

## Theatre Drury Lane

The Theatre Royal Drury Lane has been providing entertainment since 1663, with the current building, built in 1812, the fourth theatre on the site. It is a Grade I listed building. As an historic theatre and an historic building of such significance, it was essential that alterations and enhancements to ensure it could remain commercially viable were very carefully assessed, both individually and cumulatively.

The refurbishment had four interconnecting elements: Substantial restoration of the “front of house”; significant improvement to the auditorium and related areas to improve the customer experience; creation of a modern stage to enable the Theatre to host the best musical entertainment; and to introduce more flexible use of the front-of-house and related areas (including a restaurant in the adjacent no. 6 Catherine Street, enclosure and activation of Vinegar Yard (an access/service area) and remodeling of bar areas, to open the building up to the public throughout the day and support its viability.

A key element of the approach was a detailed assessment of the whole building and the “significance” (in both historical and architectural terms) of each and every area. This allowed for constructive pre-application discussions with Westminster City Council, Historic England and special interest groups. It was essential that the proposed changes were individually and collectively necessary, in the least-impactful location and delivered the most benefit to the Theatre’s future. The range of enhancements was extensive and focused on the most significant areas, protecting and revealing the historic fabric whilst aiding public access to and enjoyment of the building as a whole, as well as to the theatrical experience.

Westminster City Council and Historic England was fully supportive of the overall proposals, with key stakeholders and interest groups appreciating not only the depth of research and explanation provided but also the balance being struck across the building as a whole. The application was strongly supported by all relevant parties and planning permission and listed building consent granted in December 2017 for the next exciting phase of this wonderful building’s life.

### Client

LW Theatres

### Sector

Hospitality and Leisure

### Services

Planning Consultancy

### Project value

£ N/A

“This refurbishment will raise the curtain on a new era for the theatre- preserving the character of this wonderful old building while creating a modern space for performers and audiences to enjoy”

Gillian Almond  
Head of Commercial Services  
Royal Holloway, University of London

