

King's Theatre, Edinburgh

Heritage Interpretation Design and Interpretation Plan Brief

1. Introduction and Background

Capital Theatres seeks to appoint a consultant to curate and create a conceptual design package and interpretation plan for the restoration of the King's Theatre, Edinburgh. They will work closely with the architectural design team, Archivist and Capital Theatres staff to create a plan that fulfils National Lottery Heritage Fund outcomes and Capital Theatres strategic vision.

The design package and Interpretation Plan will inform how the theatre's spaces, objects, archival collections and other resources can be best utilised in the newly redeveloped building, to create an informative, educational and enjoyable experience for visitors and audiences. It will identify the key themes and stories which the King's Theatre is able to interpret and set out in detail, with associated costs, how the main exhibition and public display areas will be used to do this.

The interpretation Plan will form part of Capital Theatre's stage two submission to National Lottery Heritage Fund. It will be developed in parallel to the building design development, delivery and development of the activity plan and the creation of the Theatre's archives. The interpretation plan will be expected to take account of the audiences outlined in the activity plan and develop plans appropriate to these groups. It will also take account of experience and advise of the three advisory groups set up through the project – an access panel, a junior panel and a community panel who's aim it is to influence strategic decision making of the project, ensuring plans are fit for purpose and meets the needs and aspirations of the groups we aim to engage and impact.

2. King's Theatre, Edinburgh

The Grade A listed King's Theatre opened in 1906 and stands on a prominent site in Edinburgh's Tollcross area. It is one of Scotland's oldest and most loved theatres. Some 200,000 audience members a year flock to the King's for a mix of high culture and popular entertainment. The King's is home to Scotland's biggest Panto production, the annual Gang Show and each year plays a pivotal role in hosting the Edinburgh International Festival.

This ambitious, £25 million redevelopment project will result in the repair, enhancement and expansion of one of Scotland's oldest working theatres. Through this project we will transform and optimise the King's theatre for the next 50 years. We will modernise the venue creating a transformed theatregoing experience whilst preserving and showcasing the heritage.

Capital works will include modernisation of front and back of house areas, making them suitable for 21st century audience and performer needs. Back stage will see current areas of risk addressed. Works will transform accessibility challenges throughout the building making it equitable for all users. A new street level café, bars, hospitality space and learning studio will be created. All redevelopment activities, through a conservation plan and management and maintenance plan, will ensure heritage is preserved and restored.

3. The Project

The redevelopment of the King's Theatre will completely transform the venue, optimising its potential as a visitor attraction and educational venue. Public spaces will be revolutionised to

engage visitors during the day, as well as pre-and post-performances. The new dedicated learning studio will provide rehearsal space and the capacity to host talks, events, seminars and workshops.

The redevelopment of the King's Theatre will deal with all of the major conservation issues that need to be addressed in order to preserve, protect and promote the heritage of the site and enable the development of heritage interpretation.

Opportunities to interpret the heritage and encourage public participation include: a visitor experience with interpretation of heritage throughout the venue, events, guided tours, digital collection and a family-friendly café. Each will use design interpretation to highlight the significance of the building, specific architectural features and the social and cultural heritage. In addition, there will be a programme of community and education activities to engage local people and schools in the heritage of the theatre.

Opening up the foyer, creation of new bars and a new hospitality space will provide an opportunity to deliver a changing exhibition programme throughout the year. The upper circle bar and foyer spaces will form the focal point of heritage interpretation. These areas will be staffed by the theatre's learning and participation team and volunteers. There may be opportunities for associated sales e.g. exhibition related material, postcards, guidebooks, memorabilia etc.

The project will offer guided tours of the building that we expect to be delivered in creative and inventive ways, that are flexible to respond to the variable day to day programme of performances, events and workshops happening elsewhere in the building. We would like the plans to consider different types of tour, offering different levels of engagement, from in-depth views into the backstage workings of the theatre a through to light touch, self-led, guides or maps, for adults and for children.

Partnerships with other heritage bodies will create a collection of archive materials relating to the King's theatre, pantomime, and theatrical performance. There may be opportunities, for example, to partner up with other former Howard and Wyndham theatres across the country for a broad-picture view of how H&W influenced theatre development in the early part of the 20th century.

Capital Theatre's own collection of archive materials and artefacts provides a fascinating opportunity to link the story of the King's with the bigger picture of entertainment in Edinburgh and beyond. Collections and stories will be drawn from:

People

The many and diverse 'people of the King's' provide wonderful source material; from the original founders, architects, designers and builders, to over a century of philanthropy, performers (professional and amateur), production creatives, stage crew, staff, managers, and the audiences themselves. In addition, celebrity is a huge draw and the King's can boast some of the biggest stars of stage and screen.

Panto

The King's opened in 1906 with a performance of Cinderella and there has been a pantomime almost every year since. It is now the most popular in Scotland. Pantomime is perhaps the most popular form of theatre in Scotland and is special in that it attracts a socially-diverse and multi-generational audience. Every year, 90,000 turn out to see colourful characters telling familiar stories with gallus local humour, magnificent costumes and a plentiful supply of song and dance.

Past and Place

The theatre has over 100 years of continuous creative operation. It attracts millions of visitors, many of whom still cherish fond memories: from being thrilled by the drama; entertained by the likes of the Five Past Eight Show, to multi-generational visits to the Panto experienced alongside the glamour, the beautiful architecture of the building and its sense of occasion. The story of the King's and its place in Tollcross (including its transport and industrial heritage), the local economy and community including the former brewery, the former Goldberg's department store and its social history needs to be captured as part of this redevelopment project and shared with the local community, visitors and audiences.

4. The Research and Design Brief

We require a consultant to work with the design team, theatre conservation specialist, project team, project archivist, staff and stakeholders. They will produce design proposals and an Interpretation Plan to involve more people in the heritage of the King's, in ways that meet their needs and interests. It will need to meet the objectives of the current National Lottery Heritage Fund Guidance and present the heritage story in exciting, innovative ways to reflect the King's Theatre's unique character.

We seek to engage a consultant who will research, design and implement a compelling, interactive heritage experience package. The consultant will use the visual material and emotional content of the theatre's history to engage visitors, audiences and participants. The consultant will engage with the organisation's advisory panels and consultation groups to test concepts and ideas, to reflect the full range of views of our visitors and audiences.

We require the consultant to work with the archivist to identify available archives and materials held by Capital Theatres and by other public bodies, alongside materials gathered for the People's Archive, to curate a heritage experience.

A design and interpretation approach will be required to create an innovative on-site experience, and a heritage interpretation package that:

- sets the theatrical scene for a non-traditional approach to 'exhibition' design
- is fully accessible and inclusive
- explores the theatre within the social history context of Edinburgh as a whole, from its original construction to the present day
- celebrates the built, social, industrial and cultural heritage of the theatre, and its community
- explores theatrical performance and production, from celebrity, glamour and magic to stage craft, theatre skills and careers
- engages core and new audiences, it should entertain as well as inform
- includes content that goes beyond paper archives to include diverse, colourful, 3D and 2D objects
- includes heritage interpretation which is multi-layered and multi-sensory to engage all ages, through hands-on interactivity and innovative use of digital technology
- ensures that the exhibitions and tour opportunities are prominent in the building

- ensures frontage, signage, interior design and 'attractor displays' creates a bright, open, welcoming feel
- offers a range of 'rewards' to visitors, individually and as a group including: play, learning, social interaction and reminiscence
- is developed with the whole audience in mind, with meaningful things for a three-year-old as well as a 73-year-old
- encourages 'mindful' exploration of the displays by creating exhibits that are intriguing, with surprises and items to keep people's interest. The heritage experience must present visitors with something magical, something where perhaps their sense of belief is suspended, and they become utterly absorbed in what they see, and hear, and touch.

5. Methodology

We require the following information to be submitted with your bid.

- Agency background, including relevant previous experience and staff allocated to this project
- Two examples of similar projects, with brief details and images where possible
- Details of how the tenderer intends to manage the project, including a project plan and timeline
- How the tenderer will approach the research and design interpretation, partnerships, audiences and achieve the required outputs
- Overall costs (including daily rates and VAT as applicable)
- Contact details (phone and email) for two references

All tender submissions will be evaluated to identify the consultant who will deliver best value - balancing quality and price, with a significant emphasis on the quality (Quality 70%: Price 30%).

6. Theatre Management & Operation

The King's Theatre is currently owned by the City of Edinburgh Council. The building is leased to Capital Theatres on a 25-year lease. It is a receiving house which with a year-round programme of visiting productions.

7. The Site

The theatre when redeveloped will be capable of seating circa 1,100 people. It will also provide:

- A dedicated rehearsal and learning studio
- A hospitality space
- A café at ground floor with level access from the street
- Foyers and bars at three levels – Stalls, Dress Circle and Upper Circle

8. Historic Context

In preparation for a round 1 Heritage Lottery Application we commissioned David Wilmore, a theatre heritage consultant to prepare a Conservation Statement, and commissioned an archive audit and report.

A key objective of the redevelopment project is to preserve and showcase the heritage of the Theatre for a wide range of people to engage with, learn and seek enjoyment from. The built heritage and the social and cultural heritage are rich and worth further research and interpretation.

9. Partnership for Delivery

Capital Theatres seeks to realise the potential of the King's Theatre as a unique heritage attraction within Edinburgh. We secured a Stage 1 pass from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in November 2019. We now require interpretation plans to be submitted as part of a Stage 2 submission in December 2020, all plans need to deliver against the Fund's strategic priorities and outcomes.

As one of the main funders of this project it is essential that the project assists with City of Edinburgh Council's key strategic objectives on culture and tourism.

The King's Theatre sits in the busy Tollcross area of the city. The regeneration of the theatre will act as a catalyst in boosting the local economy with restaurants, cafés and retail outlets.

The redevelopment of the King's Theatre will make this key cultural building a major partner for education and learning within the city by working with schools and the wider community on projects related to local history, cultural heritage and the theatre.

10. Project Team Co-ordination

The Interpretation Plan will be developed in parallel with the RIBA 3 and 4 architectural design phases of the project. The appointed consultants will work closely with the Design Team to ensure that the interpretation proposals are both pragmatic and deliverable within the overall architectural proposals. Co-ordination between the disciplines is critical.

The Interpretation Plan will be created in parallel with a complementary Activity Plan and therefore will take account of the audiences identified by the Activity Plan. The appointed consultant will be expected to work alongside Capital Theatres Learning and Participation team and the Learning Plan Consultant in their development and delivery of the Activity Plan. The appointed consultant will be expected to work with the volunteers, advisory panels and members of the community.

The appointed consultant will be expected to work alongside a consultant archivist, and team of volunteers to identify and source archive items.

The current architectural proposals have been developed by Bennetts Associates Architects to RIBA Stage 2.

The appointed consultants will be required to report to the Director of Operations and liaise with the other consultants' team(s) and Capital Theatres staff in order to ensure that all proposals and

strategies are consistent and coherent. The appointed consultant will be responsible for the delivery of the interpretation plan.

11. Meeting Audience Needs

The exhibition design needs to embrace a number of visitor focused elements including:

- Community participation – Local performance groups etc
- Opportunities for volunteering within the Theatre
- Working with young people – school visits, higher education students
- Integrating the needs of people with disabilities in all aspects of the project

The main visitor categories for consideration are:

- *Families* — children accompanied by adults; age ranges of children
- *Education (Schools, Lifelong learners)* — pupils, teachers, parent helpers and lifelong learners
- *Independent adults* — non-specialist adults who primarily visit as couples (not special interest enthusiasts). With sub-categories: younger (20's and 30's)
- *Older (50+)* - It should be remembered that there has been, and will continue to be, significant growth in this age group, and that these are people with leisure time who enjoy cultural experiences and tend to value our heritage and the past. This age group is particularly important as they remember the “Glory days” of the King's when they were youthful. How can we make our displays dementia friendly, can we present stories to encourage reminiscence, or use music to trigger memories.
- *Theatre goers and insiders* – King's attenders, Festival Theatre attenders, supporters, performing companies, staff, amateur dramatic performers
- *Arts / Heritage enthusiasts* – members, donors, volunteers, staff of partner heritage and arts organisations e.g. National Museums of Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Heritage Volunteer Organisers Scotland
- *Day visitors and tourists* – those within an hour drive time who might pop in but whose prime motivation for visiting Edinburgh is other than the theatre e.g. visit with family or friends or for a specific event, or both UK and international tourists who might be motivated to explore where they are visiting, or have personal links to the city

12. Outputs

The main outputs will be;

1. a detailed and costed Interpretation Plan which identifies and describes the themes and stories that the King's Theatre will interpret in order to meet its objectives and achieve outcomes set out within our stage 1 application to National Lottery Heritage Fund.
2. a design scheme proposal, and associated costs for public display/exhibition spaces, artefacts and materials within the proposed redeveloped building. You will need to work with the design team and attend meetings as necessary.
3. managing the delivery of the Interpretation plan during the delivery phase of the project. You will work the project manager, design team and Director of Operations to ensure timely, and in budget completion.

There are a number of additional outputs that will emerge and be refined as the project develops. Some of the contributory elements are expected to include:

- General site and exhibition interpretation, including interactive, sensory, visual impact, hands-on and digital exhibits, digital recreations, self-led resources
- Materials to support the delivery of community and educational activities
- External signage and streetscape
- Entrance and friendly welcome
- Sponsor acknowledgement and recognition
- Site map and orientation awareness
- Labelling - digital labels, audio-visual text labels, warning label
- Images, photography, film and public art
- Digital interfaces delivered on built-in screens, in apps or online using visitors own mobile technology
- Utilisation of visitors' own mobile technology to reduce hardware costs and maintenance
- Accessibility signage
- Visitor feedback
- The learning space and needs: briefing rooms, school resources etc.
- Specific audience needs- special needs groups
- Specific exhibits needs – historic sound and lighting equipment
- Extra theatrical props to extend the length of a visit
- Literature and materials - Integration with main events literature, online publications, guide book, postcards – historic and present
- Digitalisation of archive materials and a web presence

13. Fee Proposal

This is a two-part contract, dependant on a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund stage 2 pass. A budget of £15,000 has been allowed, excluding VAT, for consultant fees and activities for work delivered during the Development stage. A subsequent £10,000 has been allowed, excluding VAT for the implementation and delivery of the plan (excluding fit out costs). The package of work for the Delivery phase of the project will be confirmed upon a success stage 2 submission from National Lottery Heritage Fund, June 2021.

An additional £93,000 has been allowed for digital screens, display units, cases and information panels.

The consultants should provide a two-part fee proposal for the work to be delivered during the Development Phase and the Delivery Phase of the project. The fee proposal should also include any additional sub-consultancy fees deemed necessary by the consultants. It should be fully inclusive of all expenses.

It should be noted that all information, drawings, reports etc. produced will become and remain the copyright of the Client.

The consultants should also allow to fully cost and work with the appointed Cost Management consultants in the Design Team to provide all the necessary financial information as may be required to submit the full Round Two bid to Heritage Lottery Fund.

14. Timescales

Our intention is to submit a Round Two Heritage Grants application in December 2020. The planned construction programme is 20 months and will commence, subject to all funds and approvals being in place, in September 2021 and completed by May 2023.

We require the Interpretation Plan and Exhibition Design Proposals by November 2020 so that we have time to integrate into our Round Two submission.

Issue Brief	-	13 January 2020
Tenders returned	-	6 th February 2020 5pm
Interviews	-	17 th February 2020
Kick off meeting	-	26 th February 2020
Draft plan and costs	-	July 2020
Final plan	-	November 2020

15. Reporting

The consultant will report to Brian Loudon, Director of Operations, Festival Theatre, 13/29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9FT

16. Tender returns

Tender submissions should be returned to: Brian Loudon, Director of Operations, Festival Theatre, 13/29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9FT

The tender return date is Thursday 6th February at 5pm.