Project: Salisbury Playhouse

Venue Details and History

Salisbury Playhouse was built in 1976 and is the only producing theatre in Wiltshire, located in the town of Salisbury. It is a multi-use building-based venue operated by Wiltshire Creative.

The Salisbury Playhouse comprises the 517-seat Main House and the 149-seat Salberg studio theatre, a rehearsal room, and a community and education space. It does not currently hold a listed status.

It is part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations and receives regular funding from Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council. Plays in the Main House are often own or co-produced work, of which there are between eight and ten a year. The Playhouse also houses touring productions and a variety of events as part of the Salisbury International Arts Festival.

The venue was typical of the regional theatres constructed in the 1970s with a concrete frame and brick infill. The venue was extended in 2010. The new building provided a new rehearsal space and a community room. The unusual triangular extension plan follows the geometry of the site and the existing building and accommodates the footprint of the theatre's hexagonal main stage within the rehearsal room plan. The new community room provides accommodation for performances, education work, lectures, seminars, workshops, board-meetings, and social events. The extension received the Salisbury Civic Society Conservation Award in 2010.

In terms of general site constraints relevant to the venue's location, it is important to note that the Salisbury Playhouse is in the city centre of Salisbury and as such may be subject to several planning restrictions.

Its adjacency to the Maltings development may also pose restrictions on what is feasible in terms of alterations to the primary and external plant which may need to be considered. However, the adjacency to the Maltings also poses an opportunity with regards to the potential for waste heat recovery, new district energy networks and shared plant & infrastructure which could help both properties reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Home Survey Tool Output

A Display Energy Certificate (DEC) is not currently available for the Salisbury Playhouse, but once obtained it can be used to benchmark and monitor the impact of any future works on the building's overall energy rating.

As a rule, achieving Net Zero Carbon performance on an existing 1970's venue is not an easy task. However, working towards a target of Net Zero Carbon in operation is a manageable and achievable process.

Buro Happold's engineering consultancy team deployed the digital Home Survey Tool by inputting information associated with the key features of the venue in order to detect appropriate "lean, clean, and green" improvements.

In the case of the Salisbury Playhouse based on the venue's location, existing construction, and age amongst a range of potential carbon & energy improvement measures the Home Survey Tool identified the following key fabric and services' upgrade opportunities:

- Insulation improvements to walls & roof
- Addition of heat recovery to ventilation
- Addition of CO2 monitoring & variable speed fans to ventilation systems
- Replacement of existing boilers and cooling with heat pumps for heating & cooling
- Building controls enhancements

Continues...

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Theatre Green Book Case Study

Physical Site Survey

Following the initial application of the Home Survey Tool, Buro Happold's team visited the Salisbury Playhouse on 17th November 2021. The team spent the day on site reviewing all aspects of the venue to gain a first-hand understanding of its construction, operation, and condition. At the time of visit the building was operational, but elements of the venue such as the catering facilities were closed due to the Covid pandemic restrictions.

In addition to visually inspecting the building and engineering systems the Buro Happold team spent time with the facilities and operational teams. This allowed the engineers to understand the subtle nuances of the building's operation from different perspectives which added to the insight given in the resulting subsequent reports.

This included considering what was working well, what needed improving, and what key opportunities there were in any future aspirations for the venue. This first-hand feedback fed into the report and resulted in a series of further recommendations for the venue including:

- Improve the extent of existing controls infrastructure
- Replace / upgrade existing hot water systems
- Review existing heating, ventilation, and electrical plant
- Review existing stage house and workshop heating
- Emergency lighting and fire strategy reviews

Conclusions/Recommendations

The common theme across both digital and physical analysis appears to be the **Building Controls.**

The Home Survey Tool identified opportunities for improvements in building fabric and building controls, such as the addition of insulation and CO2 monitoring and variable speed fans to facilitate automatic control of fresh air. However, the physical site survey identified further opportunities to improve thermal comfort whilst using a more modern, energy efficient plant.

In addition to opportunities to modernise the existing theatre's plant, both studies identified the potential to improve and expand the controls system capability. Other findings included the expansion of the controls' system to offer more comprehensive coverage of local air conditioning as well as enhanced energy metering opportunities.

In addition to the above, providing better monitoring of hot water generation systems and considering alternative heat pump based hot water system options will also offer improvements to the building's operational efficiency.

Building Controls | Building Fabric | Air Leakage | Dated Plant | Record Information

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Home Survey Tool >