



FRIENDS OF THE
ALEXANDRA PALACE THEATRE

Dear Friend

I am writing on behalf of the Friends committee to tell you the good news that the Alexandra Palace Trust has secured an £18.8 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the regeneration of the theatre and a large part of the eastern end of the Palace, the original Victorian part of the Palace.

This is wonderful culmination to more than a dozen years of campaigning by the Friends and supporters to bring the theatre back into public use.

Our thanks go to Duncan Wilson, Ally Pally's chief executive, and all his team for all their hard work in preparing and developing the bid, and for this fantastic result.

The full announcement by Alexandra Palace is below. We will let you know as soon as we have more details on how the project will now proceed.

Nigel Willmott
Chair, Friends of the Alexandra Palace Theatre

[PS Drama at the Palace, our recently published history of the Victorian theatre, is still available from the Friends website (<http://fapt.org.uk/w/shop>) at £7 for members or £8.50 for non-members, and on Amazon at £8.50.]

For immediate release

ICONIC LONDON LANDMARK SECURES £18.8M IN HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND SUPPORT

Alexandra Palace celebrates 'green light' for historic renovation plans

Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust (APPCT) is delighted to announce that it has been awarded £18.8million of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to restore the Palace's most significant historic spaces to their former glory and secure the Palace's future as one of London's leading heritage destinations.

Under the plans, the eastern end of the Palace, comprising the BBC Studios and the Victorian Theatre will be repaired and refurbished, together with the glazed East Court in which a new and more welcoming public entrance hall will be created.

The BBC studios - birthplace of high-definition television broadcasts in 1936 - will be turned into an interactive visitor attraction, drawing on the BBC's extraordinarily rich archives and telling the remarkable story of popular entertainment culminating in the birth and development of broadcast television. There will be a special focus on schools and learning programmes, displays of historic equipment and hands-on engagement with the art of making television programmes.

The Palace's stunning hidden theatre dating back to 1875 will also be brought back to life for community and commercial use with theatrical performances, cinema screenings, live comedy, acoustic music and corporate entertainment among the ideas backed by leading arts figures. The theatre will accommodate audiences of up to 1,300 but has been designed to suit smaller and more intimate audience numbers too.

Duncan Wilson OBE, Chief Executive of APPCT commented:

"We are thrilled with the HLF announcement. Today marks a hugely positive and significant step in realising our aspirations to bring the Victorian Theatre and BBC Studios back to life and fulfil the potential of the Palace and its remarkable history for the local community, visitors from all over the UK, and overseas.

"There are further challenges ahead, including the launch of a new fundraising programme and preparing the Palace for the start of the construction programme later this year, but this announcement represents a huge achievement for the Trust and its supporters."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said:

"Alexandra Palace has played a pivotal role in the development of popular entertainment – culminating in the birth of British television. The Eastern end has stood derelict for 35 years but now Lottery funding is heralding a new chapter for this iconic building, creating an inspirational space where people can learn about its rich and colourful history."

As part of the development phase, a summer-long public engagement programme was undertaken, culminating in a 2-week Public Exhibition at the Palace, which welcomed over 2,000 visitors, with over 400 people completing feedback forms on the plans.

Cllr Joanna Christophides, Chair of the APPCT Board said:

"I have been hugely encouraged by the show of local community support we have received in the lead up to this decision and I would like to thank everyone for their valuable contribution. We are already starting to see the benefit of this project with the growth of our public engagement programmes, including history tours, volunteering initiatives and our schools programme over the past two years. We are very grateful to the HLF for backing our plans to transform the Palace."

The award of £18.8million HLF funding contributes towards the total project cost of £26.7m, with the London Borough of Haringey having pledged £6.8m and the Trust committing to a fundraising target of £1m before the start of the project in 2016.

Haringey Council Leader Claire Kober said:

"It's fantastic news that the Heritage Lottery Fund has embraced this exciting vision for Ally Pally, which secures the long-term future of one of London's most iconic landmarks.

Alexandra Palace has been through some challenging times, but this historic restoration will allow some of the building's hidden gems to finally be unveiled. This tremendous achievement is testament to the hard work, determination and enthusiasm of staff and local people."

ENDS

Feel free to send this email on to others who may be interested.
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