

# Television Centre, London

**Television Centre** (**TVC**) is a building complex in White City, West London, that was the headquarters of BBC Television between 1960 and 2013. The first BBC staff moved into the Scenery Block in 1953, and the centre was officially opened on 29 June 1960. It is one of the most readily recognisable facilities of its type, having appeared as the backdrop for many BBC programmes. Parts of the building are Grade II listed, including the central ring and Studio 1.

Most of the BBC's national television and radio news output came from Television Centre, and in later years most recorded television was output from the nearby Broadcast Centre at 201 Wood Lane, care of Red Bee Media. Live television events from studios and routing of national and international sporting events took place within Television Centre before being passed to the Broadcast Centre for transmission.

The building is 4 miles (6 kilometres) west of central London, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The nearest Underground stations are White City and Wood Lane.

The BBC announced in 2010 that they would cease broadcasting from Television Centre in 2013. In July 2012 it was announced that the complex had been sold to property developers Stanhope plc, who said that the new Television Centre development would "pay homage to the original use of the building", and that the new Television Centre would be opened up to the public, offering entertainment and leisure facilities and approximately 1,000 new homes. The refurbished studios reopened in September 2017.

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## History

On Friday 1 April 1949 Norman Collins, the Controller of the BBC Television Service, announced at the Television Society's annual dinner at The Waldorf Hilton, London that a new TV centre would be built in Shepherd's Bush. London broadcasts at the time came from Alexandra Palace and Lime Grove Studios (from 1949). It was to be the largest television centre in the world.<sup>[1]</sup> Riverside Studios in Hammersmith were used from 1954.<sup>[1]</sup>

It was planned to be 6 acres (2.4 hectares), but turned out to be twice the size. On 24 August 1956 the main contract was awarded to Higgs and Hill, which also built The London Studios for ITV which opened in 1972. Television Centre was planned to cost £9m.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Television Centre



Location within Greater London

<b>Former names</b>	BBC Television Centre
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#### General information

<b>Type</b>	Television production (1960–2013, 2017–present), mixed commercial and residential usage (2012–present)
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<b>Architectural style</b>	Minimalist
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<b>Location</b>	West side of Wood Lane (A219) in White City, opposite Wood Lane tube station
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<b>Address</b>	White City, W12 7RJ
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<b>Country</b>	United Kingdom
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<b>Coordinates</b>	<span><span><span><span><span>51.5099°N</span> <span>0.2263°W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span>51.5099°N 0.2263°W</span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>51.5099; -0.2263</span></span></span></span></span>
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<b>Elevation</b>	6 <span> </span> m (20 <span> </span> ft)
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<b>Current tenants</b>	BBC Studioworks <p>BBC Studios</p> <p>ITV</p>
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<b>Completed</b>	29 June 1960
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<b>Inaugurated</b>	29 June 1960
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<b>Renovated</b>	2013–18
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<b>Cost</b>	£10 million <p>adjusted by inflation: £119 million</p>
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<b>Owner</b>	BBC (1949–2013) <p>AIMCo (2012–present)</p>
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#### Technical details

<b>Floor count</b>	8 (above ground)
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<b>Floor area</b>	14 acres (56,656 <span> </span> m <sup>2</sup> )
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#### Design and construction

<b>Architect</b>	Graham Dawbarn
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<b>Architecture firm</b>	Norman & Dawbarn
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When it opened, the Director of BBC television was Gerald Beadle, and the first programme broadcast was *First Night* with David Nixon in Studio Three.<sup>[2]</sup>

In 1997, the BBC News Centre was opened, in a new complex at the front of the building.<sup>[3]</sup> The decision to move radio news to this building was attributed to Director General John Birt, a move that was resisted by the managing director of BBC Radio, Liz Forgan, who resigned after failing to dissuade the governors. Birt's decision caused problems; for example some politicians accustomed to travelling to interviews at Broadcasting House were reluctant to make the journey to White City, despite being only 4½ mi (7.2 km) west.

## The building

### Circular shape

The building featured a central circular block (officially known as the Main Block, but often referred to by staff as the "doughnut") around which were studios, offices, engineering areas and the News Centre. In the centre of the main block was a statue designed by T.B. Huxley-Jones of Helios, the Greek god of the sun, to symbolise the radiation of television around the world. At the foot of the statue were two reclining figures, symbolising sound and vision, the components of television. It was originally a fountain, but owing to the building's unique shape it was too noisy for the staff in the overlooking offices, and there were problems with water leakage into the videotape area which for a long time was directly beneath. Even though there was a foundation stone marked 'BBC 1956' in the basement of the main building, construction began in 1951.<sup>[4]</sup> Various extensions have been added.

Increasingly the BBC had to seek accommodation elsewhere, such as the nearby BBC White City complex comprising White City One, a 25,000 square metre office building, and the adjacent Broadcast and Media Centres. With the migration of staff and functions to complexes in Salford and London W1, White City One was mothballed in March 2013.

### Design

The overall design from the air appeared to resemble a question mark in shape. The architect, Graham Dawbarn, CBE (Norman & Dawbarn), drew a question mark on an envelope (now held by the BBC Written Archives Centre) while thinking about the design of the building, and realised that it would be an ideal shape for the site.<sup>[5]</sup> An article in *The BBC Quarterly*, July 1946, proposed a circular design, several years before Dawbarn drew up his plans.

The building was commissioned in 1949 with work starting in 1950. However government restrictions on building, through its loan sanction and licensing of materials, ensured that building work was halted until 1953. Intended as stopgaps, the BBC remodelled the former Gaumont Studios at Lime Grove and the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith. In 1953, the Shepherd's Bush Empire began to be used for television broadcasts. Work resumed in 1953 on the TVC scenery block (Stage 1) and work began in 1954 on the canteen block (Stage 2), which doubled as a rehearsal space.

Work on Stage 3, the central circular office block and studios, began in March 1955 on TC4, 5 and 2. The shells of TC1, TC6 and TC7 were constructed around the same time but they were not fitted out until a few years later. BBC Television Centre officially opened with TC3 operational on 29 June 1960.<sup>[6]</sup>

Arthur Hayes worked on the building from 1956 to 1970 and was responsible for the creation of the original 'BBC Television Centre' lettering on the façade of Studio 1. The lettering was later used all over the building, even in tile work outside lift entrances. Demands from Broadcasting House meant that Hayes had less time than he had thought to design a decor for the façade, leading to him puncturing a scale foam model of the wall with drawing pins, and thus the birth of the iconic 'Atomic Dots': there are 26 across the façade of Studio 1, each one backlit and clearly visible at night.

### Studios

In later years, the centre's studios were run by BBC Studios and Post Production (now renamed BBC Studioworks), a wholly owned commercial subsidiary. The studios varied in size. All studios were usually abbreviated to initials, such as TC1 (Television Centre 1) for Studio 1.

The studios hosted a wide variety of TV programmes for a range of broadcasters, including *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Harry Hill's TV Burp*, *Match of the Day*, *Later... with Jools Holland*, *Miranda*, *The Alan Titchmarsh Show*, *The Armstrong and Miller Show* and *8 Out of 10 Cats*, and big complex live productions such as Children in Need and Comic Relief. Over the years they were home to some of Britain's best known television programmes including *Fawlty Towers*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *Blue Peter*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, the original *Doctor Who* series and most of the best known BBC drama series. From the 1980s the use of the complex for such productions declined with the last major drama series to be shot there being *The House of Elliott*,<sup>[7]</sup> which ended in 1994, and the last single drama recorded was *Henry IV, Part 1*, in 1995.<sup>[8][9]</sup> The reason for the decline was because drama productions (except for soap operas) shifted almost entirely onto film or single-camera video, and Television Centre was a video-based, multi-camera production environment.<sup>[10]</sup>

At 19:00 on 22 March 2013, a special edition of *The One Show* was broadcast from the front of Television Centre followed by the building's last live broadcast *Madness Live: Goodbye Television Centre* and special programming to mark the end of the BBC at TVC, with the official last day at the end of that month.

In April 2013 an unsuccessful campaign was started to keep studios TC4 to TC8 open.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### Studio 0

117 square metres (1260 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in 1989, productions included for UK Play and during its later life was equipped for producing virtual reality programmes. It was home to *Liquid News* between 2000 and 2002 and CBeebies in vision continuity between 2002 and 2007. After that it was used by BBC Research. The studio was demolished as part of the redevelopment of Television Centre.

#### Studio 1

995 square metres (10,250 ft<sup>2</sup>)

<b>Structural engineer</b>	Mr Marmaduke T Tudsbery
<b>Main contractor</b>	Higgs and Hill (superstructure), George Wimpey (foundations)
<b>Website</b>	
	televisioncentre.com (http://televisioncentre.com)



Panoramic view of the centre of the building, showing the statue of Helios, the Greek god of the sun

Opened on 15 April 1964 and was the fourth largest television studio in Britain (following Fountain Studios' Studio A&B, dock10's Studio 1 and The Maidstone Studios' Studio 1), and was equipped for HDTV production (as were Studio 4, Studio 6 and Studio 8). It was reopened on 1 September 2017.<sup>[12]</sup><sup>[13]</sup> Studio 1 is the home of shows including *Sounds Like Friday Night*, *The Graham Norton Show*, *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* (from 2020), *The Jonathan Ross Show*, *The Russell Howard Hour*, *Blind Date* and *The Last Leg*.

### Studio 2

223 square metres (2,400 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in late 1960, it housed comedy programmes such as *That Was The Week That Was*. It was not initially converted to colour and closed in 1969, with the space being used as storage, but reopened in 1981. It was used by BBC News until they moved in 1997, and has played host to the Sport and Children's department. It was the main studio used for *Blue Peter* for the 2007 and 2008 series. It was vacated following the move of both departments to dock10. It was reopened on 1 September 2017.<sup>[13]</sup> Studio 2 is currently the home of the ITV programmes *Loose Women*, *Peston* and *Lorraine*, in addition to Channel 4's *Sunday Brunch*.

### Studio 3

594 square metres (6,390 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened on 29 June 1960, it was designed as a drama studio and had customised panels and fittings. The walls were slightly thicker to insulate it from noise from the Hammersmith & City line (then still part of the Metropolitan line) of the London Underground. It was the first studio to be completed and was upgraded to colour in 1969. It was reopened on 1 September 2017.<sup>[13]</sup> Studio 3 currently broadcasts ITV programmes *Good Morning Britain* and *This Morning*.

### Studio 4

585 square metres (6,300 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in January 1961, TC4 was similar in design and layout to its neighbour, TC3. It was designed as a light entertainment studio and contained a rather unusual sound system called ambiophony. It was upgraded to colour in 1970 and to HD and surround sound in 2008. It was home to many BBC sitcoms and the talk show *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross*. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

Programmes recorded or transmitted included:

- *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*
- *Later... with Jools Holland*
- *Embarrassing Bodies: Live from the Clinic*
- *Harry Hill's TV Burp*
- *A Question of Sport*
- *Celebrity Mastermind*
- *The Alan Titchmarsh Show*
- *Room 101*
- *Strictly Come Dancing*
- *Noel's House Party*
- *Parkinson*
- *Dead Ringers*
- *Little Britain*
- *Clarkson*
- *Record Breakers*
- *Only Fools and Horses*
- *Blackadder*
- *The Hairy Bikers' Cook Off*
- *The Paul Daniels Magic Show*
- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*
- *The National Lottery: In It to Win It*
- *The Impressions Show with Culshaw and Stephenson*
- *The Forsyte Saga*
- *Blue Peter*
- *Sam & Mark's Big Friday Wind-Up*
- *Yes Minister-Yes Prime Minister*
- *Z-Cars*
- *Play for Today*
- *Golden Balls*
- *Top of the Pops*

### Studio 5

223 square metres (2,400 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in August 1961, it was used for the first half of its life by broadcasts from BBC Schools. There was an adjacent area used for schools programming that linked in with the studio. It was converted to colour around 1973, about the same time as schools broadcasts as a whole. It was closed briefly during the mid-1980s, and reopened in 1987 following a two-year refurbishment. It was the home of BBC Sport's programmes until 2012 when the Sports department moved to MediaCityUK. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

Programmes recorded or transmitted included:

- *Match of the Day*
- *Football Focus*
- *Crimewatch*
- *Jackanory*
- *Grandstand*
- *Ask the Family*
- *Call My Bluff*
- *Holiday*
- *Watchdog*
- *Play School*
- *The Old Grey Whistle Test*

### Studio 6

598 square metres (6,440 ft<sup>2</sup>)



Studio TC1 at BBC Television Centre

Opened in July 1967 to coincide with BBC Two's switch to colour. It was the first to be equipped with colour cameras. It was a strange design: it was originally designed to be split in two by a large removable wall, but this idea was abandoned. The gallery was moved in 1993 and the old gallery became home to the BBC Red Button control room. Upgraded to HD in July 2010, the first 3D capable studio in the UK. Home to children's programmes *Live & Kicking* and *Dick and Dom in da Bungalow*, and *Pointless*. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

Programmes recorded or transmitted included:

- *Pointless*
- *Mock the Week*
- *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*
- *Alan Carr: Chatty Man*
- *The Paul O'Grady Show*
- *8 Out of 10 Cats*
- *10 O'Clock Live*
- *Chris Moyles' Quiz Night*
- *Sam & Mark's Big Friday Wind Up*
- *Live & Kicking*
- *The Saturday Show*
- *Dick & Dom in da Bungalow*
- *The Liver Birds*
- *My Family*
- *Pennies from Heaven*
- *Doctor Who*
- *The Good Life*
- *The Goodies*
- *Rentaghost*
- *Blue Peter*
- *Juliet Bravo*
- *Bomber Harris*
- *A Bit of Fry & Laurie*
- *They Think It's All Over*
- *Rory Bremner*
- *Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps*
- *Big Break*

### Studio 7

223 square metres (2,400 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in 1962 and was used for a variety of programmes. Home to children's programming such as *Going Live!*, before being home to BBC News in 1997. It was the home of the *BBC Breakfast* programme until 2012 and the *BBC News at Six* bulletin until 2013, with other bulletins based at N6 in the News Centre. It was vacated on 15 March 2013, following the refit of the extension to Broadcasting House, to where the BBC News department and newsroom moved. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

Programmes recorded or transmitted included:

- *Business Breakfast*
- *BBC Breakfast*
- *Working Lunch*
- *HARDtalk*
- *Newsround*
- *Sportsround*
- *Newsnight*
- *Newsnight Review*
- *Match of the Day Kickabout*
- *The Andrew Marr Show*
- *Breakfast with Frost*
- *On the Record*
- *The Politics Show*
- *BBC News at Six*
- *Swap Shop*
- *Saturday Superstore*
- *Going Live*
- *Butterflies*
- *To the Manor Born*
- *Play School*
- *Bob's Full House*
- *ChuckleVision*
- *Shooting Stars*
- *The Stand Up Show*
- *The Late Show*
- *Bodger & Badger*

### Studio 8

602 square metres (6,480 ft<sup>2</sup>)

Opened in 1967, noted as the best studio for television producers to use. It was the size that most programmes wanted and, building on the experience when building the other studios, was the best. The galleries and studios were laid out perfectly and in a layout producers liked. It became the studio for comedy and sitcoms, because of its audience seating arrangements and size. It was converted to HD in January 2007. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

Programmes recorded or transmitted included:

- *Miranda*
- *Not Going Out*
- *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*
- *Tipping Point*
- *A Question of Sport*
- *Piers Morgan's Life Stories*
- *Five Minutes to a Fortune*
- *Pets Nation*
- *Morecambe & Wise*
- *The Dick Emery Show*
- *Sykes*
- *The Two Ronnies*
- *Absolutely Fabulous*
- *Monty Python's Flying Circus*
- *Keeping Up Appearances*
- *Are You Being Served?*
- *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*
- *Open All Hours*
- *Citizen Smith*
- *Up Pompeii*
- *Porridge*
- *In Sickness and in Health*
- *The Les Dawson Show*
- *Fawlty Towers*
- *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*
- *Not the Nine O'Clock News*
- *Blankety Blank*
- *Bread*
- *Hi-de-Hi!*
- *The Russ Abbot Show*
- *Alas Smith and Jones*
- *'Allo 'Allo*
- *Birds of a Feather*
- *May to December*
- *Just Good Friends*
- *Hole in the Wall*
- *Ever Decreasing Circles*
- *Victoria Wood As Seen on TV*

- *French and Saunders*
- *One Foot in the Grave*
- *Knowing Me Knowing You with Alan Partridge*
- *Dinnerladies*
- *Auntie's Bloomers*
- *The National Lottery Draws*
- *The Catherine Tate Show*

### Studio 9

84 square metres (900 ft²)

Built in 1955 as a foyer area of the restaurant block, becoming a store area, converted to a studio in 1996 for Children's BBC. The location was highly convenient: it allowed the invasion continuity to be relocated from the "Broom Cupboard" (continuity announcer's booth) to a roomier studio. It opened onto the Blue Peter Garden allowing presentation to take place there. It was an odd shape, and was used for invasion continuity for CBBC until 2004, when they broadcast links for the CBBC Channel only. All invasion continuity was dropped in 2006, and it was used for programmes such as *Sam & Mark's TMI Friday* and *SMart*. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

### Studio 10

111 square metres (1200 ft²)

Opened as **N1** in September 1969, it was used for the BBC1 daytime news bulletins, and the home of BBC World (previously BBC World Service News) from 1993. Closed in spring 1999 when news bulletins moved to the News Centre section of Television Centre, and renamed as TC10. Used for some programmes by channel UK Play until the station's closure. Between 2004 and 2006 it was used for in-vision continuity for CBBC on BBC One and BBC Two, before being used by some programming for CBBC such as *Level Up*. From 2010 to 2011 it was the home of CBeebies. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

### Studio 11

186 square metres (2000 ft²)

Opened as **N2** in September 1969, and the same size as N1, it was used for the BBC2 daytime news bulletins. Extended in 1985 to include props store and adjacent lobby, it became home to the *Six O'Clock* and *Nine O'Clock News*. In spring 1999, following the completion of the News Centre spur of Television Centre, the news moved out and it was renamed TC11. In 2002 it became home to *Liquid News* and later to the other BBC Three news programmes *60 Seconds* and *The 7 O'Clock News*. It briefly played host to the domestic BBC News bulletins while their studios were refurbished in 2006, before becoming general purpose. It was home to *Strictly Come Dancing: It Takes Two* until December 2011. This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

### Studio 12

56 square metres (600 ft²)

Originally a music store, converted into a studio in 2004 for CBBC programmes. Used for *Sportsround* for some years, but converted into presentation studio in 2006. Used for invasion continuity for CBBC and changed into an in-vision continuity studio in summer 2007. The set was transferred to a mini studio in the East Tower. It was used by BBC Research<sup>[14]</sup> This studio was demolished during the redevelopment of Television Centre.

### Pres A

65 square metres (704 ft²)

Opened in 1960, designed for in-vision continuity for BBC 1, but was used as such for only three years. Became weather studio prior to the move to the BBC Weather Centre in 1990 (also in Television Centre), following which it was used by Children's BBC to supplement presentation from the 'Broom Cupboard', and was used for slots such as birthdays and public holidays. Became full-time home of Children's BBC in 1994 following the vacation of the 'Broom Cupboard'. It closed following CBBC's move to TC9 and was converted back into office space.

### Pres B

65 square metres (704 ft²)

Opened in 1964, designed for in-vision continuity for BBC 2, but that did not use in-vision continuity for more than a few months after launch. Became a general purpose studio housing small productions such as *Points of View*, the *Film* series with Barry Norman and *The Old Grey Whistle Test*. It closed in 1996 and was converted back into office space.

### News studios

In addition to these studios, BBC News used a number of studios for the frequent news bulletins. These studios have a different naming system owing to their permanent usage and were not included on most studio lists, as they were unavailable for hire.

- **N1** – Previously BBC One daytime bulletins. Became **TC10**
- **N2** – Previously BBC Two daytime bulletins. Became **TC11**
- **N3** – Small studio off main newsroom, before being made part of newsroom, separated by glass panels.
- **N4** – Studio, became part of the BBC Club bar
- **N5** – Originally studio for BBC Arabic Television service, which closed in 1996. It was a storeroom until 2001 when it was used for the BBCi service, then from 2007 as a home for *Click* prior to its move to Broadcasting House in 2012.
- **N6** – Formerly home to *BBC News at One*, *BBC News at Ten* and the BBC News channel.
- **N8** – Home to BBC World News prior to its move to Broadcasting House in 2013, and by the BBC News channel from 1999 to 2008. BBC News channel still used the studio to allow the *BBC News at Ten* to rehearse in N6 until 2013
- **N9** – Home to BBC World News until 2008, used as a contingency when N6/N8 unavailable due to technical work and for election coverage
- **N10** – Formerly used by BBC Three to produce *60 Seconds*

These studios were located in Stage 5 & Stage 6, commonly known as the BBC News Centre. BBC News moved out of Stage 6 in 2013 to the new BBC News Centre at New Broadcasting House in Central London. After redevelopment, Stage 6 became the new home to the commercial arm of the BBC, BBC Worldwide.

There was no N7, to avoid confusion with **TC7**, which housed 'big' news programmes such as *BBC Breakfast*, *Working Lunch*, and *Newsnight*.

## Infrastructure

In February 1996, the electricity and heating were transferred to a European Gas Turbines (EGT) 4.9MWe Typhoon gas turbine combined heating, power and cooling unit.<sup>[15]</sup> It included a 6MW Thermax air conditioning (cooling) vapour absorption machine (VAM). The £6m HVAC system reduced energy costs by 35%, and paid for itself within three years. A second turbine was added, without a second chimney. However, in 2008<sup>[16]</sup> the BBC admitted that the energy system was being used for emergency purposes only as it had become cost-ineffective to use full-time. Excess electricity produced at night has not been returned to the National Grid, as originally planned. In November 2003, the turbine's chimneys caught fire,<sup>[17]</sup> bringing TV output to a halt. After the fire the turbines were no longer used regularly.

## Listed status

The development of the Westfield shopping centre nearby led to a sharp rise in property prices and placed the Television Centre under threat. In February 2008, with an amendment in November, English Heritage requested listed status for the scenery workshop, the canteen block adjoining the Blue Peter Garden, and the central building.<sup>[18]</sup> Previously, under a longstanding deal between the BBC and English Heritage the building was not listed to allow the BBC to make changes necessary in a broadcasting centre. In return, the BBC agreed that if it left, the fabric of the building would be restored to its mid-60s state, and English Heritage would list notable features.<sup>[19]</sup>

On 17 June 2009 the Central Ring of the building and Studio 1, noting in particular the John Piper mosaic, central drum with its mosaic tiles, the Huxley-Jones gilded statue of Helios, full-height glazing of the stair and original clock in the Central Ring, received Grade II listed status from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.<sup>[20]</sup> The 'atomic dots' and name of Studio 1, and the cantilevered porch on its exterior were noted as important architectural features of that building.<sup>[21]</sup> The Department did not consider the other buildings, including all other studios, scenery block and canteen of sufficient special interest to warrant listing.<sup>[21][22]</sup> Making the protection announcement, the architecture minister Barbara Follett noted that it was where *Doctor Who*, *Fawlty Towers* and *Blue Peter* were made: "It has been a torture chamber for politicians, and an endless source of first-class entertainment for the nation—sometimes both at the same time."<sup>[22]</sup>

## Redevelopment

It was announced on 18 October 2007 that in order to meet a £2 billion shortfall in funding, the BBC intended to "reduce the size of the property portfolio in west London by selling BBC Television Centre by the end of the financial year 2012/13",<sup>[23]</sup> with the then Director General, Mark Thompson, saying the plan would deliver "a smaller, but fitter, BBC" in the digital age.<sup>[24]</sup> A BBC spokeswoman has added that "this is a full scale disposal of BBC Television Centre and we won't be leasing it back".<sup>[25]</sup> The corporation officially put Television Centre on the property market in June 2011.<sup>[26][27]</sup>

BBC Sport and BBC Children's moved to dock10, MediaCityUK in Salford Quays in 2012,<sup>[28]</sup> with Children's Learning, Radio 5 Live<sup>[29]</sup> and part of BBC Future Media & Technology.<sup>[30]</sup> The move saw up to 1,500 posts at TV Centre and 700 posts at New Broadcasting House relocate to Salford Quays. *BBC Breakfast*, part of BBC News, moved to Salford in April 2012.<sup>[31][32]</sup>

On 16 July 2012, the BBC agreed to sell the site to Stanhope plc for £200 million. The figure was low partly due to the high levels of asbestos in the building.<sup>[33]</sup> The building closed on 31 March 2013 and was redeveloped to include flats, office space, a cinema and hotels.<sup>[34]</sup> Studios 1, 2 and 3 along with part of the basement and offices have been refurbished and leased back to the BBC on a 15-year lease.<sup>[35]</sup> The original schedule would have seen Studios 1, 2, & 3 back in production by Autumn of 2014 however on 17 July 2014 the BBC announced that due to the extensive building work, programme production will not recommence at Television Centre until 2017 when much of the demolition and groundwork has been completed.<sup>[36]</sup> The BBC's commercial businesses, BBC Worldwide and BBC Studios and Post Production will lease back Stage 6 as office space which is the part formerly occupied by BBC News.<sup>[37]</sup>

All BBC News, national radio and BBC World Service broadcasts were relocated to Broadcasting House between July 2012 and March 2013, which is said to include one of the largest live newsrooms in the world.<sup>[38]</sup> The final news broadcasts from Television Centre took place on 18 March 2013, when the BBC News channel and remaining news output completed the move to Broadcasting House. This was one of the final live broadcasts from the building.<sup>[39]</sup>

A 90-minute documentary titled *Tales of Television Centre*<sup>[40]</sup> was broadcast on BBC Four in 2012 ahead of the move out. On 22 March 2013, BBC Four devoted its evening schedule to programmes commemorating Television Centre. At the heart of the evening was *Goodbye Television Centre* a two-hour history presented by former BBC One controller and BBC chairman Michael Grade. The last live programme broadcast was *Madness Live: Goodbye Television Centre*, shown that day on BBC Four.

In March 2013, the BBC and Stanhope formed a joint venture, Television Centre Developments, to manage the redevelopment of the 14-acre site.<sup>[41]</sup> Only three of the eight production studios were earmarked for continued use by the BBC, with the rest being demolished for flats, and it was argued that this would leave insufficient facilities in the capital for independent television production, and a *Save Television Centre Studios* website and petition was set up.

In December 2013 Stanhope was granted planning permission from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.<sup>[42]</sup>

In October 2014, UK magazine *Private Eye* reported that having spent £60 million to remove broadcasting equipment from the building, the BBC planned to spend £12 million a year to lease back parts of the building.<sup>[43]</sup> This decision was in direct contradiction of the BBC's promise in 2007 that the sale of TVC was a "full-scale disposal" and that it would not be leasing back any part of the building.<sup>[44]</sup>

Demolition work began in February 2015.<sup>[45]</sup>

As of April 2016 only Studios TC1, TC2 and TC3 remained, the other studios TC4, TC5, TC6, TC7 and TC8 had now all been demolished. The statue of Helios, the Greek God of Sun, had been removed for renovation before it returns to the redevelopment at Television Centre later in 2016. Developer Stanhope and construction manager Mace have carefully removed the gilded bronze figure with heritage experts PAYE Conservation for repair and renovation. The Helios has stood in the rotunda at Television Centre since the former BBC headquarters opened in 1960.<sup>[46]</sup>



The exterior of Television Centre pictured during the live broadcast of the 2008 edition of the Children in Need telethon on 14 November 2008



Television Centre during redevelopment in May 2015. The BBC blocks on the wall of TC1 were removed in September 2014.

BBC Studioworks, the commercial subsidiary of the BBC who will operate and maintain the newly refurbished Studios 1, 2 and 3 and production facilities at Television Centre confirmed on their website that the newly refurbished Television Centre studios, productions facilities and post production facilities would have its official opening in September 2017.<sup>[47]</sup> As of April 2017, bookings for the newly refurbished and renovated Studios 1, 2 and 3 were being taken.<sup>[48]</sup>

## Reopening

BBC Studioworks at Television Centre officially opened on 1 September 2017. The first programme to transmit live from the newly refurbished studios was *Strictly Come Dancing: It Takes Two* on BBC Two on Monday 25 September 2017. It was hosted by Zoë Ball.

In April 2018, ITV's daytime programmes *Good Morning Britain*, *Lorraine*, *This Morning*, *Loose Women* and political discussion programme *Peston* moved to Television Centre, due to the closure and redevelopment of The London Studios.<sup>[49][50][51]</sup> However in October 2018, it was announced that ITV would not be returning to the South Bank,<sup>[52]</sup> and it is thought that ITV Daytime programmes will continue to be broadcast from Television Centre.

## Current productions

### BBC productions

- *The Graham Norton Show* (TC1: 2018–present)
- *Later... with Jools Holland* (1992-2012; TC1: 2019)<sup>[53]</sup>
- *Mock the Week* (TC4: 2005–2012; TC1: 2018–present)
- *QI* (TC1: 2019–present)
- *Sounds Like Friday Night* (TC1: 2017–present)

### ITV productions

- *The Chase* (TC1: Celebrity Specials, 2019)<sup>[54]</sup>
- *Good Morning Britain* (TC3: 2018–present)
- *The Jonathan Ross Show* (TC1: 2017–present)
- *Loose Women* (TC2: 2018–present)
- *Lorraine* (TC2: 2018–present)
- *This Morning* (TC3: 2018–present)
- *Peston* (TC2: 2018–present)

### Other productions

- *The Big Narstie Show* (TC1: 2018–present)
- *Blind Date* (TC1: 2017–present)
- *El Hormiguero* (TC1: Special, 2019)<sup>[55]</sup>
- *The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice* (TC1: 2018–present)
- *The Russell Howard Hour* (TC1: 2017–present)
- *Sunday Brunch* (TC2: 2019–present)
- *The Last Leg* (TC1: 2018–present)
- *Your Face or Mine* (TC1: 2019–present)

## Major events

### Terrorist target

On 4 March 2001, a bomb placed outside the news centre exploded, with no fatalities.<sup>[56]</sup> It was attributed to the Real IRA and the culprits were eventually caught. The front of the building suffered moderate damage, but was soon repaired.

### Power failures

Television Centre has suffered from power cuts that affected normal broadcasting, but these were not seen as a systemic problem. One such power cut caused the launch night of BBC2, on 20 April 1964, to be cancelled; programmes began the next day.<sup>[57]</sup>

A major power failure occurred on 20 June 2000 at approximately 5 p.m., affecting the entire Television Centre resulting in services such as BBC Two and BBC Radio 4 coming off air, and BBC News 24 went off air before being relocated to the BBC's Westminster studios. The *Six O'Clock News* suffered severe lighting problems and had to be cancelled halfway through, and the BBC's backup generator caught fire. Troubles were experienced in the South East region, as *Newsroom South East* started later than planned. The fire alarms went off at Television Centre later that day, leaving only a skeleton crew. Eventually many programmes returned, from different locations: *Newsnight* was presented from the main news studio with intermittent technical problems. The failure was due to a substation in Shepherd's Bush and normal services resumed the following day.<sup>[58]</sup>

Just before 8 a.m. on 28 November 2003 an electrical fault caused some equipment to overheat, which set off fire alarms.<sup>[17]</sup> Although there was no fire, the fault caused widespread power cuts and prevented backup generators from providing alternative power. All output was affected with services transferred across London to alternative studios. The One O'Clock News and BBC News 24 broadcast for much of the day from the BBC's Millbank Studios,<sup>[17]</sup> and the *Today* programme and Five Live's *Breakfast* morning radio shows fell off air for 15 minutes.<sup>[17]</sup> The Millbank Studios are a fall-back for news operations in the event of TVC failure, and are continually recording the last hour of the BBC News Channel output (sans in-vision clock) for this purpose. This power cut came on the week prior to the relaunch of News 24, which was postponed for another week to ensure that all problems had been remedied.<sup>[59]</sup>

### Protests

Programmes have been interrupted by protesters gaining access to Television Centre. In 1988, a group of lesbian protestors campaigning against Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 gained access to the studio of the *Six O'Clock News* during a live broadcast.<sup>[60]</sup> Newsreader Sue Lawley continued with the broadcast, while co-presenter Nicholas Witchell tackled the intruders off-camera.<sup>[61]</sup>

On 20 May 2006 during the live broadcast of *National Lottery: Jet Set* the studio was invaded by members of the Fathers 4 Justice campaign group, causing the show to go briefly off air while the protesters were removed.<sup>[62]</sup> This was also a problem as that night's lottery broadcast ran straight into the Eurovision Song Contest 2006.



Television Centre on Election Night, 4 May 2005

For *Question Time* on 22 October 2009, the BBC invited the leader of the British National Party, Nick Griffin, onto the programme for the first time causing heated public debate and strong protests outside the studios.<sup>[63]</sup> Television Centre had its security breached with around 30 anti-fascist protesters storming the reception area and several hundred protesters gathering outside. Police and security staff were forced to close gates leading into the Centre and form barriers to prevent any further breaches of security.<sup>[64]</sup>



Protesters objecting to the appearance of Nick Griffin on *Question Time* outside Television Centre in 2009

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Preceded by <b>Villa Louvigny Luxembourg City</b>	<b>Eurovision Song Contest Venue 1963</b>	Succeeded by <b>Tivolis Koncertsal Copenhagen</b>
Preceded by <i>first venue</i>	<b>Eurovision Dance Contest Venue 2007</b>	Succeeded by <b>SECC Glasgow</b>

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