

Reuben Foundation Wing, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

Complete	Area	Client	Architect
2015	UK England	Lyric Hammersmith	Rick Mather Architects

With a reputation for ground-breaking productions, the original Lyric theatre in Hammersmith was built in 1895 then moved in 1979 piece by piece down the street to its current location on Lyric Square in Hammersmith. Following re-development works in 2004 to create its grand entrance, work began on expanding over the adjacent Kings Mall shopping centre to provide London's first teaching theatre for the performing arts, the Reuben Foundation Wing.

Completed in 2015, the Reuben doubled the theatre's facilities, adding a host of state-of-the-art spaces for drama, dance, music recording, editing and practice rooms, cinema and TV studio. The facility also provides a sensory space for children with disabilities.

In 2017 the project received a BREEAM rating of Excellent.



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Services provided

Sandy Brown developed the acoustic strategy for the Reuben Foundation Wing, driving the design for the building and highlighting major acoustic considerations. These included:

- sound insulation of major spaces and the retail areas below them
- design for the acoustic character of each space
- building services noise and vibration control
- sound insulation of building envelope
- commissioning testing.

Special acoustic features

The external wall to the Lyric stage is shared with the new theatre studio and cinema. To allow for these spaces to be used simultaneously, independent plasterboard linings were added to the new spaces, incorporated into a box-in-box design to improve sound insulation.

To take advantage of natural light, the dance studio had to be placed above the recording studio control room, yet there were severe weight limits in building over the top of an existing building that limited the possible solutions. After determining the heaviest isolated floor possible above, spring isolated ceilings were incorporated below to maximise sound insulation.

Sound absorptive finishes were specified in each room to achieve optimum reverberation and room acoustics, including heavy curtains in the theatre studio and film studio to provide variability as well as specialist plaster to reduce noise in the atrium commons area. In addition, the mechanical services were closely analysed to ensure they could achieve the critical background noise level limits. Finally, the scene building workshop was relocated to just off the stage entrance, which required specialist large door sets to be provided to allow work to continue during rehearsals.

