# Prince Charles bids to reopen former Picturehouse in Stratford as fans rally over Leicester Square lease



The Prince Charles Cinema, a fixture of Leicester Square known for its cult programming and raucous midnight singalongs, has put in a bid to reopen the former Stratford Picturehouse as a second London venue even as talks continue over the future of its original site. According to the original report, the move would see the independent repertory cinema expand beyond its West End home while it remains in negotiations with its landlord over a new lease for the Leicester Square premises.

Those negotiations involve Zedwell LSQ Ltd, identified in reporting as the landlord for the Leicester Square site and linked to larger development interests. UK Companies House filings confirm Zedwell LSQ Ltd as an active corporate entity, showing its registration and standard company filings; public records have been used to corroborate media reporting that connects the company to the developer groups managing properties in the area. The dispute has prompted a rapid public mobilisation: when the prospect of the Prince Charles being forced out became public, a petition opposing the move gathered very large numbers in a single day, a surge that independent outlets also documented.

Paul Vickery, the cinema’s head of programming, told The Guardian that the Stratford bid is intended as an addition rather than a relocation. “Given what’s happened this year, I understand how it could look like we’re trying to shift operations but that’s not what’s happening,” he said, adding that the team envisages “a third or fourth space” if the expansion proves viable. The language underlines a deliberate strategy to scale the Prince Charles model rather than abandon the West End institution that has become part of London’s cultural fabric.

Stratford was described by Vickery as an attractive prospect because of its recent regeneration and demographic mix. The area’s post‑Olympic transformation, a large student population and a proliferation of new residential developments make it, in his view, a neighbourhood that could sustain another specialist cinema while still “finding its feet” culturally and commercially.

The Prince Charles’s bid to branch out sits against its long-standing reputation as one of the capital’s most idiosyncratic cinemas. Opened originally as a live theatre in 1962 and reinvented as a repertory venue in 1991, it has cultivated traditions — from cut-price seats to midnight screenings and audience singalongs — that have attracted directors such as Paul Thomas Anderson and Quentin Tarantino. Oral histories and long-form profiles have emphasised how those traditions have helped make the venue a touchstone for devoted filmgoers, which in turn explains the swift public reaction to the lease dispute.

The opportunity to take on the Stratford site traces back to the closure of several Picturehouse venues in London. Industry reporting documented that Picturehouse confirmed the closure of multiple London sites in summer 2024, including the Stratford branch, citing rising operational costs, falling admissions and broader financial pressures in the sector that followed the pandemic and affected corporate owners. Those closures created a number of empty or shuttered screens that independent operators and community groups have since explored as potential new homes for film programming.

The Prince Charles has previously expressed interest in other rescued venues. It explored taking on Edinburgh’s Filmhouse before that building’s recent revival; Screen Scotland reports that Filmhouse reopened on 27 June 2025 following a £2 million refurbishment, funded by a combination of government support, Screen Scotland grants, local authority backing and public crowdfunding. The Filmhouse relaunch is being held up in coverage as an example of how community support and targeted funding can revive a listed, culturally significant cinema building.

The speed and scale of public support for the Prince Charles underlines both the cultural stakes and the community’s willingness to act. “The response was so humbling,” Vickery told The Guardian, reflecting on the wave of offers and messages after the lease dispute emerged. Independent reporting also documented the petition’s rapid growth, underscoring how deeply the venue’s fate resonates beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

For now, the outcome remains conditional on lease talks and the practicalities of reopening a former Picturehouse site. The Prince Charles’s proposal frames Stratford as the first of what could be several outposts, but whether that expansion proceeds alongside a secure future in Leicester Square depends on negotiations with the landlord and on broader market pressures that have reshaped the London cinema landscape in recent years.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london), [[4]](https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14220123/filing-history), [[6]](https://www.huckmag.com/article/petition-save-the-prince-charles-cinema-pcc-100000)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.timeout.com/london/film/an-oral-history-of-prince-charles-cinema), [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.screendaily.com/news/picturehouse-cinemas-confirms-closure-of-three-london-sites/5194862.article)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.screen.scot/news/2025/june/a-screen-icon-returns-filmhouse-edinburgh-reopens-its-doors), [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 8 – [[6]](https://www.huckmag.com/article/petition-save-the-prince-charles-cinema-pcc-100000), [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london), [[4]](https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14220123/filing-history), [[5]](https://www.screendaily.com/news/picturehouse-cinemas-confirms-closure-of-three-london-sites/5194862.article)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/aug/11/prince-charles-cinema-looks-to-expand-to-second-venue-in-east-london> - The Guardian reports that the Prince Charles Cinema, a beloved independent repertory venue in Leicester Square, is seeking to open a second site in east London by bidding to take over the former Stratford Picturehouse. The move comes while the cinema remains in talks with its landlord, Zedwell LSQ Ltd, owned by developer Criterion Capital, over the future of its original Leicester Square premises. Head of programming Paul Vickery emphasises expansion is an addition rather than a relocation, citing ambitions for further outposts. The article references the cinema’s cult status, famous supporters, its 1962 origins and a petition opposing displacement.
3. <https://www.screen.scot/news/2025/june/a-screen-icon-returns-filmhouse-edinburgh-reopens-its-doors> - Screen Scotland reports that Edinburgh’s Filmhouse will reopen on 27 June 2025 after a £2 million refurbishment and an 'Open the Doors' campaign. The article details repairs to the listed building’s roof and stonework, internal refit, and enhancements including new seating, improved technical facilities and a refurbished bar. The project is backed by funding from the UK Government’s Levelling Up Community Ownership Fund, Screen Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council, plus public crowdfunding. Filmhouse will relaunch with three refurbished screens and plans to add a fourth, resuming its role as a hub for film festivals, education and community engagement.
4. <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14220123/filing-history> - The UK Companies House filing history for ZEDWELL LSQ LIMITED shows the company is registered under number 14220123 and holds filings including accounts and confirmation statements. Documents record name changes and details of persons with significant control, demonstrating its corporate existence. The public register provides dates of incorporation, financial submissions and director appointments, confirming Zedwell LSQ as an active entity. This official source supports reporting that Zedwell LSQ Ltd is the landlord associated with Leicester Square holdings and links to larger developer groups referenced in public coverage, verifying claims about ownership and company structure in the Prince Charles Cinema dispute.
5. <https://www.screendaily.com/news/picturehouse-cinemas-confirms-closure-of-three-london-sites/5194862.article> - ScreenDaily reports that Picturehouse Cinemas confirmed the closure of three London sites in summer 2024, including Stratford East Picturehouse, citing increasing operational costs and declining admissions. The piece notes the last trading dates and wider pressures on the sector linked to post-pandemic recovery and financial strains at parent company Cineworld. It explains that Picturehouse had opened new venues elsewhere while closing older branches, and that membership holders would be contacted. This source corroborates claims that the Stratford Picturehouse had ceased operations, creating an opportunity for independent operators like the Prince Charles to consider reopening the former site in east London.
6. <https://www.huckmag.com/article/petition-save-the-prince-charles-cinema-pcc-100000> - Huck reports that the Save The Prince Charles Cinema petition gathered over 100,000 signatures in a single day after the venue revealed the landlord, Zedwell LSQ Ltd, sought to insert a six-month break clause into a new lease. The item outlines the cinema’s campaign alleging unreasonable rent demands and lack of transparency from the landlord, and describes the community’s swift mobilisation to protect the West End institution. Huck highlights the cinema’s cultural history and the organisers’ concerns about being placed under constant threat, providing independent confirmation of the rapid surge in public support referenced in other coverage and media reports.
7. <https://www.timeout.com/london/film/an-oral-history-of-prince-charles-cinema> - Time Out’s oral history of the Prince Charles Cinema traces its evolution from a theatre opened in 1962 to a film venue that became a repertory cinema in 1991, when Robins Cinemas introduced cut-price and repertory programming. The piece collects memories from staff, filmmakers and patrons, noting traditions such as singalongs and midnight screenings and references to famous visitors including Paul Thomas Anderson and Quentin Tarantino. It explains how the cinema cultivated a cult reputation through eclectic seasons, second‑run films and promotional stunts, underlining the cultural importance that underpins contemporary campaigns to preserve the venue amid lease disputes and activism.