

**Kirwin & Simpson**  
SEATING

## Recent Project Case Studies

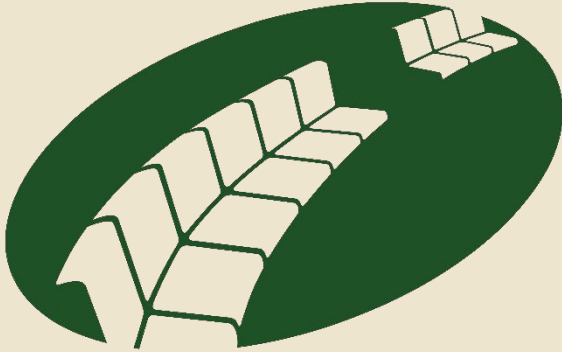
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**Kirwin & Simpson**  
SEATING

**Australian Projects**

# Project Case Study

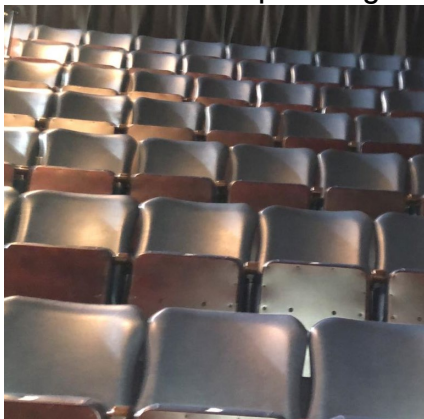
COMEDY THEATRE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

2019

The Comedy Theatre is a 1003-seat theatre erected on the site of one of Melbourne's earliest playhouses, a prefabricated iron theatre purchased in Manchester, England. After periods of inactivity where it was used as a film studio and scenery dock for neighbouring theatres. The Marriner Group have owned and operated the venue since 1996. The auditorium is embellished with opulent coloured beams and brackets, painted arches and coats of arms are located on the frieze and, perhaps fittingly, Jason Marriner turned back to the UK for their new seating.



The Marriner Group management wanted to reuse the original hardwood arms, allowing part of the theatres' long history to be carried through to the next generation. Each arm was individually sanded down and repolished and their shape and size had to be taken into consideration when Kirwin & Simpson set about designing the new cast-end and intermediate metalwork. The cast-ends themselves were patterned and custom made to accurately replicate the original heritage designs which dated back to the pre-war years. The venue took advantage of the narrow seat envelope offered by Kirwin & Simpson chairs to install larger chairs with maintained capacity.



The seat backs were also unique and required many prototypes and much testing to effectively replicate the original pads, whilst improving comfort. The vinyl covering was again matched to the original with a modern alternative that had the same aesthetics and feel whilst offering excellent durability and comfort. The project was delivered on a tight timescale and has been a huge success, allowing the venue to retain the intimate theatre feel that was key to the project's integrity. Another global success for Kirwin & Simpson showing distance is no barrier to getting bespoke seats designed, supplied, and installed on time.



# Project Case Study

## THE REGENT THEATRE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

2019

Built in 1929, The Regent Theatre in Melbourne has been subject to many closures and re-openings through the years. From fire and water damage in 1945 destroyed, to restoration and operation until 1970 when it would close doors and be sold to the City Council as part of a redevelopment project. Empty for 26 years Marriner Group restored and reopened its doors to the public again in 1996.

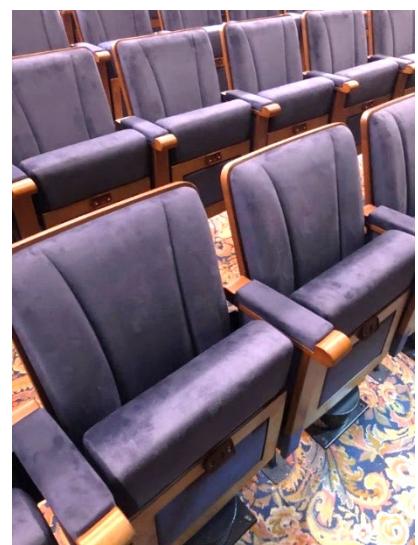


In 2019, Marriner carried out a full refurbishment of the whole theatre. A section was built on to the front of the Circle to move the audience closer to the stage and improve Sightlines. 1,831 new luxury chairs were designed, built, and installed by Kirwin & Simpson.

The chairs feature many bespoke aspects including custom framed backs with interchangeable upholstered panels featuring sew lines and the seat base has a hardwood surround with an upholstered centre panel.

ProBax Seat Foam Technology was incorporated into the design, for ultimate comfort and durability. The seat number is mounted on an individual hardwood piece that is angled for better viewing without becoming a snag point. Each leg features a hardwood insert with an upholstered inside panel making this chair is one of the highest specification chairs on the market. The arm pad has a custom hardwood surround with upholstered inner panel, again for maximum comfort and durability.

The Regent Theatre Chair is one of Kirwin & Simpson's flagship projects and the epitome of what the Company stands for. Taking the history of the venue and the exacting wishes of the owners into account to produce a completely bespoke product with the highest levels of quality available anywhere in the World. Such projects are now commonplace across the globe as the reputation grows and grows.





# Project Case Study

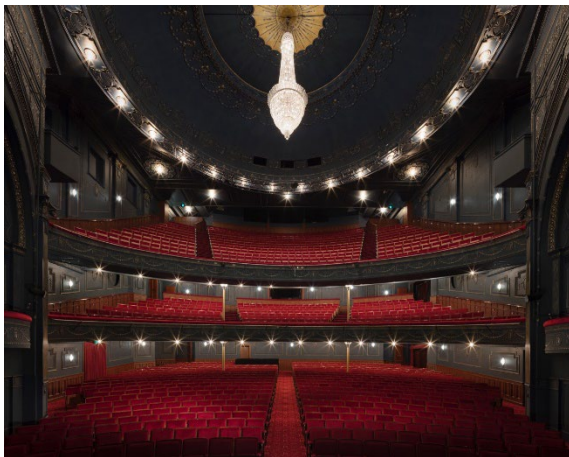
## THE PRINCESS THEATRE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA 2018

When the Marriner Group, proprietors and custodians of Melbourne's prized heritage theatres, wanted to upgrade their flag-ship Princess Theatre they literally scoured the globe for the right seating supplier.

Having sat on and tested numerous seats at a multitude of performing arts venues they settled on Kirwin & Simpson to design, supply and install 1,560 new seats to coincide with the opening of a major show at the venue which originally opened in 1854.



The Marriner Management wanted something "very special and different" from what was locally available and spent weeks working with K&S on the design.



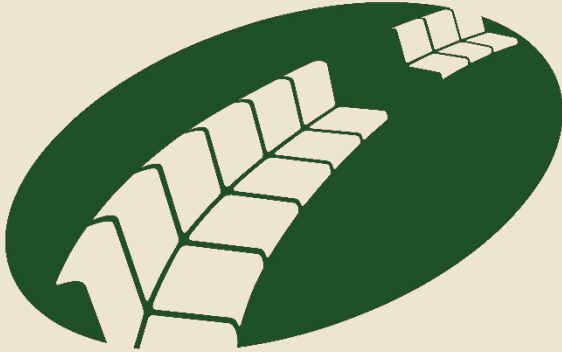
The cast-end design was replicated from plasterwork motifs in the Main Foyer.

The Circle seating was particularly challenging - replacing existing fold-up seating that left many patrons feeling that they would fall down the back of the steps and replacing with fixed seats. Facing the prospect of re-stepping the whole Circle, Kirwin & Simpson were successfully able to design seats that resolved all issues without re-stepping, saving significant costs for the owners.

The narrow seat envelope, a feature of all Kirwin seating, proved a bonus as the stringent local fire regulations on row access were met without the need for any reduction in audience capacity. Something every other manufacturer had struggled to achieve when pitching for the project.

*"Our 'new' Theatre seating is a joy to behold. We're all thrilled and relieved that the end result is everything we imagined it might be: The sympathetic bespoke heritage design, modern ergonomics and comfort, and the surprisingly extra leg room in the stalls - I'm still not entirely sure where it all came from - all in all a brilliant outcome. Sincere thanks to all the K & S team who made it possible."* - Venue Owner, Jason Marriner





**Kirwin & Simpson**  
SEATING

**United Kingdom  
Projects**

# Project Case Study

## BAFTA 195 PICCADILLY, LONDON, U.K.

2021

BAFTA's shiny old-but-new headquarters at 195 Piccadilly are gearing up for a March 2022 opening after a three-year-long £25m renovation. The building has been upgraded with the highest specification in material technology and to highlight the academy's future.

Kirwin & Simpson designed, manufactured and installed Art Deco-inspired seats in the building's two revamped state-of-the-art screening rooms.



In a nod to BAFTA's increased sustainability drive, K&S were briefed to re-use as much of the existing seats as possible in the larger 227-seat Princess Anne Theatre. We were able to reuse the existing metalwork and backs. However, by reshaping the padded elements and using environmentally friendly Flax-based upholstery, the old chairs look and feel like the best new seats around.

Custom embroidery of the BAFTA logo on each chair adds to modern feel, accentuates the branding, and makes the theatre feel fuller and more intimate when not at full capacity. The bespoke, ergonomic chairs sit well in this flagship venue which is crammed with Dolby technology providing the best cinematic experience in London.

The smaller 41-seat Run Run Shaw Theatre is newly located on the third floor of the building. The brief for this theatre was more open and thus in collaboration with BAFTA, K&S were able to create a truly bespoke chair with a Gilded Age of Cinema feel. Kirwin & Simpson looked through many old photos and used the archetypal period style as its starting point. Using red leather for the back cap and around the arms let us round the edges to reflect the late-1950's styling. A modern touch was added by etching the BAFTA name into the metal arm-strips at the front of each chair. A stylish throw-back design with modern materials and comfort, all enhanced by the Christie DCI Cinema projection system with Dolby Atmos sound.





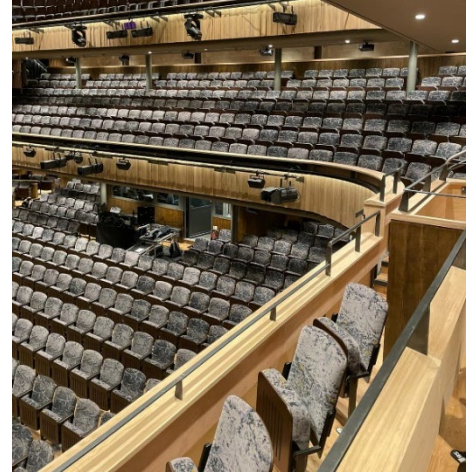
# Project Case Study

## HALL FOR CORNWALL, TRURO, U.K.

2021

Grade II listed, a former 17<sup>th</sup> Century Market House and the former Truro City Hall, the new Hall for Cornwall has just completed its latest reincarnation. After a £26m, 3-year renovation the venue opened to audiences as The Cornwall Playhouse in October 2021. The original granite ashlar stone has been restored to its former glory now cleaned of paints and other coatings and the venue maintains many of the arcades and bays from the 1840's.

To make the venue commercially viable seating capacity needed to be expanded whilst maintaining aesthetics that fit with the Hall's location and status. CharcoalBlue and Kirwin & Simpson worked with the main contractors to design a family of chairs that could accommodate structural supports sitting proud of the floor, removable and stackable pit chairs for the front orchestra rows, perch seating for the ground floor wings and the usual removable, demountable and transfer-arm wheelchair options.



Using two shades of a bespoke fabric, designed to reflect the slate and oak heritage of the region, the range, totalling 22 variations was designed by K&S. Of particular note were the chairs needing to accommodate the structural beams where bespoke dog-leg metalwork was developed to allow two chairs to sit over the beams without a central floor support. The pit chairs were designed specifically to look like they belonged rest of the venue. They are linked but easily removed and the unique tip-up arm allows them to be stacked 10-high when not in use.

In total, K&S added 350 additional seating positions to bring the capacity up to over 1,300.

*"Kirwin & Simpson set the gold standard in theatre seating for Capital Projects. As always, having worked with them before, our chairs on the transformation of Hall for Cornwall's capital project are stunning. The attention and care they show are exemplary, coupled with exquisite craftsmanship. Their work sits centre stage of our beautiful new auditorium in the newly launched Cornwall Playhouse." - Julien Boast, CEO, Cornwall Playhouse*



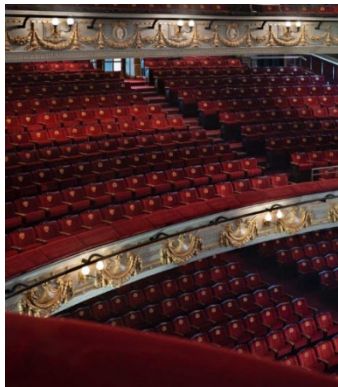
# Project Case Study

## THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE, LONDON, U.K.

2021

When it comes to historical performing arts venues it is difficult to look beyond the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the world's oldest theatre site still in continual use.

The current Grade I listed building first opened in 1812. As well as being the first in the world to witness the singing of the "new" British National Anthem, (*God Save the King* back in 1745!). It is the only venue in the world to have two Royal Boxes; a feature dating back to the time of King George III who was not on good terms with his son. To avoid confrontation each had their own entrance, own side of the theatre (King's Side and Prince's Side), and Royal Box.



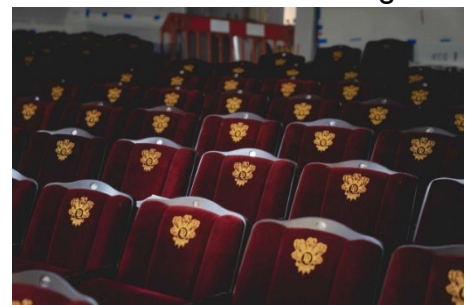
As part of the £60 million Theatre Royal Drury Lane renovation the auditorium was entirely re-modelled. Award-winning architect Steve Tompkins led the project to make the venue fit for modern day audiences that preserves the wealth of history, and ready to premiere one of the most ambitious 21<sup>st</sup> Century shows, *Frozen: The Musical*.

Working closely with LW Theatres, architects and theatre consultants, Kirwin & Simpson were able to help keep capacity close to the original 2,200 chairs. Feeling that the original theatre was too big, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber made a conscious decision to reduce capacity. This allowed K&S to maximise space and build in extra comfort for patrons, including wider seats with more legroom and better sight lines. Still, 1,950 custom-made seats were installed, keeping Theatre Royal Drury Lane one of the largest theatres on the West End.

To achieve this, 169 different chair types were required. Variations included 4 chair widths, sprung and gravity tipping seats, varying tall and standard back heights, 12°, 14°, 16° back angles, two different seat angles, and removable, demountable and transfer arm units with wooden arm or leather arms. Custom units for were made with framed and plywood backs, special sockets for end of row lights, and some units were cut-down to fit over structural beams. Kirwin & Simpson also manufactured embroidered Box Chairs.

Keeping with the heritage, the theatre was split down the middle once more for King and Prince, duplicating bespoke embroidery on every chair. This wasn't like usual embroidery processes as the designs had to receive approval from the Royal Household and be meticulously re-produced to pass inspection.

The old auditorium seats were still in good condition so rather than let them go to landfill they were carefully removed, packaged, and delivered to three regional volunteer-run venues across the UK.





# Project Case Study

TRAFALGAR THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2021

The spectacular Grade II listed Trafalgar Theatre is the result of a major multi-million-pound restoration project to return the theatre to its original 1930's heritage design undertaken by Trafalgar Entertainment and overseen by Foster Wilson Size.

Within the auditorium, the newly restored decoration and lighting is black with silver, bronze and gold metallic hints, reflective of the original interior's colour palette. Using historical photographs as a reference

the auditorium carpet and seating fabric replicate the original designs patterns, with greens, creams and yellows to contrast against the monochrome walls. The Balcony front - that had been carefully stored away for a number of years when the theatre was two studio spaces - has been beautifully restored and refitted to spectacular effect, along with the grand ceiling and proscenium arch.



Kirwin & Simpson designed, manufactured, and fitted the auditorium with 630 brand new seats specially designed with audience comfort in mind. The seats supplied are completely bespoke and are a range of demountable and removable units. They boast custom fabric made with two types of patterns to get as close to the original as possible. To make the seats more modern and comfortable

for patrons, we've included ProBax® Advanced Comfort Foam Technology and built-in menu and programme holders on the back, also custom end panels with bronze waymarking complements the theatre's new colour palette.

In addition, Kirwin & Simpson specially designed a transfer arm for accessible seats. This was designed for patron ease of movement from wheelchair into designated seat. We also supplied Box Chairs based on our stacking Portobello Chair in the same custom fabric.

Project Manager, Emily O'Dell said, *"The seat fabric is likely to be the most talked about design piece in the theatre. The pattern is very closely based on the original seat fabric and is very different to the usual theatre seats so we are incredibly excited about them and think they work perfectly in the restored look."*

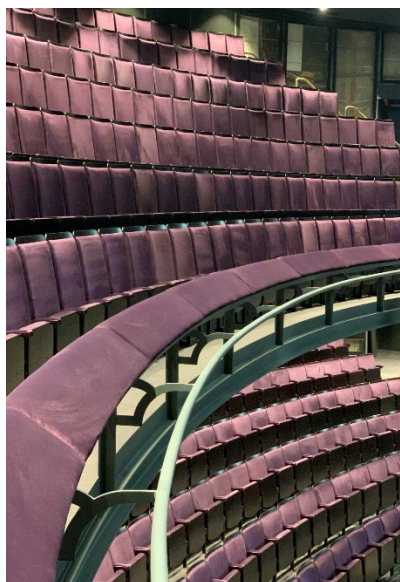


# Project Case Study

GILLIAN LYNNE THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2020

The modern theatre, the first in the UK to be named after a non-Royal female, is built on the site of previous taverns and music halls, where a place of entertainment has been located since Elizabethan times. Officially opened as the New London Theatre in January 1973 and renamed after the choreographer of CATS in 2018, the Gillian Lynne has undergone a major restructuring aimed at increasing capacity and improving comfort and audience experiences, including additional toilets, new front of house, and the reinstatement of the original revolving stage.



Kirwin & Simpson supplied the new, modern look seating with an ambitious target of adding 150 additional seats. Despite the re-instatement of the revolving stage, Kirwin & Simpson were able to increase the theatre's capacity from 1,024 to 1,299 via a re-raked and extended auditorium balcony and additional room gained by narrow-envelope chairs. That's 275 more theatre-lovers able to experience the brilliance of LW's *Cinderella*.

Working to a tight budget Kirwin & Simpson re-used 95% of the original metalwork but redesigned the seat backs to tighten the seat envelope by 20mm. The compact envelope allowed seat ways of a very generous 500mm, this in turn allowed for long rows of up to 42 chairs. The Circle saw the biggest change with laser cut standard and two heights of tall backs to ensure all regulations were met.

The use of ProBax Comfort Foams improved comfort despite the change, and three back styles (short, tall and extra tall) were used across the auditorium. Other key elements of the design include a removable floor fixing system and LED lights wired into the upholstered end panels. all new polished woodwork with recessed numbers in the back falls in superbly with the new purple colour scheme.

Every chair in the house has an excellent view of the stage.



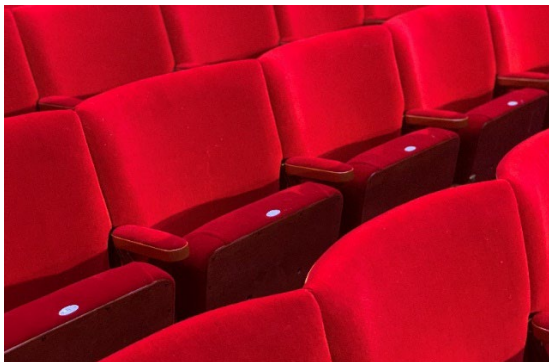


# Project Case Study

THE REGENT CENTRE, CHRISTCHURCH, U.K.

2020

In 2020 The Regent Centre re-opened following its most significant restoration since opening as the town's 'Super-Cinema' in 1931. The restoration was funded primarily by customer generosity and careful management of the venue, raising £350,000 in funds for the project. Gary Trinder, Regent Chairman and project lead for the restoration, said *"the aim was to enhance the buildings original features and simplify a decorative scheme from 14 different colours to five"*.



After much consideration with the client, Kirwin & Simpson designed a comfortable custom chair. The design includes a deep rose moquette fabric with gold cast metalwork and dark brown wood colours, all reflective of the 1930s period.

Using modern methods, Kirwin & Simpson were able to remaster the cast iron metalwork to suit modern comfort but still aligns with the same aesthetics as the early 1900's original cast design. The cast seat brackets were redesigned to incorporate an anti-finger trap mechanism without impacting the brackets visually.

For extra patron comfort, the hardwood polished arm features an upholstered inner panel. Whilst the hardwood outer ensures the highest levels of durability and luxury.

The back pads have a traditional double bend profile which increases comfort and help keeps the chairs compact without sacrificing any comfort.

Please click on the following link to see the Dorset View Online Article;

[https://www.dorsetview.co.uk/christchurchs-regent-centre-1930s-restoration-for-2020-audiences/?fbclid=IwAR2wj2TNucP\\_O2oM97NgME9GGds\\_DYS771HaiecxxUSviGZHAaGNtcpFWcE#.X70vdMj7RPZ](https://www.dorsetview.co.uk/christchurchs-regent-centre-1930s-restoration-for-2020-audiences/?fbclid=IwAR2wj2TNucP_O2oM97NgME9GGds_DYS771HaiecxxUSviGZHAaGNtcpFWcE#.X70vdMj7RPZ)



# Project Case Study

THE CHELSEA THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2019



Chelsea Theatre is a studio theatre located on the Kings Road in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London. It presents, commissions, and produces material and works with the local community.

Kirwin & Simpson were approached to design and build a high quality and highly flexible bench unit. The units were mainly in 2-seater with some 1-seat units. The benches had to fix to either the rear face of the riser or the front face of the riser. We had to design multiple custom linking brackets that allowed the benches to be universal, with only the linking brackets specific to the fixing location.

The client wanted us to use a combination of contrasting fabric and leather capping. The result was a vibrant design which also offers the highest levels of durability.





# Project Case Study

FAIRFIELD HALL, CROYDON, U.K.

2018

The Fairfield Halls date back to 1962 – since opening have hosted everyone from Morecambe & Wise to The Beatles – and gradually lost its sparkle over the decades. In 2016 the Hall closed for an extensive £42 million renovation.

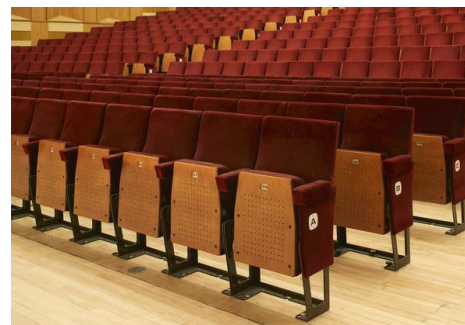
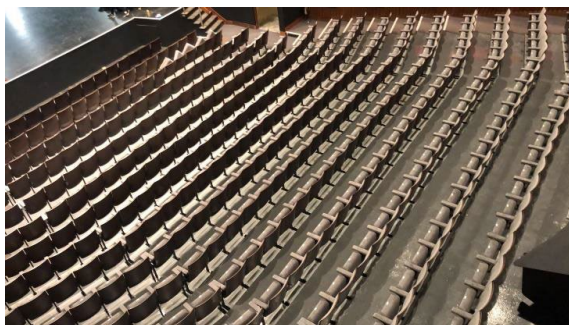
Kirwin & Simpson were contracted to fit two of the auditoriums and instructed by project managers BH Live to work to a very tight schedule of 10 weeks.



We designed and built 750 new Fleet Range Chairs for the new Ashcroft Theatre. These variations of Fleet were made with a grey Madison velour from Sunbury Design fabrics with wooden elements stained in a complimentary shade. Installation took place over 4 days, and we worked to a very tight production schedule to meet the installation window.

The previous seats in the 1,800-seater Concert Hall were in a terrible condition. Most of the original seats were repaired and reinstalled, refurbishments were carried out to any severely damaged ones. A new 200 Carnaby Removable Chair system was installed in the front of the Stalls, along with luxury benches in the Choir Stalls.

The end result looked great, and everyone was incredibly pleased by the design and efficiency during the project.



# Project Case Study

THE BRIDGE THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2017

The Bridge Theatre is London's first new commercial theatre of scale for four decades. The 900-seat auditorium is the flagship home of the London Theatre Company and was Winner of Theatre Building of the Year in The Stage Awards 2018. The auditorium is designed to answer the needs of contemporary audiences and theatre-makers with a multi-use format.



A cutting-edge design and development by architects Haworth Tomkins, the chairs required a close collaboration between architect and client to develop a product that was comfortable, practical and stylish.

This included the most unusual feature of being able to twist the chair through 25° without removing from the fixing plate; effectively creating an entirely new seating position from the same fixed starting point.

The seats were made with a variety of different back heights to accommodate sightlines and the leather capping to both seat backs and arms, whilst providing a practical boost to wear and tear, also look striking in situ.

The unique design means the stage edge is only 52ft from the furthest seat prompting the UK Theatre Press to claim the venue is “something terrific, both utilitarian yet glamorous, which puts the audience first in every sense”.





# Project Case Study

THE LYCEUM THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2017



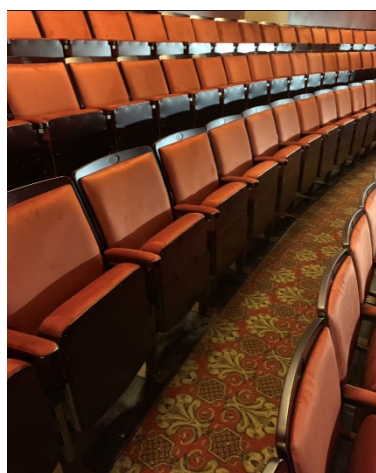
The brief from the Ambassador Theatre Group was to design new seating for one of London's oldest theatrical venues. Originally opened in 1834, the Lyceum is Grade II listed and the new seats needed to be sympathetic to the original architecture and style whilst conforming to modern seating requirements.

2,100 new seats were to be designed, manufactured, and installed on a strict rolling programme. There were various installation phases with the standout phase being completed

in a 24-hour turnaround with 648 chairs removed and installed.

The bespoke design of the chair had to comply with English Heritage, the venue Owner and Disney, who have a long-term lease on the building. This required extensive, high-level coordination meetings to assess all ideas, ensure all parties were fully informed and to keep the project on track.

Unique items included a custom cast-end standard which incorporated details from plaster work and stained-glass windows in the foyer and framed backs with in-built menu holders for programmes and Bar menus and all seats were fitted with ProBax Advanced Comfort Foams.



There was also a special Grand Circle Chair variant to fit in with the construction of the Circle Level, this also included extra-tall backs to meet seating regulations.

One special consideration for Disney was the need for an extra-wide aisle to allow the Animal Parade in the Lion King Show to proceed. Working with the venue and utilising the narrow seat envelope of the K&S seating range, new layouts were agreed without any loss of seating capacity. Getting the seats you want in the layout you need at even in the most historic venues?

*"Hakuna matata!"*

# Project Case Study

PERSE SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, U.K.

2016

Perse School is a co-educational independent day school in Cambridge, England, founded in 1615 by Stephen Perse. Award winning architects Haworth Tompkins were the lead for the school's new Peter Hall Performing Arts Centre, named after one of the school's best-known pupils and founder of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Charcoalblue consulted on the design and Kirwin & Simpson provided all the venues seating.



A major part of the brief was to provide a room that could quickly transform from 'assembly mode' into 'theatre mode', with easily removable and multi-location seating. This allows the school to gain extra rows of seating in minutes, and then for theatre mode have the depth of stage they require for their full-scale musicals and orchestral events. In total there are 7 different configurations.

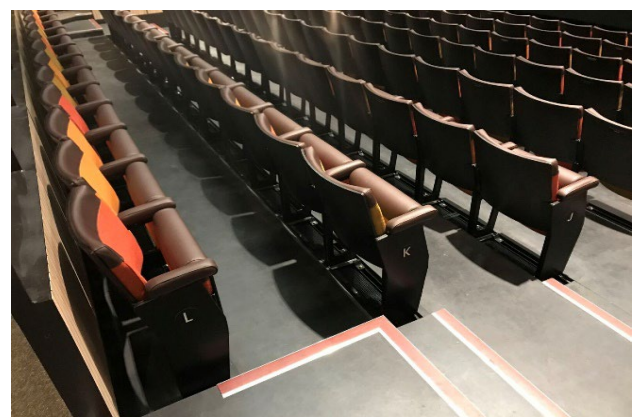


*"In many ways this 400-seat facility is our most radical development in the last 50 years",* Headmaster, Ed Elliott.

It recognises Performing Arts help develop confidence, creativity, and communication, placing them at the heart of everyday school life. The auditorium is a rich, dark timber-lined space to contrast with foyer providing a warm intimate room for dance, theatre, assembly, music, and speech, wrapping the audience around the performers or allowing more conventional configurations when required.

The seats are upholstered in wool with natural colours that allude to the landscape outside and a contracting leather cap to both seat-back and base. Lightweight at 17.8kg per seat the overall effect is a kaleidoscope of colours that are interchangeable and intimate.

Overall, the cost was £10.5m but the seats were delivered as budgeted allowing for tight control on the project's "Perse" strings!





# Project Case Study



THE LYRIC THEATRE, HAMMERSMITH, U.K.

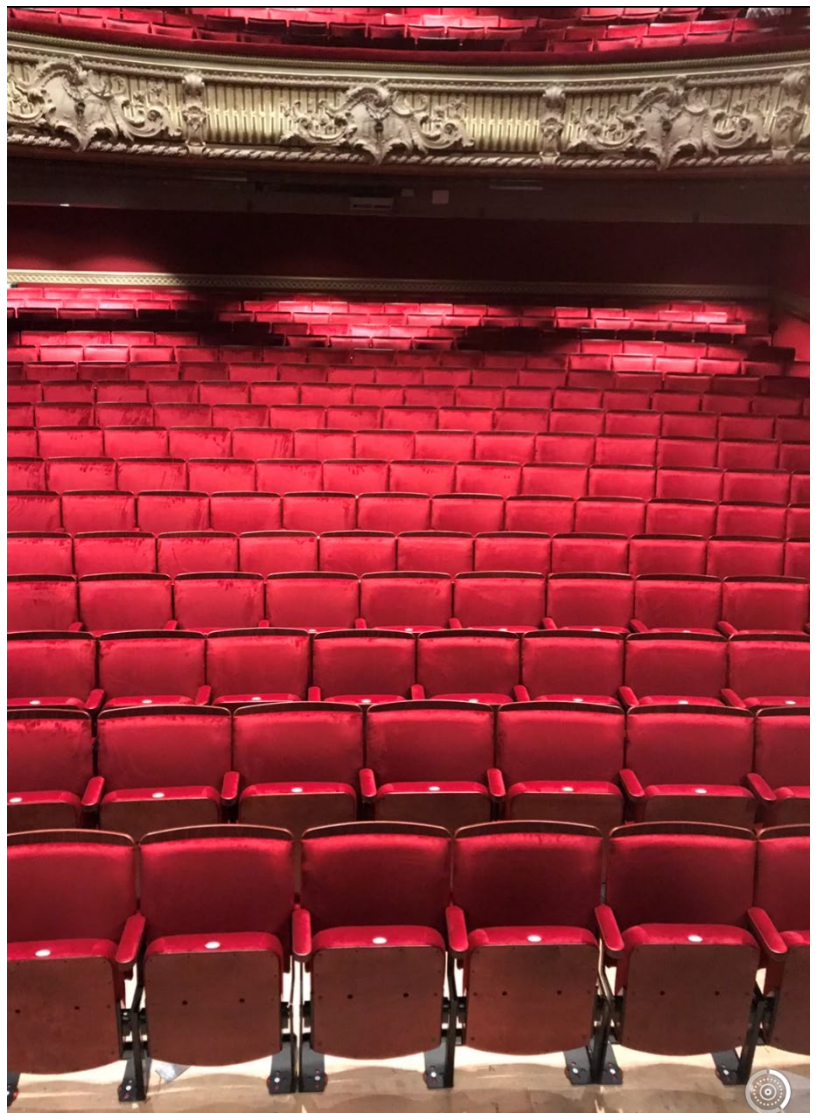
2015



The Lyric Theatre was originally a music hall established in 1888. Success as an entertainment venue led it to be rebuilt and enlarged on the same site twice, firstly in 1890 and then in 1895. In 1966 the theatre was due to be closed and demolished. However, a successful campaign to save it led to the auditorium being dismantled and rebuilt piece by piece within a modern shell on the current site. The new venue opened in 1979.

The Lyric underwent a major redevelopment project, with new facilities for young people and the local community completed in 2015. The theatre upgrade was designed by Rick Mather Architects and theatre came directly to Kirwin & Simpson for their seating requirements.

The Lyric Hammersmith was nominated in the 'Community Benefit' and 'Tourism and Leisure' categories at the RICS Awards 2016, London.



# Project Case Study

## APOLLO VICTORIA THEATRE, LONDON, U.K.

2014

Opened in 1930 as a cinema and variety theatre, the Apollo Victoria quickly became an established venue for musical theatre.

To celebrate *Wicked's* 10<sup>th</sup> year at the Apollo Victoria Theatre in London, the venue undertook a major refurbishment. This included brand new chairs in the Stalls and Dress Circle designed to replicate the theatre's original chairs from the 1930's but designed to live up to today's expectations of comfort and safety.



Kirwin & Simpson were able to replace all 2,300 chairs over 12 consecutive weekends as the theatre remained open and with no disruption to any performances.



Kirwin & Simpson recreated the original cast iron metalwork through a lengthy process involving our in-house 3D printer; as well as traditional pattern-making and cutting edge drawing packages used to remaster this design from the old standard. The seat foam was upgraded to the latest ProBax® Advanced comfort Technology, promoting durability and supporting patron posture.

The Moquette fabric was specially designed to replicate the original. Renowned theatre consultant John Muir of Foster Wilson Architects led the process of matching the new fabric and carpet colours to that in existing black and white photographs from the 1930's. The pattern and colours were created from newspaper articles and text from the 1930's. The fabric was specially woven to our client's exact pattern

choice and colour, allowing for a completely unique touch to the chair design.

Upon installing the chairs, a section of carpet needed to be removed from the side of a fire exit, revealing a piece of the original fabric that is near-identical to the new.

Everyone involved in the project was incredibly pleased that we were able to achieve this level of detail and overall design that compliments such an iconic theatre.



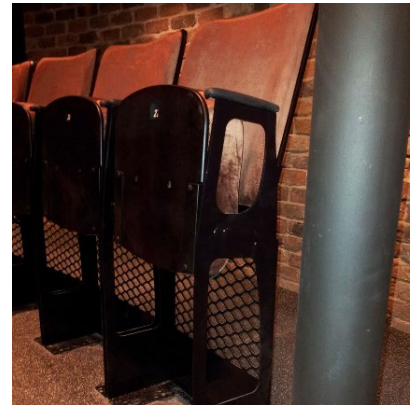


# Project Case Study

LIVERPOOL EVERYMAN THEATRE, LIVERPOOL, U.K. 2014

After ten long years of planning and two years of building, the Liverpool Everyman Theatre opened its doors in 2014. The theatre underwent an extensive £27 million rebuild and refurbishment program that won them the 2014 RIBA Stirling Award for Architecture.

The new Everyman was designed and overseen by architects Haworth Tompkins as a multi-use venue. The intentions behind this are to generate more income with a flexible approach to seating and capacity in the 405-seater auditorium.



Kirwin & Simpson's brief was to retain the style and character of the original seating but bring it up to modern standards of comfort. We were also tasked with building in flexibility.

The need to change the auditorium layout quickly and easily between show runs, meant the chairs we designed had to conform to a uniform size and footprint, whilst also making them fully interchangeable.

Even the specially designed "high-chairs" in the back row can be easily moved and re-fixed using a special floor fixing system designed and manufactured by Kirwin & Simpson.

One of the more unusual features in the Everyman Theatre is seats upholstered with the fabric 'upside down' to create a more 'lived in' look, one of several measures designed to give the auditorium a welcoming but contemporary look and feel

The Everyman seat is a result of close collaboration between the client, architect, theatre consultant and the seat manufacturer and has been a great success.

Gavin Green, Senior Partner at Charcoalblue, said, *"The new owners are delighted with the flexibility and comfort of the seat, it looks great as well!"*

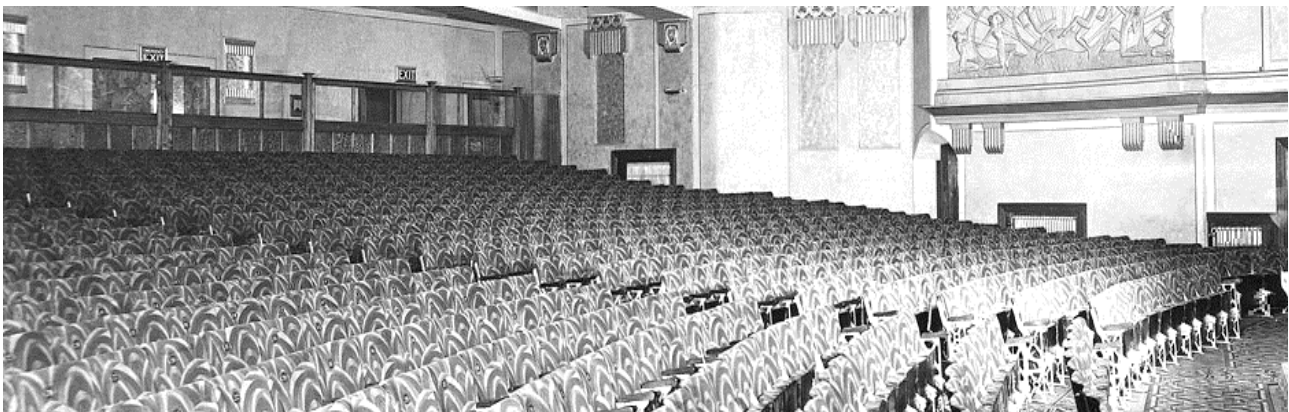


# Project Case Study

STOCKPORT PLAZA, STOCKPORT, U.K.

2014

The Stockport Plaza Super Cinema and Variety Theatre is an award-winning example of the finest in 1932 Art Deco architecture which has been lovingly and painstakingly restored to her opening day condition. This Grade II listed building had spent time as a bingo hall and nightclub before falling derelict and when it came to restoring the interior to its former glory Kirwin & Simpson had little but a grainy black and white image to work from.



Paint samples were taken from the walls and the colours analysed in order to produce fabric shades dyed to match a very bold and distinctive blue and gold pattern.

The seat standards were replicated to incorporate the cross and circle design just about discernible from the historical photos, but with the “finger-trap” eliminated. The overall seat dimensions were increased to allow for today's increased body mass and the Kirwin & Simpson narrow seat envelope allowed capacity to be retained.

Various chair types and styles were designed in conjunction with the venue and theatre consultants to match what was originally installed over 85 years ago. Seat types installed included armed and armless with different stitch detailing on the back along with embroidered numbers.





# Project Case Study

THE KINGS THEATRE, GLASGOW, U.K.

2009



The King's Theatre opened in 1904 and stands on a prominent site on Bath Street, Glasgow. One of Scotland's most historic and significant theatres, King's Theatre Glasgow has played host to top stars and shows ever since. Well known for its Christmas pantomimes, it also provides Glasgow's flourishing amateur groups with a high-profile stage. The theatre continues to present first class shows today from a wide range of genres

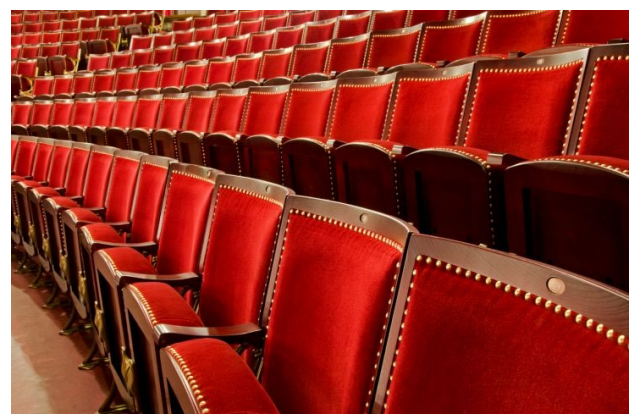
During the 2009 refurbishment overseen by Simpson & Brown architects, Kirwin & Simpson recreate the original Lazarus Chair, bringing the venue up to date in terms of comfort, legroom, and materials.

The Lazarus concept chair designed by Kirwin & Simpson involved framed solid wooden seat backs and seat bases.

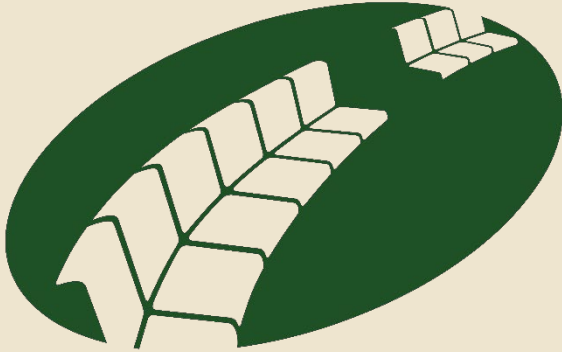


Over 150 individual brass nails were hand tacked into each of the seats. New cast ends were made, and the seats were specifically designed to accommodate the stepping in the upper levels. Importantly, by utilising a design with a narrow front to back seat envelope, legroom for the patrons was increased without compromising on comfort. Seats were made slightly wider than the originals too, accommodating the larger build of 21st Century theatre goers.

**James Haworth, King's Theatre General Manager** said: *"I feel privileged to be working at a theatre steeped in rich history and held in high regard by so many theatre lovers. To see it restored in such a way gives us a glimpse into its glorious past whilst bringing seats and facilities up to modern day standards"*







**Kirwin & Simpson**  
SEATING

**United States Projects**

# Project Case Study

## THEATRESQUARED, FAYETTEVILLE ARKANSAS, USA

2019

TheatreSquared was founded in 2005 in Fayetteville and staged its initial production that same year. In the past decade, the theatre's annual budget has grown from \$160,000 to \$4.3 million, making it one of the larger cultural institutions serving audiences in Northwest Arkansas. As part of a \$34 million capital campaign, the company completed a 50,000 square-foot facility in mid-2019 that includes two performing arts venues as well as offices, apartments, workspaces, and a Café. The project was a collaboration between London-based theatre planners Charcoalblue and New York-based Marvel Architects.



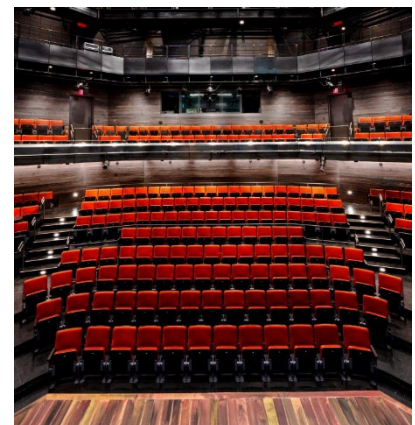
Plans were drawn up to marry perfect acoustics, flawless sightlines with custom made seating, and a reconfigured layout. Kirwin & Simpson developed a derivative of their Fleet Range suitable for the 368 Balcony, Circle and Stalls chairs. In total, 37 seats were removable and a further 2 were fitted with transfer arms for wheelchair spaces. Wall and floor mounted usher seats and portable loose chairs for use in the upper echelons were also designed in a style compatible with the bulk of the fixed seating. A new quick-release system was developed for the removable seating to speed up the process.

To aide sightlines 22 of the chairs were made 50cm (20 inches) taller and a further 18 were made to swivel allowing easy access but facilitating a degree of rotation to improve viewing. Seats were all supplied with sponsor plates to assist with fund raising for the venue.

Installation was co-ordinated with local labour and despite last minute layout changes at the client's request, the finished arrangement was beyond the venue's expectations with 4 additional seating positions found. The multi-point fixing system enabled optimal flexibility and ease of movement from "thrust" to "proscenium" to "into-the-round" configurations.

*"Kirwin & Simpson combine top craftsmanship, scale, and capability with a genuine family feeling of accessibility and a no-compromises commitment to doing the job right. Theatres are complex coordination projects, and whenever issues arose, K&S were quick to deal with them with admirable professionalism and focus. For those who are lucky enough to have K&S on the team, you're in great hands!" -*

**Martin Miller, Executive Director, TheatreSquared**



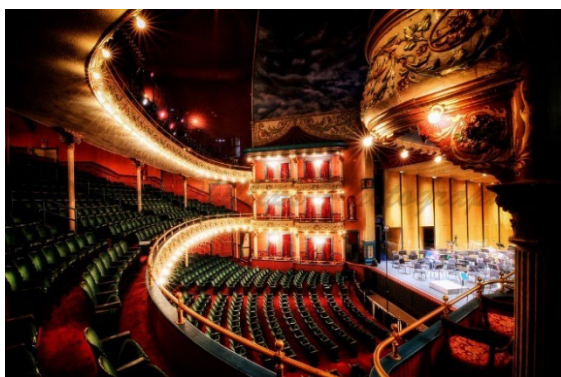
# Project Case Study

## THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE, MACON, GEORGIA, USA

2018

Three quarters of the way through their \$2.9m refurbishment, the management and staff at the Grand Opera House in Macon, Georgia knew they had a seating problem.

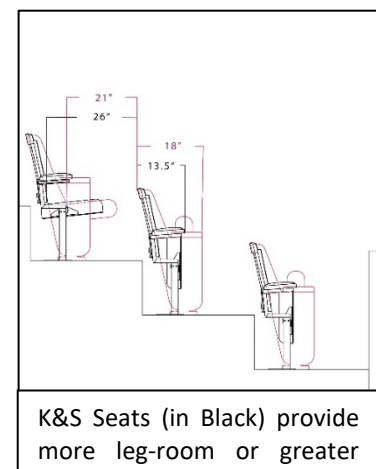
Built in 1884 and following a long period in the last century as a movie house, the venue was restored as a live performance theatre in 1969. However, like many historic Performing Arts venues original configurations were not compatible with dimensions of theatre seats produced today. In this case, once the Balcony seats were occupied, the room to the back of the row in front was far too restrictive. Re-stepping the Balcony was not an option, so with 3 months until opening night, a solution was needed.



*“The supplier of our new seats didn’t really want to help as the balcony only has a 400 capacity and we really were stuck between a rock and a hard place”, said Gram Slaton, Executive Director. “We couldn’t find the money to replace all the new balcony seating, nor could we afford to lose seating capacity or re-step the balcony. Then we were lucky enough to meet the guys from Kirwin & Simpson at the LHAT convention. They were lifesavers”*

K&S have been providing seats for the UK’s leading Performing Arts venues for 74 years and are known for a “Can-do” attitude and the very tight front-to-back seat envelope of their chairs. Clever positioning of the seat brackets means the overall depth of the typical K&S seat cushion remains unchanged whilst the distance from the front of the cushion to the back of seat in front is increased. With the addition of ProBax Comfort Foams the seats receive excellent comfort ratings and save room. *“We adjusted our standard brackets to fit the metalwork in-situ at the Grand Opera House, covered the seats in the fabric they sent and shipped to site a week before opening night”, Alastair Simpson, MD.*

The modified brackets fit most existing seat metalwork found in the US and several LHAT members are currently looking at them as a very financially viable option to either reducing seat numbers or having to re-step Balconies at their venues.





# Project Case Study

HUDSON THEATRE, NEW YORK  
NEW YORK, USA

2017

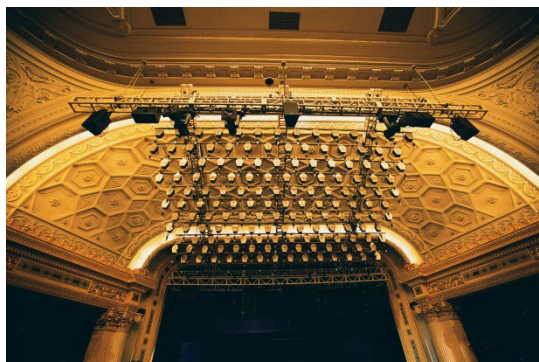


When ATG announced the renovation of New York's 112-year-old Hudson Theatre, they had little idea of the architectural features and history they would uncover along the way.

Granted Landmark status in 1987, design ideas for the Hudson renovation began to change once the construction team initiated work on the venue. As layers of plasterboard, studwork, tiles and paint were removed, many of the original features were exposed. They thought: *Could any of these historical characteristics be maintained and incorporated into the new look Hudson Theatre?*

Owners and architects alike were particularly taken by the ceiling structure which comprised of a series of concentric plaster hexagons, previously hidden under the plasterboard. They had an idea to carry this geometrical design through even to the seating and carpet if possible.

Enter Kirwin & Simpson, bespoke theatre seat makers from the UK, who designed a unique cast iron end for each seat row incorporating the hexagon shape.



Specially moulded ends incorporating row letters and number cut outs were both designed to reflect the hexagonal theme.

Additional modern features such as the narrow seat envelope and ProBax Comfort Foams were also worked into the final classic looking chair allowing an extra row of seats over the original layout with no compromise to leg room or comfort.

*"K&S were able to design and make from scratch end-of-row castings to carry that hexagonal motif. In addition, being bespoke we were able to go for a bold and exciting fabric choice for the seats. In pre-opening tours it's the chairs and colour schemes that have the biggest WOW! factor".* - Eric Paris - General Manger, Hudson Theatre, NYC

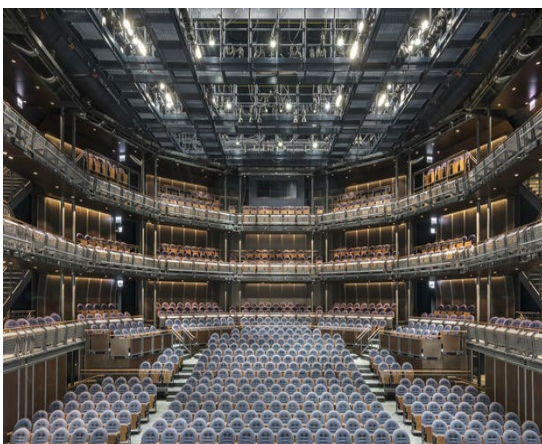
# Project Case Study

## CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATRE, CHICAGO ILLINOIS, USA

2016

The brief for this project was to remodel a former outdoor music venue on Navy Pier into a fully enclosed, flexible auditorium. The new Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier, Chicago now has a unique feature: It can transform.

The timeline was short and the budget lower than other brick-and-mortar venues. Construction began in March 2016, and final costs of construction were \$35 million. This was a close collaboration with the theatre consultants, architects, the clients and the Kirwin & Simpson design team.



The key elements are nine huge seating towers each about the size of a city bus and weighing about 35,000 lbs. Despite their size, only two people are needed to manoeuvre them to create a wide range of stage and seating configurations for audience capacities ranging from 150 to 900 people.

With this degree of interchangeability, it was a major challenge to ensure every seat was correctly adjusted for height, back angle and sight lines and all upholstery components were interchangeable.

The fixing systems also needed special treatment, including the design and installation of a unique “boot”, raising the height of certain seats in key positions.

Most configurations include main floor seating, which bolts onto wooden decking risers set up at various heights, and can be staggered, raked and reconfigured.

The first audience reviews have raved about the facility since its re-opening in September 2017. Press have referred to it as *“the greatest theatre in the world”*.





# Project Case Study

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE, BROOKLYN,  
NEW YORK, USA

2015

Kirwin & Simpson's Portobello Chair was originally designed for St Ann's Warehouse.

The brief was to design a stacking chair with the same level of comfort and similar design as a chair Kirwin & Simpson had made for The Courtyard Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. This freestanding design needed to be used in multiple auditorium layouts, as the venue is known to change the seating layout for a more intimate experience between the actors and the audience.



Every aspect of the frame was carefully designed to ensure the functionality requirements were met and the highest levels of durability were built into the design. The chairs had to be stacked 10-high, lightweight and stable during storage, easily transportable from the auditorium to storage by one person, and needed to connect to the riser and each other by a simple release system.

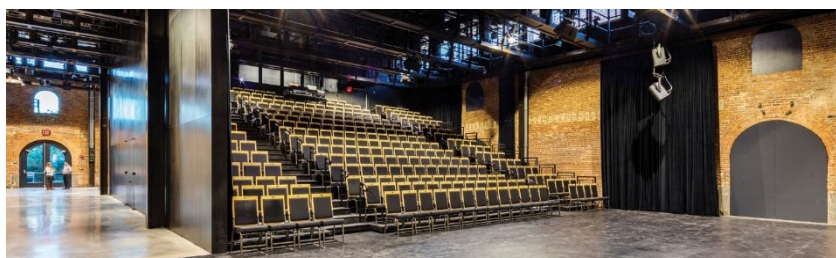


Both aspects had to be quick and easy so the chair layout could be adjusted as efficiently as possible.

The use of a formed ply back and upholstered inner enabled us to build in a lumber support and maximize comfort without having to design a large thick back. The use of ProBax® Seat Foam Technology.

St Ann's wanted a very natural-meets-raw industrial look and feel to the chair, opting for a clear lacquer frame to emphasise the manufacturing marks. We designed recesses in the rear and front faces of the ply back, for sponsor plaques and seat numbers. The plaques and numbers had to be interchangeable for when different auditorium layouts are used. A magnet system and miniature plunger mean the numbers can be easily and quickly changed.

After a year of design and development, Kirwin & Simpson had produced an extremely comfortable, fully functional stacking chair that allows for more intimate seating arrangements.





# Project Case Study

HEAD THEATRE – CENTER STAGE, BALTIMORE,  
MARYLAND, USA

2015



Since opening in 1963, Baltimore Center Stage has welcomed nearly 100,000 people each season to its award-winning facility in the City's historic Mt. Vernon Cultural District.

In 2015, they embarked on a \$32million renovation project for the historic building with the aim of creating more state-of-the-art performance spaces with the best and latest in theatre design and technology. This was the first major refurbishment of the venue in a quarter century and the venue wanted a venue for the next 25 years.

According to Stephen Richard, Centre Stage MD, *"One crucial objective was to turn Center Stage's fourth-floor Head Theatre into a reconfigurable space with multiple seating setups that could change based on show demands."*

The challenge for Kirwin & Simpson was to achieve this with chairs retaining as much of the traditional venue heritage as possible whilst having various fixing points, adjustable angles and heights and meeting modern day regulatory requirements.



Using bespoke chair designs, the 400-seat theatre can now be reconfigured to different sizes and seating plans including a 99-seat theatre useful for new artists and workshopping, a 180-seat configuration used for holding education programs for children ages 8 to 12 and the full capacity. The first season featured three variations of the thrust stage as well as an end stage configuration; theatre-in-the-round followed in Season 2.



The first season featured three variations of the thrust stage as well as an end stage configuration; theatre-in-the-round followed in Season 2.

*"That level of seating flexibility and ingenuity I've never seen," Richard said. "From the Head we will be able to carve out any format we want, the seats are almost like Russian nesting dolls."*

Having survived a devastating fire in 1974, with the help of Kirwin & Simpson the Head has gone on to become the city's leading professional producing theatre with a fitting home to welcome the community.

# Project Case Study

## UNIQUE SEATING UPON REQUEST

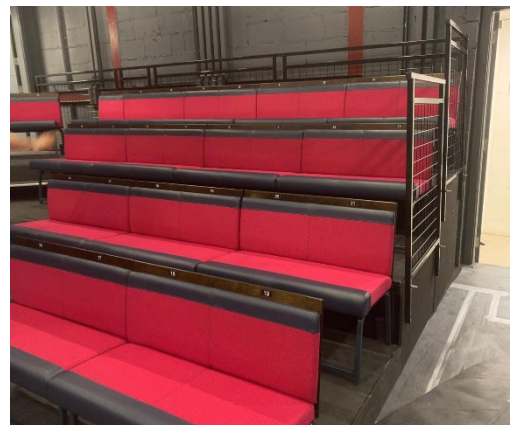
Kirwin & Simpson pride themselves on providing bespoke seating that reflects every need of the customer. As a result, some smaller projects turn to us when the seats they desire are just not available from any other source. Whilst these projects are not significant in the Kirwin & Simpson P&L, they provide opportunities for us to develop new designs and concepts and work with new materials that may help stand us in good stead for future projects.



The Annenberg Space for Photography was one such project, requiring curved benches in two sizes which were capable of nesting together along a wall to give a larger reception area. The Space features several powerfully-themed exhibits a year as well as photography-oriented programming, including lectures, workshops, master classes and family-friendly events. Bespoke benches with seating for 15 were delivered 5,500 miles away to LA for a very tight opening night deadline and have since received rave reviews for practicality and

comfort.

Similarly, when a small private theatre was created out of an existing space in Chelsea, England, dimensions of the bench seating were pre-defined. With nothing commercially available Kirwin & Simpson designed, configured and installed bespoke seating that not only maximised comfort and capacity but still managed to allow the owners design input. The task was made interesting by the need for the benches to be easily removed, wheeled away, and stored on trolleys by a 2-man team. The venue is now successfully open and used for events of up to 50 people.



Private cinemas with unconventional dimensions and layouts often want seating resembling traditional styles but that need bespoke components. In short, If you want seats that you cannot get anywhere else, regardless of distance, venue or style - come to Kirwin & Simpson.

