



TRANSFORMING OUR THEATRES

Lifting the Theatre Tower 'lantern'

Over the next two days the three pre-fabricated sections that make up the viewing platform at the top of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre's new Theatre Tower will be lifted into place.

How does it happen?

Tuesday 29th September 2009

A special 300 tonne crane arrived in Stratford-upon-Avon early on Tuesday morning. The steel framework of the platform is lifted first. This has been constructed on site and weighs 20 tonnes. It will be bolted to the top of the central concrete lift shaft.

Wednesday 30th September 2009

The last two sections to be lifted are made of Precast Concrete & Brick and form the north and south faces of the platform. They will be arriving as a special wide load (they are six metres across) and are conveyed horizontally.

They are lifted into the vertical plane before being seated on top of two of the three load-bearing brick outer walls of the tower. The outer walls have been built by hand over the last nine months and to do this the tower has been progressively encased in scaffolding.

Once the viewing platform is in place, scaffolding will be built up around it to allow its louvered glass skin to be installed. The viewing deck will be accessible via a lift which carries 14 people, and is yet to be installed in the central shaft. Around 50 people can be accommodated at the top of the Theatre Tower.

Descent will be by a steel staircase that wraps around the central lift shaft, offering views through many small windows that are set in the thick brick outer walls or through the slit windows that form the corners of tower. On their descent from the top, visitors will be able to cross to the theatre where they will encounter the third floor rooftop restaurant, which will have panoramic views of the River Avon and the adjacent Bancroft Gardens.

What's the purpose of the Theatre Tower?

As well as being a new landmark for Stratford-upon-Avon, replacing the original Victorian theatre tower which was destroyed when the Memorial Theatre burned down in 1926, the Theatre Tower provides stairs and one of two passenger lifts serving all levels of the new theatre. It also forms one side of the new entrance to the colonnade, which will link the RST and the Swan Theatre together for the first time.

Facts and figures about the Theatre Tower

- The Theatre Tower will be 32 metres high to the viewing platform and 36 metres to the top of the tower. It incorporates a lift and stairs, which will provide access to all levels of the new theatre.
- The tower was inspired by the original Memorial Theatre water tower which was engulfed in flames when the theatre was gutted by fire in 1926. The Memorial Theatre is now the Swan Theatre, adjacent to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.
- The top of the tower will be encased in a glass and steel box, built on the ground and lifted into place, to create a tower 'lantern'.
- The Theatre Tower will slope gently at a 3 degree angle and is being built by 8 specialist bricklayers, 6 specialist architectural metal workers installing the stairs & lantern.
- Companies involved in the construction of the Theatre Tower and lifting of the Theatre Tower 'lantern' include Bennetts Associates, Buro Happold, Gardiner and Theobald, Drivers Jonas (RSC Project Team), plus Mace (Construction Managers) and CMF, Lesterose, Elliot Thomas (trade contractors).

Transforming Our Theatres

Work is well underway on the transformation of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST) in Stratford-upon-Avon, to create an intimate, thrust-stage 1000 seat auditorium, which brings the actor and audience closer together, along with new public spaces and better facilities for artists.

The new RST auditorium will dramatically improve the relationship between the actors and the audience reducing the furthest seat from 27 – 15 metres away from the stage.

The project will marry the best of the original building, retaining key heritage elements of the 1932 theatre, with new dynamic spaces and architecture.

The cost

The £112.8 million cost of transforming our Theatres will be met by public sector support and a fundraising campaign.

£100m has already been secured including **£50m** from Arts Council England, **£20m** from Advantage West Midlands (Regional Development Agency) and **£30m** in gifts from individuals and Trusts; including substantial support from the RSC's own Board and American supporters.

We still need your helps and a public appeal, seeking to raise £1million was launched in autumn 2008, giving people the chance to get involved in different ways including the opportunity to name a seat in the new auditorium, sponsor a brick or donate loose change.

To find out how you can play your part visit www.rsc.org.uk/appeal

