

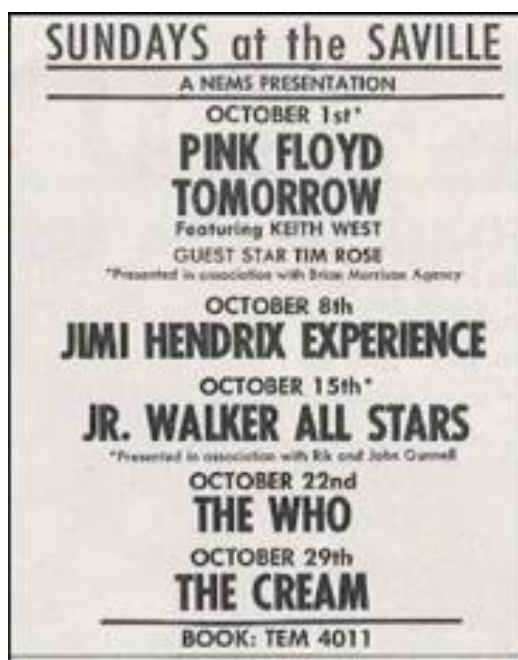
Proof of Evidence for Covent Garden Community Association re Historic Character of the building

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My name is Jane Palm-Gold. I have lived on New Compton Street and within the Denmark St. Conservation Area for 17 years.

I am an artist, curator and St. Giles local historian. I have created and curated a number of exhibitions on the rich and infamous history of the area - on the St Giles Rookery and the 18th century Gin Epidemic (with Museum of London Archaeology), on Denmark Street/Tin Pan Alley and the cultural history of the music industry (Regeneration City Blues, Leeds and London, 2015) and in 2017 I was commissioned by Shaftesbury Plc to curate an exhibition on The Roxy, the legendary Punk club in Covent Garden (this featured as part of a larger event that I organised for the Seven Dials Trust). My work has featured on SKYArts 'Tate Walks' on Hogarth and 'Invitation Au Voyage' for ARTE TV. In 2017 myself, Alastair Choat and Henry Scott-Irvine supplied historic evidence and citations at the request of English Heritage and we got the Sex Pistols rehearsal space and flat on Denmark Street Grade II* listed status.

I have undertaken some research into the history of the building that is now the Odeon Covent Garden and in particular its history as a hugely important cultural space for live music under Brian Epstein (manager of The Beatles) from 1965 to 1967 and then before it was bought by ABC to become a cinema in 1970.



The Saville Theatre venue was within close proximity to the music business on Denmark Street and thus was inextricably linked with promoters/managers/agents/recording studios and publishers who had businesses on the street. The famously rich cultural history of the street and its importance to London and 20th century music history is something which Consolidated Developments have valued in their redevelopment that is currently taking shape, and they have done much to preserve the historic nature and fabric of the industry within the street itself.

The Saville was built as a theatre in 1931 and features all along its frontage the famous frieze sculpted by Gilbert Bayes which depicts 'Drama Through The Ages'. It has Grade II listed status.

The theatre operated successful runs of plays and musicals before, during and after the war. But it narrowly escaped destruction from the bombing that destroyed so much of Shaftesbury Avenue, which makes it even more special as a survivor. I would like to show you a video clip of the morning after an air-raid. (See [this video](#) which CGCA will play in part, including from 0.56 to 1.06 minutes where there is footage around The Saville).

In the late 1960's the theatre was famed for its 'legendary Sunday night concerts'. When Brian Epstein took a lease on the building he promoted new plays as well as these weekly rock gigs. The concerts were sell-outs, featuring a roll call of top artists and bands of the era as the above poster shows.

In fact, Jimi Hendrix played the Saville Theatre on five occasions, once famously opening his set with a rendition of Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, which he performed to The Beatles all sat in the front row. Their album had only been released two days before. There is footage of this occasion [on YouTube here](#). In August 1967 and immediately after his ground-breaking performance at the US Monterey Pop Festival, Hendrix returned in triumph to perform at the Saville. In November 1967, The Beatles filmed their music promo for 'Hello Goodbye' on the stage of the theatre, resplendent in costumes made famous on the cover of the 'Sergeant Pepper' Peter Blake album sleeve.



This period of time at the Saville Theatre is one of the most illustrious in its history. Another legendary British band with connections to the theatre is the Rolling Stones and I would like to show you a video clip from another of these Sunday night shows. This clip shows glimpses of the interior of The Saville Theatre, and about half a minute of footage outside the theatre. (See [this video](#) which CGCA will play in part, including from 2.35 to 3.15 minutes where there is footage outside The Saville).

The external shots of the theatre in the 1960's show that it has hardly changed outside, and give a spirited feel for how it would look if it were sympathetically restored to its original glory and intended use. The Saville has had a rich and glittering history and deserves to be reinstated as a premier arts cultural performance space.
