



It's the end of the line for the Hammersmith Palais



Above and insert: The Palais De Danse, soon after it first opened its doors in 1919.

Main pic: 50 years on, the Palais was still going strong in 1969

The Hammersmith Palais, West London's legendary music and dance venue which inspired the 1978 Clash single (White Man) in Hammersmith Palais, is facing demolition to make way for a new office block.

The historic ballroom, which achieved iconic status after it was name checked by seminal punk band the Clash, is facing demolition after developers got the final go-ahead at a planning committee on 22 January.

Artists who have performed at the venue range from Glenn Miller to Justin Timberlake, but now the music could all be over for the Palais. Its owner, Parkway Properties, is planning to demolish the famous venue/nightclub and replace it with offices and a restaurant.

Councillor Lucy Ivimy, H&F Planning Committee Chairman, says, "Having given permission to demolish the Palais in 2001, the current planning committee had no justifiable grounds for refusing permission on this occasion."

History

Built in 1919 as the Palais De Danse, the Palais was one of a number of ballrooms which grew up

around the capital to meet the demands of the jazz era. The building opened just after the First World War with the original Dixieland Big Band. In the twenties it was converted briefly into an ice rink before reverting to duty as a dance hall.

During the Second World War the BBC broadcast Services Spotlight from the Palais. Big band stars including Stan Kenton, Joe Loss and Glenn Miller all played there.

After the war the Palais continued to host big bands, as well as some of the most famous rock and rollers of the time, including Bill Hayley, the Rolling Stones, the Pogues and the Clash, who released the single (White Man) in Hammersmith Palais in 1978.

In the 1970s and 80s, it became the place where audiences could see bands like the Clash, the Sex Pistols and U2. The Palais is also host to a number of music awards ceremonies, including the annual NME awards.

Cllr Ivimy continues, "Sadly, despite the Palais' great history, none of the original 1930s interior features remain and English Heritage has inspected the site and confirmed that there is insufficient architectural merit in the building to justify listing it."

Decline

In 1995, a 13-year-old Prince William attended an event called the Yuppy Ball "disguised" as a normal teenager with friends from Eton. However, during the late nineties the nightclub was witness to violent behaviour and drug-taking.

Police tried repeatedly to have the club closed after being called to violent incidents, including a shooting on the dance floor, a man having his ear bitten off and a riot in the street outside when two gangs clashed.

More recently, the venue has managed to reinvent itself. Justin Timberlake performed there

last summer and it is the base for Saturday night crowd-puller, School Disco. The weekly parties regularly attract about 2,000 revellers, but have aroused the wrath of residents, who complain about being woken at 2.00am by drunks as the Palais empties.

School Disco's founder and head DJ Bobby Sanchez said, "There is a general trend to convert the old music halls in London to retail or residential property, so it doesn't come as a surprise." Parkway Properties already had planning permission for the scheme and with final 'conservation area' consent can now press ahead with their plans.

Councillor Nicholas Botterill, cabinet member for environment, says, "We recognise that some people will have fond memories of the golden era at The Hammersmith Palais.

"It is true to say it played a huge part in west London's music scene, but sadly the golden era for the Palais is now long gone."