

CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed



Horizontal signage **MIRTH** has been erected above the canopy of the Granada/EMD at Walthamstow in conjunction with the opening of the 'pop-up' hostelry operating in the foyer areas. It is hoped that this is envisaged as a temporary measure; it will be suggested to the owner that a vertical sign, preferably bearing the appellation **GRANADA**, be reinstalled. *Photo taken March 2016.*

It has been reported by a representative of Historic England that the restoration work to Stanford Hall near Loughborough has been executed in an exemplary manner. It is stated that the murals remain intact and items of original equipment are to be reinstated. There is currently neither plan nor budget to re-establish the original design of the ceiling's decorative scheme. See p29 last Bulletin and p14/15 Bulletin 50/1.

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Concern has arisen regarding the deteriorating condition of the Theatre Royal in Manchester. This stately edifice served as a cinema from the early nineteen twenties to the early nineteen seventies, undergoing major internal structural changes during those years. Cognisant of its earlier theatrical history, The Theatres Trust has included it on its 'At Risk' register. A watching brief will be maintained and any developments monitored. *Photo taken October 2005.*

A site meeting has been held at the Regal in Kingston-upon-Thames with representatives of CNM Estates, their architect and other interested parties. It is encouraging to note that the architect is enthusiastic apropos the restoration of original historic detail. However, grave doubt remains pertaining to the practicalities of the spatial planning of the conference, performance and culinary-service areas.

Unlisted

In analogous manner another live theatre, the Grand in Banbury, commenced film exhibition in nineteen twenty-nine and was fully reconstructed internally six years later by noted northern cinema architect Joseph Gomersall. It is understood to be recorded as an Undesignated Heritage Asset, yet to date no application for registration as an Asset of Community Value has been submitted. It is believed that much of the Egyptian-deco interior survives; thus the Committee would be grateful if any member in possession of recent internal images could forward copies in order to facilitate further work on this case.

Churchill Homes has acquired the Odeon at Aylesbury with the intention of redeveloping the site as retirement housing. Permission to demolish the structure is in place; although retention of the frontage might have been desirable, it has unfortunately undergone drastic alteration.

As previously reported, the figurative sculptures from the façade of the Gaumont Palace in Cheltenham have been salvaged, restored and mounted for public display, yet no explanation stating their provenance appears to be provided. It is thus to be suggested to the local Council that a simple plaque be furnished; the Association would be happy to provide the text of the inscription.

Minerva has won its appeal against Kensington and Chelsea Council's decision in January 2015 to reject planning permission for its revised scheme for the Odeon at Kensington and the neighbouring site. An Asset of Community Value application has now been submitted, coincident with an attempt to secure funds to appeal against the Inspector's decision.



A letter advocating retention of the Ritz in Southgate's Bowes Road has been forwarded to Enfield Council, whose redevelopment plans for *Ritz Parade* include options that threaten destruction of the building. Its owners, the Jehovah's Witnesses, are also eager to retain the facility. *Photo taken April 2006.*

Following the rejection for listing of the Towers in Hornchurch, not only has the venue been nominated as an Asset of Community Value by local campaigners but the local Council has also extended its Article Four Direction indefinitely. At the least, this confers a gratifying stay of execution.

A local campaign group is endeavouring to re-open the Regal in Ringwood for film exhibition. The support of the Association for this venture has been sought: this has been readily proffered. See Newsreel p21. A similar aspiration is demonstrated in an enterprise that is attempting to return the Central Hall Picture Palace in Tooting to cinema operation. Its internal mutilation during long alternative usage prohibits application for statutory protection.

The operator of the Palladium in Brixton has reportedly resolved with the local Council the potential problems of noise nuisance to residents of the proposed neighbouring development. He is committed to the venue's future and has recently undertaken significant redecoration.