

The Hayward Gallery in the 1960s

From the day they first opened in 1967, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, part of London's Southbank Centre, have hosted some of the Capital's most memorable events that have pushed the boundaries of art and culture.

One of Pink Floyd's first concerts, the 'Games of May' took place there in May 1967 and included live wood chopping on stage, a man dressed up as an admiral giving out daffodils and a bubble machine that stained all the furniture and resulted in the band being banned from ever playing there again. A year later, the Hayward Gallery opened next-door and was soon hosting groundbreaking exhibitions on Matisse and Pop Art.

The buildings themselves are renowned for their radical Brutalist / Modernist architecture and are considered, by English Heritage, to be part of our finest collection of post-war buildings. And whilst they split the crowd when it comes to their appreciation, there’s no denying they’ve become an iconic part of London’s vibrant South Bank skyline.

But after nearly 50 years of good use these buildings are starting to show their age. Now in a deteriorating state, the Southbank Centre is set to begin an urgently needed programme of restoration and refurbishment works. Having secured £4.9m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and £16.7m from the Arts Council England, the £25m project will improve public areas and cultural spaces for the 6.25m people who visit the 21-acre site every year.

The project also includes a major heritage programme to open up the centre's extensive archive to the public and the creation of an Archive Studio in the Royal Festival Hall - a space to train volunteers and host public events.

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, commented: “The South Bank is one London’s most vibrant and popular riverside areas. With the help of nearly £5m of National Lottery players’ money, the Southbank Centre will be able to start conservation work and also give its historic archive a complete overhaul. As long-term supporters, we are always impressed with the centre’s ability to reinvent itself as well as effectively engage with the local community as well as both domestic and overseas visitors.”

The Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room will close on **21 September** for two years while the work takes place.



Artist impression of Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer with improved access and views to the terraces



val Wing repair and maintenance project

The Hayward Gallery

Southbank Centre receives £4.9m Heritage Lottery Fund award