

PRESS RELEASE

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Major leap forward in plans to save Streatham Hill Theatre as leading consultants announced and begin work on viability study.

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre, supported by the Mayor of London, Lambeth Council and The Theatres Trust, and backed by a successful crowdfunding initiative, have started work with the successful bidders of a hard fought competitive tender to produce a Viability Study and Economic Impact Assessment on the historic building. This will deliver a report on the theatre's potential to become a multi-purpose arts and culture centre for the local community.

David Harvey, Chair of the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre said:

"I am delighted to announce we have appointed a crack team led by renowned arts business consultants FEI to deliver this milestone work on reawakening Streatham Hill Theatre. We are confident that the team will deliver a compelling case for its use as an arts and cultural venue fit for a post-Covid renewal. Doing so will help bring new opportunities and benefits to the local economy and to the community that has given us such strong backing."

Nick Dodds, Managing Director of FEI said:

"We are really excited to be working with the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre to help bring this important building back to life. We have put together a very experienced team of architects, cost consultants, economists and business planners to find realistic and sustainable options for the building over the next few months. We know from experience that these projects take a huge amount of commitment and enthusiasm from the lead organisation to realise their potential - something the Friends have plenty of!"

Councillor Sonia Winifred, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture, Lambeth Council said:

"The appointment of FEI and their consultant team follows a successful crowdfunding initiative and marks a really important phase in the history of Streatham Hill Theatre. Their appointment is a critical step towards understanding what a viable future for the theatre looks like and how that can be achieved. The Council is keen to see the building play a key role in supporting local jobs, boosting the town centre economy and raising Streatham's profile. We look forward to continuing to work with the Friends and their appointed team over the coming months!"

Claire Appleby, Architecture Adviser at Theatres Trust said:

"We are delighted to be supporting the Viability Study and Economic Impact Assessment for the Streatham Hill Theatre through our Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme. The announcement of the appointment of FEI and their consultant team to carry out these works is

an exciting and important first step in the journey to breathe new life into this magnificent theatre which has been on our Theatres at Risk register since 2017.”

The viability study has been funded following an overwhelming community response to a crowdfunding campaign by the Friends group of local volunteers. The Crowdfund London campaign gained 440 pledges, and won the backing of the Mayor of London, Lambeth Council and the Theatres Trust. It also gained high-profile endorsements from the creative community, including Baroness Benjamin DBE, DL, Simon Callow CBE, Lolita Chakrabarti, Catherine Russell, and Sir Mark Rylance.

To deliver this project FEI have teamed up with theatre architects Aedas Arts Team, cost and programme consultants Pulse Consult, and creative industry economists Nordicity. They will look at different options for the future of the Grade II listed building as an arts and cultural centre, and then set out a robust and compelling case to decision-makers and interested parties to come on-board.

The report will be completed in December 2020, and will move the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre a step closer to realising their plans to bring back to life the ‘sleeping beauty’, setting the scene for detailed engagement with potential partners in 2021.

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Press enquiries, including photos and video:

David Harvey, Chairman, Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre
07770 843030 | pr@streathamhilltheatre.org

The Friends website www.streathamhilltheatre.org has press resources, including video and photographs of the campaign and the theatre.

Notes for Editors

1. The Save Streatham Hill Theatre crowdfunding campaign to support a viability study was launched on 28th January 2020. The Crowdfund London campaign quickly became the most-backed live crowdfunding campaign in the UK on the Spacehive platform. It gained a huge groundswell of support from the local community, political leaders, and businesses, as well as support from the wider creative and heritage communities. It reached its funding target on 13th May 2020, gaining funding pledges from the Mayor of London and Lambeth Council to help reach a total of £41,680. Full details of the campaign are at save.streathamhilltheatre.org
2. On 20th May, the Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for theatre, announced that they would also provide a helping hand to Streatham Hill Theatre by awarding a grant of £6,000 through their Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme to deliver an Economic Impact Assessment. Full details are here [Press Release: 20 May 2020 Six](#)

['Theatres at Risk' get a helping hand from Theatres Trust.](#)

3. Streatham Hill Theatre was opened in 1929. It was bombed in WW2 but was repaired and reopened in 1950. It closed to theatre in 1962, becoming a bingo hall. Much of the original theatre and its equipment remain. Small scale theatre returned via Streatham Theatre Company from 2013 to 2016. Bingo ceased in 2017, leaving only a small 24/7 slot machine lounge operated by leaseholders Praesepe plc.
4. The theatre has a stage the size of the London Palladium's stage and was designed by the architect W.G.R Sprague, who designed many of the great West End theatres including the Aldwych, Novello, and Gielgud Theatres.
5. The theatre was granted a Grade 2 listing 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".
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/thelist/listentry/1244564>
6. The theatre was added to the Theatres Trust Theatres at Risk Register in 2017 when the bingo closed, with much of the building unused, and the risk of development or splitting off parts of the building a concern.
<http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-atrisk/484-streatham-hill-theatre>
7. In 2018 Lambeth Council approved The Friends' nomination of Streatham Hill Theatre as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), which was then appealed by the owners. After a flashmob demonstration of support by over 1000 people in November 2018, ACV status was confirmed in early 2019. More on our website www.streathamhilltheatre.org
8. FEI provides both strategic and operational advice to arts, entertainment, and conference venues as well as cultural and creative industries organisations and their funders. More here: www.feiuk.com