

# CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

## Grade II\* Listed

The application for the mandatory permissions required prior to the commencement of work to convert the **State** at Grays into a JD Wetherspoon establishment has reportedly been delayed, although preliminary operations to remove asbestos have apparently begun. The Association is to press for the retention of the spatial identities of the distinguished foyers as separate and distinct from the auditorium. It will also suggest that the long-disused lighting troughs traversing the ceiling of the latter be relit; accomplishing this with LED lighting would prove cost effective in its installation, power consumption and maintenance. {1837}

The trust of the **Electric Palace** at Harwich has requested the support of the CTA for its plans to repair and refurbish the property. This will be proffered and the opportunity taken to comment on the suitability of such proposals to the historic fabric of the cinema. {2597}

The refurbishment of the lower foyer of the **Odeon** at Muswell Hill has reportedly been carried out in acceptably sympathetic manner, despite the colour palette differing somewhat from the original scheme. It seems likely, however, that planning approval will be received for the two mini-cinemas, colloquially termed 'pods', which are intended to be sited in the rear corners of the circle. Thus focus is changing from outright objection to endeavours aimed at ameliorating their visual impact, ensuring that they are removable without damage to the listed interior and limiting planning permission to encompass only such period during which the building remains in cinema usage. {13783}

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A trust has been formed which aims to rehabilitate and run the **Royalty** at Harborne. However, there is no indication that the current owner is willing to relinquish ownership of the property and it is unlikely that the local Council will consider compulsory purchase of the building. {33866}



The **Dominion** [Granada] in Acton, owned by a church that had previously demonstrated interest in sympathetic restoration of the property, has been placed on the market at a purchase price of about three million pounds. A theatre production company has reportedly expressed interest in its acquisition. Bromige's fine façade survives; this masterfully integrates internal stair flights within its fenestrated extremes. Much of the original detailing of foyer and auditorium is also extant. It is thus imperative that the structure is treated sympathetically during any alterations for reuse; the Association will scrutinise closely plans for such work. {13831} *Photo taken April 2006.*

It appears from the planning and listed building consent applications relating to the **Ritz** at Grays that little more than re-painting and re-seating are proposed. The religious body involved in the scheme is that which owns the **Regal** at Camberwell. {22456}

A petition is currently circulating in the Stretford area of Manchester demanding that the **Longford** be restored, as its unique exterior by Henry Elder has deteriorated to such a degree that it is regarded locally as an eyesore. {13796}

An application has been made for permission to demolish the remains of the **Regent** at Lyme Regis with the intention of building a replica on the site. Concern arises that this replacement could constitute a mere pastiche of the original; the Association stands ready to offer all possible advice in order to prevent such an unfortunate outcome. {22441}



In a somewhat curious case, it was announced in 2013 that the **Elysium** [Gaiety/Classic] in Eastbourne was to have its listed status revoked, yet to date it retains its designation. {22753} *Photo taken April 2008.*

## Unlisted

The **Regent** at Deal, sold to a private business by the local Council in 2011, is the subject of debate between the owners and a local lobby group: the former assert that they are proceeding as fast as possible with plans for its renovation whilst the latter is highly vocal in its adverse criticism, claiming that it sees little progress towards this goal. Independently of either faction, the CTA is to suggest to the local Council that the building, originally a typical seaside pavilion, is of community value and suitable for local listing. See Newsreel p15. {32928}

Save Britain's Heritage (SAVE) continues its campaign to retain the imposing frontage of the **Futurist** in Liverpool. Its petition to the Court of Appeal to hear its case was granted; thus the CTA's pledge of £400 was called in. The appeal to prevent unbridled demolition of the façade was successful, yet unfortunately SAVE was forced subsequently to compromise by agreeing to the removal of the pediment, deemed unstable by engineers. An agreement was secured for safe removal, labelling and storage of the component parts. Meanwhile, the overall case against the redevelopment of the area continues. See Newsreel p16. {6508} & {32281}

The appeal by the Kingsway International Christian Centre against refusal of planning permission for change of use of the **Rialto** at Crystal Palace has been dismissed. {28989}

At an extraordinary general meeting of its planning committee, councillors from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are to vote on an application to designate the **Odeon** an Asset of Community Value [ACV]. The group applying for this classification has released detailed proposals and plans of its bold and ambitious vision for the future of the building, which includes four cinemas, two theatres, a gallery and a recording studio. Extant original features would be incorporated wherever possible. See Newsreel p17. {13801}

Lidl has submitted a formal application to demolish the **Towers** in Hornchurch, which will be considered by the local Council's full planning committee. The CTA will object and request that a representative be allowed to speak at the meeting. It will also issue a press release to the local information media and continues to liaise with the local campaign group that is attempting to acquire ACV status for the building. {13777}

Despite the Association's suggestion that a new cinema be constructed behind the retained façade of the **Cinema** in Hoxton, the entire structure has unfortunately been demolished. See Newsreel p17. {13803}

