



Belfast Grand Opera House and the Royal & Derngate Theatres in Northampton Receive Prestigious Industry Recognition

Two of Arts Team's recent projects have been recognised at the Northern Ireland and East Midlands RICS Awards 2008. The extension to the Grade B listed Belfast Grand Opera House won the Community Benefit Category at the Northern Ireland Awards, and Northampton's Royal & Derngate Theatres Development received a Commendation in the Building Conservation Category at the East Midland Awards.

The RICS Awards celebrate the diversity of talent behind building projects. Projects are entered in four categories: Building Conservation, Community Benefit, Sustainability and Regeneration.

Arts Team's new extension to the **Belfast Grand Opera House** (affectionately known as Act II), beat other high profile Belfast projects to win the **Community Benefit Award** at the **RICS Northern Ireland Awards 2008**. The award recognises the interaction between a project and the community it serves, taking into consideration local community feedback, the level of community involvement, responsible use and public access.

Belfast Grand Opera House Act II brings Frank Matcham's original Grade B listed building into the 21st century, and has created an all-day destination venue. It houses a 150-seat studio theatre plus casual performance spaces and also provides new foyer space and improved front-of-house facilities.



Northampton's **Royal & Derngate Theatres** Development received a Commendation in the **Building Conservation** category of the **RICS East Midland Awards 2008**. The project unites the two auditoria (the Victorian Theatre Royal being Grade II listed) with a new front-of-house space defining a new entrance and identity for the building. Judging of the Building Conservation category takes into consideration preservation of important architectural features, use of traditional materials and techniques, research, environmental considerations, long term prospects and sustainability.

Barry Pritchard, Arts Team Principal Director, said *"Our recent achievements at the RICS Awards highlight Arts Team's commitment to achieving successful community interaction for all our public projects, including the Belfast Royal Opera House. We are also extremely proud of all the hard work that has gone into making the Royal & Derngate Theatres Development such a triumph, especially in terms of conservation and restoration work."*

-ENDS-

For further information, please contact Lucy Cooper on 020 7480 1500 or lacooper@rhwl.com.

Notes to editors:

- Arts Team is a part of Renton Howard Wood Levin LLP specialising in arts and education buildings.
- Current Arts Team projects include a new theatre and entertainment centre for Aylesbury and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.
- Visit www.artsteam.com.