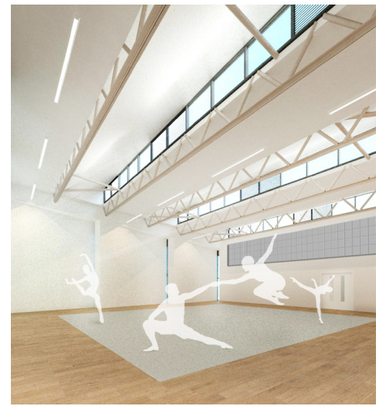
# DANCE HUB, BIRMINGHAM

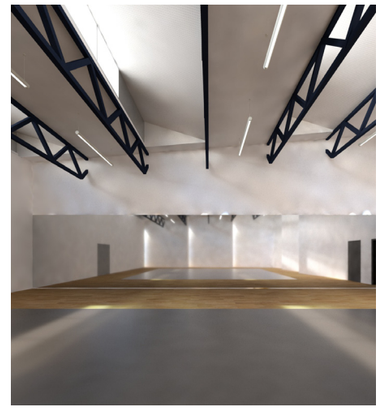
**LOCATION:** BIRMINGHAM
**CLIENT:** BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME
**COMPLETION:** 2019
**VALUE:** £3.4M
**SIZE:** 695M$^2$
**SERVICE:** ARCHITECTURE, INTERIOR DESIGN
**SECTOR:** ARTS & CULTURE
**CONTRACTOR:** FABRITE CONSTRUCTION
**STRUCTURES:** MANN WILLIAMS
**SERVICES:** FAX FORDHAM
**COST CONSULTANT:** RPS

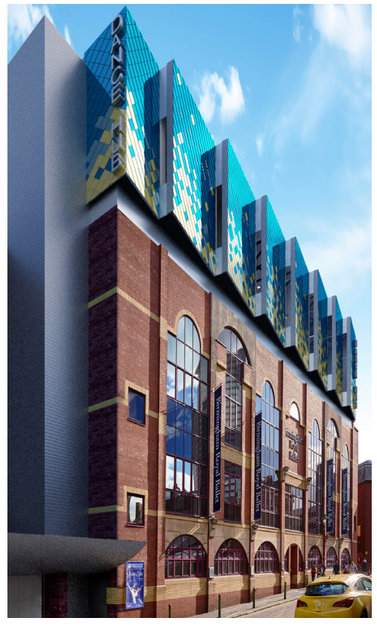
Austin-Smith:Lord was commissioned to design a new extension to the existing estate of facilities operated by Birmingham Hippodrome in the centre of the city.

The development provides a new dance studio and changing facilities for professional and community use, office space for One Dance UK; the national body for dance, meeting spaces, a reception and a kitchenette.

The extension, on the roof of the existing Birmingham Royal Ballet Headquarters building, together with the Hippodrome, DanceXchange and Birmingham Royal Ballet forms a coherent suite of facilities for the Dance Community in Birmingham and the greater West Midlands area.







The Dance Hub facilities are accommodated over a single storey that gradually increases in height along the length of the site in order to provide the required volume for the Dance Studio. The Dance Studio and the Changing Rooms naturally reflect the position of similar spaces below in Birmingham Royal Ballet and Circulation is generally kept to a minimum in the centre of the plan.

The Office accommodates 20 desk spaces and whilst the main objective of the office is to provide a home to One Dance UK, the space is managed with a 'hot-desking' approach enabling other dance companies who wish to rent a desk space to do so.

Dance Hub has a clear identity of its own, challenging the dated Post-modern host building below, yet elegant in appearance and complimenting its base in rhythm and colour. Not a replica, a seamless transition, or cleverly concealed, but as a new layer to the story of the development of the performing arts in Birmingham.

The design for the Dance Hub envelope aims to create the perception of movement both inside and out. Inspiration is taken from the peacock; behind the stunningly beautiful plumage of a peacock lies a complex structure that changes colour with the angle of incident light.

In plan, the elevations take on a saw-tooth form with strips of mostly north-facing glazing to assist in creating a bright space without glare or direct sunlight.

Apart from sanitary areas and changing rooms, all interior spaces are naturally ventilated, including the dance studio. Each saw-tooth form in the plan contains a plenum which moderates air-speed and temperature and eliminates external noise. Fresh air enters through the facades and exits at high level through louvres set within north-light glazing in the roof profile.

In expressing the articulation of the facade in the whole form of the building the design achieves an holistic approach; considering interior conditions, engineering solutions and aesthetics as one.