



The Theatres Trust announces Theatres at Risk Register for 2019

**Press launch: Tuesday 22nd January 2019, 10am – 1pm
Alexandra Palace Theatre, Alexandra Palace Way, London N22 7AY**

Now in its 12th year, the Theatres at Risk Register highlights and supports theatres under threat of closure, redevelopment or demolition across the UK, calling the public's attention to these buildings, their challenges, opportunities and those who fight for them. This year, 31 theatres appear on this vitally important register with three new additions - Theatr Ardudwy, Tottenham Palace Theatre and The Intimate Theatre in Palmers Green.

Every theatre on the register has strong architectural merit or cultural heritage and, crucially, the potential to be returned to its original performance use and be a real asset to its community. Despite the time, money and energy needed to bring these theatres back into use, theatres can be central to placemaking, giving communities a real sense of cohesion and belonging. A theatre building can provide the centrepiece that attracts visitors to a town and encourages residents to spend their money locally. The London Borough of Waltham Forest's research has shown that the Walthamstow Granada could play a key role in the revival of the local area, estimating that once renovated the site could add between £34m and £52m to the local economy over a ten-year period.

Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for theatres, who compile the register, is calling for more collaborative creative partnerships between local authorities, theatre owners and operators and community groups to protect the theatres on the list. They are also asking for more sustainable funding to prevent further theatres becoming 'at risk' in the future.

Actor, stand-up comedian, writer and Theatres Trust Ambassador, Jack Dee, comments, *Nothing comes close to the thrill of live performance, either as a performer or as an audience member – and the unique buildings where this magic happens should be treasured. Restoring and maintaining theatres is not cheap, but it is worth the investment. Each and every building on the Theatres at Risk register could have a bright future as a performance space with the right support from funders, local authorities and communities working in partnership. Each will recoup that investment many times over, attracting visitors to an area, kickstarting regeneration – and contributing to the sense of wellbeing of the local community.*

Theatres can be at risk for a variety of reasons, including loss of funding, lack of maintenance, or threat from a neighbouring development. As well as disused buildings, the list includes working theatres with capital, funding or operational issues and venues currently open for special events but where significant restoration work or fundraising still needs to be done. Sadly, more than half of the buildings on this year's register are empty and it is undeniable that these cases are harder to return to use. But it is not impossible; one such recent success story is Alexandra Palace Theatre which has been removed from the Theatres at Risk register and is the venue for this year's launch event - after a six-year restoration project, it reopened in December after an 80-year hiatus. The Cryer in Sutton has also been removed from the list as it is due to reopen as an arts centre.

Significant progress has been made with many of the remaining theatres including Bradford Odeon, Century Theatre, King's Theatre Kirkcaldy and Leith Theatre. Burnley Empire's situation is improving having been bought by its local campaign group, with the support of the Theatres Trust and other partners including the National Trust, TheatreSearch and Burnley Council. Local groups of tireless supporters can be key to securing brighter futures for theatres. The Intimate Theatre, new to this year's register, is helped by a newly formed campaign group, supported by The Theatres Trust, who have already managed to get the site listed as an Asset of Community Value and are lobbying hard to ensure that the theatre is retained.

The theatres appearing on the 2019 register are as follows:

Brighton Hippodrome

Theatre Royal Margate

Victoria Pavilion/Winter Gardens, Morecambe

Dudley Hippodrome

Victoria Theatre, Salford

Spilsby Theatre

Streatham Hill Theatre, London

Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech **NEW**

Winter Gardens Pavilion, Blackpool

Burnley Empire

Plymouth Palace
Hulme Hippodrome
Century Theatre, Coalville
Walthamstow Granada, London
Leith Theatre
King's Theatre, Dundee
The Broadway, Peterborough
Tottenham Palace Theatre, London **NEW**
Conwy Civic Hall
Mechanics' Institute, Swindon
Intimate Theatre, London **NEW**
Kings Theatre, Kirkcaldy
Tameside Hippodrome, Ashton-under-Lyne
North Pier Pavilion, Blackpool
Garston Empire, Liverpool
Doncaster Grand
Swansea Palace
Derby Hippodrome
Odeon/New Victoria, Bradford
Theatre Royal, Hyde
Theatre Royal, Manchester

Assessment criteria for each theatre is available via www.theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk/theatres-at-risk-assessment-criteria and full case studies on each can be seen on the Theatres Trust website.

Seven theatres have been removed since the 2018 register for a mixture of positive and negative reasons or where the circumstances have changed. These are Alexandra Place Theatre, The Cryer, Hulme Playhouse, Llandudno Grand, The Secombe Theatre, Workington Opera House and The Coronet Theatre. Londoners are familiar with the sad story of The Coronet which, despite much lobbying and over 4,000 people signing an online petition to save the venue, is due for imminent demolition as part of the redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre site for housing, retail and leisure use.

Theatres Trust works with theatres and local authorities to provide advice and find creative solutions in order to keep or restore buildings such as those on the register in use. Since the Register's launch, of the 175 theatres that have been included on the list, 44% are now operating as live performance venues, being refurbished or being replaced by another suitable performance space. Notable successes have included Wilton's Music Hall, Theatre Royal

Portsmouth, Kings Theatre Southsea, Aberdeen Tivoli, Shanklin Theatre Isle of Wight and Stockport Plaza.

To prevent more theatres becoming 'at risk' the industry body cautions that arts funders and policymakers need to recognise the value of existing active theatre buildings and make a commitment to sustained investment in capital projects.

Andy Rudge, Head of Theatre at Integro, the launch event sponsor, says, *Integro (Insurance Brokers Ltd) have been a long standing supporter of the Theatres Trust and the valuable work it undertakes within the theatre industry. The Theatres at Risk Register is an integral part of its activities – identifying and providing much needed support to organisations when the sustainability and viability of a venue is threatened. It is vital that this work continues to help maintain the cultural landscape of the UK.*

Photo credit: Alexandra Palace Theatre (Photo by Lloyd Winters)

Notes to Editors

Website www.theatrust.org.uk

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Theatres Trust

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. They believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. They champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. They do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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