

Press Release

26 November 2009

### Procrastination over the Hippodrome as winter threatens theatre's future

The Derby Hippodrome Theatre is entering its second winter, still neglected and unprotected, prompting concern by a local action group that severe winter weather will further harm this historic building. The Chair of Derby Hippodrome Theatre Fund, Joan Travis, said:

“Since the building was exposed to the elements in March 2008, caused by works carried out under the ownership of Christopher Anthony, neither the owner, nor the City Council, responsible for ensuring that the listed building is kept in good repair, has attempted to rectify the situation. Patience is running out for all the supporters who wish to see the Hippodrome restored as a theatre”.

The Derby Hippodrome Restoration Fund has indicated to the City Council how the theatre could be restored and brought to use in the 21st century by a dedicated Trust. The Fund is in close communication with organisations like English Heritage and the Theatres Trust, who have offered support and advice for the project. It has also contacted the appropriate Secretary of State to deal with the owner's planning applications. These would entail the building being mostly transformed into a multi-storey car-park, which the council stated was not needed three years ago, let alone now that the city has under-utilised parking at the Westfield shopping centre. These applications were submitted in April 2009 and after several unexplained delays are now not due to be heard until January 2010.

The Derby Hippodrome Restoration Fund is asking for no further delays to the decision on the future of the theatre, and looks to the new Chief Executive of the Council to listen to the wishes of the people of Derby to restore the theatre, thereby regenerating what could be a vibrant area of the city.

The recent terrible storms in the West of the U.K. show what damage can be done to even modern infrastructure; the Fund urges the Council to take action to ensure the Hippodrome survives the winter. With each delay caused by the City Council, the theatre becomes more vulnerable.

Joan Travis continued: “The City Council has powers of compulsory purchase to acquire the building. There must be an end to the procrastination; but most urgently and immediately, the Council must install protective covering and adequate barriers now to prevent further deterioration from the weather to this unique and historic building.”

END

#### Notes to editors

See [www.derbyhippodrome.co.uk](http://www.derbyhippodrome.co.uk); email us at [action@derbyhippodrome.co.uk](mailto:action@derbyhippodrome.co.uk).

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