

PRESS RELEASE: 20 May 2020

'Theatre at Risk' Streatham Hill Theatre gets a helping hand from Theatres Trust

A grant of £6,000 has been awarded to the **Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre** to contribute towards a viability study and economic impact assessment.

Streatham Hill Theatre is one of London's most lavish 'sleeping beauties' and the last theatre designed by W G R Sprague, the architect responsible for some of the most beautiful theatres in London. It has been on the Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk Register since 2017.

Many parts of the building have been unused since performances ceased in 1962 and except for a small lounge used for gambling machines, the building has not been used since January 2017. The building's fabric is degrading and there is the threat of future commercial development by the freeholder.

This support will contribute to the crowdfunding campaign that Friends of Streatham Hill is running to fund a viability study and other vital steps needed to return the theatre to community use. The viability study will be important in proving a viable and sustainable future use for the building and in bringing other stakeholders on board.

Streatham Hill Theatre is one of six theatres to receive funding through the second round of the **Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme**, run by the national advisory body for theatres. The others are **Brighton Hippodrome, Derby Hippodrome, Granada in Walthamstow, Groundings Theatre in Portsmouth and Leith Theatre**.

The programme is designed to support theatres on the Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk Register to commission expert advice and acquire the skills and knowledge to push forward capital projects to help save their theatres. Alongside the funding, the theatre will receive support and advice from the Theatres Trust advice team.

Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre's Chair David Harvey says: "This grant will help make it possible for the Friends to demonstrate how this beautiful building can be saved for the community. Revived as a vibrant space for arts, culture and entertainment as well as a co-working environment for new and growing small businesses, we believe it can help regenerate the local high street and wider area. This has become even more urgent as the local community and economy need to rebuild when we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis. The grant adds to funds [pledged](#) by nearly 450 individual supporters, the [Mayor of London](#), and [Lambeth Council](#). We thank everyone for their support and look forward to being able to reopen the building well before its 100th birthday in 2029."

Theatres Trust Architecture Advisor Claire Appleby says "We know how difficult it can be for theatres to raise funding for the early stage concept and viability works and for organisational support. These first stages of a project provide the vital foundations for both project and organisation, and we hope that with this support, these theatres will be able to make real progress."

Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme is supported by Historic England, The Pilgrim Trust and Swire Charitable Trust.

Sue Bowers of the Pilgrim Trust says: "The Pilgrim Trust recognises the importance of supporting theatres at risk to save their buildings and give them a viable and sustainable future. This is not just because so many of the buildings are of outstanding significance, but also because a restored, vibrant and well visited theatre building can assist with the

regeneration of the centres of our towns and cities. We are delighted to be funding this programme.”

Martha Allfrey Trustee of the Swire Charitable Trust says “The Swire Charitable Trust is delighted to be supporting the Theatres Trust’s Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme. We applaud its goal of removing vulnerable theatres from the Theatres at Risk Register, thus securing the future of these vital cultural, community and heritage assets. Theatres Trust’s unique and intense work with these theatres can lend support in so many ways, offering exciting opportunities to the community and campaign groups involved – we will follow the progress of each project with great interest.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Download images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fnlvgvewpbbmfzt/AABCax7R9ySx56py2emyQIZva?dl=0>

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants.

Theatres at Risk Register is published annually by the Theatres Trust to highlight and support the theatre buildings under threat across the UK. There are 30 theatres on the 2020 list. Every theatre on the register has strong architectural merit or cultural heritage and, the potential to be returned to its original performance use and be a real asset to its community. Since 2006 Theatres Trust has helped save more than 80 theatres on the Theatres at Risk list.

Streatham Hill Theatre was built in 1929, the last theatre designed by theatre architect W. G. R. Sprague. It is possibly his largest and one of the best-equipped in London outside of the West End. It was listed Grade II in 1994 as ‘an unusually lavish example of a theatre built in the short-lived revival of building in 1929-30; as a suburban example of this date the building may be unique.’ It was registered as an Asset of Community Value in 2018.

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre are campaigning to reawaken the former Streatham Hill Theatre, as an arts, culture and entertainment venue with workspace for the community. We have had success in gaining Asset of Community Value status, supported by an amazing turn out of people for a flash mob photo-call*. We have the help of the Theatres Trust, and the potential regeneration of the theatre has become part of Lambeth’s “Local Plan” and “Streatham Investment and Growth Strategy” as a catalyst for local growth. We also have help from the GLA’s Culture at Risk team. More widely, the campaign has received help and support from local people, community organisations and businesses, arts industry bodies and associations, and celebrities with a local connection, including Simon Callow and Catherine Russell who recently celebrated the theatre’s 90th anniversary*. The

campaign has been crowdfunding to fund a viability study to show all the stakeholders that there is a future for the theatre, by providing venues and workspaces as a beating heart for Streatham and the surrounding area.

[* photos available <http://streathamhilltheatre.org/resources/press/>]

Full details of the grants awarded:

Brighton Hippodrome – Brighton Hippodrome CIC has been awarded a grant of £7,000 to support legal advice to formalise the development partnership and to support fundraising advice.

Derby Hippodrome – Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust has been awarded a grant of £15,000 to support a detailed study into the operational viability of the Derby Hippodrome.

Granada, Walthamstow – Soho Theatre Company has been awarded a grant of £9,500 to support business and operations planning work for the Granada, Walthamstow. The Granada is listed Grade II* and is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

Groundlings Theatre, Portsmouth – Groundlings Theatre Trust has been awarded a grant of £19,000 to support governance and business planning works for the organisation, and to undertake a new conditions survey for the building. The Groundlings is listed Grade II* and is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register.

Leith Theatre – Leith Theatre Trust has been awarded a grant of £11,000 to support mentoring consultancy works, accounts and leadership training, and fund a package of consultancy expertise work covering financial, marketing / fundraising, audience development and community membership, and stakeholder engagement.

Streatham Hill Theatre – The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre has been awarded a grant of £6,000 to support the proposed viability study and economic impact assessment. for Streatham Hill Theatre.

Funders

Historic England is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. It protects, champions and saves the places that define who we are where we've come from as a nation. It cares passionately about the stories they tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists it shares its passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.

The Pilgrim Trust's aim is to preserve and promote Britain's historical and intellectual assets and to provide assistance to vulnerable members of society. The Pilgrim Trust gives grants totalling approximately two million pounds each year to charities and other public bodies.

Swire Charitable Trust is an independent UK grant making trust. Since 1975 it has supported a wide range of charities that share its commitment to delivering positive and lasting change to UK society.