

24/09/2018**Bennetts Associates wins planning for significant extension of Shaftesbury Theatre**

Bennetts Associates has secured planning and listed building consent for the second phase of the Shaftesbury Theatre renovation. The proposal includes the redevelopment of public spaces around the Grade II listed theatre and the transformation of its foyers and bars opening out onto, and extending beneath, the newly pedestrianised Princes Circus and transforming the setting of the historic theatre.

The project follows Bennetts Associates' previous work on Shaftesbury Theatre in 2016, an exceptional refurbishment of the fly tower which received multiple awards including the RIBA National Award in 2018. The second phase of the transformation project will secure the theatre's long-term future as an important venue in London's theatreland district. Working in collaboration with the London Borough of Camden's ambitious Princes Circus re-development, the masterplan will also help integrate the restored theatre with the public realm.

The new plans for Shaftesbury Theatre involves the creation of a brand new foyer space below ground serving the basement-level stalls, and the extension and refurbishment of the current ground and upper-level bars. The pedestrianised external space will also enable the creation of a landscaped spill-out area. In addition, the theatre's historic auditorium will be restored following new research on its original finishes and appearance.

The design by Bennetts Associates focuses on improving accessibility and modernising the theatre's facilities. The project will increase foyer spaces by 200sq m and add 16 WCs as well as create step-free access to the stalls level for the first time in the theatre's 106-year history.

Simon Erridge from Bennetts Associates said:

"The West End's venues must continue to adapt to the needs of contemporary audiences and The Shaftesbury Theatre is an exemplar of this thinking. This innovative scheme shows how joined-up thinking between the public and private sectors can result in better, more accessible and more welcoming spaces both inside and outside our historic theatres."

James Williams, Chief Executive, The Shaftesbury Theatre, said:

"Shaftesbury Theatre is thrilled that the shared vision between Bennetts Associates and itself has been recognised by Camden council in the granting of planning permission. These additions to our beautiful building will make it an iconic theatre in the 21st Century."

END**Note to editors**

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About Bennetts Associates

Bennetts Associates is one of the UK's leading architectural practices, with more than 150 awards for a wide variety of projects. The firm's ethos is based on architecture that is timeless, humane and elegant. Its work is always meticulously executed and has pioneered long-term sustainability across many sectors.

Projects undertaken by the practice have ranged from around £1m to £200m, including new-build, refurbishment and restoration of listed buildings. Bennetts Associates is responsible for many prominent projects such as the recently opened Storyhouse in Chester, Hampstead Theatre, Edinburgh University's Potterrow Development, Jubilee Library in Brighton, the New Street Square Development in the City of London, the Gateway Buildings at St Antony's College in Oxford and the design of the Stirling Prize shortlisted transformation of the Grade II listed Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

In 2018, Bennetts Associates secured two RIBA National Awards for Storyhouse and Shaftsbury Theatre refurbishments, alongside a Civic Trust Award for Storyhouse; prior to these they won Practice of the Year as well as Small Project of the Year (up to £5m) for Shaftsbury Theatre at the Building Awards 2016.

Bennetts Associates is a founding member of the UKGBC and is especially well-regarded for its pioneering work on sustainability. The practice is involved in research, conferences and government committees associated with sustainability and the wider construction sector.

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