

**The Theatres Trust**

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## **THEATRE BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER 2010 HIGHLIGHTS LOCAL CAMPAIGNS TO SAVE THEATRES**

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*London, UK*

The Theatres Trust's 2010 Theatre Buildings at Risk register (TBAR), published today, reveals how the recession in 2009 has impacted on theatres across the UK - stalling plans to save theatres and placing more theatres under threat of demolition. The TBAR also illustrates that cuts to public sector spending have already started to bite, and how through the power of social media, local groups are coming together to make the case and fight for the future of their local theatres.

Covering the whole of the UK, the TBAR highlights theatres in use and theatre buildings that were once in use. They share threats from demolition, neglect, adverse local development, funding cuts and closure.

Many thousands of local people have signed up to Facebook campaigns and signed petitions in support of their local theatres. Theatres threatened with closure include the Acorn Arts Centre in Penzance and the Grade II Crewe Lyceum, which are both under imminent threat as a result of recent funding decisions. Bedford Civic is also at risk from local authority plans to close and convert it into a one stop shop for council services.

Theatres threatened with imminent demolition include Workington Opera House, which its owners intend to demolish and replace with apartments, the Borough Theatre in Wallsend which is also to be demolished for housing development, and the Grade II Derby Hippodrome which the owner is seeking planning permission to replace with a car park.

The Trust has removed theatres from last year's TBAR that have been promised public funding to secure their future, but it is keeping a close eye on these theatres in light of reviews of public sector funding commitments. Removed theatres include the Grade II\* Opera House in Blackpool. The City Council has been promised the funding to purchase the Winter Gardens, and with this the immediate threat of demolition of the Opera House for redevelopment is removed. St George's Theatre in Great Yarmouth has benefited from Sea Change Funding, and the University of Portsmouth is progressing with its plans to reinstate the stage and backstage facilities at Portsmouth Theatre Royal.

### **Protecting theatres for everyone**

**Director** Mhora Samuel **Chairman** Rob Dickins CBE  
**Trustees** Jason Barnes, Phil Clark, Marilyn Cutts, Venu Dhupa, Tim Foster, Penelope Keith CBE DL,  
Dr Pauleen Lane CBE, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Anne McReynolds, Matthew Rooke,  
Chris Shepley CBE, Sam Shrouder, Ben Twist

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres  
The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697



However, The Theatres Trust is deeply concerned that the number of theatres on the TBAR will grow over the next year. With the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies and the creation of new Local Enterprise Partnerships, sources of capital funding are unclear. Many of the theatres that have been on the register in previous years and are still closed and boarded up are likely to remain so. Theatres such as the Plymouth Palace and Burnley Empire remain closed but are located in areas with real regeneration potential. One hope is that as Lottery distributors' funding allocations return to pre-Olympics levels, capital funding will be more available to secure the future of many of the theatres on the risk register.

The theatres on the TBAR provide important cultural and community resources for local people and make their contribution to the vision of a 'Big Society'. They empower people, are important in engendering local pride, and enhance the quality of people's lives, through the access they provide to the arts and entertainment and by their contribution to the quality of the built environment.

Theatres Trust Chairman, Rob Dickins CBE said, "Our TBAR this year really highlights theatres under threat from imminent demolition and funding cuts. I'm very concerned that the theatres currently providing local people with access to their only live arts and entertainment experiences are going to end up abandoned and lying empty. Previously closed and abandoned theatres are also now more of a target for redevelopment and demolition. We cannot lose our theatre heritage in this way."

The Theatre Buildings at Risk Register can be searched online at [www.theatrust.org.uk](http://www.theatrust.org.uk). More information on each theatre is provided through a link to the Trust's Theatres Database, which includes around 2,000 existing theatre buildings. Each of the top entries has a downloadable information sheet.

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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.

**About the Theatre Buildings At Risk register:** Since it began in 1976 The Theatres Trust has been protecting theatre buildings throughout the UK. The TBAR was started in 2006 in response to growing public interest in theatres, to identify important theatres, and to create a Risk Register to work alongside others similar lists and Local Authorities Local Lists.

### The 2010 Top Theatre Buildings at Risk:

#### England: Top Theatres 2010:

Acorn Arts Centre, Penzance  
Bedford Civic (Grade II)  
Burnley Empire (Grade II)  
Brighton Hippodrome (Grade II\*)  
Borough Theatre, Wallsend  
Crewe Lyceum (Grade II)  
Derby Hippodrome (Grade II)  
Doncaster Grand (Grade II)  
Hulme Hippodrome & Playhouse, Manchester (Grade II)  
Futurist, Scarborough  
Liverpool Neptune (Grade II)  
Plymouth Palace (Grade II\*)  
Stockton Globe (Grade II)  
Swindon Mechanics' Institute (Grade II\*)  
Workington Opera House  
Tameside Hippodrome (Grade II)  
Theatre Royal Hyde (Grade II)

#### Scotland: Top Theatres 2010:

Ayr Civic (new in 2010)  
Britannia Panopticon, Glasgow (Category A)  
Edinburgh Gateway (Category C(s))  
Edinburgh Odeon/Victoria (Category B)  
Glasgow Coliseum (new in 2010) (Category B)  
Ramshorn Theatre, Glasgow (new in 2010) (Category A)  
Tivoli, Aberdeen (Category A)

**Wales: Top Theatres 2010:**

Swansea Palace (Grade II)  
Patti Theatre, Craig-y-Nos, Abercrave (Grade I)  
Pontypridd Town Hall (new in 2010) (Grade II)  
Theatr Elli, Llanelli (new in 2010) (Grade II)  
Theatre Royal, Barry

**Further information:**

Stats:

c.2,000 extant theatre buildings in the UK (not all in theatre use): around 150 in Scotland, over 180 in Wales, and c.1,700 in England

2009	2010
82 on TBAR	55 on TBAR
71 England	43 England
4 Scotland	7 Scotland
7 Wales	5 Wales
0 Northern Ireland	0 Northern Ireland

40 removed from the 2009 list; 14 buildings added in 2010

The TBAR Register differs from the risk registers of other bodies in that it includes **all** types of theatre building, whether statutory listed, in a Conservation Area, or not listed. This means that the Trust can monitor theatres which are under threat, but not afforded any statutory protection.

Risks to theatres are assessed by: Ownership/Sale (Threat through sale or ownership); Funding/Finance (Where difficulties in obtaining capital or revenue funding puts the building at risk); Building Operation (Where quality of operation threatens continuing or future theatre use of building); Cost of works (Where the cost of maintenance/refurbishment works to comply with regulations is high); Local development (Where development adversely affects access to the theatre or restricts future expansion/improvements); Demolition (Where there is a clear threat of demolition); Use class (Risk of future alterations to another use to be made without referral/control); Building fabric (Decay of a building not in use or removal of significant features); Theatre fabric (Irreversible works which may prevent a return to theatre use in the future).