



## PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 5 October 2018

### Brewhouse ambitions being realised

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) have announced the appointment of MICA Architects to redevelop The Brewhouse Theatre & Arts Centre on the Coal Orchard site.

The news was revealed today (Friday 5 October) during a visit to the riverside venue by the Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC, the newly appointed Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

TDBC who own the arts centre and the operator TTA, have been working on plans to expand and revitalise the 70s building into a flagship, multi-purpose arts venue fit for generations to come.

MICA is a leading architectural practice responsible for the Southbank Masterplan, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, Fairfield Halls restoration, National Maritime Museum and Horniman Museum in the UK. **MICA will work in partnership with theatre and acoustic specialist, Sound Space Vision, whose international portfolio includes Theatre Royal (Bath), Dubai Opera House and Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts (Toronto, Canada).**

Cllr Mark Edwards, whose portfolio includes the arts, culture and business, said: *"This investment represents the council's commitment to regenerating Taunton Town Centre and its appreciation of the positive cultural, economic and social impact that such arts projects have on people living, working, visiting and studying in the region. These plans play a central part in the regeneration of the Coal Orchard creating a vibrant and thriving centre on the River Tone."*

The improved venue will include an enlarged main auditorium and flexible studio theatre to enable a greater programme of live performances, with improved acoustics and better facilities for national touring productions. The revitalised arts centre will wrap around parts of the existing building, working in harmony to preserve the adjoining listed 18<sup>th</sup> century house. This will provide a range of new spaces including performing and visual art studios, cinema, cafe and gallery while making the most of the river frontage and creating the potential for pop-up performances and events.

TTA are already in talks with several service providers and arts organisations who are anticipated to reside in or utilise the rejuvenated facility, creating a thriving cultural hub in the heart of Taunton.

Vanessa Lefrancois, Chief Executive of TTA, said: *"I am in no doubt that this redevelopment project, will unlock Taunton's potential and act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the County Town. We are confident MICA and their partner Sound Space Vision will deliver the Council's and TTA's shared aspiration for this exciting development. Such projects require*

*thoughtful consideration and investment, in order for our communities to reap the significant cultural, social and economic benefits they can deliver. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with TDBC to deliver a beautiful, bespoke, multi-purpose arts centre that the people of Somerset will be immensely proud of and enjoy.”*

Stuart Cade, MICA Director, said: “*We relish the opportunity to work with Taunton Deane Borough Council and the Taunton Theatre Association to realise their ambitions for this beautiful site by the River Tone. MICA bring expertise in performing arts, in historic building, in public realm, and in leading wider project teams on complex cultural projects, with proven success in delivery - on time and to budget.. As a team, we work across the UK embedding ourselves in our client’s location and context, taking pride in the co-production of their aspirations to create uplifting environments for local communities.*”

The capital cost for the project is fixed at £12million and the project is planned to be delivered by autumn 2022.

## **ENDS**

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