Hippodrome

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Scotland’s oldest purpose built cinema has screened its first film in nearly 34 years and celebrated the reopening of an important piece of cinema and architectural history following a £2.15m restoration and fit-out programme.

The Hippodrome, which first opened in 1912, reopened with a special community screening with one hundred local residents on the guest list.

The historic, A-listed building in Bo’ness reopens just over 97 years after its first customers sat in its uniquely designed, round cinema.

The Hippodrome, which was the vision of local film-maker Louis Dickson and designed by renowned Scottish architect Matthew Steele, opened on the 11th of March 1912.

The first film to be shown since the 16th August 1975 was chosen by residents of Bo’ness. *Mamma Mia*, Hollywood’s most successful film musical and the UK’s highest grossing film ever, topped the list in a locally run competition that included *Singin' in the Rain*, *Wall-e*, *Some Like it Hot, Strictly Ballroom*, *Casablanca*, *ET* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

The Hippodrome is a key project in the My Future’s in Falkirk economic development initiative which also includes the £5million regeneration of Bo’ness and a £150 million mixed use development to redevelop the town’s foreshore.

The Hippodrome redevelopment forms a central part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative to restore significant buildings within the attractive historical town centre of Bo’ness. It is owned by Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, which undertook the first phase of restoration, and is now leased to Falkirk Council. The architects for the restoration project were Linlithgow based Pollock Hammond Partnership.

The £1.95m initial restoration programme was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Falkirk Council through the Townscape Heritage Initiative, Historic Scotland, the Architectural Heritage Fund, Falkirk Environment Trust and the Manifold Trust. The £200k technical fit-out has been funded by Falkirk Council with support from the National Lottery through the Scottish Arts Council.

Thirteen new jobs will be created including technicians, catering and box office staff.