

# BRIXTON HOUSE

Appointment  
of Chair  
July 2024



Saxton Bampfylde

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# Welcome from David Bryan

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of Brixton House.

When I was appointed Chair of Ovalhouse Theatre eight years ago, it was always with the prospect of making Brixton House a reality. It was that spectacular objective that drew me in. The potential to be a part of something that would be a landmark and a symbol of community endeavour and creativity was overwhelming. The ideas emerging around what Brixton House could become spoke to my personal values and commitment to enabling neglected communities to have somewhere that is life affirming. Ovalhouse had a long and successful history working with poor and neglected communities by giving them a space to breathe, be creative and find their voices. I was determined that Brixton House would do this and more.

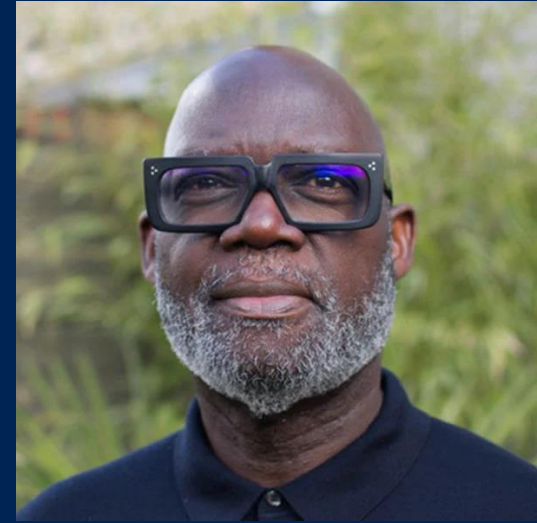
I'm unequivocally proud of what we, the board of Brixton House, have achieved. This has been a phenomenal team effort, where we have been reliant on different skills, knowledge and expertise from within the board to enable us to make Brixton House a reality despite a challenging journey. It has been just over 2 years since Brixton House opened and its artistic achievements have been

amazing. It's often forgotten that we opened just as Covid restrictions were relaxed. The paint was still wet in places; thankfully, the concrete was set. Bringing a new entity into the world is fraught and we at Brixton House had to make tough calls and maintain our strategic focus. Thankfully, the worst is behind us, and the best is still to come.

We have a very good board that is on its way to becoming a great board. One committed to both advising, monitoring and investing in building towards the future.

Our community engagement is a major focus, but we now have a basis to build on. You might think it odd to leave comments on the arts to the end, but this aspect is in good hands and has emerged into a consistent and exciting Brixton House cultural offer.

I hope that you will be captivated by the bold step that Brixton House represents and symbolises, a determination to do more than just make-do. It has been a privilege to be the ambassador for Brixton House. Brixton House is an exhilarating venture; we hope you will give this role careful consideration.



**David Bryan CBE**  
*Chair, Brixton House*



# About Brixton House

Brixton House, in the heart of Brixton, is a theatre and creative hub that attracts, supports and inspires new artistic experiences that develop community solidarity and passion for social change. With a diverse programme of shows, events, and workshops that foreground underrepresented voices, Brixton House champions diversity and inclusivity.

Brixton House also invites artists at various stages of their journey to explore, create, and share honest, challenging, innovative work that moves us towards a more inclusive global society.

Brixton House's journey began in the 1930s when the organisation was established as Ovalhouse, a groundbreaking and inclusive theatre space for local young people, community members and traditionally marginalised artists, writers and performers.

Ovalhouse established an international reputation for pioneering fringe theatre and supporting experimental theatre companies and was also a home and meeting place for social justice groups including the British Black Panther Party, Black Theatre Co-op and the Theatre of Black Women, with notable activists like Beverley Bryan and theatremakers such as Mustapha Matura, Bernardine Evaristo and Paulette Randall as members.

In 2022, the organisation assumed its new identity as Brixton House and a new, purpose-built home on Coldharbour Lane.

Brixton House receives 50% of its income from theatre and commercial activities with a further 35% as a recipient of Arts Council England funding through the National Portfolio. The remaining 15% comes from fundraising.

[Brixton House website](#)

[Latest accounts](#)

# The Building

Designed by Edmund Wilson of Foster Wilson Architects, Brixton House incorporates sustainable raw materials throughout, while boldly displaying modern features and illuminations. It is home to two theatres, seven rehearsal rooms including ceiling heights for aerial performances, high-quality technical facilities, and fully accessible spaces, including wheelchair-accessible rigs, as well as a café and bar open throughout the day.

Carlton Mansions, the Victorian building next to Brixton House and home to the famous *Nuclear Dawn* mural by Brian Barnes MBE, has been restored and refurbished by Lambeth Council to house 26 workspace units offered at affordable rents to the arts and creative industries. With direct access between Brixton House and Carlton Mansions, residents of Carlton Mansions can benefit from all of the spaces and resources on the whole site.

In addition to this, two floors of Brixton House house offices rented out by the organisation on behalf of Lambeth Council to the creative

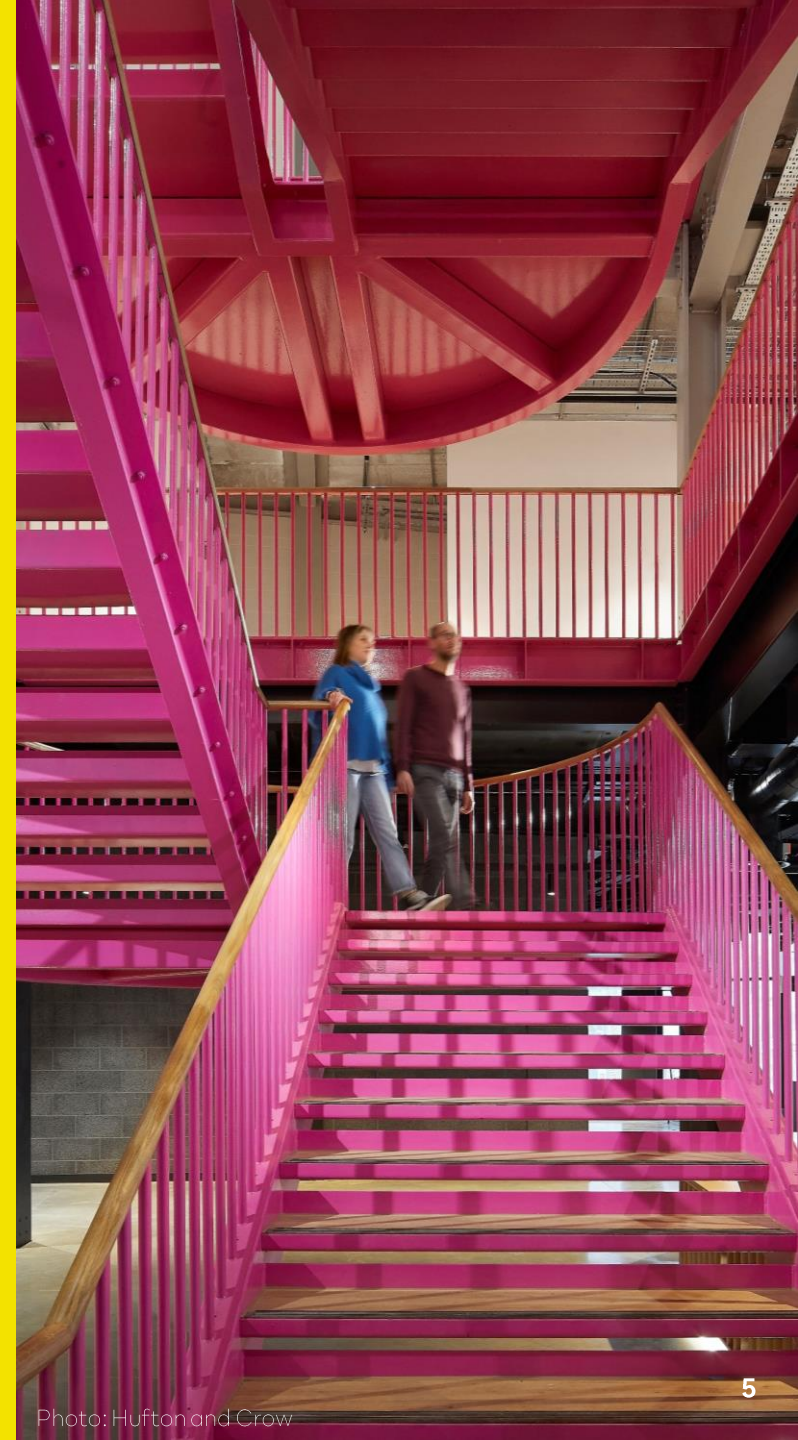
industries and the arts, establishing Brixton House as a vital new creative hub for London.

Data company [Beauhurst](#) occupy the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and [ACM](#), who offer specialist education programmes in Music Performance, Songwriting, Production, Business, Games Development and more, are resident on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and the basement.

The building development is part of the Somerleyton Road Development Project and was a venture conceived as a partnership with Lambeth Council, who are the freeholders of the building. As part of this regeneration project and as a new creative hub embedded in the community, Brixton House aims to serve the residents and the creative community of Brixton and beyond.

[Further reading:](#)

[Somerleyton Road Development Project](#)





# Looking ahead

Brixton House is a success story that has been nearly a decade in the making. An inspired vision to build a creative hub centred around moving Ovalhouse Theatre, an independent charity with a commitment and track record of giving a platform to the neglected communities and unheard voices, to Brixton. We closed the doors on Ovalhouse in December 2019, anticipating a move to the new building late in 2020. The onset of Covid meant that there was a significant delay to our original plans and the ensuing political, financial, and environmental crises delayed our new phase. However, we remained focused, resilient and determined and opened the doors to Brixton House in February 2022.

Our mission is to continue establishing Brixton House as a new creative hub which presents and collaborates with voices and perspectives not currently centred in mainstream funded culture. We will focus on theatrical stories told through theatre and multiple other art forms. We remain committed to and representative of Brixton, being a place where the lively and diverse communities who live, work, and visit this place, can come together to engage with culture and build community.

By doing this we will continue working towards our vision – to empower our undervalued, unheard, and excluded communities through our creative and cultural spaces.



**Our vision is to empower  
our undervalued, unheard,  
and excluded communities  
through our creative and  
cultural spaces.**

**We are  
committed to and  
representative of  
Brixton.**

**enterprising  
welcoming  
nurturing  
radical  
collaborative  
celebratory**

**We live by our values and they are at the core of everything we do.**

**Enterprising: We are a strong creative enterprise providing security and stability for creative freedom to be realised.**

**Welcoming: We will remain connected to our communities and treat everyone with kindness and respect. Brixton House is their home from home.**

**Nurturing: We foster a caring and compassionate environment that inspires to be and give their best.**

**Radical: We encourage people to be authentic, affirm their rights, be critical, bold, resolute and determined.**

**Collaborative: We are proactive in working with others, locally, nationally or internationally on a shared understanding of community enrichment.**

**Celebratory: We embody a spirit of hope.**



# The Role

David Bryan is standing down as Chair of Brixton House having made an outstanding contribution in leading the Board and organisation through a period of considerable change in its transition from its previous existence as Ovalhouse, to a new identity and home.

The new Chair will join Brixton House at a hugely exciting time as the organisation is now at home in its new, purpose-built building. They will help lead Brixton House through this exciting period of change as it grows and develops. This is the opportunity to support and champion an organisation with the potential to make a significant difference to both its community and the national arts landscape.

## Key Responsibilities

### Leadership

- To play a key role in the development of Brixton House's vision for the future, contributing to its strategic leadership, sound management and proactive progression, with a focus on ensuring long-term sustainability and the development and diversification of income streams;
- To work closely with and support the CEO, senior team and the rest of the staff;
- To proactively encourage the theatre's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- To safeguard the charitable mission and reputation of Brixton House, acting in the best interests of the organisation at all times;
- To conduct the annual appraisal of the CEO and participate in annual appraisals of board members where appropriate;

### External advocacy and stakeholder management

- To support and manage relationships with key stakeholders, notably London Borough of Lambeth and central government agencies, in partnership with the rest of the Board and CEO;
- To act as a positive and passionate ambassador for the organisation, advocating on its behalf, and representing its creative and civic mission;
- To contribute to fundraising efforts and build networks on

behalf of Brixton House;

- To attend productions at Brixton House, and touring productions nationally;

### Governance

- To ensure principles of good governance are met and the Board is well run, working collaboratively with other board members and staff;
- To effectively chair Board meetings;
- To ensure that Brixton House maintains its organisational resilience through the development and regular monitoring of robust policies, risk management, charitable accounting practices and internal controls;
- To support the development of the Trustees, ensuring that they understand fully their role and responsibilities and drawing on their particular expertise to the benefit of the Board as a whole;
- To ensure that the Trustees have the appropriate blend of skills, lived experience and diversity of voice to enable the Board to deliver its objectives and ensuring that any gaps are addressed through development of individuals or recruitment;
- To ensure the sustainability of the Board through regular performance review of Trustees and succession planning;
- To oversee risk management including regular review of the risk register.



Things I Can Laugh About Now, Photo: The Other Richard

# Person Specification

The successful candidate will bring all or most of the following qualities:

- The willingness to be an outstanding ambassador and advocate for Brixton House and its mission;
- The energy, skills and experience to support and raise Brixton House's profile locally, nationally and globally;
- The management skills required to support the executive team;
- A good understanding of the social, economic and political context in which Brixton House works and a willingness to further develop this understanding, and;
- Emotional and strategic intelligence.
- A passion for the arts and the conviction that they have the power to transform lives and communities;
- A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- A strong track record of leadership;
- A strong level of commerciality, financial acumen, and an entrepreneurial approach;
- The capacity for strategic thinking to support the ambitions and long-term development of Brixton House;
- A strong understanding of governance and board leadership and development, ideally gained through prior non-executive experience;
- High-level networks and a willingness to play a leading role in fundraising activities, using professional and personal contacts for the benefit of Brixton House and to advance the organisation externally;







# Terms of Appointment

The Chair is appointed on a three-year term with the opportunity to renew for a second term.

There are 4 Board meetings a year plus an annual away day and possible additional ad hoc meetings.

The Chair is also expected to attend performances and events.

The overall time commitment is expected to be 2-3 days per month.

This is an unremunerated role, though reasonable expenses may be reimbursed.

# How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Brixton House on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code JBOFA.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the (non-compulsory) online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024.

Final interviews with Brixton House will take place in September.

*\*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

Brixton House is committed to building a caring workplace for our staff, artists, and community. Our House is a space for artistic and civic-minded collaboration that represents the Brixton we all love. Brixton House is committed to celebrating the wealth of diversity in our society through our staff team. We are actively engaged in representation, inclusion, and anti-racism planning.

Our organisation is always evolving to be the most inclusive venue we can be and to promote more collaboration, attracting a proudly diverse pool of talented people from the global majority. We value enriching our artists, community and workforce with multiple perspectives and therefore encourage applicants from all intersections of our society.

We value equality of opportunity and will be inspired by applications from candidates currently underrepresented across the arts workforce, particularly anyone who understands the experiences of discrimination or racism. We strive to treat all job applications equally, and we may use positive action in cases where candidates are equally qualified.

## GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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