



royal and derngate theatres

"Suzie genuinely understood the mission of our company... Her design for us responded to the unique nature of our company and also the unusual combination of buildings that we were developing... Her approach is collaborative and imaginative."

Donna Munday - Chief Executive

Client: Royal and Derngate Theatres Trust
 Chair: Judith Mellor Executive Director: Donna Munday
 Value: £12 million Procurement: Traditional JCT contract
 Completion: Autumn 2008, on time and on budget
 Role: Full architecture / interior services (Director Arts Team)

unifying two audiences

Through Arts Team, Suzie was selected by the Trust to transform their theatres, by defining an affordable project from an ambitious wish list. The Trust's vision was to unify two adjoining venues - the Grade 2* listed Royal Theatre and warehouse with the innovative Derngate concert hall. The Trust wanted community-focussed arts facilities alongside retail and revenue generating potential to support their need for financial resilience.

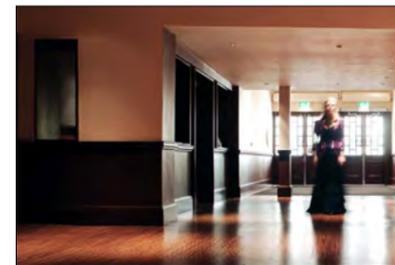
uncovering a hidden "jewel"

The project delivered a coherently restored 1884 Grade 2 listed theatre; a refurbished iconic 1983 auditorium; reinvented foyers; a new cutting edge rehearsal studio; a suite of smaller flexible studios for education and functions; and upgraded administration and back stage areas. Local artists contributed throughout the design process conceiving of a number of ideas which were integrated into the project.



Rear wall of the Royal - revealed

Royal & Derngate now boasts an exceptional rehearsal studio which supports the development of innovative programmes of work by their production company, led by a series of the best up and coming artistic directors including Rupert Goold, Laurie Sansom and James Dacre.



Royal Foyer

A new copper entrance faces towards the main routes from the town's car parks, drawing people in. It encourages increased footfall through the venue. The new cafe and box office allow visitors to pause a moment and enjoy the space. On their way through the foyer they can discover the performance spaces and events within an informal and welcoming environment.



Restored Royal theatre auditorium

To restore Phipps Royal Theatre, we stripped away more than 11 layers of decoration until forensic analysis identified his original colour scheme, and uncovered some original fragments of fabric. These formed the basis of the finishes now seen throughout the theatre.

Inside the new foyer areas, our palette of materials and colours create a warm and vibrant foyer, the bespoke floor finish flowing like a river between spaces.

"...sensationally refashioned into one harmonious, multifaceted entity...every minute, every penny appears to have been put to good use. I can think of few arts complexes that induce such a rush of excitement on arrival."

The Daily Telegraph

The response to the building has been overwhelming with audiences taking ownership of it immediately. Visitor numbers now far exceed the target 300,000 per year, and Northampton continues to lead the way in ground-breaking regional theatre.

Awards and Publications:
 Stage, Jan 2011

Judged Regional Theatre of the Year by 'The Stage' 2010

RICS Regional Building Conservation Commendation, 2008

Selected as one of the 50 buildings of the RIBA 'Fifty buildings, 50 years'

Timber Building Vol 2, 2005

Royal and Derngate theatres: new foyer incorporates theatre lighting for mood