



## **BFI National Film Centre gets the green light**

### **DCMS pledges £45 million capital spend**

- Everyone in Britain to benefit from new centre for film
- Visionary new digital hub you can plug into from home

The BFI announces today that it is proceeding with its plan to build a visionary new film centre on London's South Bank. The decision to move forward comes as the Culture Secretary, Ben Bradshaw, announced a £45 million capital investment from Government in the project.

The BFI's ambition is to create a world-leading centre for the study, enjoyment and celebration of film and television. The money pledged from Government follows an earlier investment promise of £5 million in the project from the London Mayor through the LDA. It secures the next phase of the project which is to design and plan, and will go towards helping fund the construction of the new centre which is to be developed on the site of Hungerford car park.

Amanda Nevill, director of the BFI, said:

"This is hugely exciting news for film culture in Britain, for the whole of the British film industry and a positive turning point in the history of the BFI. Film is one of the greatest art forms of today and universally popular. It is also a British success story - London and the UK are at the centre of the global film industry.

"We will be creating something that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world, precisely because we can. It will build on the BFI's 75 year legacy, bringing together the greatest collections of film on earth with all the excitement and stimulation of emerging cinema into the most creative and inclusive programmes. It will be a digital hub, working with partners across the UK to share and exchange those programmes. We are a step closer in our ambition to inspire and excite audiences everywhere in a new digital Britain."

John Woodward, chief executive of the UK Film Council which funds the BFI, said:

"This is a key milestone on the road towards the UK Film Council and the BFI's shared objective of transforming the cultural film offering to UK citizens in the digital age. Not only will film now have a fitting home on the best arts campus in the world, but the development will use digital technology to open up the archive and all the other film treasures that the BFI holds for the benefit of everyone in the UK."

Ends



## **The BFI's vision**

“Something as powerful as film should be celebrated and understood – that is why the BFI exists – if it didn't exist we would be busy inventing it”

**Anthony Minghella**

Film has never been so exciting, or more important. Increasingly more and more of the information we use to navigate daily life comes through the moving image. It is the medium of the moment - everyone is engaged in it, watching it, making it, uploading and downloading it. For young people especially, film is the communication medium of the 21st century.

The importance of film ('film' taken to express the whole spectrum of moving image) in our daily lives has been transformed through digital technology. Today's society engages with film in ways which would have been unimaginable even five years ago, never mind when the BFI was founded 75 years ago.

The BFI is a cultural body admired and emulated the world over for the breadth of joined-up activity from the BFI National Archive and The National Film Theatre – now BFI Southbank - to the BFI London Film Festival, its national distribution, events, education activities and publishing.

All of this has been at the heart of film in this country for over 75 years.

Through the BFI, Britain boasts a film archive which is the envy of the world. It provides a tantalising window into how the people of Britain live, work and play from rare glimpses of an early moving Edwardian world, through the classic and loved films of British cinema, broadening out to encompass important collections of American, Chinese, Russian, cultural cinema. The archive of film is brought to life by the equally important and enlightening letters, papers and scripts, and the often ravishingly beautiful photograph and poster collections. It is an ever growing, living collection - the film premiere of tonight becoming next months archive treasure.

But with digital capability the BFI can deliver much more.

There has never been a more exciting moment nor a more exciting opportunity for the BFI, nor a more pressing need for the BFI to step up and modernise in response to this public eager for more.

What we propose is a dramatic transformation of the BFI which will deliver a compelling, exciting and vibrant vision for the future of film culture in the UK, reaching more people, more efficiently.

It is a vision which will address head on the very real issues the BFI faces with dilapidate, disparate and expensive estate, technical obsolescence and antediluvian public facilities. The vision arrests a spiral of decline so we can prioritise investment in public services instead.

It is a vision which allows us to compete equally on an international stage.

And, the vision is unique because the BFI, unlike similar organisations in any other country in the world, can build on the legacy of 75 years and bring together the greatest collections of film on earth with the excitement and stimulation of emerging cinema, with the most creative and inclusive experiences and programmes, with the aim of fostering a passionate quest for individual learning and scholarship in everyone.

“It would enable us all in the British film community to reach our dream to have one building, one National Film Centre, where all the tributaries that make up the extraordinary vibrant British film community at the moment can be housed. Because we have a glorious opportunity, it seems to me, here in Britain, and one of the great things is that the BFI is going to be leading that change.”

**Paul Greengrass**

Our vision focuses around the creation of a BFI National Film Centre, an international destination for film which is digitally connected, wired to the world; and influenced as much by its virtual visitors as it is by those who enter through the door.

Although based in London the BFI centre will be emphatically national. It will exchange programmes and knowledge with a wide range of communities and partners right across the UK, constantly drawing on and updating the BFI National Archive, the regional archives and the expanding Mediatheque network.

From this base, the BFI will champion film programmes which have the power to change perspectives, which consider other histories, bring different considerations to our own lives, new voices to challenge our understanding of the world and our place in it, lend new eyes to see differently.

Every part of the BFI National Film Centre, from the cinemas to the galleries, the displays to the research centre will appeal equally (but in different ways) to the parent and child, the eminent scholar, the exacting film enthusiast, the dismissive teenager, the expectant filmmaker, the demanding culture vulture. It is designed as much for the casual 'drop-in' visitor as it is for the dedicated visitor. What's more, you will be able to join in virtually wherever you live.

It is here that you can encounter the real things that made film and television history, legendary objects and papers, view films on line or see film as intended on the big screen.

It is also a genuine place of work, a centre of research, creativity and production (of content by both real and remote visitors) which produces all the centre's programmes and the London Film Festival, cares for the national collections, and supports distribution of film and knowledge about British film culture in the UK and around the world.

Research and scholarship are the backbone of all public programmes – and a new formal partnership with a consortium of HE institutions will see students and scholars engaging with the National Collection as never before.

## **About the BFI**

The BFI is the nation's cultural agency for film. Our mission is to ensure that everyone has access to the broadest choice of film culture, no matter where they live or how they want to access it.

## **BFI Press Office**

Nick Mason Pearson  
0207 957 8901 / 07968 747879

or

Claire O'Brien  
0207 957 8993