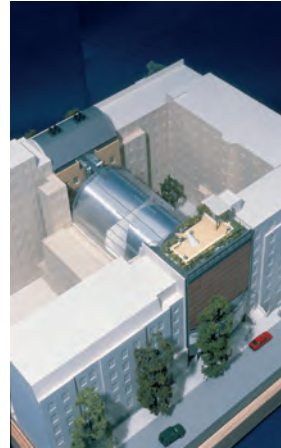


The model showing the intended roof garden and the actuality.

A particularly interesting point was the intended roof garden. It was to have been put on the top of the new fly tower, the equivalent of my little Woodbine patch. The students would have been able to go out on a lovely day and sit there in tranquillity and overlook London and swot their Shakespeare. But it fell foul, of course, of disabled access provisions – don't such things always? And the sadness

Three UK architects describe their theatre work: Bryan Avery on the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Steve Tompkins on the redevelopment of the Royal Court Theatre in Sloane Square, London and Glenn Howells on three of his theatres.

...and, after we had provided a lift to the staircase, by the rejection of the 100,000, €210,000) additional aid it wasn't cost-effective. I would have a little garden there, and this glazing to the Cleft



Photos: Bryan Avery

A fly tower is a very difficult thing to deal with. You either deal with it artistically, by getting an artist to come and paint pretty pictures on it, or by doing a pattern yourself – disguising it, in fact. But what I thought would be interesting here would be to try to make it look as though it was a fenestration pattern of the rest of the façade, and then take the opportunity to billow it out, to give something of a more memorable presence. Malet Street isn't used very much as a through route; you see the fly tower more from Torrington Place and from the British Museum at the ends, and so you need to glimpse it obliquely to see that it's there.

At night it becomes a little more clear as to how it's organised. This billowing-out section, which goes out to the property line, in fact forms an opportunity to create two little Juliet balconies. Those are to the dressing rooms, and now the students come out and promenade there. This is not

something you'd necessarily do in a professional theatre – might be too embarrassing – but for the students it's terrific. And again, it was an opportunity in a building which doesn't permit smoking – and at the time I was a smoker – for people to open the little flaps on the side and to puff away and nervously watch their parents and friends and their audience arrive for that evening's performance.

We had to fit the lift behind the stage and a crossover corridor within the depth from the façade to the extension of the property boundary which was very tight. The stage also needed to be the maximum width of 15½ m (50'-10"), and we really had to make the best of it. The Cleft is a slot separated back-to-back like two people sitting on a park bench with their bottoms about 900 mm (3'-0") apart. If anyone asks you about an atrium space that's 900 mm wide, you tell them that it can be done – damn silly, but it can be done.

The ground floor shows some of the complexity of the circulation at the entrance. There is the get-in entrance, with a hidden door, and two opening arms which embrace

The theatre entrance and fly tower in Malet Street by night and day and a view of the interior and bar area.

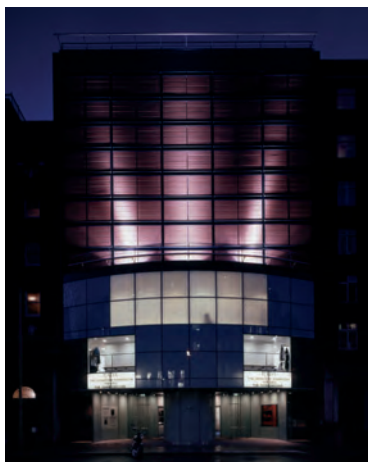


Photo: Richard Bryant



Photo: Bryan Avery



Photo: Mark Tupper