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**CAPITAL THEATRES**

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Photo: Anneleen Lindsay

## Welcome

We are thrilled to be raising the curtain on the first season back at the iconic King's Theatre. After many months visiting the site and watching progress, I am delighted to see the theatre taking shape and the dust sheets coming down to reveal our beautiful auditorium.

We open the King's with stories that celebrate courage, spirit and Scotland itself, from the Olympic triumphs of **Chariots of Fire** to **Wallace**, a bold new musical honouring a legendary Scottish hero. You'll also find laughter with the return of the King's Panto and a brand-new production of **Pinocchio**, dance from **Jasmin Vardimon**'s talented company, and pure joy in favourites like West End smash hit **Operation Mincemeat**,

**Tony Roper's** beloved **The Steame** and an homage to the biggest boyband of the 70s in **Rollers Forever**.

Stay tuned for more information about exciting opening events at the King's, which will take place in summer 2026.

This is a brochure filled with passion, pride and the magic of live performance. It feels incredibly special to be sharing a programme of shows across all three of our wonderful venues once again.

Here's to the roar of the crowd, the thrill of the lights and an unforgettable new chapter. With warmest wishes,

**Fiona Gibson**  
**CEO, Capital Theatres**

# The King's Theatre redevelopment: a new era for the people's theatre

For nearly 120 years, the King's Theatre has brought people together to share extraordinary live experiences. Opened in 1906, this Grade A-listed venue has welcomed generations of audiences and artists, and remains one of the few theatres in the UK to have operated continuously since opening. It is also the sole surviving working theatre designed by architects Swanston and Davidson.

During its rich history, the King's has seen little in the way of modernisation. The need for redevelopment was becoming urgent if the theatre was not to be closed, potentially for good. In February 2023, construction began on site to secure the King's future as a fully accessible, world-class venue

and a vibrant cultural hub at the heart of the community for generations to come. Let's raise the curtain on what's changing, why it matters, and how it will benefit everyone who walks through the front doors.

## Raising the roof (literally)

One of the most dramatic changes at the King's is the extension of the fly tower, which has been raised by 4.5 metres. This creates additional space above the stage where the scenery is flown in and out of the audience's sight. With this new capacity to accommodate larger and heavier scenery, the King's can now welcome bigger, more complex productions. From West End musicals to gripping drama and even

**"Lifts will transform how people experience the building. For the first time, there will be permanent wheelchair seats in the dress circle and step-free access to the stage door, dressing rooms and performer facilities."**

**John Robb, Head of Technical**



circus, the stage is set for a whole new level of performance.

Another major transformation is the replacement of the original raked (sloped) stage with a new, level stage. While raked stages were common when the King's was first designed, they pose challenges for certain performances, particularly dance and circus, where level ground is essential. This new flat stage sets the scene for a broader range of productions and exciting new companies to take centre stage at the King's.

## A warm welcome for everyone

The redevelopment doesn't stop at the stage. Every part of the building is being sensitively updated to enhance the overall audience experience.

At street level, a brand-new café will welcome not just theatregoers, but anyone in need of a hot drink, a bite to eat or simply a place to catch up with friends and soak up the atmosphere of this historic venue.

At each side of the entrance foyer, two lifts are being installed to provide easy access

to the auditorium and beautifully redesigned bars on all levels of the building.

Wheelchair spaces are being increased and there will be seats with transfer arms in the stalls. Accessible toilets will be available on every level including a Changing Places toilet, designed for people with complex needs, which will be open to the general public.

And for audience members sitting high up in the upper circle? Improved sight lines and legroom will make your experience more comfortable and enjoyable, no matter where you sit.

## Breaking down historic barriers

The redevelopment also tackles the layout of the building. The original design, like many theatres of its age, intended to separate audiences by class. Different ticket holders came in different entrances. Those in the top price seats entered the opulent marbled foyer and had access to the comfortable dress circle bar. Those in the cheaper seats used a separate staircase to take them to the Upper Circle.

While this was common practice in the 19th

**“The transformation of the King’s will allow everyone to begin their journey equally. Audiences will all enter through the beautiful front foyer and enjoy the splendour of the front-of-house spaces.”**

**Stuart Smith-Gordon,  
King’s Theatre Design Consultant**

and early 20th centuries, we want everyone to have the same warm welcome when the King’s reopens.

With the new lifts and reconfigured bar areas, the redeveloped King’s invites all guests to have the same extraordinary experience.

### Celebrating the past

While the King’s moves confidently into the future, we have taken the opportunity to celebrate its remarkable history.

We are bringing the theatre’s past to life with The People’s Archive. This digital archive, available to explore on our website, includes more than 3,000 digitised images, including old programmes, photos, press clippings and volunteer-led research projects.

These treasures have come from audience members, performers and former employees – alongside many that have been discovered during the redevelopment itself.

“The People’s Archive is more than just a collection of old items. It’s a way to understand the people who made the King’s what it is – and to inspire new generations to make their own memories here.” Abby Pendlebury, Heritage Engagement Manager.

When the King’s reopens, you will be able to enjoy heritage tours and see some of the most special pieces in person – like parts of the original transformation drum used for scenery changes in early performances,



Photos: Anneleen Lindsay



and a message in a bottle discovered in the auditorium 118-years after it was hidden by the theatre’s original construction team.

### Space for creativity and community

The previously underused attic space has been

**“From costume design to genealogy, we’ve uncovered amazing stories that show how deeply the King’s is woven into the fabric of Edinburgh.”**

**Abby Pendlebury, Heritage Engagement Manager**

redesigned to create a beautiful new Creative Engagement Studio. This airy, double-height space will be used for school workshops, community projects and all kinds of creative activities.

There will also be a quiet room for anyone who needs a moment of calm and a field kitchen to support events and hospitality.

This space is part of a bigger goal; to make the King’s not just a venue for performances, but a place where people come together to learn, create and connect.

### Looking ahead to 2026

When the curtain rises once again at the King’s in 2026, it will rise on a theatre that’s ready for at least the next 100 years. Bigger shows. Better access. More comfort. And a stronger connection to its community than ever before.

Whether you’re a lifelong theatre lover or visiting for the first time, the new King’s promises something special: a warm welcome, a brilliant show and a space where everyone belongs.

We can’t wait to see you there.

[capitaltheatres.com/kings-future](http://capitaltheatres.com/kings-future)

# Thanks to everyone who is supporting the King's Theatre

Capital Theatres extends its heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped to make the transformation of the King's Theatre possible.

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We would also like to thank everyone who has dedicated a seat and named a step at the King's Theatre, and those who have supported our crowdfunder appeal.

Visit [capitaltheatres.com/kings-future/](http://capitaltheatres.com/kings-future/) to see a full list of everyone who has contributed. Thanks too, to those who wish to remain anonymous.

## Please support the King's Future

As we countdown to the King's Theatre re-opening, we need everyone's support to ensure we can open the doors and share the extraordinary experience of live performances.

To show your support please visit [capitaltheatres.com/kings-future](http://capitaltheatres.com/kings-future), email [support@capitaltheatres.com](mailto:support@capitaltheatres.com) or call 0131 357 7858 to speak to a member of the Development Team.



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