



## PRESS RELEASE

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# KING'S THEATRE EDINBURGH REDEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARCHITECT AND FIRST LOOK AT THE DESIGNS FOR THE BUILDING

**Capital Theatres**, the charitable trust which runs the Festival and King's Theatres and The Studio, is delighted to officially launch the King's Theatre Edinburgh Redevelopment Campaign with the announcement of the architect for the project, **Bennetts Associates** and the unveiling of their initial designs for the building's transformation.

The unveiled designs for the redeveloped King's Theatre show a design that retains the majesty of the original building but reimagined for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The images, a cross-section of the reimagined building and a front side view showing the building's depth down Tarvit Street, capture a design that makes optimum use of the space available in the original 1906 building and the scope to create additional front of house space including a stunning roof terrace with views across the city skyline.

The transformational project will preserve and revitalise the King's Theatre Edinburgh, one of Scotland's oldest and most loved theatres, making it a vibrant, dynamic and accessible cultural destination for generations to come.

One of the UK's leading architectural practices, Bennetts Associates is responsible for several renowned cultural projects including Storyhouse in Chester, a much-loved cultural centre which combines a theatre, cinema and library, and the extension to Shaftesbury Theatre, both of which received RIBA National Awards this year.

Joining Bennetts Associates as the appointed architect on the project will be **Theatreplan**, global theatre design and technical theatre consultancy specialists. Together Bennetts and Theatreplan are also working on the transformation of Citizens Theatre in Glasgow.

## King's Theatre, Performing for the Future

Opened in 1906, The King's Theatres Edinburgh welcomes over 200,000 visitors every year. An important venue for touring drama, musicals and children's shows, it is home to Scotland's biggest panto production and each year plays a pivotal role in hosting the Edinburgh International Festival.

The King's is one of a handful of Grade A listed theatres in the UK that has still to have a major redevelopment and is the only surviving operational theatre by the architects Swanston and Davidson.

Now 112 years old, the King's is in need of a major redevelopment to meet the needs of today's audiences, and today's performers, and to safeguard it for generations to come. Without investment,

the audience and performer experience will decline and the King's will be at risk of closure, either due to a sudden failure of infrastructure or through a more gradual reduction in attendances.

An ambitious redevelopment project will result in the repair, enhancement and expansion of one of Scotland's oldest working theatres. This bold project will overhaul the interior and exterior of the theatre to enrich the audience experience and create a renewed sense of destination for the King's Theatre. Transformation of the King's will reinvigorate the artistic programme, by providing the facilities to attract the very best productions to the city.

The stage is set to:

1. More than double the opening hours
2. Increase annual visitor figures by 50%
3. Contribute £15m in economic impact per year for Edinburgh, an increase of £3m from current operations
4. Create more than 100 volunteering roles

How will the King's change?

- The transformation will create **a new street level café and bar**, accessible directly from Leven Street, along with an exciting new roof top hospitality space, providing spectacular 360-degree views of the City.
- **Installation of lifts and ramps** will enable visitors with mobility issues to be able to access all areas of the King's for the first time.
- A **brand-new learning studio** will be created, providing a much-needed space for community engagement, and educational projects.
- The existing **bars and foyers** will be overhauled whilst retaining their heritage and charm providing flexible and enjoyable entertainment spaces for pre and post-performance.
- The stage will be flattened to attract world-class opera and dance so that we can **offer a more diverse programme** for our audiences. The orchestra pit will be rebuilt to support improved acoustics for opera and musicals.
- Essential repairs will be made to wiring, lighting and the safety curtain to make them fit for purpose, as well as improvements to set and scenery access to allow **the building to work efficiently** for the future.
- **Back of house facilities** like dressing rooms, wardrobe and the green room will be given a long overdue facelift.

Bennetts Associates has presented their initial designs and will continue to develop designs through 2019, with a finalised design ready in 2020. Redevelopment works are scheduled to begin in September 2021, with the theatre closed for 20 months, reopening summer 2023.

The project will cost in the region of £20million. Funds are already in place from Capital Theatres (£5m) and the **City of Edinburgh Council** (£4m). Remaining funds will be sourced from a fundraising campaign, applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and other grant making trusts as well as statutory bodies.

The design team will be led by Bennetts Associates as the appointed architect, alongside Theatreplan and Project Mangers **Thomas & Adamson**. They will be joined by Mechanical and Electrical

Engineers **Max Fordham**; Civil and Structural Engineers **Will Rudd Davidson**, Quantity and Surveyors **Gleeds**.

**Duncan Hendry**, Chief Executive of **Capital Theatres** said: "We are delighted to have appointed Bennetts Associates to lead the design team who will transform the King's Theatre over the next few years. Bennetts have extensive experience of redeveloping theatres and heritage buildings across the UK and we were impressed by the elegance of their initial designs. We look forward to working with them to deliver a stunning building.

The King's Theatre holds a special place in the hearts of many people from Edinburgh and further afield. The King's really is 'Everyone's Theatre' and throughout this exciting redevelopment project we hope people will help us secure the future of their theatre. In early 2019 we will provide ways in which people can engage with, give opinion and support the project."

**Councillor Donald Wilson**, Culture and Communities Convener at the **City of Edinburgh Council**, said: "The King's Theatre has been a firm Edinburgh favourite for over a century and the Council is proud to pledge £4m towards its redevelopment. From some of the most talented community stage groups in the country and children's shows, to theatre directly from London's West End, the 'Grand Old Lady of Leven Street' has always been Edinburgh's theatre for everyone. This essential investment drive will help all of us enjoy a night at the King's for many more years to come."

**James Nelmes**, Associate Director at **Bennetts Associates** said: "The King's Theatre has a unique place in the hearts and minds of many Edinburgh residents and is a theatre of national architectural importance. We are delighted to be working with Capital Theatres and Theatreplan to bring it to the next stage. The plans to modernise the existing facilities and transform the experiences of visitors, performers and staff will help the theatre to remain a vital part of Edinburgh's cultural provision for years to come."

**Mathew Smethurst-Evans**, Executive Director UK for **Theatreplan** said: "Theatreplan is really excited to be part of the team rejuvenating this historic theatre, and modernising its facilities to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's also great to be working with Bennetts Associates again and adding another project to our experience collaborating on unique theatre spaces."

For more information about the King's Theatre redevelopment and how you can support the fundraising campaign please go to [www.capitaltheatres.com/support](http://www.capitaltheatres.com/support) or call 0131 622 8087

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**For further information** and images, please contact: Catherine Bromley, Head of Press and Communications, Capital Theatres, [catherine.bromley@capitaltheatres.com](mailto:catherine.bromley@capitaltheatres.com) / 0131 622 8088

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About Capital Theatres**

Capital Theatres present world-class shows to entertain and inspire audiences of all ages. We stage over 700 performances each year, at the Festival Theatre (1,900 seats), the King's Theatre (1,300 seats) and The Studio (155 seats) in a broad and inclusive programme featuring the very best in drama, dance, musical theatre, live music, comedy and pantomime.

Much of our programme is exclusive to our venues in Scotland, providing the only opportunity for audiences to see the biggest shows touring north of the border, the best in international contemporary dance and the latest productions from leading local and national companies.

During the summer months our stages are the heart of the Edinburgh Festivals in the world's leading

festival city. The Festivals provide a focus for pioneering new voices and artforms and a celebration of artistic collaboration that continues throughout the year.

We support access to the arts for everyone and have an extensive learning and participation programme of talks, workshops and events to introduce and develop engagement and interest in the heritage of our buildings and all areas of live performance.

We are a registered Scottish charity (SCO18605) and our theatres and our programme are supported by the City of Edinburgh Council.

[www.capitaltheatres.com](http://www.capitaltheatres.com)



### **About Bennetts Associates**

Bennetts Associates is one of the UK's leading architectural practices, with a reputation for design quality, sustainability and a collaborative style of work. The practice has completed a diverse portfolio of cultural, workplace and education projects in both the public and private sector, ranging from masterplans to small historic buildings that have been celebrated with more than 150 awards over 30 years. Bennetts Associates is an employee-owned trust of 80 people with studios in London, Edinburgh and Manchester.

The firm is responsible for many prominent projects such as the New Street Square development in the City of London, PowerGen and London Borough of Camden HQ, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Transformation and Storyhouse in Chester. Bennetts Associates is currently working on Facebook's London HQ, the Design and Engineering HQ for Jaguar Land Rover, the Royal College of Pathologists' London HQ and the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Futures Institute.

[bennettsassociates.com](http://bennettsassociates.com) / Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn: @BennettsAssocs

### **About Theatreplan**

Theatreplan is a global theatre design, and technical theatre consultancy, helping clients create award-winning spaces for performance, around the world. The company was established over 30 years ago by one of the world's first, and leading theatre consultants, Richard Brett, whose legacy continues to guide the company's commitment to excellence. Theatreplan offers a wide range of consultancy services including, the design of new theatres; technical consultancy services in lighting, sounds, AV and stage engineering; heritage restorations, and upgrades at some of the world's leading performance venues. Current clients include, Glasgow Citizens Theatre, Sydney Opera House and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The company has recently rebranded, to create a contemporary look that reflects its pioneering approach to design, the strength and depth of expertise within its team, its commitment to client engagement and its reputation for innovation and quality. Its new website, [www.theatreplan.com](http://www.theatreplan.com) has just been launched.