

Alexandra Palace

Public consultation key messages

27.04.12

Panel 1

'Tomorrow's Ally Pally'

Welcome to the Alexandra Palace Public Consultation

Over the past few months the Trustees of Alexandra Palace have been developing a 'spatial masterplan' for the future use of the building; looking at the whole site and how people might use it and move around it in years to come

Why do we need to 'regenerate' the Palace?

Currently, the Palace does not generate enough income to support its maintenance and there is a significant need for investment in facilities. As a consequence, much of the Palace is underused. So we have been developing a regeneration strategy which includes a design-led masterplan for the whole Palace.

What does the masterplan deliver?

Our vision for the long term future of the Palace and Park is to:

- establish the Palace firmly for the long term as a major entertainment destination
- realise the community and learning potential of the Palace and Park
- make the Palace more financially self-sufficient and reduce our dependence on public subsidy
- sympathetically conserve the Palace and Park for future generations

Our plans turn these objectives into design proposals for different parts of the Palace.

What stage are we at?

We are currently at the early stages of the regeneration process, in which we are exploring a whole range of related projects for each area of the Palace. These projects may be delivered to different timescales, depending on the priorities assigned to them and the availability of financial and commercial partners.

The masterplan sets out a long term, design-led strategy and direction of travel against which the projects can be assessed.

Panel 2

What is the Public Consultation about?

We would like to share our ideas with you, at this early stage, because Alexandra Palace is the People's Palace and we want to hear your views.

Your support is essential if we are to make progress with our ambitious plans. Whether you live locally or further away, whether you are a member of an interest group or an event organiser, we would welcome your feedback and comments. This will help us to prioritise our ideas as we move to the next stage of the regeneration process.

Panel 3

Who are we?

Alexandra Palace and Park are owned and managed by a charitable trust, created by an Act of Parliament in 1900. Our charitable objectives are to maintain the Palace and Park to be used as a place of public resort and recreation and for other public purposes.

Since 1980, Haringey Council has been the sole trustee of the Trust, and holds on-going responsibility for its administration. The members of the board are locally elected Councillors, and representatives of the local residents and user groups. The Trust is committed to driving forward the regeneration of the Palace and the maintenance of the Park.

Our team

The Trust has brought together an expert team to advise us on the options including:

- Terry Farrell and Partners, the world-renowned architects and urban designers
- WSP, the global transport advisors
- Donald Insall Associates, the historic building and conservation specialists

Panel 4

What are we planning?

We have identified six "Big Ideas" for transforming Alexandra Palace. These are each set out on a separate panel.

Not all of these initiatives will happen at once. Some may take a number of years to realise. Our intention is that each of the Big Ideas can stand independently of one another and be taken forward on their own. However, like pieces of a jigsaw, they will all fit together over time to create a picture of the Alexandra Palace of the future.

Our aim is to make the Palace more financially sustainable. By using spaces to generate income, we will be able to ensure that the Palace is self-sufficient and is conserved for future generations.

How are we proposing to conserve the historic building?

A Conservation Management Plan was prepared by world-class experts in the field at the beginning of the masterplan process, to guide and advise on proposals for the future use of the building. It identifies the parts of the building which are most historically significant as

well as the elements which are most vulnerable. You can download the Conservation Management Plan from our website.

Panel 5

1. Improving your first impressions

When Alexandra Palace first opened, there was a grand sense of arrival by tram and train or along a tree-lined avenue leading to the Palace. Today many of these arrival points have been lost or degraded and first impressions as you arrive at the Palace are not that memorable. We would like to recapture that sense of arrival.

We are looking at ways to improve the eastern and western approaches to the Palace. Possible ideas include changing the East Court car park and improving the road layout and terraces outside the Palm Court. This would create two new public spaces, providing natural meeting points for visitors and the local community.

Reducing the impact of the road

In Victorian times the access to the Palace was on the north side of the building and the South Terrace connected directly to the Park. Today a busy road divides the Palace from the Park.

We plan to make changes to the road in order to reduce its visual impact and to improve the connection between the Palace and the Park. We are exploring the idea of a shared space in front of the Palace for cars and pedestrians. Similar schemes have been successfully introduced elsewhere in London, including Covent Garden and, more recently, Exhibition Road in South Kensington.

Panel 6

2. Upgrading the entrances to the Palace

When the Palace was designed, back in the 1870s, the building had entrances on all four sides. Today, only two entrances exist, to the Palm Court and the East Court, and the building lacks a grand central front door.

We are exploring ways to upgrade the entrance spaces for visitors including new planting, water features and seating in the Palm Court and East Court. We are also assessing the accessibility of all the Palace entrances to ensure that they are DDA-compliant.

We are planning to make better use of the main entrance on the South Terrace, underneath the magnificent rose window. This would provide direct access to the Great Hall for visitors from the South Terrace, making it a more active space and strengthening access to the Park.

Panel 7

3. Making it easier to move around inside the Palace

Originally the East and the West wings of the Palace were linked together by four grand corridors, looking out onto landscaped courtyards where the West Hall and Ice Rink are currently located.

We are looking to improve circulation in the Palace by re-opening the unused corridors and refurbishing the existing ones. This will provide a number of benefits:

- It will allow visitors to move more freely around the Palace, without having to go outside
- It will significantly improve the use of the building for public events
- It will open up areas of the building which are currently quite inaccessible
- It will allow spaces such as the Theatre, Ice Rink and Main Halls to operate independently
- It will mean visitors can continue to enjoy using the Palace when there are large events taking place

Panel 8

4. Upgrading the Main Halls

In recent years, Alexandra Palace's reputation and success as a venue for live events has grown significantly, attracting artists such as Jay-Z and Florence and the Machine and key sporting events such as the Masters Snooker.

In order to capitalise on the growth of live events we are looking to upgrade the Main Halls and backstage areas to make them more attractive to organisers and provide an even better experience for visitors.

The Great Hall

The Great Hall is a fine example of a Victorian concert hall and it houses the magnificent Henry Willis organ, one of the largest in the country. It is a firm favourite of many event organisers and performers and is one of the largest standing venues in London, with space for more than 10,000 visitors. However the Great Hall requires significant investment to maximise its potential.

As a minimum we plan to upgrade the lighting and make repairs to the glass roof to enhance the experience for visitors and to improve the backstage areas for performers.

Should further investment become available, we are also working up more ambitious design options for the Great Hall. We are considering the introduction of colonnaded aisles with mezzanine balconies which would provide more flexible servicing, better acoustics, controlled daylight, zoning of space and would improve energy efficiency. We are also looking at the important conservation aspects of the Great Hall such as the rose windows and the organ.

Panel 9**5. A Hotel in the Palace**

As Alexandra Palace continues to grow and becomes a more successful destination, there is likely to be demand for a hotel on site to accommodate performers, organisers, contractors and the public.

We are examining the feasibility of a new hotel in the Panorama Room space with a potential lobby off the Palm Court and guestrooms looking out over the skyline of London. The hotel would be built behind the existing Victorian façade of the Palace in order to keep the symmetry of the building. It would make use of the imposing West Tower, which has been derelict for many years.

The public spaces of the Hotel would be open to all, providing restaurant, bar and meeting room facilities overlooking the South Terrace.

Panel 10**6. Opening up the derelict spaces**

Many of the most fascinating and historically significant parts of the Palace, such as the Theatre and BBC Studios, are closed to the public as they are in poor structural condition. The Trust is committed to finding funding solutions which will bring these spaces back to life, providing public access and appreciation as well as learning opportunities for local schools colleges and the community.

The Theatre

The Theatre is one of the hidden treasures of Alexandra Palace. Opened in 1875 it originally seated audiences of 3,000 and still has a complete set of Victorian stage machinery.

A feasibility study is currently being undertaken by theatre specialists to assess the potential viability of re-opening the Theatre as a performance space for community and commercial use. In addition to the main concert hall we are looking to introduce theatre workshops and performance studios as part of a wider learning programme with educational partners.

The BBC Studios

The BBC Studios, at the South-East corner of the Palace, have a unique heritage as the birthplace of public broadcast television. The BBC Tower with its iconic mast was the site from which the first high-definition television programme was transmitted in 1936.

We are exploring the potential for a Broadcast Learning Centre within the BBC Studios as both a local community and visitor resource. The range of possible uses subject to availability of funding might include a broadcast archive and learning centre together with working studios, use as a film and TV school, arts cinema, café and bar.

In the longer term, one of our strategic goals as a Trust is for the BBC Studios to be recognised as a World Heritage Site.

The Basement

Underneath the Palace there is a large basement, now derelict, which was used in the past for storage and kitchens. During World War I parts of the basement and the Great Hall were used as a refugee, and later an internment, camp.

Our plan is to refurbish the basement to provide facilities to support the operations at ground floor and above, like the hotel. We are also exploring the potential of opening up the basement arches underneath the South Terrace to provide café and restaurant spaces and a variety of other community and creative uses.

Panel 11

What will it cost?

Realising the project to regenerate Alexandra Palace will require significant investment over time. The total cost, if compared with the market rate for refurbishing buildings of its size, is likely to be tens of millions of pounds, spread over time. But each element will be judged on its merits and will only proceed if there is a sound business case and it can be financed.

How are we going to fund it?

In taking forward our regeneration proposals we will be looking to obtain finance via investments and loans from public and private bodies as well as grants. We will pay back loans with additional income generated from new uses.

Investment by private sector partners may require security in the form of a lease over parts of the Palace. This may involve further public consultation at a later stage.

How long will it take?

Given the ambitious and forward-looking proposals in the masterplan, these ideas will take a number of years to achieve. Our intention is to prioritise those projects which will most readily attract investment, improve the performance of the Palace for live events, or realise the biggest community benefits.

Panel 12

What will be the economic and wider benefits of the regeneration?

The regeneration of Alexandra Palace will have a positive impact on the local community and its economy:

- New employment and business opportunities will be created, during restoration and construction work, and in running new facilities such as the Theatre and the Hotel
- Enhanced leisure and entertainment facilities will increase economic activity in the area, benefitting not only Alexandra Palace, but also local suppliers, businesses and the local community
- Learning and education opportunities will be generated around enhanced heritage and ecological interpretation in the Palace and Park respectively
- There will be additional local benefits from increased tourism

Panel 13

What will happen next?

When the consultation process finishes at the end of June 2012 we will review all of the feedback we receive. Your views will be important in shaping the next stage of the masterplanning process over the summer and assigning priorities to the various projects. The conclusions from the consultation process will be fed back later in the year via our website.

Based on the public response to the consultation, we will be able to assess the support and demand for the Trust's ideas. We intend to approach potential partners for the event business and hotel operations later in the year. We will also be in discussion with potential donors, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, later in the year.

What will be the future role of the Trust?

The Trustees are fully committed to their continuing stewardship role, upholding the need to deliver community benefit and public access as well as caring for the place and running a sustainable operation.

In order to meet its charitable objectives the Trust will remain as landlord of the Park and Palace. We will continue to run parts of the Palace and the Park directly and working with commercial and cultural partners in the events or hotel business where appropriate opportunities arise.

Panel 14

We'd love to hear your views

You can register your opinions in a variety of ways:

- Fill in the Freepost survey available at the Ally Pally exhibition and Haringey Public Libraries
- Feedback online at www.alexandrapalace.com/tomorrowsallypally
- E-mail us at tomorrowsallypally@alexandrapalace.com
- Share your thoughts on twitter @yourallypally or facebook (#tomorrowsap)
- Attend one of our discussion meetings where you will have a chance to put your view to Trustees and staff of Alexandra Palace

Register your support

- If you would like to register your support for the Alexandra Palace masterplan or be kept in touch as the project develops please visit us at www.alexandrapalace.com/regeneration or email us on regeneration@alexandrapalace.com

Consultation questions

1. How often have you visited Alexandra Palace in the last year?
Please tick one box only
Never 1-3 times 4-7 times 8+ times

2. Please rank the following in order of importance from 1-8

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Improving first impressions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Upgrading the entrances to the Palace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Making it easier to move around inside the Palace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Upgrading the Main Halls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Building a Hotel in the Palace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Opening up the Theatre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Opening up the BBC Studios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Opening up the basement |

3. Please identify how far you agree with the following statements:

Overall, I am supportive of the Alexandra Palace proposals	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Trust should look to fund the regeneration programme from a variety of possible sources including public, private and non-profit institutions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Once the proposals are realised, I am likely to visit Alexandra Palace more frequently	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

4. Please add any other comments (open box)