



Managed by Nuneaton Arts Council

New Build Proposals

CONFIDENTIAL

Rev 5 January 2015

BRIEF:

Following discussions with representatives from Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) members of the Nuneaton Arts Council (NAC) were advised that under the new town planning project, there is a proposal that a new performance venue be built within the area to the east of the town centre. The suggested location for this new venue is the current Midland Red bus station.

Further to this, NBBC stated that they would be expecting the NAC to have involvement throughout the consultation, planning and execution of any new build, as well as responsibility upon completion for the management of the new complex.

As a result of this proposal, the NAC were asked by NBBC to prepare a statement of requirements for submission to the authority.

This document aims to fulfill that request for information as well as give some background to support key items on the requirements.

In addition to the practical aspects of a new performing arts based complex, the NAC also considered several key aesthetic and philosophical criteria. In short, the town of Nuneaton needs more than just a theatre.

- The days of single arts use are gone.
- There is a definite need for a multi arts complex.
- But this does NOT mean that one space fits all needs.
- The new building MUST be fit for the 21st century.
- Architecture and the use of the complex must be forward thinking and not backward looking.
- Location, location, location – it is essential that the new facility is central to the town (within the inner ring road) and mainstream amenities must support this.
- Today's theatre is not nostalgia – it is contemporary and cutting edge. The new facilities must not just allow for this but actively encourage it.
- The catchment area for the town is growing, as evidenced by the increase in bookings at the Abbey from surrounding counties.
- The new facility would improve both daytime and evening opportunities for leisure and entertainment which in turn supports the economic development and improvement of the town in general.

This is a unique opportunity for Nuneaton to create not only a new theatre, but a state of the art complex which can absolutely 'fly the flag' for the town and the borough. The existing Abbey Theatre has attracted users and audience from an increasingly wide catchment area, extending from Leicestershire to Staffordshire, Coventry and Birmingham. There is every chance that the new venue can extend that reach further bringing more people into the town.

WCAVA CONCLUSIONS:

As part of the original brief, WCAVA have prepared a Community Stakeholder Report, and from this document, their strategic priorities were identified as:

1. Social, Leisure and Entertainment
2. Older People – more provision for the mature members of the town and visitors
3. Children and Young People – family accessible activities, etc
4. Education – Working together with local schools/colleges and also independent provision for learning
5. Financial Inclusion – Making the arts available to all
6. Health Inequalities – Access to the arts regardless of ability or disability
7. Job Creation – Both as part of the new venue management and other local businesses who would support it
8. Community Safety – Making the town centre in particular a more secure and visitor friendly area.

GENERAL SCOPE OF FACILITIES:

The following comprises a list of facilities that the NAC deems either necessary or desirable within the new performance venue complex.

- Main Theatre and Auditorium
- Full Backstage Facilities
- Second Performance Area – studio theatre
- Third Performance Area – Lecture Hall style
- Dedicated dressing rooms to both performance spaces
- 150 to 200 seat cinema/conference/lecture hall.
- Rehearsal Spaces
- Dance Studios
- Storage Areas/Workshops – for costume, properties, scenery.
- Music Rehearsal Spaces
- Visual Arts studio(s)
- Accessible Gallery Space(s) about the venue
- Recording Facilities
- Video editing suites.
- Main Foyer incorporating bar/café facilities etc.
- Quality restaurant/bistro facilities
- BFI Film Booths

In addition to the artistic side of the new building, we need to incorporate:

- .Educational Suites
- Corporate/Conference Facilities and meeting rooms.
- Administration
- Third Party Office Space
- First Aid
- Disabled Access.
- Adequate parking.
- Possibility of small number of retail outlets to compliment the complex.

MAIN THEATRE & AUDITORIUM:

Theatre seating capacity of approx 400.

Seating split into approx 250 in stalls seating, 150 on circle seating.

Adequate provision for and access by customers and users with physical disabilities.

Stage (working) area approx 10m width, 12m depth with proscenium arch set at approx 5.5m.

Wing space each side of stage of approx 7.5m by 12m.

Full fly tower with 35-40 counterweight flying lines.

Full width orchestra pit to front of stage, extending beneath to accommodate players in comfort.

Access from stage to all technical areas and dressing rooms.

FULL BACKSTAGE FACILITIES.

Scenery dock and workshop to one side of stage to approx size 10m by 14m, to incorporate scenic storage and building/painting space. Adequate technical facilities to accommodate such work. Easy access to the scene dock for up to 40 foot articulated lorries when delivering scenery.

Technical workshop of approx 8m by 6m to include appropriate wood and metal working tools to provide for the maintenance of items within the complex as well as fabrication of scenic materials.

Crew Room for the use by technical crew during theatre work or performances, equipped with appropriate facilities for basic snack preparation/heating and hot drinks etc.

Green Room for the use by performers during performances/rehearsals, equipped with appropriate facilities for basic snack preparation/heating and hot drinks etc.

SECOND PERFORMANCE AREA – STUDIO THEATRE.

Black box performance space to accommodate smaller events – seating capacity 120 to 150.

Flexible layout to allow productions in proscenium, thrust or in-the-round.

Seating solution to be mobile and retractable with seats forming part of the retraction, allowing for speedy setup of auditorium configurations.

Studio to have flexible rigging superstructure and electrical (lighting and sound) infrastructure to accommodate differing styles of production needs.

The studio would also be usable as an additional rehearsal space when not taken by performances.

THIRD PERFORMANCE AREA – LECTURE HALL

A multi-purpose space set out as a small lecture hall but with the infrastructure provided to cater to cinema showings, small music groups/bands, comedy nights as well as corporate presentations.

Seating capacity up to approx 200.

DRESSING ROOMS.

Both performance spaces to have dedicated dressing rooms, with full facilities as required, including cast toilets and some shower rooms en suite to principal rooms (with disabled as integral option).

Main theatre – 4 small ‘principal’ rooms plus at least 2 or 3 larger rooms to accommodate larger chorus casts – eg dance schools with segregation partition options within each.

Studio theatre – 3 or 4 small dressing rooms to accommodate expected smaller cast numbers.

REHEARSAL SPACES.

Two rehearsal spaces with floor area similar to the working space on main stage, with fully sprung wooden floor.

One or two additional smaller rooms to cater for groups wishing to rehearse or hold meetings in a more intimate space.

DANCE STUDIOS.

Two or three fully equipped dance studios including master studio with balcony (which can also be utilized as a performance space) to 2 or 3 sides to allow overview of large group dance numbers. Facilities to include PA for music reproduction, floor to ceiling mirrors and ballet barre as standard. Also separate toilet and changing facilities within dance studio section. Studios to incorporate drop-off/waiting area and office space.

Master studio area approx 20m x 10m, secondary studios 17m x 8m

STORAGE AREAS.

Located with easy access from stage/studio, storage spaces for lighting inventory, sound equipment, costume, properties and scenery items.

Also well equipped and functional workshop spaces for build/repair of stage scenery/properties as well as general maintenance.

MUSIC REHEARSAL SPACES.

2 or 3 small rehearsal rooms, with basic facilities for small bands to rehearse. Rooms to have full sound insulation to adjacent spaces.

1 large rehearsal space for groups of musicians to practice in preparation for performances, concerts etc. Suggested capacity of 20 to 25 musicians, seated, including adequate provision for larger instruments such as percussion etc.

RECORDING FACILITIES.

Located adjacent to the large rehearsal room above, with soundproof window looking onto same, this studio would be equipped with quality audio recording, processing and reproduction equipment to allow for the recording of any groups ranging from small bands to full orchestras.

Recording facilities can be made portable for use either within different areas of the building or on external projects away from the venue.

VISUAL ARTS FACILITIES AND GALLERY SPACE

Studio space for local artists and visual arts organizations to produce, frame and display internally to the venue, plus gallery display options about the venue as a whole for locally produced and visiting art works in 2 and 3 dimensions.

VIDEO EDITING SUITES.

Available as part of both the educational provision for the complex as well as supporting any of the groups using the venue, the suites could be used to either edit events that have been recorded, or to prepare visual aspects of performances in any of the spaces available. This might also benefit elements of the corporate options on offer.

MAIN FOYER.

Large open space foyer to serve ideally performance spaces – incorporated within the foyer would be licensed and café bar service areas, which would be open each day and evening for general public use as well as those attending events.

It is envisaged that the foyer space would be multi-levelled to serve the various facilities within the complex.

Small performance staging area to accommodate interval/post-show entertainment and/or general bar entertainment on non-production dates.

Facilities to display both 2D and 3D visual arts from within the borough and elsewhere.

Also within main foyer, box office and public information centre. One or both of these may be managed by outside agency.

RESTAURANT/BISTRO.

Restaurant to seat approx 30 to 40 or so to serve all day as well as pre-show and post-show meals. Suggested location on 1st floor, with views onto theatre concourse/foyer or to landscaped exterior.

Bistro to be accessed from main foyer serving bar meal type menu. Open daily and into early evening to cater not only for theatre visitors but also to encourage passing trade into the complex.

CORPORATE/CONFERENCE.

Many of the rehearsal and meeting spaces as well as the performance areas could be made available to corporate users during the working day, either for conference style events or meetings etc.

RETAIL OUTLETS.

Small retail outlets might be incorporated into the main ground floor foyer space as long as they compliment the facilities. However, it is not envisaged (nor desirable) that the space become a shopping mall.

ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICE SPACE

Office space for the administration of the venue as a whole, plus other aspects of the complex such as bar/restaurant management.

Opportunities for providing office/admin facilities for local third party arts organizations – voluntary/charitable/artistic start-ups etc.

FIRST AID.

With a complex of the size proposed, it would make sense to incorporate a first aid room available to key first aid trained staff and volunteers.

DISABLED ACCESS.

Statutory regulations will of course be adhered to in all areas, with ramp access where appropriate and public lifts to upper floors in key locations, including backstage.

PARKING.

For day to day use, it is envisaged that adequate parking on site for staff members and volunteers is essential. This may be in an open staff car park with access control in place for authorized users, or possibly even an underground parking facility, again with access control.

For general public, as well as large cast parking needs, access to a full sized public car park in easy walking distance is paramount. Following the example of other theatres (both volunteer run and professional) we see the benefits of being able to offer either free or discounted parking tickets to theatre patrons.

CONSULTATION:

Once the initial brief outline of the proposed new venue is accepted, the NAC will aim to consult, in conjunction with the developers and local authorities, with a number of specific design consultants.

These will include (but not exclusively):

- Theatre design architects/consultants
- Acoustic design consultants
- Technical theatre consultants

As well as professional consultation, time must be given to all of the potential users of the complex, both current and future, to comment on the proposals and facilities.

Members of the NAC will seek also to tour a variety of venues, both professional and amateur, to assess others' strengths/weaknesses in order that we might exploit their experience of best practices and avoid potential pitfalls.

General architects and consultants may not have the required skillset or experience to fully appreciate the differences and specific needs when designing performance spaces. Where a general designer/architect might look at aesthetics as a prime driver, theatre designers for example will likely begin from the **practical** side of a working venue. Aesthetics are indeed important, but not at the cost of practicalities.

SUSTAINABILITY:

INITIAL BUILD.

The full details of the build costs for such a new complex are as yet unknown, but it is anticipated that along with funds injected by local and county authorities for the redevelopment, some of the finance will be generated by the sale of the current plot occupied by the Abbey Theatre to the respective developers.

In addition, as a voluntary and community group, the NAC expects to be able to apply for significant grant aid which will contribute to the overall construction and equipment costs throughout. What level of funding will be needed and available from each of these sources will not be determinable until firm project plans and designs have been struck.

REVENUE COSTS.

Initial assessments of the running costs for the new complex will form part of the final business plan, and these will need to be assessed and split into the component parts. Hire fees therefore for the individual areas we would like to have available would be tailored to suit.

The prime source of funding would come from the hire of those various spaces and facilities. Whilst we acknowledge that the overheads of such a large venue would be a significant increase on the present it is vital that we retain the affordability of the facilities for community groups. Therefore there would also be income generation on a daily basis from the bar, café bar, restaurant and bistro enterprises. Whether these are managed as a franchise (with the NAC taking due percentage from takings) or as a wholly owned internal enterprise is open for discussion and assessment. Space hire from commercial bookings however are seen as a definite income generation avenue.

Although not all grant funding bodies will support revenue costs, there are those who do, and where possible, the NAC can seek to apply for such funding to support the ongoing management of the complex, thus keeping costs down to manageable levels for our user groups.

The NAC can also look at other sources of direct income. Advertising within public areas could well be lucrative, especially if initial investment included various forms of electronic media. Another suggestion has been rental of roof space for communications/cellphone masts. Sponsorship from local businesses in the town may also be more attractive with the new location/facilities and is an option well worth exploring and exploiting.

Predicted/potential revenue streams include:

- Theatre hire/room hire
- Office space rents
- Studio space rents
- Dance studio rents
- Venue sponsored event income
- Catering/bar revenues
- Advertising revenues
- Corporate functions
- Education provision
- Retail franchise income/rents
- Grants/business sponsorship

STAFFING.

Considering the type and size of venue proposed it is envisaged that there should likely be at least some element of full time paid management staff at the venue. At the very least, this should be a building manager plus admin support with the possibility of a technical manager. Catering/bar facilities would need to be fully managed as a self-supporting entity.

These staffers would be employed by and report to the new charitable trust, via a management/executive committee structure.

Again, it is feasible that in the short term, wages for some or all staff might be supported by ongoing grant applications to relevant funding organizations.

STAKEHOLDERS.

Existing stakeholders would include the wide variety of performance/arts groups currently using the existing Abbey Theatre venue, although these would be viewed as subsidiary to the new charitable trust.

New stakeholders would be brought on-stream such as local visual arts organizations and educational establishments along with business interests.

- Art Alert
- Escape Arts
- Local schools/colleges
- Corporate bodies (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Round Table etc)

Estimated Footprint:

SPACE:	Sq M:	SPACE:	Sq M:
Main auditorium	800	Visual Arts Studio	50
Auditorium 2 (studio)	350	Framing Facility	12
Auditorium 3 (lecture space)	250		
		BFI Suite	25
Main foyer/bar	150		
Upper foyer/bar	60	Recording Suite (music)	10
Restaurant	180	Video edit suite	10
Café/Bistro	80		
		Educational suite 1	80
Scenery dock	80	Educational suite 2	50
Scenery storage	80		
Scenic workshop	100	Office 1	16
Electrical workshop	48	Office 2	50
Electrical storage	30	Office 3	16
Dimmer Room 1	15	Office 4	16
Dimmer Room 2	15	Office 5	30
Technical Stores 1	25	Office 6	20
Technical stores 2	25	Office 7	20
Properties storage	80	Office 8	20
Wardrobe storage	150		
Sewing Room	20	Dance Studio 1	200
		Dance Studio 2	100
Dressing Room 1	50	Dance Studio 3	80
Dressing Room 2	50	Dance Studio 4	80
Dressing Room 3	12	Dance Studio 5	80
Dressing Room 4	12		
Dressing Room 5	12	TOTAL (Estimated)	4262
Dressing Room 6	50		
Dressing Room 7	50		
Dressing Room 8	12		
Dressing Room 9	12		
Dressing Room 10	12		
Green Room	25		
Crew Room	25		
First Aid Room	25		
Rehearsal Room 1	150		
Rehearsal Room 2	80		
Rehearsal Room 3	50		
Rehearsal Room 4	30		
Rehearsal Room 5	16		
Rehearsal Room 6	16		
Rehearsal Room 7	35		
Rehearsal Room 8	35		