



THE CINEMA MUSEUM

...committed to memory



## THE CINEMA MUSEUM (TCM) PUBLIC STATEMENT 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

The Cinema Museum has been campaigning for the option to purchase its buildings since 2007. In May 2021 the Museum issued a public statement reiterating the fact that they had agreed purchase terms with their landlords, Lifestory for their buildings. The Museum also made it publicly clear that there was one area of strong disagreement between Lifestory and the Museum (see below box).

**Area of disagreement:** Lifestory's position is that if they do not get planning permission for the wider Woodlands site, they will sell the Master's House and other heritage buildings (home to TCM) to the highest bidder to help offset their losses on this venture. This act will inevitably see the permanent closure of the Museum and the potential loss of public access to (and use of) these heritage buildings. *TCM does not believe this is an acceptable outcome from the sale of public land, the purchase of which was funded from public money, on a promise to secure the future of TCM*

Excerpt From The Cinema Museum Public Statement May 2021

Six months have passed since that statement was made and the Museum has still not been given a legal option of long-term security of tenure.

Over that time The Cinema Museum has continued to argue that Lifestory should honour the agreement they made when they purchased the wider Woodlands site (upon which the Museum sits) and enter into the legally binding sale agreement with The Cinema Museum as the purchaser.

Over that time the Museum buildings, which are important heritage buildings of significant architectural, cultural and public interest have deteriorated further, resulting in the Museum flooding on many occasions - threatening the collections and causing further significant damage to the fabric of its Grade 2 listed buildings.

Had the Museum been allowed to purchase its buildings at the commencement of this campaign, then that security of tenure would have allowed the trustees to apply for grants for necessary repairs. As it stands, the short leases that The Cinema Museum have been obliged to remain on, leave it responsible for repairs, without the ability to raise charitable grant funding to pay for them. In the past six months costs in the region of some £20,000+ have been incurred by the Museum, merely to 'patch things up' and nurse these important buildings along. This is unsustainable and potentially ruinous for this small charity and volunteer led Museum.

By the time everyone accepts that action must be taken, it may be too late for the Museum, its buildings and its collections. We have today, delivered a letter to Lifestory, in the name of the volunteers and trustees of The Cinema Museum and the 60,000+ signatories of the 'Save The Cinema Museum' petition, asking them to exchange on the leases drawn up by The Cinema Museum in 2020. We have asked for a formal and conclusive response within 30 days.