

THE THEATRES TRUST ANNOUNCES 50:50 CHANCE FOR THEATRES AT RISK

08 July 2008

London, UK

Reviewing its own top ten theatres at risk for 2008 in England The Theatres Trust welcomed English Heritage's new initiative to protect the nation's heritage. Of the 68 theatres in England on The Theatres Trust's *Theatre Buildings at Risk* register (TBAR), 34 currently face an uncertain future and are at high risk. The top ten theatres in the Trust's 2008 TBAR include theatres that remain empty, are under threat of demolition, neglect or unsympathetic redevelopment, and lack of funds for repairs and restoration.

Following the launch of English Heritage's new *Heritage at Risk* register The Theatres Trust highlighted the importance of its own work with local authorities, theatre owners and the public to secure historic theatres for future generations. Director Mhora Samuel added, 'English Heritage is encouraging local authorities to make use of its new ambitious and systematic survey of all England's designated heritage at risk. The Theatres Trust is delighted to be able to supplement this initiative with its own ongoing register highlighting the state of the nation's theatres'.

Following a dramatic year which saw the partial demolition of Grade II listed *Derby Hippodrome*, Mhora Samuel, Director of The Theatres Trust said, 'We commend English Heritage's call to local councils to take action and I'm pleased to say that the Trust continues to provide advice to authorities on serving Repairs and Urgent Work and Enforcement Notices where theatres are under threat.'

Unlike English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk* register, The Theatres Trust's *Theatre Buildings at Risk* register includes **all** theatre buildings at risk regardless of listed status or grading. Because of this the Trust's register will be an important contributor to the proposed Heritage Asset Registers to be held by local councils as part of the new Heritage Protection Bill.

The *Theatre Buildings at Risk* top ten shares three entries with English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk* register. These include *Plymouth Palace Theatre* (Grade II*), *Swindon Mechanics Institute* (Grade II*) and *Wilton's Music Hall*, London (Grade II*). *Swindon Mechanics Institute* remains a priority despite the withdrawal of an appeal for demolition in May this year, whilst *Wilton's Music Hall* and *Plymouth Palace* see no real change.

The not so good news is that the Trust's 2008 top ten includes three new entries. Brighton's *Gardner Arts Centre*, (Grade II*) on the University of Sussex campus, remains

Protecting theatres for everyone

Director Mhora Samuel **Chairman** Rupert Rhymes OBE
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closed since funding was withdrawn in May 2007. The *Farnham Redgrave*, a purpose built local theatre continues to be threatened with demolition with no provision for a replacement in the pipeline. And finally the *Bradford Odeon*, a large cine-variety theatre is also threatened with total demolition.

But as good news follows bad, we are pleased to say that three theatres from TBAR 2007's top ten have been saved. These include the *Lonsdale Cinema*, Carlisle (Grade II), which was added to the Statutory List in 2007; the *Theatre Royal Hyde* (Grade II) whose new owner is looking to carry out repairs; and the *Doncaster Grand Theatre* (Grade II) whose developer owner is in the course of selling the theatre to the Friends of Doncaster Grand.

Rupert Rhymes OBE, Chairman of The Theatres Trust concluded, 'The Trust remains committed to maintaining the *Theatre Buildings at Risk* register. By highlighting those theatres most at risk we are able to raise concerns with local councils and support public action to protect our theatres for the nation'.

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Notes For Editors

About The Theatres Trust: The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Public Body for theatres and a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting land on which there is a theatre. This applies to all theatre buildings, old and new, in current use, in other uses, or disused. It was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 *'to promote the better protection of theatres'*. The Theatres Trust champions all theatres, historic, contemporary and new as important places in our lives and supports and develops awareness of the protection and needs of UK theatres.

The Theatres Trust 2008 Top Ten Historic Theatre Buildings at Risk:

Plymouth Palace Theatre (Grade II*) – Empty

Swindon Mechanics Institute (Grade II*) – Threat of demolition and in poor state of repair

Wilton's Music Hall, London (Grade II*) – Lack of funds for repairs and restoration

Gardner Arts Centre, Brighton (Grade II*) – Empty

Burnley Empire (Grade II) – Empty and in poor state of repair

Derby Hippodrome (Grade II) – Partially demolished

Globe, Stockton-on-Tees (Grade II) – Empty

Hulme Hippodrome and Playhouse, Manchester (Both Grade II) - Empty and in poor state of repair

Bradford Odeon (Not listed) – Empty

Farnham Redgrave (Not listed) – Empty and in poor state of repair

Theatres Database: The Theatres Trust continues to maintain its Theatre Buildings at Risk register. A full record of UK theatres in its Theatres Database can be found on www.theatrestrust.org.uk

Images: Images can be provided upon request.

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