



BENEDETTIARCHITECTS

**PRESS ENQUIRIES**

Theresa Simon for  
Claire Curtice Publicists  
theresa@theresasimon.com  
+44 (0) 7976 766221  
[Download press kit here](#)

## PRESS RELEASE

# MAJOR BAFTA HEADQUARTERS REFURBISHMENT: BENEDETTI ARCHITECTS SCHEME STARTS ON SITE

195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN, UK

07/2019

Work is commencing on site in July for Benedetti Architects' substantial refurbishment and expansion of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) headquarters at 195 Piccadilly.

The Grade II listed building, which the charity has occupied since 1974, is an architectural gem in The Crown Estate portfolio. Originally built in 1883 as galleries and multi-purpose event spaces for the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, a medium then overlooked by the neighbouring Royal Academy of Arts, 195 Piccadilly has now become synonymous with BAFTA's home. BAFTA has commissioned Benedetti Architects to fully reconfigure and expand the building so it can double its charitable work to support emerging talent and continue to flourish as the centre of excellence for the moving image arts in film, games and television.

The 2,050sqm building currently houses BAFTA members' spaces, the 227-seat Princess Anne theatre, BAFTA's boardroom, meeting rooms and offices, as well as multi-purpose charitable and commercial event spaces, which help generate revenue to support BAFTA's wide-ranging charitable programmes. The new scheme creates fit-for-purpose spaces with greater flexibility, balancing members' needs with raising income and increasing public access. At the heart of the refurbishment is the Learning and New Talent floor, which is central to the charity's work, enabling it to support the inspiration and training of young creatives in film, television and games.

Benedetti Architects' scheme doubles the building's capacity by significantly increasing the usable area and reconfiguring the entire infrastructure to improve energy performance and user comfort. The architects' unifying interior design will enhance BAFTA's unique character, whilst celebrating the building's historic assets. Benedetti's inventive reworking and consideration of various combinations of spaces, volumes, views and sequential movement enable robust commercial adaptability and the opportunity for theatrical 'reveals' and special events to aid the charity's long-term cultural and financial sustainability.

BAFTA partners with world-leading industry specialists to ensure the architects and consultants are working with the cutting edge of technical innovation and expertise, such as redesigning the Princess Anne cinema theatre to achieve the UK's best moving image experience. The most striking architectural and revelatory aspect of Benedetti's proposal is the creation of a new top floor that restores, raises and reintegrates two large Victorian rooflight spaces and decorative plasterwork, hidden for more than 40 years. The historic plasterwork will be raised three metres and enclosed with innovative, high-performance,

'smart' reactive liquid-crystal glazing (a UK first) to create an entirely new, generously-proportioned top floor, with spectacular views over St James's Churchyard.

Other aspects of the scheme include the transformation and repurposing of existing spaces to provide: a second cinema theatre, banqueting hall, an entire floor devoted to BAFTA's Learning and New Talent programmes, members' bar, restaurant and club, meeting rooms, extra kitchens, administration and staff offices and two terraces overlooking Piccadilly and the Grade I listed St James's Church.

During construction, BAFTA members and the public will have access to BAFTA Piccadilly, next door at 194 Piccadilly, which will be BAFTA's temporary home while the works are being completed. This will include an exhibition space for the public to discover more about the craft of BAFTA winners and nominees, as well as a food and beverage offering.

195 Piccadilly is Grade II listed and in the St James's conservation area. The fundraising campaign began in 2016 when planning consent was unanimously granted following detailed consultations with Westminster City Council, Historic England, St James's Church and The Crown Estate.

Renato Benedetti, Director, Benedetti Architects, said:

"BAFTA is the world's premier moving image arts organisation and it's been an honour to work so closely with the BAFTA team. We all know their awards, but they do so much more and this building is integral to their broad charitable remit and singular international identity. We have enjoyed the challenge of creating an architectural and interiors vision that expands, animates and enhances everything BAFTA does, while staying true to the building's original character."

Kevin Price, Chief Operating Officer, BAFTA, said:

"BAFTA's ambitious plans will make our home at 195 Piccadilly an international centre of excellence for the moving image arts. We are excited by the ideas and scope of the design by Benedetti Architects to fundamentally enhance every aspect of what we do while being sensitive to the character of the building we are so fond of. They feel part of the BAFTA family now and we look forward to working with them to build the project."

**See BAFTA'S FUTURE, a three-minute film by Benedetti Architects**

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

<b>Full postal address</b>	195 Piccadilly, St. James's, London W1J 9LN
<b>Existing internal area</b>	2,050 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Proposed internal area</b>	2,480 m
<b>Schedule</b>	Appointment: April 2014 Start on site: July 2019 Completion: scheduled for 3rd quarter 2021
<b>Client</b>	British Academy of Film and Television Arts (Charity No. 216726)
<b>Architect &amp; Interior Designer</b>	Benedetti Architects
<b>Visualisations</b>	© Benedetti Architects & © MillerHare

### **Benedetti Architects**

Benedetti Architects was founded by Renato Benedetti in 2016 following 20 years of award-winning success as McDowell+Benedetti Architects. The practice has an international reputation for design excellence across a wide range of sectors and building types. In the commercial sector, built works include the new headquarters and showroom for international furniture maker Brunner, which won the 2014 New London Architecture - Retail Award; a new bookshop/reading room, church and offices for the Eleventh Church of Christ, Scientist, London in King's Cross; and The Association of Photographers gallery and headquarters in Shoreditch. Other built works include multi-award winning pedestrian bridges, Castleford Bridge and Scale Lane Bridge, both of which transform the public realm context and sense of place by creating bridges which are civic spaces/places as much as transport routes.

The practice is currently engaged in a variety of projects, including: the comprehensive phased transformation of the historic Portsmouth Guildhall, a 2,500 capacity multi-event performing arts and cultural venue; several housing/mixed-use schemes in London, such as 74 flats within the Old Kent Road Bakerloo Line Extension masterplan in Southwark, and 75 flats and shop units in Dagenham.

Renato Benedetti's public profile includes roles on Design Review Panels in London for Southwark, Wandsworth and Lewisham. He is a Design Council CABE national Built Environment Expert and an RIBA client advisor and competition judge.

[www.benedettiarchitects.com](http://www.benedettiarchitects.com)



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