

# Theatres Protection Fund Small Grants Scheme

*Kate Carmichael,*  
Resources Adviser, reports on the Trust's seventh round of grants, the progress of previous grant recipients and introduces the Trust's second grants programme, the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme.

**In September 2015 The Theatres Trust announced the seventh round of small capital grants from its Small Grants Scheme. Grants were awarded to the Horse and Bamboo Theatre Rossendale, Upfront Arts Theatre Penrith, Colne's Pendle Hippodrome, Theatre Royal Dumfries, and the Wardrobe Theatre Bristol.**

Round Seven marks the start of our fourth year of the Small Grants Scheme, and to date we've awarded 37 grants totalling £165,241.

Thirty-three of the theatres are based in England, (of which 10 are in London), three in Scotland and one in Wales. Though the Scheme is limited to small capital projects under £5,000 the benefits are clear to see.

Round Seven awards fulfil a range of needs, from roof repairs, to soundproofing doors, and enhancing accessibility and back of house facilities.

## News from previous grant recipients

Round Four recipient London's Tara Arts is now midway through its capital project. Basement works were completed in June 2015, and antique doors sourced in India, funded by the Scheme, also arrived. The steel framework of the new Tara Theatre has now been erected and fit-out is expected to begin in September 2015.

Another project almost complete is Round Five's Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells, which received a Small Grant towards much needed repair to the sandstone walls of its (former church) building. The award also helped leverage match funding for the project. Though stone repair is still ongoing to the back wall of the theatre it is hoped works will be complete by mid-September 2015.

September will also see Theatre Royal Stratford East reopen after the restoration of its safety curtain, with support from the Scheme. The decorative safety curtain has been restored and painted by specialists experienced in *trompe-loeil*, Hare & Humphreys. Audiences will experience the glory of the new safety curtain and further auditorium refurbishments at the reopening production, *Etienne Sisters*.

In January 2015 we awarded Round Six grants for small capital repair projects to the Polka Theatre and Little Angel Theatre in London, and the Actors Workshop Halifax.

The Polka Children's Theatre, which participated in The Theatres Trust's Ecovenue project, upgraded its two dysfunctional stage left air-conditioning units in spring 2015 with more energy-efficient models allowing better temperature regulation. Works also included repositioning condenser units to a side wall to ensure that access is available for routine maintenance visits – all in time to deal with the very British summertime weather.

An award from The Theatres Trust has also helped protect the Little Angel Theatre against the weather. Its works provided a full, lasting repair to the flat roof above the backstage area of the theatre and the office, this was an urgent repair needed to avoid expensive ongoing maintenance costs and prevent water ingress. The work was completed within a month of the award by local supplier Evans & Thompson Ltd.

The Grade II listed Actors Workshop in Halifax also used its award for urgent roof

repairs. Carried out in April 2015 the works have enabled the venue to reopen rehearsal and extra dressing room facilities in time for its July youth production and also proven successful as the building has remained dry during recent heavy rains.

Looking to a larger capital project, and our third Scottish project funded by the Small Grants Scheme, the Burgh Hall in Dunoon has completed its soft strip out, and works are on site. The installation of a low rise lifting platform to access the stage, funded by the Scheme, is due to take place in January 2016. Meanwhile, the Burgh Hall has a new pop-up venue as a temporary home during the refurbishment works, centrally located in the main street in Dunoon.

## London Theatres Small Grants Scheme

In August 2015, thanks to a donation of £25,000 from The Mackintosh Foundation, and with the support of the Mayor of London we launched the second of our programmes run through our Theatres Protection Fund, the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme.

The London scheme is a dedicated capital fund to help small theatres in London needing to improve and maintain their buildings and lever in other sources of investment, particularly philanthropic support. It follows the London Assembly investigation led by Tom Copley AM into the challenges facing the capital's small theatres and its July 2013 report *Centre Stage: Supporting small theatres in the capital*.

The Trust's Theatres Protection Fund is now able to run two grants programmes to help theatres in need and at risk address urgent building repairs, improve their operational viability, introduce environmental improvements, and enhance physical accessibility.

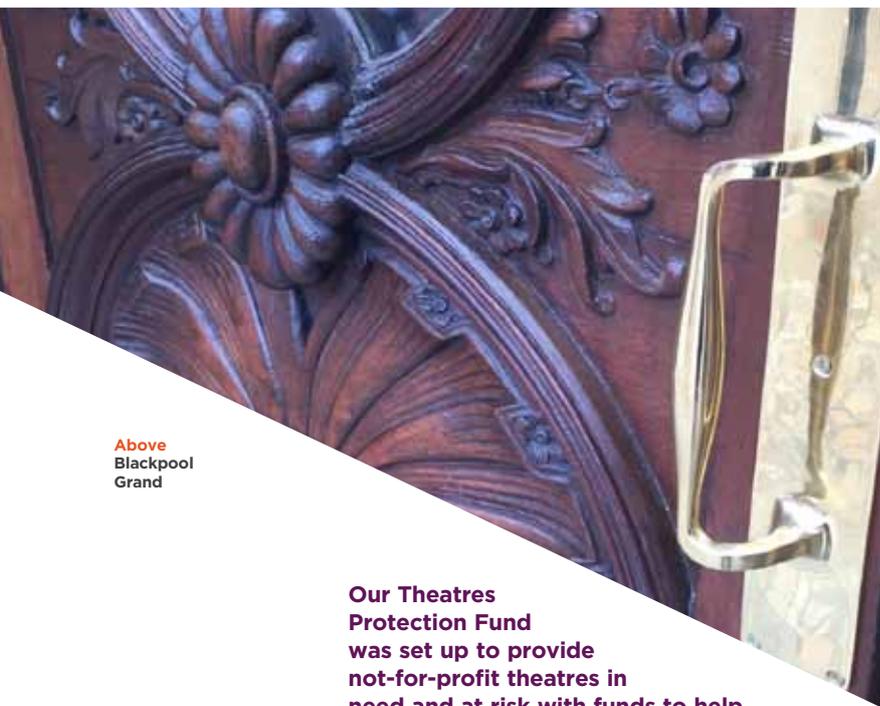
## Help us build the Fund

There is a high level of demand for our Small Grants. For every grant awarded there have been six unsuccessful applicants.

We would like to be able to assist more theatres. Your support could help grow the Theatres Protection Fund to assist theatres in need and at risk in the UK.

To discuss a potential application and eligibility to either Scheme, or if you are interested in making a donation to the Theatres Protection Fund, please contact Kate Carmichael Resources Adviser, [kate.carmichael@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:kate.carmichael@theatrestrust.org.uk) or visit [theatrestrust.org.uk/grants](http://theatrestrust.org.uk/grants)

# Theatres Protection Fund



Above  
Blackpool  
Grand

**Our Theatres Protection Fund was set up to provide not-for-profit theatres in need and at risk with funds to help them secure their buildings. We now run two Small Grants programmes through the Fund that help with urgent repairs and improve operational viability.**

We have been able to develop our capital grant-giving role thanks to the generosity of leaders within the theatre industry. These include donations from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Judy Craymer MBE and The Mackintosh Foundation, which launched our UK Small Grants Scheme in 2012, and the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme in 2015.

The UK Small Grants Scheme has awarded 36 grants to theatres across the UK since it started in 2012: 31 in England; 4 in Scotland and 1 in Wales, including roof repairs, new stage curtains, internal staircases and stage lifts.

To date 31 projects have been completed. The positive feedback received from the theatres involved demonstrates the difference a small grant can make to the protection of theatres and the experience of the people that use them.

## UK Small Grants Scheme

Penrith's Upfront Puppet Theatre, a modern, environmentally friendly converted theatre, received funding for their Grand Staircase project in Summer 2015, to improve accessibility and audience flow. The staircase was installed in December 2015, in time for their Christmas show.

The Grade II\* Grand Theatre Blackpool has now completed the repair of their three pairs of ornately carved ground floor foyer doors. The Matcham-designed doors were removed in

**Kate Carmichael, Resources Adviser, provides updates on UK Small Grants Scheme projects, announces the first round of awards from the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme, and welcomes a new donor, Soho Estates Director, Fawn James.**

pairs for careful restoration, so that the theatre could remain operational throughout. Paint was stripped off by hand rather than by caustic bath, and damaged elements were repaired or replaced. New sealants and varnishes were used that can withstand the salty spray and allow the grain of the oak to shine through.

Dumfries Theatre Royal has also completed its project funded by the Trust - to install new entrance, side and internal doors, in-keeping with the historic Category-B listing of the theatre. These works complement a larger scheme of works designed by architect Gordon Fleming to expand the theatre by linking its four sets of existing buildings together, including a new glass atrium, creating a more welcoming foyer between the studio theatre and main auditorium.

Dunoon Burgh Hall, the only theatre in Argyll when it opened in 1874, was the first theatre to receive a grant towards a new stage lift. Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust's successful fundraising campaign has meant the refurbishment project, led by Page\Park Architects and delivered by building contractors WH Kirkwood Ltd, is now reaching its midpoint. Major roof repairs are currently underway and it is anticipated that the building will reopen in late Autumn 2016.

And finally, to Tara Arts in Earlsfield, which received a grant to install unique Indian teak doors to the auditorium and rehearsal studio, as part of a larger theatre extension and redevelopment project. The teak doors sourced in India arrived in June 2015, and have since been treated for fire safety by Envirograf, tested for their acoustic qualities by Arup, and installed. Ex-RSC seating acquired from Kirwin-Simpson has been installed in the new auditorium, which features an earth floor. The theatre is on track to open in June 2016.

## London Theatres Small Grants Scheme announces first round of awards and new five-year donor

There are around 110 small theatres in London. The London Scheme was launched in Spring 2015, working with the Mayor of London's Office, to help small theatres in the capital. It was set up in response to the London Assembly's *Centre Stage* report into the challenges facing small

**"Theatres Trust support for acoustic doors will prove invaluable in helping Tara open doors to new talent."**

**Jatinder Verma,  
Artistic Director,  
Tara Arts**

theatres in London, which identified that 93% of small London theatres had yet to raise the money to carry out significant upgrade or repair to their buildings, with a direct impact on their future.

On 3 February 2016 we were delighted to announce the first round of awards from our London Theatres Small Grants Scheme. Launched with funds from Cameron Mackintosh, the first round provides five small London theatres with £5,000 each to carry out urgent work towards building repairs, backstage and building access route improvements, and new office and education space.

**“We’re making a start in helping to solve the urgent capital needs of London’s smaller theatres. This is so important for the next generation of artists and audiences and the continuing success of London’s theatre scene.”**  
**Cameron Mackintosh, Chairman,  
The Mackintosh Foundation**

The first theatres to benefit from the London Scheme are Battersea Arts Centre, Bush Theatre, The Cockpit, New Diorama Theatre, and SPID Theatre.

We continue to reach out to new donors to help build the Fund, and a month later, on 9 March 2016, we were delighted to announce that Soho Estates Director Fawn James donated £125,000 to the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme. Fawn joins Cameron Mackintosh as the second major donor to the London Scheme ensuring that it will now run until 2020.

Fawn’s generous donation is good news for small theatres across London. Every time we’re able to announce a new donor to the London Scheme we’re helping to secure the future of live theatre across London. So many small theatres are working on such tight budgets they struggle to make improvements to their buildings – and we know these grants can make a huge difference.

**“Small theatres are often the genesis for bold and innovative productions, helping to foster the next generation of talented artists, and provide an important role in local communities. If we want London to remain a world leader in arts and culture, we have to make sure that small theatres can thrive.”**  
**Fawn James, Director, Soho Estates**

Fawn James’s family has shared a history with some of the most iconic theatres and entertainment venues in the heart of London – her grandfather, Paul Raymond, started staging revue and variety shows in small venues in Soho in the 50s and worked with some of the great stars of the age. Her support for the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme reflects Soho Estates’s continuing commitment to London’s arts scene.

**Please contact the Theatres Trust for more information on eligibility and how to apply to the London Theatres Small Grants Scheme and the UK Small Grants Scheme.**

## London Theatres Small Grants Scheme Round 1

### Battersea Arts Centre, Wandsworth £5,000

Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), based in a Grade II\* listed former town hall, will replace their temporary wheelchair ramp leading to the café bar and first floor performance space, addressing an accessibility element of a major Haworth Tompkins-led capital redevelopment and restoration project. [www.bac.org.uk](http://www.bac.org.uk)

### Bush Theatre, Hammersmith and Fulham £5,000

The Bush Theatre, based in the locally listed Old Shepherd’s Bush Library in 2011, recently completed the first phase of a Haworth Tompkins redevelopment investing in urgent infrastructure improvements and equipment. The Bush will repair their pitched roofs and dormer windows to maintain the condition of the locally listed theatre’s façade, as part of phase 2 works to preserve the history and heritage of the Old Library. [www.bushtheatre.co.uk](http://www.bushtheatre.co.uk)

### The Cockpit, Westminster £5,000

The Cockpit, a 240-seat box auditorium designed by Edward Mendelsohn, and currently running as a full-time theatre and training venue, will repair their leaky flat roof which sits over the theatre’s dressing rooms. This will improve backstage conditions for performers and theatre staff and keep costumes and equipment safe. [www.thecockpit.org.uk](http://www.thecockpit.org.uk)

### New Diorama Theatre, Camden £5,000

The New Diorama, a black box studio theatre, which opened in 2010 in the new British Land development of Regents Place as part of a Section 106 Agreement, will install a converted storage container in their back yard to provide much needed space for their outreach programme and an accessible office space. [www.newdiorama.com](http://www.newdiorama.com)

### SPID Theatre, Kensington and Chelsea £5,000

Kensal House Community Rooms is home to SPID Theatre, a 140-seat hall which lies at the heart of the community rooms of the Grade II\* Modernist council estate in Ladbroke Grove. Over the past seven years SPID has renovated and fitted out the space, and will now carry out urgent works to replace doors, and install access ramps and double glazed windows to ensure that the local community has access to a well maintained, fully-functioning theatre it can be proud of.  
[www.spidtheatre.com](http://www.spidtheatre.com)



Above  
Battersea  
Arts Centre



Below  
SPID Theatre  
© Alexandra  
Katalgida

## London Theatres Small Grants Scheme Round Two recipients

In December 2016 we were pleased to announce that the following 5 theatres in London received grants towards their small capital projects. Funding in this Round focuses on improving the accessibility of theatres, and conditions in the auditorium and backstage.



### Omnibus £5,000

#### Air conditioning

Omnibus is a new and developing arts centre in Clapham, housed in a former library, and with much local support. The grant will help the theatre improve climate control in two performance spaces, and improve conditions for audiences.

Both the main theatre space and the Common Room, often used as an informal performance space, are very well insulated – a requirement of planning regulations to reduce noise transmission when the building was converted to performance use. As a result both spaces can become very hot, and this has been identified as a regular issue with audiences, which Omnibus wants to address as it develops its work. As well as being a theatre that produces its own work, both in the theatre and as site-specific work in the area, Omnibus also presents music and visual arts, has established a youth theatre, and supports emerging artists & companies. [omnibus-clapham.org](http://omnibus-clapham.org)

### Soho Theatre £5,000

#### Fire safety & accessibility

Soho Theatre produces and presents a vast amount of theatre, comedy and cabaret from its central London premises, and has been described as a mini Edinburgh Festival. The grant will help the theatre install a fire shutter, which will complete the fire rating

of the main foyer. This in turn will allow the theatre to accommodate more wheelchair patrons in each performance space, as the lift will be able to be used as a fire lift. Soho's design means that none of its performance spaces are at street level, so improving lift access is crucial to its core artistic aims of accessibility and diversity.

[sohotheatre.com](http://sohotheatre.com)



### Theatre Peckham £5,000

#### Accessibility & signage

Theatre Peckham, a community theatre in Southwark, is moving into its new theatre in winter 2016. The new £2.4m theatre is being built as part of a Section 106 Agreement, but the developers have not funded the fit-out of the theatre and its associated spaces. The grant will support better accessibility for disabled people and good signage for all. Theatre Peckham works with children and young people, a high proportion of whom are from diverse or difficult backgrounds, teaching them performance and life skills.

[theatrepeckham.co.uk](http://theatrepeckham.co.uk)

### Tricycle Theatre £5,000

#### Accessibility backstage

The Tricycle Theatre is located in Brent, the most diverse borough in London, and is a local venue with an international vision. The grant will help install an accessible shower and WC in a backstage dressing room, which currently has no accessible provision. These works are part of a wider capital project to address the urgent renewal of the theatre, which has been put under considerable strain due to growing audiences and increasingly ambitious programming. The capital project will enable the theatre to serve its growing audiences, improve access, and also contribute to the regeneration of Kilburn High Road. [tricycle.co.uk](http://tricycle.co.uk)



### Young Actors Theatre £5,000

#### Roof & backstage refurbishment

The Young Actors Theatre is a performance space, as well as a theatre school and talent agency for children and young people housed in an Edwardian school house in Islington. It requires considerable maintenance and repair. The grant will help address phase one of a larger project that concentrates on urgent repairs to leaking roofs and refurbishment to basement toilets and dressing rooms needed to bring the building up to a basic standard. The drama school has built up a considerable reputation for training children and young people, and, by keeping fees low, has been especially successful in supporting those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The school now works closely with local councils on a variety of social inclusion projects. [youngactors.org.uk](http://youngactors.org.uk)



### Upcoming deadlines

Round 3: 22 August 2017  
Round 4: 15 January 2018

For more information and to apply visit:  
[theatretrust.org.uk/grants](http://theatretrust.org.uk/grants)