

The Theatres Trust

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THEATRES TRUST ANNOUNCES THEATRES AT RISK NEED MORE THAN GUARDIAN ANGELS

Embargoed until 8am 14 July 2011, London, UK

The Theatres Trust 2011 Theatre Buildings At Risk register (TBAR) announced today identifies the number of theatres at risk in the UK has risen to **58** since last year. In addition to the tireless efforts of community and campaign groups who are the guardian angels of many UK theatres, there is a desperate need for funding and public backing. Over half of the theatres on its at risk register have yet to find the financial and political support needed to secure a viable future.

Mhora Samuel, Director of The Theatres Trust said, "In a year when many local authorities, public bodies and private owners reviewed the funding and ownership of their theatres, local campaigns were mounted to save theatres under threat. All have faced huge challenges in establishing governance structures and raising the money to keep their local theatres from being sold or closed. We hope that legislation such as the Government's new Localism Bill will create the conditions and empower more individuals and groups to take on the guardianship of theatres at risk."

Covering the whole of the UK, the Theatres Trust's Theatre Buildings at Risk register highlights theatres that face threats from demolition, neglect, local development, funding cuts and closure. Many of those in private ownership remain closed or in a poor condition whilst groups who want to rescue and reopen them try to gain public support and raise funding.

In London, the Trust hoped to remove Wilton's Music Hall from the register, but due to its unsuccessful attempts to secure funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund it has remained on the list of top theatres at risk. Its high profile and celebrity backed campaign to raise £4 million is generating significant awareness for the theatre. But it is not alone in its plight, Morecambe Winter Gardens among many others continue their struggle to secure funding to support restoration or purchase.

The top theatres at risk in the 2011 TBAR in England include the Brighton Hippodrome (Grade II*), Morecambe Winter Gardens (Grade II*), Plymouth Palace (Grade II*), Burnley Empire (Grade II), Hulme Hippodrome (Grade II), Wilton's Music Hall (Grade II*), Tameside Hippodrome (Grade II), Derby Hippodrome (Grade II), Doncaster Grand (Grade II), Hulme Playhouse (Grade II), Hyde Theatre Royal (Grade II), Dudley Hippodrome, Garston Empire in Liverpool and the Cochrane Theatre in London.

Protecting theatres for everyone

Director Mhora Samuel **Chairman** Rob Dickins CBE
Trustees Nick Allott, Phil Clark, Ruth Eastwood, Tim Foster, Oliver Goodwin, Jerry Katzman, Penelope Keith CBE DL, Dr Pauleen Lane CBE, Graham McPherson, Anne McReynolds, Judith Mellor, Matthew Rooke, Chris Shepley CBE, 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



In Scotland the most important theatres at risk include Aberdeen Tivoli (Category A), Ramshorn Theatre in Glasgow (Category A), Glasgow Britannia Panopticon (Category A) and Stockbridge Theatre (former Theatre Workshop) (Category B). In Wales the fates of the Swansea Palace (Grade II), Conwy Civic Hall, Theatr Harlech and Parc Hall in Treorchy remain unclear.

Twenty theatres have been added to the 2011 list whilst eighteen theatres have been removed, many receiving support from The Theatres Trust to help secure their future.

In addition to the theatres that remain on the TBAR, many of the new theatres have been added because they have been put up for sale, are on sites proposed for redevelopment or are under threat of demolition. The new additions include the Bournemouth Pier Theatre, RAF Brampton Theatre, Isle of Wight Ryde Theatre (Grade II), in London Paul Robeson Theatre, Plymouth Athenaeum, Liverpool Forum (Grade II), Regent Theatre in Loughborough, Penrith Alhambra, Sandonia in Stafford, Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall (Grade II), St. Peter's Theatre in Southsea, Ayr Gaiety (Category B), Stockbridge Theatre in Edinburgh (Category B), Conwy Civic Hall, Theatr Harlech, Parc Hall in Treorchy, De Valence Pavilion in Tenby, Albert Hall Theatre in Llandrindod Wells (Grade II), St Donats Arts Centre near Llantwit Major and the Corwen Pavilion.

The successful creation of community-based trusts lie at the heart of many of the theatres that have come off the 2010 register. Many have received advice and support from The Theatres Trust. A new charitable trust took over the Shanklin Theatre on the Isle of Wight and is in negotiation with the council to transfer the theatre's Freehold into its ownership. The Marina Theatre, Lowestoft and the Acorn Arts Centre, Penzance are in similar positions with both remaining open while they transfer to trust status.

Those that have come off the list include, Gardner Arts Centre/Attenborough Centre for the Contemporary Arts, Brighton (Grade II*), Crewe Lyceum (Grade II), Shanklin Theatre (Grade II), Neptune Theatre, Liverpool (Grade II), Hackney Empire (Grade II*), Arts Theatre, London, Westminster Theatre, Marina Theatre, Lowestoft, Acorn Arts Centre, Penzance, Victoria Theatre, Salford (Grade II), Stockton Globe (Grade II), Taunton Gaumont (Grade II), Theatr Elli, Llanelli (Grade II), and the Patti Theatre, Craig-y-Nos (Grade I).

Despite eleventh hour efforts by local campaigns some theatres have been lost to demolition. These include the Borough Theatre Wallsend, Garrison Theatre, Alsager, Ayr Civic Theatre and the Glasgow Coliseum.

Looking to the future, the Trust hopes for a demonstrable increase in funding and political support for community and campaign groups in protecting and promoting the value of their local theatres.

The Theatre Buildings at Risk register can be searched online at www.theatrust.org.uk. More information on each theatre is provided through a link to the Trust's online 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.

Further information:

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

2010	2011
55 on TBAR	58 on TBAR
43 England	41 England
7 Scotland	7 Scotland
5 Wales	10 Wales
0 Northern Ireland	0 Northern Ireland
18 removed from the 2010 list; 20 buildings added in 2011	

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.

The risk criteria that we apply are: Threat through sale or ownership; Difficulties in obtaining capital or revenue funding; The poor quality of operation threatening continuing or future theatre use of the building; High cost of maintenance/refurbishment works; Local development adversely affecting access to the theatre or restricting future expansion/improvements; A clear threat of demolition; alteration to another use; Decay of a building not in use or removal of significant features; and Irreversible works which may prevent a return to theatre use in the future.

The addition of a 'star rating' enables the Trust to apply a qualitative judgement on the importance of the theatre as:

- **A theatre** (for example, excellent sightlines, acoustics, warmth, facilities);
- Its **architectural quality**;
- its **historical significance**; and
- Its **uniqueness** (in relation to the provision of working theatres within the locality).