

Streatham Hill Theatre

Statement of Heritage Risk

Addendum to Statement of Heritage Significance

August 2022



streathamhilltheatre.org

The Streatham Hill Theatre has been recognised by local, national and statutory bodies as a [significant heritage asset](#) that is at risk of loss or damage.

This document collates the current at-risk statements from those bodies at the time of compilation. Check with them for latest information. Their rights are acknowledged.

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Historic England – Grade II Listed Building

From <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1244564?section=official-list-entry> August 2022



Historic England

STREATHAM HILL THEATRE, 110, STREATHAM HILL, SW2 4RD

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1244564

Date first listed: 22-Sep-1994

Location

Statutory Address: STREATHAM HILL THEATRE, 110, STREATHAM HILL, SW2 4RD

County: Greater London Authority

District: Lambeth (London Borough)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TQ 30322 72963

Details

TQ 3072 963-/30/10028

STREATHAM HILL (west side) No. 110 (Streatham Hill Theatre)

Grade II

Theatre. 1928-9 by WGR Sprague and WH Barton. Steel frame clad in brick and facade faced in Doulton's Carrara terracotta; the roof partly flat and partly pantiled.

Auditorium, originally seating nearly 3,000 people, on three levels, with three tiers of paired boxes either side of proscenium. Full stage with dressing rooms, fly tower and grid, its machinery not inspected.

At the front a series of foyers and bars from basement to second floor.

Facade a tripartite composition with four-bay pavilions under pediments with swag decoration either side of five-bay centre with open parapet recessed behind Tuscan columns in antis. Five pairs of original doors to foyer under original canopy now covered.

Foyer with Imperial stair rising behind screen of Ionic columns under deep cornice, with neo-Grec iron balustrades, original-kiosks and mirrors. Upper foyer under circle with moulded decoration in similar neo-Grec decoration; more rococo-style ceiling and cornice to first-floor bar.

The auditorium is unusually vast and opulent for its late date. Moulded square proscenium arch with moulded frieze of urns and sphinxes over, similar decoration in medallions to ante-proscenium behind two tiers of boxes to each side, these features all separated by three pairs of giant fluted Ionic columns. The side walls of the stalls and circle areas with pilasters, cornices and shallow panelling. Ceiling inset with heavily moulded, shallow, circular saucer dome with central chandelier.

Included 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.

Source The Builder, 29 November 1929, p.908

Listing NGR: TQ3032272963

[Legal](#)

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

[The scope of legal protection for listed buildings](#)

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

Theatres Trust Theatres at Risk Register

From <http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk/484-streatham-hill-theatre> August 2022



Streatham Hill Theatre

One of south London's most lavish 'sleeping beauties' and the last theatre designed by W. G. R. Sprague, the architect responsible for some of the most stunning theatres in London.

ADDRESS	110 Streatham Hill, London, SW2 4RD
RISK RATING	7 (Community Value: 3, Star Rating: 2, Risk Factor: 2)
LOCAL AUTHORITY	London Borough of Lambeth
LOCAL GROUP	The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre
OWNER	Ruach City Church (Poll Mount Ltd to May 2022)
OPERATOR	Merkur Casino UK
ARCHITECT	William George Robert Sprague & W. H. Barton
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	1929
LISTING	Grade II / Asset of Community Value
CAPACITY	c. 2800
DATABASE LINK	View in Theatres Database

Significance

Built in 1929, this was the last theatre designed by theatre architect William George Robert Sprague. It is possibly his largest and one of the best-equipped in London outside of the West End. The theatre has an imposing faience facade. The foyer is spacious, with tall gilded Ionic columns and arches, a terrazzo floor, and two round kiosks on each side of the grand central stairway. This sweeps up to dress circle and balcony levels, parting at the centre into two flights with iron balustrading. The auditorium is lavish and has excellent sightlines with two balconies. The foyers, auditorium, and public areas were described as being 'in the Adam manner' but are quite eclectic, with friezes of sphinxes, angels, and garlands in abundance. The theatre was hit by a V1 flying bomb in 1944 but was reconstructed in 1950 closely to the original Sprague designs. Original wooden stage machinery is also still in situ, together with the counterweight flying and three-part forestage orchestra lifts.

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.

A Statement of Historical Significance, commissioned as a part of the viability study has shown that the theatre is significant on a number of levels: its place in the work of the original architect W.G.R Sprague, being a rare example of interwar suburban theatre buildings, its aesthetic completeness, quality and scale - and its role in the collective cultural memory of its local community.

In November 2021 Historic England included Streatham Hill Theatre on its Heritage at Risk Register, giving it further protection and recognition.

Why is this theatre at risk?

Streatham Hill Theatre has been on the Theatres at Risk Register since 2018.

Praesepe plc closed its Beacon Bingo operation in the main auditorium in January 2017 and currently (now named Merkur Casino UK) operates a Cashino slot-machine lounge out of the rear of the stalls only, leaving the future of the building uncertain. The closure of bingo also brought the end of local amateur community theatre use in the building. This had been operating using a pop-up theatre space in the circle foyer and had run tours and promenade performances around the building.

Beacon Bingo's lease expires in 2028 and it is understood that the company will be liable for dilapidations at the end of this term, and this could have a substantial cost implication. The head lease held by Mecca expires on the same date.

It is feared that the building's owner, Poll Mount Ltd, may have plans for redevelopment. There is also concern that if the more saleable parts of the building are let or developed separately, such as for offices or flats, the auditorium itself may be left in an unsustainable position, and without the income it would need from the rest of the building.

Theatre potential

There is currently a shortage of both workspace and arts / cultural facilities in the area which this building could address.

In 2020 campaign group The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre raised funds to complete a viability study and economic impact assessment to investigate the theatre's potential for a sustainable future. The report published in April 2021 confirmed that restoration and phased reuse of the theatre as a leisure and entertainment venue is a viable proposal, and would generate footfall, jobs and economic growth, adding over £70m to the local economy over 30 years.

Current situation

Local campaign group Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre is very proactive and has achieved successes both in fundraising and in harnessing strong community support for the building. The group was also successful in getting the building listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) in July 2018, despite an appeal by the owners. Lambeth Council's decision to list the theatre as an ACV recognises the theatre's important cultural and social role in its community. It is also a sign of the council's support to return the theatre to an arts and performance use, continuing Streatham's path of becoming a more attractive and exciting place for residents and visitors.

A further strong indication of the council and residents' support for the theatre as a key pillar in local regeneration was provided by the theatre's inclusion within the council's 2019 bid to the Future High Streets Fund for Streatham's high street, although sadly the bid was unsuccessful.

Lambeth's Investment and Growth Strategy for Streatham in June 2019 included a priority action to explore opportunities for the building as part of its objective of providing spaces for better and new experiences in the area. Furthermore, the states that the former Streatham Hill Theatre provides a transformative opportunity to provide a major leisure and entertainment venue with the potential for workspace for creative, digital and cultural industries.

A successful crowdfunder campaign, including £15,000 from the Mayor of London's 2020 Crowdfund London, £7,500 from Lambeth Council and £6,000 from our [Theatres at Risk Capacity Building Programme](#), enabled the Friends group to commission a viability study and economic impact assessment. The report was published in April 2021 and confirmed that with investment and refurbishment the operation of the theatre as a leisure and entertainment venue is a viable long-term proposition. It recommends a phased, incremental and collaborative approach, with the immediate focus on making meanwhile use of parts of the building. A minimal refurbishment of the theatre could be implemented as a sustainable operating model in the medium term, while longer-term plans are developed for full refurbishment and operation as a fully commercial theatre. This is an exciting and important step in the journey to breathe new life into this magnificent theatre.

Theatres Trust has been supporting the campaign group since its formation providing fundraising and viability study advice. In addition, the Association of British Theatre Technicians Historical Research Committee has carried out extensive research into the theatre's unique and significant history and its current condition.

In November 2021 Streatham Hill Theatre was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, a list of the most valued historic places and those most at risk of being lost. The recognition will help provide additional protection to the theatre, building on foundations already laid through the work of the campaign group, Theatres Trust, and other stakeholders, and help continue the theatre's journey on a pathway to achieving a sustainable and positive future.

Theatres Trust is continuing to support the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre and key stakeholders with early-stage project advice.

[Update May 2022](#)

Theatres Trust has been made aware that Streatham Hill Theatre has been sold to an unknown buyer. We are encouraging them to get in touch with us to discuss their plans. [Read our full response to this news.](#)

[Update June 2022](#)

Save Britain's Heritage (SAVE) has added Streatham Hill Theatre to its Buildings at Risk list. At the same time, the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre campaign group has announced that David Harewood MBE and Jools Holland OBE DL have become Patrons for the campaign.

[Update July 2022](#)

Further to the news in May that Streatham Hill Theatre had been bought, it has been confirmed that the building has been sold on, with the new owners confirmed as Ruach City Church.

Historic England Heritage at Risk Register

From <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/212434> August 2022



Streatham Hill Theatre, 110, Streatham Hill SW2 - Lambeth

Constructed by WGR Sprague and WH Barton in 1928. Steel framed construction clad in brick with the frontage clad in Doulton Carrara terracotta. An unusually lavish example, with a significant amount of survival, despite a direct hit during World War II after which the interior was repaired to the original design. It remained in use as a theatre until 1962 and then as a bingo hall until 2017, but now much of the building is no longer in use. There is flooding in the basement subways causing deterioration of the fabric and other areas show signs of water ingress.

Site Details

Designated Site Name: STREATHAM HILL THEATRE
Heritage Category: Listed Building grade II
List Entry Number: [1244564](#)
Local Planning Authority: Lambeth
Site Type: Recreational

Location

Building Name: Streatham Hill Theatre
County: Greater London
District / Borough: Lambeth
Parliamentary Constituency: Streatham
Region: London and South East

Assessment Information

Assessment Type: Building or structure
Condition: Poor
Occupancy / Use: Part occupied/part in use
Priority: C - Slow decay; no solution agreed
Ownership: Commercial company
Designation: [Listed Building](#) grade II, [CA](#)

SAVE Britain's Heritage – Buildings at Risk Register

From <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/campaigns/item/796/SAVE-Me-Im-Yours-New-Entries-List-in-full>

August 2022

Streatham Hill Theatre, 110 Streatham Hill, London SW2 4RD

This grade II theatre is an utter gem with interiors oozing glamour. There is uncertainty about its future but The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre proposes to return the theatre to arts, culture and performance use for the community. They have gathered support from across the theatre world including support from Simon Callow, Akram Khan and Mark Rylance.

See <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/campaigns/item/796/SAVE-Me-Im-Yours-New-Entries-List-in-full#:~:text=South%20East-,Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre,-%2C%20110%20Streatham%20Hill>



Art Deco Society UK – Heritage at Risk Register

From <https://artdecosociety.uk/buildings-at-risk/> August 2022

See <https://artdecosociety.uk/buildings-at-risk/#:~:text=Streatham%20Hill%20Theatre>



London Borough of Lambeth - Asset of Community Value

ACV Granted 2nd July 2018

From letter dated 6th July 2018 <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/ACV/SHT%20ACV%20Panel%20Decision%20Letter.pdf>

ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE – STREATHAM HILL THEATRE, 110 STREATHAM HILL, LONDON, SW2 4RD NOMINATED BY THE FRIENDS OF STREATHAM HILL THEATRE COMMUNITY GROUP

Assessment Panel Decision

Thank you for your submission dated 21 May 2018, nominating the above property as an Asset of Community Value.

I would like to inform you that at its meeting on Monday, 2nd of July 2018 the Assessment Panel has agreed that the above asset complies with criteria set out by the Localism Act 2011 and/or Asset of Community Value Regulations 2012 and the property is now registered as an Assets of Community Value. This will now be publicised on the Council website.

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and /or the asset of community value regulations 2012 the owner of the property owner will be given the opportunity to object to the listing of the successfully ACV listed assets and you will be informed if this happens. However, in the meantime the owner is not allowed to dispose of the freehold of the successfully listed property or any lease in excess of 25 years. Please note that there are certain exceptions to this restriction.

Detailed information regarding Assets of Community Value can be obtained from the Council's website: <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/elections-and-council/about-lambeth/assets-of-community-valueguide#register-of-assets-of-community-value>

David Gobel B.Sc (Hons), MRICS
Senior Surveyor VSPS, Finance
London Borough of Lambeth

ACV Confirmed after appeal January 2019

From letter dated 9th January 2019 <http://resources.streathamhilltheatre.org/ACV/SHT%20ACV%20Review%20Outcome%20-%20Summary.pdf>

Review of listing as an Asset of Community Value relating to Streatham Hill Theatre 110 Streatham Hill London SW2 4RD

I refer to your [Beacon Bingo] request for a review of the decision made by London Borough of Lambeth to list the above property, known as Streatham Hill Theatre, as an Asset of Community Value (“ACV”) at a decision made on 2 July 2017. By agreement the parties extended the period for completion of the review until 11th January 2019.

The review has been undertaken by Sophie Linton MA MRICS, Head of Valuation and Strategic Assets. She has had no previous involvement with the decision to list the assets as ACVs although a member of the Strategic Assets team was on the original panel.

The London Borough of Lambeth (the “Council”) received nomination forms dated 21 May 2018 from the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre (the “Nominator”) to list Streatham Hill Theatre 110 Streatham Hill, London, SW2 4RD (the “Property”) as an ACV under the Localism Act 2011 (the “2011 Act”) and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 (the “ACV Regulations”).

Following a review by a panel of Lambeth Council officers, the Property was successfully listed on 2 July 2017.

The Review

[A detailed response to the review was presented in the letter and for the reasons given confirmed ACV listing]

Conclusion

For the reasons noted above, the Reviewing Officer upholds the first panel’s decision to list Streatham Hill Theatre as an Asset of Community Value to the extent that it meets the requirements set out within Section 88(2) of the 2011 Act.

Sophie Linton MA MRICS
Head of Strategic Assets
London Borough of Lambeth