

## GRANADA THEATRE, WALTHAMSTOW

[Granada Theatre](#), 186 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, Waltham Forest, London, E17 4QL

**Total risk value 7:** Risk Rating: 2. Star rating: 2. Community Rating 3.

### Significance

The Granada was built in 1930 by architect Cecil Masey with interior decoration by Theodore Komisarjevsky. It operated initially as a ciné-variety theatre, with a subsequent history as a live music venue and cinema. There is much classical detail in the large foyer, with a flight of stairs each side leading up to the 'Hall of Mirrors' – a flat barrel-vaulted circle lobby. The richly ordered proscenium arch and gilded decorated wall grilles use details from the Palace at Cordoba, overlaid with seventeenth-century Baroque features. The 'Hall of Mirrors' and part of the auditorium were stylishly redecorated to their original splendour in 1995, and the central kiosk designed to match. The walls of the balcony were reconstructed to give a more intimate finish, which has not detracted from the original style of the magnificent auditorium. The Granada achieved listed status in February 1987 and is now Grade II\*. The Granada could provide a new performance space for Waltham Forest, a borough which does not currently have a major permanent theatre or performance space. There is widespread support for this venue to return to genuine entertainment use.

### Risk

Summary of Risk: Ownership/Sale: (Medium), Cost of Works (Medium), Building Fabric (Medium).

The cinema closed in 2003 when it was taken over by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). This organisation aimed to change the use of the Granada to a church, but lobbying by local residents and the support of the Council prevented this, and the UCKG sold the building to Antic London (a pub group) in November 2014. Without any use or maintenance, it is believed that the auditorium and stage areas are now in a poor condition. If the auditorium is not brought back into use, there is a strong risk that the auditorium and stage areas will deteriorate further and the venue will be lost permanently to live performance use. In order to avoid this, the London Borough of Waltham Forest has brought Antic London and Soho Theatre together to discuss shared use of the building.

### Current situation

Plans developed by the local Waltham Forest Cinema Trust and Soho Theatre for a restoration of the theatre and a return to professional performance alongside an active community education programme have gained widespread support among active local campaign groups, the business community and local residents, as well as cross-party support amongst councillors and local MPs. The local authority, the London Borough of Waltham Forest, has proactively worked with Soho Theatre and Waltham Forest Cinema Trust to secure the building for community and entertainment use through an attempted negotiated purchase with a significant financial contribution, as well as committing to use of a Compulsory Purchase Order if that approach failed.

In November 2014, the Antic pub group bought the freehold from the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, with the aim of developing the building. Its stated plans include bars/pubs, restaurants, jazz/cabaret club, boutique B&B, rooftop garden, cafes and some enabling residential development.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest has been brokering discussions between Antic London and Soho Theatre, with the aspiration of ensuring a shared use of the building. The plan would be for Soho Theatre to deliver a high quality programme of entertainment, alongside a wide-reaching community education programme.

**Aim**

To secure a long-term sustainable use for the Walthamstow Granada, which includes restoration of the theatre, a return to live performance and demonstrable community access and participation.

**Action 2015/16 for The Theatres Trust:** To support London Borough of Waltham Forest and Soho Theatre in their negotiations with Antic London.

**Further information**

**Current Freehold Owner:** Antic London W: [anticlondon.com](http://anticlondon.com)

**Current Operator/Manager:** None

**Local Contact:** Soho Theatre: Mark Godfrey, Executive Director, Steve Marmion, Artistic Director, Kelly Fogarty, Press Enquiries E: [kelly@sohotheatre.com](mailto:kelly@sohotheatre.com) T: 020 7478 0132 M: 07446 051 466  
Waltham Forest Cinema Trust: Neil Gerrard, Chair

**Local Authority:** London Borough of Waltham Forest W: [walthamforest.gov.uk](http://walthamforest.gov.uk) T: 020 8496 3000  
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**Theatres Trust Theatres Database:** ID Number [1703](#)

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