

## ENTERTAINMENT



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# Streatham Hill Theatre campaign boosted by high-profile support

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- Oli Dickson Jefford

**A campaign to save the Streatham Hill Theatre has been backed by several notable figures following its 91st birthday.**

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre was set up in early 2017 after the venue was left unused following the suspension of bingo events, with the group aiming to ensure that the theatre is in use to preserve it and benefit the wider community.

Campaign chairman David Harvey said: “There was concern that if it remained mostly closed, the beautiful architecture would deteriorate, the community would lose access forever, and redevelopment might take place.

“We had already lost the nearby Megabowl (former Gaumont cinema) and Caesars nightclub (the former Locarno ballroom), both built around the same time as the theatre when Streatham was ‘the West End of south London’.”

The campaign has managed to raise over £46,000 to help run several studies to see how best the theatre can be saved and used, and has now received a major boost with nine notable patrons throwing their support behind the campaign.

Among those backing the campaign to save the Streatham Hill Theatre are Oscar-winning actor Sir Mark Rylance, TV presenter Baroness Floella Benjamin, comedian and 'Have I Got News For You' panelist Paul Merton and BBC presenter Samira Ahmed.

Harvey said: "Having prominent supporters is a great help in spreading the work about the campaign by helping open doors to people who might not otherwise find out about it.

"Those people may be able to help us achieve the campaign's aims, or may know others who can.

"It is especially helpful when those supporters know the local area and its community spirit as they can better express the enthusiasm about the project and how it will benefit the area."

Harvey and the rest of the campaign believe it is vital that the theatre is saved and used, largely so the local community can benefit from such a large and historic space.

He said: "A revitalised Streatham Hill Theatre as an arts and cultural centre, with workspace, would be integral to revival and renewal of the local economy and the high street it sits on.

"It can provide a lively, 'always on' venue bringing people to the area from nearby and from the wide south London area, helping increase footfall.

"It can offer facilities for the artists and performers of the future, bringing the spirit of the theatre's past to the future generation."

More information about the campaign can be found [here](#).

*Featured image credit: Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre*

<https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/entertainment/23112020-streatham-hill-theatre-campaign/>

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