

Unicorn Theatre London UK

keith williams architects





320 seat Weston Theatre

The multi-award winning Unicorn Theatre for children and young people, is located on Tooley Street near London Bridge and the River Thames. The Unicorn, when opened in 2005, was the first new central London theatre to be built since the National in 1976. It houses the 320 seat Weston Theatre, the Clore Studio theatre, education, teaching and rehearsal spaces, public foyer and café, and is the most far reaching child focussed educative and theatrical institution in the UK.

The Unicorn was opened by Lord Attenborough receiving huge critical acclaim on 1 December 2005 and among many awards, was shortlisted for the penultimate round of the 2006 Stirling Prize, and has been extensively featured in the international press as an exemplar of its type.

"In December (2010) we will have been open for five years and by then we will have recorded our 300,000th visitor.

We are immensely proud that Keith Williams and his colleagues have produced a building which not only looks excellent, but also works extremely well for both audiences and theatre employees".

Tony Graham : Chief Executive
Unicorn Theatre

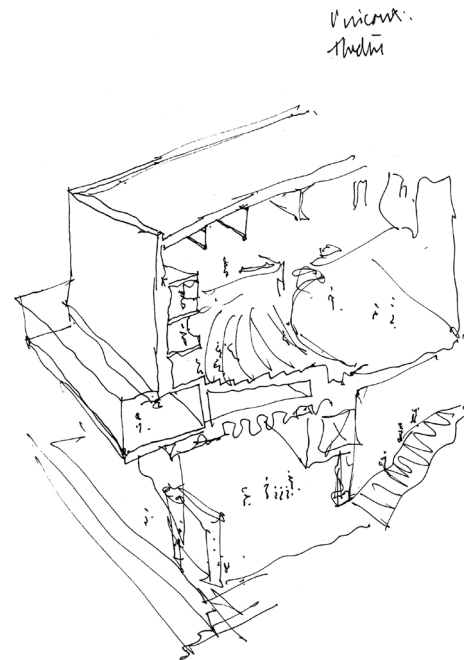
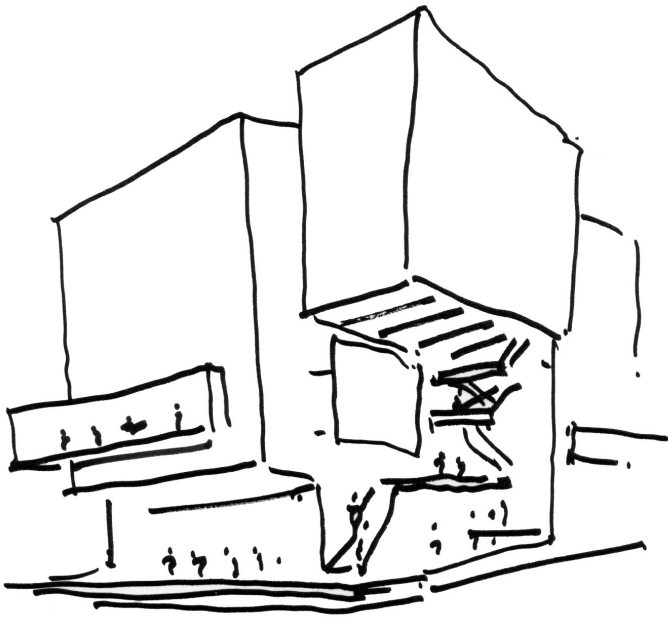
COMPLETION

2005

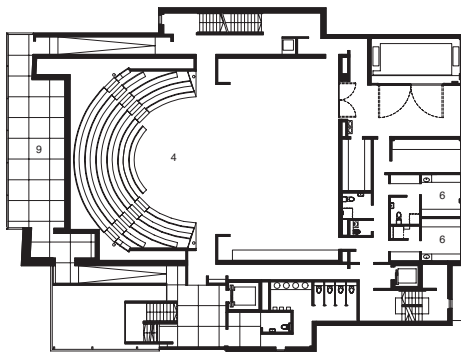
PROJECT AREA

3,650 m²

Unicorn Theatre, London, UK



Keith Williams' concept sketches of the Unicorn



Plan at Stage Level



Key Successes

- Design and delivery of multi-award winning theatre building
- The first permanent home for the Unicorn in its 58 year history
- First new central London theatre since the National in 1976
- Key part of the Southwark's regeneration strategy
- Project delivered to time and budget

Multi-award winning theatre building

- Weston Theatre 320 seats capable of transformation into different theatrical modes
- 110 seat Clore Studio
- Dame Judi Dench Rehearsal Studio
- Education Studio
- Stagehouse & flying Loft



The multi-award winning Unicorn Theatre for children and young people, won by Keith Williams in design competition, is located on Tooley Street near London Bridge and the River Thames.

The Unicorn upon its opening in 2005, was the first new central London theatre to be built since the National Theatre opened in 1976.

It houses the 320 seat Weston Theatre, the Clore Studio theatre, education, teaching and rehearsal spaces, public foyer and café, and is the most far reaching child focussed educative and theatrical institution in the UK.

The new building is an asymmetric pavilion. Its elevations are in part open and transparent, revealing the heart of the building to the public, yet elsewhere deliberately solid and cliff like, punctuated by carefully controlled windows and toplights.

The L shaped foyer is multi-level and transparent, revealing both the studio theatre and the grand stair, which leads to the Weston Theatre (the main auditorium) 7m above, which, clad in pre-oxidised copper panels, balances spectacularly above the street.

The larger architectural gestures of the spectacularly projecting main auditorium and the corner tower, signal the new building at an urban level, yet the designs are rich in child scale detail. The stages, balconies, seating and in particular the form of the main auditorium itself derived from narrative storytelling, all bring a delicate and appropriate scale to a unique new theatre for children.

“This is above all, a sophisticated piece of architecture with its carefully articulated cubic masses, subtle balance of solid and void and skilful relationship of the interior with the adjacent streets.”

Giles Worsley
The Daily Telegraph
Unicorn Theatre, London, UK



Unicorn from Tooley Street showing theatre's green room



main foyer with cascading stair to the Weston Theatre 7m above the street

Awards

2008

Chicago Athenaeum International Architecture Prize

International Award Winner

2007

USITT Awards

Award Winner

Copper in Architecture Awards

Award Winner

2006

Stirling Prize

Nominated

RIBA Awards

Award Winner

RIAI Awards

Award Winner

KEY:

1. Foyer
2. Cafe
3. Box Office
4. 340 Seat Auditorium
5. 120 Seat Studio Theatre
6. Dressing Rooms
7. Void
8. Green Room
9. Meeting Room
10. Education Room
11. Office
12. Rehearsal Room



Section AA



Facts & Figures

Project Title	: Unicorn Theatre
Client	: UCC Ltd
Design Programme	: 2000 - 2003
Construction Programme	: 2004 - 2005
Official Opening	: Dec 2005
Budget	: £10 million
Area	: 3,650m ²

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