

# CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

## Planning Reform Submission to the Heritage Alliance

As a response to the consultation on National Planning Policy reform, the Association formulated and forwarded its objection to the extension of permitted development rights to cinema buildings, arguing for the genre's significance in both architectural and sociological terms.

### Grade I Listed

The Conservation Officer responsible for the **Granada** in Tooting has indicated that the works recently executed thereon did not require listed building consent as they qualified as repairs. However, investigation is to be carried out on site to determine if replacement of damaged faience on the façade has been accomplished utilising appropriate materials.

### Grade II\* Listed

Planning consent for a hotel adjacent to the **Dreamland** complex in Margate has been granted, despite objection from the Association appertaining to its detrimental impact upon the vista of the frontage of the entertainment building.

Discussions are continuing concerning the previously reported funding request from the trust administering the **Paignton Picture House**.

### Grade II Listed

A meeting with representatives of the **Crown Estate** has revealed that the **Carlton** in London's Haymarket will close for two years whilst redevelopment work is undertaken around it. The office block that replaced the theatre's stage-house will remain alongside the recently-listed entertainment venue. The extensive illuminated advertising panel will be removed from the exterior in order to reveal its original well-balanced architectural attributes; a commitment has also been made to replace the canopy, a feature that promotes proclamation of the building's function. The requirement to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act by providing elevator access is proving practicably and aesthetically problematic. See Newsreel px.

It is reported that the **Ritz** in Nuneaton has been purchased by a charitable organisation. No details of its intentions for the venue are known currently.

### Unlisted



The Ritz Aldershot in April 2006 with the Empire in the background

A rumour has circulated that the **Ritz** and the **Empire** in Aldershot are both to be demolished. The former is in use as a bingo establishment within the stalls area, with the residuum of space disused, purportedly due to the presence of asbestos. The latter structure is currently in use as a Gurkha community centre, although permission for demolition has been granted; it was refused listed status in 2005.

Councillors of the Borough of Ashford have voted in a majority of thirty-four to seven to demolish the auditorium of the **Odeon** and redevelop the site as a retail complex.

A submission was forwarded to Bradford City Council maintaining that the interior of the **New Victoria** should be restored to its original Italian Renaissance internal appearance as designed by William Illingworth and not merely renovated as a poor pastiche of an alleged typical cinema interior. Reprehensibly the latter approach was approved by councillors. Attempts will be made to maintain a dialogue with the parties involved in an attempt to ameliorate the negative impact of this concept.

The Association has proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan relating to the area in which the **Brontë** at Haworth is situated recognises the cinema as a Non-designated Heritage Asset. Following local consultation, the Plan will be submitted to the City of Bradford Council for further statutory consultation and independent examination. If approved, it will become subject to a local referendum, a favourable outcome to which will result in its integration into the Statutory Development Plan for Bradford.

The **Byron** at Hucknall has been purchased by an Irish development company, which has commenced building work on site. The interior of the cinema regrettably was largely mutilated during its conversion for bingo within the lower auditorium volume. See Newsreel px.



The Dominion/Safari Harrow in September 2006

Pre-application discussions are proceeding concerning demolition of the main body of the **Dominion** in Harrow, with intended replacement by a supermarket and residential accommodation. Frank Bromige's magnificent, currently hidden, façade would be restored and integrated into the new scheme, although how fully or effectively remains moot. However, much interior detailing also remains, especially within the circle area. The CTA is thus advancing strong objection to this proposal and is arguing strenuously for retention of the entire structure.

A site meeting has taken place at the location of the **Kensington Kinema** to discuss further possible salvage operations. Various artefacts have already been removed to storage prior to intended relocation in the redeveloped premises.

It is reported that the reproductions of Raymond Briton Riviere's 'Flying Ladies' have been returned to the splay walls of the **Odeon** in Leicester Square. They were initially missing following the frantic final rush to reopen the cinema at the end of 2018.

Slough Borough Council has acquired the **Adelphi** for conversion to a performing arts centre. If sensitively realised, that could prove to be positive news for this testament to the prowess of architect E Norman Bailey. However, a close watching brief must be maintained because, as previously reported, this cinema was recently lamentably refused listed status, despite its imposing façade and the almost unaltered decorative scheme within, including that featured in the distinguished ballroom, a rare survivor.

Objections to both an original and a revised submission for extension of the **Wetherby Cinema** have been submitted. See Newsreel px.

