

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II Listed



It is reported that the Central Picture Theatre / King Edward in Blackpool is to be converted into an 'artisan market' as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme. The 'Arts and Crafts' style exterior constitutes the cinema's most notable extant feature; minimal internal detailing survives. An acceptable utilisation of the building may thus be advanced by this enterprise. *photo taken September 2003*

Unauthorised work at the Ritz in Ilkeston has culminated in the destruction of the plasterwork embellishing its foyer. Following discovery of this mutilation, the CTA contacted Erewash Borough Council, the enforcement officer of which halted any further injurious activity pending submission of a related planning application. It is reported that the objective of the new owner is to employ the structure as an office and training facility.

The gratifying report concerning the listing of the Abbey in the Wavertree area of Liverpool has been somewhat tempered by the perpetual inconsistency of Historic England in its criteria for assessment: cinemas of equal or greater architectural merit, exemplified by the Regal in Sunderland, have been declined this status routinely. It is evident that associative value assumes greater import during evaluation than architectonic quality – the Abbey has links to a popular music ensemble. The Association is to confer with The Heritage Alliance, raising the possibility of a joint approach by its constituents to Historic England on this recurrent issue.



The Odeon in Loughborough closed in March. Operator Beacon Bingo is concentrating its endeavours within purpose-built venues and is consequently leasing out its other properties. Currently no applications for alterations to the aforementioned building are under consideration. *photo taken May 2004*

The scheme for the Carlton, now Empire, in London's Haymarket is to proceed, yet with a delayed commencement date of early 2022. The Crown Estate has been urged to publicise its plans for the area on the surrounding hoardings, specifically including recognition of the original cinema's incorporation within the enterprise.

An online presentation to the local Civic Society detailing the latest proposals for the Regal in Kingston-upon-Thames has been conducted. Resultant opinion upon the updated designs is less than favourable.

The local Council has received no request for pre-application discussions concerning reconstruction of the Regent in Lyme Regis since 2017. The Association has issued a press release in an attempt to stimulate publicity from media outlets serving the region.

A similar media campaign by the CTA relating to the Granada in Shrewsbury has met with a degree of success, as a proposition to subdivide and restructure the cinema's interior as apartments has been aborted. Meanwhile, it is not known if the previously functioning bingo operation will resume following relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Grand in Southport remains unoccupied; its deterioration and security elicit disquietude. It is reported that the current owner has approached the local Council with a tentative plan for reuse; a watching brief will thus be maintained

Unlisted

Refurbishment of the Brontë in Haworth has been promulgated by a potential operator who has contacted the Association for advice. As previously reported, this cinema has been included as a local asset on a draft Neighbourhood Plan. The structure has lain empty for several years, although extant attributes are believed to include the original proscenium and paybox.

It had been intended that the shell of the only surviving section of the original structure of the Regent in Hinckley should remain following a conversion exercise; the auditorium block was lost some years ago. However, removal of the domed ceiling from the surviving upper crush foyer during this process has caused structural instability; work has thus been halted whilst the situation is assessed.

Save Britain's Heritage has convened a working-group to formulate potentialities for reutilisation of the Sandonia in Stafford, which the Association has previously attempted to safeguard with an emphasis upon retention of the impressive neo-classical white stone façade. Concurrently a local campaign for its conservation is also making some headway.

The Imperial in Walsall originated as an agricultural hall in 1868, was later converted to a cinema and has recently operated as a hostelry of the JD Wetherspoon chain. This operation has now terminated and concern arises for the building's future prospects. By virtue of the age of the edifice, the CTA will work in tandem with the Victorian Society on this case.

Demolitions in Brief

- ◆ Permission has been granted to demolish the auditorium of the Palace in Lancaster, although the frontage, facing onto Dalton Square, will remain. Loss of the audience chamber is regrettable as it features attributes of definite quality.
- ◆ An application has been made to raze the early (1911), yet significantly altered, Cinematograph in Edmonton.
- ◆ Prior to the CTA becoming aware of the situation, permission was granted to demolish the Adelphi in Moston [Manchester], which is to be replaced by an apartment block.
- ◆ Although the façade of the Premier in Somercotes [Derbys] is to be preserved, permission for redevelopment of the remainder of the cinema into multiple dwellings has been granted, with a proviso that a sign on a flank wall shall be incorporated into the new erection.
- ◆ A development propounded for the site of the Majestic in Gravesend is intended to integrate the façade and frontal block into another ubiquitous block of flats, which is destined to replace the auditorium. Regrettably this unsatisfactory outcome represents the best such attainable in this case.