

# DUNFERMLINE, FIFE

Dunfermline has a population of just over 50,000. The capital of Scotland until the 17th Century, Dunfermline was birthplace to kings of Scotland and is the last resting place of King Robert the Bruce. The town retains features of its medieval past in its Abbey, Palace and Abbott House. It has a proud association with the 19th Century industrialist and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, who was born in the town. Dunfermline was the world's leading centre of linen damask during the 19th Century. Today, amongst the town's major employers are BSkyB, Amazon, FMC Technologies and the Nationwide Building Society. Dunfermline is expanding, most notably on the Eastern edge of the town in Duloch and the 'Dunfermline Eastern Expansion' where over 4,000 houses have been built over the past 10 years.

The Alhambra Theatre opened in 1922 as a venue for theatre and cinema. It was a 'cinema only' in the 1960s and later became a bingo hall. The large, brick building, which holds audiences of 1,200, fell into disuse until being purchased by Linklater Ltd, in 2006. A private sector trust carried out a phased renovation and re-opening of the venue (first shows in 2007), making improvements when funding allowed.

The Alhambra Theatre based its initial programming on 'simple to stage' comedy and rock 'n' roll, which could attract large audiences (early acts included Jimmy Carr, Ed Byrne, KT Turnstall, Kaiser Chiefs etc) and tribute acts. The venue has extended its programming to host both National Theatre and Scottish Opera. There is a children's theatre school and various community activities plus an annual pantomime.

Biggar Economics (2013) estimated that the Alhambra had contributed £4.6 million to the Fife economy; and £4.9 million Scotland in its first five years. The study also noted that the theatre had contributed to 'a sense of identity and place; a difference in people's opinion of Dunfermline; civic pride and had made Dunfermline a more vibrant place.

## BECOMING AWESOMESTOW

11–26 April

A research project by Julie Ramage and Dr Lorna Hards

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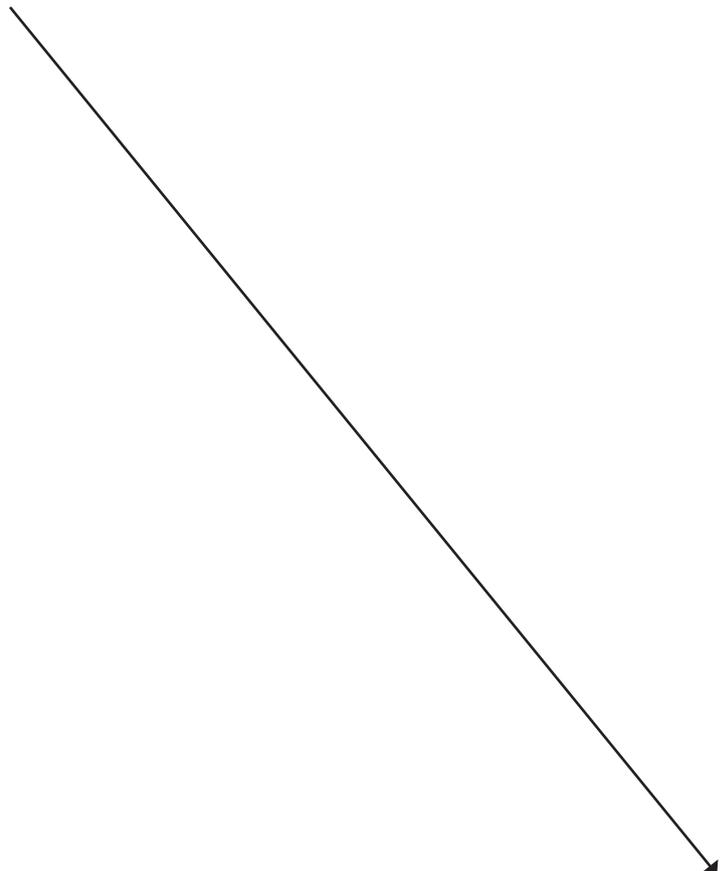
11–26 April 2015

Ground Floor Corridor, Reid Building, The Glasgow School of Art,  
164 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G36RT

Open: Mon–Sun 10am–4.30pm

**Nesta** THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

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**CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS**

- Theatre building empty and disused
- Growing population in the town but perceived lack of cultural provision
- Shortage of venues for community theatre groups and larger scale live productions
- Empty shops in Canmore Street and the Maygate
- Lack of footfall in this area
- Night-time economy focused around alcohol and binge-drinking

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVENTION**

- Improve the condition of the theatre building and bring it into use
- Establish a profitable business from the theatre
- Provide a venue for community theatre groups and for larger scale live productions
- Improve Canmore Street and the Maygate

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

- Renovating the theatre will make it fit for purpose
- A large, high quality theatre will be able to attract large scale talent and shows
- Theatre audiences will spend money with nearby restaurants and shops
- Local community will become engaged in new range of activities
- Contributing to a better place to live, work and go out

**INPUTS**

- Private sector investment through the theatre trust
- In-kind support from local supporters, volunteers and press etc
- Council and public sector does not invest until 2014

**ACTIVITIES**

- Renovation of the theatre building fabric and interior
- Programming the space with national companies and major shows and visiting artists
- Theatre school, community activities and use by amateur groups
- Marketing and promotion locally and across the region

**IMPACT**

- Improvement in the cultural offer with range of high quality productions visiting on a regular basis
- Existing theatre groups take on larger scale productions and new groups established with greater participation
- Improved appearance of Canmore Street and Maygate with larger footfall
- Emerging night-time economy built on culture and music
- Enthusiasm for creative and cultural projects and further building renovation from creatives and with council support

**OUTCOMES**

- Profitable theatre company
- New 'lifestyle' businesses opening and improved choice of restaurants and bars
- Improved general appearance of the area
- Neighbouring food and drink businesses offer tie-in events and offers and report increase in sales

**OUTPUTS**

- Building renovated to a high standard
- Visitors to Dunfermline town centre on show nights
- Employment and ticket sales at the theatre
- Some of the previously empty shops occupied
- Increased footfall in the Canmore Street/ Maygate area in the evenings