

## Equality Impact Assessment Screening

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Estates/Finance
<b>PROJECT</b>	Theatre Redevelopment

The £16 million redevelopment of the Royal Academy of Music's Theatre and provision of a new Recital Hall.

The architects Ian Ritchie <http://www.ianritchiearchitects.co.uk/> have stated that the rebuild of the theatre and provision of the new recital hall will offer new educational opportunities as well as improving accessibility and the environmental conditions for staff, students and the public. The architects produced a detailed Design and Access statement, as requirement of the planning permission application.

Does this policy/project etc. provide opportunities to make a positive impact on equality? Please detail.

The theatre redevelopment and provision of the new recital hall will have a positive impact on equality in particular that of improved access for disabled students, staff and visitors. The architect's Design and Access is a statement of intent which details that a core principle of the project is 'improving accessibility and inclusivity'.

- The theatre will have a total of 308 seats spread between stall and balcony and these include 2 permanent and 2 flexible wheelchair spaces.
- The redevelopment will allow for disabled access to both levels of the new theatre and the new roof-top recital hall by the introduction of a new Building Regulations M compliant lift, which will also provide access to the existing Concert Room in lower basement of the main building. This will make all Academy licensed entertainment venues fully accessible to the public.
- The existing orchestra pit will be extended into the auditorium, and by doing so will bring the musicians forward which will reduce acoustic health risks.
- The new recital hall will be fully accessible to all performers including those with mobility related disabilities and provision will be made as necessary to provide access to theatre dressing rooms, backstage, technical areas for disabled performers.
- The entrance to the new theatre will remain in the existing location close to Reception. Visitors will enter a lobby area which provides access to the theatre stalls/balcony and recital hall using either stairs or use of the new compliant lift.
- The new lift will be prioritised for wheelchair users, and other visitors with mobility issues; where necessary and this will be monitored by front of house staff.
- The project will allow for the addition of a fully accessible WC on the lower basement level on the main building.
- In the event of emergency, wheelchair users and other students/visitors with mobility disabilities will be assisted from the building by trained staff using strategically placed evacuation chairs if necessary.
- The provision of an induction loop to assist those with hearing impairments will be included as part of the new amplification system.
- Directional signage, in line with good practice guidelines, to assist those with visual impairments will be considered during the latter stages of the project.
- A printed route map detailing disabled access to the new theatre, recital hall, WC and other facilities will be produced and made available on request and via the Academy's website.

Although not part of the remit of Theatre Redevelopment project planned developments to the Academy main building will enhance access by providing a step free entrance for all users of the building. This development is currently awaiting planning permission and it is hoped that work will be completed by

September 2016.

As part of the Academy's procurement tendering process potential contractors, in the areas listed below, were asked to complete an equality contract conditions vendor questionnaire.

- Architectural Design Services
- Mechanical Electrical and Pipework Engineering Design Services
- Structural Engineering Design Services
- Quantity Surveyor
- Project Management

What evidence has been considered in the above?

The architect's Design and Access statement states: The scheme has been designed with consideration to standards and guidance included in the following documents:

- Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings, ODPM, 2004.
- British Standards Institute, BS8300:2009: Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice.
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Means of Escape for Disabled People (Supplementary Guide); DCLG 2007.

The project has progressed through a series of developmental stages in consultation with staff, students and other users of the theatre resulting in an inclusive approach to the redevelopment of the theatre provision of the new recital hall. This has included:

- Theatre Management Group - membership includes members of the Governing Body, the Principal and other members of the Academy's senior management team, the Estates Manager, Finance Director and a number of external consultants. This group has overall responsibility for the management and governance of the project including obligations under the Equalities Act 2010.
- Theatre Users Group – membership includes the Academy's Estates Manager, Student Union President, Director of Artistic Planning a member of the Academy's senior management team and other key Academy staff who are users of the theatre. This group has been able to inform the project from a professional perspective and to promote the needs of all users including staff/students and the general public.
- Theatre Design Group - membership includes a range of external consultants, including a disability consultant. As part of its remit this group considered issues of accessibility and presented proposals to the Theatre Management Group.
- Theatre Impact Group - membership includes the Academy's Estates Manager, Deputy Estates Manager, Deputy Principal, Director of Artistic and the Secretary and Registrar. This group has responsibility for the logistical and operational aspects of the project and will continue to monitor issues related to equality, specifically access, as the project progress.

Work on the theatre redevelopment and provision of the new recital hall begins July 2015.

**Date:** 20 October 2015