
Bennetts Associates

Places for People & Performance

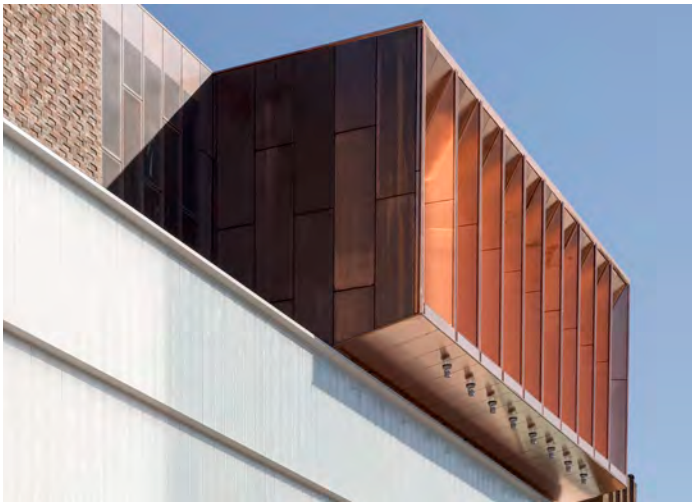
We are creating a new generation of public buildings which thrive on day-long social activity and aim to become focal points in their towns and cities.



At Bennetts Associates we want to create a future where people are empowered by the built environment and feel better connected to each other.

We engage with people in every aspect of what we do, creating buildings, places and spaces which encourage social activity and a sense of belonging.

We are creating a new generation of public buildings which thrive on day-long social activity and aim to become focal points in their towns and cities..



“One of the most exciting projects in England at the moment... A powerful, modern, forward-thinking vision.”

Sir Peter Bazalgette
Executive Chairman, ITV

Project Details

Chester	Cheshire West and Cheshire Council	7,000m ²	£37 million	2017
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion

Carbon Data

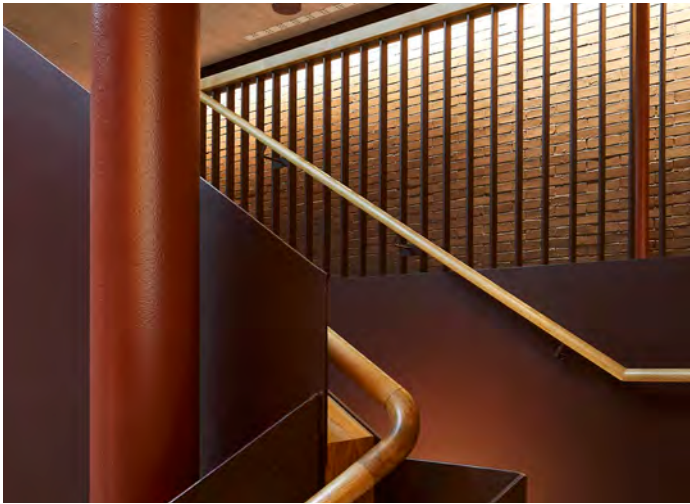
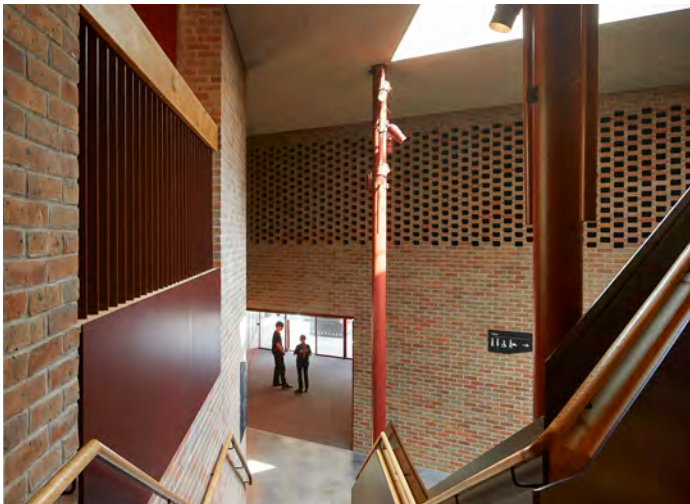
<1000 kgCO₂e/m²
Upfront Carbon (A1-A5)
Total

A cultural hub that has redefined a city centre and offers an alluring model for the integration of civic and cultural services.

Located in heart of Chester’s historic centre, Storyhouse provides the city with a much-needed new home for drama, film and literature, curated under the over-arching theme of storytelling.

The £37m building incorporates an 800-seat main auditorium, a studio theatre, a cinema, a brand-new city-centre library and a café. The site includes a Grade II listed cinema, formerly an Odeon dating from 1936. Cheshire West and Chester Council hope to achieve a unique city-centre building with 18-hour a day activity.

The concept for the building places the technically complex new auditorium and flytower outside the existing Odeon, allowing the cinema’s striking Art Deco interior to be restored and used to house the foyer, studio and library. The prominent brick exterior of the historic Odeon retains its landmark status in Chester’s townscape and continues to mark one of the major entrances to the site.



“The theatre has become a cultural and social hub for the town and this project will build on that position, ensuring that it remains exciting and relevant for its growing audience.”

Eric Buckmaster
Executive member for wellbeing, East Hertfordshire Council

Project Details

Hertford Location	East Hertfordshire Council Client	3,228 m ² Area	£19.9 million Value	2023 Completion
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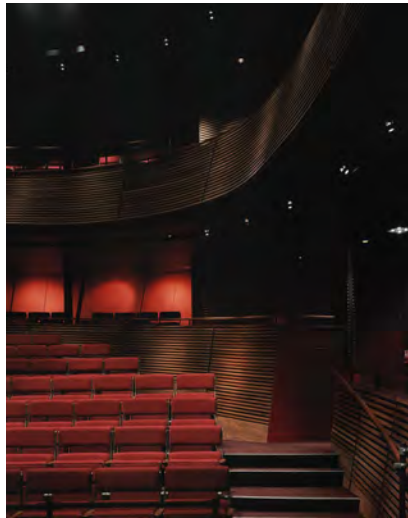
Carbon Data

602 kgCO ₂ e/m ² Upfront Carbon (A1-A5) Total	-165 kgCO ₂ e/m ² Sequestered Carbon
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We are working with Hertford Theatre and Citizens Design Bureau to create transformed all-day foyers incorporating events spaces, catering and three cinema screens. The foyer spaces are to be co-ordinated with a wider approach to the public realm which includes the surrounding streets and riverside. These in turn are part of a larger urban design strategy for Hertford.

As the major cultural hub for East Hertfordshire, Hertford Theatre is building on its success by adding new cinema screens and increasing its capacity for live events and all-day activities. Located in the historic town of Hertford, the site lies between the River Lea and remains of the town’s medieval castle. The context of small-scale historic buildings and the grain of the town’s streetscape led to a design which houses the theatre and cinema spaces in five distinct blocks, their pitched roofs and textured brick walls pushed together tightly to fit within the site boundary. The existing main theatre space and its distinctive ‘malthouse’ fly-tower are retained and anchor the whole composition. The new foyers have extensive views of the River Lea a new walkway will allow visitors to explore the river edge and the historic motte of the medieval castle.

The theatre space is completely remodelled internally, reraking the stalls adding a balcony to increase the capacity from 400 to 550. The room is designed so that theatre and cinema can both be enjoyed in comfort. The 200 additional cinema seats are divided into three screens, allowing first-run cinema to be programmed, and a 150seat studio provides a second flexible live performance and cinema space. Sustainability is an important factor in the design, and has influenced both the choice of construction materials and the energy strategy for the building. Cross-laminated timber is extensively used in the superstructure and the all-electric heating and cooling strategy utilises air-source heat pumps. The project is targeting a BREEAM Excellent rating.



“The audience experience at Hampstead Theatre has been completely transformed. We are delighted to have collaborated with Bennetts once again to create a truly exciting, world-class space.”

Neil Morris
Associate Producer, Hampstead Theatre

Project Details

Swiss Cottage, London	Hampstead Theatre Foundation	3,500 m ² Area	£10 million (2003) Value	2003, 2016, 2019 Completion
Location	Client			

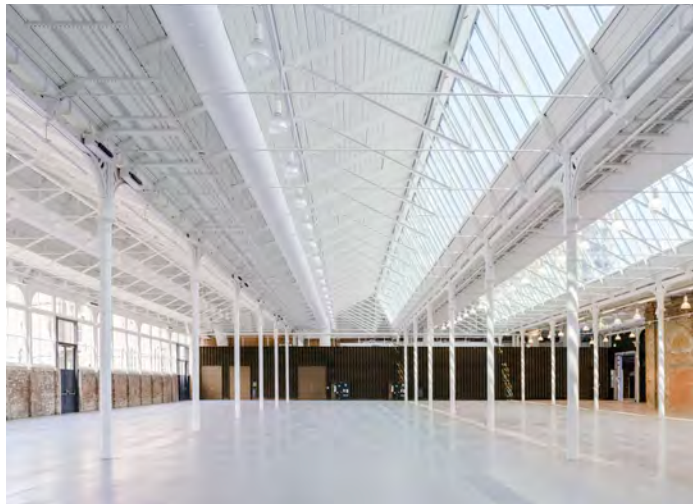
Hampstead Theatre was Bennetts Associates’ first cultural project and has been enjoyed by thousands of visitors since it first opened in 2003.

We have overseen the evolution of the building in line with changing business demands and visitor expectations to maintain its position as a successful all-day venue which hosts sell-out productions in its two performance spaces.

The original RIBA Award-winning building was designed to support Hampstead Theatre’s continuing tradition of fostering new writing, with a flexible stage and a compact auditorium that can adapt to each play and production. Hampstead Theatre was also the catalyst for a major reworking of the whole Swiss Cottage site in north-west London and the subsequent masterplan was initiated by Bennetts Associates.

The building’s sculptural form expresses the volume of the auditorium and stage rising out of a rectangle of ancillary accommodation. A large basement prevents the building from dominating the site. The auditorium’s shallow ellipse accommodates various sizes of audience and stage format while maintaining the feel of a complete ‘room’. Flexible education and production workshops facilitate the client’s work commissioning and staging new plays.

In 2014, our practice was invited to revisit the theatre to masterplan changes to the foyer and daytime visitor experience. The foyer was transformed in the summer of 2016, followed by the refurbishment and extension of the main auditorium in the summer of 2019. The recent foyer and auditorium projects were carried out in six-week dark periods over the summer, they have resulted in an increase in the number of daytime visitors, increased spend and bar sales, and 40 additional seats in the main auditorium.



Woolwich Works

Culture

“This is an incredibly exciting vision. It’s about putting Woolwich and the borough firmly on the map as a leading cultural destination.”

Miranda Williams
Cabinet Member for Culture and Creative Industries

Project Details

Woolwich, London Location	The Royal Borough of Greenwich Client	16,600 m ² Area	£31 million Value	2021 Completion
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Carbon Data

<290 kgCO₂e/m²
Upfront Carbon (A1-A5)
Total

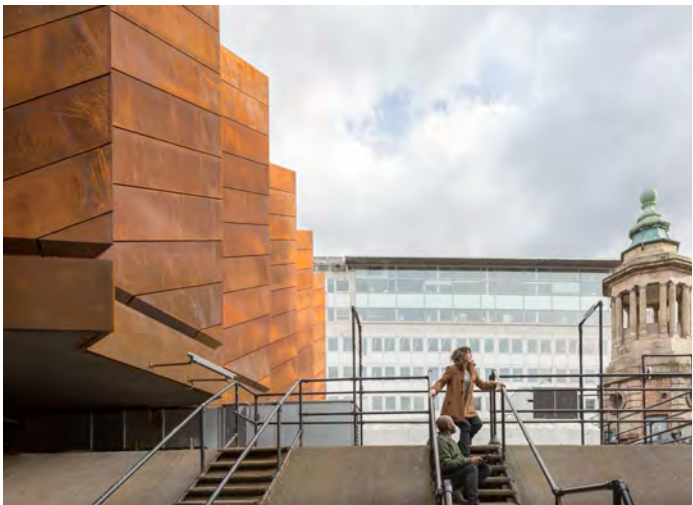
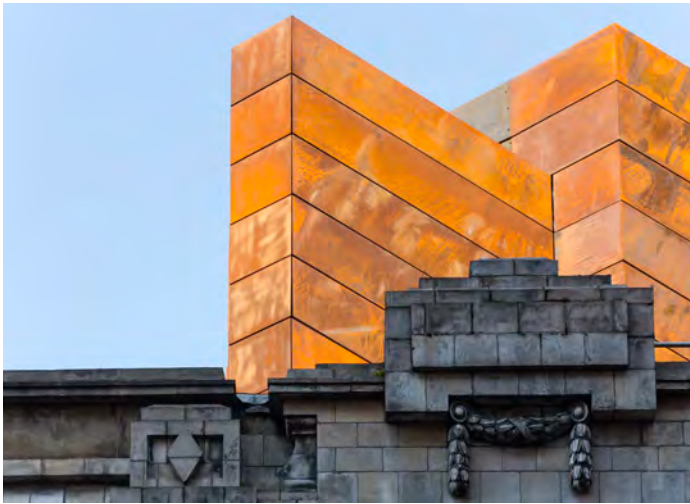
Carved out of five historic military buildings, Woolwich Works is a new cultural destination in London located in the royal Arsenal. The predominantly unused Grade II and II* listed buildings have been converted to a 16,500-square-metre creative hub for multiple cultural occupiers, led by The Royal Borough of Greenwich.

The new Woolwich Works now includes a 450-seat theatre, a music venue, a museum and a variety of rehearsal studios, as well as providing a base for a number of internationally acclaimed theatre and dance companies including Punchdrunk.

Working closely with the client throughout the design process, the project team helped identify the types of uses and tenants that would work well with the existing buildings, rather than undertaking significant works to the buildings to accommodate the requirements of less naturally aligned uses. This considered approach was complemented across all design disciplines.

The centrepiece of the project is “Building 41”, which comprises an impressive performance space with capacity for 1200 seated or 1800 standing, an external

courtyard and three smaller wings accommodating five studios, which can also be used for performance and rehearsal space creating flexibility for the venue. A café, bar and a further river-facing events space can be hired by community groups and the public, meaning Woolwich Works is truly flexible in how it can be used and the performances it can host.



“These additions to our beautiful building will make it an iconic theatre in the 21st Century.”

James Williams
Chief Executive, The Shaftesbury Theatre

Project Details

London	Shaftesbury Theatre / The Theatre of Comedy Company	342 m ²	£5 million (Phase 1), £10 million (Phase 2)	2016 (Phase 1)
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion

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. The innovative flytower extension is being followed by a second phase creating larger and more welcoming spaces both inside and outside the historic theatre.

A dramatic new flytower has appeared on the skyline of London’s West End. The project entailed building a 35-tonne capacity flytower plus offices and plant on top of an existing theatre that had to remain operational at all times. The tight deadline was the opening of the blockbuster show, Motown, in March 2016.

Shaftesbury Theatre is a prominent listed building with an ornate terracotta façade. The serrated shape of the flytower box forms a dramatic angular volume on the skyline and is fabricated from panels of weathering steel, complementing both the terracotta and the adjoining building’s faience and brickwork.

The front-of house transformation is part of the second phase of the project and involves the creation of a brand new foyer space below ground which serves the basement-level stalls, in addition, the current ground and upper-level bars are extended and refurbished, and external pedestrianisation creates spill-out space. A feature stair and a basement box is introduced and all audience and staff facilities, as well as the auditorium will be reinvigorated.



“We aim to be the most exciting and adventurous theatre-producing building in Scotland - a creative, activity-packed organisation where artists and audiences can come together to be entertained, challenged and inspired..”

Dominic Hill, Artistic Director, Citizens Theatre

Project Details

Glasgow	Citizens Theatre	7,700 m²	£14.5 million	2024
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion

Carbon Data

<641 kgCO₂e/m²
Upfront Carbon (A1-A5)
Total

The transformation of the ‘Citz’ will create a welcoming series of public spaces which will be flexible, sociable and barrier-free.

The theatre’s listed 1880 auditorium and stage are also being refurbished and made fully accessible for the first time.

A dramatic series of foyer spaces will replace the theatre’s lacklustre 1980s frontage on Gorbals Street. Audiences will enter the auditorium through its iconic stone gable and upper galleries will connect with new spaces for studio theatre, rehearsal, learning and administration.

Actors’ facilities, backstage areas and construction workshops will be improved through reorganisation and refurbishment, whilst public access will extend further into the building where the public can see the inner workings of the theatre and its heritage: the historic understage machinery and paint frame, the scenery and wardrobe departments.



“To excel in the arts requires technical skill and creative vision teamed with humour, warmth and personality. Bennetts deliver on both aspects: a class act and the right choice for any cultural institution looking for the best.”

Kate Varah
Executive Director, The Old Vic Theatre

Project Details

London	The Old Vic Theatre	4,000 m ²	£1.8 million	2019
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion



Continuing Bennetts Associates’ work at The Old Vic in an association that stretches back to 2012, the project is the first major phase to be undertaken as part of a wider redevelopment of the 200 year old theatre.

The transformation aims to create more welcoming environment for patrons and safe-guard the long-term future of this historic theatre.

Working with Interior Designer Rebecca Richwhite, the new bar spaces and WCs revitalise the front of house experience and create an all-day destination. Carefully selected materials explore texture and colour through the use of tactile elements such as Clayworks textured wall and ceiling finishes and exposed mild steel, along with theatrical touches by Old Vic Associate Artist Rob Howell and Lighting Designer Hugh Vanstone.



The scheme improved accessibility and the much maligned WC provision in a complete transformation of front of house spaces. A new main entrance from Waterloo Road with new stair and lift serving the basement and ground floor was inserted into the Grade II* listed theatre by relocating the rear wall of the auditorium. This created a more spacious foyer and box office that is accessible for the first time, in addition to providing new wheelchair access into the re-raked stalls.



The King's Theatre

Culture

“Their combination of creative design thinking, technical knowhow and easy communications, both in leading the design team and with a broad range of stakeholders is helping to chart a course”

Brian Loudon
Director of Operations, Capital Theatres

Project Details

Edinburgh	Capital Theatres	4,740 m ²	£29 million	Expected 2025
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion

Carbon Data

562 kgCO₂e/m²
Upfront Carbon (A1-A5)
Total

The King's Theatre first opened in 1906 and welcomed over 200,000 visitors each year. The owner, Capital Theatres, has recognised the need to update the muchloved building to reflect the expectations of today's productions and audiences. Bennetts Associates was asked to revitalise the King's whilst safeguarding its reputation and improving its sustainability credentials.

The project is on site and set for completion in 2024. Many spaces will be open to the public for the first time. A new flytower and technical infrastructure will extend the artistic programme.

Operational carbon savings will be made by upgrading plant, equipment and controls systems, and embodied carbon has been the subject of detailed scrutiny through the design process. The total upfront embodied carbon emissions of the project are forecast at 508KgCO₂ e/m², and the project has been included in a research project with the aim of benchmarking upfront embodied carbon in the theatre sector. The design makes optimum use of the spaces inside the original 1906 building and sensitively adapts what already exists. The revitalised heritage spaces will be complemented by two new bars, a learning and participation studio, new stairs and lifts and a new box office. The inclusive and inviting destination will draw locals and new visitors in to appreciate the performing arts while the new street café on the ground floor will generate an all-day buzz throughout the building. The theatre's circulation routes will be radically improved for ease of navigation and access democratised throughout.



“A pair of Shakespearean theatres linked together with a weave of empathetic new architecture, creating a convincing and effective whole.”

Jonathan Glancey
The Guardian

Project Details

Stratford-upon-Avon	Royal Shakespeare Company	13,000 m ²	£60 million	2010
Location	Client	Area	Value	Completion



The transformation of the Grade II* listed home of Shakespearean theatre was won through an international competition and opened in November 2010.

At its heart, a new 1000-seat thrust-stage auditorium has revolutionised the way audiences experience live theatre. Its public spaces are accessible and welcoming, and its relationship with the town of Stratford-upon-Avon has been reinvigorated by the creation of the tower, new external spaces and routes. The design has sensitively incorporated the most significant remains of the earlier theatres which stood on the site and retained their character.

The project also provides multi-purpose workshop/ admin space within the existing Royal Shakespeare Company campus. A sequence of routes and vistas will eventually connect the new square to the heart of the campus and New Place Gardens beyond. The creation of squares, routes, public spaces and a new landmark means that this is as much about the public realm as it is about a new auditorium for the performance of Shakespeare.

On the urban side of the building a glazed colonnade allows the two theatres to be connected for the first time and a lift/stair tower forms a 33m high viewing gallery. Together with the existing picture gallery, the tower and the colonnade define a new public square that acts as a gathering point and a venue for external performance.

“Time and again Bennetts has combined architectural excellence with laudable sustainability credentials and fantastic delivery.”

Tom Broughton
Brand Director, Building Awards

Our Theatre Clients

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Action Transport Theatre
Ambassadors Theatre Group (ATG)
Buxton Opera House
Canford School
Capital Theatres
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Citizens Theatre
Dash Arts
Deda Arts
Delfont Macintosh
English National Opera
Gravesham Borough Council
Hampstead Theatre
Hertford Theatre
Really Useful Theatres
Royal Borough of Greenwich
Royal Shakespeare Company
Shaftesbury Theatre
The Old Vic
The Theatre of Comedy Company
University of Derby
University of Leicester

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