

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a night festival. In the upper half, there are bright, golden fireworks exploding against a dark sky. Below the fireworks, a large crowd of people is visible, many with their arms raised in celebration. The lower half of the image shows the illuminated facades of modern buildings with large glass windows, reflecting the festival lights. The overall atmosphere is festive and vibrant.

# T M

**Theatres  
Magazine**

Summer  
2018

Introducing Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive

Improving Accessibility

Theatres Protection Fund Awards

Streatham Space Project: from S106 to theatre

Providing protection for theatres in the planning system

Q&A with cultural champions Waltham Forest Council

Book Review City of Culture

# Showcase: NST City, Southampton

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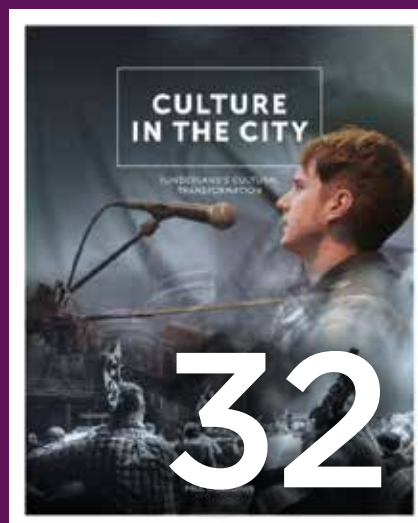
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## New money and new models for theatre buildings



Bradford Odeon, currently dark and on our theatres at risk register, is about to undergo a major transformation turning it into a live music and entertainment venue, operated by the NEC Group.

Image courtesy of Tim Ronalds Architects

# Introducing Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive

**How we finance and run theatres is changing, but what does this mean for how we build and adapt our theatres? Director Jon Morgan introduces the themes being discussed at Conference 18, taking place on Tuesday 16 October 2018 at the Lyric Hammersmith.**

If there's one thing theatre people are good at it is improvising – making the best of what we've got and making sure the show goes on. For centuries we've adapted to the challenges of changing political and economic circumstances and in the last century theatre has continued to thrive in spite of gloomy predictions that first cinema, then television and then the internet and digital media would be the end of live performance.

And the last ten years of austerity has seen the further challenge of significantly reduced public spending. *The Arts Index 2007-2016*, which is published by the National Campaign for the Arts, shows that combined public funding for the arts in England (Treasury, local government and lottery) has fallen by 20% since 2007/8.

In spite of this very few theatres are shutting their doors. On the contrary, it is estimated that in London over the last five years around 30 new theatres have been built or created from converted spaces. Alongside this, across the UK, in places like Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Darlington, Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Oldham, Southampton,

Stockton, Glasgow, Perth, Truro, and Barry, we are seeing new theatres being built, former theatres re-opening and a number of theatres undertaking major redevelopment projects.

At Conference 18 we will be exploring exactly how theatres are adapting to thrive. We will look at how theatres are changing their businesses to generate more earned income and what this means for theatre design. The Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool repurposed their traditional seating to create a cabaret style arrangement, Act 1 of 4 phases of redevelopment, this allowed them to offer a package of a meal and a show. They recently finished Act III works which opened a new 150-seat basement venue, able to operate independently of the main space. Other theatres such as West Yorkshire Playhouse and the Citizens in Glasgow are undertaking significant improvements to their front of house spaces.

Theatres are also developing more flexible models for presenting a wider range of work, whether that's the creation of new or adapted spaces in London's West End by producers such as Delfont Mackintosh, Nimax or LW Theatres, purpose built flexible spaces like The Bridge in London and the Factory in Manchester or, as is increasingly popular, the repurposing of spaces for presenting immersive theatre such as The Buzz in Southwark.

We will also examine how theatres are collaborating with other sectors to deliver joint services and share spaces. As well as

hosting a number of arts organisations, the Albany in Deptford works in partnership with Lewisham Council to run Deptford Lounge an innovative community hub and library. While in Northumberland the council and Alnwick Theatre have secured the future of the theatre, agreeing a new 50-year lease and £2.5m redevelopment project which will see part of the ground floor converted into a community hub, including a library, tourist information and customer service facilities.

Alongside changing operating models and evolving theatre design, theatres are forging new partnerships to raise the funds needed for new and redeveloped buildings. Bradford Odeon, a theatre at risk, is due to reopen in 2020 thanks to a far-sighted partnership between the local authority, developer Bradford Live and the NEC Group, while Nuffield Southampton Theatres (our Showcase article this edition) are extending their reach beyond their campus space with a newly opened city-centre venue. NST City is part of a new arts complex, Studio 144, which has been developed in a partnership between the council, the university and developer Grosvenor, and brokered by Southampton Cultural Development Trust.

So, theatres are adapting to the challenging economic environment with new and redeveloped buildings springing up across the UK funded by strategic partnerships across a range of stakeholders and sustained by new operating and financial models.

However there are clouds on the horizon. According to the Local Government Association, local authorities will see a further 54% reduction in their central government funding over the next two years. And following a peak in lottery revenues in 2015/16, the lottery distribution bodies have now halved the funding they can distribute for capital projects.

The 900-seat Bridge Theatre is a commercial theatre building near Tower Bridge in London that opened in October 2017.

Philip Vile



The Factory in Manchester is a new £112m arts venue set to be built by Laing O'Rourke and designed by OMA, Rem Koolhaas' practice.

OMA

What does this mean for the future of the UK's theatres? Alongside in-depth case studies we will take a look at the bigger picture and ask: what are the future capital needs for our theatres, where are the gaps in provision and where is the money going to come from? And, what can be done to ensure we continue to invest in our theatre building infrastructure so present and future generations can access the excitement of live performance wherever they live in the UK?

At this year's conference there will be a mix of broad ranging debate on these questions alongside inspiring case studies from architects, theatre operators and consultants, developers, and local authorities explaining how they are finding new ways to raise capital funding and developing new design and operating models to make theatres more viable for the future.

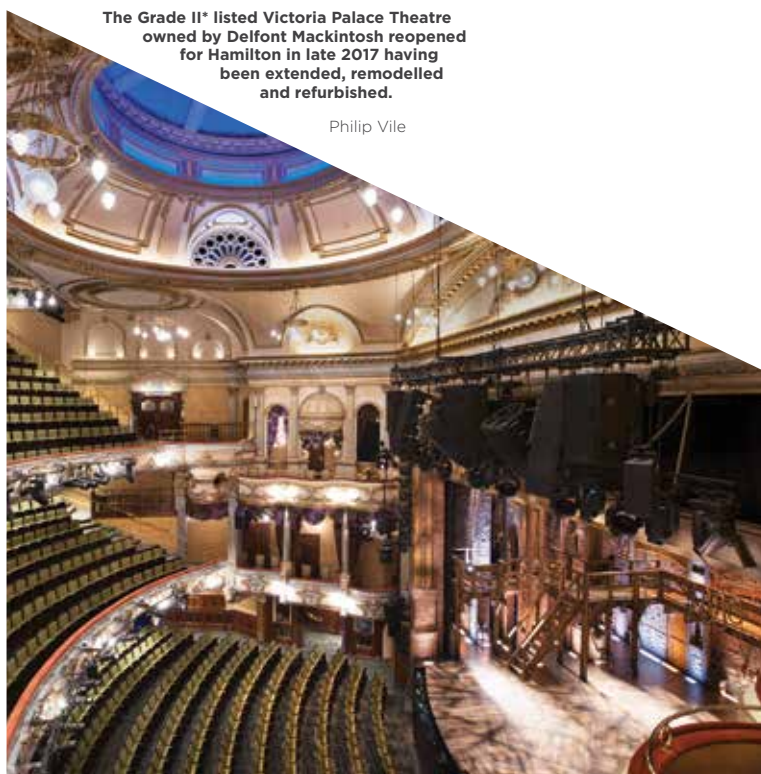
Confirmed speakers include Michael Ellis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, and producer and theatre owner Cameron Mackintosh who will be discussing his work renovating and renewing some of London's finest theatres. John McGrath, CEO and Artistic Director of Manchester International Festival will talk about creating the UK's most flexible performance venue.

**Early Bird booking is now open:**  
[theatretrust.org.uk/events](http://theatretrust.org.uk/events)

**More speakers and the full programme will be announced over the summer.**

The Grade II\* listed Victoria Palace Theatre owned by Delfont Mackintosh reopened for Hamilton in late 2017 having been extended, remodelled and refurbished.

Philip Vile





# Conference 18: Adapt & Thrive

New money and new  
models for theatre  
buildings

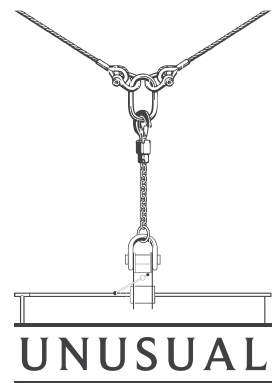
**Tuesday 16 Oct 2018**  
Lyric Hammersmith

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# Theatres Protection Fund

## Improving Accessibility with the Theatre Improvement Scheme

**The Theatres Trust and Wolfson Foundation partnership continues with the launch of the Theatre Improvement Scheme. Our Theatres Adviser Tom Stickland explains more about the scheme, and the theme for year one, improving accessibility.**

For six years the Theatres Trust have been offering small grants to theatres to address urgent repairs and improvements. These have really shown how a small investment can make a big difference to a theatre. With a maximum grant of £5,000 our small grant awards often help contribute to a much larger overall project, and the projects tend to be narrow in scope. This year, continuing our partnership with the Wolfson Foundation, we are broadening our impact by offering grants up to £20,000 to fund excellent projects through our new Theatre Improvement Scheme.

Our mission at the Theatres Trust is to champion the future of live performance, by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. Until now the projects funded by our small grant schemes have responded to an urgent need, but we would like to encourage theatres to be proactive about considering their greatest asset, the building, and how they can improve it for audiences and staff alike.

The Theatre Improvement Scheme was launched in February 2018 and is run in partnership with the Wolfson Foundation who have provided funding to allow Theatres Trust to distribute £100,000 a year for the next three years. A different theme will be announced each year and to give theatres time to develop their project the scheme will have a single September deadline. The theme in 2018 is 'Improving Accessibility'.

Improving accessibility is something that our smaller grants schemes have funded in the past, including recent awards to the Purple Playhouse, Chapter Arts Centre and the Tron Theatre, but sadly many theatres still present barriers for D/deaf and disabled audiences, artists and staff. With this new scheme we would like to see applications for ambitious projects that theatres have devised in consultation with D/deaf and disabled user groups who may be current audience members of their theatre or members of the local community that the theatre wants

to feel welcome in the future. With a £20,000 budget meaningful standalone projects can be created that can have a long standing impact on the theatre and its audiences.

There are many ways that theatre buildings can be made more accessible and we would encourage theatres to not think only about lifts, ramps and toilets. Projects might include dipped bars, accessible signage, captioning equipment – any improvement that will improve accessibility. We will consider applications that include building projects, plant and major equipment purchases. While we will consider any engagement activities around the project as a positive contribution, this funding is intended to fund the capital elements of these projects.

If theatres are truly going to be considered excellent then they must make sure the performances they produce and programme are of the highest standard, and importantly, accessible to all. The under-representation of D/deaf and disabled people in the theatre workforce is partly due to barriers that inaccessible buildings present. We expect successful theatres to consider the needs of all users of their buildings that will serve as best practice examples that we can tell readers of Theatres Magazine about in the future.

The deadline for the Improving Accessibility grants will be the 13 September 2018 (we will announce next year's theme in a future issue of Theatres Magazine). If you are interested in applying visit: [theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding/theatre-improvement-scheme](https://theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding/theatre-improvement-scheme)

Chapter Arts Centre



**“Access to theatres for disabled audiences, artists & employees is vital to ensure the industry acts inclusively and fully reflects its audience. Theatre premises need to constantly evolve to meet the demands of the public regardless of the age of the building. But all too often theatres are unable to employ disabled talent or accommodate disabled artists due to inaccessible offices and stages. I welcome the Theatres Trust initiative to focus funding on organisations who wish to drive this agenda, and go beyond reasonable adjustment.”**

**Andrew Miller**  
Disability Champion for  
UK Arts and Culture



# Theatres Protection Fund UK Small Grants Scheme Awards

The UK Small Grants Scheme has awarded £24,715 to five more theatres for small capital grants in Round 11 awards.

## **Burnley Mechanics Theatre** £5,000 | Get-in lift

Burnley Mechanics Theatre is a receiving house converted from an historic mechanic's institute. It has an auditorium on the first floor which results in a challenging get in procedure requiring multiple hoists and manual handling. Our grant will fund a new lift which will remove the final step of that by allowing heavy set pieces to be brought up to stage level without physical effort. This project will help ensure the health and safety of theatre workers and improve the experience of visiting companies.

## **Tron Theatre, Glasgow** £5,000 | Dipped box office & bar

The Category B listed Tron Theatre in Glasgow seats 230 in the Main Auditorium and 50 in the Changing House studio theatre. Originally a church dating from 1795, it was converted and reopened as a theatre in 1982. The theatre is undertaking a programme of refurbishment. Using funds from the Theatres Trust, a new box office and bar counter will be installed with a dipped section to allow wheelchair users and other audience members who couldn't previously see over the counter to interact with the theatre's staff.

## **St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth** £5,000 | Signage

Based in an 18th century Grade I listed former chapel building, St George's Theatre in Great Yarmouth was previously considered a Theatre at Risk but was renovated and reopened in 2013. Since then audiences have returned, but growth has been hampered by a lack of signage identifying it as an active theatre. Theatres Trust grant funding will pay for bold and clear signage that publicises the theatre and neighbouring pavilion, while respecting the historic setting.



St George's Theatre,  
Great Yarmouth

### **Purple Playhouse, Brighton** **£4,715 | Accessibility Improvements**

Purple Playhouse is a community theatre associated with the Grace Eyre Foundation. Currently achieving a Bronze level accessibility rating from Attitude is Everything, it is hoped that Silver level can be achieved following these accessibility improvements. The Theatres Trust grant will help fund primary works associated with the toilets, changing doors, switch heights and mirrors. The package of works also includes some urgent repairs to tackle damp and soundproofing issues which pose immediate risks to the theatre's operation.



Purple Playhouse,  
Brighton

### **Studio 1A, Bangor** **£5,000 | Connecting front & back of house**

Studio1A is an amateur theatre run by Bangor Drama Club. A grant from the Theatres Trust will fund minor works to complete the conversion of Bangor Drama Club's new dedicated theatre space. The works will connect the front and back of house and improve the stage size. This is the first grant that the Theatres Trust has given to a theatre in Northern Ireland.

**“Theatres need support to repair and improve their buildings and we are delighted that our small grants schemes can help with that. The recipients are all rooted in their local communities and give a broad range of people access to the performing arts.”**

**Jon Morgan, Director  
Theatres Trust**

Studio 1A,  
Bangor



Launched in April 2012, this scheme awards grants of up to £5,000 to theatres across the UK to address urgent building works and improvements, and receives support from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

The deadline for the next round of applications for the UK Small Grants Scheme is Tuesday 8 January 2019. Further details including criteria, application forms and previous recipients can be found: [theatrust.org.uk/uk-theatres-small-grants-scheme](http://theatrust.org.uk/uk-theatres-small-grants-scheme)



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## Theatres Protection Fund

# London Theatres Small Grants Scheme Awards

The London Theatres Small Grants Scheme has awarded £24,870 in capital grants to five more small London theatres in Round 4 awards.

The awards have been made to theatres in need of immediate repairs, addressing accessibility issues and improving conditions for staff, performers and audiences.

### **Albany Theatre** £5,000 | Door lobbies

The Albany in Deptford is a hub for the creative industries with a theatre at its heart. This grant will improve the front of house spaces through the installation of lobbies on the front entrance by stopping drafts and improving the comfort of daytime users of the space. The Albany plans to secure match-funding for the grant with the aim of starting work in late 2018.

### **Half Moon Theatre** £5,000 | Get-in lift

Half Moon is a specialist children's theatre in Limehouse, East London. As well as presenting original productions, they also present a programme of other work suitable for young audiences between September and April each year. A grant from the Theatres Trust will support a scissor lift at the rear of the building; this external lift will predominantly be used for the movement of scenery, but will also serve as a means of escape for wheelchair users.

### **Normansfield Theatre** £5,000 | New assistive listening system

Normansfield is an historic private theatre built in 1879 in the Langdon Down Centre. Originally designed to be used by the patients in the residential home on the site, the theatre is now open for public events. Many of the theatres' users are hearing impaired and a grant from the Theatres Trust will install a new system to improve their experience.



Normansfield Theatre



### **Playground Theatre** **£5,000 | Widening fire escapes**

The Playground is a new theatre that opened in 2017, converted from a bus depot. The resident company have been operating for some time but this is their first permanent performance space. The project funded by a Theatres Trust grant will widen the fire escapes of the building and will allow for an increased audience capacity.



Playground Theatre

### **Theatre503** **£4,870 | Stage & dressing room improvements**

Theatre503 is a well-established space for new writing on the small scale. This pub theatre has developed a strong reputation as a home for emerging writing talent. This Theatres Trust funded project includes improvements to the stage and dressing room areas. This package of works that will make a big difference to performers and creatives at this small theatre.



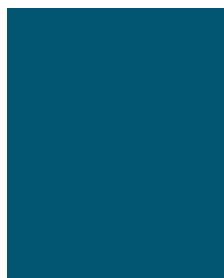
The London Theatres Small Grants Scheme was launched in summer 2015 by Cameron Mackintosh's Mackintosh Foundation in partnership with the London Mayor's Office, to help small theatres in the city with vital capital funding. In spring 2016 Fawn James of Soho Estates joined the Mackintosh Foundation as the second major donor to the London Small Theatres Grants Scheme.

The Round 5 deadline will be 15 October 2018. Further details including criteria, application forms and previous recipients can be found: [theatretrust.org.uk/uk-theatres-small-grants-scheme](http://theatretrust.org.uk/uk-theatres-small-grants-scheme)

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# NST City, Southampton



**On 16 February 2018 Southampton's, new performing arts venue, NST City, opened with a celebratory event in Guildhall Square featuring more than 100 performers, dance, music and fireworks, followed by the world premiere of Howard Brenton's *The Shadow Factory*. Artistic and Executive Directors Sam Hughes and Caroline Routh discuss the design and build of their new theatre in the heart of the city.**

## Beginnings

NST City, Southampton's new arts centre sits in the North Building, one half of the Studio 144 development, with the John Hansard Art Gallery in the South Building. It is the final element in Southampton's ambitious cultural quarter.

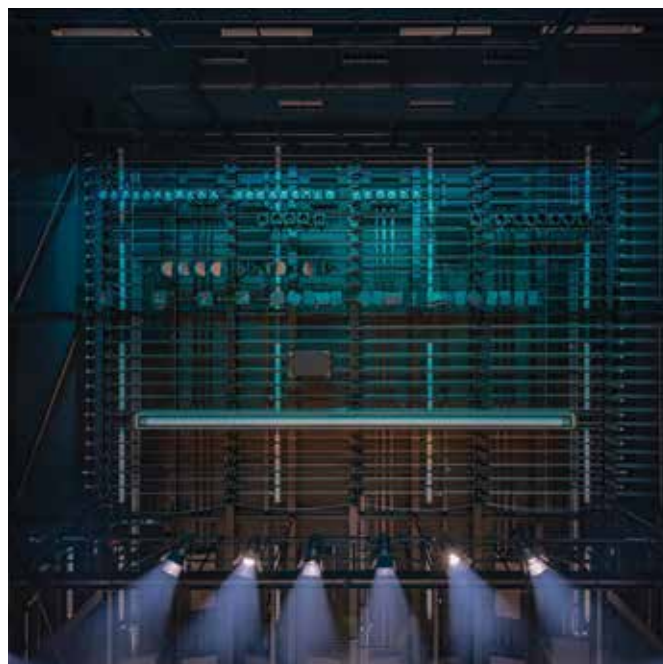
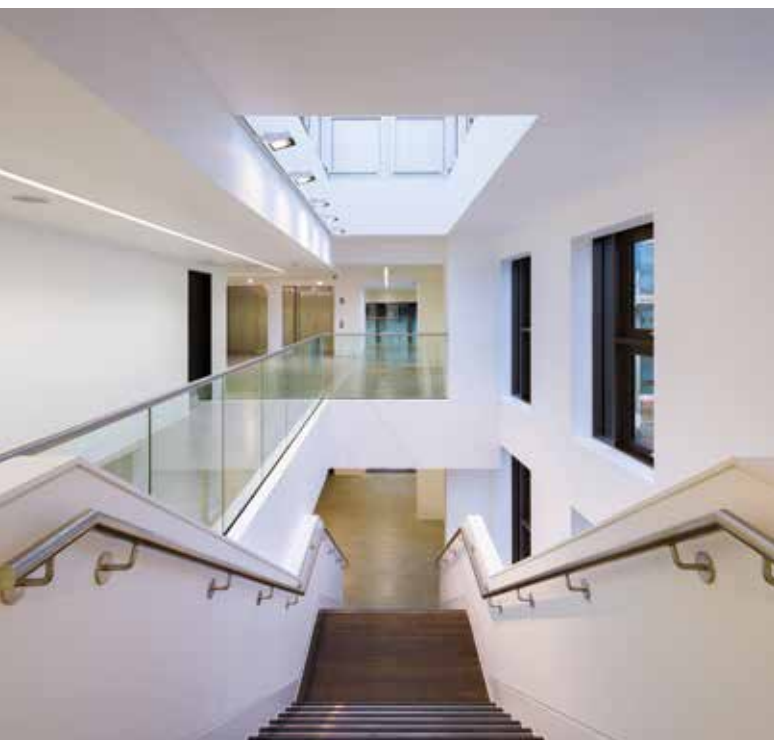
The overall development is designed by CZWG and the arts facilities by Glenn Howells Architects, with fit out by Galliford Try. Studio 144 includes gallery, performing arts and film/media studio space as part of a mixed-use development.

The quarter has been 15 years in the making – a partnership between the council, the university and developer Grosvenor, brokered by Southampton Cultural Development Trust, and supported by Arts Council England through their National Lottery-funded Capital programme.

NST City, is run by Nuffield Southampton Theatres (NST), the largest Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation in Southampton. NST City is a producing theatre alongside Nuffield's existing theatre, renamed NST Campus, on the University of Southampton's Highfield Campus, which will remain a presenting house.

showcase

Below:  
**Main staircase**  
Right:  
**Grid in main auditorium**



**“The new venue offers a level of visibility and accessibility that we’ve never had before with the campus site and that is key in terms of Southampton feeling a sense of ownership of its cultural assets.”**

**Sam Hodges, Artistic Director**

If NST was to be the catalyst for cultural transformation that it sought to be, it needed to speak to its community and also represent it to the country. NST knew that they should run this new venue. They enlisted Plann to represent them in relation to their discussions and negotiations with Southampton City Council over becoming the operator of the new venue, and by 2015 they were firmly on board.

NST’s ambitions for the new venue were two-fold, to be able to produce world class drama which celebrates theatre at its best – innovative in form, striking in design, inclusive and diverse in its appeal, and for the building to be an energetic and dynamic whirlwind of artistic programme, artist development initiatives, and community outreach opportunities. Though the overall design had been agreed, NST was still able to make a mark.

#### **A look at the spaces**

As a new hub for the creative community, the design was to be inclusive and open. A café at the heart of the building connects the various arts spaces, which include a 446-seat theatre, a 135-seat studio, a rehearsal room and three workshop spaces.

The public enter from the main square up a flight of stairs to reach the large foyer, box office, bar, café and main house.

Get-in is via a goods lift from the ground floor to the first floor. This leads to the workshop, through acoustic doors to the main house. There are also three dressing rooms on the first floor, as well as the wardrobe and green room.

The second floor holds the main house balcony, a studio theatre, two dressing rooms, a rehearsal room and another control room.

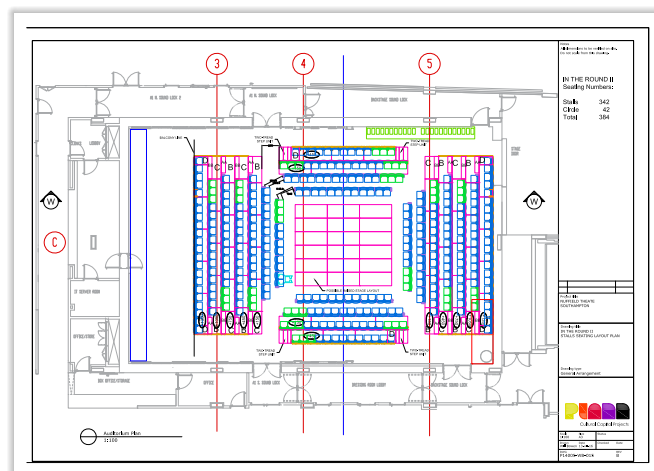
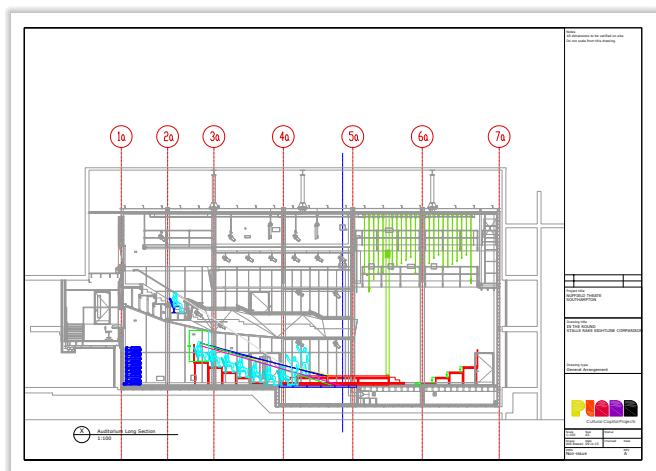
The different spaces have been designed to be multi-use, so rehearsal spaces double as function or seminar rooms, and they are open and airy. The theatre’s offices, rehearsal and other rooms are designed to be accessed by staff directly from the public spaces, and loos are used by staff, performers and the public. Front of house and back of house are designed to be fully accessible via passenger lifts.

#### **The design process**

Arup has been involved in designs for the project since 2003, and provided full engineering services, including specialist acoustics design and theatre consulting. They worked with Southampton City Council and Glenn Howells Architects to develop the design of the North building, with a brief to include a mix of performance and creative spaces, welcoming locally produced shows, professional performers, and community groups.

Plann acted as the end user representative, reviewing the drawings and providing advice on the suitability of the proposals to meet NST’s business plan and artistic programme. These included changes to the main auditorium, a reallocation of spaces to fit the operational model, and aesthetic changes to the bar and café areas.





Above:  
**Different seating configurations in the main house**

NST's original venue is proscenium arch, so it was crucial that the new space was able to be flexible to improve the offer and the design for the main theatre has inherent flexibility.

One of NST's key aspirations was for there to be a flexible 'kit of parts' comprising of loose seating and rostra to allow the main end-on space to be used in a flexible format. With the main seating bank retractable and the room in flat floor configuration, the flexible seating can provide a deep thrust, promenade and in the round formats.

With retractable seating and moving platforms, enabling staging and seating to be arranged in different formats responding to the artistic team's creativity on a show by show basis, as well as associated machinery, lighting, sound and projection systems, all performances should be able to offer the sophisticated technical presentation expected by today's audiences.

Plann assisted NST with applying to Arts Council England for funding, designed the kit of parts, procured the components and oversaw the installation. This was achieved with Metro decks, bespoke treads and handrails supplied and manufactured by Stage Solutions. Shadow Factory, the first show in the main house uses a mixture of retractable and 'kit of parts' seating.

The Studio Theatre is a black box, with flexible, retractable seating, and can be used in a range of formats from cabaret to cinema (with projection facilities built in).

As part of a wider development, the arts spaces had to be in close proximity to retail, restaurants and housing areas. This required careful building planning and acoustic design in the constrained site to ensure that the spaces would deliver their full range of use without conflict. Arup and Plann worked together to detail isolated 'box-in-box' constructions for the two performance spaces. These provide noise control by completely separating the internal structure from the external structure and ensure the theatres don't disturb nearby spaces.



Top:  
**Studio theatre**  
Bottom:  
**Main house from a side balcony**

### Legacy

To date the theatre team considers the launch of the building and the communities' response to their first show *The Shadow Factory*, their greatest achievement, despite the building not entirely designed as a producing theatre.

NST ran an open space event in late 2015, where audiences were invited to be engaged in the building, where they input what they wanted from building – to make it their own. These same people are now helping the theatre team with snagging and future proofing conversations. Despite space on-site being at a premium, and with their business model focussing on income generation, the theatre team have tried to ensure there are dedicated, affordable arts spaces for community groups, with a development programme bringing the community in.

A few months after opening, and the team are getting to grips with the building, focussing on redressing the challenge that no ground floor presence brings, and building their relationship with Sotonians and the city.

Their aspirations are that Southampton becomes one of the leading cultural cities in the country, becoming a place where the thousands of students who study in the two universities stay to live, a place synonymous with artistic provision and quality – an identity which Sotonians wear with pride and understanding.

NST want to see a thriving fringe sector develop to support and be supported by the more established government-funded organisations. They also want to see the city become more cohesive and integrated through the conduit of NST's work, on and off stage.

Sam Hodges will be speaking at  
**Conference 18: Adapt and Thrive.**



## NST City Profile

### Main house capacity

446 in end-on configuration, 236 on raked bleacher seating, 100 in pit, 114 on balcony

### Studio capacity

135

### Size

4,000 sq metres

### Dressing rooms

Five, shared between both performance spaces

### Toilets

17, including three accessible

### Major capital funders in order of financial contribution

Southampton City Council Capital Funding, Arts Council England Capital Lottery Funding, Government Funding, funding from SEEDA (now defunct)

## Design Team

### Clients

Grosvenor and Southampton City Council (exterior)  
Southampton City Council (interior)

### Architects

CZWG (exterior)  
Glenn Howells Ltd (interior)

### Cost Consultants

Huntley Cartwright

### M & E Consultants

Arup

### Theatre Consultants

Arup

### Project Manager

Plann Ltd & Southampton City Council Managers

### Contractor

McLaren (exterior)  
Galliford Try (interior)

### Theatre

Sam Hodges  
Caroline Routh

*Artistic Director*  
*Executive Director*



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RICS, Design Through Innovation Award  
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# Streatham Space Project: from S106 to theatre

**In 2015 developer London Square secured planning permission to redevelop the old Streatham Gaumont Cinema and an adjacent site for retail and residential use. The Section 106 agreement alongside the permission stipulated that the development also provide a new theatre space. Chris Moore and Brian Harris, theatre consultants; Dave Hughes, architect; and Andy McKeane, Streatham Space Project Director walk us through the process from S106 to completed theatre.**

## Assessing viability

Chris Moore and Brian Harris were initially invited in 2015 by David Hughes Architects to investigate the proposed audience capacity for a planned new centre on Streatham Hill – a Viability Assessment. The opportunity had come about as part of a Section 106, facilitated through the residential planning involvement of Lambeth Borough Council.

Due to the construction programme David Hughes Architects were appointed to design a shell for a theatre/ arts centre. The fit-out design and details were to be developed with the chosen operator, after the main building was complete. The developer would pay for the fit-out of the space; the operator would then have the venue at a peppercorn rent for 25 years.

An original scheme for the theatre was amended in March 2015 following public consultation and input and advice from the Theatres Trust, and the focus was agreed as a professional studio theatre embedded in its local community. The design proposed a 500m<sup>2</sup> shell space that included a 140m<sup>2</sup> theatre box set apart from the proposed residential accommodation (fully flexible) and attractive to professional productions, proving a valued and valuable local asset.

The scheme did not offer definitive proposals or development options, but set out to demonstrate how the auditorium and the shell space could be used effectively, referring to two studies that both featured a 120-seat performance space. The local authority requested an independent view of the project's viability, following concerns from local stakeholders that the audience size for the proposed project (120 seats) and the overall space allowance for the auditorium and ancillary spaces (500m<sup>2</sup> total) might not prove viable. The viability assessment concluded that, since the context of the development represented the key determinants of its success or failure, the capacity proposed was not a 'make or break' factor for the success of the venue.

**'Section 106' refers to an agreement made between an applicant and the local authority, attached to a planning permission, to make an otherwise unacceptable development acceptable. This can include financial contributions towards new or improved facilities which link directly to the development, either by physical location or usage derived from the new development, or on-site concessions such as fit-out costs or discounted/subsidised/peppercorn rent. Theatres can and have benefitted from such agreements. Section 106 agreements relate to the application site and remain in place if the applicant sells the site to another party.**

## Through planning

Planning permission was granted. The Section 106 Agreement (a key document to this type of arrangement) specified an "open process" for the selection of the operator for Streatham Hill Theatre (as it was originally known).

Once Lambeth Borough Council had approved the appointment process, the Section 106 agreement then required "*Interested parties to submit a business plan which details how they will run the space and engage with the local community, respond to local expectations and outline how the flexible auditorium and ancillary spaces are made available for theatre, arts development and wider community uses*".

It further required a "*Review of submitted business plans to include the Theatres Trust, David Hughes Architect and the retained theatre consultant (ACL Consultancy Solutions)*".

## Procurement

Working alongside the developer and the design team, Chris and Brian developed an open and transparent, two-stage operator selection process. Every stage was planned and key dates fixed. The procurement opportunity was advertised widely through social media, press and radio, through their own networks of contacts and to others who had expressed early interest.

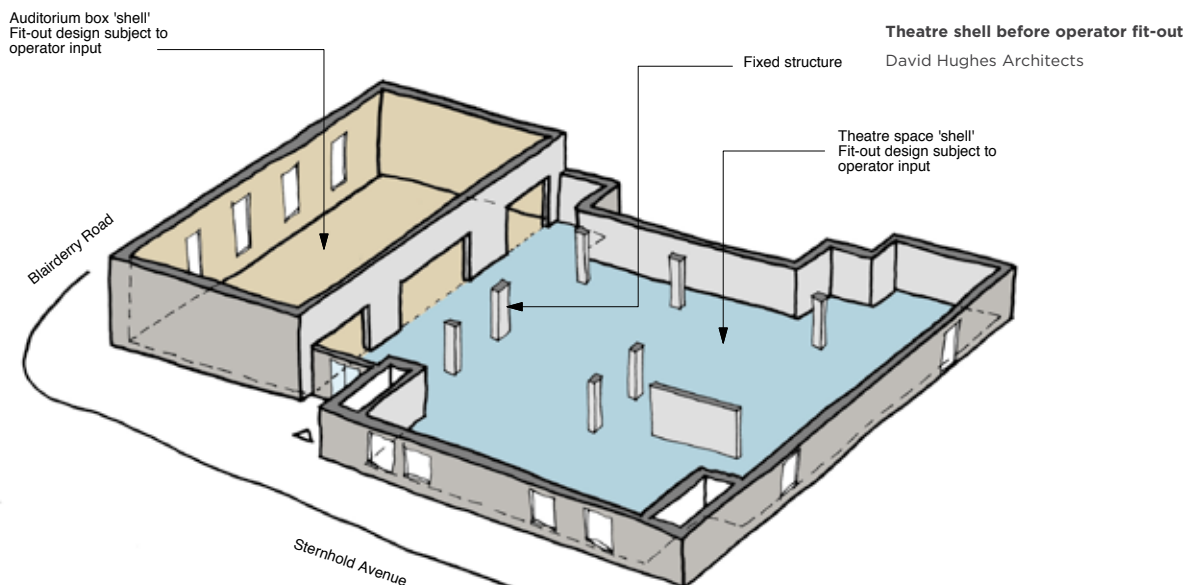
Stage 1, the Expression of Interest (EOI) lasted four weeks. Potential tenderers were provided with background documentation, guidelines on completing the EOI, timescales for the whole procurement process and next stages and – most importantly – evaluation criteria and scoring weighting. Tenderers were asked to respond to three themes: The Vision; Community Engagement; Experience. They were also advised to provide as much evidence (examples) as possible, in what would be an evidence-led appraisal process.



Streatham Space Project  
David Monteith-Hodge







The process delivered 19 good or great tenders for shortlisting and three tenders were shortlisted to go on to Stage 2, including ThinkTank.

Successful bidders were notified and debriefed on the strengths and weaknesses of their tenders, in detail. A press release was issued with the shortlist outcome and the Stage 2 documentation sent out (the beginning of a six-week period). A one-day workshop for the three shortlisted tenderers followed that brought them together to benefit from generic advice and support for this stage, followed by individual appointments to revisit their strengths and weaknesses, introduce some approaches they might not have considered and answer questions.

There was a site visit (the building was coming towards 'shell state') and tenderers were encouraged to use it for visualisation and inspiration. There was a requirement for a further written proposal in this stage.

Two weeks were allowed for the re-convened panel to consider the Stage 2 tenders and the results were presented in confidence to London Square and London Borough of Lambeth prior to the interview. London Square joined the panel for the interviews. It was important that the developer felt comfortable that neither their development, brand nor reputation be threatened by an organisation that didn't demonstrate adequate experience, professionalism or judgement in front of them. The scoring throughout the process and following the interview provided a very close field, but the panel was unanimous in the final decision on the day.

For this project, London Square were looking for a company that had a clear vision and passion and ThinkTank, a group comprising eight actors and theatremakers from the area, won the bid to run the new 120-seat venue, part of a mixed-use development. ThinkTank were a group of young, relatively inexperienced but hugely energetic local people who had come together specifically in response to this opportunity.

ThinkTank's vision was to open and operate a space that was welcoming to all and was firmly rooted in the community. That excitement, energy and being rooted in the local community was hugely attractive to London Square.

### ThinkTank becomes Streatham Space Project

Now was the time to develop the business plan and building, working alongside the Theatre Consultants and the Design Team. This involved developing internal layouts and interior design, as well as technical matters to deliver the theatre and space to meet their vision.

They were keen on flexibility, not just in the auditorium but throughout the other spaces. The kitchen was designed specifically to be 'generic' so they can develop a series of pop-up café and food offerings with local companies. The small multi-use room and rehearsal / studio have been designed to be as flexible as possible.

Doors were sized and extra doors were included to ensure ease of movement between all the spaces so the rehearsal room can become an extension of the bar, or the auditorium can be opened up directly to the bar or the rehearsal room. The auditorium includes windows (with black out shutters) for daytime flexible use.

ThinkTank wanted the venue to tell the stories relevant to the people who live in the area and open them up to experiences that they wouldn't normally know about. They named their venue Streatham Space Project because they want to see what ThinkTank can do for Streatham.

On 4 June 2018, three years since the Viability Appraisal, Streatham Space Project was ready to welcome the Streatham community through its doors.

### With thanks to article contributors

ACL

[aclconsultancysolutions.com](http://aclconsultancysolutions.com)

David Hughes Architects  
[dharchitects.co.uk/](http://dharchitects.co.uk/)

Streatham Space Project  
[streathamspaceproject.co.uk/](http://streathamspaceproject.co.uk/)

Brian Harris and  
Andy McKeane  
will be speaking at  
**Conference 18:  
Adapt and Thrive.**





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# Victoria Palace Theatre

with *Hamilton* on stage

Intimacy  
**Flexibility**  
Simplicity

Photography by Philip Vile



# Q&A with cultural champions

## Waltham Forest Council

In February Waltham Forest Council were announced as the first London Borough of Culture, and in March they announced their commitment to purchase, restore and reopen Grade II\* Theatre at Risk Walthamstow Granada. We talk to **Clare Coghill** Waltham Forest Council Leader, and **Cllr Simon Miller**, Member for Economic Growth and High Streets about their commitment to culture.

**Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and Cllr Clare Coghill of Waltham Forest celebrate as winners of London Borough of Culture 2019 at the Blackhorse Workshop.**

Matt Alexander/PA Wire

### What does culture mean to you?

We see culture as a vital component of economic growth. Culture helps to attract visitors and investment, creates jobs and generates economic activity and is important as a means of attracting and retaining talent.

We also have a great cultural tradition, being the birthplace of the radical thinker and craftsman William Morris and the film director Alfred Hitchcock, and we are continuing this through investing in our cultural offer.

Earlier this year we were named London's first Borough of Culture by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and it is a huge accolade that will shine the spotlight on Waltham Forest and is supported with £1.34m prize money to further invest in culture in the borough.

This will be match funded by the council and partners, and will leave a lasting legacy with investment in cultural institutions, programmes and careers, with the aim to have 85% of households involved in this once in a lifetime opportunity winning the award brings.

This means more visitors, more spend in the local economy, burgeoning town centres, and increasing house prices as the borough's profile grows. Our focus will continue to integrate culture into our regeneration plans to maximise shared value from the public realm, creating spaces that promote people's health, happiness and wellbeing while capitalising on the local community's assets and potential.

### Tell us more about your plans for the Granada.

As the first ever London Borough of Culture we see restoring the iconic Walthamstow Granada site as a major boost to the long term economy, making the area a magnet for people across London to visit and enjoy.

This purchase of the Granada is an investment in our Borough's increasingly important cultural economy, which has doubled in the last five years.

Impact studies show that once renovated the site could add between £34m and £52m to the local economy over a ten year period. It is also anticipated that the reopened theatre could create up to 37 new jobs. It's a win-win situation.

The council is in discussions with Soho Theatre, which would operate the 1,000-seat venue with a programme featuring the biggest names in UK and international comedy and an annual pantomime alongside screenings, theatre and community education work.

Soho Theatre has roots in the community, having worked with hundreds of young people in Waltham Forest in primary and secondary schools since 2013, and presented a major parks festival in the borough during 2017.





### **What other plans do you have to improve your cultural infrastructure?**

Not long after announcing our intention for the Granada we approved plans to restore and breathe life back into the Regal Cinema in Highams Park. This will be the third entertainment venue/cinema in the borough. Three years ago we had zero!

New cultural venues in the borough have been well received and attended, and an increasing number of community led entertainment venues, meanwhile workspaces (CentrE17, Blackhorse Workshops, Locus of Walthamstow) and farmers markets are emerging as local residents demand more.

Interestingly Walthamstow Wetlands is going from strength to strength, proving that it is all kinds of culture people are hungry for.

**“Impact studies show that once renovated the Granada could add between £34m and £52m to the local economy.”**

### **You recognise the placemaking value of theatres and cultural infrastructure – what do you think makes one council push forward, whilst another may be more cautious?**

We have the space, the vision and the bold plans. Waltham Forest is experiencing an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime period of change and growth as the centre of London moves east and more people want to live in and open businesses in the borough.

This rapid transformation of the borough means our residents have more disposable income than ever before and are therefore demanding more for their area. Added to this Waltham Forest Council is ambitious for the place and for our residents. The borough is committed to investing in culture and the arts and ensuring they are embedded into our residents' everyday life.

We have seen the value in culture at the heart of our placemaking schemes – such as Walthamstow Town Centre, St James Street HLF Regeneration Scheme, etc. We've made a promise to deliver a quality life for all our residents and plan to do this through cultural led regeneration and our borough of culture programme in 2019 and beyond.

# Theatres at Risk

## Casework updates

**In January of this year we launched our annual Theatres at Risk register with a call for local authorities to better support their theatre buildings by developing the opportunities they offer to their communities. Six months on from the launch Architecture Adviser Claire Appleby provides a brief update on the key activity to theatres on our register.**

At our Theatres at Risk launch in January Lee Craven and Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw gave an inspirational presentation about the plans and progress **Bradford Odeon**. Following on from the hard work and positive progress, we are pleased to bring you further good news about the Odeon.

In March it was announced that the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership had secured £4m funding from the Government's Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund towards the restoration of the Odeon, a bid firmly supported by the Theatres Trust. Then in May, Bradford Live and their preferred operator, the NEC Group, formally exchanged contracts, signing a 30-year lease on the building.

The news of both deals goes a long way to securing the estimated £20m cost of the building works. In the meantime, Bradford Live are continuing their drive to raise the final funding to bridge the current shortfall. We continue to support Bradford Live in fulfilling its ambitions to see the Odeon restored and once more staging live performance. Works are due to commence later this year – a remarkable turnaround in fortunes for this iconic cine-variety theatre that, less than 10 years ago, was approved for demolition.

The future is also looking more positive for Britain's oldest surviving travelling theatre – the **Century Theatre** in Snibston. This unique and ingenious mobile theatre toured England in the 1950s, 60s and 70s and made its final journey in December 1996 to become a permanent performance space and museum exhibit at the since demolished Snibston Discovery Museum. The closure and subsequent demolition of the Discovery Museum and new proposals to develop the site left the Century at operational risk. Last year the council unveiled proposals for a masterplan for the entire Snibston site, comprising new housing situated a distance from the theatre, improved access to the theatre and the park's listed headstocks, plus new heritage trails and facilities linking to the Country Park. The Theatres Trust has now been consulted on further, more detailed proposals, which enhance the offer

to the theatre and serve to better integrate its operation into the site.

Whilst plans are developing for the site and building's surroundings, they are also afoot for the theatre operation. The council is currently working with the theatre's local volunteer group to begin formulating a new operational structure for the Century. Theatres Trust is supporting these discussions and has been offering business planning advice.

Unfortunately this year's recent news for theatre at risk **Dudley Hippodrome** is less positive. February saw Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's cabinet opting for the early termination of the five year lease granted to the volunteers trying to save this 1930s variety theatre. The group, Black Country Hippodrome Limited, only had possession of the theatre for one year and during this time they succeeded in carrying out preliminary investigations on the building and securing the pro bono assistance of an architect – no mean feat against the backdrop of concerns regarding asbestos which left the group unable to access the building. The five-year programme for the group to fundraise, progress works on a feasibility study and ultimately reopen the theatre to the public was a tight programme and the Theatres Trust had raised concerns that the five year limitation on the lease may adversely affect their ability to secure funding. The council's Scrutiny Committee has since upheld the decision to terminate the lease, leaving the Hippodrome empty once more and without any agreement for its future. It is feared that the council may look to reinstate a previous planning application for the building's demolition.

Following the decision to terminate the lease Black Country Hippodrome Ltd disbanded. A new group, Dudley Hippodrome Community Group has formed to continue campaigning for the theatre.

As is clear from the above projects, and as reported at our Theatres at Risk launch, local authority support is essential in helping our At Risk theatres achieve an assured path towards life as a performance venue. Even where local authorities are not contributing financially to a project, external funders will look for council support as evidence of the viability of a project.

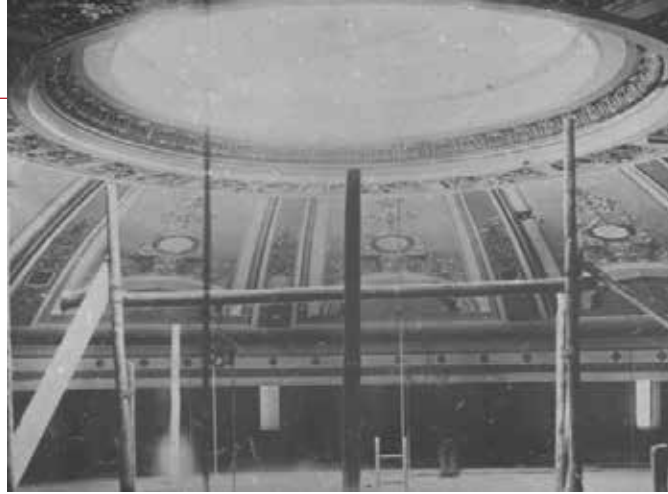
Fortunately a positive attitude and supportive response from a local authority has been very evident for two other theatres at risk – **Leith Theatre** and the **Walthamstow Granada**.

As reported in February, Edinburgh City Council has awarded £1m towards the restoration of **Leith Theatre** – a fantastic endorsement of the hard work of Leith Theatre Trust and its ambitions to fully restore and reopen this



This is a picture of the interior of the Bradford Odeon dome, nearing completion in the 30s. Although most of the plaster was removed during the 1968/69 conversion, the steel supports of the dome still remain. Currently there are plans to reuse this steelwork to create a dramatic new ceiling for the venue.

Image courtesy Colin Sutton



important Category B listed building. A very different story from 2004 when the council administration approved the sale of the theatre for residential development.

For the **Walthamstow Granada** it has been a very positive start to the year. In March Waltham Forest Council announced their commitment to purchasing the building, and pledging to restore and reopen this magnificent Grade II\* listed venue for live performance. It is testament to the council's commitment to culture and a major step in their journey as the first London Borough of Culture. The council has been working with Soho Theatre over new operational plans which will include a 1,000-seat auditorium in the renovated theatre. Theatres Trust has been supporting both Soho Theatre and the council in this work.

One important factor in the council's decision to acquire the Granada was the commissioning of economic and social research, which indicated that the project could add from £34m up to £52m to the local economy over a ten year period.

As noted at our January Theatres at Risk 2018 launch event at Soho Theatre, it is important for council's to consider the economic and social benefits of these buildings and their overall impact on an area prior to making a decision on their future. The results can show enormous impact. For Waltham Forest, the regeneration of the Granada will not only breathe new life into an important historical theatre venue but also, as the council's research has proven, play a key role in the regenerative and economic revival of the local area. Find out more from Waltham Forest Council on their plans for the Granada on page 20.

Another of our at risk theatres with some positive news is **Blackpool Winter Gardens Pavilion**. In July this year Selladoor Worldwide announced a partnership with Blackpool Entertainment Company which will bring theatre back to this venue, and it is hoped, ensure that the theatre is protected and revitalised.

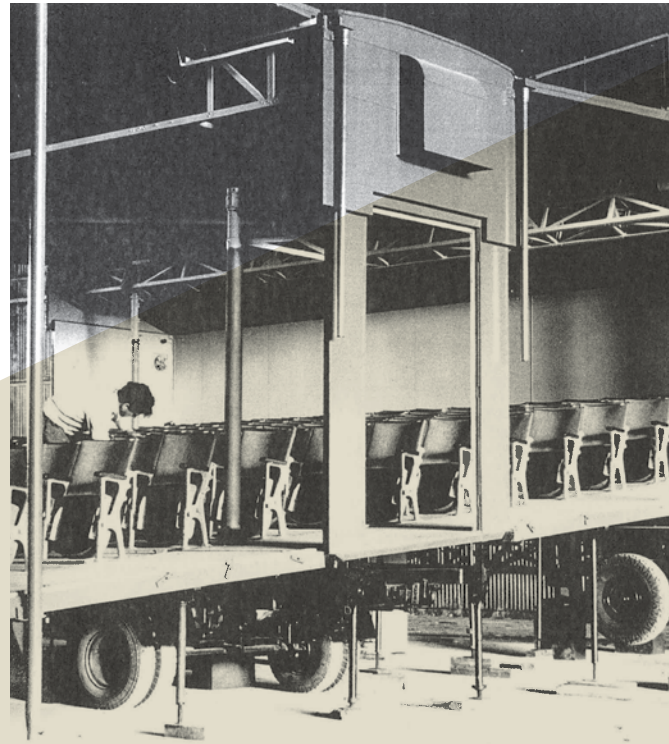
And finally, on a further positive note, do look out for information on Alexandra Palace – now taking bookings for its first performance.

This is the Dudley Hippodrome in 1976. Its giant curvaceous buff-brick frontage stood directly next door to the Plaza Cinema. This in turn, was adjacent to the Zoo's main entrance, and opposite a 1937 Odeon, on the way into the town. Now only the Hippodrome remains.

Image courtesy Roy Hawthorne, ARPS, AIBP / Dudley Hippodrome Archive Service

This is a side on picture of the original auditorium at the Century Theatre, Britain's oldest surviving travelling theatre. At the end of World War II many city centre theatres had been destroyed and elsewhere performance facilities were very poor. The theatre was created to fill this need by being a completely portable stage, auditorium, and dressing rooms, together with box office, mobile living quarters, offices and stores.

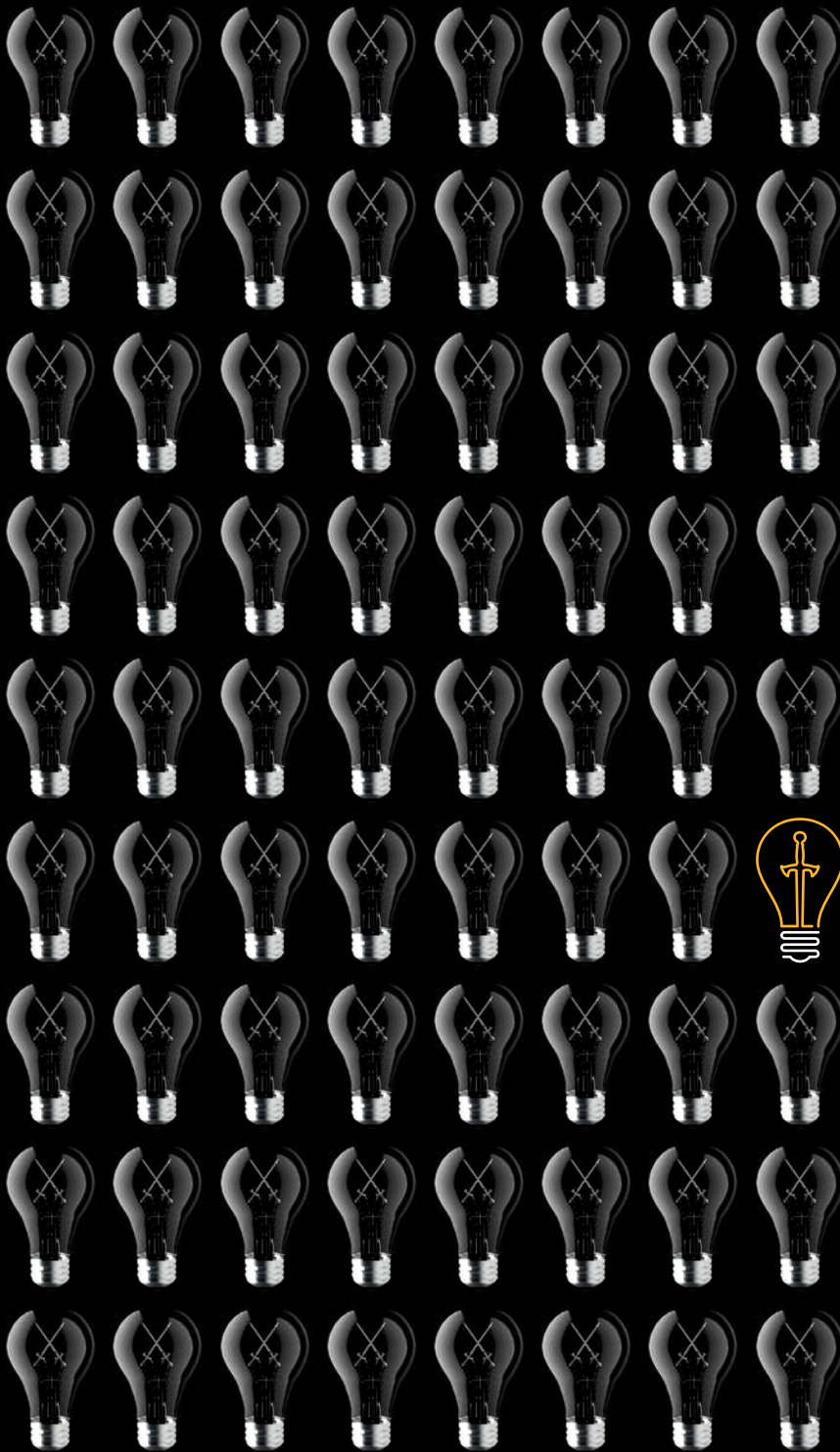
Image courtesy Century Theatre



Leith Theatre has just hosted the Hidden Door Festival, a non-profit and volunteer-run multi arts festival, specialising in transforming run-down spaces, for a second year running – continuing what was started to transform the building into the major arts venue the city needs. In 2017 the festival attracted rave reviews and critical praise for its role in resurrecting 'Scotland's best new live music venue', also winning a Visit Scotland Scottish Thistle Award for 'Best Cultural Event or Festival'. It is hoped that Leith Theatre, which is currently being used for on-off small-scale events, will back in full use in about three to five years.

Image courtesy Leith Theatre





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# Providing protection for theatres in the planning system

**The first half of 2018 has been a busy time for Tom Clarke MRTPI, the Trust's new National Planning Adviser, with the Theatres Trust responding to proposed changes affecting the national planning systems across the UK. Tom introduces himself, explains more about why theatres matter, the different types of plans we respond to and why involvement is so important.**

I joined the Theatres Trust in January 2018 as the new National Planning Adviser, a role previously managed by Ross Anthony. I am a town planner by trade – I did my Masters in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Westminster and undertook unique research on how the planning system might better protect pubs from unnecessary loss. Most recently I worked at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, where I led on key aspects of their new Local Plan and drove forward new policies promoting and protecting cultural venues and the arts. I am thrilled to be able to join the Theatres Trust where we can really make a difference to the future viability of theatres, old and new, through the planning system, thanks to the objects of the Theatres Trust Act 1976 and Theatres Trust (Scotland) Act 1978.

## Why theatres matter

We can all agree that theatres make a positive contribution to the cultural infrastructure of the areas in which they operate, promoting wellbeing, offering opportunities for participation and helping to encourage learning and the development of skills. With the retail market facing great change and challenge, the town centres that perform well tend to be those with a strong cultural and leisure offer and theatres are, or could be, central to that, as Conference 17: Theatres and Placemaking amply demonstrated. Our case studies – York Theatre Royal, Lyric Hammersmith, Sunderland MAC and Chester Storyhouse – showed how they help to develop a sense of place, making communities unique and special, making them better places in which to live, work and visit and helping to support other businesses and local jobs.

## Types of planning matters we respond to

The Theatres Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system in England, Scotland and Wales – we are uniquely placed and often the only source of expert advice on theatre use, design, conservation, and planning matters available to local authorities and official bodies. As such we use our 40 years' worth of knowledge to comment on theatre related planning applications

and advise on planning policies to secure cultural policies that protect theatres.

Through our planning role we represent the best interests of theatres and theatre buildings by providing independent advice and recommendations to local councils or other planning authorities. We work to safeguard theatre use, or the potential for such use.

There are various ways we do this, which include:

- **planning application responses**
- **advice to applicants, councils, community groups and anyone else either thinking about putting in a theatre-related planning application or concerned about one that has been submitted**
- **commenting on local development and neighbourhood plans, regional plans, masterplans and other local planning policy documents**
- **national planning policy**
- **other national and government consultations relating to the planning system**

## Planning's vital role

For most people their first personal involvement in the planning system comes through a planning application.

But the real influence in getting the right development in the right places, and in protecting the things most valuable to us, comes at a much earlier stage. In the UK we have a plan-led system and decisions on planning applications are based on the policies within the development plan that every district, borough or city across the UK has in place for their local area. The development plan includes regional and national plans, with England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales each having their own set of planning legislation and national policy frameworks.

In England the Localism Act also brought in Neighbourhood Planning, so neighbourhoods, parishes and small town councils may also have a plan with additional policies.

**Figures compiled last year (2017) show there to be over 2,000 designated groups, with 349 Neighbourhood Plans being in place. In 2017/18 the Theatres Trust received 436 requests to comment on policy documents, I have received 258 in my first six months.**

Alongside those documents are masterplans, which typically guide significant regeneration projects, town centre improvements and new settlements, and supplementary planning documents which deal with a variety of topics from parking standards to the protection of reptiles.

All plans, whether national or local, should be based on robust evidence and need and are subject to rounds of public consultation. They are rigorously tested and independently examined. They articulate a vision and priorities for their areas, set targets for new homes and jobs, identify infrastructure and other requirements, allocate land for development and set policies for the assessment of planning applications to make sure they contribute to the plan's objectives.

We work to ensure all plans include policies that safeguard and promote culture and sustainable theatre use. This makes it much easier to support or object to planning application proposals – we advise that where they can, theatre operators and local people make their voice heard here too.

The Trust recently commented on a proposed allocation in Stratford-upon-Avon which contains two theatres, cautioning against including residential use because of potential conflict due to noise. In Reading we objected to the potential replacement of the Hexagon.

Once land or a site has been allocated for a particular use it is very difficult to prevent the type of development prescribed in the plan coming forward. Often at application stage local people will invest time and energy into campaigning against proposals, whereas in reality it is only the finer details that can still be negotiated.

It is therefore even more important that we focus our work to ensure policies and principles relevant to supporting theatres and other cultural uses are present at the highest level.

#### Recent policy consultations

Not only have there been 160 different local and neighbourhood development plans to respond to, but revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in England and Planning Policy Wales (PPW) have both been consulted on this year.

Both national planning policy documents are generally strong on promoting and protecting cultural facilities including theatres and supporting the cultural well-being of their residents, although there remain areas for improvement. There is also an opportunity to significantly strengthen reference to culture within national policy in Scotland; revisions and consultation are expected later in 2018, which we will keep you up-to-date with.

Of particular significance is that for the first time the 'Agent of Change' principle has been embedded within the NPPF and in Scotland there is a commitment to include it within the next versions of Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework. This is something that have been advocating for some time, alongside organisations such as the Music Venues Trust.

**Agent of Change** places responsibility on developers to ensure there won't be future conflict with existing uses such as theatres, music venues, pubs and nightclubs impacting their operations or even resulting in closure, and to bear the cost of any measures necessary to make the new development acceptable.

The Theatres Trust also keeps abreast of legislative changes impacting the planning system. Already in 2018 there have been significant consultations on the Scottish (Planning) Bill and Planning Law in Wales, and there are regular updates to instruments such as permitted development rights which permits certain types of minor development without need for a full planning application or consultation. Where these affect or relate to theatres or cultural development, we will be there with our voice, ensuring theatre buildings are protected.

#### Promoting culture through planning

As I started I realised that it was essential that the interests of theatres were reflected within these plans and national frameworks as this makes it much easier to support or object to planning proposals, and we are becoming ever more proactive in responding to policy consultations during the preparation stage to ensure they include cultural policies that protect theatres.

We believe the planning system should and can, with the right terms, facilitate development and change in a way that promotes and engenders culture across the UK.

While we recognise the importance of regeneration and the delivery of housing, this should not come at the expense of the country's valued social and cultural assets. These reviews provide an opportunity to emphasise the role of culture as one of the four pillars of sustainable development, and ensure the planning system maximises the benefits of cultural activity to social well-being, local economies, and sustainable communities.

**“We strongly believe that working with councils and government to get policies right will make a long-term difference to the prospects of theatres and the communities that cherish them.”**

One of my next objectives is to draft guidance that can assist planners with understanding the key issues when considering theatre-related applications, and to help communities effectively get involved with planning matters related to theatres that are important to them.

**We highlight key applications in the following pages of TM (p. 27 and 28) and you can see more planning responses including our national policy representations on our website [www.theatrestrust.org.uk/latest/planning-responses](http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/latest/planning-responses). If you need theatre-related planning advice, get in contact at [planning@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:planning@theatrestrust.org.uk).**



# Our work

## Proposed Church Street bar and bistro Cassidy + Ashton



The Trust supported proposals 18/0263 & 18/0264 (pending) by the **Grand Theatre in Blackpool** to convert neighbouring retail units into a bar and bistro, making the theatre a destination outside of show times. The proposal broadens Blackpool's leisure offer and appeal in order to deliver a vibrant outdoor café culture, encouraging residents and visitors to spend more time in the town centre across the day and into the evening in support of Blackpool's Town Centre Strategy. In addition, proposed building works will enhance the Grand Theatre's frontage and canopy, upgrading the existing poor-quality shopfronts and unsympathetic signage to complement the building's architectural quality, heritage and character. By combining three 'short term' units into one active 'permanent use' unit, this proposal will help reduce unit vacancy levels (20.1%, Annual Monitoring Report, August 2017) and will reduce the quantity of 'short term' retail units in Blackpool.

Delfont Mackintosh is undergoing a strategy of refurbishment in line with the British Theatre Technicians best practice guidance. The Trust recently supported safety improvements and refurbishment works at two of the theatre operators' London theatres, supporting and recommending the granting of listed building consent at **London's Wyndham's Theatre** 18/02567/LBC (pending) and **Noel Coward Theatre** 18/02568/LBC (approved). At Wyndham's, this relates to additional ceiling sections not covered in application 17/10677/LBC, including the replacement of ceilings in poor repair and without decorative features and the proposed installation of access hatches. At Noel Coward this includes the alteration and upgrade of the existing ceiling void crawl boards and other services that rest on the ceiling, including a walkway and equipment suspended from the structural roof frame. The safety of the audience, performers and theatre staff is paramount and the Theatres Trust welcomes the precautionary approach taken by Delfont Mackintosh to reinforce, refurbish, redecorate and extend the life of their theatres.

The Trust raised concerns in relation to the proposed change of use of the **London Adelphi Theatre's** neighbouring site into a hotel, specifically citing potential noise impact as hotel bedrooms directly neighbour the theatre, 17/09494/FULL (approved). In principle the Trust does not object to the use of this site as a hotel, but concerns centre on the risk of acoustic breakout between the properties and the possibility of the future viability of the theatre being

negatively impacted, either from noise from building works or by any future noise complaints from the hotel. Noise impact can arise from regular performances, as well as from daytime rehearsals and other events. In its response the Theatres Trust highlighted the importance that must be placed on protecting this cultural asset, asking the council to ensure the onus is on the applicant to mitigate any potential impact through appropriate soundproofing for the hotel. We re-emphasised the Planning (Agent of Change) Bill which requires more rigorous protection for existing uses and puts an even stronger onus on new development to avoid such noise conflict.

Further to a previous application in 2017, the Theatres Trust supported proposals for shopfront alterations at street level which will improve **Leicester Haymarket Theatre's** access and visibility in the area. The Trust agrees that the installation of a new shopfront and entry at street level, new link bridge and fire escape, and third and fourth floor extensions that provide additional lobby space and a lift shaft will improve access and escape routes for the theatre. Additionally, the proposed Haymarket Theatre signage will strengthen the venue's visibility and presence on Garrick Walk and within the Haymarket centre. Application PL/TB/20180150 has been approved by Leicester City Council, subject to development within three years of application (by 26 January 2021).

The Trust supported the **St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth**, 06/17/0604/LB, for new external signage to improve its visibility and raise awareness of its theatre function. Commissioned in 1714, this former deconsecrated chapel is one of the finest examples of Baroque Church architecture outside of London. To avoid demolition in 1972 it was converted into a professional theatre and performing arts centre, which closed in 2006 due to structural defects. In 2013, following 'at risk' status from English Heritage and the Theatres Trust, it was sympathetically restored into a modern theatre, to include an additional single storey pavilion to house box office, bar/café, toilets and office facilities. The Theatres Trust supports the proposal for upgraded signage on the former church to increase the theatre's visibility and viability. Given the building does not appear to the passer-by as an active theatre, it is particularly important to draw attention to its theatre function. In place of transparent signage with minimal fittings, the Trust recommends greater prominence of theatre signage to include eye-catching external banners, citing the Bristol Old Vic, Theatre Royal Haymarket, Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Theatre Royal Newcastle as examples of appropriate Grade I listed signage that communicates building use and allows for visual appreciation of the setting. Great Yarmouth Borough Council has approved this proposal, subject to material revision to non-reflective materials to avoid undue distraction to motorists and to avoid possible resemblance to and confusion with bona-fide road signs.

**Contact us** if you are planning a capital project, or want advice and guidance on maintaining your theatre building [advice@theatretrust.org.uk](mailto:advice@theatretrust.org.uk)

**Proposed theatre Tunbridge Wells.**  
Allies + Morrison



The Theatres Trust supported proposal 18/00076/FUL for a **new 1,200 seat theatre in Tunbridge Wells**, as part of a new Civic Centre complex in Tunbridge Wells. The proposal looks to replace the 985-seat Assembly Hall, along with a civic suite, council and commercial offices and underground car parking. The existing Town Hall and Assembly Hall site will then be put on the market. The Great Hall car park will be demolished to make way for the development. The Theatres Trust made a number of design comments to enhance the application. This scheme seeks to improve and expand theatre provision in the area, providing valuable cultural space for the local community. Plans also include an all-day café and deli open to the neighbourhood to provide an additional source of income. The existing flat-floor mode of the Assembly Hall Theatre is considered inadequate to attract a greater range of modern touring productions that Tunbridge Wells want to add to their programming; proposals for the new theatre would support these aims, but the Trust believes there may be an ongoing role for the Hall given the difficulties of converting it to other uses without harming special architectural or historic interest. The Trust has requested being consulted at an early stage when proposals for the Assembly Hall come forward. Overall, the Trust believes the Tunbridge Wells redevelopment will expand theatre provision and positively contribute to the vitality of the wider town centre. Approval has been granted subject to the completion of a memorandum of understanding.

The Trust supported applications 17/01617/LBC and 17/01616/FUL (pending) for alterations and the change of use of the former **State Cinema, Grays** (use class D2) to a Public House (use class A4). The State is a 2,400-seat super cinema designed by FGM Chancellor and built in 1938 in the Art Deco style. It was originally listed Grade II in 1985, but was regraded to Grade II\* in June 2000, following a re-appraisal of the original interior features, which are still intact. It is understood to be one of only 8 super cinemas in England to be listed II\*. The State was constructed with a full stage and dressing room facilities to enable live performance, hence the interest of the Theatres Trust, though it was rarely used for that purpose. The Trust welcomes and supports this proposal to refurbish and restore the former State Cinema and to introduce a new and sustainable new use that will continue to allow public access to this significant building. The extensive pre-application discussions held with Historic England, the Cinema Theatre Association and the architects KDPA ensure the alterations proposed support the new use, while the historic and architectural integrity of the building is maintained. The

Trust's main concern is with the Compton Organ. While it is damaged and missing parts, it is repairable. Given the rarity of remaining cinema organs, and the importance of this super cinema as a heritage asset, the Trust strongly recommended the full restoration of the organ be conditioned as part of any consent issued.

The Trust supported applications 0509/2017 and 0524/2017 (approved) to amend the approved plans relating to the extension, remodelling and refurbishment of **Tamworth's Assembly Rooms**. The Trust discussed the scheme on numerous occasions with the project team and understands the obstacles and complications associated with the reorganisation and extensions to this statutory listed heritage asset. While the changes proposed do not address all potential enhancements, many earlier concerns have been resolved and they have a more functional scheme to support the sustainability of the Assembly Rooms. The Trust has made further recommendations and urges that additional works are considered at this stage to safeguard the space for more intensive uses in the future. Recommendations include full wheelchair access via the main entrance, reviewing the width of the stair in the foyer for additional circulation of guests, and reconsideration for the design of the foyer in-keeping with the original features and the cultural and historic nature of the theatre. With the above in mind, the Trust believes the works will significantly improve and enhance the Assembly Rooms as a valuable cultural asset for Tamworth. Tamworth Borough Council has approved this application with conditions in relation to the proposed restoration of the historic fabric, internal alterations and extension to the rear and north side of the existing building.

**Chichester Festival Theatre.**  
Philip Vile



The Trust supported application 17/03163/LBC for conservation concrete repairs to be made to the external concrete structure of the **Chichester Festival Theatre**. The theatre is one of the most important post war theatres in the United Kingdom in terms of its design and influence, and this is reflected in its Grade II\* statutory heritage listing. Unfortunately part of the concrete structure is deteriorating, and previous works to refurbish the building were not successful and further repairs to the main beam are now required. Given the importance of this beam to the integrity of the overall building structure and to the ongoing conservation and operation of the theatre, we supported granting listed building consent. The application has been permitted by Chichester District Council.

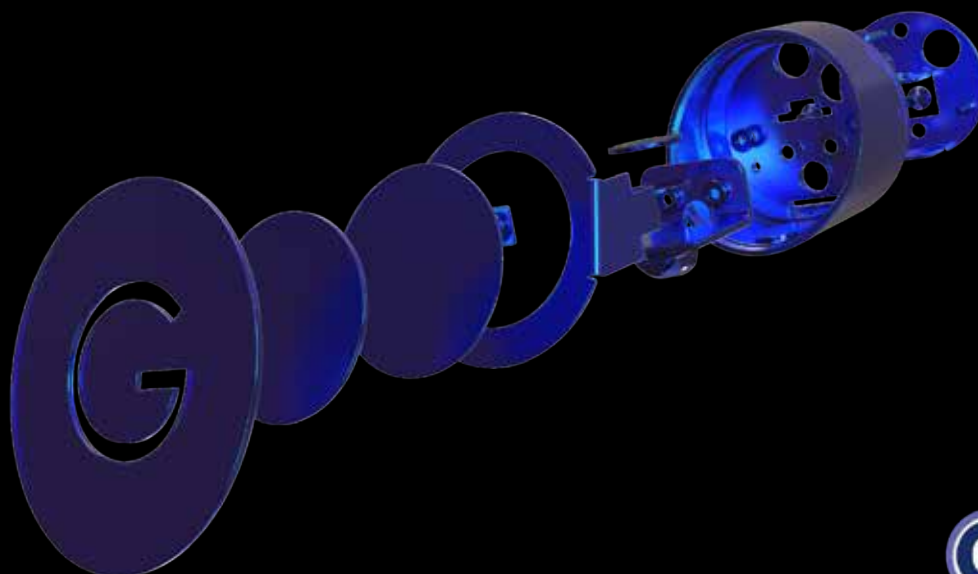


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# In the news

## Current Casework

### Save Stage Lighting Campaign

Major progress has been made in the Save Stage Lighting campaign, with theatres set to be exempted from a proposed European Union ban that could endanger the sector's future. Earlier this year theatre lighting was under threat from proposed EU energy regulations, which could see the sale of most lighting fixtures currently used in the industry banned from 2020. The Association of Lighting Designers mounted an industry campaign raising awareness of these proposals, which the Theatres Trust supported, and with the backing of the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe, which represented its members in all EU states including UK members SOLT and UK Theatre; trade associations such as the Professional Lighting and Sound Association; the Association of Swedish Lighting Designers and the International Association of Lighting Designers, they met with EU representatives. As a result the organisations involved will draft an exemption for entertainment lighting within the regulations, meaning that the sale of lighting fixtures for theatre will not be banned, even if those fixtures do not meet the required energy efficiency. The organisations will work with the European Commission on the wording of the exemption, but if all goes to plan, it will be written into the regulations before they are passed into EU law in October 2018.



### Southwark Playhouse confirms two new permanent homes

Southwark Playhouse, which has operated in temporary venues since it was founded in 1993, has announced it will move to one flagship venue at Elephant and Castle, with a second satellite venue situated back within the arches of London Bridge Station. Southwark Playhouse – Elephant will be five minutes from the theatre's current premises, and sits as part of the new station redevelopment. It will include a 300-seat flexible theatre space, with a second studio space for youth and community work. Meanwhile, Southwark Playhouse – London Bridge, the satellite venue, on the site of the former Southwark Playhouse on the corner of Tooley Street and Bermondsey Street, will include two flexible performance spaces with 200 and 150-seats, to nurture and promote work by new and emerging practitioners – there will also be a rehearsal space at this site. Both of these venues are going to run at the same time, as continuations of the work produced at their current premises on Newington Causeway. The theatre's current premises will be converted into flats, with the organisation planning to move out during 2019, and it will continue operating until then.

### Edinburgh Council invests funding in theatre infrastructure

The City of Edinburgh Council has set aside a £5m fund for capital investment in the city's theatres. It agreed to create a fund for theatre upgrades with £4m towards the King's Theatre's planned £25m refurbishment and £1m to help re-open theatre at risk,

Leith Theatre. The funding is given with the aim of leveraging supplementary contributions from other partners. The council's commitment of £4m will add to £5m already raised by the King's trust through its theatre ticket levy and will enable an application for further funding from Historic Scotland and the Scottish Government. The planned redevelopment of the King's will overhaul onstage facilities, which have remained largely untouched for more than 100 years. This will allow the theatre to attract larger and more prestigious productions. Plans include the creation of an arts centre, which will be open all day, and ensuring backstage and front-of-house at the King's are fully accessible with new lift access. Construction work is expected to begin at the King's in September 2021 with a projected re-opening in the spring of 2023. The Theatres Trust believes that sustained local authority support of a campaign group is a key factor in its success. Edinburgh City Council have already been very supportive of theatre at risk, Leith Theatre through granting them a five-year lease on the building, with an agreement in principle for a further 30-year lease at the end of the five-year term. The proposed funding for the project is both a significant contribution towards the capital works proposals and further proof of the council's support and recognition of the opportunity a restored Leith Theatre will bring.



### The Buzz – new immersive venue set to hit the capital

Limelight Productions and ebp have joined forces to create a pioneering new immersive theatre – 'The Buzz'.



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The joint venture between the two production houses will address the need for a permanent immersive creative space in the capital and it will be the first purpose-built fully flexible performance arts venue for immersive and interactive theatrical events in the UK. It will also be designed to be moved to any location. The Buzz will complement the vibrant and consistently developing landscape of Borough and Elephant and Castle. It will also offer a focal meeting point in The Buzz Bar and will be working with local universities to appoint student ambassadors; creating a networking community for the next generation of creatives and offering specific events and workshops to the local community. The Buzz is being project managed by Ri:Se, who are also overseeing the build of Alice's Adventures Underground in Shanghai, and it has been designed by Adventures in Architecture. An immersive theatrical adaptation of the Thunderbirds television series is set to open in the new venue in November.

### Citizens Theatre Glasgow marks historic temporary two-year closure

On Saturday 23 June, the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow held an open day offering the locals one last chance to discover what goes on behind the scenes, before the Gorbals venue undergoes a landmark £19.4m redevelopment project to preserve the Victorian interior and upgrade the venue's other spaces. This will be the first time in 140 years that a working theatre has not been operating from 119 Gorbals Street. The theatre company will move out of the B-listed building, which it leases from Glasgow City Council, for more than two years and from September 2018 will present its artistic programme at Tramway. As part of the works the muses of music, comedy, tragedy and dance will join Shakespeare and Burns on the front of the Citizens Theatre. The six statues, said to weigh three tons each and the work of Glasgow sculptor John Mossman, stood on large columns taken from the Union Bank and were previously part of a shared frontage

with the adjoining Palace Theatre, and had recently been on display in the theatre's foyer.

### The New London Theatre renamed

The theatre will be formally recognised as the Gillian Lynne Theatre later this year and will be the first West End theatre to be named after a woman. The New London Theatre, which has been owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber since 1991, welcomes 450,000 people through its doors every year and is famous for being the home of the original production of *Cats* – Gillian Lynne is the legendary choreographer and director responsible for the ground-breaking musical.



Stockton Globe's damaged panel

### Missing piece of Stockton Globe's history: can you help locate it?

An appeal has been launched to find photographs of a damaged panel at the Stockton Globe. One of the two Art Deco bas-relief panels in the auditorium is complete, but the other was badly damaged after a ventilation grate was installed over it some years ago. The design team working on the venue are keen to know what the damaged panel looked like. The panels are among many historic features in the Globe, which is undergoing transformation. Anyone with pictures of the damaged panel should get in touch. Photographs can be emailed to [TheGlobe@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:TheGlobe@stockton.gov.uk).

### Fundraising continues for Theatre Royal Wakefield

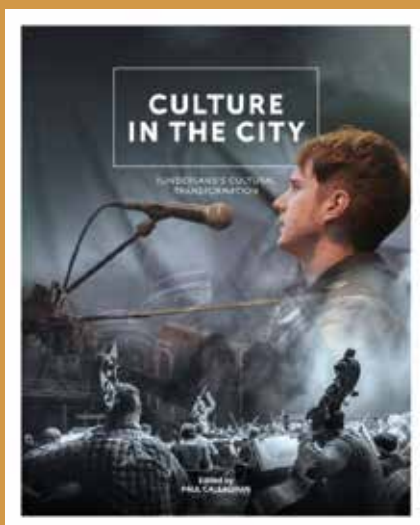
Audiences were treated to a special preview of Theatre Royal Wakefield's new Centre for Creativity over the May bank holiday weekend when the first performances took place inside the Walker Studio. The Centre for Creativity, which has been built on the side of the existing Matcham theatre

on Westgate, features a versatile studio theatre along with a new café/bar, providing a major extension to Theatre Royal Wakefield with direct public access from Westgate into the theatre's foyer and stalls seating area. It will provide increased hospitality facilities at night, which will help to transform the audience's journey through the theatre and allow artists to engage with audience members. The glass frontage creates a dramatic statement, inviting people inside to enjoy a contemporary café/bar. This will lead to the new 100 seat studio theatre where you will be able to experience comedy, music, drama, story-telling, puppetry and all sorts of new performances. The theatre still needs to raise £60,000 to complete the fit out and purchase the technical, sound and lighting equipment required. Find out more: [theatreroyalwakefield.co.uk](http://theatreroyalwakefield.co.uk)

### Temporary Shakespeare's Rose Theatre in York nears completion

Work has almost finished on Lunchbox Theatrical Productions' Shakespearean Rose Theatre, a temporary structure which stands on Castle Car Park next to Clifford's Tower in York. It is Europe's first ever temporary Shakespearean theatre. Shakespeare's Rose Theatre and will combine a layer system scaffolding technology by Acorn Scaffolding, construction work began early June and a celestial ceiling has been installed above the stage – the next step for the construction team is to start work on the Elizabethan village surrounding the structure, which will include buildings providing food and drink, a garden and a wagon on which free entertainment will be provided. It has taken about 11,000 hours of work to build the theatre, which weighs about 70 tonnes. It will house an audience of 950, with 600 seated on three tiered balconies around an open-roofed courtyard, and standing room for 350 'groundlings'. No seat in the theatre will be more than 15m from the action.

# Book Review



## Culture in the City

**Sunderland's Cultural Transformation**  
**Edited by Paul Callaghan**  
**The Sunderland Music Arts and**  
**Culture Trust, 2017**  
**ISBN 978 1 909486 26 3**

*Culture In The City* pulls together chapters from the key people in Sunderland's arts and cultural sectors, to capture the journey as the city prepared a bid to be 2021 UK City of Culture. It details how the city has sown the seeds for a major cultural intervention. The bid ultimately proved unsuccessful with Coventry given the title, however the value of this book remains as a statement of intent for a city looking to engage with culture in a very positive way.

Charting the history of culture in Sunderland from the early Middle Ages influences of Venerable Bede and the glassmaking tradition through the live music scene which created the Futureheads right up to the present day, the book shows there has always been culture in Sunderland and it is worth protecting and celebrating. Evolving from the realisation that Sunderland's residents are amongst the 20% least engaged in the arts in DCMS 'Taking Part Survey', a cultural spring was initiated with support from ACE's Creative People and Places funding in 2014. This scheme is credited as the catalyst for many of the projects at the core of this book and the City of Culture bid. It is clear that the plans for cultural transformation comes from a many pronged approach including placemaking, people and partnerships. Particularly interesting is the university's role in creating change and acting as stewards of the city's culture. The discussion of partnerships amongst the university, local enterprise, local authorities and artists is interspersed with illustrated examples of creative projects which have engaged local communities in the past four years.

The impetus behind the book is an acknowledgement of a severe under provision of arts infrastructure in the city.

At its heart is the proposal for Music, Arts and Culture Quarter. Centred around the existing Sunderland Empire Theatre and a number of key heritage buildings, it has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and will be progressing regardless of the award of the title. Indeed Paul Callaghan CBE, DL, FRSA, Chair of Live Theatre and Trustee of Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture Trust was asked to explore the role of culture within regeneration as part of the MACQ (Music, Arts and Cultural Quarter) project in Sunderland for Conference 17: Theatres & Placemaking. In the chapter on the new performance space, Helen Green makes a convincing case for the need for a mid-scale venue to give the emerging theatre companies a home and to build an audience for this kind of work and the Fire Station is being converted to fill this niche.

Attendees of the Theatres Trust's conference last year will remember the energetic speech given by this book's editor Paul Callaghan and that carries through to the paper. It could prove a valuable resource for any individual, local authority, arts organisation or community group with a desire to transform their cities and in search of ideas about how to get started. It is perhaps prophetic that the book so often talks of the impact of NewcastleGateshead's unsuccessful bid for European Capital of Culture in 2008. The preparations and partnerships formed for that bid continued and led to a cultural transformation of those cities that changed them forever. The work evidenced by this book suggests a similar future is in store for Sunderland.

**Review by Tom Stickland,**  
**Theatres Adviser, Theatres Trust**





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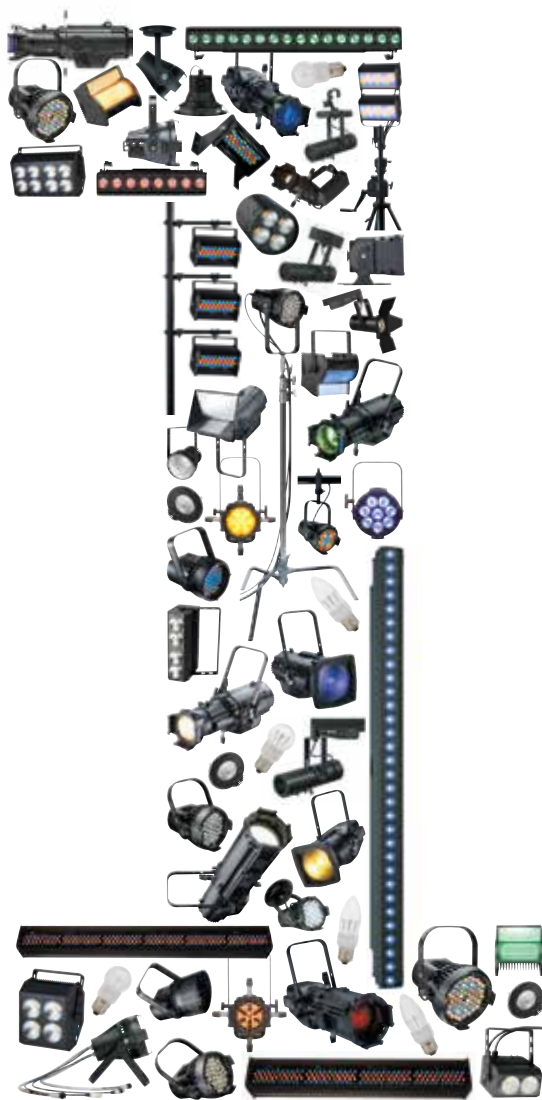
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