

## Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2010 between the Barbican Centre and Barbican Residents

### Present from Barbican Centre (BC):

Graham Sheffield, Artistic Director (GS)

Leonora Thomson, Head of Communications (LT, Chair)

Lorna Gemmell, Communications Manager (LG, Minutes)

### Item 1

#### Cinema relocation update

LT provided an informal update on the proposed relocation of cinemas 2 and 3:

- The planning and design work is continuing.
- The BC now have AHMM (who worked on the Barbican Foyers scheme) on board to work on the signage and wayfinding design. They will be working with NBDA (the appointed cinema architects) in taking the design to stage D.
- The programme schedule has changed a little: the Stage D design report needs to be approved by a number of CoL committees in September, before being submitted to the Planning Department.
- Removal of Podium corridor – the BC understands the residents' general support for its removal – and while it is not in the current cinema works plan, it something the BC are very aware of, despite the financial challenges there are in order to take forward. **Action > LG to feed this again into the design process**
- The BC explained that there have been initial, tentative discussions around the removal of the zig zag ramp. And that if residents were keen for this to happen the BC could build it into the possible designs. Residents were asked what their feelings were on this. The majority of those present were not supportive of the idea, on architectural and practical grounds (examples given of lifts around the Estate which frequently break down therefore increasing the importance of the ramps). **[NB – since the meeting, this feedback from residents along with that of other parties have been considered, and this is not something that will be pursued by the BC.]**
- Leo advised that it is likely that the BC will be holding another all-resident meeting in mid June to show the ongoing design options. This is in advance of the internal deadline so residents have a window in which their thoughts and comments can be considered by the design team. **[NB since the meeting the BC is also planning to hold an additional meeting in Sept/Oct to show residents the designs before they get submitted for formal planning.]**
- The latest update to residents was in the April Podium. Podium will continue to be used to keep everyone informed.
- The FAQs on the Barbican Residents page of the website will also continue to be updated with any other further points that occur. It was also noted that Nicholas Kenyon will be attending the Barbican Association AGM next week.

LT and GS answered questions from residents on this topic, summarised as follows:

*Question:* Will the signage and wayfinding extend beyond the cinemas, and will it be connected to previous signage investigations?

*Response:* GS stated that the BC had advised on previous signage studies that had been undertaken, for example when the foyer spaces were redone, and at that time

there was no funding for it to be extended any further. The BC is committed to external signage work going forward. It was agreed that a combined group of the BC, Residents and Estate could take this forward. For the cinema relocation project the BC confirmed that they are liaising with the streetscaping team regarding street scaping and walkways. It was noted by the BC that there was a need for early consultation with residents on this point to enable them to feed into the process.

*Question:* Have NBDA done a 'box in a box' soundproofed building before?

*Response:* BC staff were unsure of the answer to this off hand. LT advised that Arup – the acoustic engineers working on the cinemas – have. Action > LG to provide further information to the Group on NBDA and Arup's previous experience. GA added that complexes in Leicester and Toronto were examples from which we can learn.

*Question:* In reference to the residents consultation and the planning application – is the planned June meeting the last chance to comment?

*Response:* LT said that while it was not the last chance, it is a very good time to feed in as there is still time for those comments to be considered by the design team before the plans are submitted to the various committees and formal planning. Residents were asked to make any further suggestions as to how the BC communicates and consults with residents as the BC want to make the process as beneficial to everyone as possible. LT also advised that they would have a smaller meeting with the BA to discuss the finer issues surrounding noise and operational considerations.

*Question:* Are we still on the 2 year timetable?

*Response:* Yes.

*Question:* Would it be possible to consider the plans being submitted to committees on white paper rather than yellow papers for transparency?

*Response:* GS and LT understood the need for this, and will look into this. **Action > LT to investigate.**

*Comment:* Residents at the meeting advised that they felt that the controversy surrounding the new facilities needs to be positive and look to the future, rather than continue to discuss why the situation has arisen. It was also suggested that Podium could more clearly highlight where residents could find further information on the subject. **Action > LG to look into how this message could be highlighted.**

*Response:* GS agreed with this thought, and the point was noted by BC staff.

*Comment:* GS explained the rationale of how the cinema programme will work during the closure period. He advised that while the number of films shown will be reduced given the one screen, the integrity of the programme has been maintained, which is a balance between showing the new releases that are cheaper to screen and the more expensive to run art house seasons.

*Question:* Can we introduce a 'wave pattern' with new release films, show that the BC could show two different films in the same week, but alternating between the two show times?

*Response:* GS stated this was a very creative idea and said that the BC would check with Robert Rider (Head of Cinema) to see whether this had been considered and that this kind of decision is often in the hands of the distributors agreeing how many screenings and times there are **Action > LG to check and feed back to the Group.**

*Question:* Do the BC get a greater number of visitors at early or late shows?

*Response:* GS stated that there is no pattern

*Question:* Is there the same restrictions from distributors on digital?

*Response:* Yes.

*Question:* Surely having daytime screenings would help this demand from the distributors?

*Response:* GS advised that this is something we are looking at doing in the new cinemas, to increase weekday ticket sales which could be of benefit

*Question:* Is the BC digital?

*Response:* 2 of the 3 screens are at the moment. The new screens will be.

## **Item 2**

### **GS and upcoming highlights of the artistic programme.**

Artistic Director Graham Sheffield ran through the season highlights for 2010 and going into 2011. He outlined: the '101 things to do this summer' campaign including a John Adams music theatre show in Theatre Royal Stratford East, the upcoming Japanese Fashion exhibition in the gallery that will form part of a wider focus on Japan in Autumn 2010, key highlights from the Great Performers season, big names returning to the Theatre including Black Watch and Les Miserables.

Graham also announced to the meeting that he will be leaving the Barbican Centre after 15 years to become Chief Executive of the West Kowloon Cultural Quarter in Hong Kong. The House Group Reps wished GS all the very best for the future.

ENDS.