

Streatham Hill's Sleeping Beauty

Streatham has a 'sleeping beauty' – a unique gem of a theatre built for an audience of over 2500 with a stage large enough to take the very biggest shows. The **Streatham Hill Theatre** at 110 Streatham Hill was Grade 2 listed 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”.

Opened in 1929 as **Streatham Hill Playhouse**, the theatre attracted stars including John Gielgud and Vivian Leigh and top shows from the West End. It survived bomb damage in 1944, and was reopened in 1950, but by 1962 it succumbed to the advent of TV, and became Britain's biggest bingo venue, with the theatre preserved in suspended animation.

Bingo ceased in January this year and the owners of Beacon Bingo, have been seeking a new cultural use for the building. Many in Streatham are also eager to put it to use as a centre for the burgeoning arts and cultural scene in South London, and are concerned for the future of the beautiful historic building with the risk of it falling into disuse and deterioration, or being lost to redevelopment.

The Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre has been founded by David Harvey to help bring the theatre back into use and save it for future generations.

An arts centre based in a renewed Streatham Hill Theatre would give Lambeth a counter-balance to the South Bank Centre. Many residents, businesses, and organisations have pledged to support the initiative, and the Friends are working with theatre heritage organisations including the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) and the Theatres Trust.

David said, “I know this lovely building well, having helped stage theatre and run tours there, with great support from Beacon Bingo. Everyone who sees the theatre is in awe of this hidden gem and wants it to be brought back to life.”

The Friends will hold a public meeting in the New Year to give everyone a chance to get involved. They would love to hear from anyone able to support them in any way.

Join the Friends by liking them on Facebook at [facebook.com/StreathamHillTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/StreathamHillTheatre), following on Twitter twitter.com/StreathamHillT or contact sht@gaz.me.uk.

What's that? Can it be the sound of a sleeping beauty stirring?