small capital expenditure

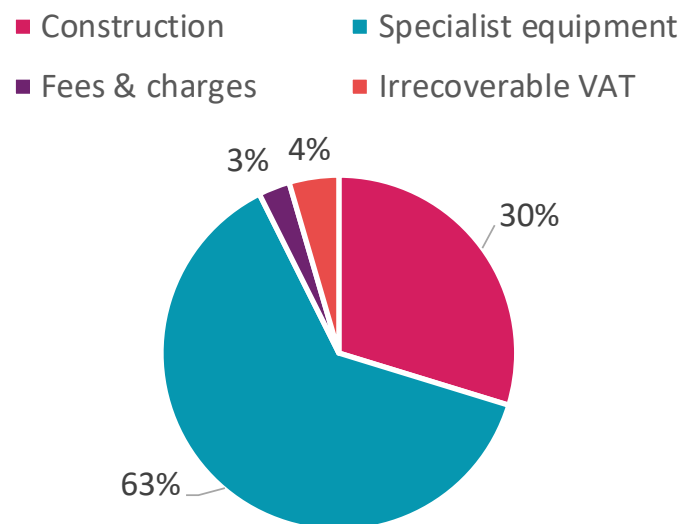
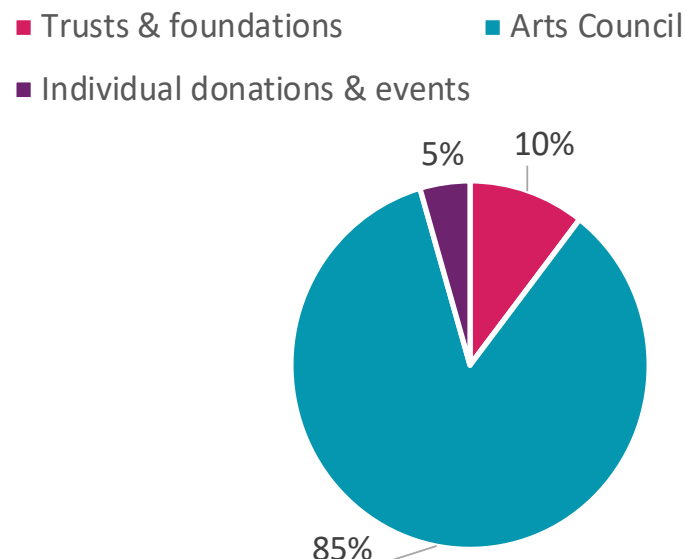


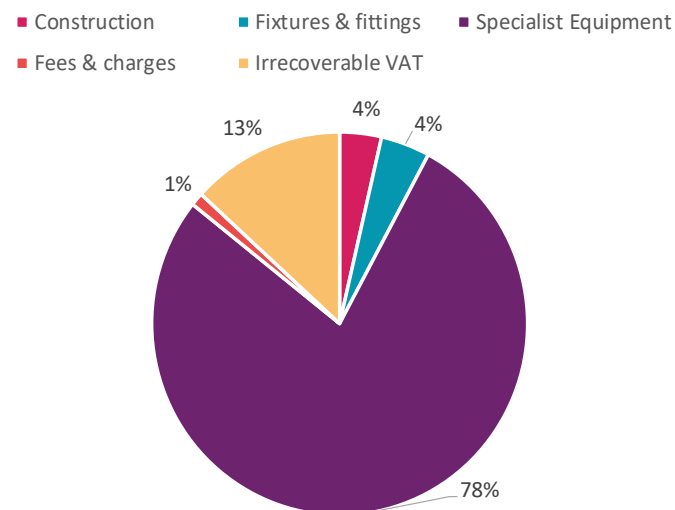
Figure 17. Derngate refurbishment small capital income



Derngate improvements

This project was designed to ensure the on-going flexibility of the Derngate space in such a way that it could be operated efficiently and safely. The screw jack mechanisms that were in use for raising the floor were reaching the end of their useful life and an alternative was needed. Having researched various solutions it was decided to install a fixed chain solution supplied by French manufacturer Serapid and installed by TV Theatre Services. Derngate is only the second auditorium in the country, after Birmingham Hippodrome to be using the technology. Savings on the original budget and a highly successful individual donors scheme allowed for additional improvements including new bleacher seating, new carpet, some seat replacement and new air conditioning units.

Figure 18. Derngate refurbishment small capital expenditure



Project Achievements

Always clean, great seats, great snacks and a cheeky glass of wine if you fancy, what more could you ask for?

It's a beautiful intimate cinema, spotlessly clean, very very comfy chairs, easy access. The pricing is the same as all the major cinemas as are some of the refreshments. This is definitely one we shall be going back to (Tripadvisor reviews)

The works have also allowed us to create a connection between the Filmhouse and the Derngate. Now we are able to do more live broadcasts like Ballet Bolshoi. We setup a scheme whereby audiences to the screening could then get discounted tickets for live ballet in the Derngate.

Three things are evident in hearing Martin describe the process and achievements of both projects. Firstly, there was clarity around the purpose and ambitions behind the works. Both capital projects were intended to and have now contributed towards the overarching organisational strategy and business model development. Secondly, both projects have delivered added flexibility to the organisation. The technical operation of the Derngate floor is now more efficient and it can adapt safely to a range of configurations. The rigid chains are guaranteed for 30 years so there is also some peace of mind in terms of

the longevity of the project. The digital projection technology allows for ease of use and can potentially act as a screening hub for other venues regionally.

Thirdly, both projects allowed for the development of new partnerships and connections. Birmingham Hippodrome acted as a project mentor for the Derngate floor lift improvements. The Filmhouse has enabled a relationship with the BFI and other film-based partners.

The addition of the second screen has also enabled Northampton Theatres to extend its commitment to diversity through providing access to film for as wide-ranging audiences as possible. As part of a partnership with the BFI Northampton Theatres offered an internship for a young, aspiring programmer from a diverse background. She has now been appointed as the permanent programmer. Developing the Filmhouse has created eight full time equivalent roles and improving the operation of the Derngate has protected jobs.

Operating two screens means that the economic model breaks even with relatively modest audiences. Surpluses made from consistently good attendances has enabled Northampton Theatres to invest in a very diverse programme which includes an LGBTQ+ film festival, autism and dementia friendly screenings, issue based non-mainstream titles and local filmmakers. The Filmhouse has also been recognised for championing local food and drink suppliers.

Sharing the experience

We were delighted with how well this project has been delivered, it has exceeded our expectations. We were able to achieve more than anticipated and have made new contacts with both individual donors as well as trusts by doing so.

The project gave us the opportunity to refocus our fundraising and look at small-scale schemes in particular. We let audience members know that their small contribution could be put towards unlocking £500,000. It was a great success.

Northampton Theatres chose to project manage both projects themselves, utilising the skills of the team and providing an opportunity for team development. There was also some backfill of key posts to ensure there was the necessary capacity to take on the project management. The timing of both projects meant that elements supported by the Arts Council had to be achieved in tight timescales, this was made possible by the internal project management and good relationships with the contractors.

Both the capital projects demonstrate that comparatively modest investment in core elements of capital projects can have a significant impact on an organisation's ability to develop its artistic, financial and business models. The projects have acted as catalysts for Northampton

Theatres in reviewing and developing its fundraising strategy. As a result of the timing on the Derngate project there was a need to raise the matching funding quickly. The decision was made to go for an audience based/individual donor scheme and in three weeks the funds were raised. Everyone who contributed got a hand signed thank you letter , which became a team effort because of the large numbers involved! The membership scheme used for the Filmhouse, now standing at 2,000 people, is also being used to revamp the theatre membership model.

We have found there is a lot to be learned from a cinema audience. We are learning more about digitally engaged audiences and how they behave. This has only been possible by moving into digital presentation. We have conversations now as a team about digital because we have a cinema.

Picture 42. Derngate fixed chain lifting equipment (TV & Theatre Services)

