

New BBC boss hears MP suggest it has lost sight of its 'cultural importance to this country'

Battle lines redrawn in studios scrap

THE new Director General of the BBC has blamed a decade of under-investment for its decision to appeal against the Grade II-listing of its famous Maida Vale Studios.

Tim Davie, who took over the helm from Lord Hall on September 1, was quizzed by Labour MP Kevin Brennan during a Commons committee meeting held online on Tuesday.

Acts from The Beatles and Pink Floyd to Adele have performed at the studio complex and

by TOM FOOT

Radio 1's John Peel sessions were recorded there for four decades.

The listing, applied for by Maida Vale resident Theo Morgan, protects the building from future development. But it would also significantly decrease its sale price.

Mr Davie told Mr Brennan: "The BBC is significantly down in real terms – in the last 10 years 30 per cent in terms of our investment. We are facing massive global players, and if we are



BBC DG: Tim Davie

interested in growing the creative economy, and delivering audience value, then that will be all

threatened if we are not investing in the BBC.

"Those studios have been the great resources for the BBC.

"There is a soul in there that is amazing. But it is in a residential area. It is not fit for purpose."

Mr Davie, whose basic salary is £525,000 a year, added: "It's £10 million... I could invest in young talent, apprenticeships, I think it trumps it. I don't think we are losing the cultural soul of the BBC."

Mr Brennan had suggested to him that the

A win in our studios battle

It is a shame that Maida Vale Studios is being lost to the past. I decided to apply for the building to be listed as a Grade II building. I submitted an application. A Change.org petition to save the studios has had over 10,000 signatures, showing the strength of local opinion. The BBC are unlikely to say in Maida Vale. to a purpose-built venue in Haverstock, that many of us would hate to see it knocked down to make way for luxury flats. The BBC, obsessed with the listing, perhaps leaving the opportunity of their own. We recognise the unique place in our heritage occupied by the Studios, which, regrettably, have not been saved. Locals can be proud that we've won the latest Battle of Maida.

Extra May 22: campaigners celebrate the listing

BBC had lost sight of its "cultural importance to this country".

The BBC announced closure of the studios in 2018 with all music recording facilities moving to new premises in Stratford, east London.

The former Edwardian rollerskating rink was

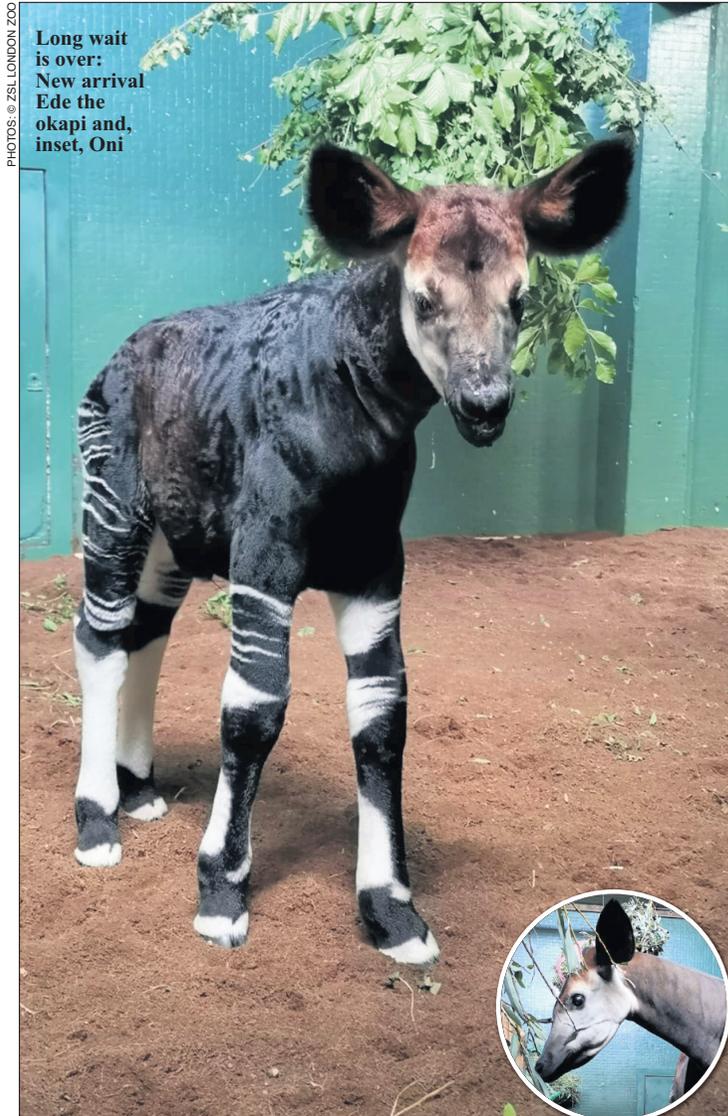
awarded Grade II-listed status by Historic England in May, despite objections from the BBC.

Mr Morgan, who lives in Sutherland Avenue, had said: "I decided to apply for the building to be listed as it to be saved, I was not aware that anyone

else had submitted an application.

"A Change.org petition to save the studios has had over 10,000 signatures, showing the strength of feeling it inspires. But many of us would hate to see it knocked down to make way for luxury flats... Locals can be proud that we've won the latest Battle of Maida."

The 1806 Battle of Maida (Calabria) between the French and British was one of many during the Napoleonic Wars.



Long wait is over: New arrival Ede the okapi and, inset, Oni

Ede the okapi's timely arrival

London Zoo's Oni the okapi gave birth to a baby girl, Ede, on Sunday after an epic 16-month pregnancy, writes Tom Foot.

The 12-hour labour was watched on CCTV by zookeepers. ZSL okapi keeper Gemma Metcalf said: "Like all

okapis, Oni had a long pregnancy – close to 16 months – so we have been excitedly waiting for Ede for a long time."



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