



STRAND ARTS CENTRE - BRAND PITCH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strand Arts Centre (SAC), a revered cultural institution in East Belfast seeks a **comprehensive brand overhaul** to better embody its rich heritage, community role, and diverse cultural offerings. SAC aspires to **reinvigorate its brand presence across all touchpoints**, aiming for a relaunch in late 2025.

As we revitalise our brand, we will preserve our historical charm while embracing contemporary dynamics. The renewed brand embodies East Belfast's spirit, promoting inclusivity, diversity, and artistic excellence.

CLIENT: STRAND ARTS CENTRE

Founded in 1935, SAC has been a hub for cinema, live performances, and educational programs, and it is time to reinvigorate its brand presence across all touchpoints, both digital and physical. SAC has been East Belfast's cinematic haven, stage for performances, and educational inspiration. SAC's 90-year legacy is a celebration of diverse film experiences, fostering connections in the community.

Beyond cinema, SAC's stage showcases local talent and international acts, while our educational programs provide insights into the world of cinema. This transformation invites the community to rediscover SAC's cultural essence, bridging generations and telling the story of East Belfast in every frame. SAC's future is a living testament to a vibrant cultural landscape, where past, present, and future converge in a celebration of art and community.

PROPOSED VISION

A thriving, inclusive and inspiring hub with an innovative programme rooted in **creativity, community and heritage**, which **improves the lives** of all who visit.

PROPOSED MISSION

Provide a welcoming venue which is a catalyst for people developing a love of heritage and the arts. Deliver events and activities which educate and empower. Champion local talent and invest in the talent of tomorrow.

VALUES

CREATIVITY - Through creativity we will create opportunities for individual and community development, stimulating social change.

RESPECT - Our programme shall be curated with respect, empathy and integrity for others, our building shall be an accessible space, welcoming to all.

EXCELLENCE - We shall strive for excellence in the execution of all that we do & support our beneficiaries and partners to achieve their goals.

PROGRESSIVE - We shall regularly reflect on what we have done with a desire to refining, improve and innovating our offer & processes.

OUTPUT ACTIVITIES, TARGETS & PROCEDURES: 2024/25 DURING CLOSURE

- Programme digital events, workshops & Q&A's which have a wide appeal so established patrons can continue to engage in the arts through the Strand.
- Commission and deliver pop-up street theatre.
- Deliver live music and comedy events under 'Stranded' brand at Harland & Wolf Social Club
- Temporarily relocate our regular tenants to other east Belfast venues and ensure Strand branding and building up-dates at these sites. Advertise these events/activities and their new locations through our digital marketing channels. (NiStars to Ashfield Girls; TBC Productions to Shorts; SW Yoga to St Marks; Figure This and Aware to Belmont Tower)
- Host high profile pop-up events within key festivals, attracting the culturally curious audience, raising awareness of our brand and re-opening.
- Host workshops aimed at retaining & expanding our participatory arts audience.
- Partner with National Trust, helping them improve their engagement with the local community through creative activity, and reaching a wider audience base for the Strand through their social media network.
- Fund local artists, performers and facilitators

FIRST YEAR OF REOPENING

- Increase film ticket sales by 25% from 2022/23
- Increase web traffic and social media coverage by 10% on 2023/24
- Retain attainable ticket prices.
- Attract & support quality touring theatre productions.
- Programme renowned musicians and comedians
- Have a regular scratch night where fledgling talent can perform informally.
- Develop larger participatory arts offerings and audience before the refurbishment.
- Further develop and strengthen our delivery partnerships, festival participation and relationships with other arts organisations
- Have an annual artist in residence.

OUTCOMES

More people in East Belfast feel SAC has something to offer them

SAC has motivated people to increase or broaden their artistic, cultural or heritage activity

SAC is an important part of NI's arts infrastructure & cultural tourism offer

INDICATORS

- Diversity of socio-demographic of SAC's patrons (postcode and age range)
- More events informed by audiences with specific/high needs.
- More events attracting audiences /participants to a new experience.
- More partnerships with arts organisations illustrating a diversity of artists offer.
- More partnerships with community orgs serving groups with specific needs.
- More partnerships with commercial organisations.



1. MARKETING OBJECTIVES

During SAC's closure (May 2024 to late 2025), the marketing plan focuses on:

- Maintaining a strong connection and sense of community with our diverse audience segments.
- Rejuvenating Strand Arts Centre brand identity.
- Reinforcing our status as a cultural hub in East Belfast.
- Maintaining and increasing engagement and excitement about reopening.
- Demonstrating commitment to our patrons and stakeholders.
- Fostering loyalty and support.
- Adapting strategically to needs and interests of each audience.

By tailoring these activities, we can continue to be a vibrant and integral part of the community, setting the stage for a successful relaunch, generating excitement for the refurbishment, and providing valuable cultural content during the closure period of April 2023 to late 2025.

2. CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to weave the threads of rich heritage, vibrant community, and diverse arts and culture into the tapestry of East Belfast and beyond. Established in 1935, we stand as a beacon of cinematic and artistic excellence, nurturing a welcoming space where stories unfold, connections deepen, and creativity flourishes.

Our commitment is to rejuvenate our brand, not just as a cultural hub but as a living testament to the stories of East Belfast – connecting generations, celebrating diversity, and inspiring the future. Our rebrand aims to **reimagine**, **revitalise**, and **redefine** the arts landscape together, one cinematic frame at a time.

3. AIMS AND CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

3.1 Cultivate a vibrant arts and heritage scene in East Belfast, fostering inclusivity, creativity, and community engagement while supporting the development of local talent and enriching the cultural fabric of the area.

3.2 Deliver a diverse programme of creative activity to meet broader community needs (such as improved well-being, education, integration, social mobility, confidence, place-making)

3.3 Create a popular hub which is an accessible shared space for all.

3.4 Preserve the heritage of NI's only surviving art deco cinema and inspire future generations to value NI's cinematic past, and the local stories that shape identity.

3.5 Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Strand Arts Centre.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE:

4.1 Film Goers: Families, Film Enthusiasts, Local residents, Corporate sector

Messaging: Bringing Film to East Belfast for 80 years, Connect people to Belfast's stories, places, arts and heritage, See it at the Strand – support local independent heritage cinema, An authentic cinemagoing experience very different from the multiplexes

4.2 Film & Heritage Tourists: NI Staycation, NI Groups – schools, students, community groups, local film industry groups, corporate away-days, UK / ROI Cultural Tourists, Europe / US Visitors

Messaging: Pride of Place – connecting residents and visitors to the 'Story of East Belfast', and shared social history, Unique heritage and arts offer will attract regional and out-of-state visitors to East Belfast, 'Strand Stories' – personal memories from Strand audiences celebrating the social, architectural and technological history of the Strand, Surrounded by contemporary filmmakers – (writers, directors, actors, rich cultural tradition on doorstep) and close proximity to Titanic Studios.

4.3 Culture Goers: Culture Vultures- Culturally engaged Prestige Positions or Domestic Success, aged 18-60, from wider catchment area, +60,000 people, Young professionals – aged 18-35 looking for a night out in Belfast, Artists and Arts Organisations- over 40 groups currently with potential to increase no. by 20% and frequency of use

Messaging: Established audience and database- enabling festivals to reach an East Belfast audience, Partnership working and collaboration (local, national or international), Encouraging additional spend in local economy, Showcases the high quality of Belfast's arts scene locally and internationally enhances Belfast's cultural reputation and offer, Showcasing emerging talent (and supporting the creative industries) on the doorstep of East Belfast, Unique venue with unrivalled acoustics and intimacy.

4.4 Live and Local: High deprivation wards in 12-minute walk of Strand (population 26,269), Price sensitive and currently low engagement in arts, Segment sub-groups: Uninspired teens, Men's Shed & Strong Women

Messaging: The Strand is a venue for all, Great choice of popular and affordable entertainment, Shows take place in the old front stalls which audiences might have frequented in their youth

4.5 Families: Local families, Staycation, Out of state visitors

Messaging: Affordable, welcoming, family- friendly venue, Cross generational appeal (eg) Minors Club, heritage exhibition, architectural marriage of nostalgia and modernity, Arts are for all, Encouraging audiences to try something new

4.6 Education: Primary school children and teachers, Secondary school children and teachers, F&HE students (eg) Performing Arts, Moving Image, Young people (16-25 yr olds), Local community

Messaging: Close relationship with local primary and secondary schools, Improves Literacy, Provides history of local area, cinema, writers, producers and directors, MIA and performing arts courses in line with curriculum, Inspiration for career paths from Strand Champions

4.7 Communities: Community Groups, Seniors groups, Men's shed, Women's groups, Mums & Tots, Youth groups, Charities, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools

Messaging: Removes barriers to participation to ensure as many as possible can engage with high quality activity, Enables and inspires people to understand their city and their identity, and to express themselves through arts or heritage activity in a meaningful way, Creates, develops, and promotes shared cultural space (including physical space and programming that encourages positive and constructive dialogue between cultures and communities)

4.8 Creative Industries: Young people (16-25yr olds), Local community, Film/media graduates

Messaging: NI's burgeoning sector generating £737m to the economy, The Strand demonstrates how it will attract, nurture and retain talent, Promotes employment opportunities in this sector – aligns traditional creative industrial skills employed in East Belfast with modern requirements, Delivers a broad ranges of skills development courses for creative industries run by experienced professionals

4.9 Corporate / Private Hire: Corporate Sector, Individuals and Families, Charities & Community Groups – over 70 groups are currently patrons, potential to increase no. by 10% and frequency of visits

Messaging: Great choice of popular and affordable entertainment. Supporting SAC support East Belfast. Inspires key personal to people to understand the importance of SAC's heritage and identity

5. AUDIENCE RESEARCH:

Although we have conducted extensive research into understanding our key audience segments, this information is from 2017-18, and more research needs conducted before rebranding. To ensure the rebranding effort is aligned with the preferences and expectations of our audience, we propose conducting comprehensive audience research through a reputable branding company to lead this research initiative.

This research should include surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to understand the demographics, interests, and behaviours of our existing and potential audience, and where we position ourselves in the current market landscape.

Online Resources: We can leverage the following online resources to understand our audience research:

- Thrive (<https://wewillthrive.co.uk>)
- Arts Audiences (www.artsaudiences.com)
- The Audience Agency (www.theaudienceagency.org)
- Baker Richards (www.baker-richards.com)
- Capacity Interactive (www.capacityinteractive.com) for insights on digital marketing strategies
- Culture Republic (www.culturerepublic.co.uk)
- The Experience Business (www.theexperiencebusiness.co.uk)
- Arts Marketing Association (AMA) Benchmarking Survey (www.a-m-a.co.uk)

6. KEY MESSAGES:

Rich Heritage: Emphasise SAC's storied history and its legacy as a cultural cornerstone in East Belfast.

Community Hub: Highlight our role as a welcoming space for the local community to enjoy a variety of entertainment and educational offerings.

Diverse Programming: Showcase the range of events and activities, including cinema screenings, live performances, workshops, and cultural events.

Accessibility: Communicate that SAC is an inclusive and accessible venue for all ages and backgrounds.

Commitment to Quality: Communicate the Centre's commitment to excellence and the highest standards of entertainment and cultural experiences.

7. BRAND REVAMP

7.1 Visual Identity: Develop a flexible and dynamic visual identity that reflects the diverse range of offerings. Ensure the brand identity is consistently integrated into the physical space, including signage, decor, and merchandise. Revamp the digital presence to create a user-friendly website with new look and feel, as well as social media profiles.

7.2 Logo Redesign: Create a refreshed, modern, yet timeless logo that incorporates the cinema heritage while reflecting the broader cultural scope. Conduct thorough market research to gauge audience perceptions and preferences. Tender marketing agencies to use these insights to guide the redesign of our logo, ensuring it captures the essence of The Strand's revitalised identity. Elements of art-deco can be retained or subtly integrated to preserve historical continuity while infusing modern appeal.

7.3 Values Reassessment: Revisit and refine our core values to reflect the evolving vision of The Strand. Emphasise aspects such as community engagement, inclusivity, and a commitment to cultural diversity in line with our new mission.

7.4 Type-fonts and Visual Elements: Leverage market research to select type-fonts and visual elements that resonate with our target audiences. The chosen type-fonts and design elements should reflect both our historical charm and contemporary flair, striking a balance that appeals to a broad spectrum of patrons.

7.5 Naming Convention: Assess how our audiences refer to us, whether as Strand Arts Centre, The Strand, or The Strand Cinema. Choose a name that aligns with the rebrand and resonates most strongly with our patrons, considering factors like brand recognition and accessibility.

7.6 Preserving Heritage: Highlight the Strand's rich history and art-deco heritage as integral components of the rebrand. Feature historical narratives, photos, and anecdotes in marketing materials to connect patrons with the cinema's legacy. Emphasise the unique and distinctive features of The Strand that set it apart from other venues. Whether it's ornate architecture,



vintage decor, or intimate ambiance, ensure these characteristics remain central to the brand identity.

7.7 Community Involvement: Involve key stakeholders, including long-time patrons and community members, in the rebranding process. Seek their input and feedback to ensure that the new brand resonates with the very people who cherish The Strand.

7.8 Website: Apply brand identity to our website's skin, introducing a refreshed look and feel across the whole customer journey, including copy, photography, messaging, navigation, programme segmentation, colours and fonts.

8. GUIDELINES AND TONE OF VOICE:

Messaging: Craft compelling and consistent messaging that highlights SAC's unique offerings and history.

Tone of Voice: Establish a warm and inviting tone that evokes a sense of nostalgia while still being contemporary and approachable.

Brand Guidelines: Develop a comprehensive brand guideline document that provides clear instructions on logo usage, colour schemes, fonts, and design elements for all touchpoints.

9. STAFF BRIEFING:

Training: Conduct training sessions for all staff members to ensure they understand and can communicate the new brand's values, mission, and tone effectively.

Culture Book: A guide encapsulating new brand values, stories, and best practices for new and existing employees.

10. BUDGET AND TIMELINE:

Budget: To be discussed upon shortlisting.

Timeline: The rebranding process is expected to take 6-8 months.

Proposal Submission: Within 4 weeks of receiving this brief.

Final Selection of Agency: Two weeks post proposal submission.

Initial Concepts: 4-8 weeks post-selection.

Final Deliverables : 12-32 weeks post-selection.

The revitalised brand identity for SAC will not only celebrate its history but also secure its future as a vibrant cultural destination, uniting the community and inspiring generations to come across all branding touchpoints.

11. TENDER INVITATION

11.1 Format of Response

We invite applicants to submit responses showcasing a distinguished track record in delivering high-quality branding interpretation. Demonstrate your expertise in crafting compelling brand narratives for specified target audiences, and articulate your understanding of the project, proposing an approach that breathes new life into the Strand's cultural identity.

A	<p>Contractors Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstration of a clear understanding of the project and brief ii. Your proposed approach, branding scope and timetable for the Development Stage. iii. Your proposed approach, branding scope and timetable for Delivery Stage works. <p>Collective max. word count for Part A – 1,000 words</p>	<p>10</p> <p>20</p> <p>20</p>
B	<p>Project Experience: By reference to two previously completed projects (within last five years) of similar scope and complexity please demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Experience in delivering interpretation, branding, design and application in museums/arts/heritage/visitor attraction setting. ii. Share your success stories in crafting memorable brand experiences, encompassing print, digital, film, audio, in-venue and social media. iii. Demonstrate your ability to work within multi-disciplinary teams, with effective collaboration between key stakeholders for successful execution of a branding consultancy project. iv. Delivery of projects to time and on, or under, budget while achieving required quality standards/management. <p>Collective max. word count for Part B – 1,000 words</p> <p>Client contact details for example projects to be provided for references.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>15</p> <p>10</p> <p>10</p>

11.2 Contract Award Criteria & Budget

This is a fixed fee tender allowing for a maximum £10,000 consultancy costs across the development and delivery stages of the project brief.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE WORKS: Market research, branding and interpretive design – delivered throughout the period from April 2024 – July 2024.

Conduct and review research materials. Develop a keen understanding of the vision of the refurbishment project, including the physical and operational changes. Develop a detailed Brand Interpretation Plan which identifies and describes the themes and stories that will be interpreted to meet our objectives and outcomes. Create a Branding Proposal that will be applied across all touchpoints online and throughout the building and customer journey, including briefs, brand design documentation and associated costs.

DELIVERY STAGE WORKS: implementation of the full rebranding scheme, completion, and handover – Works encompass the procurement of branding elements, overseeing the research and creation, and briefing the team on specifications and applications to ensure smooth integration. The estimated timeframe for this stage is July 2024 to November 2024.

11.3 Site Visit

Strongly encouraged in advance of drafting a tender submission.

11.4 Submission of Tenders

- Fully completed tender proposals must be received by **12pm (noon), Friday 12th April 2024**
- Tenders to be submitted by email to mimi@strandartscentre.com and emma@strandartscentre.com with the subject 'Brand Tender Submission, PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL'
- Tenders received after the above deadline will not be valid

11.5 Assessment Criteria

A contract will be awarded based on who offered the most exciting brand design and commitment to the project, and the service delivering best value for money against the fixed project budget, whilst taking due account of relevant experience on museum/exhibition design and previous performance on similar projects.

	Criteria	Score
	Fully completed response	Yes/No
A	Quality of Contractors proposal in response	50%
B	Suitability based on examples of previous project experience	50%
	Total	100%