

CHARCOALBLUE

12039 - ROGALAND THEATRE, STAVANGER

REVIEW OF 'AKROPOLISVISJONEN' BY HELEN & HARD

INTRODUCTION

Charcoalblue were invited to review and comment on the Spring 2019 'Akropolisvisjonen' report developed by Helen & Hard Architects.

In general, we consider these two schemes to be very well presented, reflecting a significant amount of underlying work. We acknowledge the spatial requirements outlined in our 2018 report have been accurately adopted and integrated into these schemes.

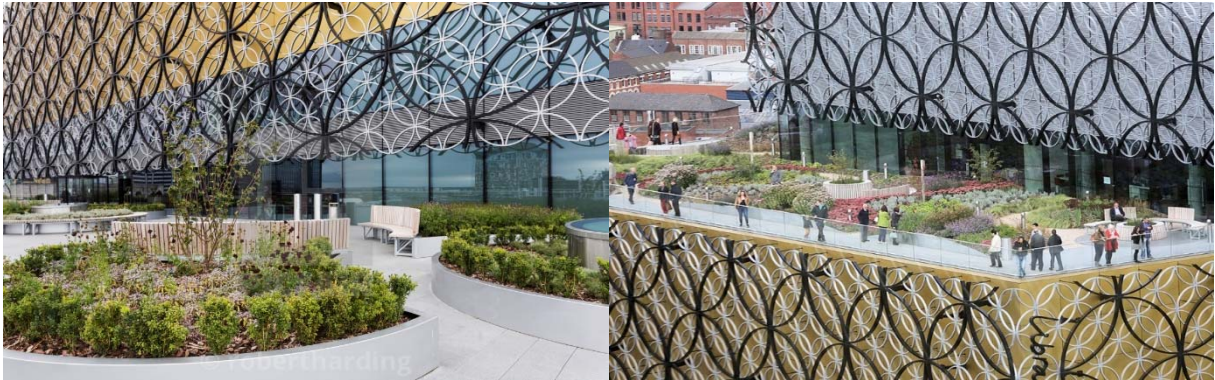
Our comments below are based on our previous briefing with the client team in 2018, and recent discussions with both HH and the Rogaland team during our visit in April 2019. These comments are therefore only related to the theatre brief, the operational requirements and the public realm – we have not been briefed on the Museum requirements.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON BOTH ALT. 1 AND ALT. 2

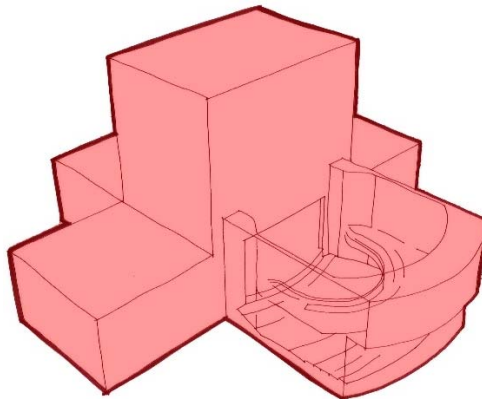
- The public foyer 'street' that runs N/S through the site is an exciting concept, which provides fantastic opportunities for animating the audience journey through the site. We imagine that this route could be populated with small gathering spaces, quiet retreat areas, food outlets and small, informal performance areas.
- We love the proposed latticed glass ceiling to the foyer and street, which will flood the area with natural daylight. There are similar enclosed spaces at both the British Museum and the Amsterdam Maritime museum where previously external courtyards have become exciting new indoor spaces where the public love to gather.



- We also like the concept of creating green roofs over the top of the new buildings – these will create opportunities for public gardens, as at the new Birmingham Library in the pictures below, where many public visit the building just for the gardens, not the books! These gardens will also mitigate the loss of the existing museum garden.



- Having reviewed these schemes, we suggest it may be possible to make minor adjustments to the given dimensions of Scene 4 and possibly also Scene 3, so that these spaces can be better located within the overall planning – e.g. within the two heritage theatre buildings – Teaterbygg and Turnhall.
- Looking at the relationship between the performance spaces and the foyer in these schemes, the rear of the auditorium to Scene 1 will likely have a curved wall, rather than rectangular, as in the sketch below. By rounding off the hard corners to the rear of the auditorium in these layouts and increasing the separation to adjacent spaces, it should be possible to improve the circulation around it within public foyer areas.



COMMENTS ON ALT. 1

- We like the general massing in this scheme and the use of the natural gradient of the Akropolis to increase the massing height toward the rear of the site.
- Opening up the lower level of the existing museum building is a brilliant way to stop it becoming an obstacle on the site and creates an exciting, flexible space in the heart of the new complex.
- The layout of this scheme will help to retain the clear and separate identities of the two organisations – with the Museum mainly to the West along Musegata and the Theatre areas mainly to the East. This will be clear delineation, easily understood by the public and will likely create efficient internal circulation for both organisations.

- We feel that the audience journey from the North entrance through to Scene 1 is too long and involves too much vertical travel.
Almost 60% of the total theatre audience will be heading for the Scene 1 auditorium, so it makes more sense to locate it closer to the entrance.
Based on our understanding of UK audiences, productions in Scene 1 will attract a higher proportion of elderly and mobility-impaired audience, for whom the increased internal travel distance may prove discouraging.
- The relocation of Scene 1 to the rear of the site also risks diluting the Rogaland Theatre's heart and history. Scene 1 is the major offering from the theatre organization, and the flytower is a clear and obvious presence alongside the heritage buildings at the lower end of the site. We understand that the relocation would open up the views of the museum building, but we feel that with Scene 1 being so far from the entrance, there is a risk of losing some of the Theatre's identity.
- The proposed location of Scene 1 is somewhat cramped to the south side by the proximity of Lagårdskleivå. There should be sufficient foyer and circulation around both sides of the auditorium on both levels to provide efficient audience movement and the required emergency escape capacity.

COMMENTS ON ALT. 2

- In our opinion, the location of Scene 1 in this layout is better than in Alt. 1., although we acknowledge that the flytower will need to be no taller than at present to avoid impacting negatively on the view of the old museum building from the city.
The orientation of Scene 1 may need to be adjusted for optimum fit.
- The layout of this scheme towards the South end does not seem to be as clearly defined as Alt 1, with Museum and Theatre areas more overlapping and intertwined. The theatre accommodation is spread to both East and West of the central museum building, which will lead to longer and more convoluted staff journeys between different areas – e.g. between Admin offices and staff accommodation. We suggest the theatre areas would be better congregated more to the East with Museum areas more to the West, similar to the layout of Alt 1.
- The Rehearsal spaces are located below the level of the adjacent road, with limited daylight opportunity. We suggest relocating these to the South East corner to benefit from daylight and views, whereas the museum galleries would be more suited to areas with less daylight.
- Dressing rooms should be located close to Scene 1 and Scene 2. We suggest creating a route over the workshops to link between the dressing rooms and the rehearsal spaces and admin areas. It will be beneficial to the Theatre company to create an internal 'highway' that is regularly used by all staff.
- The open plaza area in front of the old museum building, facing Musegata, is fantastic and will be a great location for social, artistic and promotional events, much as they use the central courtyard at the Amsterdam Maritime Museum.
- The height of the backbone walkway between the workshops and Scene 2 can probably be reduced by around 2m, which may make for an easier public route over the top of it.

COMMENTS ON THE 'THEATRE CONNECTIONS' LAYOUT ON P13

- Please note that the Charcoalblue gross figure of 20,519m² is based on a net figure of **13,679m²**, not 15,210m² as reported on this page.
- Although Scenes 3 & 4 need a connection to the backstage circulation and backbone, they do not necessarily need to be at the same level. It is accepted that the routes between the backbone and these two spaces may need to be more convoluted to allow for efficient building planning. As mentioned in our report, we fully expect the scenery route to these two smaller spaces to be via some sort of lift.
- It would be useful to also include the rubbish and waste disposal routes on this diagram, so that these are not forgotten. If these schemes are progressed, there are likely to be additional food outlets in and around the public foyer street, with associated kitchen spaces, which will complicate the routes for food delivery and waste.

CONCLUSIONS

- In general, these two schemes suggest to us that the overall site is large enough to provide a fantastic new home for both organisations, including some great new public spaces around them.
- In our opinion, each of the two proposals contain some positive, exciting ideas, as well as some drawbacks. We acknowledge that we have not been involved in the process that arrived at these two schemes, which are clearly the result of a lot of work! It seems to us, however, that the most attractive and efficient scheme for the site may be a combination of the best features of both schemes.

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