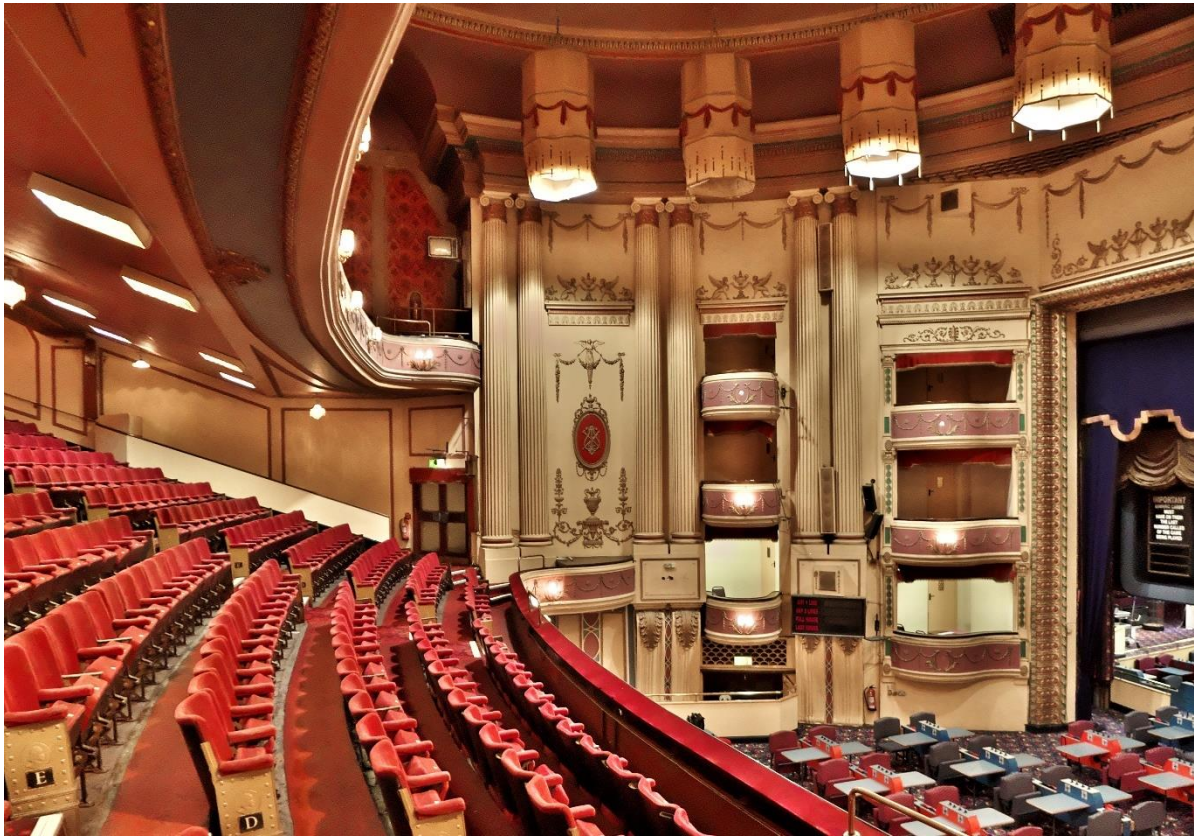


PRESS RELEASE
EMBARGOED UNTIL 29th June 2022



- **Streatham Hill Theatre added to SAVE Britain's Heritage Buildings at Risk Register 2022.**
- **David Harewood MBE and Jools Holland OBE DL announced as Patrons of The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre.**
- ***Sherwood* star, Robert Glenister, features in a new student documentary about Streatham Hill Theatre.**



[Streatham Hill Theatre](#) interior by Tim Hatcher

Today, 29th June, Save Britain's Heritage (SAVE), has added Streatham Hill Theatre to its Buildings at Risk Register 2022 which highlights historic buildings whose future is uncertain, and ultimately seeks to return them to use and secure the buildings' futures.

David Harewood MBE and Jools Holland OBE DL have today become Patrons of The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre campaign to find a sustainable solution to the future of the building, and promote its return to use as an arts and culture venue for the community. Other Patrons of the campaign include: Baroness Floella Benjamin, DBE, DL, Samira Ahmed, and Sir Mark Rylance.

Also today, broadcast journalism students at the University of Westminster have published online a student documentary featuring *Sherwood* star, and campaign Patron, Robert

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre, a CIO and registered charity 1193643.

Patrons: Akram Khan MBE, Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE DL, Catherine Russell, David Harewood MBE, Jessica Thom, Jools Holland OBE DL, Paul Merton, Renato Balsadonna, Robert Glenister, Samira Ahmed, Simon Callow CBE & Sir Mark Rylance

Glenister, and others, covering the history of the Theatre, its importance, and the campaign to save it.

Responding to these announcements, **David Harvey, Chair, The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre** said “These developments demonstrate yet more recognition for the majestic Streatham Hill Theatre, its historic importance, and the breadth and depth of support in the community for the building to be rejuvenated for a future in arts and culture.”

Further statements:

‘The prospect of bringing back to life a theatre in South London, with a stage the equivalent size of the Palladium, is very exciting. My friend the late Chris Barber and his jazz band played there in the fifties, and it would be so wonderful to see the Streatham Hill Theatre filled with all kinds of music once again. I'm delighted to add my support to this important campaign to save it.’

Jools Holland OBE DL, Pianist, Composer, Bandleader, Singer and Broadcaster

“Theatre and the Creative Arts are so important for people's well-being, which is just one of the reasons I'm fully behind the Friends' campaign to bring this very special building back to life as a beating heart for our wonderful Streatham community and beyond.”

David Harewood MBE, Actor, Director, Presenter and Author

“If it can be preserved as a historical venue and as a performing venue as well, then, best of both worlds.”

Robert Glenister, Actor

"With dazzlingly opulent interiors, this exceptional 1920s theatre is an important part of London's rich cultural history. Remarkably little altered since it opened, it is well-suited to being brought back into use as a performance venue. SAVE Britain's Heritage is today adding it to our Buildings at Risk Register as the theatre has lain largely disused for some time and is highly vulnerable to redevelopment. Fortunately, The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre have a vision to bring the theatre back into use for the community. SAVE wholeheartedly supports their initiative."

Henrietta Billings, Director, SAVE Britain's Heritage

“The addition of the Streatham Hill Theatre to the Save Britain's Heritage's latest At Risk Register is a significant step in the ongoing efforts to protect this hidden gem in the heart of Streatham.

“Together with the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre, Lambeth Council is committed to doing all we can to celebrate its rich history and safeguard its future.

“The campaign has captured everyone's imagination in Streatham and beyond, and to have so many talented artists, actors and musicians backing the cause show the strength of feeling for this historic venue.”

Cllr Donatus Anyanwu, Lambeth Council Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Leisure and Sport

“The stunning Streatham Hill Theatre has enormous potential to be restored to its former glory, and used once again as a centre for the arts and creativity.

“The Council should do everything possible to support The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre ensuring the site is designated as an Asset of Community Value way past its current end-date of July 2023, and to attract funding for the project. There is the opportunity for a cultural centre that would benefit all ages and all communities here in Lambeth.”

“Meanwhile, preserving and renovating the theatre for future generations would draw more people to Streatham from all over London, helping to reinvent Europe’s longest high street.”

Cllr Donna Harris, Councillor for Streatham Hill West & Thornton Ward and Group Leader, Lambeth Liberal Democrats

“Since we added Streatham Hill Theatre to our Theatres at Risk Register in 2017, we have been working with the Friends group and other interested parties to find a viable long-term use for this unique theatre. We are delighted to see that support for this cause is growing and we hope that together, Streatham Hill Theatre can be restored, reopened and returned to use as a valuable asset to its local community and high street.”

Claire Appleby, Architecture Adviser, Theatres Trust

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Contact for The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre

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Further resources including a selection of photos are available via www.streathamhilltheatre.org and resources.streathamhilltheatre.org - the [Press](#) menu and [folder](#) have specific press resources.

Contact for SAVE Britain’s Heritage

For further information on the Buildings at Risk Register, please contact Liz Fuller, liz.fuller@savebritainsheritage.org, 020 7253 3500

University of Westminster student documentary

A team of University of Westminster MA Broadcast Journalism students, led by Neha Suryavanshi, looked to make a documentary about London losing so many historic buildings, choosing to focus on Streatham Hill Theatre. They interviewed various people supporting the Friends’ campaign. The documentary will be released on The Friends YouTube channel tv.streathamhilltheatre.org by 29th June. Neha can be contacted using w1854011@my.westminster.ac.uk

Streatham Hill Theatre

Streatham Hill Theatre originally opened in 1929 and is a Grade II listed building with an auditorium with a capacity of over 2,800. It was the last project by the renowned West End theatre architect W G R Sprague, whose other surviving theatres include the Wyndhams Theatre, Noel Coward Theatre, Aldwych Theatre and Gielgud Theatre.

After a direct V1 'doodlebug' hit in 1944, it closed for the rest of WWII and reopened in 1950 to entertain visitors for another twelve years, before being repurposed for bingo in 1962, until the closure of the bingo in 2017. The theatre was added to Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk Register in 2017.

In 2019, after a flashmob of over 1,000 people demonstrated huge local support, Lambeth Council turned down an appeal by the theatre's owners against its Asset of Community Value status.

In November 2021, Historic England [added Streatham Hill Theatre](#) to its national Heritage at Risk Register of most valued historic places and those most at risk of being lost. On the announcement of this, Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London said "I hope others will join me in supporting this remarkable building being transformed into an inclusive, cultural space that will serve the local community for years to come."

Building Ownership

The Friends have no access to or control of the building, which is currently only partially in use as a small slot machine lounge by leaseholders, Merkur Casino UK (formerly Praesepe). In May 2022 the Friends learnt that the freehold had been sold to new owners. The Friends have heard verbally from one of the new owners and are expecting further dialogue in the coming months. More about these developments [here](#).

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre's mission is to help find a sustainable solution to the future of the building, and to promote returning it to use as an arts and culture venue. They are an entirely volunteer-run organisation with around 1200 members and associates, supported by the Mayor of London, Lambeth Council and The Theatres Trust, and in February 2021 were granted CIO charity status.

Patrons

On the 91st birthday of the opening of the theatre, on 20th November 2020, the Friends announced nine Patrons for their campaign: Baroness Floella Benjamin, DBE, DL, Catherine Russell, Jessica Thom, Paul Merton, Renato Balsadonna, Robert Glenister, Samira Ahmed, Simon Callow, CBE and Sir Mark Rylance.

In January 2021 it was announced that they were being joined by Akram Khan, MBE. In addition, over 200 creative industry individuals and organisations have so far given their support to the campaign and many others continue to add their names.

Biographies and photographs are available for new Patrons, David Harewood MBE and Jools Holland OBE DL, and also for existing Patrons, at <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/press/Patrons/>

Community support

The [Lambeth Local Plan 2021](#) says "The council will support the regeneration of the former Streatham Hill Theatre to become a major leisure and entertainment venue alongside workspace for creative and cultural industries".

The Streatham Investment and Growth Strategy 2019–2030, adopted by Lambeth, sets out a priority action to explore the feasibility of refurbishing and rejuvenating the theatre, and says that successfully restoring this building would bring significant improvements to the public realm and historic/cultural fabric of the area.

The Save Streatham Hill Theatre crowdfunding campaign to support a viability study and economic impact assessment was launched on 28th January 2020. 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, along the way gaining funding pledges from the Mayor of London and Lambeth Council to help reach a total of £41,680, as well as a £6,000 grant from the Theatres Trust.

The viability study report summary is available [here](#), along with a statement of historic significance [here](#).

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