

Historic Smith Square Hall Secures Planning Consent for Major Restoration



Wednesday 11 March 2026

Westminster City Council has granted planning and listed building consent for *Doors Open*, a bold £20 million capital project led by Sinfonia Smith Square to restore and transform Smith Square Hall, the Grade I listed Baroque cultural landmark in the heart of London.

The Hall sits on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and requires urgent restoration to safeguard its future.

Doors Open will secure Smith Square Hall's future through a thoughtful renovation that respects Sir Thomas Archer's 18th-century design while delivering 21st-century performance facilities and a centre for musical excellence.

Smith Square Hall is home to Sinfonia Smith Square, whose mission is to inspire young artists by nurturing the next generation of professional musicians through its annual Fellowship programme, which forms a new, vibrant orchestra each year. Sinfonia Smith Square attracts world-class artists who present exceptional performances in its iconic home, and acts as a catalyst for community engagement, delivering cultural initiatives for the enjoyment of diverse audiences.

Doors Open will deliver:

- A world class performance space, building on the Hall's rich musical heritage and renowned acoustic, attracting audiences of 100,000 a year.
- A new Learning Studio for children, schools, and community outreach activity.
- An Artist Wellbeing Hub providing improved facilities for musicians and guest artists.
- A revitalised Crypt cafe and box office, creating a welcoming community space open throughout the day.
- Full restoration of the historic building fabric and essential services, safeguarding the building for future generations.

Construction is expected to begin in 2027, with completion and the reopening of Smith Square Hall anticipated in early 2029. Sinfonia Smith Square is working with renowned conservation and performance architects Burrell Foley Fischer on the project.

Sinfonia Smith Square's vision, to transform lives through music, is central to *Doors Open*. The organisation collaborates with local partners including Tri-Borough Music Hub and Westminster City School to inspire participation and create pathways into music at all levels.

Over a four-year period, *Doors Open* will engage more than 35,000 people through an ambitious community outreach and education programme promoting skills development and volunteering.

Doors Open is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with Development Phase funding already in place.

Rosie Fraser, Chief Executive, Sinfonia Smith Square said:

“Planning and listed building consent for Doors Open marks a decisive moment for Smith Square Hall. By restoring this extraordinary building, introducing 21st-century performance capabilities, and creating a new Learning Studio, we will open the Hall to the families, schools and communities on our doorstep who have never had access to the music and education it can offer. This secures the future of a historic landmark - and an exciting musical future for our neighbours across Westminster and beyond.”

Mark Shearer and Tim Mitchell, Councillors for St James's Ward, Westminster City Council said:

“As Ward Councillors we are delighted that Sinfonia Smith Square has achieved planning consent for the transformation of this iconic building. In particular we are excited to see plans that will benefit the local neighbourhood and also the wider musical community - especially young musicians who typically wouldn't have the opportunity to play at this level. We wish the team our very best wishes for their ongoing fundraising efforts for this transformation.”

In February, Her Majesty The Queen, Royal Patron of Sinfonia Smith Square, visited Smith Square Hall to watch young scholars from the Tri-Borough Music Hub rehearse and perform with the orchestra and learn about the project.

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Notes to Editors:

Full resolution images can be downloaded [here](#).

About Sinfonia Smith Square

Sinfonia Smith Square was formed in 2021 from the merger of Southbank Sinfonia and St John's Smith Square. The organisation nurtures emerging professional musicians through its annual orchestral Fellowship programme, with over 700 players from across the globe having participated since 2002.

Smith Square Hall, formerly St John's Smith Square, is a Grade I listed Baroque masterpiece currently on the Heritage at Risk register. The £20 million ***Doors Open*** project will restore the building, create 21st century performance facilities, and expand education programmes to reach over 10,000 people annually.

Smith Square Hall hosts a year-round programme ranging from community events to internationally acclaimed concerts. This month sees the inaugural ***London Festival of Chamber music (March 25 – 29)***, featuring inspiring musicians brought together by the festival's Artistic Director, pianist Alessio Bax, for a week of musical collaboration.

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