



SHAKESPEARE'S
GUILDHALL
TRUST

OUR VISION

FOR ST GEORGE'S GUILDHALL,
KING'S LYNN

**Keep Britain's oldest
working theatre, working!**



AN INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust comprises a group of concerned local people with many years professional experience in arts, heritage, entertainment, education, and business management.

Concerned at the disconnected planning for St. George's Guildhall and Arts Centre they wanted to come up with a scheme that would secure the sustainability and integrity of the entire site and ensure that it was not broken up for potential commercial development.

I have kept a keen and supportive eye on developments at St George's Guildhall over recent years, as SGT has tried to collaborate with the Borough Council to create a community asset that will contribute to the local economy without straining public finances.

This brochure showcases SGT's vision to create a viable operation of the entire site – from road to river – including

food & beverage and a retail component, together with galleries, studios, education areas and office space for local arts and cultural groups.

This is a vital step towards ensuring we keep this incredible theatre working. I have many fond memories of the Guildhall and I hope to create many more in the future.

Please support SGT in whatever way you can.

Yours

Stephen Fry
STEPHEN FRY



ST GEORGE'S GUILDHALL

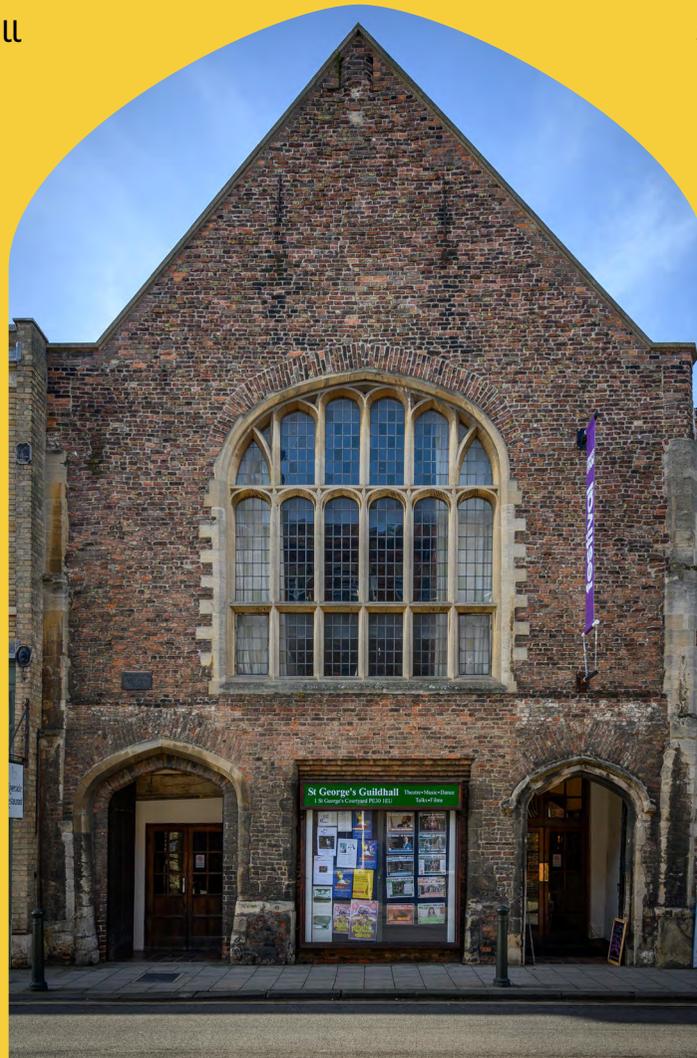
England's largest surviving medieval Guildhall and Britain's oldest working theatre. Since 1445 it has hosted performances in all the key dramatic phases of English theatre, and is the only theatre in the world that can claim Shakespeare played here as an actor: in 1593.

His leading comic actor, Robert Armin, was born in King's Lynn.

No other site in the world has this theatrical pedigree.

It is also the heart of a set of medieval buildings which have been a centre for arts, culture, community and education since 1951.

St George's Guildhall is owned by The National Trust and leased to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk until 2050.



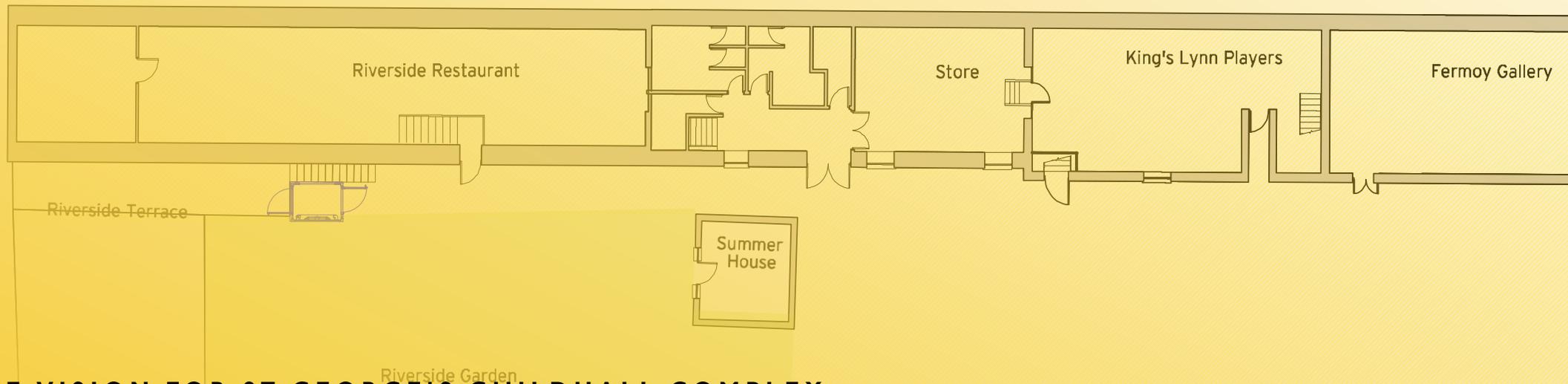
SHAKESPEARE'S GUILDHALL TRUST

Changing standards for public spaces, rising costs and diminishing investment mean the Guildhall may be lost .

Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust [SGT] was founded to establish a sustainable future for the whole site. Our aim is to create a mixed-use performance, arts and cultural centre; a heritage attraction of national significance; and a great economic, education and community asset for King's Lynn.

Our vision honours the spirit and generosity of Alexander Penrose and Ruth, Lady Fermoy who rescued the Guildhall from destruction in the 1940s, re-established it as an arts venue, and subsequently gave it to the National Trust.

SITE DEVELOPMENT & RESTORATION



THE VISION FOR ST GEORGE'S GUILDHALL COMPLEX

Our vision unifies management of the entire site, National Trust and Council-owned buildings, enabling integration of cultural and commercial events, refreshments, and other income-generating uses.

Restoration and development of the buildings and open spaces, with improved facilities throughout the site, will create a financially sustainable and vibrant venue, open 7 days a week.



Courtyard

Shakespeare Barn

29 King Street

LIFT

GAS

Plant Room
(Tunnel Below)

Foyer/ Bar

Lift

Fermoy Gallery Entrance

Covered Walkway

Stage
Door

Long Passage

Red Barn

FWC

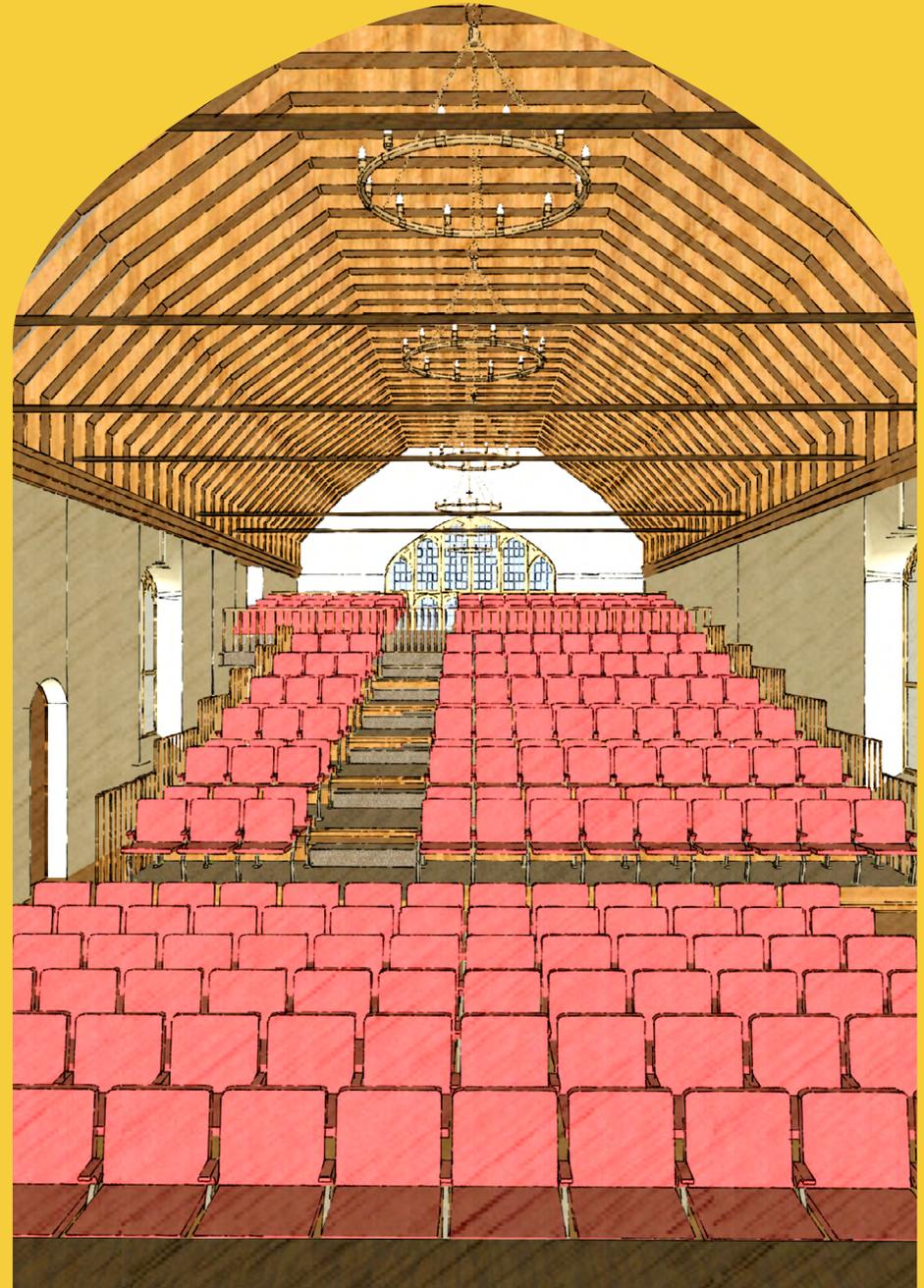
MWC

The Old Warehouse

FROM ROAD TO RIVER

The site runs from King Street to the Great Ouse River. We envisage coherent use of the building and open areas providing spaces for: performance and rehearsal; workshops and education; restaurant, café, bars; heritage interpretation; retail; and commercial hire (events & office).

Flexibility of use combined with respect for the heritage are key to our proposals for achieving the major refurbishment needed to meet modern standards of access, comfort and facilities:





GUILDHALL

Main performance and events venue. Street entrance remodelled into a welcoming foyer with box office and bar. Raked floor and fixed seating replaced by flat floor and retractable seating, allowing for 300 in proscenium format and flexible alternative uses. Wheelchair access to audience, backstage and public areas.

UNDERCROFT

Vaulted wine cellar beneath the Guildhall: an intimate performance space for cabaret, comedy, jazz. Easy access from foyer, lift, and direct access to the Courtyard



RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT, GARDEN AND TERRACE

Restaurant modernised and integrated with food & beverage provision across rest of site. Garden and terrace equipped for outdoor events, performances, markets, craft fairs etc.. Wheelchair access.

OLD WAREHOUSE

Potential conversion for offices, studio accommodation, or other income-producing activity.



WHITE BARN AND ANNEX

Existing secondary theatre workshop redeveloped and modernised to service all users of the Guildhall site. Spaces created for exhibitions, workshops, education & training.



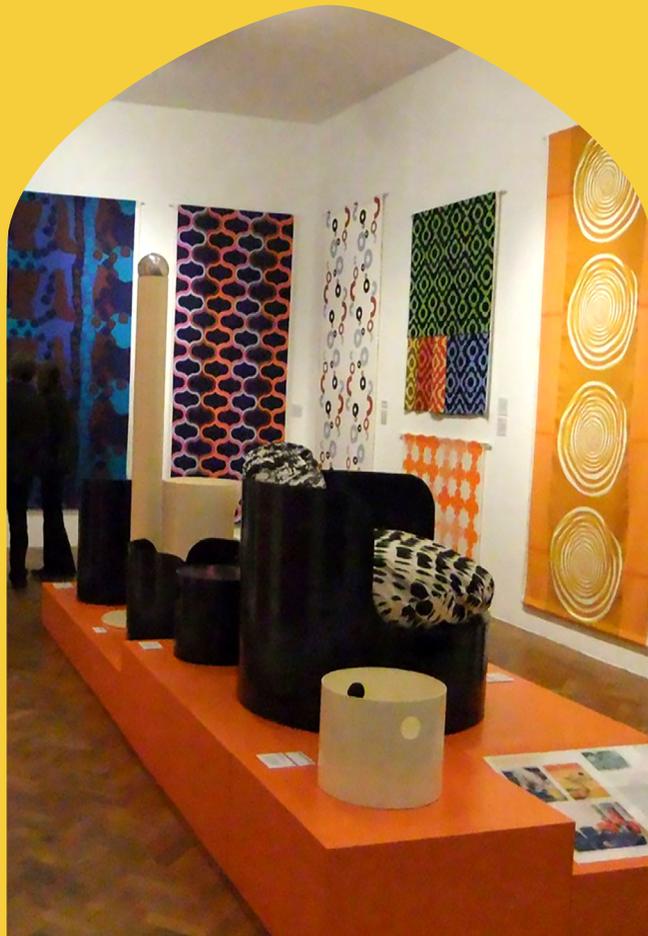
RED BARN

Upgraded for exhibition use and as a versatile stand-alone secondary space for workshops, rehearsals and to support other activities on the site.

NORTH COURTYARD

Accessible from King Street and brought into use as a seating area for refreshments and outdoor events.

Direct access to Guildhall and Shakespeare Barn will help integrate site.



FERMOY GALLERY

Upgraded to modern conservation and exhibition security standards, capable of use for receptions etc., and potential expansion into adjacent building.

SHAKESPEARE BARN

Restoration as space for exhibitions, education workshops, meetings and other events. Additional space for provision of food & beverage.



KL PLAYERS' WORKSHOP

Redeveloped for additional gallery and/or other income earning spaces.

29 KING STREET

Modernised offices for staff and potential commercial letting. Archway access from King Street to Courtyard improved.



ACTIVITIES

PERFORMING ARTS

Throughout the site, including open spaces. New and engaging ways to present Shakespeare and Armin, generating a vibrant audience for their work within the town and beyond. An in-house company and producing house: both important to financial success.

Professional, local and youth theatre groups. Comedy and poetry performances.

Live music such as cabaret, jazz, folk; lectures, public meetings; and films, focussing on art house, classic and specialist interest.

VISUAL ARTS

A range of visual arts events ensuring there is always something to see. Working with the Norfolk Museums Service and other partners we will build a lively and varied programme of exhibitions. These will bring contemporary artistic visions to reflect the heritage, alongside workshops and training events. Collaborations will be encouraged from the local to the international.



EDUCATION & WORKSHOPS

Education is at the heart of our aim for the site, including training and learning opportunities in theatre skills; summer schools, workshops, seminars. Internationally marketed summer school based on Shakespeare, Armin and comedy. School & College partnerships providing apprenticeships, work experience, school performances, and discussions.

HERITAGE ATTRACTION

Heritage illustrated throughout the site revealing the surprising history of the Guildhall and its links with Shakespeare & Armin.

Imaginative, state-of-the-art heritage interpretation, targeted at all ages, specifically designed to highlight the Guildhall's unique place in the history of theatre. Guided tours by trained volunteers.

A significant international opportunity and central to the financial sustainability strategy.



COMMERCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

With all activities throughout the site under one management, paid staff and volunteers working together minimises overheads and encourages community involvement. Main sources of income for the whole site derived from:

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Integrated catering, open every day and evening, co-ordinating with events programmes.

BOX OFFICE

Performances programmed and co-ordinated for theatre and other venues across the site.

THEATRE HIRE

Current users continue to play an important role in ensuring the site is well-used.

RETAIL

Commercially run shop selling souvenirs, literature, books, art & craft items etc. generating additional income.

GALLERIES

Available for commercial or sponsored exhibitions, and to hire for selling exhibitions or other activities.

HERITAGE VISITORS & EXHIBITIONS

Daily guided walks and talks by trained volunteers.

EDUCATION CENTRE

Workshops and courses for all ages and skill levels, with theatre-skills training.

Partnerships with local schools, colleges and adult education providers.

SPONSORSHIP & MEMBERSHIP

Corporate sponsorship and hospitality packages, plus membership schemes e.g. Patrons, Benefactors, Associates and Friends.

COMMERCIAL HIRINGS

Wide range of spaces available for high quality events such as company meetings, conferences, film sets, private functions.

TENANCIES & COMMERCIAL RENTALS

Unused or surplus space let on commercial basis as offices, preferably to businesses in the creative, media or marketing sector to provide additional cultural benefit.





**SHAKESPEARE'S
GUILDHALL
TRUST**

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO SUPPORT SGT'S VISION, PLEASE GET IN
TOUCH AND LET US KNOW HOW YOU CAN HELP**

info@shakepearesguildhalltrust.org.uk

Shakespeare's Guildhall Trust (King's Lynn)
Registered Charity Number 1185448
c/o 2 Thoresby College, Queen Street,
King's Lynn, PE30 1HX.

**Keep Britain's
oldest working
theatre, working!**



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With thanks to **Foster Wilson Architects**

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