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THEATRE503 TO BUILD WORLD-CLASS CENTRE FOR EARLY CAREER PLAYWRIGHTS IN NINE ELMS, WANDSWORTH

Theatre503 have successfully bid to create a new 320 square metre, state-of-the art studio space in Nine Elms, Wandsworth which will open its doors by 2023 and be:

- a centre of international playwriting excellence for early career playwrights
- an open space for anyone in the local community who wants to tell their story and explore their creativity
- a bridge between 503's artistic development programmes and its theatre productions staged in Theatre503's Latchmere venue on Battersea Park Road.

The Battersea-based new writing venue was chosen as part of a competitive Cultural Anchor Tenancy application process by Galliard Homes, Royal Mail Group and Wandsworth Council, managed by BOP Consulting.

With a £250,000 contribution from Galliard towards its fit out, the 503Studio at Nine Elms will include a rehearsal suite, multi-purpose event spaces, a creative area for writers including desks and a reading room, as well as housing the administrative offices of Theatre503. This will enable the theatre to expand their programme, in particular engaging with more people in the Nine Elms community and the borough of Wandsworth, as well as continuing to deliver their unique support of diverse debut and emerging playwrights from across the UK and beyond.

Lisa Spirling and Andrew Shepherd, Artistic and Executive Directors of Theatre503, said: "The 503Studio at Nine Elms is a game changing moment in the history of Theatre503 and will have a seismic impact on the new writing ecology for generations to come. Diversity begins with who is telling the stories. While this has been a driving force in how we programme throughout the year, we cannot achieve this without actively seeking out writers and the artists who bring their words to life from all backgrounds and support them to put their work on stage. The 503Studio gives us the opportunity to take this commitment even further with a unique, world class centre opening up even more creative opportunities for all. It will be a vibrant, open, accessible and welcoming space where early career playwrights from all over the world rub shoulders with local residents looking for a creative outlet. The 503Studio will be a vital destination for writers of the future to find their voice, develop their craft and feed directly into the final productions in our Latchmere home."

Theatre503 was awarded the peppercorn rent 99-year tenure after showing the potential to deliver a bigger impact in the local community, as well as their ongoing commitment to audiences and participants in Wandsworth. Recent Council supported projects include their first ever livestreamed production of *The Fairytale Revolution*, which was shared for free to 9,605 local schoolchildren in December and *Right to Write*, a beginners playwriting course for people who live or work in Nine Elms.

The site, just off Nine Elms Lane, will be situated in Nine Elms Park, next to the new Nine Elms school, at the very heart of the community where tens of thousands of residents will be living.

Shepherd and Spirling continue: "What we are particularly excited about is being able to create a permanent presence in Nine Elms where anybody who lives, works or is simply passing by can walk through our doors and find out not only what's on offer in our 503 spaces but also all the other cultural opportunities in Nine Elms and Wandsworth. The 503Studio at Nine Elms will be a significant creative and learning space that lasts and is a lasting legacy for Theatre503, the borough of Wandsworth and the theatre sector."

Cllr Ravi Govindia, Leader of Wandsworth Council, said: “We are delighted to have delivered another cultural anchor partnership which connects culture and community and brings the reality of Nine Elms as an arts destination a step closer.

“This growing neighbourhood is shown to be the place of choice for arts organisations as they expand to reach new audiences.

“I welcome Theatre503 extending its reach to this part of Wandsworth and look forward to working together as we make Nine Elms an even more lively destination.”

Galliard Homes: “We received some excellent proposals for the unit and very much enjoyed working with Wandsworth Council and Royal Mail throughout the process. We are especially pleased to be working with Theatre503 to build a world class centre of excellence within Nine Elms. Supporting future generations in gaining new skills through training is something Galliard Homes are passionate about. We are therefore pleased to be working with Theatre503 to support the next generation of playwrights, ensuring the UK creative industry can flourish.”

Erica Whyman, Chair of Theatre503 and Deputy Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, said: “The team at Theatre503 never cease to inspire me with their energy, ingenuity and commitment to new voices. I am delighted that this opportunity will allow them to spread their wings, and will mean we can share their visionary and accessible work with many more people. This collaboration with Nine Elms will secure the future of Theatre503, ensuring we can make an invaluable contribution to the community we serve in Wandsworth and to British Theatre.”

The 503Studio at Nine Elms is due to be built and completed before the end of 2023, alongside the installation of a lift and refurbished floor to open up access to Theatre503 at their existing home above The Latchmere.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT THEATRE503

Theatre503 is at the forefront of identifying and nurturing new voices at the very start of their careers and launching them to the industry. They stage more early career playwrights than another theatre in the world – with over 120 writers premiered each year from festivals of short pieces to full length productions, resulting in employment for over 1,000 freelance artists through their year-round programme.

They provide a diverse pipeline of talent resulting in modern classics like “The Mountaintop” by Katori Hall and “Rotterdam” by Jon Brittain – both Olivier Award winners – to future classics like Yasmin Joseph’s “J’Ouvert”, winner of the 2020 James Tait Black Prize and transferring to the West End/BBC Arts and “Wolfie” by Ross Willis, winner of the 2020 Writers Guild Award for Best New Play. Writers who began their creative life at Theatre503 are now writing for the likes of “The Crown”, “Succession”, “Doctor Who”, “Killing Eve” and “Normal People” and every single major subsidised theatre in the country now boasts a new play by a writer who started at Theatre503.

Over a two-year cycle they receive and read over 4,000 scripts including: their International Playwriting Award (1,719 scripts from 45 countries in 2020), 503Five writers’ residency (548 applications) and unsolicited submissions (1,000 per year). They also support writers all year round with development projects working towards that first full length production as part of the 503Studio.

www.theatre503.com / Twitter @Theatre503

About Nine Elms

The Nine Elms part of Wandsworth is an innovative mixed-use district on the Thames in central London with a rich industrial and horticultural heritage. As part of the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea opportunity area, it is undergoing rapid transformation with the creation of 20,000 homes and 25,000 post-construction jobs and two

new Northern Line stations opening in Autumn 2021. Apple is moving its London campus into Battersea Power Station in 2021, further enhancing the area's reputation for creative and digital industries.

A vibrant cultural programme of events, exhibitions and installations is being delivered by Wandsworth Council alongside new cultural spaces opening up in Nine Elms including Matt's Gallery, World Heart Beat, Theatre503 and Chocolate Films. Recent events such as Light Up Nine Elms, Art Night and community festivals attracted thousands of residents and visitors from across London.

The new 503Studio joins Matt's Gallery, World Heart Beat Academy and Chocolate Films who are taking up new spaces in the Nine Elms area, enabled as part of Wandsworth Council's cultural strategy, working with developers and partners to attract cultural organisations and so weave the arts into the fabric of this emerging neighbourhood.

www.nineelmslondon.com / Twitter @NineElmsTeam / Instagram @NineElmsLondon / Facebook @NineElmsLondon

About Galliard

Founded in 1992, Galliard is one of London's largest developers. Over its 29-year history the Galliard Group has evolved from its residential property origins to be a leading authority and expert in construction and the development of large mixed-use schemes and commercial hospitality premises. The group has just over 300 staff and a development portfolio worth over £3.44 billion currently under construction, including nearly 6,392 homes, with some 1,208 homes currently being marketed for sale, and 0.76m sq. ft. of consented commercial space. Through strategic joint venture partnerships Galliard Homes has steadily moved into other key cities throughout the UK, and 2017 saw the group acquire a portfolio in Birmingham with a gross development value of over £500 million. Led by Executive Chairman Stephen Conway, who co-founded the company and CEO Don O'Sullivan. Galliard Homes is a development partner of Frogmore, McCourt, O'Shea, Vanke, Cain International, Catalyst Housing Group, Acorn and Apsley House Capital. Galliard Homes is award winning and in recent years has won international prizes for its developments The Chilterns, Baltimore Tower, Metropolitan Crescent and The Stage, to name a few. A strategic aim of the Group is to engage with the communities within which we work and promote employability, educational advancement, charitable giving, a strong local economy and environmental sustainability. Our Corporate charity partner, St Mungo's works to end homelessness and rebuild lives which aligns with our own values. Our Future Talent schemes, Engage, Evolve and Elevate and our internal development programmes ensure that we continue to attract, recruit and retain the best in the business.

www.galliarhhomes.com