

## CASEWORK REPORT: March 2015

### ENGLAND

*Compiled by Tim Hatcher  
All photographs by Harry Rigby (Editor - CTA Bulletin)*

#### Grade II\*

The *South Essex News* has reported that the **State** at Grays is to become another unit in the chain of JD Wetherspoon hosteleries. The Association is to contact the Company in an attempt to ensure that the fabric of the structure is treated sympathetically during any conversion works. It will be stressed that the fine upper and lower foyers are of major import and should be retained intact.



The Astoria Brixton as *The Academy* in May 2003

The **Astoria** in Brixton is to be internally refurbished and redecorated; archival information has been forwarded, in addition to information relating to paint analysis.

The CTA is to object to a proposal to erect an electronic advertising sign on the façade of the former **Gaumont Palace** in Hammersmith. It is understood that the purpose of the sign would be not for promotion of the theatre's productions but instead for display of advertisement sequences of a general nature directed towards traffic on the nearby flyover.

Planning permission relating to the **Carlton** in Islington has been renewed; no indication has been made available regarding a timescale for any proposed works.



The proscenium of the *Capitol* Forest Hill in September 2004

#### Grade II

It is reported that the licensed premises operated within the **Capitol** at Forest Hill are to close and that the building will revert to film exhibition. Satisfaction at such an outcome is tempered by the likely subdivision of the auditorium, currently largely intact. The CTA is to request details and drawings of the proposals.

#### Unlisted

For several years the religious organisation occupying the **Rialto** in Upper Norwood has utilised the building for church services; it is now applying for retrospective planning permission in order to continue these activities. The Association is objecting, as a strong local campaign to return the building to entertainment usage is active.

Following a considerable hiatus since the demolition of all except the frontage of the **Forum** in Ealing in 2009, plans have been submitted for a replacement structure incorporating the retained façade.

Independently of this organisation, a further attempt was made to obtain listed designation for the **Futurist** in Scarborough; this application was subsequently rejected.

In similar vein, a listing bid for the **Picturedrome** in Worthing (since 1935 the Connaught Theatre) was also unsuccessful.



The Coronet Elephant and Castle in March 2004

The lessee of the **Coronet**, situated within London's Elephant and Castle neighbourhood, hopes to carry out considerable refurbishment work; he has been forwarded relevant historical information.

## WALES

*Compiled by John Skinner*

### Grade II

#### **PALACE, CONWY**

CTA Cymru finally managed to gain entry to inspect the interior of the cinema on 31 October, accompanied by Huw Davies, Senior Conservation Officer for Conwy Borough Council and by Simon Wardle of CADW. A thorough inspection of the building was carried out and it is good to report that there have been no modifications carried out to the interior and that the Holophane Lighting equipment is intact. However, it was not possible to gain access to the projection box due to the staircase to the box having been used as a storage area by the café located in the front of the building. There were signs of water ingress on the side walls in places but no major damage to report. It is the intention to gain access to the projection box at a date to be arranged to find out if the control box to the Holophane Lighting is intact in working order. CADW is in the process of up-dating their listing description for the cinema to include the interior.

#### **CASTLE CINEMA, SWANSEA**

A planning application for listed building consent to demolish the auditorium for the construction of 66 student study bedrooms with 16 cluster flats, retaining the end wall of the cinema and the frontage (including the foyer) was submitted on 20 November 2013. CTA Cymru objected to this application on 31 January 2014. Nothing has yet been decided but it is believed that a decision is imminent as the Council has been in discussion with the owners of the building (in private ownership). The current occupiers of the building, Laserzone, are due to move out shortly and it is understood that they have carried out unauthorised alterations to the auditorium as well as the unauthorised removal of the thirties-era paybox of the former cinema. CTA Cymru is monitoring the situation and has impressed on the Council the importance of rescuing the pay-box (now in storage under the stage at the rear of the building) prior to any development taking place. The Castle was the first purpose-built cinema to be built in the City centre, opening on 4 December 1913 and closing as a cinema on 31 October 1991. It has a fine neo-classical facade and the name **CASTLE CINEMA** is featured in the brickwork on the rear wall of the building. It is not known how much of the original décor remains in the auditorium but the original proscenium was modified for wide-screen circa 1962.

#### **PALACE THEATRE/CINEMA, SWANSEA**

Good news that the Council was issued with an ultimatum on health and safety grounds to carry out emergency renovation to the exterior of the building due to the danger of falling masonry. Work started on 18 January to repair the external plasterwork and the removal of vegetation growing on the roof and side elevations by a company called Heritage Façades Ltd and is due for completion by the end of March. The exterior of the building now looks much better than it has done for some time (photograph taken on 17 February).



The Council has made a grant of £75,000 available for this work to take place on condition that the owners (two businessmen from Gravesend) take steps to set up a Buildings Preservation Trust and that they maintain the building properly after it has been 'mothballed' by the Council. The Palace has now been included in the High Street Regeneration Zone, which previously stopped at the Railway Station. CTA Cymru has been working with the *Friends of the Palace* and met with Conservation Officer for Swansea CBC, Stephen Smith, on 16 January. It is intended to set up a meeting with the owners of the Theatre to discuss potential future use of the building. The Council has commissioned a Feasibility Study on the building and this will need to be taken into account in deciding upon its future. CTA Cymru and the Friends may need to use the Freedom of Information Act to inspect the contents of the Study as the Conservation Officer deemed that he could not disclose its contents due to it containing "commercially sensitive information".

## Unlisted

### COLISEUM, PORTHMADOG

The Council was to decide on a planning application to demolish the cinema in mid-November but have decided to defer their decision until the applicant has carried out a bat survey involving a full inspection of the building and the re-submission of the planning application. CADW inspected the cinema at the end of October and opted not to list the cinema on its architectural merit. The *Friends of the Coliseum* Group are delighted at the decision to defer the planning approval as it will give them some breathing space before they decide on their course of action. CTA Cymru objected to the planning application to demolish in mid-October.

### SCALA, PRESTATYN

The Scala Cinema and Arts Centre, owned by Denbighshire County Council but run by a separate charitable organisation may be forced to close due to financial difficulties. It is reported that the Centre owes the Council £60,000 in wage debt as well as £80,000 remaining to be paid on a loan. The Council have said that they cannot continue to make up the shortfall in wage payments and are putting pressure on the operators of the Centre to discuss the matter.



### ELYSIUM, SWANSEA

The long derelict former Elysium Cinema in the High Street is now becoming a real eyesore. It has a pleasant frontage with some tile-work but substantial alterations had been made to the auditorium including the insertion of a false ceiling when the cinema was on bingo. The building is located in the High Street Regeneration Zone and the City Council has been in discussion with the owners to persuade them to sell the site for redevelopment into flats but the owners are refusing to do so. In any subsequent redevelopment, it is hoped that the frontage will be retained. The Elysium opened as a cinema on 11 April 1914 and was an early closure on 12 August 1960. It is reported as the first cinema in Swansea to show talking pictures (June 1929). The building operated as a bingo hall for many years as the Elysium Bingo Club and the building was also home of the Swansea Labour Party. It was visited by the CTA in October 1992. (photograph taken August 2007)