

Filmhouse, Edinburgh

RICHARD
MURPHY
ARCHITECTS



1 - View from Cambridge Street

The project to build a new Filmhouse in Festival Square can be traced to 2004 when Richard Murphy proposed the idea to the Filmhouse Board. That design, which was exhibited at the Venice Biennale in the same year, never progressed to a planning application. Since then the Edinburgh International Film Festival and the Filmhouse have merged to form the "Centre for the Moving Image" and in 2019 the new Board commissioned two feasibility studies from the practice: one looking at a complete rebuild of the existing Filmhouse site on Lothian Road and the second to look again at Festival Square. The Board decided to progress with the second option. The City Council has agreed to lease the site to the Filmhouse and to the principle of constructing a Filmhouse there.

The project has three objectives:

Firstly it is an acknowledgement that film is the only art form without its "temple" in the city. Music. painting.

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Mostly, it is an acknowledgment that film is the only art form that does not "come" in the city: music, painting, portraiture, artefacts, archaeology etc. all have their prominent monuments but film, arguably the most popular and quintessentially 20th century art form exists behind the facade of a 19th century church (which itself is in much need of refurbishment).

Secondly, it is an attempt to solve the "problem" of Festival Square, a public space created in the 1980's from a former railway goods yard as part of a wider master-plan. The Square is formed by two office buildings to north and south, the Sheraton Grand Hotel to the west (the Sheraton Hotel has two entrances and this is its minor entrance) and Lothian Road the east. The Square is arguably Edinburgh's first public square (all the others were conceived as shared private gardens) but it is usually a deserted space. Re-landscaped twice, later developments to the west have had negligible effect on through traffic. It occasionally hosts a tent for promotions or a performance but these fail to populate any external the space. A new Filmhouse, being the only Arts building that opens its doors from 900am to 100am for continual performances has the potential to bring life to the space. The City Council have also expressed their intention to traffic calm the adjacent section of Lothian Road in order to unite the square with the re-landscaped space outside the Usher Hall.

And thirdly, the Filmhouse want to increase dramatically their activity as well as their prominence. The proposal is to create a "community of film"...watching film, discussing film, educating about film and making film all happening alongside each other in one building. So the brief now includes seven auditoria totalling just under 1000 seats, educational rooms, festival spaces, offices both for administration and film production, outdoor cinema on the roof and cafe, bar and restaurant.

The project design has started from the objective of making a minimal footprint within the square and, acknowledging the "wider square intention," it deliberately aligns with the entrance to the Usher Hall. An "object building," in the square (in the great tradition), the slender footprint of the building takes just 14% of the public space and frames the asymmetrical entrance of the Hotel. The hotel itself is "reset" with a much more prominent staircase including disabled ramp and a terrace outside the existing restaurant. The form also minimises the interruption of Castle views from the hotel. The main entrance faces the Usher Hall with two subsidiary entrances to west and east. A three story cafe/ bar with box office and shop constitute the social heart of the building. The entrance is at the middle level and the cafe is located along both the main elevations with external seating to both north and south. It also extends to a mezzanine above with a roof terrace above the main entrance. Downstairs is the larger bar seen immediately on entry but also through paving glazing on both east and west sides. This leads to educational rooms, festival centre and at the next level down a concourse which gives access to six of the auditoria. These vary from a 300 seat cinema to a flat floor retractable experimental space. Entering any of the auditoria cinemas goes pass through a shaft of space lit by the paving lights above. The lowest level is reserved for kitchens and plant and "green room" for visiting film celebrities.

A seventh auditorium with its own foyer is at the next level above the cafe. This auditoria is designed for "special events" and for hire to outside organisations and, unusually, has a window to Usher Hall and Castle which is replaced by the screen when a film is about to start and will reappear at the end. When not in use the auditorium can be seen from Lothian Road reminding passers-by of the core function of the building. The seats can be retracted for flat floor events. Two floors of offices are above this, one for administration of Filmhouse and film festival and one for film production companies. Above that is a restaurant with external roof terrace and finally a roof top bar which can be used for external film shows in the summer months as well as the main social space of

the Film Festival.

A lift core and stair towards the rear form the main vertical circulation but two other staircase on the elevations also connect auditorium 7 to the foyer. A bank of 4 dumb waiters and a staff lift connect two kitchens in the basement to miscellaneous serveries on seven different levels. Externally the building is clad mostly in etched

glass with changing lighting and includes two giant screens to show changing images of films and two information screens detailing what's currently showing.

Other Details

Client	Centre for the Moving Image
Architects	Richard Murphy Architects; Richard Murphy, James Mason, Calum Dalgetty, Graeme Armet, Clarke Zhou
Structural Engineers	Arup
Services Engineers	Arup
Fire Engineers	Jeremy Gardiner Associates
Cinema Consultants	Arup
Landscape Consultants	Open Optimised Environments
Cost Consultants	Gardiner and Theobald



Press

12 March 2020	Edinburgh Filmhouse has revealed plans for a new 6 screen home in the City's Festival Square	Cinemabang
12 March 2020	Edinburgh's Festival Square must not become like Piccadilly Circus – Daniel Johnson MSP	Edinburgh Evening News
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival: Plans for hub tower unveiled	Arezona Family
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Filmhouse 'will be 21st century temple for film'	STV
16 March 2020	Here's the ideal site for new Filmhouse tower – Helen Martin	Edinburgh Evening News
14 March 2020	Scotland: The 11-story cinema complex will honor the Edinburgh Film Festival	Londynek
14 March 2020	Please don't screw-up Edinburgh's film future, support the Filmhouse plans	Think Scotland
13 March 2020	The Edinburgh Briefing podcast: 'The Times Square of Edinburgh'	Edinburgh Evening News
12 March 2020	Filmhouse plan is too high for Edinburgh's skyline – John McLellan	Edinburgh Evening News
12 March 2020	Heritage watchdog gives cautious welcome to Edinburgh's 'exciting but risky' film temple vision	Edinburgh Evening News
11 March 2020	Edinburgh unveils vision of new £50m 'film temple' on Lothian Road	Edinburgh Evening News
11 March 2020	Edinburgh's Filmhouse Unveils Plans for Major Cinema and Festival Venue	Variety
11 March 2020	Video: New 11-storey cinema tower planned for Edinburgh public square	Scottish Construction Now
11 March 2020	Artist's impressions of £50m Edinburgh Filmhouse plan	Eye For Film
11 March 2020	New plans revealed for Edinburgh Filmhouse	North Edinburgh News
11 March 2020	Edinburgh's new £50m complex 'will be film festival home'	The National
11 March 2020	Edinburgh's Filmhouse unveils plans for a new landmark film and screen hub	The List
11 March 2020	Plans afoot to turn Edinburgh's Filmhouse into Scottish national film hub	Long Room
11 March 2020	Richard Murphv reveals £50m 'temple for film'	Architects' Journal

Date	Article Title	Source
	concept in Edinburgh	
11 March 2020	Plans afoot to turn Edinburgh's Filmhouse into Scottish national film hub	Screen Daily
11 March 2020	A new home for Filmhouse – consultation begins today	Edinburgh Reporter
11 March 2020	Edinburgh unveils vision of new £50m 'film temple' on Lothian Road	The Scotsman
11 March 2020	Edinburgh's Filmhouse planning ambitious new six-screen cinema	The Skinny
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival: Plans for hub tower unveiled	The US Breaking News
11 March 2020	11-level 'temple for film' set for Edinburgh debut	Urban Realm
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival: Plans for hub tower unveiled	Myglnews
11 March 2020	£50m plan for new Filmhouse in Edinburgh	Daily Business
11 March 2020	Edinburgh film festival unveil plans for £50m movie centre to replace Filmhouse	Edinburgh Live
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Filmhouse revives plans for towering cinema in unused public square	The Herald
11 March 2020	Edinburgh's Filmhouse announces £50m plans for a new building in Festival Square	Forth One
11 March 2020	Take a virtual journey through the new £50m Edinburgh 'film temple'	Edinburgh Evening News
11 March 2020	Bold New Landmark Project to Deliver the Future of Filmhouse, Home to Edinburgh International Film Festival	Banterflix
11 March 2020	Plans unveiled for six-screen Edinburgh 'temple to film'	Insider
11 March 2020	Edinburgh film festival organisers submit plan for £50m movie centre	The Guardian
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival: Plans for hub tower unveiled	BBC News Online
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival organisers outline plans for huge £50m cinema complex	Far Out Magazine
11 March 2020	How Edinburgh film industry could join international premier league – Brian Ferguson	The Scotsman
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Film Festival: Plans for hub tower unveiled	ireportnews
11 March 2020	Edinburgh Filmhouse International Film	Deadline

11 March 2020	Edinburgh Filmhouse, International Film Festival's Primary Venue, Planning Major \$65M Re-Development	Deedee
11 March 2020	Festival's blockbuster plans for new cinema	The Times

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