

promises Negrini

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## The Commitment: a new work at the Warehouse Theatre?

Posted on September 19, 2014

Ted Craig, the director of the Warehouse Theatre at East Croydon which was forced to close two years ago, has warmly welcomed [the news, reported by Inside Croydon, that Ruskin Square developers Stanhope are keen to stand by their pledge to build a replacement for the world-famous studio theatre.](#)



Ted Craig: delighted by the prospect of a new Warehouse Theatre

And the Labour council’s new arts and culture spokesman, Timothy Godfrey, has spoken of his own “commitment” to the Warehouse Theatre.

Craig told **Inside Croydon** this week: “Staff of the Warehouse Theatre worked with the developers Stanhope in developing the designs for a new theatre over a 10-year period, and the plans are very exciting.

“They have never been shown to the public because

we were waiting for a ‘go’ on the Ruskin Square development first.”

After the Warehouse closed in 2012 – when the then Tory-controlled Croydon Council prompted its demise by withdrawing its annual grant at short-notice – a £3 million grant earmarked for building a new theatre within the office developments in Ruskin Square to replace the Victorian warehouse was thought to have been “transferred” by the council for use at the Fairfield Halls.

But sources at Stanhope have indicated that if the grant funds are made available, they will hold good to their promise of a purpose-built, 200-seat studio-style venue, which could stage drama, comedy, music and cabaret, right next to East Croydon Station. Small drama groups and high-standard amateur dramatic societies have been priced out of using the Fairfield Halls, and with Sutton having announced plans to close the Charles Cryer Theatre in Carshalton, a mid-sized theatrical venue could be in great demand in this part of south London.

Since the Warehouse Theatre closed, Craig has been operating Warehouse Phoenix “to carry on the work and traditions of the Warehouse Theatre”, including staging its international play-writing competition each year.

At Monday’s council cabinet meeting, Godfrey unveiled the latest plans for a “Cultural Quarter”, which involves at least £34 million of spending to revitalise the Fairfield Halls. There was no mention of Ruskin Square – just across George Street from College Green and the Cultural Quarter – in the report.

But Godfrey told **iC**: “No one should doubt my commitment to filling the space left by the demise of the official Warehouse Theatre Company.”



"Commitment": Timothy Godfrey

According to Godfrey, the £3 million Stanhope grant was promised as part of a Section 106 social benefit planning agreement, and will not be payable until 500,000 sq ft of office space has been occupied – which could still be some way off. Godfrey believes that the grant may also be index linked.

Craig has fresh hope for the future of his theatre company: “We’re thrilled (and relieved) that a Cultural Quarter and much-needed work planned for Fairfield is being so strongly promoted by the new cabinet member for the arts, Timothy Godfrey.

“We haven’t stopped working on a future for Phoenix this last year or so, we continue to produce each year the International Playwriting Festival, as you know, and we have been tirelessly searching for new partners to join us and help make a new building a buzzing, exciting place.”

- [\*\*Ruskin Square could include theatre if council refunds £3m\*\*](#)

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## Building a new Croydon won't be boring, promises Negrini

Posted on [September 19, 2014](#)

[Jo Negrini, Croydon Council's head of planning](#), this week rejected earlier schemes – drawn up by the previous Conservative council – for Fairfield Halls to be virtually surrounded by high-rise housing as “really, really boring”.



Jo Negrini: she doesn't want Croydon to be boring

Instead, Negrini told hundreds of property developers, estate agents, landlords and land owners at the Live Croydon event, that the intention is [to create a Cultural Quarter which “makes Croydon as interesting and exciting as possible”](#).

The new quarter would lead housing development, rather than the other way around so that, according to Negrini, people would want to live in Croydon for its cafe culture.

This was a more interventionist approach to town planning for Croydon than had been heard for many years, but it appeared to meet with the property developers’ warm approval at the commercial possibilities it presented them. The difference, you might suppose, between saleable

and rentable flats and offices, and the unsaleable or unrenatable.

Negrini’s message was one of a strong planning leadership from the council, something that has not been seen in Croydon since [Sir James Marshall started plotting Croydon’s office skyscraper and road widening boom in 1954](#).

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The radical proposals will underpin the Labour council's plan for growth, which are due to be revealed to the cabinet at the end of the month.

In a week when no less a figure than [Lord Rogers extolled Croydon's available space for development](#), a self-assured Negrini felt that Croydon has become a place that “people aren't sniggering about anymore”.

Negrini dismissed those who question what would happen to Croydon if Westfield and Hammerson failed to deliver on their £1 billion new shopping mall, as there was so much else that the council was going to do to drive forward the town's development.

The director of a London think tank told **Inside Croydon** today that Negrini's take up of the Croydon planning job – as executive director of development and environment – “can be seen as an endorsement of Croydon's plans for the future”.

After Negrini's four-year spell for planning and Olympic legacy at Newham, the Australian headed south of the river with Westfield's recommendation after the success of that borough's regeneration at Stratford.

At Live Croydon, Negrini's assertive approach was on show when she said, “Developers will not be allowed to sit on land anymore.”

She told her audience, “We will tell you what we want.” It almost sounded like town *planning* was going on.

“We want to ensure a pipeline of development,” Negrini said, saying that the council will act to ensure plots of land would be used.

The council would be taking radical action, Negrini said, including sponsoring a “revolving investment fund”. Other measures cited by Negrini included

- equity financing,
- some development-friendly redesignation of planning definitions for certain areas,
- the setting up of housing development companies,
- acquiring land,
- taking direct council stakes in developments,
- using compulsory purchase orders if necessary to get development going,
- helping developers assemble land blocks,
- undertaking direct building by the council, and
- acquiring land

Negrini even mentioned that the council would enter into joint ventures. The Croydon Council Urban Regeneration Vehicle, CCURV, that has delivered to the borough the £220million council head offices, may not be the paragon of public-private co-operation she has in mind.



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The town centre and its cultural quarter would include “clubbing outside of Tiger, Tiger”, Negrini promised, and that they will be “drive-in cinemas atop of the car parks”.

There would be rent-free accommodation for digital start-up companies, as already announced for Tech City activity in the council-owned Davis House, and the promise of world-class fibre optic provision for superfast broadband to make Croydon a connected town with signal strengths boosted from atop the town centre’s skyscrapers.

Negotiations continue to bring Roehampton University to take residence at Fisher’s Folly, and adopt as much of Croydon town centre as its campus.

What Negrini left unsaid was that Labour’s 30 per cent target for affordable housing could not be achieved in the town centre, but she said, “we have done the numbers” and that all developments *outside* the town centre can accommodate the required amount of affordable housing.

“We are going to prioritise New Addington,” Negrini said.

The council will aim to outdo the housing target set by the Greater London Authority and will seek to surpass even its own long-term target for new homes, which is set at 9,500 units. As many as 12,000 new homes could be built in the long-term. “We will have a good go at that,” Negrini said, with 8,000 the target for the first 12 years of work.

The council has already done work with EC Harris and Cushman & Wakefield to review 400 sites in the borough for possible development, with the first focused efforts to go into 16 sites identified from that report from the commercial estate agents’ professional analysis.

One senior Tory councillor was heard to complain that the Croydon Conservatives did not adopt such an active approach during its most recent eight years in power, and previous periods in control of the Town Hall over the past 30 years.

Three decades provided no successful new office building and only a rather pedestrian pace of development elsewhere. But a glass frame for East Croydon Station and a badly botched £20 million bridge project, some new school buildings, the BRIT performing arts school, the tram, the Coulsdon bypass, the Central Library, two leisure centres in



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Waddon (one of which was demolished), three residential towers of varying merit and, of course, the vastly over-priced Fisher's Folly, is not much to show since the 1980s.

Negrini appears determined that the pace of change will accelerate on her watch. It certainly won't be boring.

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## How millionaire Philp is using the hierachy of capitalism

Posted on [September 19, 2014](#)



**JON BIGGER, pictured, on besmirching, Thatcherism and how his Croydon South general election rival is blatantly electioneering**

Last week, [I wrote about what I, and others it seems, have seen as blatant electioneering by Chris Philp, the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Croydon South](#) at next year's election.

[I read Philp's response](#) with great interest.

I was very disappointed, but not surprised, that he chose to misrepresent my position on the issue of potential cuts to train services in Coulsdon. My original article made it quite clear that there are proposals for cuts to off-peak services into Victoria.

The issue at the heart of this is Philp's involvement (he does not, yet at least, hold any elected office for the area) and the way in which he uses his position within society to influence events. It all seems to be stepping on the toes of [the very well-paid elected MP, Richard Ottaway](#).

As a businessman with a massive amount of money, Philp has me at a disadvantage. While he claims to be able to get into meetings with the chief executive of GoVia, my position as an unemployed Class War party activist means I get emails from office juniors of that company which quote their press releases back to me.

Philp benefits from the hierarchy of capitalism in everything he does. In that respect – and that respect only – he has the advantage over me.

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It's one of the reasons he will win the election. He should be aware, though, that in every other respect, I will beat him. There is a spectre hanging over his campaign and it is the spectre of Class War.

In his article, Philp claimed that I “besmirched” his character. Everything Philp stands for disgusts me. I'm going to besmirch him to within an inch of his life over the next few months.

He claims to be a Thatcherite. I suspect he shed a tear on the day that she died. I was giving a speech on a picket line and then I spent the afternoon drinking champagne. The reason for the joy was because of what she did to people and communities.

Philp likes what Thatcher did, from the snatching away of shoolchildren's milk, to the snatching of public assets to sell them off on the cheap to big business. He likes that Thatcher destroyed our country's mining communities and her deliberate attacks on working people through chilling anti-trade union laws.

Thatcher was responsible for stifling freedom of speech by preventing Sinn Fein members from being able to speak in their own voices on British television. Evidence is mounting that within her government, a blind eye was turned to try to hide very serious allegations of child sex abuse.

I wonder what it is about Thatcherism that Philp likes? To me, Thatcherism stands for corruption, selfishness and the destruction of community life.

Someone should warn Philp against using words like “besmirch”. That word makes him sound bumptious, full of his own importance. Most people will interpret it that way, I feel. We can only guess what his posh Tory chums make of it. If only he'd highlighted my comments as “animadversion”, he could have impressed the toffs and made the rest of us reach for our dictionaries.

In the coming weeks I will be setting out my priorities for the election campaign. Mine will focus on democracy and participation. It will be radical in comparison to what Philp offers. It will offer hope while he will offer divisive policies aimed at helping the rich get



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richer and keeping the rest of us in line when we try to do something about our lot.

In my opinion, Philp failed in his right of reply to explain why he is already acting like the MP for Croydon South. He failed to detail on whose behalf he is acting and under what mandate.

I consider that he is using his societal position to influence the outcome of the election. It would be wrong to assume that I trust the press releases of corporations. I trust them as much as I trust Chris Philp: not at all.

Philp has failed to answer the points I raised about the way in which he has behaved in electioneering thus far. Residents in Croydon South deserve a proper appraisal of all his activities in the run up to the election.

- **Jon Bigger is the Croydon South parliamentary candidate for Class War**

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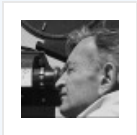
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[davidcallam](#) says:



September 19, 2014 at 2:44 pm

I can't imagine for one moment that Rear Admiral Ottaway objects to some free help. Philp's intervention saves him a job, or rather it raises an issue that our Richard might not have found a window to deal with in his busy schedule.

I take Mr Bigger's point that Mr Philp has no mandate at present, but since he is the Tories chosen pig's bladder on a stick to which the party has attached its blue rosette, he will be ushered into the Westminster mausoleum next May as surely as night follows day.

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**[Arfur Towcrate \(@ArfurZTowcrate\)](#)** says:

September 19, 2014 at 3:56 pm

Chris Philp will make a fine MP for Croydon South, representing his party's interests ably in both Parliament and the constituency. Unlike his recently disgraced local rival for this position, he is neither corpulent nor florid, and his good looks should prove a hit with undecided ladies (and John Loony, for that matter).

Who cares if he's rich? Surely that proves he's not in this for the money? If he's got a bad back, he can buy his own bed, and I am sure his riches will run to getting his own chimney swept without filing a claim for the public purse to pay for this. A man clearly dripping with business acumen should do wonders for this impoverished borough.

He's also a man *au fait* with technology. Maybe he'll reply a bit more often to electronic correspondence from his constituents than the current incumbent, who doesn't even tweet.

And then there's the entertainment value. Put him next to Gavin Barwell, and there you have Croydon's answer to Ant and Dec.

I do have just one doubt. Is he local? Will he actually live in, gulp, C r o y d o n?

👍 4 👎 2 ⓘ Rate This

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**[johnnyvoter](#)** says:

September 19, 2014 at 3:59 pm

Always bizarre when someone says they admired Thatcher. this is short-hand for im a self-centred bully who has nothing but utter contempt for the poor of this country.

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**Jon Bigger says:**

September 19, 2014 at 11:58 pm

Yes, that’s pretty much my point. Tony Benn had five questions for people in power. He’s quoted as saying “what power do you have; where did you get it; in whose interests do you exercise it; to whom are you accountable; and, how can we get rid of you? Anyone who cannot answer the last of those questions does not live in a democratic system.”

I think those questions hold true and we should ask them of those with power. With Philp, I find myself asking them before he even has an elected position.

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## The Commitment: a new work at the Warehouse Theatre?

Posted on [September 19, 2014](#)

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Ted Craig: delighted by the prospect of a new Warehouse Theatre

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"They have never been shown to the public because we were waiting for a 'go' on the Ruskin Square development first."

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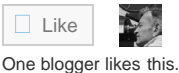
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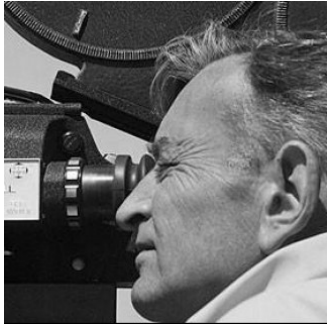
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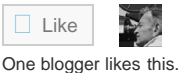
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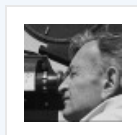
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## “Book Token” promoted as Pollard completes Tory takeover

Posted on [September 21, 2014](#)

Croydon's Tory councillors yesterday duly anointed Tim Pollard, the “loyal deputy” who did just enough to cause the downfall of Mike Fisher over #WadGate, as their new leader. With no one else from the 30-strong group of Conservative councillors prepared ...

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## Youth theatre group seeks volunteers to build for the future

Posted on [September 20, 2014](#)

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## Spread Eagle Theatre is tuned in for the light programme

Posted on [September 20, 2014](#)

BELLA BARTOCK, our resident culture vulture, got out her rouge and party frock to enjoy another evening at the Spread Eagle Theatre, which is celebrating its first birthday. As I make my way past East Croydon Station, taking great care ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# How millionaire Philp is using the hierachy of capitalism

Posted on September 19, 2014

JON BIGGER, pictured, on besmirching, Thatcherism and how his Croydon South general election rival is blatantly electioneering Last week, I wrote about what I, and others it seems, have seen as blatant electioneering by Chris Philp, the Conservative parliamentary candidate ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# The Commitment: a new work at the Warehouse Theatre?

Posted on September 19, 2014

Ted Craig, the director of the Warehouse Theatre at East Croydon which was forced to close two years ago, has warmly welcomed the news, reported by Inside Croydon, that Ruskin Square developers Stanhope are keen to stand by their pledge ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# Building a new Croydon won't be boring, promises Negrini

Posted on September 19, 2014

Jo Negrini, Croydon Council's head of planning, this week rejected earlier schemes – drawn up by the previous Conservative council – for Fairfield Halls to be virtually surrounded by high-rise housing as “really, really boring”. Instead, Negrini told hundreds of ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# Now you see it, now you don't: Elvery dumps David Brent look

Posted on September 18, 2014


We may never be able to use this piece of artwork again – unless the council's £180,000 a year chief executive decides to do something for chari-dee in Movember. The beard's gone.


Posted in [Croydon Council](#), [Nathan Elvery](#), [Sean Fitzsimons](#) | Tagged [Conservative](#), [Croydon](#), [Croydon Council](#), [Nathan Elvery](#) | [1 Comment](#)

# Ending office-to-flats won't harm market, SHW director says

Posted on September 18, 2014

A director of the Croydon estate agency which manages the Whitgift Foundation's vast portfolio of properties in the borough has told Inside Croydon that the council's move to end permitted development – the planning device which allows the owners of ... [Continue reading →](#)

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 Now you see it, now you don't: Elvery dumps David Brent look

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## Crouch kicks Midwives to victory on his return from injury

Posted on [September 18, 2014](#)

RUGBY ROUND-UP: Old Mid-Whitgiftians welcomed Dan Crouch back into their side after more than a season out through injury, and 10 points from the boot of their fly-half, including a important penalty late in the game, was enough to secure ... [Continue reading →](#)

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## “Radically pragmatic” Negrini exhibits award-winning chutzpah

Posted on [September 18, 2014](#)

Nathan Elvery’s up to his old tricks. And Croydon Council looks like a shoo-in for another empty “award“, to be handed over by the council’s mates in the property market, for being “pragmatic” planners. MIPIM UK is a property developers ... [Continue reading →](#)

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## St Peter’s Church Book Sale, South Croydon, Sep 20

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## Ottaway milked MPs’ pay system for £250,000 last year

Posted on [September 17, 2014](#)

Conservative MP Richard Ottaway has hit the parliamentary jackpot again. According to the latest official figures from the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, or IPSA, in the financial year to May 2014, Tricky Dicky cost the taxpayer the grand total of: ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# Rogers calls on planners to build homes in “empty” Croydon

Posted on [September 17, 2014](#)

One of the world’s leading architects has called for the radical re-building of central Croydon to provide homes to help meet the national housing crisis. “You could put two new towns in the centre of Croydon without any problem because ... [Continue reading →](#)

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# Music At The Unit, Lives Not Knives: Sep 20

Posted on [September 16, 2014](#)

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## Ruskin Square could include theatre if council refunds £3m

Posted on [September 14, 2014](#)

Croydon could get a purpose-built, modern 200-seat studio theatre to replace the much-lamented Warehouse Theatre, provided that the council re-allocates a £3 million grant originally intended for the purpose by private developers Stanhope.



Hello future: But does that future include the new Warehouse studio theatre that was included in the Croydon Masterplan?

The news comes as the now Labour-run council cabinet meets tomorrow night to ~~discuss~~ push through spending £34 million on a “Croydon Cultural Quarter” (we know, we know...) which will include a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls and re-developed College Green site.

The plans as laid out in the council officials’ report do not include any

arts provision in Ruskin Square, the mixed-use development on the former coal merchants’ site next to East Croydon Station that has been a decade in the planning by Stanhope and their financial backers Schroders.

Work has begun this summer on building the first residential blocks at the Dingwall Road end of the long-derelict site which was once promoted as the “Gateway” to Croydon.

Stanhope have been most patient in their relationship with a borough council of both political hues and which at one point, a decade ago, tried to impose a rival developer on the site, resulting in a series of costly public inquiries.

Stanhope were long-time financial backers of the world-acclaimed Warehouse Theatre, based in a Victorian warehouse that adjoined their site, and they pledged to spend £3million on a replacement studio theatre within their office and residential buildings.

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Ruskin Square, including a new studio theatre, was a crucial part of the “Croydon Masterplan”.

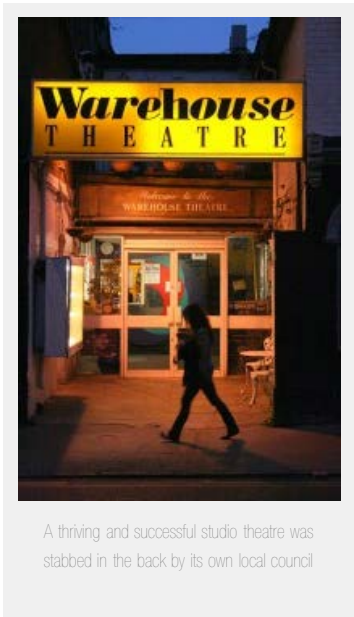
Stanhope have also several times accommodated the council, Transport for London and Network Rail in other ways, such as in adjusting their own scheme to allow for other elements of the overall redevelopment, including the £23 million “Bridge to Nowhere” built at the north end of East Croydon Station.


[The Warehouse Theatre was forced to close in 2012](#), when the then Tory-run council withdrew its annual arts grant, precipitating a financial crisis. The council then activated a clause in the agreement between the Warehouse and Stanhope for the £3 million grant to be re-allocated.

With a Croydon Council Tory leadership including Dudley Mead, the chairman of the Fairfield Halls board, it was understood that the money would be used to build a studio theatre at what was fast emerging as the “Favoured Halls”.


Fairfield opened its own studio theatre in its former Green Room space in the past month.

Tomorrow night at the council cabinet meeting, Timothy Godfrey, Labour’s spokesman on the arts – who is also a Fairfield Halls trustee – will speak to a report which promises to spend £34 million through till 2018 on the “Cultural Quarter”, with a set of plans which might be described as, well, a bit sketchy.





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This sketch map has been included in an official council report. Seriously

“Culture is at the heart of the council’s ambitious regeneration and growth plans for Croydon and in this context the College Green area and the Fairfield Halls holds huge potential,” the council report states.

The refurbishment plan for the Fairfield Halls, including the Ashcroft Theatre and Arnhem Gallery, has been on the council’s agenda since at least 2006, but was never actioned under the Tories, leaving the 1960s-built arts venue to become increasingly down-at-heel and a bit sorry for itself.

As well as offering a link through to the Clocktower arts complex and Surrey Street, the plans going before the council tomorrow include a cinema in the Fairfield Halls, although it does not explain how this sits with the existing provision at Grant’s, or the planned multiplex within the £1billion Hammersfield redevelopment.

The previous Tory council laid waste to the borough’s arts programme, axing the annual Mela – for a saving of less than £100,000, [or the cost of a single Councillor Steve O’Connell](#) - allowing the Warehouse to close, closing the David Lean Cinema in a badly bungled attempt to transfer its arts house screenings to the Fairfield, and flogging off other precious publicly owned property.



Led by their deputy leader Tim Pollard, the Tory council raided the borough’s family silver – in this case in the form of the Riasco china collection – and flogged off two dozen of the best examples of the priceless porcelain with the intention of raising £13million towards the Fairfields refurbishment.

[After costs and charges, Pollard’s Hong Kong auction eventually raised just £6.5 million](#), the money going into the council’s general fund rather than being specifically ear-marked for arts spending. A bit like Stanhope’s £3 million arts grant.

This week, sources in the building industry told **Inside Croydon** that Stanhope are more confident about their scheme’s immediate future than at any time in the past 10 years, and that they would be keen to consider any reasonable proposals that would enable them to include a purpose-built arts venue which complements the offering at the Fairfield Halls and provides the prospect of a “New Warehouse Theatre”.

“It would have to be properly run, and they would probably want the former artistic director of the Warehouse, Ted Craig, to be involved,” our source

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said.

“The venue would need to earn its keep. It could provide a venue for music, cabaret and comedy as well as fringe theatre – all things which Croydon is crying out for, and which would work really well beside a rail station that’s just 20 minutes from the centre of London.

“They’d certainly welcome discussions with the council about providing something in a Cultural Quarter, but Stanhope’s original £3 million grant money would have to be used towards the development.”

- **Read the council “Cultural Quarter” report being submitted to Monday’s cabinet meeting by clicking here: [Cultural Quarter report](#)**

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- [Police question time, LNK at Centrale, Sep 17](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: \*Chef\*, Sep 18](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: Remembering the Great War, Sep 18](#)
- [The Complete History of the BBC – Abridged, Spread Eagle, Sep 19-20](#)
- [Cinema Ruskin film show, Sep 20](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Sep 20](#)
- [Open House London weekend, Sep 20-21](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: A Night At The Cinema in 1914, Sep 22](#)
- [Activity to Work back-to-work workshops, Sep 23](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: \*Jimmy’s Hall\*, Sep 25](#)
- [Streatham Common 6M race, Sep 27](#)
- [Fancy dress family funday, Sep 28](#)
- [Ukrainian choir concert, St John’s Shirley, Sep 29](#)
- [Tree Sides, Spread Eagle Theatre, Oct 2-4](#)
- [The Goon Show, Spread Eagle Theatre, Oct 8-11](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: From Fire Station to Theatre, Oct 16](#)
- [Cinema Ruskin film show, Oct 18](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Oct 18](#)
- [This Was The World and I Was King, Spread Eagle, Oct 23-25](#)
- [Albert Einstein – Relativity Speaking, Spread Eagle, Nov 12-15](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Nov 15](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: Lambeth’s Archives, Nov 20](#)
- [Choose Your Own Documentary, Spread Eagle Theatre, Nov 21-22](#)
- [The Last Sense of Sudden, Spread Eagle Theatre, Nov 27-29](#)
- [Ghost Stories for Christmas, Spread Eagle Theatre, Dec 3](#)
- [Fog Horn Funnies, Spread Eagle Theatre, Dec 6](#)
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**2 Responses to *Ruskin Square could include theatre if council refunds £3m***



**[Adrian Winchester](#)** says:  
September 14, 2014 at 4:44 pm

The Fairfield have just installed a brand new high-powered digital projector and a very big replacement screen in the Concert Hall, so presumably this is the “new cinema” mentioned in the report. There’s no obvious other space where they can accommodate 600 people, which is more than the Ashcroft’s capacity. Spectacular films and live streaming – often on Mondays – would in some respects complement what the Save the David Lean Cinema Campaign are doing at the David Lean, and the two venues have agreed to mostly avoid screenings on the same days. Both attract a similar audience and it makes sense to minimise competition, especially at a time when the future of the David Lean – which is entirely run by unpaid volunteers – is far from secure.

If the plan is for the Clocktower to regain some of its stature as a cultural centre, it’s worth remembering that the Braithwaite Hall was an important part of the arts offering there, with touring productions, live music, etc. While the Braithwaite is mostly dormant, perhaps the Warehouse Phoenix company could consider presenting the occasional production there in advance of any Ruskin Square development?

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**davidcallam** says:

September 14, 2014 at 6:05 pm

What a complete pigs’ breakfast.

If the council is determined to waste public money trying to revive the Fairfield, it would surely make sense to incorporate a studio theatre on site, or to renovate Braithwaite Hall properly. But please don’t establish what could easily become a third loss-making arts site in the town centre. For all Ted Craig’s grandiose talk about The Warehouse, it closed immediately the grant was withdrawn, suggesting that council money would be essential to re-open it on the same site.

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The news comes as the now Labour-run council cabinet meets tomorrow night to ~~dis~~uss push through spending £34 million on a “Croydon Cultural Quarter” (we know, we know...) which will include a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls and re-developed College Green site.

The plans as laid out in the council officials’ report do not include any arts provision in Ruskin Square, the mixed-use development on the former coal merchants’ site next to East Croydon Station that has been a decade in the planning by Stanhope and their financial backers Schroders.

Work has begun this summer on building the first residential blocks at the Dingwall Road end of the long-derelict site which was once promoted as the “Gateway” to Croydon.

Stanhope have been most patient in their relationship with a borough council of both political hues and which at one point, a decade ago, tried to impose a rival developer on the site, resulting in a series of costly public inquiries.

Stanhope were long-time financial backers of the world-acclaimed Warehouse Theatre, based in a Victorian warehouse that adjoined their site, and they pledged to spend £3million on a replacement studio theatre within their office and residential buildings.

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Ruskin Square, including a new studio theatre, was a crucial part of the “Croydon Masterplan”.

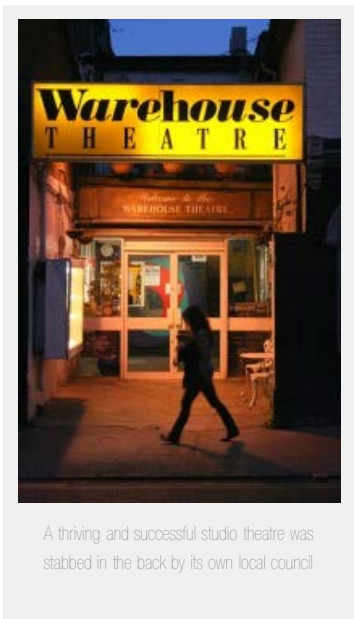
Stanhope have also several times accommodated the council, Transport for London and Network Rail in other ways, such as in adjusting their own scheme to allow for other elements of the overall redevelopment, including the £23 million “Bridge to Nowhere” built at the north end of East Croydon Station.


[The Warehouse Theatre was forced to close in 2012](#), when the then Tory-run council withdrew its annual arts grant, precipitating a financial crisis. The council then activated a clause in the agreement between the Warehouse and Stanhope for the £3 million grant to be re-allocated.


With a Croydon Council Tory leadership including Dudley Mead, the chairman of the Fairfield Halls board, it was understood that the money would be used to build a studio theatre at what was fast emerging as the “Favoured Halls”.

Fairfield opened its own studio theatre in its former Green Room space in the past month.

Tomorrow night at the council cabinet meeting, Timothy Godfrey, Labour’s spokesman on the arts – who is also a Fairfield Halls trustee – will speak to a report which promises to spend £34 million through till 2018 on the “Cultural Quarter”, with a set of plans which might be described as, well, a bit sketchy.



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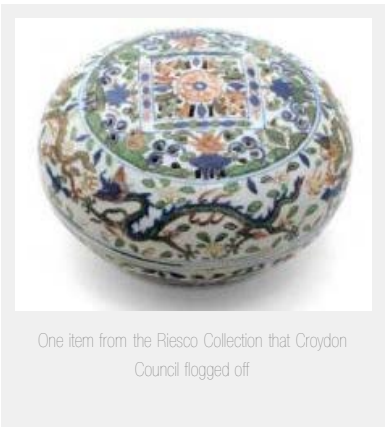
This sketch map has been included in an official council report. Seriously

“Culture is at the heart of the council’s ambitious regeneration and growth plans for Croydon and in this context the College Green area and the Fairfield Halls holds huge potential,” the council report states.

The refurbishment plan for the Fairfield Halls, including the Ashcroft Theatre and Arnhem Gallery, has been on the council’s agenda since at least 2006, but was never actioned under the Tories, leaving the 1960s-built arts venue to become increasingly down-at-heel and a bit sorry for itself.

As well as offering a link through to the Clocktower arts complex and Surrey Street, the plans going before the council tomorrow include a cinema in the Fairfield Halls, although it does not explain how this sits with the existing provision at Grant’s, or the planned multiplex within the £1billion Hammersfield redevelopment.

The previous Tory council laid waste to the borough’s arts programme, axing the annual Mela – for a saving of less than £100,000, [or the cost of a single Councillor Steve O’Connell](#) - allowing the Warehouse to close, closing the David Lean Cinema in a badly bungled attempt to transfer its arts house screenings to the Fairfield, and flogging off other precious publicly owned property.



Led by their deputy leader Tim Pollard, the Tory council raided the borough’s family silver – in this case in the form of the Riesco china collection – and flogged off two dozen of the best examples of the priceless porcelain with the intention of raising £13million towards the Fairfields refurbishment.

[After costs and charges, Pollard’s Hong Kong auction eventually raised just £6.5 million](#), the money going into the council’s general fund rather than being specifically ear-marked for arts spending. A bit like Stanhope’s £3 million arts grant.

This week, sources in the building industry told **Inside Croydon** that Stanhope are more confident about their scheme’s immediate future than at any time in the past 10 years, and that they would be keen to consider any reasonable proposals that would enable them to include a purpose-built arts venue which complements the offering at the Fairfield Halls and provides the prospect of a “New Warehouse Theatre”.

“It would have to be properly run, and they would probably want the former artistic director of the Warehouse, Ted Craig, to be involved,” our source

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said.

“The venue would need to earn its keep. It could provide a venue for music, cabaret and comedy as well as fringe theatre – all things which Croydon is crying out for, and which would work really well beside a rail station that’s just 20 minutes from the centre of London.

“They’d certainly welcome discussions with the council about providing something in a Cultural Quarter, but Stanhope’s original £3 million grant money would have to be used towards the development.”

- **Read the council “Cultural Quarter” report being submitted to Monday’s cabinet meeting by clicking here: [Cultural Quarter report](#)**

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## Coming to Croydon

- [Soul Symphony Community Choir sessions, Sep 16-Dec 23](#)
- [Police question time, LNK at Centrale, Sep 17](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: \*Chef\*, Sep 18](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: Remembering the Great War, Sep 18](#)
- [The Complete History of the BBC – Abridged, Spread Eagle, Sep 19-20](#)
- [Cinema Ruskin film show, Sep 20](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Sep 20](#)
- [Open House London weekend, Sep 20-21](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: A Night At The Cinema in 1914, Sep 22](#)
- [Activity to Work back-to-work workshops, Sep 23](#)
- [David Lean Cinema: \*Jimmy’s Hall\*, Sep 25](#)
- [Streatham Common 6M race, Sep 27](#)
- [Fancy dress family funday, Sep 28](#)
- [Ukrainian choir concert, St John’s Shirley, Sep 29](#)
- [Tree Sides, Spread Eagle Theatre, Oct 2-4](#)
- [The Goon Show, Spread Eagle Theatre, Oct 8-11](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: From Fire Station to Theatre, Oct 16](#)
- [Cinema Ruskin film show, Oct 18](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Oct 18](#)
- [This Was The World and I Was King, Spread Eagle, Oct 23-25](#)
- [Albert Einstein – Relativity Speaking, Spread Eagle, Nov 12-15](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Nov 15](#)
- [Norwood Society Talk: Lambeth’s Archives, Nov 20](#)
- [Choose Your Own Documentary, Spread Eagle Theatre, Nov 21-22](#)
- [The Last Sense of Sudden, Spread Eagle Theatre, Nov 27-29](#)
- [Ghost Stories for Christmas, Spread Eagle Theatre, Dec 3](#)
- [Fog Horn Funnies, Spread Eagle Theatre, Dec 6](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Dec 13](#)
- [South Croydon business breakfast, Jan 24](#)

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**2 Responses to *Ruskin Square could include theatre if council refunds £3m***



**[Adrian Winchester](#)** says:  
September 14, 2014 at 4:44 pm



The Fairfield have just installed a brand new high-powered digital projector and a very big replacement screen in the Concert Hall, so presumably this is the “new cinema” mentioned in the report. There’s no obvious other space where they can accommodate 600 people, which is more than the Ashcroft’s capacity. Spectacular films and live streaming – often on Mondays – would in some respects complement what the Save the David Lean Cinema Campaign are doing at the David Lean, and the two venues have agreed to mostly avoid screenings on the same days. Both attract a similar audience and it makes sense to minimise competition, especially at a time when the future of the David Lean – which is entirely run by unpaid volunteers – is far from secure.

If the plan is for the Clocktower to regain some of its stature as a cultural centre, it’s worth remembering that the Braithwaite Hall was an important part of the arts offering there, with touring productions, live music, etc. While the Braithwaite is mostly dormant, perhaps the Warehouse Phoenix company could consider presenting the occasional production there in advance of any Ruskin Square development?

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**davidcallam** says:

September 14, 2014 at 6:05 pm

What a complete pigs’ breakfast.

If the council is determined to waste public money trying to revive the Fairfield, it would surely make sense to incorporate a studio theatre on site, or to renovate Braithwaite Hall properly. But please don’t establish what could easily become a third loss-making arts site in the town centre. For all Ted Craig’s grandiose talk about The Warehouse, it closed immediately the grant was withdrawn, suggesting that council money would be essential to re-open it on the same site.

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