

Dunard Centre

Edinburgh, UK 2017–

Edinburgh is a city with a rich cultural heritage that plays host to the world's largest performing arts festival every year. The Dunard Centre will address the long identified need for a purpose-built, medium-sized performance venue in the city, serving as an Edinburgh base for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and providing a new space for a range of musical performances. In addition to the main, 1,000-seat auditorium the venue will offer a 200-seat studio for performance, recording and rehearsals, as well as delivering an educational outreach programme. Upon completion, it will be Edinburgh's first dedicated new space for music and the performing arts in 100 years.

The new venue is located within Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site at the eastern end of its Georgian New Town. It replaces an unremarkable office building and abuts the rear of the Grade-A listed Dundas House (1771) on St. Andrew Square. On an urban level the building seeks to do two things: resolve the immediate urban conditions of the site, which is relatively concealed and at the intersection of several distinct neighbourhoods; and provide a fitting terminus at the end of George Street, the New Town's principal axis, in a position where a grand public building was originally intended to be built.

The building's functions are distributed within three simple, compact and intersecting volumes. The concert hall sits in the centre of the site within a pure oval volume; its shape and scale dictated by the acoustic requirements. Its elliptical form is topped by a shallow dome – an urban gesture which terminates the axial view east along George Street, with Dundas House prominently in the foreground. The venue's overlapping lower volumes are orthogonal in form and house its ancillary and public functions. These help to reduce the overall mass of the building and anchor it within the scale, geometry and atmosphere of the surrounding streets and neighbouring buildings. Overall, the venue seeks to form an urban composition centred around Dundas House, in balance with the prominent civic structures at the opposite end of George Street.

The façades of the new venue relate to the architecture of the New Town in both their order and materiality. The expression of a base, middle and top, found on other neoclassical buildings, is picked up by the composition of the venue's massing while the texture and tone of its concrete picks up the various sandstones found in the New Town. The metal-clad dome completes the crown of the building, announcing its public nature and aligning with the other civic buildings across the city.

In vertical arrangement, the main concert hall is lifted above the ground, freeing the entire entrance level for an open foyer with three entrances addressing the different approaches. This continuous ground plane increases permeability across the previously closed off site and seamlessly unites the venue with the diverse urban conditions that surround it. The foyer will be a new public room for the city, open outside of performance hours. It encompasses all the main public functions of the venue: information, ticketing, cloakroom and café, and can host informal performances, exhibitions and events. A fourth entrance, directly from the grand domed banking hall of Dundas House can be used for special gatherings or ceremonial openings.

From the foyer staircases lead up to the main concert hall or down to the studio at basement level. Corridors wrap around the main auditorium at each level, providing access, acoustic isolation and break-out space. Around the upper level, a colonnaded promenade directly below the dome offers visitors a meeting space with 360 degree views of the city. Terraces to the north and south, on the roofs of the secondary volumes provide open-air gathering spaces.

Competition	2017
Project start	2017
Gross floor area	10,000m ²
Client	IMPACT Scotland
Architect	David Chipperfield Architects London
Directors	David Chipperfield, Louise Dier, Billy Prendergast
Project director	Alasdair Graham
Project architect	Johannes Feder
Team	Ricardo Alvarez, Freddie Armitage, Matt Ball, Nick Beissengroll, Bernardo Criscuoli, Micha Gamper, Clemens Gerritzen, Jochen Glemser, Sofia Gozzi, Christopher Harvey, Rory Hughes, Daniel Itten, Craig Johnston, Davide Maggio, Antonio Mazzolai, Matthias Odazzi, Charlie Proctor, Simonpietro Salini, Jana Schwalb, Alban Wagener, Richard Youel
Competition team	Freddie Armitage, Alasdair Graham, Craig Johnston, Matthias Odazzi, Charlie Proctor, Hellmer Rahms, Jana Schwalb
Executive architect	Reiach and Hall Architects
Landscape architect	Gross Max
Structural engineer	Whitby Wood
Services engineer	Arup
Lighting consultant	Arup
Façade consultant	Thornton Tomasetti
Theatre consultants	Theatre Projects
Acoustic consultants	Nagata Acoustics (hall and studio), Arup (venue)
Fire protection	Atelier Ten
Quantity surveyor	Turner & Townsend
Project management	Turner & Townsend



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