

PRESS RELEASE

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Work starts on the Mayflower Gantry development

Work is now underway on the first stage of construction at the new Mayflower Gantry development.

This, the first of two construction stages sees the Mayflower Theatre receiving a new “get in” & scene dock facility on the western side of the theatre allowing easier access, and ensuring facilities are up to date and can cope with the new demands from touring productions. This will also improve the aesthetic of the surrounding area as the get-in and get-out of large scale sets, lighting and costumes etc. will be housed within a new acoustically tuned scene dock. The Theatre’s technical staff will also benefit as they will be able to work in safe and dry conditions improving and updating their working practices. This state of the art transformation to the Theatre will ease the movement of larger productions available pre and post the West End and furthermore boost the cultural heritage of the City

Dennis Hall, Chief Executive for The Mayflower Theatre said, ““I am delighted that this major building project in the City is well under way, the fact that we are getting this exciting and modern facility will update the working practices of the theatre stage crew and as equally important the land at the rear of the theatre is now released for much needed affordable homes for the City. These are indeed exciting times and although we are now some 6 weeks into a 12 week project our Box Office and internet sales facility is available to book for a fantastic Autumn season of productions.”

Cllr Royston Smith Cabinet Member for Economic Development Added:

“The Gantry represents an important investment in Southampton’s infrastructure and is integral to its renaissance vision. It will boost the city’s economy as the Mayflower Theatre is able for the first time - to open its doors to the big West End Shows by the building of an enclosed lorry dock. The development also provides work for the local contractor Drew Smith who has helped drive this project forward and brings much needed affordable accommodation. The Gantry is an excellent example of what the council and its partners can achieve in hard times and how it is working to create a future for the city.”

The second stage of the build will see 115 flats being constructed for much needed affordable housing on the site fronting West Park Road behind the Mayflower Theatre; providing affordable housing in a central city location with excellent transport links.

This landmark development - which has been 3 years in the making - is the product of a successful partnership between Atlantic Housing, Drew Smith, The Mayflower Theatre and Southampton City Council.

The site, owned by Southampton City Council was initially discussed with Drew Smith for its development potential. Southampton City Council were keen to see the site mainly developed for affordable housing, and Atlantic Housing came on board to ultimately ‘front’ the project as a member of the Council’s ‘Southampton Affordable Housing Partnership’(which is tasked with building 2000 new affordable homes in the city by 2012).

Hazel Warwick Group Development Director for First Wessex of which Atlantic Housing is part said:

“This is an exciting opportunity for Atlantic Housing to deliver a much needed mixed tenure, affordable housing scheme in central Southampton that also supports major improvements for the theatre and the cultural heritage of the City.”

Stuart Munro, Managing Director of the Drew Smith Group, which has built thousands of affordable homes across the south in the last decade added:

“The Gantry project was the culmination of three years’ hard work to bring all partner organisations together.

“Reaching the target could not have come at a better time for the city, while other building work is in decline; this project allows us to deliver 200 jobs over three years and 115 new homes to Southampton.

“Drew Smith celebrates the 20th anniversary of its founding in the city this year and this project has to be one of our most significant achievements. It helps fulfil our long term goal of sharing our prosperity with our own community.”

Cllr Phil Williams Cabinet Member for Housing and Local Services

explained:

“This development ticks all the boxes. It brings 115 new homes; an extension to the Mayflower theatre and by implication will provide much needed jobs for people in the construction industry. I am pleased the development is going ahead. It is a good example of how innovative schemes can benefit residences and business.”

The flats were designed by Hampshire based Architects Kenn Scaddan, local engineers Upton McGougan are working on the infrastructure elements of the site, with grant funding from the Homes & Communities Agency and Employers Agent Baqus Denley King. The allocations for new homes will be obtained through Southampton City Councils choice-based lettings scheme and Homes in Hants.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

First Wessex Housing Group manages around 17,000 affordable homes primarily in Hampshire and with some activity in Surrey.

The group comprises Atlantic Housing Limited, First Atlantic Housing, Pavilion Housing Association, Portsmouth Housing Association, Fernhill Care Limited and Wessex Property Limited.

Atlantic Housing and First Atlantic Housing: provide a full range of affordable housing including rented, supported, shared ownership and key worker housing. A large support portfolio includes housing for older people, extra-care housing, dementia care housing, housing for people with learning disabilities, people recovering from mental illness and some specialist accommodation. They cover a geographic area spanning Eastleigh, Southampton, Winchester and the New Forest.

www.firstwessex.org

The Mayflower Theatre is a charitable trust and does not receive any funding or subsidies from outside bodies. The Mayflower is also the third largest theatre in the UK, and presents a mix of the very best touring productions, West End shows, and world-renowned Ballet & Opera to the people of the south.

Drew Smith Group: A local Building Contractor & Developer based in Hampshire for the past 20 years. Building both, private residential and commercial property as well as Local Authority works, including refurbishment and maintenance of schools and hospitals.

The core of the business is development of affordable housing for various registered social landlords. There is also a private residential arm to the business for property sold on the open market.

www.drewsmith.co.uk

