

Case Study: The Egg

The award-winning Egg children's and young people's theatre was completed by Tom Grieve while an Associate at Haworth Tompkins. The project, Tardis-like, inserted a new 125-seat theatre, 60m² rehearsal space, cafe, workshop, scene dock and ancillary spaces into a Grade II listed town hall measuring just 15x9m.

The design was the response to a brief drawn up by a group of 9-18 year olds, who wanted the new theatre to have the glamour of a traditional theatre space rather than a 'black box' approach that would be usual for a theatre of this size. The new building inserts the eponymous egg-shaped auditorium into the Bath stone walls of the old hall, clad in red polycarbonate and padded felt. Working in a conservation area and with a crumbling listed building were challenges that were met by an innovative structural solution of raking steel columns, and limited interventions to the exterior, using dramatic lighting in the window reveals to suggest the activity within when the building is in operation.

Throughout the process there was a constant dialogue with the young user group who would inhabit the building, testing the ideas. The challenge and reward of the project also lay in working with a small local family contractor who had previously never taken on a public building, but who brought a proactive approach to the complexity of the building and real commitment to the project.

Awards include: RIBA Award, Bath and North-East Somerset Design Quality Award, Crown Commission Conservation Award shortlist, Mies van der Rohe Prize longlist.

- Client: Theatre Royal Bath
- Contract value: £2.2m
- Completed 2006



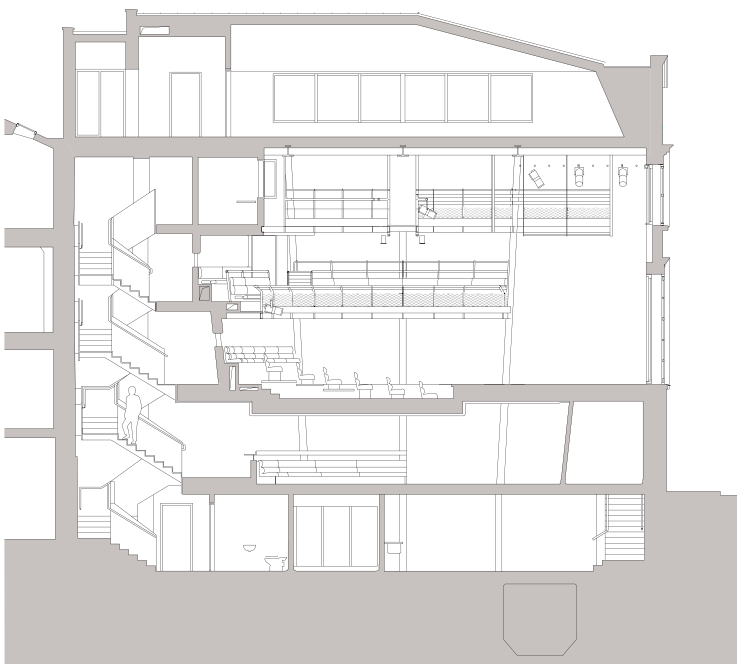
Views of the interior and exterior of the theatre

The Egg: Design in detail

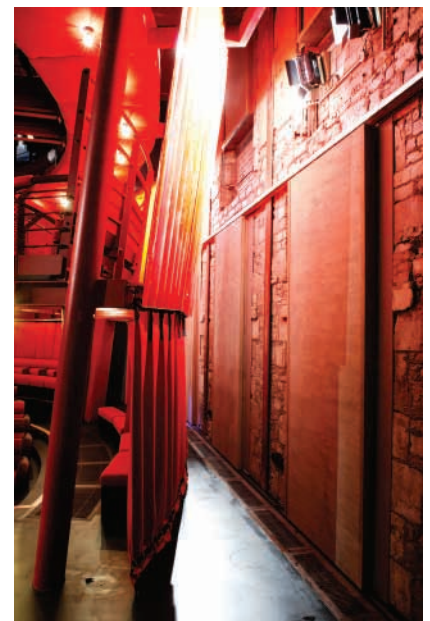
The theatre itself is highly flexible. It can be blacked-out or daylight, and used in a traditional end-on arrangement, in the round, traverse or with a flat floor.

Above the auditorium is a rehearsal studio that looks out over the Bath roofscape, while below it is a family-friendly cafe and basement workshop. The underside of the auditorium projects down into the cafe, clad in yellow felt, and a mirrored ceiling around this gives the illusion of a higher space as well as the sense of fun that the client group desired.

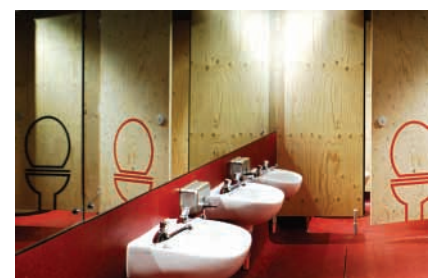
Materials used:
Corrugated polycarbonate
Felt
Mirrored steel
Plywood
Resin flooring



Section through the building showing rehearsal studio at the top, the main theatre, the foyer, and the workshop in the basement.



Foyer of the theatre with padded felt ceiling.



Top to bottom: rehearsal studio; main theatre inserted into the shell of the old parish hall; WCs.