

ALEXANDRA
PALACE

Reclaiming the People's Palace



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Foreword

The East Wing Restoration Project has been the single most transformative undertaking at Alexandra Palace for a generation.

This report offers a welcome opportunity to look back on the project, the huge benefits it has delivered and the lessons it has taught us. At the time of writing, in winter 2020, we can also reflect on how the new spaces and opportunities the project brought can play a crucial role in supporting the recovery of our charity, and our community, from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our gratitude to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) is boundless. Given the scale of the East Wing Restoration Project, it is hard to imagine that any other funder could have provided the guidance role that they did. Throughout the project, as challenges mounted and problems were uncovered, they remained patient and pragmatic, always a source of wise counsel and support.

For anyone undertaking a major NLHF project, three pieces of advice are essential. Firstly, share your progress with NLHF. Communicate frequently and with openness, even when things aren't going to plan. Their advice and support is an invaluable asset in ensuring the success of your project.

Secondly, no matter how confident you are in your project plan, there will be surprises, so be prepared for changes. Working on historic assets is never easy. Hold your desired outcomes close, but be flexible.

Finally, a major capital project could change not just the physical condition of the heritage you care for, but your organisation too. Be open to this change, and embrace its possibilities. The rewards can be enormous.

Few organisations will go through such profound change as ours in such a short space of time. In the course of doing so, it has remained a true privilege to play a part in safeguarding the nation's heritage for the future and enabling people to enjoy and benefit from it. We wish you every success as you endeavour to do the same. ■

Louise Stewart
CEO, Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust

Thanks to...

The project funders:



AkzoNobel, American Express Foundation, Arts Council England, BBC Children in Need, Bruce Wake Charitable Trust, Department for Culture, Digital, Media and Sport, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Friends of Alexandra Palace Theatre, Garfield Weston Foundation, Heritage of London Trust, Hewlett-Packard, John Thaw Foundation, J. Paul Getty Charitable Trust, Kirby Laing Foundation, Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation, One Circle Events, The National Archive, The Rose Foundation, The Sackler Trust, SEE Tickets, Tarkett, Teale Charitable Trust and Tottenham Grammar School Foundation

All individual supporters of the project. No matter how large or small, every gift helped make the East Wing a reality.

Our local community - neighbours, schools, colleges, community groups and organisations - and everyone who submitted a Letter of Support towards our applications for funding.

Our NLHF Senior Investment Manager, monitors and mentors, who provided encouragement and advice at every stage.

Our Trustee Board and Committees, Friends' Groups, colleagues in Haringey and the wider Alexandra Palace team for their continued support and expertise.

The architects, planners, engineers, quantity surveyors, designers, project managers and construction workers who brought this project to life

Our suppliers, who worked sensitively with us throughout our transformation and have become part of the amazing story of Ally Pally.

Executive summary



Alexandra Palace has come a long way since the decision was taken to apply for funding for the East Wing Restoration Project back in the summer of 2012. At that time over 40% of the building was derelict, the fledgling Learning Team had only just been created, our engagement with the local community was limited and our trading company was generating a third of the income it does today.

We wanted to sympathetically restore the Park and Palace for future generations, increase the community and learning potential the site can offer and make our organisation more financially self-sufficient.

A successful grant application in 2015 made the East Wing Restoration Project a reality. Over the next six years, and following unprecedented investment and commitment, the project has restored, reopened and completely reimagined a previously derelict wing of the listed, nineteenth-century Palace.

The East Court and Theatre re-opened to the public in December 2018, to huge acclaim, thrilling visitors as a new free-to-enter public space and engaging people with our heritage and dramatic history of innovation and entertainment. It has contributed to record visitor numbers, ground-breaking new events, boosted income and increased the benefits the Palace brings to individuals, the community and local economy. The Theatre, complete with breath-taking 'arrested decay' décor, welcomed audiences for the first time in 80 years with a programme of

exceptional breadth and quality. We're proud that this progress has been recognised with a series of awards across the construction, architecture and civic sectors.

This project established our Creative Learning programme, which now delivers hundreds of activities each year, many in the new spaces created by the project. Our Interpretation and Curatorial department, in-house Fundraising Team and Visitor Services Team have all been established for the first time by the project, and over 130 active volunteers have been recruited.

While we delight in these achievements, there is an element of sadness that we were not able to achieve all of the original outcomes, in particular the development of the BBC Studios to showcase the role Alexandra Palace played in the history of television. Due to the condition of the building, revealed during the first phase of works, the BBC Studios and some external landscaping works could not be completed in the budget available. We continue to seek funding to restore these areas in the future.

It is no understatement to say the East Wing Restoration Project has changed Alexandra Palace for good. And both the successes and frustrations we experienced throughout the course of the project have provided huge learning opportunities that we continue to utilise as we improve the Park and Palace, now and for future generations. ■



Transformation in numbers

Since National Heritage Lottery Fund support was awarded in 2015, our engagement with the public has been transformed:

- **50,000** ticket buyers to theatre shows
- Over **100** performances in the Theatre
- **1,175** Creative Learning events
- **22,227** people participated in our Creative Learning Programme
- **260** people joined volunteer-led heritage tours
- **137** regular volunteers
- **16,733** hours volunteered
- **76** schools engaged with local history
- Almost **50%** of school children participating from BAME backgrounds, **30%** speak English as a second language

- The Palace generates **£167** million for the wider economy each year
- **157** new organisational and programming partnerships
- **8,000** archive objects digitised
- **40** heritage blogs published
- **12** online and in-person exhibitions staged
- **Dozens** of memories recorded from ex-staff, relatives of internees, performers, and local people
- **Five** new multi-media digital resources (Virtual tours, 360° scans, 3d scans, mixed reality, augmented reality)
- **£250,000** public donations to the project
- Over **20** new funding relationships
- More than **15,000** unique pieces of press coverage

Methodology

In reviewing this project, we considered our performance against the range of outcomes and outputs agreed in 2015. This section of the document details our original aims and considers the inputs invested in the project, and the activities we carried out. We also list the data collection supporting our conclusions. This is the basis on which we have assessed our progress and evaluated our success, focussing on what worked in practice, the gaps we identified along the way and the lessons we have learned.

PROJECT OUTCOMES & OUTPUTS

Through this wide-ranging, multi-year project, we committed to deliver across NLHF's outcomes framework (as available at the time of application in 2015). In this document, we have mapped our project outputs and outcomes under headings which tell the story of the project's development:

1. PEOPLE & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be better managed

OUTPUTS

- produce a costed business plan
- create four new NLHF-funded posts, which will contribute towards the growth and development of the learning, volunteering and curatorial functions at Alexandra Palace
- 11 new full time equivalent posts covering Visitor Services, Theatre, Technical, Sales and Events will raise the capacity of the organisation
- train staff and create a multi-skilled pool to deliver a high quality visitor experience

2. RESTORATION & CONSTRUCTION

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be in better condition

OUTPUTS

- we will adopt a minimum intervention approach

3. NEW SPACES FOR INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES

PROJECT OUTCOME: People will have an enjoyable experience

OUTPUTS

- new flexible infrastructure in the East Court and Theatre will allow for a range of uses, attractive to future hirers. A pop-up approach in the East Court will allow for appropriate scaling
- the Studios will hold an exhibition of artefacts relating to the history of television, showcasing historically significant objects, demonstrating how television has evolved and merged into today's mass consumption of information and entertainment
- the Baird Studio will focus on invention, innovation and production focussing on six themes – Archives, Titles and Idents, Animation, Sound, Editing and Presenting

4. INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNICATION

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be better interpreted and explained

OUTPUTS

- personal memories will be captured and incorporated in the Interpretation Strategy to truly reflect the People's Palace
- new interpretation and signage, permanent and temporary displays, online materials, schools programmes, digitisation of collections, oral history projects and a programme of cultural and community events will be developed
- the East Court interpretation will relate to Alexandra Palace's role in the history of popular entertainment, including the BBC and the Victorian Theatre
- a theatre installation in the East Court will focus on eight themes that are particular to the context of London theatres
- non-intrusive forms of interpretation for the Theatre including guided tours will convey rich stories of significance, including its rare under-stage machinery

5. UNCOVERING OUR HERITAGE

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be identified/recorded

OUTPUTS

- appoint an Archivist
- we will work in collaboration with partner archives to redirect visitors to the relevant external sources where further research can be pursued
- digitisation will protect delicate original materials whilst providing access to a broad audience and returning content of cultural significance to the site

6. SKILLS & VOLUNTEERING

PROJECT OUTCOMES: People will have developed skills; People will have volunteered time

OUTPUTS

- a wide range of volunteering opportunities will be available including stewarding and guiding, visitor services and assisting with learning sessions – it is estimated we will attract c112 new volunteers
- working with partners, our Activity Plan Programme will develop the skills of c364 people – accredited opportunities and informal training included

7. CREATIVE LEARNING

PROJECT OUTCOME: People will have learnt about heritage

OUTPUTS

- a greater understanding of community needs will enable the delivery of tailored activities in partnership with local groups and organisations
- staff will have increased knowledge of the importance of the building and its activities. A skills audit will be undertaken for staff to inform continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and to ensure the team are motivated and well-equipped.

8. ADAPTING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

PROJECT OUTCOME: Negative environmental impacts will be reduced

OUTPUTS

- maximising low energy and passive opportunities where practical through measures including insulating roofs, replacing windows and insulating walls

9. DEVELOPING OUR AUDIENCE

PROJECT OUTCOME: More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

OUTPUTS

- we will aim to attract 130,000 visitors per year to the new spaces; visitors to the East Court will benefit from free exhibitions

10. TRANSFORMING OUR AREA

PROJECT OUTCOMES: Local economies will be boosted; Local areas/communities will be a better place to live, work or visit

OUTPUTS

- rooted in its community, the project will create a new gathering space and experience, involve neighbouring schools and community groups
- the project will have wide-ranging economic outcomes, both direct and indirect as a result of both the capital investment and income generation through the creation of a visitor destination, in addition to the existing Alexandra Palace offer. Other benefits: a strengthened brand and reputation; improved attractiveness to other investors/funders; potential development for complementary incomes and experiences to add to the overall Alexandra Palace offer

11. STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION

PROJECT OUTCOME: Organisations will be more resilient

OUTPUTS

- create new income stream (food and beverage offer) for Theatre
- there will be a net contribution to the Trust's deficit, with profits made from the Theatre and the Studios supporting the long-term aspiration of financial sustainability. The project will add value to the business but not as additional risk to the overall financial position
- project will be a catalyst in attracting investment to other parts of the site including the hotel and sponsorship

Inputs & activities

INPUTS

INVESTMENT MADE IN THE PROJECT

A core in-house team dedicated to the delivery of the project

A dedicated pool of volunteers

£18.85m NLHF funding

£6.8m Haringey Council funding

Existing spaces including our 196 acre park, the Great Hall and West Hall, Ice rink and limited entertaining, catering and conference facilities in our West Wing

Derelict spaces in our East Wing including the Theatre, East Court and BBC Studios

Stories of local heritage and archives held by Bruce Castle and Haringey Council

Objects and archives held by local Friends Groups

Limited learning resources and materials for children and families

ACTIVITIES

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Conservation and restoration of East Wing spaces

Workshops and on site activities during the build including tours, interactions, trails and school visits

Training and CPD opportunities

Presentations, workshops, exhibitions before planning and Haringey Council Funding applications were submitted – held on site and in the community

Partnership development with bodies including the BBC, BAFTA

Public events and festivals including The Great Fete and our Christmas Carnival

Community programmes bringing a range of groups from across our community into our spaces

Outreach activities including our Sensory Suitcase project with older people

Communication and interpretation strategies

Refreshed website and digital programming

Fundraising strategy and forward plan

PARTICIPANTS & PRODUCTS

Historic East Wing spaces sensitively restored and in public use

Volume of positive feedback from Creative Learning participants, clients, stakeholders and the general public

No. of people participating in our Creative Learning programme annually across the Palace and Park and through work in communities

No. of Creative Learning events, visits, workshops, presentations

No. of new partnerships with national and local organisations

No. of staff and volunteers trained

No. of audiences in the Theatre

No. of new interpretation, panels, trails, audio guides, oral histories

No. of training plans and training hours

No. of new funding relationships and new donors engaged

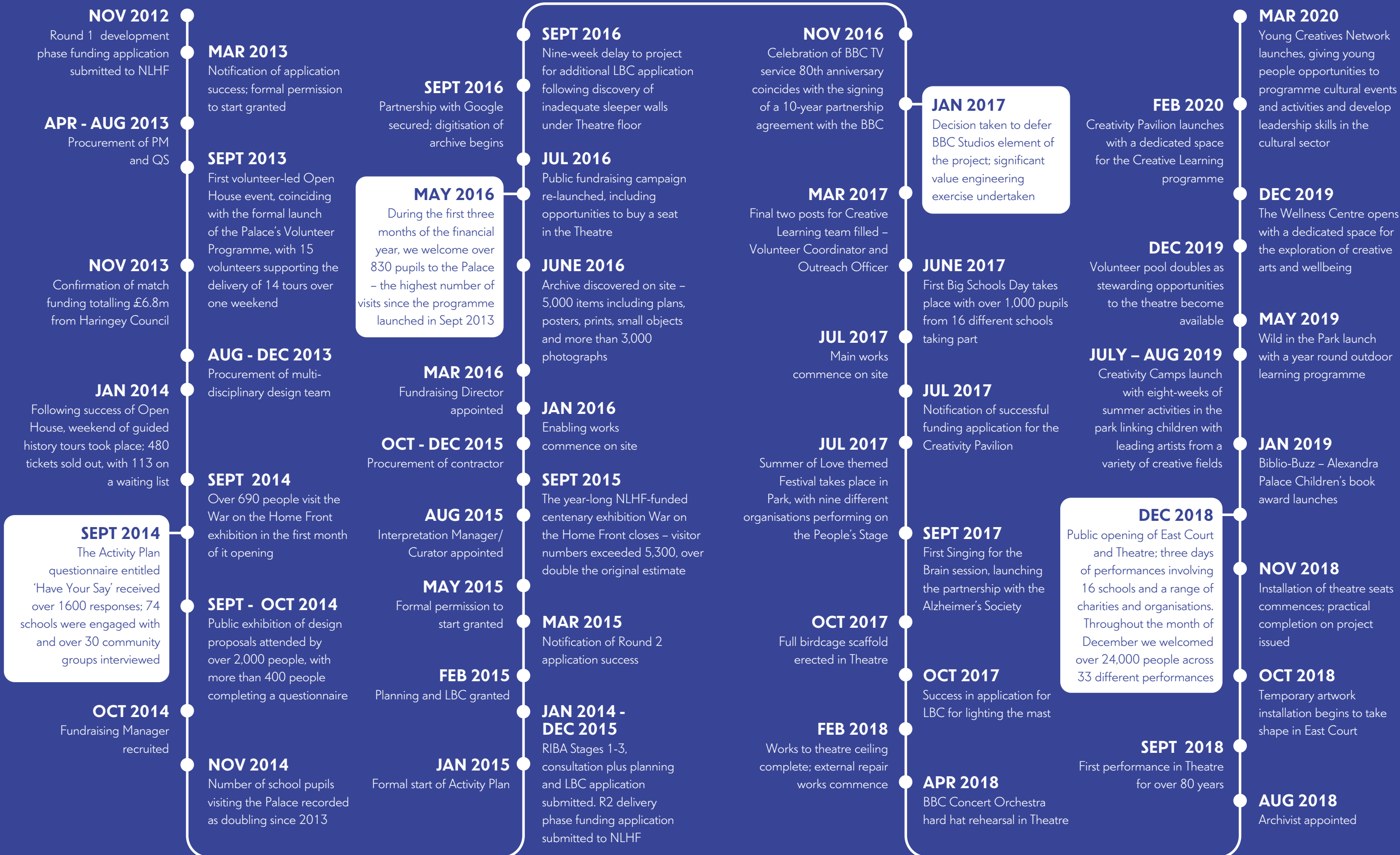
Creation of a dedicated project website

Summary of research methods

We have monitored and evaluated the impact of this project through a wide variety of research methods, including interviews, surveys and regular community engagement.

- 2014, Survey of local people contributing themes to our Activity Plan, **Sample: 1,600**
- 2014-2020, Consultation with Friends of Alexandra Palace Theatre, through regular minuted meetings, **Sample: 250**
- 2014-2020, Quarterly meetings of the Palace’s Statutory Advisory Committee and Consultative Committees, representing local community groups, **Sample: 3**
- 2014-2020, Engagement with community groups and local resident views at meetings throughout and views represented at board and project board meetings. 5 per year, **Sample: 8**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with primary school children participating in our Creative Learning programmes, **Sample: 5,912**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with young people participating in our Creative Learning programmes, **Sample: 659**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with children and families participating in our Creative Learning family programmes, **Sample: 357**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with adults participating in our Creative Learning Higher Education programmes, **Sample: 93**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with teachers participating in Continuing Professional Development activity organised by our Creative Learning Team, **Sample: 140**
- 2017-2020, Feedback surveys with adults participating in our volunteer-led theatre and building tours, **Sample: 173**
- 2018 - 2020, “Viewpoint” customer feedback tablet, in place in East Court from first week of opening. Collected quantitative data on audience engagement with our programme, travel and food and beverage offer, in addition to qualitative views, **Sample: 2,000**
- 2019, Feedback from members of Rhythm Stick steering group representing disabled people, **Sample: 12**
- 2019, In-depth interviews with stakeholders from community service groups, staff and volunteers, **Sample: 10**

Project timeline



Outcomes & learning

In this section we detail our project delivery against the original outcomes, noted at the opening of each section where relevant. For each area we have outlined our approach, detailed what happened and what we've learnt.

People & project management

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be better managed

STAFFING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Create four new NLHF-funded posts**
- **NLHF-funded posts, which will contribute towards the growth and development of the learning, volunteering and curatorial functions at APP**
- **11 new Full Time Equivalent posts covering Visitor Services, Theatre, Technical, Sales and Events will raise the capacity of the organisation**

The project has transformed the workforce at Alexandra Palace, bringing new expertise into our administration and changing our approach to staffing across our venues.

The project created the Palace's Creative Learning function. We recruited our first Creative Learning lead and officer positions with NLHF funding at Round One stage, then recruited our Outreach Officer, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Interpretations Officer and Digital Archivist following the success of our Round Two application. Recruitment was informed by visits to other small learning departments to establish roles, responsibilities and best practice.

Recruitment for these roles was altered from our first plan: while our Outreach Officer and Volunteer Coordinator roles were recruited in 2017, recruitment of the Interpretation Officer role was put on hold owing to the discovery of some in-house expertise in this area, and the discovery of our archive. In 2018, the decision was made to appoint a part time Archivist role and increase the Volunteer Coordinator role to f/t, with an added element of Interpretation responsibility.

BUSINESS PLAN

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Produce a costed business plan**

Round One NLHF support allowed us to appoint specialist consultants Barker Langham to produce a Business Plan for the development, including benchmarking against comparative projects and consultation with existing and future audiences, key stakeholder groups and staff.

The plan set out our assumptions for design, staffing and financial forecasts across the project. While many assumptions changed throughout the course of this multi-year development, particularly regarding the specification of our Theatre and BBC Studios, key principles in the Business Plan have been central to the success of the project. These include:

- We took a flexible and scalable approach to infrastructure in redeveloped spaces to ensure they remained adaptable for a range of future uses, including commercial hire
- We developed strategic partnerships with a range of community and industry partners in order to gain expertise and root our work in local need

Following the recommendations made in the business plan, we employed a number of new specialist posts across the organisation, which have enhanced and strengthened the skillset of our organisation.

LEARNING

Separating 'outreach' into a separate role did not fit well in practice - outreach activities have been intrinsic to all Creative Learning roles. We have since altered our role structure to reflect this.



LEARNING

Combining the Volunteer Coordinator role and Learning Interpretation role did not prove to be as effective as first hoped. The success in terms of growth to the volunteer programme and the time required to capture the archive, meant that the interpretation aspect of the dual role took a back seat.

Our Curatorial and Interpretation function was established by the Regeneration Manager, recruited in 2015. With relevant project management and curatorial skills, working closely with a consultant curator, this role was central in the process of educating staff and contractors about the importance of collections, interpretation and exhibitions. The Regeneration Manager went on to create and deliver our Interpretation strategy, digitisation project and heritage display in the East Court.

Eleven further posts, identified through the Business Plan were created to support the organisation in its transition. Posts spanned the Visitor Services, Theatre, Technical and Catering teams and recruitment was undertaken gradually, to support our development at key stages of the project. The timeline for appointment of roles, many of which were delivering entirely new functions for the Palace, was a challenging balance between ensuring the correct expertise was in-house for key decisions, while avoiding significant staff costs on payroll ahead of delivery in that area. Some roles began at the right moment: our Theatre Sales Manager was recruited to assist with building the Theatre events diary for 2019, for example. However, having expertise in posts such as Head of

Technical and Production earlier in the project would have been helpful with decision-making on the Theatre specification.

LEARNING

During lengthy projects it's vital to consider what in-house skills you might need in the design process and to ensure that the recruitment of key posts is tied to the timeline for each design and activity plan stage to avoid gaps in knowledge at transitions in the project. Note that input from new roles after RIBA Stage 4 has little impact on the scheme design.

Our Visitor Services team was also created through this project, and is now well-established. This dedicated staff team are responsible for a large proportion of first-time interactions with visitors, in person, over the phone or over email. They are supported by a pool of multi-skilled casual staff across a range of front-of-house roles to create a consistent visitor experience. Having a visible on-site presence in our public space, the East Court, has allowed for improved visitor experience and streamlined the way in which enquiries and complaints are dealt with.

Resource dedicated to Visitor Services has helped us to overcome the impact which the sheer scale of our spaces can have on visitors, ensuring that people drawn to the site for the first time or for a repeat visit have an engaging welcome and are easily able to navigate the site. On site staffing throughout the year has been a key part in our transition from an events venue to a public asset and heritage attraction, open to all.

“A thoroughly enjoyable, informative experience and I look forward to my next visit when in London again.”

Visitor feedback through our portal in the East Court

Over the course of the project's lifespan, there was significant staff turnover, particularly in the earlier part of the project. In three years, the team had lost two Directors, two Regeneration Managers, one Regeneration Assistant, one Head of Learning and the CEO. Three Project managers engaged during Round One were replaced with two new staff in these roles in Round Two. Oversight and ownership of project areas by existing senior and permanent staff was essential to preserve continuity as our team changed. Resource then began to settle following our Round Two application, which gave consistency and focus on aims and objectives for the project.

LEARNING

Staff turnover in new or contracted roles should be expected and it is vital that a wide range of individuals across the organisation have ownership of the project to conserve key knowledge as new roles bed in. Clear project terms of reference and a Roles and Responsibilities matrix help to ensure the whole organisation is invested in the project.



“Thank you to all the team at Alexandra Palace Theatre for helping to make our event such a success. The team – from theatre management, security, catering and all the technical staff – could not have been more helpful and were an absolute pleasure to work with. The restored theatre is beautiful and was such an amazing backdrop for our two show finales.”

Pip Haddow, Line Producer, Spun Gold TV

TRAINING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Train staff and create a multi-skilled pool to deliver a high quality visitor experience**

An extensive training programme and consolidation of our staffing structures has supplemented recruitment to increase skills within our staff. During the project we have recruited an in-house HR team, and audited our HR processes including external benchmarking and pay reviews of roles and introducing pay bands. We have also introduced organisation-wide values and behaviours.

We have launched a leadership development programme for our managers, in addition to online and face-to-face training sessions for staff at all levels. These cover: Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, GDPR and specific courses from customer service training for all front line staff to IOSH training for our event operations team. Awareness of access issues for our audience was identified as a priority area for training across front of house and audience facing roles, and a programme including autism and dementia awareness courses was introduced. Following this process, Alexandra Palace was awarded Silver status for our welcome to audiences with disabilities by access charity Attitude is Everything. ■



Restoration & construction

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be in better condition

CONSTRUCTION

From the findings of our soft market testing a traditional two stage Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Standard Building Contract was selected. The two stage process allowed for enabling works to start. During this phase further design, surveys, investigations are undertaken to prepare for a main works offer to be submitted by the contractor.

The construction element of the project was broken down into three phases; the first is the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PSCA) which covers works required from the contractor during the initial stages of the project. This is followed by the enabling works. Thirdly, and finally, are the main works (each phase undertaken under separate contract).

The construction approach is especially important in a restoration project as areas may reveal unexpected issues despite being vigilant with extensive pre-design surveys. It will also further minimise the risks for the second stage of main works and allow design works to continue to a more detailed stage.

LEARNING

Major projects should spend significant time investigating the pros and cons for their project in regards to the construction approach. Failure to select the correct approach could be the difference between achieving your project and not.

However, two stage processes are not currently common with the Design and Build approach currently used on the majority of construction projects. Therefore, if a two stage process is selected, workshops for all involved – including clients, design team and contractor - are critical to refresh everyone on the contractual and procedural difference. By undertaking these refreshers you will save time, money and avoid conflict.

The original scope of the project was made up of four construction elements;

- the BBC Studios
- the Victorian Theatre
- the glazed East Court entrance that connects them
- external landscaping

As the enabling phase commenced, surveys uncovered major challenges which put pressure on the budget and relationships across the project. These included:

- significant increase in levels of asbestos found above and beyond the initial survey findings both in the BBC studios and the Theatre
- pug floor in the BBC Studios
- dilapidated Victorian sleeper walls in the Theatre leading to revised approach

A number of measures were put in place to mitigate where possible against the impact of the challenges, including bringing high risk packages of works forward into the enabling phase and extensive value engineering. This has generated time and cost savings. For example, work brought forward to the Theatre floor proved invaluable when the Victorian sleeper walls were discovered to be in a far worse condition than originally thought and Listed Building Consent was required to remove them. This saved weeks of delay from hitting the critical construction path which would have impacted on opening the Theatre.



As the challenges continued to mount the project team worked hard to adapt and keep the original scope and integrity of the project intact. Critically during this time continuous updates were provided by the Client Team to the board, funders and stakeholders. Due to this they were prepared in advance of the Stage 2 Contract Award for the fact that the Client Team would be submitting a significant change to the original scope in order for the restoration project to remain within available budget.

SCOPE CHANGE

The team reviewed the project analysing where significant scope change could be realised without a domino effect occurring into other areas. This process was called “A Route Map to Affordability”.

Three elements of the project were identified for removal from the scope of the project:

- BBC Studios
- External Landscaping
- Fabric Repair

By de-scoping the project it was possible to safeguard the East Court and Theatre to open in 2018. An analysis of the original three principal project objectives demonstrates that the revised scope still delivered a significant percentage of the original intent of the project.

Throughout the “Route Map to Affordability” NLHF were kept updated with the challenges faced by the project. The team met with the NLHF Senior Case Officer to present the revised project scope. The approach met with initial approval for us to seek permission from the NLHF Board to de-scope the project but within the original funding level. The NLHF Board met in February 2017 and approved our revised proposal for the scheme. They also commended the Alexandra Palace team for their hard work in finding a solution to an extremely complex challenge.

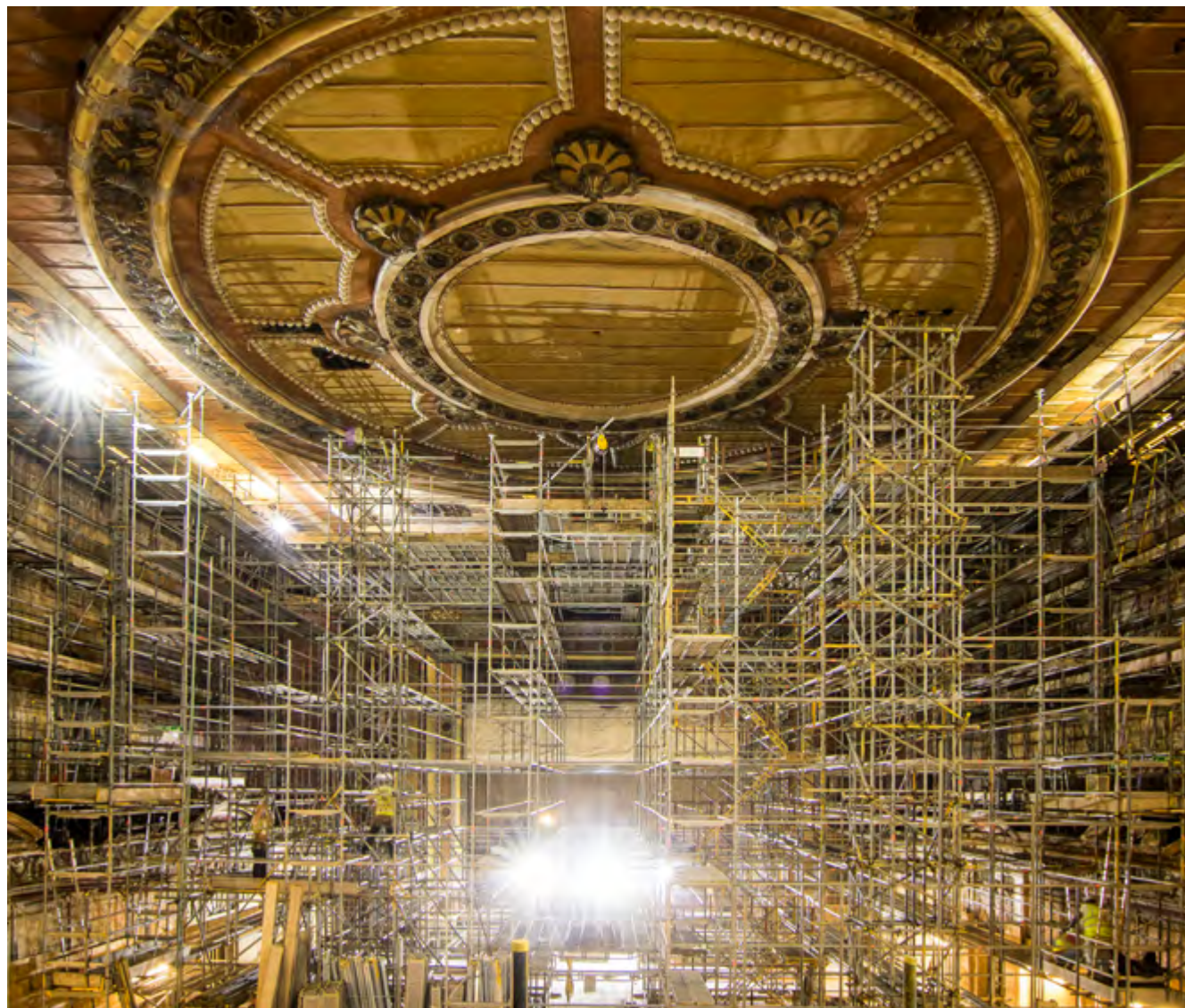
This scope change was significant and had impacts across our team. Critically the Client Team always ensured that however bleak the message all challenges were shared with our board, funders and wider stakeholder groups so that when decisive and bold decisions had to be taken all those involved had been taken on the journey.

This was also critical due to the process of approvals for de-scoping which were understandably significant with multiple funders involved. Had none of these organisations been sighted on the challenges faced those processes would have been difficult and potentially contentious. Due to the transparency with which the Client Team had operated our funders, though disappointed, were supportive.

LEARNING

Heritage construction projects are fraught with challenges, which should be expected. Make sure to maintain relationships with the key stakeholders which you will rely on when these challenges arise. No matter how bleak the news all stakeholders need to be kept regularly updated. This in turn will assist them to prepare for their decision-making processes as and when they are required.





On the commencement of the main works in summer 2017, relationships between the Client, Design and Construction Teams were under increased pressure and it was recognised by principle staff on the project that intervention was required. The main contractor suggested working with a psychologist, to resolve conflict between the teams involved.

All teams on the project welcomed the opportunity and a 'Conflict Resolution Road Map' was produced. This involved all the senior teams coming together in two groups: Client Team in one group and Construction Teams in a second.

To follow up, six principle staff - three from the Client Team and three from the Construction Team - met and workshopped the findings. The output from this process was the East Wing Project Charter.

The East Wing Project Charter produced a seismic shift in the culture and atmosphere of the project. It allowed

for a reset, provided tools for future conflicts and a much needed common anchor for all teams no matter which part of the project they contributed to. We consider this intervention as one of the greatest successes of the project as it allowed us to stay on track and tackle successfully even tougher challenges that were to come. Continuous updates were provided by the Client Team to the Board, Funders and Stakeholders. Due to this they were prepared in advance of the Stage 2 Contract Award for the fact that the Client Team would be submitting a significant change to the original scope in order for the restoration project to remain within available budget.

LEARNING

Prior to the project commencing consider workshops with all key teams to look at a "Project Charter" setting out the Culture, Values, Behaviours, Goals and Tools for Conflict resolution for your project. It will provide an anchor for the project and set the standard in a simple way that doesn't incite conflict.

The impetus on site continued, however the practical completion date continued to be delayed as significant construction challenges arose. The challenge for the Client Team was the need to start the process of handover and preparing the spaces to be performance and public ready. Due to the complexity of this and despite the significant expertise within the team nobody at Alexandra Palace had ever taken possession of a construction site previously.

To assist we enlisted Gary Beeston Events, who had extensive experience including overseeing the refurbishment of the Lyric Theatre on Broadway to become the home of *Harry Potter The Cursed Child*. Gary Beeston Events held multiple workshops with the teams, setting out a priority matrix and critical path for handover. This insight and expertise was invaluable to the team and provided much needed injection of energy.

A further challenge for the team was that we had secured a significant opening programme of events and theatre productions which kept having to be postponed. However, one date that was immovable was the BBC Proms on the 1st September showcasing showcasing Gilbert & Sullivan's *Trial By Jury* with Mary Bevan and Jane Glover conducting. As this date drew closer it became clear that the site would not be completed in time. Cancelling this live broadcast show

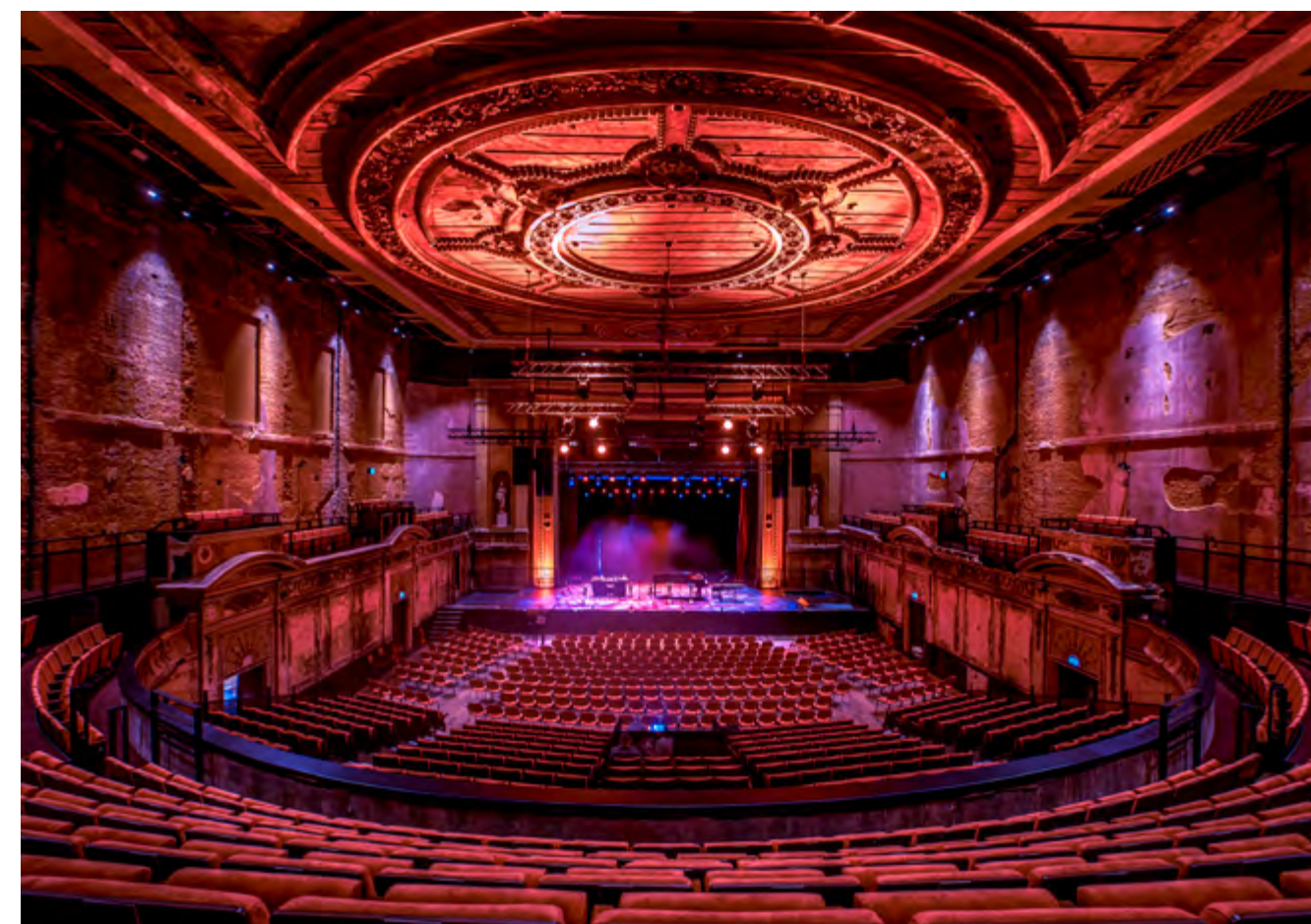
due to construction delay would have been a significant reputational issue for all those involved in the project. Using the Charter and working at a senior level across all the stakeholders and with the assistance of Gary Beeston Events we were able to achieve a public, live broadcast Proms event whilst still a construction site. In fact if you listen to Jane Glover being interviewed on the day by BBC Front Row you will hear the building works in the background!

The show went on and the publicity and public reaction was phenomenal. It was a testament to all the teams embracing the spirit of the Charter and working together to realise a common goal.

LEARNING

Bring in external expertise when required. This may not always be possible to identify in advance and may be a reaction to a particular challenge, but acknowledging when external insight and expertise is required will be invaluable and may save you time and money in the short, medium and long term.

Practical completion was achieved on 24 November 2018, which allowed for an exciting opening programme and Christmas Celebration. ■



New spaces for incredible experiences

PROJECT OUTCOME:

People will have had an enjoyable experience

The project has allowed us to redevelop historically significant spaces in our East Wing, and had a major impact on our programming and commercial capacity.

THEATRE

Restoring and reopening our Victorian Theatre was central to the project. This extraordinary performance space, including historic stage machinery, had been closed for almost 80 years at the time of application. The Business Plan established in Round One set out principles in terms of design, staffing and financial forecasts.

The Theatre was conceived primarily as a receiving house with minimal in-house technical provision. In 2016, we held seating workshops with our in-house events and programming teams and made visits to Theatre Managers, producers and performers at sites across London, identifying requirements for a range of uses (banquets, exhibitions, weddings, live music, theatre). We also contracted consultancy with commercial and subsidised theatre design specialists. Our extensive research into layouts proved invaluable when it came to finalising designs and supplier procurement. This also enabled us to offer firm estimates of build-up and break-down times and staging scenarios, enabling competitive hire fees for our spaces from opening.

LEARNING

During the multi-year delivery of a venue, there is significant scope for market conditions and technology to change between conception and final opening. There is a need to constantly revisit the assumptions, with current, expert advice, in particular for spaces which will be operating commercially.

THEATRE PROGRAMMING

For the Theatre's opening in 2019, our programme included a variety of art forms aimed to appeal to and explore a diverse range of audiences. We aimed to achieve three, multi-week Theatre productions per year with a programme of live music, comedy, spoken word, film and corporate events programmed around those productions. This was complemented by a range of profitable corporate private hires. We did not have funding in place to buy-in shows for the space, and instead looked at other models such as co-production, which involve some commercial risk to achieve a financial return.

Our opening season was vital to securing the Theatre's reputation, through accommodating world-class productions, household names and high profile actors, musicians and comedians. Our work to build a new theatre audience was supported by a strong marketing campaign and theatre strategy. Our campaign "London's oldest new theatre is opening", attracted significant media interest raising public awareness of the Theatre and its fantastic history.



In its first year the Theatre held more than 50 events attracting an audience of over 50,000, these included:

- A co-production of Headlong Theatre's *Richard III* attracting national press coverage
- A season of comedy acts including Michael McIntyre, Alan Carr, Jimmy Carr, Rob Brydon and Romesh Ranganathan
- *The Play That Goes Wrong* held 26 shows of Peter Pan attracting more than 20,000 customers
- The Liam Gallagher film *As You Were* was launched in the Theatre and included a screening of the film followed by a live performance which was broadcast internationally
- Robbie Williams' Christmas special attracted a TV audience of over a million
- A range of book launches, including Philip Pullman's *Book of Dust*
- In-conversation events with Madonna and Sir Ranulph Fiennes
- Our first fashion show, as part of London Fashion Week 2019, with international luxury brand Simone Rocha

In its first 12 months the Theatre exceeded both its revenue and profit targets, achieving more than £1m in revenue.

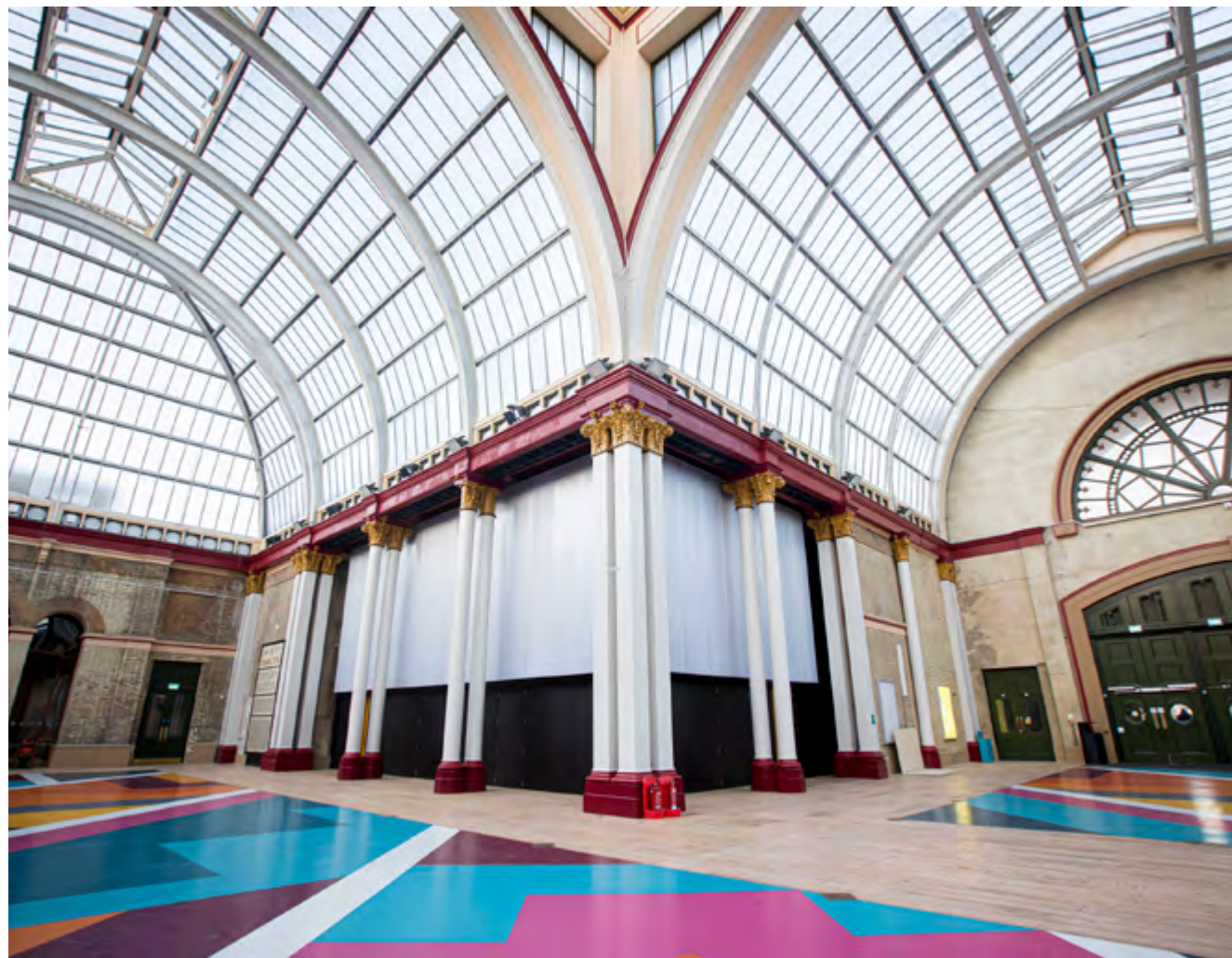
LEARNING

Building relationships with a variety of potential clients in different disciplines and sectors and offering a broad programme has been key to the commercial success of our venue, allowing us to adapt our business model to changing programming trends, and then to the tastes of our audience.



"I was blown away really, mainly because I wasn't aware of it for so many years that I was going to shows [at Alexandra Palace]. I just think it's a very striking venue and doesn't really look like anywhere else in London. The unfinished walls are my favourite part I think, very classy."

James Veck-Gilodi, lead singer, Deaf Havana



EAST COURT

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **New flexible infrastructure in the East Court and Theatre will allow for a range of uses, attractive to future hirers. A pop-up approach in the East Court will allow for appropriate scaling**

The East Court is the Palace's first truly public space, offering free access daily, year round. Forming a physical link between our Theatre, Ice Rink and the BBC Studios, this huge space allows for flexible public and commercial programming and is the hub for our new Visitor Services Team.

Staff workshops were key to establishing a list of requirements for this space, which operationally would have changing and competing demands. This was an iterative process throughout the early design stages. We engaged Soft Landings as consultants to ensure the operational requirements of the East Court were embedded into the RIBA Stage 4 designs.

Flexibility of use in the East Court was prioritised from our initial Business Plan onwards. This was reflected in the placement of power and data services throughout the space to decisions made on furnishing the space. The East Court has very few fixed items, which has enabled it to host a range of events and activities and welcome a variety of organisations into the space.

The space has been designed as the heart of the redevelopment, with flexible structures allowing exhibitions of our heritage and cross-promotion of what else there is to do at Alexandra Palace. It has hosted activities that link our spaces, including our Christmas Carnival which includes theatre programming, ice rink sessions, and large scale community Creative Learning workshops.

LEARNING

Consultancy from Soft Landings on building performance was insightful and we took many of their recommendations on board, but their support would have had greater impact at RIBA stage 2 or 3, as some recommendations were out of scope by Stage 4.

BBC STUDIOS

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **The Studios will hold an exhibition of artefacts relating to the history of television, showcasing historically significant objects, demonstrating how television has evolved and merged into today's mass consumption of information and entertainment**
- **The Baird Studio will focus on invention, innovation and production focussing on six themes – Archives, Titles and Idents, Animation, Sound, Editing and Presenting**

The redevelopment of the BBC Studios and the celebration of Alexandra Palace's pivotal role in the development of television and broadcasting were a key part of the project. The BBC Studios span a third of Alexandra Palace's famous frontage and many spaces have been derelict since the 1980s. Our journey in considering development and interpretation of these spaces has been a major area of learning for the project.

Our original Business Plan for the Studios centred on an interactive visitor experience: a timed, ticketed gallery space with exhibits focusing on the evolution of television, including the Baird Studio – celebrating John Logie Baird's contribution to the making of television; a 'media lab'; and a soundscape corridor exploring our media heritage through digital storytelling. The business case was for the studios to be a year-round visitor attraction hosting both schools visits and individual bookings. A grand staircase would be built from our East Court as a dramatic architectural intervention, and the exterior of the building returned closer to its Victorian appearance. Our plans were altered by discoveries made in the physical restoration and by important learning about our collections and audience.

BBC STUDIOS PROJECT RE-SCOPE

The extent of asbestos contamination uncovered in the BBC Studios was a major factor forcing us to re-consider our plans for the Studios. The discovery, and resulting delays to our project timeline, impacted our budget and we would have been unable to realise the Visitor Experience. Additional research into our collection also prompted us to reconsider our approach. Initial plans for the gallery identified the lack of collection objects held centrally at Alexandra Palace, and outlined a collections plan reliant

on borrowing from external collections and drawing on artefacts held by existing Friends' group. Borrowing plans were complicated by the fact that Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust is not yet accredited as a museum. This had serious implications in securing object loans and project funding for the space. Some loan requests were turned down because infrastructure and security standards could not be guaranteed.

Further research funded through the project showed that even with extensive borrowing, permanent displays were likely to be reliant on text and digital interpretation, which we would be unable to deliver on a reduced budget. The risks to our business model of failing to secure sufficient footfall and repeat visits led to us considering a project re-scope in 2017 in which it was agreed, with NLHF's support, that the Studios experience would be postponed, with funding reallocated to support initiatives including the improved technical specification of our Theatre.

While navigating this major change to the project, significant resource was dedicated to communicating the changing situation to our Board and project funders, in particular NLHF. The re-scope was of course a disappointment to many of our stakeholders in our community, in particular to those most interested in the organisation's broadcasting heritage. More could have been done to explain to these groups why it was not possible to undertake the work in the BBC Studios, through more frequent communication, public engagement and discussion during this period. Having resource dedicated to project communications within our team would have helped us to ensure that our community was engaged at this point.



LEARNING

When the scope of a development projects changes, a comprehensive communications strategy should be prioritised which considers the impact of change on all stakeholders, from project funders to community groups and the general public.

INTERPRETATION OF THE BBC STORY

Following the project re-scope, extensive work was done to consider methods of interpreting the rich history of TV broadcasting across our existing spaces and programme. Our media history has inspired much of our learning programme and has led to a strategic partnership with the BBC itself. This was celebrated when the BBC Concert Orchestra played in the as yet unfinished Theatre in September 2018 as part of the Proms.

Alexandra Palace also played a key role in the BBC's 80th anniversary celebrations in 2016 and allowed TV stakeholders to demonstrate historic equipment to coincide with the launch of our initiative with Google Arts & Culture.

BBC history is now at the heart of our Creative Learning programme, with new media and broadcasting learning projects created in partnership with BAFTA Kids, Middlesex redLoop Innovation Centre, Discovery Learning and many more. Programmes have explored the development of the multi-media sector, focusing on concepts like fake news, both today and in our history, with leading immersive theatre makers CONEY. Many of our projects also focus on the STEAM, informed by the technological innovations of early television. For example our Little Inventors competitions encourages children to design, invent and build. Winning entries were made into prototypes by MA Product Design Students and showcased in an exhibition within our Creativity Pavilion and a model engineering event. Some of the historic equipment from Alexandra Palace Television Group collections are displayed in the East Court and used in object handling sessions with schools.

“I worked in the BBC Studios, making programmes for the Open University, from 1970-1977. Keep up the good work!”

Visitor feedback through our portal in the East Court



EAST WING LEARNING SPACES: THE CREATIVITY PAVILION AND WELLNESS CENTRE

Following the project re-scope and the removal of the BBC Studios Experience from our plans, including dedicated spaces to accommodate our Creative Learning activity, we adapted our plans to ensure that learning was centre stage in the new development. The project allowed us to leverage major new support to develop dedicated learning spaces within the East Wing that cater for different parts of our community: our Creativity Pavilion and our Wellness Centre.

The only major installation made in our East Court – into a colonnaded area in the north section of the space – is our Creativity Pavilion. This bespoke learning space opened in February 2020 following a major grant from the Sackler Trust and support from Hewlett-Packard for the technological fit out. The space hosts Creative Learning workshops for all our communities, including creative summer camps for children and meetings of our Young Creatives Network.

We also welcome activities brought to us by the community, including explorations of global women's cinema and meetings of Friends groups and community organisations. The structure, designed by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studio, was informed by input from a range of community groups in the design stages to ensure designs met our core principle of flexibility for all and ensuring we could meet the needs of different client groups. For example, its large scale door panels, have multi-purpose use, from

mounting exhibits to opening out the space for free-flow movement into the East Court.

The Transmitter Hall, a historic BBC television opening onto our South Terrace, was transformed into our Wellness Centre in 2020. A large space dedicated to Creative Learning for older people, people with dementia and disabilities. Through inkind support from Tarkett flooring and AkzoNobel (Dulux), and together with funding from Kirby Laing Foundation and Bruce Wake Charitable Trust, we have been able to redesign the space with a decorative scheme sensitive to people with sensory processing and physical disabilities. The space will host our growing learning programme focusing on creativity and well-being, including the Wellness Café, Dementia dance projects and the Coffin Club. ■



Interpretation & communication

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be better interpreted and explained

PERSONAL HISTORIES

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- **Personal memories will be captured and incorporated in the Interpretation Strategy to truly reflect the People's Palace**
- **New interpretation and signage, permanent and temporary displays, online materials, schools programmes, digitisation of collections, oral history projects and a programme of cultural and community events will be developed**

We took a methodical approach by first defining what interpretation means in the context of a 150-year-old entertainment complex. Our interpretation strategy draws on stories of people and activity that have made the Palace's history, relating stories directly to current activity, and underpinning our charitable purposes to provide recreation, education and entertainment. Our focus was on explaining and demonstrating the significance of Park and Palace, and engaging staff, the public and contractors with the Palace's heritage to communicate value and relevance to their lives. Strategy was informed by visits to comparable theatre and exhibition venues and consultation with staff involved in similar initiatives at sites including Bletchley Park and Wilton's Music Hall.

Respondents to our Activity Plan survey demonstrated a strong appetite to learn more about the history of the building. The most popular themes and stories included our architecture, the history of building, entertainment history, war time at the Palace and the history of the local area. Key interpretation themes agreed with the NLHF at the outset of the project were focused on our history in the development of popular entertainment, including Mass Entertainment, Innovation, Spectacle and Popular Culture. These themes have been central to the interpretation project.

The wealth of archive material discovered and digitised during the project has given us a rich catalogue of stories we can tell. We have also uncovered stories by building relationships with members of the public, special interest groups, Friends groups and through volunteers to begin to establish engaging content. We formed alliances and partnerships with colleagues at Open University, EMI Archive Trust, National Science and Media Museum. Working on key anniversaries with local communities such as our engaged group of regular Ice Rink users has opened up a rich avenue of heritage themed content that we are still exploring.

The public have engaged with oral histories through our Creative Learning programme, East Court displays, blogs, social media posts and Google Arts & Culture stories. Through our Creative Learning team, we have been able to increasingly focus our projects on stories from our local communities.

Personal stories have become central to the way we communicate our heritage. The story of television pioneer Isaac Shoenberg has become key to 'The Race for Television' interpretation. Discovering oral archive material on the aeronaut Dolly Shepherd and being able to hear her describe her parachuting exploits at Ally Pally has been another successful way to bring the Palace's story to life.

Staff and contractors were engaged through regular presentations by the Interpretation and Curatorial Team showcasing heritage discoveries made during the works, and gradual engagement with existing Alexandra Palace staff about the stories being uncovered through all staff presentations and blog posts. We also began the practice of using the Palace's social media to start telling stories to visitors and wider public.

SIR ISAAC SHOENBERG: TELEVISION PIONEER

There are many claimants to be the 'inventor of television', among them John Logie Baird, Vladimir Zworykin, and Philo Farnsworth. In truth television was the culmination of a number of inventions, by different people, in different countries. However one man whose key contribution to the creation of television deserves wider recognition is Sir Isaac Shoenberg. His scientific confidence and commitment to his exceptional team launched the first full television service from Alexandra Palace.



ISAAC SHOENBERG CASE STUDY

One of the most influential innovations of the 20th century and an untold story of Ally Pally is that of Sir Isaac Shoenberg. As Director of Research at Marconi-EMI, he assembled and led the team of gifted scientists and engineers to develop the world's first electronic high-definition television system, winning the Race for Television over the Baird Television Company at Alexandra Palace in 1936. The system was then adopted by the BBC as the basis for the world's first public television service. Among the team was Alan Blumlein who invented binaural sound and the first films with a stereo soundtrack. The EMI-tron camera's ability to capture images outside the studio revolutionised the potential to relay live events to the public. Without this ground breaking technology we would not have seen the Queen's Coronation 67 years ago.

Researching this story and its relevance for the heritage of the BBC studios at Alexandra Palace, resulted in being able to digitise the Shoenberg family archive. We recorded Isaac Shoenberg's grandson Peter talking about his memories of a very private and unassuming man who was a music lover, and an inspiration to his team. Using these assets we were able to build relationships with RTS (the Royal Television Society) Archive and EMI Archive Trust. For our Google Arts & Culture platform, an online exhibit of this story was created and featured in the "Once

Upon a Try" theme – A journey of invention and discovery with CERN, NASA, and more than 100 museums around the world, launched at The Science Museum on 6th March, 2019. This gave the story global reach.

For our Google Arts & Culture platform, an online exhibit of this story was created and featured in the "Once Upon a Try" theme – A journey of invention and discovery. It featured alongside exhibits from CERN, NASA, and more than 100 museums around the world, and launched at The Science Museum on 6th March, 2019.

LEARNING

Recruiting experts in specific fields of interpretation was useful in early design stages, but in the long-term it was important to have people with a range of interpretation skills (i.e. collections, curation, museums), as part of the in-house team to ensure that heritage became integral to work across our organisation.

LEARNING

We have learned to be more inclusive and collaborative by accepting, bringing in and valuing other voices for our interpretation of Alexandra Palace heritage.

ONSITE INTERPRETATION

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- **The East Court interpretation will relate to Alexandra Palace's role in the history of popular entertainment, including the BBC and the Victorian Theatre**
- **A Theatre installation in the East Court will focus on eight themes that are particular to the context of London theatres**

Our original onsite interpretation plans included a BBC themed café and a timeline of the Palace. The original project also included a dedicated static theatre installation in the East Court, which planned to use the architectural language of theatre – drapery, scenery flats, rigging - to tell the Theatre story. This would be supported through research and relationship-building with those who held individual archives and skills/expertise relating specifically to theatre.

We realised during project delivery that preserving the atmosphere and flexibility of our spaces was an important consideration alongside the installation of major physical interpretation and we started to think differently about how to tell stories. Instead of the BBC café, interpretation activity and theatre stories delivered in silos, they were combined in a large-scale interpretation installation in our East Court. This was a dynamic frequently changing and ever-topical way to tell multiple heritage stories for visitors to our new spaces and give a sense of our timeline. The structure has been reconfigured several times since the space opened, including forming part of our Little Inventors exhibition, a STEAM project created by children.

EMBRACING INTERPRETATION TECHNOLOGIES

This change in approach also enabled us to consider incorporating a range of new technologies to deliver our interpretation plans. For example, during the project, public ownership of smart devices has continued to increase, making existing technology such as virtual and augmented reality experiences more suitable and affordable as a means of interpretation. Meanwhile increasing public receptivity to and awareness of online collections and multi-media interpretation meant that we had to learn quickly, experiment and create new partnerships, to ensure we were adapting to a changing interpretation and communication environment. Theatre interpretation was delivered using 3D scanning

of our historically significant under-stage machinery by Lincoln Conservation, allowing this important space, not usually accessible to the public, to be viewed virtually. Our Theatre's story has also been incorporated into a range of online galleries hosted through the Google Arts & Culture platform.

We also began to make contact with innovators and developers in new media technology, particularly in augmented reality, which led to an exploration of this type of experience in the interpretation of heritage objects. We marketed Alexandra Palace's archive and heritage to smaller tech companies, looking for rich content and a large potential user group to harvest data sets. This concept of beta testing for mutual benefit and low financial investment has laid the groundwork for several projects including augmented reality experiences embedded in heritage broadcasting objects, including early televisions, virtual reality explorations of our archive and a virtual tour of our basements. We believe we have found a sustainable new model for Alexandra Palace to be able to explore and present its history in exciting and innovative ways.

LEARNING

Our focus on digital interpretation increased through this multi-year project as interpretation technologies have developed. Monitoring and active participation in the tech sector has been vital to ensure that our interpretation at and since opening has reflected the latest innovations.

LEARNING

Heritage can be a rich source of content to organisations developing new technologies. When considered as part of a strong interpretation strategy, prioritising the user experience and heritage storytelling, this route can be an exciting path to creating digital interpretation at the cutting edge of current technology.

Wherever possible, we have also used the building as a canvas for interpretation. We transformed metres of hoarding around site during to tell our story and effectively engage with the public. This attracted attention on site and gave us both confidence and evidence that the public had a large appetite to learn more about our story. It also attracted new volunteers and donations from people who engaged with our timeline, or discovered a personal connection to an aspect of our history.

There was little communications and marketing budget set aside at both stages of the project which meant that little resource could be assigned to communicating the project's journey to our local stakeholders and beneficiaries, many of whom had been invested in safeguarding the Palace's heritage as volunteers during periods of neglect and dereliction preceding the NLHF's support. The project would have benefited from greater public support had there been a bigger budget assigned to communication, and possibly a part time dedicated marketing and communications officer to the project, alongside the community engagement and co-creation projects undertaken by our Creative Learning team.

LEARNING

Project communications are important to help raise awareness, engage and involve both invested stakeholders and new audiences. This in turn can generate additional support for the project. Dedicated project communications should be prioritised from the outset in future projects.

THEATRE INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNITY USE

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Non-intrusive forms of interpretation for the Theatre including guided tours will convey rich stories of significance, including its rare under-stage machinery**

Public tours have been central to our interpretation and public access strategy from the beginning of the project. Early in the project's development phase, before the construction had started, regular history tours were delivered, which were often fully booked. This gave the team good indication of the appetite for learning about the Theatre and we have continued to build on early history tours and delivered them throughout the lifetime of the project – from pre-NLHF to construction and beyond. These have always been hugely popular: the opening weekend in 2019 saw over 1,000 people through the door to look at the space. Theatre tours are now a key part of Christmas Carnival and other events year-round. The tours are now led by our growing pool of volunteers, who each receive comprehensive induction into the history of the spaces. Many volunteers



are drawn from our Friends groups, who championed the heritage of the Theatre and wider Palace during the years when the spaces were derelict.

LEARNING

Costs of opening up high specification spaces like our Theatre for community groups can be challenging. It is important to consider how certain groups outside of commercial hires can access spaces in cost-effective ways and to consider raising additional funding to cover this usage.

In addition to tours, we've created opportunities for people to see the space, at a range of price points and at different times of day, including daytime cinema for young families. We have embedded the theatre in our Creative Learning programme, to ensure that the range of communities we work with feel that this is their space. Key projects include; Haringey has Pride, a borough-wide festival focused on LGBTQ+ residents; Rum, Lime and Liming, a Windrush day celebration for Caribbean Elders with music, dance and poetry; Rhythm Stick, a club and DJ night for, and curated by, young people with disabilities; and the Biblio-Buzz awards ceremony bringing together 1,000 children from Haringey in the space to hear from contemporary children's authors and vote for their favourite new children's book. ■

Uncovering our heritage

PROJECT OUTCOME: Heritage will be identified/recorded

ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION

At the beginning of this project in 2015, Alexandra Palace held a very small collection of historic objects and archival material. In 2016, as part of works on the BBC Studios supported by this project, we discovered an archive of over 5,000 items in a locked storage unit, including original Victorian plans for the building and decorative scheme, records of the reconstruction following the 1980 fire, original programmes for early events at the Palace and an extensive photographic archive of the building's development. This discovery instantly changed the nature of our collections management and was a landmark shift in how we share our fascinating past.

Our original intention had been to collate and improve our archive through work with partners, and utilise their collections of stories. Finding the archive radically altered our curatorial and interpretive project, moving us from collating external archives to preserving and making accessible our own archive. Having our own archive has reaped huge benefits. We are once again 'owners' of

the Park and Palace's stories, rather than relying solely on partnerships. Uncovering historic objects has also helped us to value the materials the organisation produces today, which will become part of the Palace's heritage. This has been one of the prompts for the introduction of our new Digital Asset Management Systems (DAMS), preserving and making accessible today's photography, marketing and organisational development documentation for the future.

Uncovering the archive has also led us to consider in-house collections management, storage, appraising, conservation and rehousing as well as digitisation. Many key collections management processes are now in progress, and a priority for the future is the development of suitable rooms on site for long-term archive storage. The archive is now a thread running through all our activities, with interpretation of archive materials giving authentic context to our present day work and creating an emotional connection for our visitors.



“This collection is now core to Ally Pally’s story and has contributed to the growing sense of identity and pride in the heritage of the Park and Palace. If we hadn’t been able to take advantage of the circumstances, the archive would almost certainly have been lost or given away to a repository more able to house it.”

Kirsten Forrest, Alexandra Palace Interpretation Manager



ARCHIVE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Appoint an Archivist**

To staff our archive, NLHF funding allowed us to recruit a new Regeneration Manager with previous experience in museum settings and collections/archive management. This role is now titled Curatorial and Interpretation Manager and focuses on interpretation elements of the project, working closely with consultants on story-telling and eventual fit-out of spaces. We also brought an experienced Consultant Curator on board for a long period to advise on our collections and create our Collections Development Policy draft, which helps us handle donations of historic objects related to the Palace from the public and friends. We originally intended to recruit a Digital Archivist in 2016, to begin our digitisation project later that year, however the archive discovery prompted us to put recruitment on hold while we reassessed priorities.

We recruited the Archivist role in 2018 and were awarded an additional scoping grant from the National Archives which provided funding for a Consultant Archivist, advising on practical and strategic issues. With this resource in place, we assessed the archive and produced a report with a prioritised action plan for tackling the rehousing and cataloguing, which gave us clear steps required for archive development and management in the next 5-10 years.

ARCHIVE PARTNERSHIPS

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **We will work in collaboration with partner archives to redirect visitors to the relevant external sources where further research can be pursued**

We intended to work with a number of partners that we identified early on in the project's design development stages, including the Alexandra Palace Television Society, the BBC Archive Centre and the BECTU History Project. Partnerships have been slow to come together except where they are focussed on a particular symbiotic relationship or project. The process of building trust and working relationships has been incremental, through small collaborations and finding common ground. Local history societies and friends' groups provided useful links and starting points for contact with other organisations and stories. We now have 65 strong archives and interpretation partnerships.

LEARNING

Being sensitive and open to collaborative initiatives can be time-consuming but can lay a good foundation for future partnerships.

DIGITAL SCANNING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Digitisation will protect delicate original materials whilst providing access for a broader range of audiences and returning content of cultural significance to the site**

Digital scanning was part of our project from the outset. We worked with external organisations to digitise and share key heritage items from Alexandra Palace's history. Following the archive discovery, a large scale digital scanning project was undertaken in partnership with Google Arts & Culture. Securing this partnership gave us access to world-class scanning equipment and allowed us to open our archive to international audiences through Google's online collections platform. The scanning process involved induction training for a large group of volunteers and setting aside a dedicated room for processing the materials discovered.

Our Archivist has also led on research and stakeholder consultation and recommendations for the procurement of a new Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) now used as a shared resource by our Marketing and Communications team and Sales team, making retrieval of historic and archive images much quicker and easier. The system also offers public access to our archival material. The Alexandra Palace Archivist orchestrated training for key staff on DAMS, leaving a strong legacy, with archive volunteers continuing to appraise, sort and document records and valuable archive material for upload to the system. ■

LEARNING

The scanning project had huge benefits in preserving and giving public access to materials. However, had we had more support in place and a longer timeline to secure the Google equipment, we would have first catalogued materials, then digitised them in order to better prioritise the process.

LEARNING

We had difficulty early on convincing collections owners to lend us or give us their collections. It takes time to build trust with external organisations and stakeholders. The BBC relationships and partnerships with other museums, academics and universities has helped to secure our reputation.

LEARNING

Volunteers have been of huge value to this aspect of the project, particularly archiving and research tasks. The knowledge they have developed and the time they are able to donate to this programme makes them a valuable resource for the organisation and the archive.

LEARNING

Archive and collections has enabled more collaborative working across teams and helped to add integrity and relevance to some of our key events, such as Fireworks Festival, Great Fete and Kaleidoscope Festival, as well as our Creative Learning Programme, Fundraising Strategy and Communications Strategy.



Skills & volunteering

**PROJECT OUTCOMES: People will have developed skills;
People will have volunteered time**

VOLUNTEERING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **A wide range of volunteering opportunities will be available including stewarding and guiding, visitor services and assisting with learning sessions – it is estimated we will attract c112 new volunteers**

At the start of the project, some ad-hoc, arms-length volunteering opportunities were available through some of Alexandra Palace's Friends groups including Friends of the Park and Friends of the Theatre. When NLHF support was secured, we recruited a part-time Volunteer Coordinator to help us develop volunteering opportunities across the organisation, formalise the volunteer recruitment process and create a volunteer policy.

A dedicated in-house volunteering programme was launched in September 2017, in tandem with volunteers leading guided tours for an Open House event. In 2020, we currently have over 130 volunteers, with more than 60 offering their time on a weekly basis.

Volunteering was initially centred on roles within the Creative Learning Department, but has grown in areas such as Fundraising, Collections and Archives, Park, Visitor Services and stewarding for theatre events. Volunteers have become a valued and vital part of the wider Alexandra Palace team and intrinsic to running some of our key in-house events, such as our community summer festival (the Great Fete) and the front of house and visitor experience aspects of the theatre.

In recent years, our focus has shifted towards, co-creating opportunities with volunteers. For example, Alexandra Palace volunteers have shaped and launched a tour programme and made extensive input into the Volunteer Handbook and recruitment process. They produce blog posts for our website, a weekly volunteer newsletter and are currently working on their own magazine. They have also undertaken research into further potential volunteering opportunities across the organisation and instigated a training programme for Alexandra Palace staff about how best to work with volunteers.



“[I enjoyed] being part of such a friendly, fun and supportive team - such a good community vibe and it was great to meet all of you as well as share the experience with the young people on the day!”

Volunteer, Big Schools Day 2019

LEARNING

A co-creation approach to working with our volunteers has proved invaluable both for the volunteers, who feel empowered and embedded in the organisation, and for our teams as volunteers are more engaged, committed and have brought fresh ideas to our programmes.

Recruiting a diverse volunteer pool reflective of the demographics of our local areas has proved challenging. We are constantly looking to address this, and as such have created opportunities that are more appealing to a range of people, for example recruiting young people for the Great Fete and Big Schools programmes. Partnerships with grassroots volunteer organisations including Inspire, Volunteer Matters and City and Islington College have also enabled us to widen our appeal. Our Young Creatives Network continues to help shape and refine all aspects of provision of the Palace's programmes across the organisation, including volunteering. The introduction of supported volunteering has been a very positive addition, helping us to develop new Creative Learning projects for disabled people and rare work-based opportunities for young people with SEND.



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Working with partners, our Activity Plan Programme will develop the skills of c364 people – accredited opportunities and informal training included**

Our original Activity Plan outlined training provision as part of the construction process, delivered by the main contractor, Willmott Dixon. This was a mixture of placement opportunities and apprenticeship provision. Not all targets were met, particularly with regard to apprenticeships, but all trainees had a positive experience.

Similar to other Activity Plan work streams, further skills development opportunities were identified organically rather than sticking to the rigid targets and skills that had been identified early on. Training opportunities have been provided through all our programmes including volunteering, work with older people and schools. Placements have primarily been university students, drawn from Central School of Speech and Drama, University of BREDA in the Netherlands, Oxford University and University College London. Supported volunteering through Harrington provided life chances for young disabled NEETS to work with our grounds maintenance contractor John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance and cleaning with Team Works. A steady programme of placement opportunities delivered by Creative Learning have been extremely positive, for example an MA student from University College London found permanent employment within the Fundraising Department.

Rhythm Stick was a Creative Learning project that worked with groups of NEET adults with disabilities to help them develop skills to deliver a club night for adults with disabilities. This programme has prompted us to deliver focussed staff training for Visitor Services on being a welcoming and inclusive site, which contributed to our Attitude is Everything award in 2020. It has also helped us to secure funding to purchase specialist equipment to support disabled visitors across site and played a part in the development of the Wellness Centre project, which offers work, training and development around creating a dementia friendly visitor experience.



We identified a need for a stronger focus on partnerships with local colleges in order to deliver training to young people in line with their education. We have created work experience with links to Further Education and Higher Education colleges drawing our in-house expertise and world-class facilities. We now regularly partner with Barnet and Southgate and City and Islington Colleges, among others, offering training which contributes to vocational courses. ■

LEARNING

In future projects, we recommend a holistic and centralised approach to managing and monitoring apprentices. This should all sit with one team, be embedded into organisation early on and be led by HR.

LEARNING

Our fledgling Creative Learning team could have included apprenticeship opportunities from the outset, offering experience to young people in an arts and heritage organisation outside of the more traditional routes.

LEARNING

Think about adding clauses to contracts with service providers, clients and partners about supporting the work of the organisation through offering training, shadowing and placement opportunities.

“Learning from professionals in the industry is a truly valuable experience”

Haringey Sixth Form Volunteer at our Palace Uncovered performance



SENSORY SUITCASE CASE STUDY

Sensory Suitcase is a volunteer-led programme which takes Alexandra Palace and the extraordinary people connected with it to older people within care home settings. The programme benefits both health and wellbeing by connecting volunteers with people with dementia and their carers in a non-hierarchical, playful environment. In 2017, our first five volunteers received training in dementia awareness, exploring a range of approaches to delivering multi-sensory workshops, using creativity, non-verbal communication and object handling. Then, in pairs, the volunteers delivered bespoke reminiscence sessions in residential homes with only two residents at a time and one members of care staff.

“B started turning the handle of the small music box, her face slowly changed and a big smile came across her face. She opened her eyes and looked upward and we could see she recognised the tune, she was turning the handle faster and faster and smiling so broadly. It really was so amazing to see the change in her, it really made my day. We went on to all five of us singing Que SeraSera! Wonderfully heart-warming.”

- Carer, Priscilla Wakefield home, 2019

The Sensory Suitcase contains a number of multi-sensory objects, which help to tell the story of the Dolly Shepherd, who began her working life as a waitress at Alexandra Palace, and through a series of chance encounters became a crowd drawing parachutist. Participants are encouraged to touch, feel, smell and respond creatively to a range of objects to bring Dolly's story to life. These objects include engraved wooden music boxes and thumb pianos, view finders and photographs, a menu from Dolly's time, teas and coffee, plants, magnetic boards and a parachute for a finale where participants are encouraged to imagine Dolly's descent back down to earth. The programme has trained 26 volunteers, offers regular volunteering opportunities for seven volunteers and has reached 87 older people.

“The Sensory Suitcase project gave me an opportunity to rediscover how much I love working creatively with others, sharing and exchanging stories. The project was definitely instrumental in my recent decision to get back to acting and boosted my confidence to do so after a break of more than 13 years.”

- Project volunteer

Creative Learning

PROJECT OUTCOME: People will have learnt about heritage

Our Creative Learning programme, combined with the growth of our volunteering programme, has changed the way our organisation is perceived by local people, stakeholders and funders. Engagement through these programmes has helped to engender passion and a sense of ownership of the Palace which is vital for the long term future of Alexandra Park and Palace, alongside the physical restoration of the heritage assets.

Creative Learning was in its very early stages at the point of application for Round One NLHF funding, delivering a small schools programme of single visit local history workshops for primary schools. Following the recruitment of our first two learning roles through the application, NLHF Round Two funding kick-started our Creative Learning function, with two further learning roles financed by the project. Our Activity Plan consultation exercise identified target groups, organisations and activities early on in the process facilitated by Tricolour with Haringey-based cultural organisations such as Border Crossing and Haringey Shed. The plan was also informed by visits to other organisations to gather views and learnings.

LEARNING

It was hugely valuable to talk to learning teams from other organisations who were six to 12 months ahead of us in order to examine examples of routes to growth.

ACTIVITY PLAN

Owing to the length of the project, some aspects of our original Activity Plan were not fit for purpose by the time it came to delivering it. The Activity Plan evolved under constant review in regular consultation and team “thinking days” to reflect our growing relationships and learning about our community. A critical friend for the department was appointed in March 2018

following the approval of the new Head of Creative Learning’s Evaluation Strategy with the NLHF mentor. This created regular valuable reflective points steered by someone outside of the organisation, whose remit was to highlight best practice in consultation and evaluation practices. Thinking day workshops with key stakeholders became a regular feature of the programme allowing planning beyond the day to day delivery. We identified a number of key areas absent from the original Activity Plan:

- comprehensive programme for young people aged 16-24
- comprehensive programme to target young people in a more inclusive way and create opportunities for young people in leadership and management roles that are under represented
- lack of focus on co-curation in the design of projects
- few opportunities to celebrate the Theatre through community usage
- didn’t address the introduction of a dedicated space for learning

Alongside the natural evolution of the Activity Plan according to the circumstances outlined above the budget has been protected throughout. Looking forward to the future of our Creative Learning programme beyond the NLHF we also recognised the need to adapt the Activity Plan to build relationships with other funders, identifying growth areas such as outdoor learning in the park. We have attracted five new funders to the scheme since 2018, including BBC Children in Need, Arts Council England and Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation. These relationships will be central to allowing the programme and posts to continue.



“I really enjoyed this amazing experience. It was so inclusive and there was an opportunity for everyone to get involved and join in”.

Pupil, Big Schools Day 2019

SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

PROJECT OUTPUT

- Rooted in its community, the project will create a new gathering space and experience, involve neighbouring schools and community groups

In 2019 local school pupils visiting the Palace peaked at approximately 4,000. This substantial growth was fuelled by the addition of large scale multi-school events held in the Theatre and East Court, catering to over 1,000 children and young people. This included Big Schools Day delivered in partnership with BAFTA Kids, which brings together Key Stage 2 and 3 learners to hear about opportunities in the film sector and Biblio-Buzz, our cross-borough reading challenge.

Alexandra Palace is uniquely equipped to produce large-scale learning events enabling the Creative Learning department to develop the reach of the programme and meet industry experts from across the creative sector.





BIBLIO-BUZZ CASE STUDY

Biblio-Buzz: The Alexandra Palace Children's Book Awards is a reading challenge which inspires over 1,000 Key Stage 2 and 3 children each year to read and vote on a shortlist of the best contemporary children's literature.

The project is created in partnership with school librarians across Haringey and culminates in an awards ceremony in our Theatre, offering children the chance to come face-to-face with shortlisted authors and hear from literary celebrities including poet Michael Rosen, John Agard and Waterstone's Children's Laureate Cressida Cowell. The programme aims to increase literacy among young people by developing reading for pleasure, cementing reading habits and promoting the significant

wellbeing benefits to young readers. Biblio-Buzz, now in its third year, has grown exponentially. The National Literacy Trust have now recognised the importance of the scheme and have become official partners in the 2021 programme.

The Creative Learning team recognise the potential for Biblio-Buzz to build new audiences for their programme and grow author-led events in the theatre. Through a major new partnership with Haringey Libraries Service and with support from Arts Council England, we delivered intimate, cross-arts sessions in each of the borough's nine libraries inspired by the Biblio-Buzz shortlist in Spring 2020. This has engaged hundreds of children in some of the borough's most deprived areas.

“The benefits have been enormous... Almost every child in my class read at least one of the books and many read all six. Many children read a type of book they wouldn't have tried before, and many reluctant readers became engaged.”

Teacher, Biblio-Buzz 2019

CREATIVE LEARNING ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **A greater understanding of community needs will enable the delivery of tailored activities in partnership with local groups and organisations**

Our Creative Learning programme now reaches further than our original schools remit, engaging over 10,000 local people each year through activities onsite, online and in communities. Our approach has been to support people to explore their own creativity in a heritage setting. We aim to create groups which can meet regularly at the Palace, giving them a sense of ownership over our historic spaces and encouraging them to explore their stories, and ours, and to create relevant work for their communities.

Our work with older people and people with dementia includes our Sensory Suitcase project, while Little Window Therapies took performances by professional dancers and comedians to care homes during lockdown in 2020. We have also created spaces for partners to deliver grassroots activities for older people to combat isolation such as Coffee and Computers, which supports elders to connect online; and regular Singing for the Brain group singing sessions, led by professional singers to combat the onset of Alzheimer's. We have worked with 2,000 older people since the inception of the project. In recognition of our work in this area Alexandra Palace was chosen as the launch venue of Haringey's Dementia Friendly borough status in 2019.



We launched a programme of work for disabled people with our Rhythm Stick project in 2019. Haringey's first club night made by and for disabled people, created through a 12 week training programme and culminating in a nightclub attended by 200 people in our Theatre. Our steering group for the project included local partners working with adults with disabilities, as well as individual representatives from within the community ensuring we met the needs of our audience. In 2020, we will produce our first dedicated SEND Big Schools programme, connecting students in SEND schools with Para Dance UK.

We aim to develop activities that engage young people in different ways outside of formal education. For example, we launched our Wild in the Park programme in 2019, which takes children and young people outside of a traditional classroom environment and enables them to design projects that leave a legacy within their community, such as arts trails and making work for community festivals.

We formed our Young Creatives Network and Youth Programming Team in 2020 as a platform for our work with young people, bringing together over 30 young people for regular meet-ups to discuss creative opportunities for young people in the borough and creating new work for Alexandra Palace's main stages, online and in their communities.

LEARNING

Onsite activity is crucial to engaging audiences with the physical spaces, however delivering programmes offsite in the community has also yielded learning opportunities.

LEARNING

More work is needed to aid our understanding of trends and diversity issues affecting the volunteering and learning landscape in the local area. A priority for the future will be mapping key issues to address, working with our community partners.

LEARNING

For some programmes, participants have demonstrated a strong desire to remain involved and engaged, but we have yet to develop a programme that can welcome them back to site. Some legacy programming for particular groups is needed.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Partnership working has been essential to the growth of the team and development of our programmes. Each of our programmes is created in partnership with participants, council services and local grassroots organisations to ensure that our provision is flexible to needs within the area and is part of the communities we serve. Some projects, including Rhythm Stick, have dedicated steering groups which guide development and referrals to the schemes. We have also created programming partnerships with national arts, culture and media organisations to ensure that we are bringing sector-leading creativity to life for our communities.

- **grassroots partners include: My AFK, Haringey Shed, Bruce Grove Youth Club, Harrington**
- **cultural partners include: BBC Learning, Discovery Education, BAFTA Kids, the Guardian Foundation and the Literacy Trust**
- **Haringey council partnerships include: Libraries, Youth Justice Service, Young Carers Service, Children Service**
- **consortium partnerships include: Haringey Education Partnership, Haringey Cultural Education Partnership (Haringey Creates), Dementia Alliance, Haringey Music Hub,**
- **Higher and Further Education Partnerships include: Haringey 6th Form - ADA, CONEL, Central School of Speech and Drama**
- **local cultural organisation partnerships include: Jacksons Lane, Bernie Grant, Bruce Castle, Collage Arts, Groundswell**
- **We have strong partnerships with all local care homes**

LEARNING

We have been able to assist smaller, local cultural and heritage organisations to reach larger audiences through partnership programming in our spaces with BAFTA, BBC and Discovery Education, among others.

LEARNING

The increasing importance of our Park in the Creative Learning programme has shown us the outdoor spaces also need to be dedicated to our work with communities. This is likely to be a priority development area for the future.

CREATIVE LEARNING SKILLS

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Staff will have increased knowledge of the importance of the Palace and its activities. A skills audit will be undertaken for staff to inform CPD opportunities and to ensure the team are motivated and well-equipped.**

Initial skills audits within the Creative Learning department were carried out in 2017. A wider organisation audit identified gaps in knowledge and skills of certain user groups including older people and SEND, which the Creative Learning team helped to redress by providing training for customer-facing staff, including volunteers, with Dementia-friendly and Autism training. Members of the Creative Learning team continue to engage in regular CPD activities to ensure they increase their skills, knowledge and keep abreast of best practice. This includes attending Family Activities Conference in Liverpool, regular sessions with London Museum Skills, plus training programmes, round tables and workshops with Flourishing Lives Coalition.

INTEGRATION OF CREATIVE LEARNING IN THE ORGANISATION

At the outset of the project, we had not understood the far reaching impact of the new Creative Learning department on the culture of the wider organisation. Key projects traditionally delivered by the trading company such as The Great Fete, Alexandra Park and Palace Fireworks Festival and Christmas Carnival have evolved to a more collaborative approach with increased engagement opportunities for local communities and volunteers. With Creative Learning providing training across the organisation on working with communities new collaborations have emerged. Autism training with staff working in The Phoenix Bar and Kitchen resulted in a collaboration between the Catering Department and Creative Learning, in the form of the We Are Valued Equally (WAVE) Café pop-up.

Welcoming new and different communities to the Park and Palace has opened up a greater dialogue between the organisation and the people it serves. For example, an initial conversation with a local Haringey Pupil Referral Unit, who lacked green spaces for their learners with social, emotional and behavioural problems was instrumental in the development of our outdoor learning programme. Our 196-acre park is an essential outdoor resource in a busy urban setting with potential wellbeing benefits for communities and through the Wild in the Park programme. The Creative Learning team are working to ensure this incredible space benefits our most vulnerable young people. ■



WILD IN THE PARK CASE STUDY

Wild in the Park provides on-going therapeutic support, learning and fun for young people, between the ages of 5-16, with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This outdoor learning project is delivered through regular events, performances and after-school and holiday clubs across our park. It is funded through a significant three-year funding agreement with the Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation. The project was designed through extensive consultation with young people, Haringey Pupil Referral Unit, the Wild Trust and local stakeholders.

40 pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs attend the four week programme, while our summer school engages a further 20 young people. Participants work with specialists from a range of fields including artists, art therapists, life coaches, forestry school educators and wild life/conservation experts. Activities include designing public art trails, creating sensory trails for people who live with mental health issues and people with Dementia and their carers. There are also conservation initiatives, such as monitoring bird migration, building insect hotels, den-making, seed bombing, wildlife garden, growing fruit and vegetables.

All activities mirror the National Curriculum, but engage young people in informal ways. We aim to benefit young people's health and wellbeing by enabling participants to bond through shared experiences, develop resilience and make life-long friendships. Work created through this programme also leaves a legacy for future park users and communities to enjoy.

‘We’ve seen significant shift in the pupil’s behaviour back at school’

- Teacher



“At first the young people were reluctant and apprehensive about working in the park but they gradually opened up to the environment. As the session continued they became noticeably more curious about their surroundings and relaxed.”

- Workshop leader

Adapting for our environment

PROJECT OUTCOME: Negative environmental impacts will be reduced

PROJECT OUTPUT

- Maximising low energy and passive opportunities where practical through measures including insulating roofs, replacing windows and insulating walls

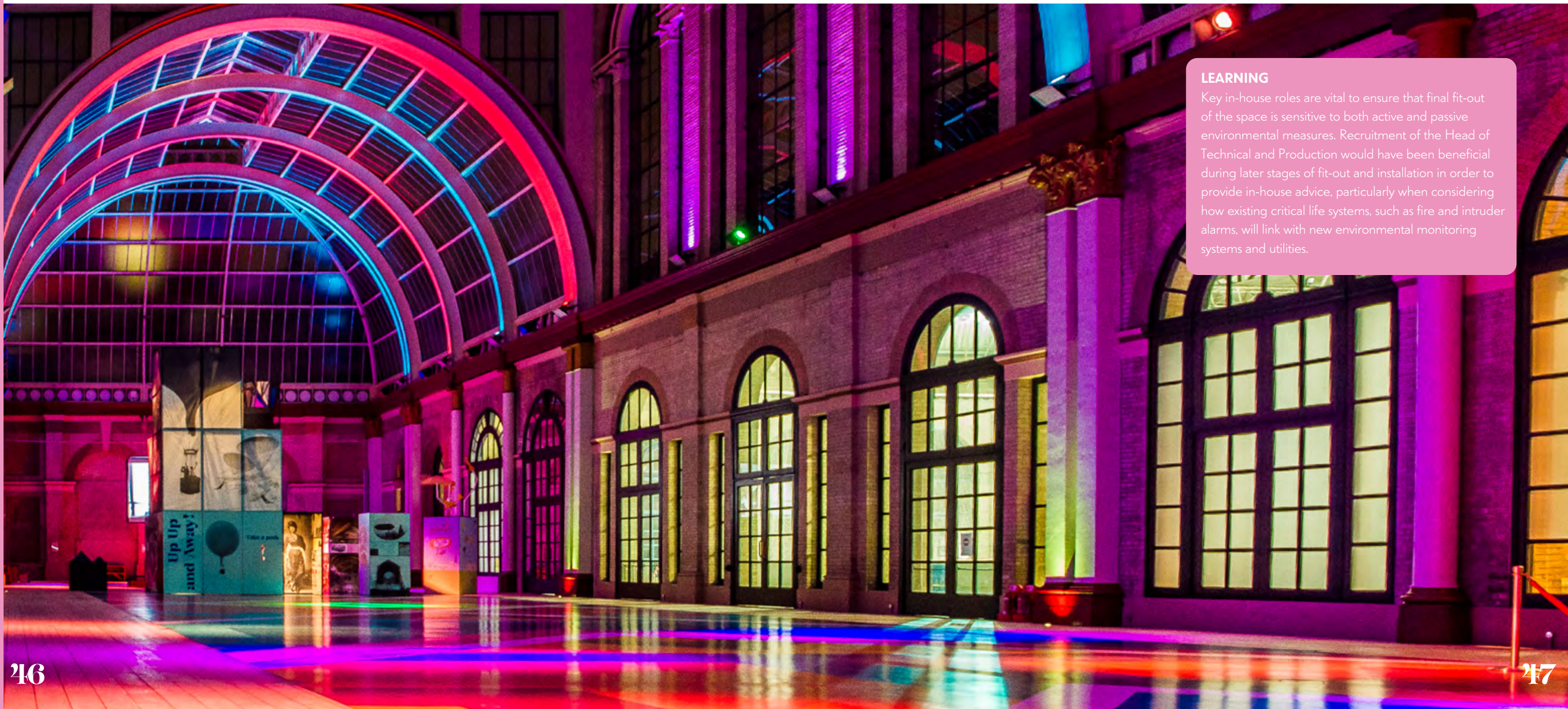
We set out to ensure that the restoration process significantly improved the long term energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of the building. The key principles were to:

- introduce passive measures such as improving levels of thermal insulation to the building fabric, maximising use of natural ventilation, avoiding use of artificial cooling and daylighting spaces where appropriate
- introduce efficient mechanical and electrical systems, including high efficacy light sources and lighting controls, daylight and occupancy light switching, demand-led ventilation and high efficiency mechanical equipment. This includes introduction of energy meters and provision of local controls so spaces can be used independently from each other

Our listed status meant there were limitations to interventions, and balancing heritage conservation and energy efficiency improvement priorities proved challenging at times. We were able to deliver on the majority of proposed interventions which have had a marked impact on our operations and energy efficiency. We made some compromises, for example, we agreed to keep heritage glass in the upper level windows in the East Court, as part of our value engineering process. ■

LEARNING

Key in-house roles are vital to ensure that final fit-out of the space is sensitive to both active and passive environmental measures. Recruitment of the Head of Technical and Production would have been beneficial during later stages of fit-out and installation in order to provide in-house advice, particularly when considering how existing critical life systems, such as fire and intruder alarms, will link with new environmental monitoring systems and utilities.



Developing our audience

PROJECT OUTCOME: More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage

PROJECT OUTPUT

- We will aim to attract 130,000 visitors per year to the new spaces; visitors to the East Court will benefit from free exhibitions

Our target of 130,000 annual visitors was to be achieved through a combination of Theatre events, general tours, workshops and activities in the East Court and Studio experience. As part of target setting, we identified a set of twelve different event types for our Theatre, ranging from theatre to spoken word, to diversify our audience and spread risk. Following the project re-scope which removed the BBC Studios from the project in 2017, this target was reduced.

On opening weekend in November 2018 we saw 10,000 people through the East Court doors, including over 1,000 visitors to Theatre space. Throughout 2019, 50 events took place in Theatre, with over 10,000 tickets sold. The majority were joining us to see programming which had not previously been staged at the Palace, including theatre, opera and choral music.



“Never raise the cost for schools in the local area. We have no money but the experience is great for our kids!”

Teacher, West Green Primary 2019

In the first year since opening, our Creative Learning programmes engaged over 10,000 people in activity across our site, including:

- children and young people (2,200)
- schools (4,000)
- people with disabilities (200)
- older people (2,000)
- young people for whom English is a second language (800)

Throughout this project we have prioritised engagement with the diverse communities living locally and, in our schools programme alone, almost 50% of school children participating are from BAME backgrounds, while 30% speak English as a second language.

Our programming regularly includes events developed with local communities, including Back to Black our black history tour; Culture Bubble: Arts and Activism, created by our Young Creatives Network to explore identity politics in light of the Black Lives Matter movement; Haringey Has Pride, a co-created play exploring local LGBTQI+ history; and Portraits for Posterity, an exhibition of portraits commemorating national Holocaust day.



We are delighted by the significant development in the size and range of our audiences. We are now working on strategies to continue that growth and encourage repeat visits, through continued development of our Creative Learning programme. This will be done via programming by our Young Creatives Network across the site, through maintenance of high-quality programming across art forms in our Theatre, and by further activating the East Court through a permanent food and beverage offer and additional family programming. ■

LEARNING

Regular, free animation of public space will be key to engaging new audiences, alongside ticketed programming. Our East Court has huge potential for developing our audience in future.

Transforming our area

PROJECT OUTCOMES: Local economies will be boosted; Local areas/communities will be a better place to live, work or visit

BOOSTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

PROJECT OUTPUTS

- **The project will have wide-ranging economic outcomes, both direct and indirect as a result of the capital investment and income generation through the creation of a visitor destination in addition to the existing Alexandra Palace offer**
- **Other benefits: a strengthened brand and reputation; improved attractiveness to other investors/ funders; potential development for complementary incomes and experiences to add to the overall Alexandra Palace offer**

The addition of new revenue and programming streams through our Theatre, East Court and Creative Learning programmes, in addition to the increased audiences for our work year-round, mean that, in 2019, Alexandra Palace contributed an estimated £167million p.a. to the economy. We drew an audience of over 700,000 event ticket buyers across the Park and Palace and we had over three million visits to the Park. This benefits the wider heritage and cultural sector, hospitality and retail sector and communities.

Every £1 spent on our heritage and charitable purposes generates £46 in the local economy (BOP Consultants 2016, inflation adjusted 2020, CPI). Since the introduction of our Theatre and Creative Learning teams, we now support over 20,000 professional opportunities in creative and heritage industries p.a. through our supply chain.

STRATEGIC VISION AND BRAND REFRESH

The East Wing project kick-started the development of a 25-year Vision for the Park and Palace, which will act as a framework for future development decisions. The project was a catalyst for other work streams including a site-wide brand refresh, a new website, repositioning Alexandra Palace as a charitable heritage asset and a place for great experiences. The entire site has been documented in a Heritage Significance Appraisal, which collates historic expert assessments of areas of the Palace, providing a single resource on which to base future decisions on the use and development of our spaces. Combined with the successful delivery of the East Wing project, our reputation has been significantly strengthened and our long-term funding opportunities are broader, providing the foundations for a more sustainable future. ■

LEARNING

It is important not to underestimate the value of a resourced and comprehensive communications strategy from outset through to delivery. Our project would have benefitted from greater investment in communication about the organisation, project and outcomes to take all our stakeholders on the journey with us.

LEARNING

Baseline data is key to success before a major project. Reviews of economic impact and community perception before beginning the project allow clear measures of success at both mid-point and completion. This is important for both reporting and for demonstrating benefit in approaches to new funders.



Strengthening our organisation

PROJECT OUTCOME: Organisations will be more resilient

FOOD AND BEVERAGE IN THE EAST WING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Create new income stream (Food & Beverage) for Theatre**

The original Business Case for the project was modest in its food and beverage ambitions. The East Court would provide a simple seating space for c.40 people designed as a BBC café 'set' serviced by a mobile and easily adaptable crew catering vehicle offering coffee, teas, freshly cooked pastries, paninis and freshly made sandwiches. There was a strong push at the time of developing the Business Case for the East Court F&B offer that strongly differentiated itself from that of other catering locations on site, in particular the onsite pub and the Ice Rink's Café. The Business Case stated *"The new offer will be developed so that there is no impact on the existing businesses – which was the driving factor in choosing a simple offer, reflecting the BBC storyline and supporting the Studios experience in a distinctive way."*

As the project evolved and adapted and the BBC Studios element of the project was postponed, it became increasingly apparent that the original concept, which had been concentrated on providing F&B offers to those coming to the BBC Studio experience, with limited dwell time, would not meet the needs of those attending the Theatre, who were looking for a substantial pre- or post-show meal. This also dovetailed with general footfall onsite significantly increasing due to high profile events and new attractions in the park.

We proactively sought to develop a feasibility study to ascertain the investment that would be required to provide a fully functioning restaurant / café in the East Court. However, the estimated costs of £1m to £1.2m were not affordable within our budget. Therefore we had to adapt the original concept by providing "pop-up" catering vans which could be scaled up and down depending on the footfall. Though this provided an adequate offer, and was true to the original Business Plan, it did not provide the visitor with exceptional offer we hoped to achieve.

LEARNING

Food and Beverage is a critical revenue driver for all visitor and entertainment attractions. Don't allow one element of your project to dictate the overall approach. Be ambitious.



MIXED MODEL APPROACH TO INCOME GENERATION

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **There will be a net contribution to the Trust's deficit, with profits made from the Theatre and the Studios supporting the long-term aspiration of financial sustainability. The project will add value to the business but not as additional risk to the overall financial position.**

A key Business Plan principle was a mixed model approach, which created new income streams through a range of activities including:

- **the BBC Studios as a chargeable ticketed visitor attraction, attracting up to 90,000 users per year**
- **food and beverage income development through a Theatre Bar, a café bar in the East Court and further food and beverage offers for weddings and events – delivered in-house, supported by a new finishing kitchen**
- **Theatre revenues, predicated on a baseline of 85 events per annum in year four of the project across 12 business types**

The deferral of the Studios element made a significant impact on original revenue projections set out in the 2015 Business Plan, so work was undertaken in-house to refine and refresh the Business Plan. The omission of Studios experience put additional pressure on the Theatre element of the project. It also became apparent that the East Court would play a greater role than first envisaged, leading us to refresh the brief for the East Court, elevating its role as the central hub for the project, with Creative Learning and customer experience at the heart.

East Wing project areas were incorporated into the organisation's overall client sales business plans: to develop and grow income streams from commercial activities through a sales strategy centred on the aims and objectives of our clients, positioning us in front of our competitors.





FUNDRAISING

PROJECT OUTPUT

- **Project will be a catalyst in attracting investment to other parts of the site including the hotel and sponsorship**

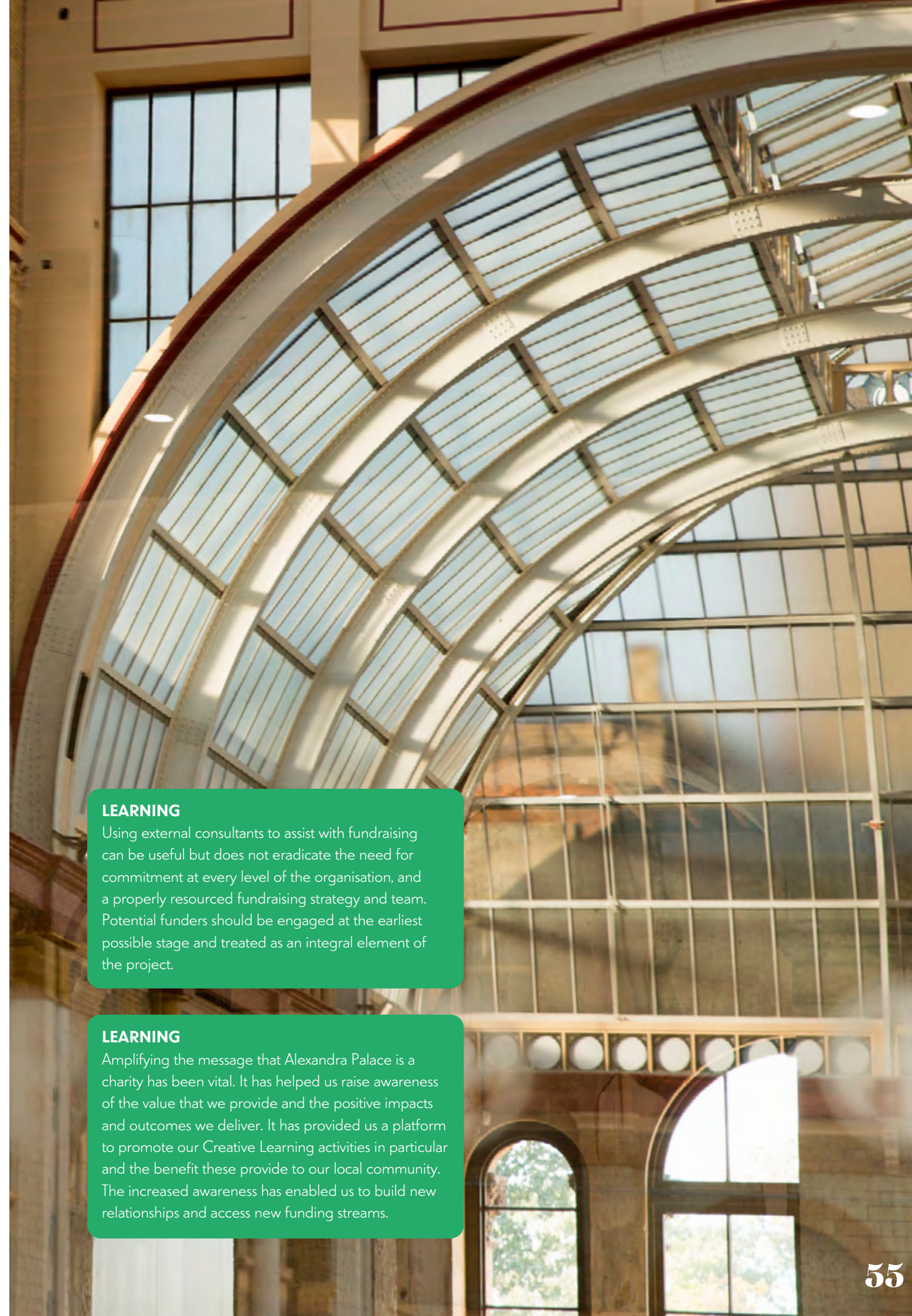
At the start of the project, we committed to raising £1 million from voluntary sources as part of the overall East Wing Restoration Project budget. With no in-house fundraising expertise at that time, we employed an external fundraising consultant to develop a strategy, with a single member of staff employed to help administer and implement it. They led on initial approaches to charitable trusts and foundations.

Our public fundraising launched with the Make a Future Memory appeal in summer 2015. In July 2016, following the appointment to the staff team of a Fundraising Director and a review of progress to date, we launched the Back to Life campaign. It was focussed on the Theatre, as this aspect of the project had captured the imagination of the public. We included a Name a Seat option and Donor Board, proven initiatives borrowed from other theatre restoration projects. Work to communicate our charitable status was key to unlocking public fundraising. Our appeals served an important role in this effort, as did interpretation across our building and website, focusing on the story of the Trust and building.

The public campaign raised over £250,000 while applications to trusts and foundations raised over £750,000. Major new funder relationships have been realised through this project. 16 new trust and foundation relationships included American Express Foundation, J. Paul Getty Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation, The Sackler Trust, Tottenham Grammar School Foundation, Kirby Laing Foundation, Arts Council England and BBC Children In Need, among others. In addition, corporate supporters included One Circle Events, See Tickets, AkzoNobel, Hewlett-Packard and Tarkett flooring. The relationships developed will be integral to the further development of the Palace and continuing support for our Creative Learning Team.

The public profile raised during this project has also been essential to the support we have received during the Covid-19 pandemic, with another £250,000 raised, by December 2020, in public donations since the first lockdown in March 2020.

Fundraising is now recognised as a core competency of the Trust in a way that it wasn't when the project began. Alexandra Palace employs a small team who achieve a great deal with limited budgets, and our supporter base is steadily growing. We have relied heavily on our volunteers who have played an integral role in our fundraising efforts, in particular, supporting donation processing and research. ■



LEARNING

Using external consultants to assist with fundraising can be useful but does not eradicate the need for commitment at every level of the organisation, and a properly resourced fundraising strategy and team. Potential funders should be engaged at the earliest possible stage and treated as an integral element of the project.

LEARNING

Amplifying the message that Alexandra Palace is a charity has been vital. It has helped us raise awareness of the value that we provide and the positive impacts and outcomes we deliver. It has provided us a platform to promote our Creative Learning activities in particular and the benefit these provide to our local community. The increased awareness has enabled us to build new relationships and access new funding streams.

Conclusion

As we conclude the East Wing Restoration Project, the heritage of Alexandra Park and Palace has never been better understood and valued. The project has created recognition that Ally Pally's stories are hugely important as a record of our country's leisure and entertainment heritage, and have relevance to understanding and decoding today's society. NLHF support has restored architecturally significant sections of our building, allowed us to conserve a previously undiscovered archive, and collect and showcase personal histories from figures in the Palace's history.

NLHF support has helped us to transform engagement with our heritage for diverse communities, designing programmes with and for local people so that the Park and Palace are open to everyone, as they were originally conceived to be. This has provided this major heritage asset a fresh lease of life for new audiences today, and for the next generation.

Meanwhile, the project has provided a catalyst for the modernisation of the organisation, to be fit for purpose, to care for the assets more effectively in the future. Despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in the last year, our organisation remains healthy and resilient, ready to build on this foundation. There is no doubt that, without this project, the importance of Alexandra Park and Palace would have continued to be undervalued, and that key parts of our heritage would have been lost. The continuing decay of our building and neglect of our assets, would have reduced potential avenues for local support and funding, putting the site's existence into question. Instead, we have a renewed building, confidence in our future plans, an engaged local population and a new platform for our heritage. ■

