

Moscow Sells Half Its Movie Theaters for \$184 Million

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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City Hall has finally managed to tempt someone into buying half its stock of Soviet era Moscow movie theaters.

Nearly a year after they were first put up for sale, Moscow City Hall has finally sold 39 of its 78 movie theaters for 9.6 billion rubles (\$184 million) — the starting price at auction, news agency RBC reported.

Amid stagnant economic growth and high inflation, the lone bidder was an affiliate of real estate development group ADG, which promised to invest 40 billion rubles (\$765 million) to develop the movie theaters, according to the agency. The group did not divulge their plans, but promised to keep showing movies at each of the theaters, which date from the Soviet era and are dotted around suburban Moscow.

As part of the sale deal, City Hall required the buyer to preserve the venues' cultural profile and not try to earn a fast buck by turning them wholesale into shopping centers — which

command a much higher rental price per square meter than cinemas.

Thirty percent of the movie theaters' area must be also be dedicated to cultural-educational activities, City Hall's property department told RBC.

The upgrade promises to be an expensive endeavor: At the moment eighteen of the 39 movie theaters are closed, nine are not working as supposed to, and nine require some kind of renovation, the agency said.

The first auction for the set of 39 movie theaters was to have taken place in December 2013, but was postponed. Other auctions in June and July were cancelled for lack of bids.

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