

Dame Darcey Bussell, DBE sets the stage for new global headquarters for Royal Academy of Dance



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- Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) President **Dame Darcey Bussell DBE**, leader of Wandsworth Council **Cllr Ravi Govindia** launched the first stage of development for its new global headquarters in Battersea
- Bussell marked the occasion with an exclusive **ribbon cutting dance piece** led by a small group of Royal Academy of Dance students, aged between seven and eight
- The new building, by developer Avanton, will almost **double the size** of its current headquarters
- The building will be completed in 2020 to coincide with the Academy's centenary
- Bussell was joined on site by RAD Chief Executive **Luke Rittner CBE**, Wandsworth Cllr **Ravi Govindia** and Avanton Managing Partner **Omer Weinberger**

The Royal Academy of Dance's (RAD) new state of the art global headquarters at *Avanton: Battersea* started to take shape this morning at an event to celebrate the building's topping out. Royal Academy of Dance students presented an exclusive dance piece, choreographed by RAD's Artistic Director, Gerard Charles for special guest and RAD President, Dame Darcey Bussell, to mark a significant construction milestone at *Avanton: Battersea*. The new building will be completed in 2020 and will be a key moment in the year marking the Academy's centenary.

Dame Darcey Bussell was joined on site by Luke Rittner, Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Dance, Avanton's Managing Partner, Omer Weinberger and Cllr Ravi Govindia, Leader of Wandsworth Council, along with students of the Academy to mark the occasion.

In a special dance display at the topping out ceremony at *Avanton: Battersea*, a group of six RAD dance students unveiled a 10-metre long ribbon, cut by Academy President Dame Darcey Bussell to mark the first stage of this new development.

The ceremony marks an exciting new chapter in the Royal Academy of Dance's future as a world-class leader in dance education and training. The new 60,000 sq.ft building provides almost double the footprint for the Academy, and will enable the Royal Academy of Dance to meet increasing demand for dance classes and workshops for people of all ages and abilities. Working

closely with Wandsworth Council, the Royal Academy of Dance will be delivering a cultural engagement strategy for the local community.

The fully accessible new headquarters will include:

- Eight full-size dance studios with sprung floors and high specification sound equipment
- A performance theatre (178 capacity) with full lighting rig and sound desk
- A library and archive that will house and display many of its original costume and dance artefacts
- A new retail space and large café for members, visitors and tourists

Designed by Patel Taylor, the development establishes a new and significant landmark for this part of Battersea, which will also provide 299 apartments and communal landscaped gardens. The development is just moments from the riverside and only eight minutes' walk from Clapham Junction. A bold design approach comprises three buildings on a single podium, the architectural form of which has been inspired by the movement of dance. The interior architecture of the Academy headquarters have been designed by Takeru Shimazaki Architects.

Dame Darcey Bussell, President of the Royal Academy of Dance commented:

"Today marks an exciting new chapter for the Academy as we approach our centenary in 2020. This building symbolises a new 'home' of dance, that will benefit our worldwide members, staff and partners, and will also enable us to strengthen our links to the local community. As President I am proud of the work the RAD does to promote a love of dance in everyone, regardless of ability or background, and to nurture future generations of talented teachers and dancers."

Luke Rittner, Chief Executive of the Royal Academy of Dance commented:

"I am honoured and delighted to be leading the RAD at this exciting time in the Academy's development. This new building will be a world-class global headquarters for the Academy and is destined to become a unique new home of dance. It will symbolise our commitment to excellence in all aspects of dance teaching and education. The new state of the art facilities will provide opportunities for dancers of all ages and abilities and will become a flagship building supporting our mission to promote dance locally, regionally, nationally and internationally."

Omer Weinberger, Managing Partner, Avanton, commented:

"Avanton aspires to do things differently. It is no longer enough for developers to just build homes, developments need to create viable new communities with mixed use facilities that will stand the test of time which stands at the centre of our ethos. We are proud to be working with the Borough of Wandsworth and the Royal Academy of Dance to secure the legacy of this incredibly important cultural organisation."

Cllr Ravi Govindia, Leader of Wandsworth Council said:

"The Royal Academy of Dance is a Wandsworth institution who have been in the borough for almost 50 years. It was critical to us that they stayed in Battersea, a part of London which is ever evolving, and continued to add to our exciting range of cultural venues and organisations."

"The new venue marks the next stage in their journey and is an important addition to the local area, with the local community continuing to benefit from their presence as a world class institution and the wonderful work they do. I wish them every success in their new home."

Avanton: Battersea is due for completion in 2020, coinciding with the year of the Royal Academy of Dance's centenary.



AVANTON:

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For more information on **Avanton**, contact LUCHFORD on 020 7631 1000, or by email at avanton@luchfordapm.com.

Notes for editors:

Royal Academy of Dance:

With approximately 14,000 members in 85 countries, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is one of the largest and most influential dance education and training organisations in the world. Established in 1920 to improve standards and re-invigorate dance training, the Academy helps and encourages its teachers to perfect their teaching skills and pass on this knowledge to their students. There are currently over 1,000 students in full-time or part-time teacher training programmes with the Academy and each year the examination syllabus is taught to thousands of young people worldwide, with around a quarter of a million pupils per year going on to take RAD exams.

Avanton:

Avanton is a progressive London property development company driven by an occupier led design approach. Focusing on placemaking, quality and community, Avanton builds homes and creates lived in spaces in some of London's prime locations. Led by a team with extensive experience across the sector in land, sales and development, Avanton leads with an entrepreneurial mindset to create long lasting locations built by people for people.

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