

HERITAGE CASEWORK

by Mike Whitcombe

The CTA Casework Committee are continually involved in securing a positive future for many endangered cinemas, both present and former. It's important work – here's a summary of our current work load.

England

Grade I

GRANADA/BUZZ, TOOTING, LONDON (Cecil Masey and Theodore Komisarjevsky, 1931)

We attended a meeting with Councillor Kemi Akinola of the London Borough of Wandsworth and Libby Lawson of Tooting Local History Group in May which went very well. Wandsworth Council are interested in the building but do not know who might be buying the freehold. We expressed our concern about the building if Buzz Bingo stops trading as they tend to shut down at short notice. If that was to happen, the Council might step in and buy the lease.

Grade II*

FORUM, LIVERPOOL (William Glen & Alfred Shennan, 1931)

We have spoken to the Artistic Director of the Mayflower, Southampton, who is still very keen to be involved and who wants to know if the Forum is for sale. Liverpool Council have not responded to our requests since 2022 but we continue pressing.

SAVILLE/ODEON, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON (Bertie Crewe, 1931; William Ryder & Associates, 1970)

The application to provide a cinema/theatre space for Cirque du Soleil with a hotel above has been approved.

CAPITOL, FOREST HILL, LONDON (John Beard, 1931)

We have responded to a planning and Listed Building Consent application for conversion to a children's play centre and this is generally acceptable.

CARLTON, HAYMARKET, LONDON (Frank Verity, 1927)



We met the ground landlords, the Crown Estate, recently and they want to demolish an unstable plant room on the roof, with which we agreed. The Crown Estate will submit an application to Westminster Council covering the entire city block, including the cinema. We will have another meeting with them when that application has been submitted.

REGAL, KINGSTON, LONDON (Robert Cromie, 1932)

We still do not know the extent of the damage to the interior after the recent fire but we have written to the Head of Development Management at Kingston Council, seeking a meeting about the future of the building.

CURZON, MAYFAIR, LONDON (Horace Hammond for Sir John Burnet, Tait & partners, 1966)

We had a meeting with Dan Zaum, the owner of, or linked to, Fantasio, a film production company who own the cinema. We asked to see more detailed drawings of their scheme. Curzon have dropped the court case against the landlords.

SAVOY, BURNT OAK (George Coles, 1936)



There is a scheme for redevelopment as small flats in a planning application.

RITZ, NUNEATON (Frank Verity & Samuel Beverley, 1937)

The case is progressing well and Zoë Massey, architect, has been in touch with us. A plaster expert, Peter Brabec, is to restore the plaster and we have advised about the colour scheme.

REGAL, ROTHERHAM (Blackmore & Sykes of Hull, 1943)

The cinema is owned by the Council and is on Rotherham Council's At-Risk list. We are attempting to discover what the Council intend to do with the building.

NORTHWICK, WORCESTER (Charles Winford, 1938)



The building is up for sale but is currently still being run as an antiques centre. The building is in relatively good condition.

NOT LISTED

ODEON, BOURNEMOUTH (George Coles, 1937)

We are concerned about photographic recording and salvage, following demolition of the auditorium.

CLIFTON, LEOMINSTER (Ernest Roberts, 1936)

We have written to the Conservation Officer, Debra Lewis, about ensuring that the paybox is preserved in accordance with the conditions of the application.

ODEON, CAMDEN TOWN, LONDON (Daniel MacKay, William Edward Trent, William Sydney Trent, 1937)

There is an application for demolition and redevelopment with student accommodation, and an 'arts space' and housing. We will argue for preservation of the foyer and will write to Camden Council to suggest that the 'arts space' be used as a cinema, with its entrance through the preserved foyer.

DOMINION, HARROW, LONDON (Frank Bromige, 1936)

The canopy and signage still have not been reinstated and we are chasing this.

GENESIS, STEPNEY, LONDON (William Glen, 1939)

We have written a five-page objection to the application, which has not yet been determined. The Twentieth Century Society have also objected, including an environmental argument.

REX, STRATFORD, LONDON (Frank Matcham & JM Gladwell/George Coles, 1897/1934)

In May Newham Council decided to sell the building to a music venue company called Columbo Group, who will operate it as Jazz Café East.

RITZ/ODEON, GEORGE STREET, OXFORD (Robert Cromie, 1936)

There is now a method statement for relocation of the Newbury Trent Relief.

PLAZA, WINCANTON (Edward De Wilde Holding, 1934)



A local operator had submitted an application to convert the building into a three-screen cinema with restoration of the façade. It is very damaging to the auditorium, to which we have objected.

PLAZA, WORTHING (Harry Weesdon, 1933)

We are investigating the application for what we believe is to be the complete demolition of the building.

Wales

Grade II

CASTLE, SWANSEA (Thomas, Meager & Jones, 1913)

We have written to the developer thanking him for the fact that the paybox has been safeguarded and will be reinstated as a feature in the foyer area. The paybox was removed without authority by the previous occupier and is a rare survivor, probably dating from opening in 1913 but may have been added later circa 1930. We supported the scheme for change of use as it respected the heritage of the former cinema and made good use of the existing building without any protruding extensions and floors that would be out of character. We will request permission to take photographs for our archive when the development is complete.

Past and present cinemas around the country are always under threat. The CTA Casework team are always happy to help another cinema from disappearing forever and your help could be vital in doing just that. If any member learns of a threat to a cinema, please let the Casework Committee know. You might just save a cinema for future generations.

