

PRESCOT PICTURE PALACE
DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT
ISSUE 01
MARCH 2023



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Issue 01

March 2023

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council



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PRESCOT PICTURE PALACE: DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

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SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AUTHORSHIP

This document has been prepared by Purcell, a firm of conservation architects and heritage consultants, specialising in the conservation of the historic environment. Specifically, it has been prepared by Mark Clifford (Bsc. (Hons), MA, IHBC), Senior Heritage Consultant, Purcell and Mark Pearce, Architect, Purcell on behalf of Knowsley Council.

1.2 AIM OF THIS REPORT

This report has been prepared to comply with the tests and requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), specifically paragraphs 189 and 190, under which a description of the significance of a site, including any contribution made by its setting, must be provided to support any planning applications. There is a requirement for applicants to make an informed assessment of heritage significance as part of a staged approach to decision-making. As part of determination of applications for planning and listed building consent, local authorities must also identify and assess the effect on significance of any proposed changes.

The assessment follows the staged approach to decision-making set out within Historic England *Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (2019):

- 01 Understand the form, materials and history of the affected heritage asset(s), and/or the nature and extent of archaeological deposits
- 02 Understand the significance of the asset(s)
- 03 Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
- 04 Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
- 05 Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance

SECTION 2.0

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS

The former Prescott Picture Palace is located in Prescott, Merseyside near the corner of Kemble Street and Market Street. The building is immediately opposite the Prescott Shopping Centre although this is screened by trees. Beyond the immediate setting there are several other designated and non-designated heritage assets. The site is within the Prescott Conservation Area.



Location of the Picture Palace and nearby designated assets. Base plan ©GoogleEarth 2022

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1.1 Prescott Conservation Area

The town sits on a south-facing hill overlooking two streams and is dominated by St Mary's Church, listed Grade I.

In the eastern half of the Conservation Area is the remains of the medieval street layout, as defined by Eccleston Street and High Street and the narrow alleyways which run between them. To the west, a broad swath of woodland forms the backdrop to the church, with a group of mainly listed Victorian and Georgian buildings close by. Derby Street, which leads out of this part of the town, contains further important 19th Century buildings including a complex of listed buildings close to the junction with Knowsley Park Lane. Apart from two churches, and one purpose-built 19th century commercial office, most of the other listed buildings (of which there are 21) are either late 18th or early 19th century cottages or higher status town houses.

A gazetteer of internal spaces is included within [Appendix B](#).

2.1.2 Prescott Picture Palace (extract from the list description)

Exterior

The main (north) elevation has six bays of three and two storeys, plus a partial basement, of rendered brick masonry with pitched roofs. The eastern three-bays, of three-storeys, forms the front of the original cinema and comprises a blind balustraded parapet with a central segmental shaped moulded panel, decorated with a scrolled and garlanded cartouche, set above a moulded roof cornice and entablature. The parapet conceals a pitched roof with

two rendered edge brick stacks to the east and another below the roof ridge west of centre. Rising from the first floor, above a moulded string course, are rusticated stucco quoins and three slim and moulded stucco pilasters, each pilaster terminated with a shield applique with acanthus leaf drops. Each upper floor has three windows all with ornamented moulded reveals, and most with replacement modern wooden windows. The second floor has two moulded square windows set either side of a circular keystoned window which is ornamented with a double swagged garland surround. The tall first floor windows are each surmounted by a pulvinated entablature, the outer windows with a frieze ornamented with plaster double swagged garlands, which connect to the windows above, and the central window terminated by a bracketed semi-circular pediment with acanthus scroll appliques to jambs. The ground floor has ashlar inscribed render with a modern central flat lintelled doorway and two arched windows either side. To the west an early-C20 blocked flat lintel doorway (the former projectionist's entrance stair) has a rusticated stucco quoined right pilaster jamb (a remnant of the original ground floor pilaster main entrance jambs). The east return is rendered with a range of blocked windows across floors, all with projecting sills, and a blocked doorway. There is one off-set window, with projecting sill, at first floor level and a small square upper window off-set in the gable end. Number 10, to the east, is a two-bay three-storey C19 building and has a moulded roof cornice with two windows to each floor (the ground floor windows are late-C20 insertions), all with projecting stone sills. An early-C20 moulded and decorated stucco pilaster rises from the first floor in the eastern bay to match the cinema frontage. Number 8 is an early-C20 single-bay, two-storey shop with an Edwardian shop front to both ground and first floor, both with cornices resting on moulded shop-front brackets. The ground floor has a stall riser and external east door. The east return is blind.

Extending from the rear of the cinema is a two-storey seven-bay auditorium constructed of brick with six brick piers concealing reinforced concrete or steel columns. Flat sandstone lintel windows, with projecting sills and curved lintel soffits, puncture the upper walls of its east and west elevations. The auditorium's east elevation has four upper windows and a blocked ground floor row-lock arched window and arched emergency door at the north end. Attached to its south end is a 1970s flat roof single-storey extension. The west elevation is supported by five brick piers and the southern six-bays project outwards to form a wider auditorium. There are two upper windows in the second and fourth bay northwards. The ground floor has a blocked rowlock arched doorway but is mostly obscured by a 1970s extensions attached to the auditorium. The south return is plain brick with a stone skew-coped gable end and a 1990s first-floor two-leaf patio door with metal balcony.

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS



The building as viewed from the road



The side elevation



The rear elevation

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS

Interior

Cinema Entrance Foyer:

The original rectangular foyer, accessed through a late-C20 entrance porch, retains early-C20 (1912) acanthus leaf ceiling roses and egg and dart plasterwork coving. The south wall has three original two-panel doors with decorative projecting moulded mid-rail motifs and glazed top panels; two two-leaf doors with moulded architrave access the rear of the auditorium and the other, opens to the balcony staircase. An inserted toilet sits behind the late-C20 east foyer window.

Cinema Auditorium:

The double-height barrel-vaulted rectangular auditorium, decorated in Edwardian Baroque style, extends south from the foyer, and its plaster decoration is unchanged. It has a segmental barrel-vaulted ceiling with six rib bands decorated with interlocking plait plasterwork and edged by egg and dart mouldings. Between each rib are three moulded plaster panels: the central panels ornamented with six stucco acanthus wreaths, with inset decorative ventilation roundels set every alternate wreath, and the outer panels with ceiling rose light fittings every alternate bay. The auditorium side walls are divided into bays by six pilasters, with a projecting entablature (with egg and dart moulding) and string course. The latter and plaster framed panels form keystone lints to the upper auditorium windows, and the bays without windows are ornamented with double swag of fruit and foliage garlands with a central scrolled cartouche (one partially concealed beside the

balcony's first floor emergency exit). The floor is raked with 120 early-C20 tip-up cinema seats re-set and re-upholstered, some with wavy Art Deco motifs to the steel end panels. The structural frame of an original balcony remains, with stairs, at the rear of the auditorium; late-C20 temporary partition walls are attached at ground and first floor. Four original cast-iron balcony columns remain to the ground-floor (boxed in) with supporting beams above. The balcony has a flat floor, apart from a section of original raked flooring which leads to an early-C20 first-floor fire escape door. Late-C20 wall partitions have been inserted within the space to form temporary rooms, one of which re-uses a ground floor balcony column for structural support. The 1940s stage lighting and other electric switchboards are retained against the rear west wall of the auditorium. At the south end of the auditorium, the suspended flat lintel proscenium arch survives in situ. The string course forms the lintel of the arch, with keystone mouldings set either side of the opening. It has scrolled brackets resting on ionic capitals, with rectangular moulded panels to the soffit, marking the width of the screen. Set above is a scrolled cartouche, ornamented with a cherub's head and roundel with the painted inscription: 'God is Love I John. CH.4. VS8.' An inserted late-C20 L-shaped staircase at the east side of the late-C20 stage gives access to an inserted upper room behind the arch. Late-C20 doors in the southern bays of the auditorium access the east and west extensions.



The main auditorium



Detail of one of the cinema seats

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS

Cinema First And Second Floors:

The first floor is accessed from the auditorium balcony which opens into a corridor to a bathroom and two rooms; all with moulded C19 door architraves, dado rails, skirting boards and C20 doors. The second floor (now accessed by the late-C19 staircase in number 10) leads to a corridor giving access to a bathroom and three small rooms. South of the corridor the floors and walls are built of heavy solid filler-joist concrete, with cast-iron supports, and house the early-C20 projection room. The second floor projection room is off-set higher than the auditorium vault and retains an early-C20 side room for film reeling or storage, with original opposing doors, one four panel wooden door and a steel-door.

Other Spaces: (partial inspection)

The interiors of number 8-10, now sub-divided, are accessed through openings in the cinema auditorium walls. The north room of number 10 has a cupboard door opening into the former ground floor projectionist's stairwell (now void, with one quarter winder in situ) and the south rooms retain a re-modelled early-C19 timber door with C20 etched glass panes. There are further subdivided rooms to the first floor of numbers 8-10, with early-C19 reeded corning and a late-C19 first-floor open string staircase, with decorative brackets.



Room above one of the adjacent shops

IDENTIFYING THE HERITAGE ASSETS

2.2 SETTING AND KEY VIEWS

The NPPF details the requirement to describe the significance of any heritage assets including any contribution made by their setting

'Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset and may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

—
Historic England (2017) The Setting of Heritage Assets

Originally produced in 2011 by Historic England, *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning, Note 3: The Setting Of Heritage Assets (Second Edition) (2017)*, has been revised to reflect changes resulting from the NPPF and now takes the form of a *Good Practice Advice note (GPA 3)*. The document sets out how the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting – the surroundings in which it is experienced. The careful management of change within the surroundings of heritage assets therefore makes an important contribution to the quality of the places in which we live.

2.2.1 Prescott Picture Palace

The Picture Palace is in a predominantly residential area of 19th century terraced housing, although there are some later infill plots. A small alleyway of granite setts runs alongside the building dividing it from the neighbouring 19th century terrace. The prevailing building height in the area is two storeys; the Picture Palace of three storeys is one of the taller buildings along Kemble Street. Immediately opposite the site is a line of heavy tree screening which hides the car park for the shopping centre to the north.

The local material palette is red brick with the Picture Palace of painted stucco standing out as a prominent feature. The Picture Palace's flamboyant style further emphasises the building amongst the wider streetscape of terraced housing comprising simpler detailing. To the west of the site is a vacant plot that is overgrown and is divided from the road by palisade fencing contributing negatively to the setting of the site.

Key views of the site are all from Kemble Street viewing the main building frontage from relatively close range, although there are medium range views from further along the road looking along the terrace. Due to the building height and topography, there are no long-distance views of the site. The side and rear of the building is partially visible from across the vacant plot on Kemble Street and across the same plot on Sewell Street. This site was previously built upon and the views of the building from these angles are not considered significant; they were not intended to be seen, are of less architectural interest and have modern extensions obscuring the building.



The building within its wider setting



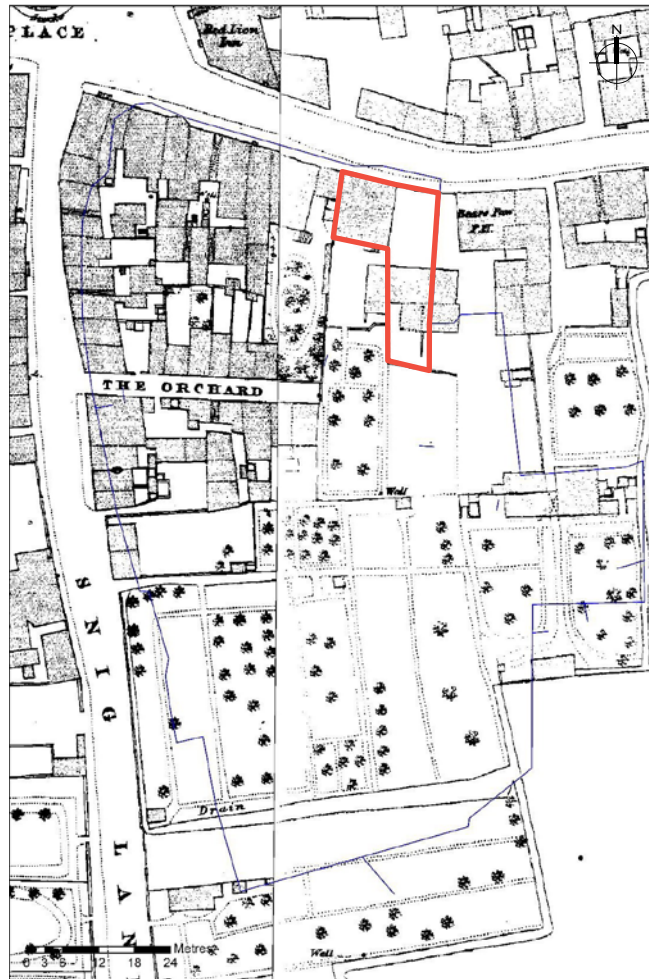
The building with the vacant plot to the west negatively contributing to the setting of the site

SECTION 3.0

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The early history of the site is presented within the supporting archaeological assessment which is not repeated in full here.

Nineteenth century cartographic sources show an existing building on the site before the extant cinema that were believed to be a pair of late 18th / early 19th century town houses. In 1848 the eastern part of the extant building (14 Kemble Street) was shown as an empty plot, with a building set back from the frontage with two buildings shown (later 10 and 12 Kemble Street).



Plan of Prescott from 1848

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The 1891 plan of Prescott shows two buildings in place; the one to the west is probably 10 Kemble Street as seen on the 1848 plan. Since 1848 the vacant plot to the east has been built upon with an adjoining property fronting onto the road. The existing buildings to the rear are still evident.

By 1908 the western most building was constructed that now contains the extant shopfront. Although there was an earlier building on this site in 1891 the small planform would suggest this was a lean to that was substantially rebuilt or demolished for the extant building. The extant shopfront is typical of this period in a late Victorian/Edwardian style. This plan shows the site four years before the cinema's construction in 1912.



1891 Plan of Prescott



1908 OS map

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The cine-theatre opened in 1912 as evidenced by The Bioscope of June 1912 which describes the registration of the company.⁰¹

Messrs S & A Taylor of Prescott were contracted to undertake the works, Messrs Fred Wilkins and Bro Ltd (manufacturing specialists in theatre and cinema equipment) undertook fibrous plaster and decorative work both internally and externally and Messrs George Scott and Sons of St Helens installed heating and ventilation in the auditorium.



The cinema frontage in the early 20th century



Part of a leaflet from the early 20th century showing the cinema

⁰¹ The Bioscope June 1912

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

By 1913 the theatre was up and running with the building described as:

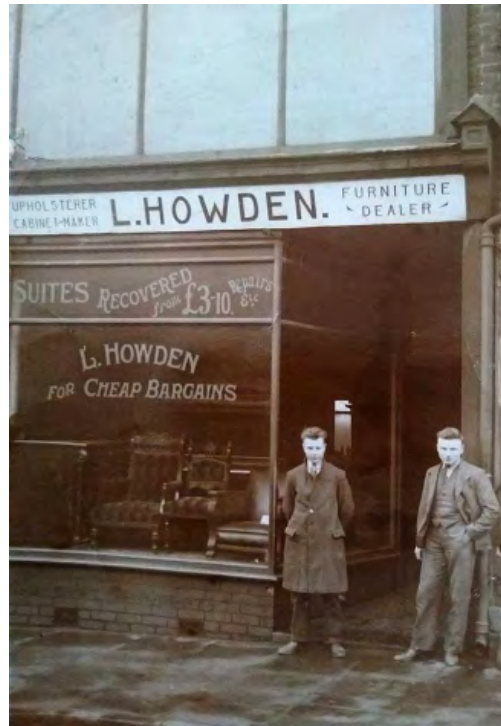
'... up to date in every way, being ventilated and heated by the latest methods, while its general appearance gives one an impression of comfort right away. Seating for 630 is provided, in tip-ups, and Mr William Challoner is to be congratulated upon the excellence of the show he conducts'.⁰²

The new cinema was clearly a success as by 1913 increased seating was to be installed to cope with the demand which included the addition of the balcony.⁰³

The Picture Palace served as a picture-drome, music-hall and Variety Theatre. It was operated as part of the J F Emery Circuit by 1923, renamed 'Palace Cinema' in 1927, and equipped with a British Thomson-Houston (BTH) sound system by 1929.

Historic photos showing the neighbouring annex to the main building once housed an early 20th century shopfront that is still evident although now obscured by boarding. This was occupied by a furniture makers called L. Howden. Above this a fully glazed upper floor suggests this may have been a workshop. There was also a shopfront between the cinema and the extant shopfront which has been infilled in the 20th century. This shopfront is again 19th or early 20th century and as the host building is older than this it is assumed to be a later insertion.

The early historic photos also show the original form of the cinema elevation with the ground floor accessed by two side doorways and the central bay as a window, this arrangement was altered in the late 20th century where the doors were converted to windows and the central bay opened as a doorway.



The adjoining early 20th century shopfront



The street in the early 20th century

⁰² The Bioscope January 1913

⁰³ The Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly Aug 7 1913

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

In 1957 the cinema closed and the building became a carpet and furniture warehouse. The planform remained relatively unchanged until the mid-1970s, although the 1920s cinema seating was removed from the auditorium and stored in the upper floors.

Later alterations include a flat roof extension that was added to the rear of numbers 8-10 and another at the south end of the auditorium's east elevation. Internally the east arm of the balcony was extended to the south end of the auditorium, over the stage and beneath the proscenium arch. Around 1976 a further flat-roof toilet extension was added at the south end of the auditorium's west elevation.

In the 1990s the proscenium arch was modified, with the upper square headed arch retained but the lower stage replaced. The east arm of the balcony was then extended up to the south auditorium wall with a bridge connected between the arms giving access to a new stair inserted at the east side of the stage and a new first-floor fire-escape door with an external metal staircase.

By 1996 the ground floor cinema entrance doors were in-filled and the central window removed for a central entrance with arched windows either side. The auditorium balcony had its side arms removed, and the rear balcony modified with the addition of partition walls at ground floor and balcony level. A temporary partition was also inserted behind the proscenium arch to create a back-stage room.



The auditorium today with the boxing to the left a later alteration to install a staircase and room behind.

SECTION 4.0

BUILDING ANALYSIS

4.1 THE ORIGINAL LATE 18TH/EARLY 19TH CENTURY HOUSE

The earliest cartographic evidence for the site in 1848 appears to show the current central building as being the oldest. Dating this building is difficult but it is probably late-18th or early-19th century based on the partial survival of the external façade. The reeded cornice found in parts of the building on the first floor are also a common feature for the regency period (early 19th century).

The eastern part of the building (the later cinema entrance) was an empty plot in 1848. By the 1890s the eastern building was constructed suggesting it dates from the mid-to-late-19th century. By 1908 the adjoining shop was built, and they are shown as three separate properties.

The original arrangement of the earliest building is difficult to identify but the partial survival of the internal planform and the chimney locations allow the building's typology to be hypothesised, with it partially spanning into the current cinema façade. This makes the current window arrangement unsymmetrical which would be unusual, so it is possible that there was an additional bay of windows between the current cinema and the central building with it being a pair of terraces or a building similar to 10 Vicarage Place, Prescott (see image). Interestingly, a vertical crack runs from parapet to ground in the approximate location of the original building line further supporting this argument.



Note the vertical crack on the parapet and at ground floor. This is possibly the original building line with everything to left the mid-late 19th century extension.



10 Vicarage Place, Prescott. A possible arrangement for the original building

BUILDING ANALYSIS

4.2 19TH AND EARLY-20TH CENTURY ADDITIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

The shopfronts themselves are late-19th or early 20th century and the central shopfront (that no longer remains but is evident in historic photographs) was inserted into an earlier building, resulting in an alteration to the internal layouts, especially at ground floor level. The central 'passage' as evident today was either an entrance corridor, or the 19th century access to the upper floors. There is a similar passage on the floor above with a staircase between second and third floor. This could either be original late-18th / early-19th century fabric or a 19th century alteration when the shop was inserted.

The original planform of the eastern most building is difficult to establish as the spaces have been opened to create the entrance foyer for the cinema in 1912/13 and the concrete staircase inserted to the balcony above. The location of the original 19th century staircase and the planform have been completely lost. The staircase in the early 20th century building (western building with the extant shopfront) is not shown on the 1970s planning drawings suggesting it is a later insertion and any evidence of how the upper floor was accessed no longer remains. The central building has an existing timber staircase likely to be from the mid-late 19th century based on the decorative tread ends (so therefore not original). The newels, balusters and handrails are possibly later 20th century replacements.



A mid-late 19th century staircase between first and second floors



The staircase to the rear of the central block. Likely to be mid-late 19th century

BUILDING ANALYSIS

4.3 THE 1912/13 PICTURE PALACE

It was in 1912 that the external façade was remodelled with the stucco render scheme and the parapet and other decorative features added when the buildings were converted into a cine-theatre. The existing buildings were internally remodelled, in particular the eastern most building completely lost its ground floor planform for the formation of the cinema foyer and the installation of the staircase to the balcony. The cinema balcony is said to be a slightly later addition in 1913 for additional seating, so the concrete staircase could be an early adaptation of the 1912 layout.

Although the map progression shows there were buildings on the site of the auditorium, the external brickwork suggests the main auditorium itself was a new construction in 1912. The existing 19th century building line is probably the line of the iron columns (currently boxed in).

The roof structure of the auditorium also suggests it did not reuse any older fabric, with it being predominantly steel framed. Within the auditorium roof space is a large ventilation duct with a maker's mark of 'The Blackman Fan: James Keith and Blackman'. Blackman fans are primarily for ventilation and dust extraction with the company founded in 1823⁰⁴. The name of the company became James Keith and Blackman from 1901 before changing to Keith Blackman in 1937 so the system will date from this period (1901-37) and likely dates from the auditorium construction as a means of ventilation, or extract for mechanical plant. Although not accessed due to safety concerns, there is said to be historic mechanical plant in the basement which is likely to be the original generator before the building was connected to mains electricity.



Keith Blackman fan advert from 1945



The roof space above the main auditorium

⁰⁴ https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Keith_Blackman

BUILDING ANALYSIS

Any phasing of the interior and the auditorium lacks any original architect's drawings or early internal photographs. A video from the Prescott Film Archive Society shows the interior of the building when it was a Bingo Hall, presumably from the 1980s. It shows the 1913 balcony (with original seating) that continued around both sides of the hall, which has since been removed. The plasterwork motifs are shown as they survive today, with the auditorium windows shown as infilled. The current windows in the auditorium were installed in the 1990s when the building became a church, along with the formation of the stage and baptismal plunge pool, along with various other alterations to the buildings.

Hartwell (1973) suggests early silent cinemas screens generally had a plaster finish painted white or a retractable screen. To accommodate sound and speakers the proscenium arch was sometimes inserted later set a few feet forward⁰⁵, this may or may not be the case at Prescott as the arch is set forward of the gable wall and the sound system was known to be installed later in 1929.

Other than the suspending lighting, that has been replaced with modern electric chandeliers, the plasterwork ceiling appears largely unaltered from the 1980s video to today. Whilst the picture quality is poor, the colour scheme differs, with it appearing to be a dark red for the motifs with a brown or yellow wall, although this itself may not be original.

At first and second floor level there are walls that are obvious insertions as they cut across chimney breasts and 19th century cornices. Several extensions to the building are also clearly identifiable as post-1945 alterations due to their construction. As the building has had multiple phases of use, dating these lightweight dividing walls is difficult as they could be from the 19th century through to the present day. Investigative works on opening-up would help establish a date for these depending on their construction type.

It is unusual (but not unique) for a picture palace to have windows in the auditorium, as the light has the potential to impact the viewing experience. Similar cine-theatres, such as Harwich Picture Palace (1911) and Scala, Ilkeston (1913) do not have auditorium windows. The windows' keystone lintels do have an art deco influence that that would be more typical of the 1920s or 30s, however, this may be from a replication of Georgian Baroque rather than an attempt at art deco. Externally the windows have stone lintels and there isn't any obvious sign of insertion into the brick façade or the plasterwork of the auditorium. Without any further evidence it is difficult to say with confidence if the windows are original to the cinema (1912) or a later, possibly 1930s, alteration.



The auditorium interior c.1980



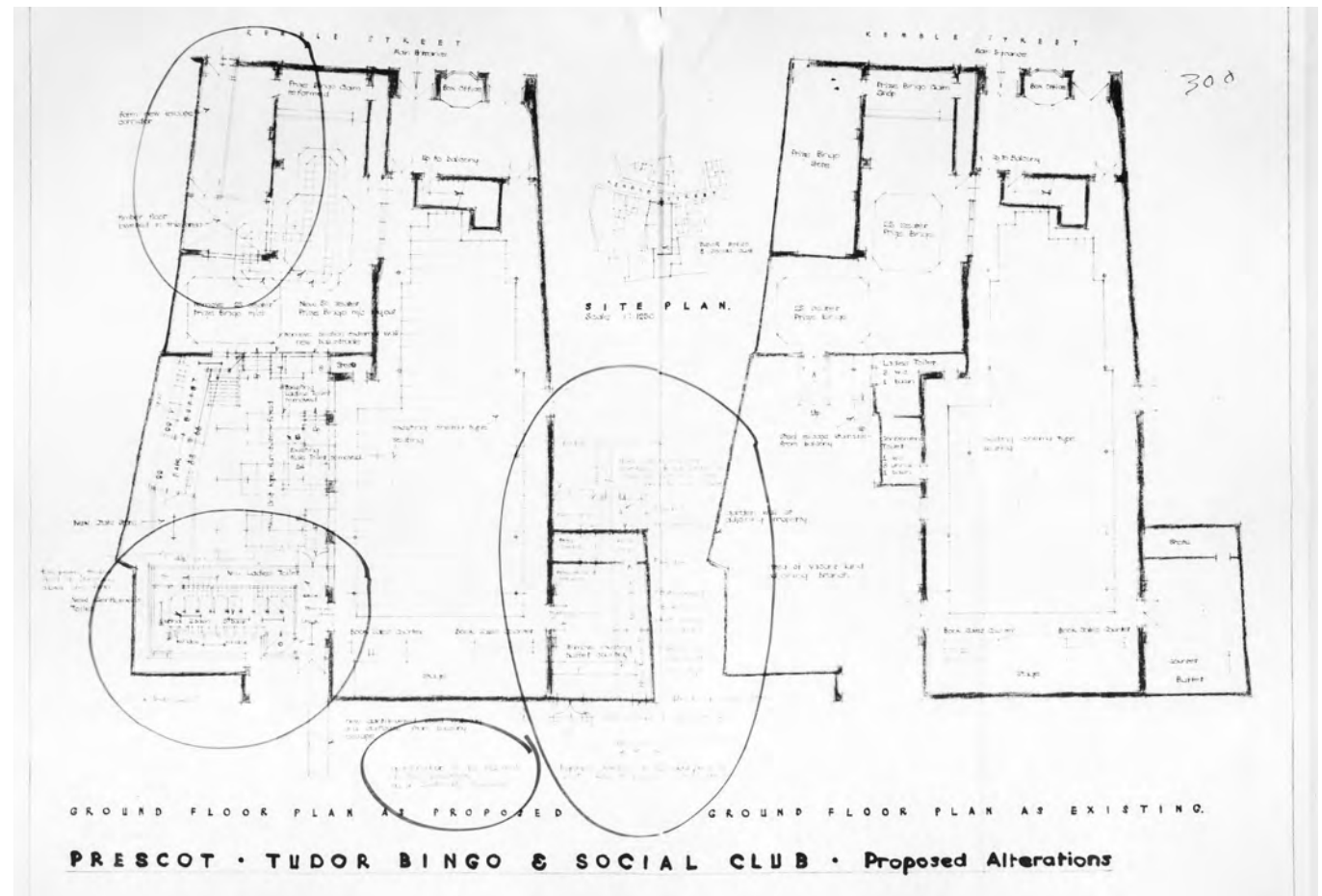
The Scala, Ilkeston (1913, Grade II)*

⁰⁵ Hartwell, D. (1973) The Picture Palace of Harwich. Article in British Film Institute

BUILDING ANALYSIS

4.4 MODERN ALTERATIONS

The building's post-cinema uses, (carpet warehouse, bingo hall and then church) involved the removal of the original cinema seating, where they were placed in storage, and various other alterations, such as the replacement of most doors with fire doors. Most of the auditorium balcony was removed in the late-20th century. When the building became a church in the 1990s the original cinema seating was re-installed and the baptismal plunge pool was installed on the stage. Floorplans from the planning portal show the layout of the building from 1974 onwards allowing the identification of later alterations, although the third floor is not shown.



The ground floor in 1974

BUILDING ANALYSIS

4.5 PHASING PLANS



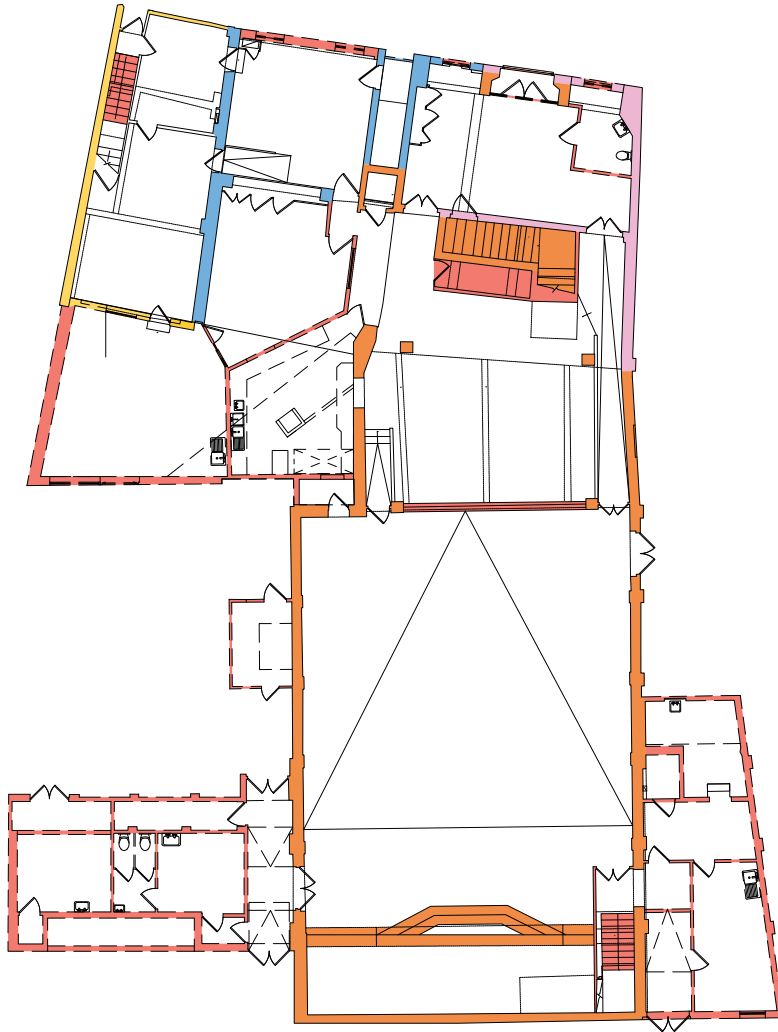
THE ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION DATES OF THE MAIN FACADE

PHASING PLAN

- Late 18th/Early 19th Century
- Mid-Late 19th Century
- Early 20th Century
- 1912
- Modern (Post-1945)

This plan is not to scale

BUILDING ANALYSIS



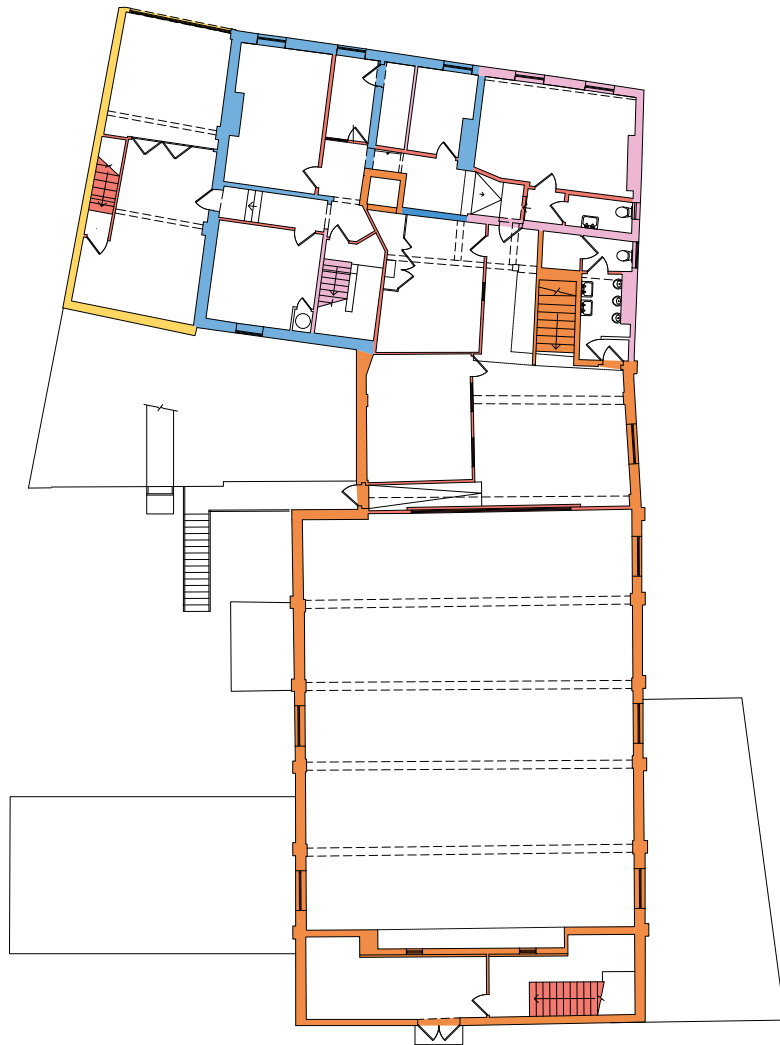
GROUND FLOOR

PHASING PLAN

- Late 18th/Early 19th Century
- Mid-Late 19th Century
- Early 20th Century
- 1912
- Modern (Post-1945)

This plan is not to scale

BUILDING ANALYSIS



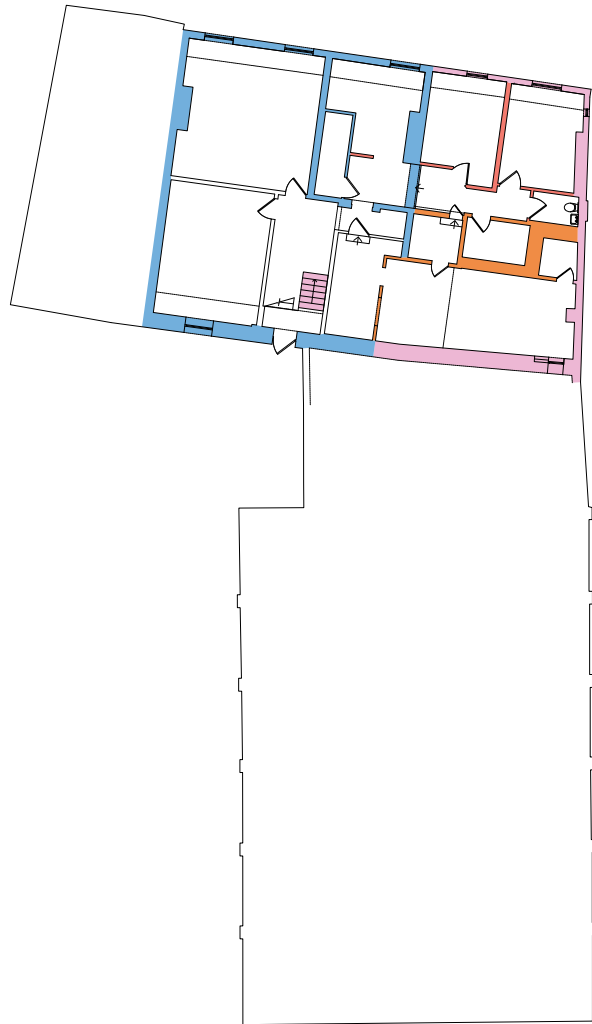
FIRST FLOOR

PHASING PLAN

- Late 18th/Early 19th Century
- Mid-Late 19th Century
- Early 20th Century
- 1912
- Modern (Post-1945)

This plan is not to scale

BUILDING ANALYSIS



SECOND FLOOR

PHASING PLAN

- Late 18th/Early 19th Century
- Mid-Late 19th Century
- Early 20th Century
- 1912
- Modern (Post-1945)

This plan is not to scale

SECTION 5.0

SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Significance can be defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The understanding of the significance of a place is vital to inform sensitively managed change. In accordance with Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets the following criteria are employed within this report to assess significance:

Archaeological Interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

The levels of relative significance used to inform the assessment of significance in this heritage statement are as follows:

Very High Significance

Attributable to those themes, features, buildings or spaces which are the most valuable. These elements are considered to be essential to the understanding and appreciation of the place and are contributors to its overall character and setting, as well as its local, regional, national and international importance. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

High Significance

Attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which has a high cultural value and forms an essential part of understanding the historic value of the site, while greatly contributing towards its character and setting, as well as its local, regional and national importance. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

Medium Significance

Attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which has some cultural importance and helps define the character and appearance of the site. These features are generally of local or regional value. Efforts should be made to retain features of this level if possible, though a greater degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible.

Low Significance

Attributable to themes, features, buildings or spaces which have minor cultural importance and which might contribute to the character or appearance of the site. These features are generally of local value. A greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.

Neutral Significance

Themes, spaces, buildings or features which have little or no cultural value and neither contribute to nor detract from the character or appearance of the site. Considerable alteration or change is likely to be possible.

Intrusive Significance

Themes, features or spaces which actually detract from the values of the site and its character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove these features. The significance plans provide a level of significance for both the physical fabric and the spatial characteristics of internal areas.

5.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Prescott Picture Palace sits at an important development point in cinema / theatre design with the gradual decline of this older Victorian form of entertainment and the growth of early cinemas already beginning. The beginning of the twentieth century saw the introduction of a new component in variety bills that would eventually lead to the closure of hundreds of theatres and music halls. This was the bioscope, a forerunner of the cinema. It was so popular that new or refurbished theatres often included provision for screening films.

The films were silent, but accompanied by music, usually an organ. These theatres became known as ciné-varieties, because of their mixture of variety theatre and cinema. Some foresighted architects included a separate projection room in their plans. This ensured the survival of some theatres as future fire safety legislation required any building showing a film to have a separate projection room.

World War I suspended theatre building, but by then it had reached a peak and demand was satisfied. By then, large towns might have two or three theatres while cities could have up to a dozen. The Depression further affected theatre-going and theatre-building. However, it was the emerging popularity of film that concerned theatre owners. Super-cinemas were springing up rapidly, many designed in a radical new artistic style, known as art deco or 'the Hollywood style'. This in turn influenced the refurbishing of some new theatres, which aspired to a more 'moderne' appeal, that of glamour and glitz.

Historic England's 'Culture and Entertainment Buildings Listing Selection Guide' (2017)⁰¹ suggests the survival of a proscenium arch and the level of alteration are important for the significance of the building along with the architectural quality. The Picture Palace sits at the end of the period representing elaborate designs, with other contemporary examples such as Harwich Picture Palace built in a very similar style. Earlier theatres (pre-1910) tended to be more classical in style. By the late-1920s and early 1930s the influence of art deco design is clearly seen in theatre and cinema styles such as Piccadilly Theatre, London (1928), by Bertie Crewe.

⁰¹ Historic England's 'Culture and Entertainment Buildings Listing Selection Guide' (2017)

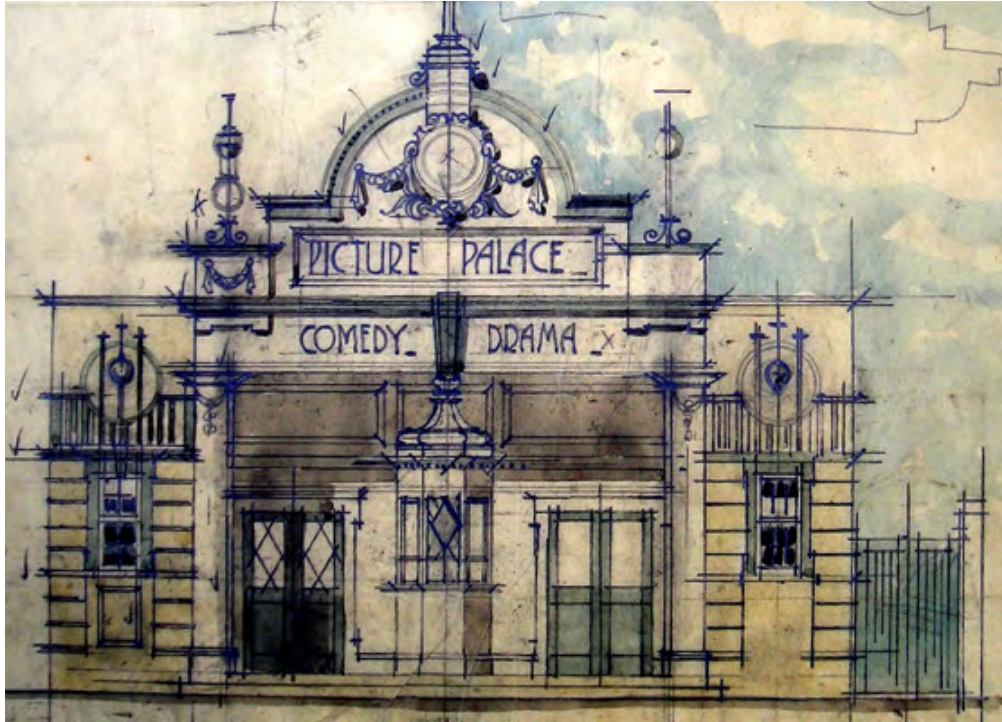
Historic England's 'Culture and Entertainment Buildings Listing Selection Guide' (2017)

Theatres: *Completeness of design enhances the case for listing – the survival of a proscenium arch where there was one is generally essential – and it is worth checking the degree of alteration carefully, especially of foyers, as theatres of this era may have been opened up to achieve movement between levels that was not originally possible. The architectural quality of the exterior is often elaborate; even so, English theatres are distinctive for being tucked away, with often only a small façade on an expensive street frontage. Internally, a theatre should retain a palpable overall sense of space. Theatres from the 1860s and 1870s were relatively modest in scale. The rich and fruity interiors of the years 1890-1914 survive disproportionately and the best, such as those by Frank Matcham, W G R Sprague and Bertie Crewe, the three leading theatre architects of the period, will most likely be listed in a high grade.*

Much greater selectivity is needed after 1914. Inter-war theatres deliberately limited their decoration and their subtlety repays close attention. Post-war theatres were reconsidered from first principles and are often experimental: significant influential layouts will warrant careful consideration. They generally dispensed with the conventional proscenium arch and, from the 1970s, reacted against grand architectural statements. Elevations were often highly glazed, so that the public in the foyers made their own theatrical statement, but decoration was deliberately kept low-key.

Cinemas: *Many of the same considerations for listing theatres apply to cinemas (see English Heritage 1999), but instead of stage equipment it is worth noting the survival of a cinema organ in situ. Completeness is important, although earlier fabric may survive hidden behind later alterations, such as screens. Exceptionally, once-common features such as an external pay box may survive. Given the numbers built, careful selection is required, but a surviving exterior with particularly good decoration and a fine canopy may well be enough to make a pre-1914 cinema listable on its own. Architectural quality and extent of alteration will be key considerations for later cinemas. Reorganisation (precipitated by government to bolster the home film-making industry) in 1927-8 led to standardisation and a new generation of cinemas for sound films: large, sometimes with tearooms and organs, and usually classical in style, but occasionally moderne. They need to be assessed in the context of their chain: each had distinctive styles and in-house architects and designers, to which the gazetteers by Allen Eyles are useful aids (see 'Select Bibliography'). Reversibility of alterations can be an issue needing special consideration. Postwar cinemas are usually part of larger office developments and their inclusion depends on the architectural quality of the whole.*

SIGNIFICANCE



Harwich Picture Palace (1911, Grade II*)



Piccadilly Theatre, London of 1928

SIGNIFICANCE

5.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Prescot Picture Palace was built at an important transitional period for theatre / cinema design and is one of the last Edwardian style cinemas built before World War I. The auditorium is richly decorated in plasterwork motifs which was typical of the early 20th century, these features survive largely unaltered along with much of the cinema planform. The survival of the proscenium arch, the ornate fibrous plasterwork, the Edwardian Baroque exterior and fixtures and fittings such as original seating, make the cinema an increasingly rare survival. The cinema was built to impress as a bold addition to the area built in an Edwardian baroque style and it forms an important feature of the streetscape and conservation area. There is also additional historical interest from the earlier period of the building's history before its conversion to a cinema and it makes an unusual example of an earlier building type adapted into an early 20th century cine-theatre. The adjoining buildings contribute to the setting and streetscape of the building along with the early 20th century shopfront.

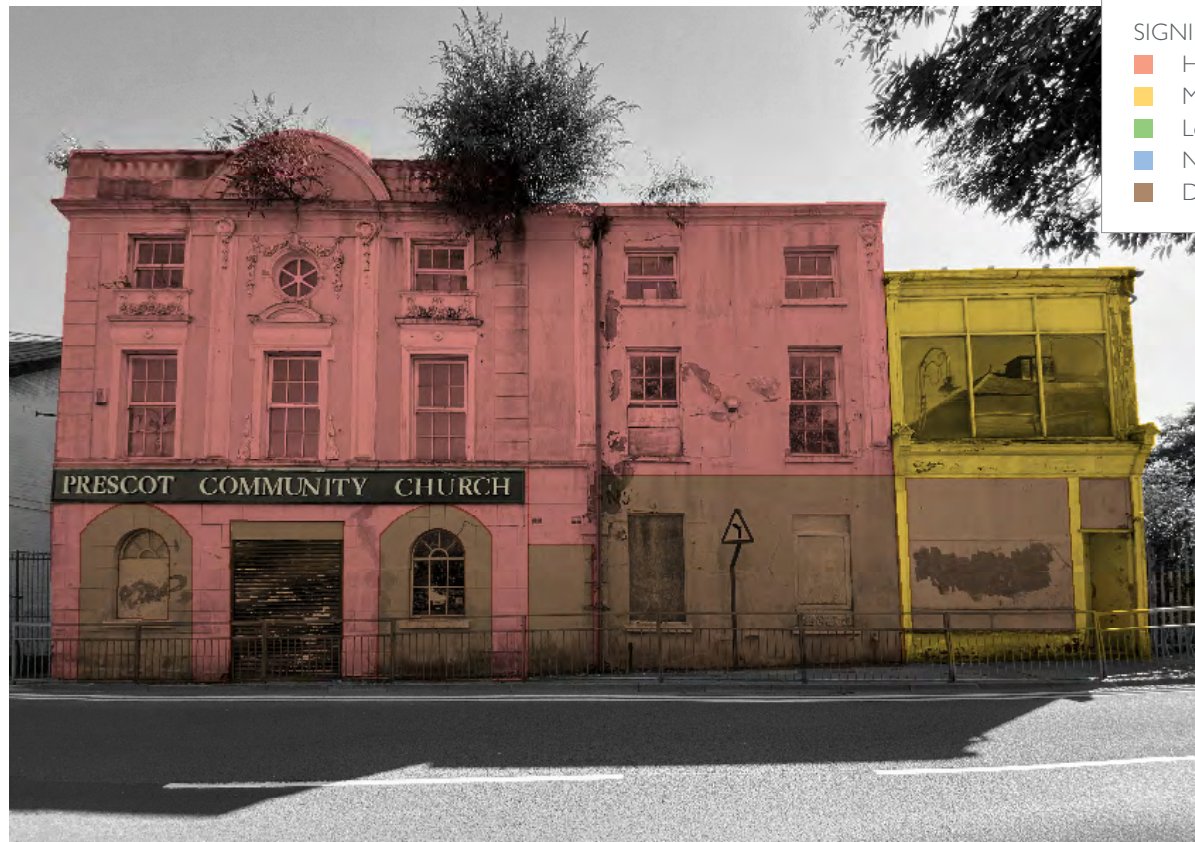
The planform has been confused by later alterations and removals and although phasing can be hypothesised there is still more to understand about the building's development and history which all add to the evidential value of the site.

Roller shutters, boarded windows, the poor condition and the infilled shopfront all detract from the aesthetic value of the building.

Key components of significance include:

- The main cinema facade is of high significance
- The historic planform is of high significance
- The main auditorium with plasterwork and historic seating are all of high significance
- The cinema entrance foyer is of high significance

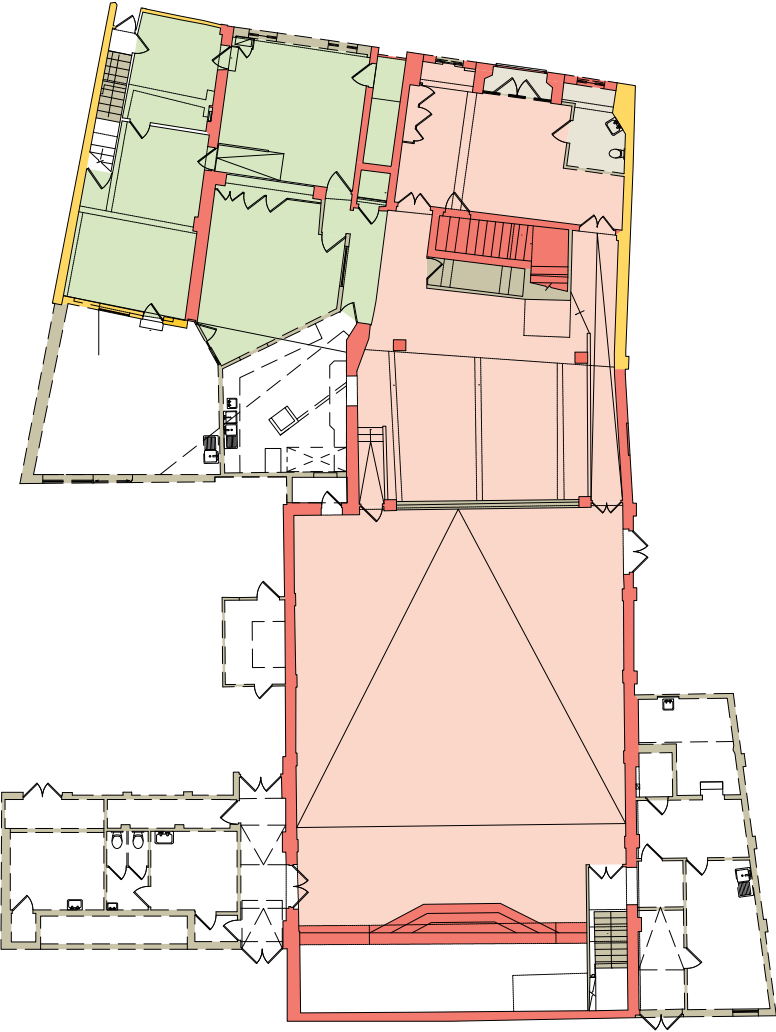
- The projectionist's room, with features such as the steel door for film storage is of high significance
- Later subdivisions that divide historic spaces have some significance, depending on their date (late-19th century to present day) but are detrimental to the building as a whole unless they represent a clear function of the building e.g. the projectionist room
- The building fabric of the original 18th/19th century buildings and the 1912 cinema are of high significance
- The early 20th century and mid-late 19th century buildings and shopfront are of medium significance
- The mechanical equipment related to the operation of the cinema is of medium significance



SIGNIFICANCE	
High	Medium
Low	Neutral
Detrimental	

SIGNIFICANCE

5.4 SIGNIFICANCE PLANS



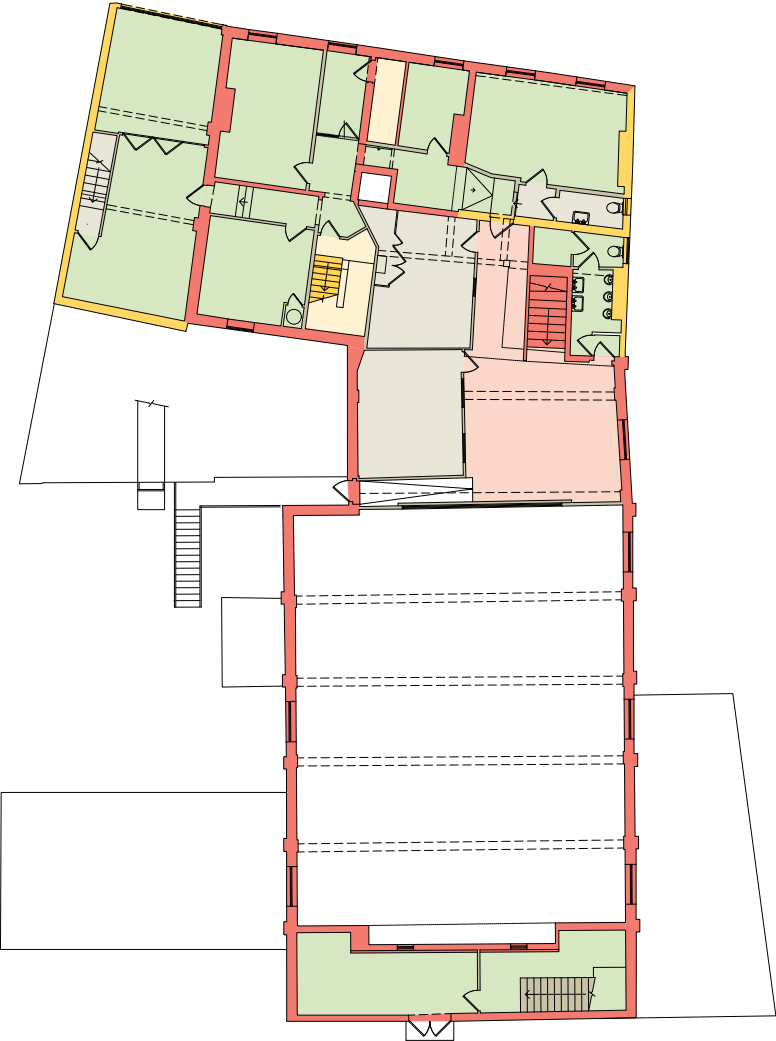
GROUND FLOOR

SIGNIFICANCE

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Neutral
- Detrimental

This plan is not to scale

SIGNIFICANCE

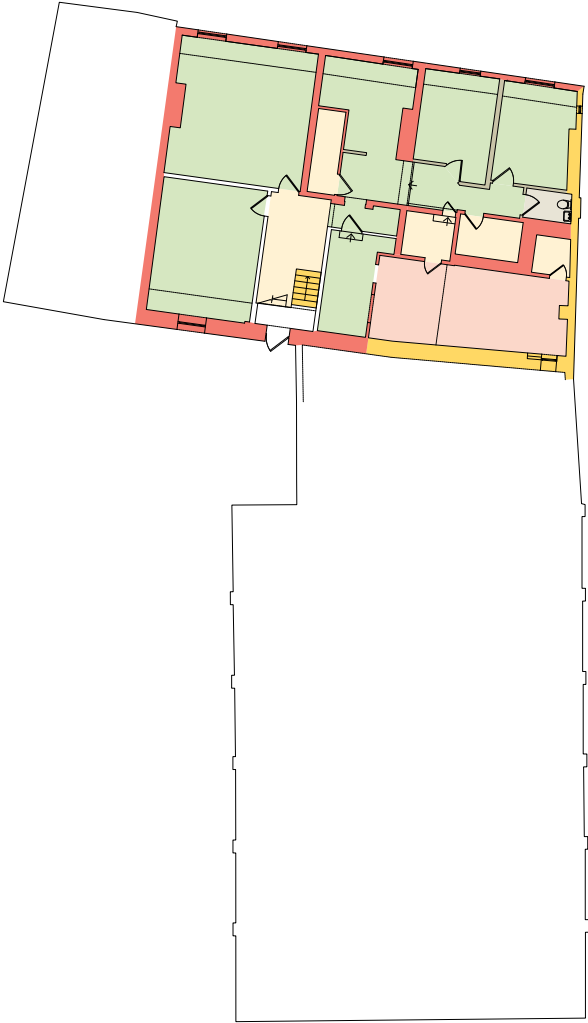


FIRST FLOOR
SIGNIFICANCE

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Neutral
- Detrimental

This plan is not to scale

SIGNIFICANCE



SECOND FLOOR

SIGNIFICANCE

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Neutral
- Detrimental

This plan is not to scale

SECTION 6.0

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

6.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied in 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development'. It outlines the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF is a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining planning and LBC applications. It supersedes and vastly simplifies the policy that previously existed in the form of Planning Policy Statements.

6.2.1 Conserving and Enhancing The Historic Environment

Within NPPF Section 15, 'Conservation and enhancing the historic environment', are the government's policies for the protection of heritage. The policies advise a holistic approach to planning and development, where all significant elements which make up the historic environment are termed heritage assets. These consist of designated assets, such as listed buildings or conservation areas, non-designated assets, such as locally listed buildings, or those features which are of heritage value. The policies within the document emphasise the need for assessing the significance of heritage assets and their setting in order to fully understand the historic environment and inform suitable design proposals for change to significant buildings.

- Paragraph 199 of the NPPF requires that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the potential level of harm to the asset's significance.
- Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

- Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- Paragraph 207 states that loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Knowsley's Local Plan (2016) sets out the local authority's objectives in relation to heritage. These are broadly summarised by policy CS20 -

Policy CS20

Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

- Development proposals in Knowsley should preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance.

The Council will:

- Require preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape;

- Prevent demolition and/or development which would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated historic asset or its setting, unless the proposal would result in substantial public benefits which clearly outweigh the harm or loss;
 - Where a development proposal will result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset or its setting, assess such harm against the benefits of the proposal;
 - Facilitate long term conservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance, including through the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.
- The re-use of vacant and underused historic assets will be encouraged, with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to proposals which will:
 - Enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to its conservation;
 - Retain or introduce public access; and
 - Enhance the importance of the asset for local tourism, leisure or the economy.
 - Development proposals on sites which include, or are considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets or comprising archaeological interest, should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement.
 - Locally important historic assets which are not subject to statutory designation will be identified in a local list and will be afforded consideration in the decision making process.

SECTION 7.0

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

7.0 DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE IMPACT SUMMARY

The proposal seeks to carry out external repairs and alterations to Prescott Picture Palace. Please refer to drawings for further information. It is understood that the client has agreement from the planning authority to undertake emergency repairs, including the removal and storage of the cinema seats to allow an internal scaffold installation; this package is not assessed here. Generally, the proposals include the following:

7.1 REINSTATEMENT OF THE FORMER CINEMA ENTRANCE AND THE HISTORIC SHOPFRONTS

The historic cinema entrance has been largely lost at street level, due to alterations carried out in the later half of the 20th century. This proposal seeks to reinstate the cinema entrance to its original design. This will involve the reinstatement of two historic entrance ways, with the addition of two new external grade doors, based on the existing historic doors located internally. Historic details such as the stucco render are to be reinstated as per historic photographs. A new central bay window will also be reinstated as per the historic photographs.

Repair work will be undertaken on the existing render on the front façade with cementitious render removed and replaced with a lime render as per the specification. Three types of render repairs will be carried out to the front façade. These are as follows: repairs to areas of flat render; repairs to run moulding; and repairs to ornate moulding. Please refer to the submitted drawings for a detailed specification of the proposed repairs.

The proposals seek to reinstate the removed central shopfront since been removed. The proposed design represents the historic shopfront that was there when the cinema was first in operation. Historic photographs illustrate its proportions and features. The new shopfront will be traditional in style with pilasters, a stallriser, fascia and cornices, along with a recessed splayed entrance.

The existing shopfront is to be reconfigured to better represent the design of the historic shopfront that was present when the cinema was in use. Changes include a new recessed splayed entrance, with new windows and door. The stallriser is to be reconstructed in brick following removal of the render. It is hoped that following the further assessment on site, the existing pilasters and fascia, can be repaired rather than by completely replaced. Should a splice method of repair prove not viable, then these items will be replaced with a like for like design, with profiles taken from the existing shopfront.

The front parapet wall is required to be taken down due to its structural instability. It is to be reinstated to the structural engineer's specification, whilst also reflecting the original design which is documented in historic photographs. A cast of the ornate decorative moulding is to be taken so that it can be accurately reconstructed. The missing text depicting 'Picture Palace' will also be reinstated.

7.1.1 Heritage Impact

The loss of the historic cinema entrance has reduced the overall significance of the façade and the asset itself which is further degraded by the roller shuttering. Reinstating this original entrance arrangement, which is strongly evidenced by historic photographs, is considered to be highly beneficial towards significance and the fabric lost in the works will predominantly be modern interventions of no significance.

The central building had an historic shopfront that was likely an early 20th century installation into the older 18th or 19th century building. Although the reinstatement is a later alteration, there is no known evidence of the form of the building before the shopfront. The current arrangement is late 20th century where the shopfront was removed and infilled. The works will result in the restoration of a feature fully informed by evidence and creating a unifying frontage to the street which is highly beneficial.

7.2 BRICKWORK

Where external brickwork is in poor condition, it is proposed that loose mortar is raked out and replaced with a new lime mortar. Further to this, there is an allowance for replacement matching bricks, which are required for approval before this work can be carried out. Redundant or inappropriate fixings are to be removed.

Cleaning of brickwork has been allowed for to better aid the assessment of its current condition. All vegetation is to be removed with an allowance to replace the top five courses of brick on all piers.

7.1.2 Heritage Impact

The works are considered like for like resulting in a positive impact on significance.

7.3 ROOF WORKS AND RAINWATER GOODS

The existing roof is to be lifted and striped with an allowance for new Welsh slate. Dark Blue Grey Slate Cwt-y-Bugail and Heather Blue Penrhyn Slate have been selected as appropriate matches to what is presently there. The historic louvred square ventilation shaft is to be reinstated with lead shaft/ lead covered pyramid roof. Chimneys are to have their existing render removed and replaced with a new lime render. Following assessment upon access, new sandstone copings are to be installed with new Tall Boy Chimney with Chimney Caps. All rainwater goods are to be replaced with cast iron rainwater goods to specification.

7.3.1 Heritage Impact

The works are considered like for like resulting in a positive impact on significance. The change from uPVC rainwater goods to cast iron is beneficial to significance.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

7.4 WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows to the auditorium are to be bricked up with the sandstone cill and lintel maintained in place to identify where a window was previously been located.

The proposals also involve reinstating windows that have been blocked up in recent years. Windows are to be replaced with new timber slimline double glazed, vertical sliding box sash windows, with true glazing bars. Windows to have sash cords and weights. Fabrication drawings will be required for approval for all windows.

In addition to the two new doors noted in relation to the cinema entrance and the new doors associated with the two shopfronts, furthermore, additional external doors are to be reinstated following the demolition works. These external grade timber doors are required to facilitate egress from the building while the future use of the building remains under review.

7.4.1 Heritage Impact

It is difficult to establish if the window openings to the auditorium are original or later installations. The glazing within them is modern and of no significance. Without evidence to suggest otherwise the window openings are assumed to be an original feature and their infilling will change the spatial characteristics of the internal high significance space resulting in a moderate degree of harm to significance.

None of the existing windows are original and their replacement with a visually similar sliding sash will not result in any harm to significance.

7.5 DEMOLITION WORKS

This proposal seeks to demolish four mid-20th century single story brick extensions. Three of these extensions are connected directly to the existing auditorium, with the remaining extension, largely extended from the historic shopfront/ residential properties. These mid-20th century extensions are generally in poor condition, and we feel their design is neither providing a benefit to the building, nor is their design sympathetic to the architecture heritage of the Picture Palace. In short, they are not fit for purpose and this proposal seeks to demolish them. Where demolition work is undertaken and the original external façade is to be re-exposed as the external façade, repair works will be carried to reinstate/ infill the voids, with brickwork to match the external facades.

The proposals have utilised all evidence at our disposal to determine the design of the external facades prior to the extensions being constructed. They therefore propose that following the demolition works, external walls are returned to their historic design with regards to positioning of windows and doors. Please refer to the existing drawings of the building which have been submitted as part of this application for a breakdown on the proposed areas for demolition.

7.5.1 Heritage Impact

The extensions to the building are all later 20th century structures of no significance and are in a poor physical condition. Their demolition and removal will result in a positive impact on significance.

7.6 ACCESS

The current phase of work does not primarily seek to improve access to the property however, new entrances are being proposed as part of the reinstatement of the cinema entrance in addition to the reinstatement of external doors to the auditorium. These proposals focus on the external works which will aid in the wider process of bringing the Picture Palace back into use and restoring its prominent position on the high street.

7.7 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE IMPACTS

The package of works will result in a positive impact on significance as they predominantly involve the repair of the building façade which is currently in a poor condition. There are various elements of the scheme that involve the restoration of lost features, such as the original cinema entrance and the central shopfront; these elements are highly beneficial to the significance of the asset. The one instance of any significant level of harm is from the infilling of the auditorium windows which will result in a change to the internal spatial characteristics of a key space within the building.

The proposal will result in 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated asset, the public benefits of the scheme involving bringing this vacant asset back into use by undertaking a package of repairs and restoration of lost elements should be considered as public benefits to outweigh this harm.

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The Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly Aug 7 1913

APPENDIX A

LIST DESCRIPTION

HERITAGE CATEGORY: LISTED BUILDING

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1475913

Date first listed: 27-May-2021

Location Description: 8-14 Kemble Street, Prescott, L34 5SQ

District: Knowsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Prescott

National Grid Reference: SJ4664492619

Summary

Former cinema and variety theatre, 1912, remodelled from two C19 townhouses. Edwardian Neo-Baroque style.

Reasons for Designation

This former Picture Palace, converted in 1912 from C19 town houses, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

* as one of the earliest surviving cine-variety houses in England;

* as a flamboyant and ornate Neo-Baroque style cine-variety theatre and cinema which reflect its status as a palace of pleasure and escapism;

* for the high-quality craftsmanship of the matching decorative scheme between facade and interior;

* for an intact and clearly readable plan form, despite the addition of some later-C20 temporary partitions;

* for the retention of its original spatial arrangement with fixtures and fittings, including early-C20 cinema seating, cinema doors, raked floors and purpose-built fire resistant projection room.

Historic interest:

* as a building type which represents a watershed moment in the rapid transition from music hall to cinema.

Group value:

* the former cinema benefits from a spatial group value with the listed St Mary's Church, No 9 Market Place and Prescott War Memorial.

History

Prescot Picture Palace was established around 1912. In 1911 The Prescot Picture Palace Company Ltd purchased number 12 to 14 Kemble Street (a pair of amalgamated C19 town houses) and plans were approved by the Urban District Council for their conversion into a cine-variety theatre in September of that year. As constructed the cinema was accessed by two main keystone arched entrance doors set either side of a leaded and five-light stained-glass window, with a projecting entablature which arched around the entrance doors. The ground floor was adapted to a foyer, with a box office positioned behind the central stained-glass window, and the auditorium built into the rear of the building. To the west of the main foyer entrances, a doorway gave the projectionist access, via a staircase, to the first and second floor of the building. In the auditorium the proscenium wall had a narrow stage for Variety Theatre beneath a suspended and curtained proscenium arch. An east stage stair provided access between the basement (not inspected, perhaps housing changing rooms) and the auditorium. A spacious concrete-built projector room was positioned on the second floor (raised above the auditorium), with projection openings in the north end of the auditorium's barrel vaulting. Messrs S & A Taylor of Prescot were contracted to undertake the works, Messrs Fred Wilkins and Bro Ltd (manufacturing specialists in theatre and cinema equipment) undertook fibrous plaster and decorative work both internally and externally and Messrs George Scott and Sons of St Helens installed heating and ventilation in the auditorium.

At its opening it was described as presenting a palatial appearance and 'quite luxurious' with the theatre seating 630 customers, which increased with the addition of a balcony around 1913. The U-shaped balcony, carried on ten pairs of columns, was accessed by a central L-shaped staircase off the foyer. The Picture Palace served as a picture-drome, music-hall and Variety Theatre. It was operated as part of the J F Emery Circuit by 1923, renamed 'Palace Cinema' in 1927, and equipped with a British Thomson-Houston (BTH) sound system by 1929. In 1957 the cinema closed and the building became a carpet and furniture warehouse. The plan form remained unchanged until the mid-1970s, although the 1920s cinema seating was removed from the auditorium and stored in the upper floors. Around 1975 former shops (8-10 Kemble St) were purchased by Tudor Bingo and incorporated into the cinema building. Number 8 was a purpose-built early-C20 shop, with an Edwardian shop-front to the ground and first floor; and Number 10 a former C19 house converted to a shop. Both shop frontages were boarded up and modifications included the creation of internal access between the newly purchased buildings and the former cinema, and the removal of the cinema entrance entablature for a fascia sign. A flat roof extension was added to the rear of numbers 8-10 and another at the south end of the auditorium's east elevation. Internally the east arm of the balcony was extended to the south end of the auditorium, over the stage and beneath the proscenium arch. Around 1976 a further flat-roof toilet extension was added at the south end of the auditorium's west elevation. Coral Bingo took over the bingo club in the late 1980s and established a social club, with the loss of the shop front to number 10 for the insertion of two ground floor windows. In the 1990s the proscenium arch was modified, with the upper square headed arch retained but the lower stage replaced. The east arm of the balcony was then extended up to the south auditorium wall with a bridge connected between the arms giving access to a new stair inserted at the east side of the stage and a new first-floor fire-escape door with an external metal staircase. In 1995 the buildings were purchased by

A: LIST DESCRIPTION

Prescot Community Church (an Elim Pentecostal Congregation), who remained in residence until 2021. By 1996 the ground floor cinema entrance doors were in-filled and the central window removed for a central entrance with arched windows either side. The auditorium balcony had its side arms removed, and the rear balcony modified with the addition of partition walls at ground floor and balcony level. A temporary partition was also inserted behind the proscenium arch to create a back-stage room.

Details

Former cinema and variety theatre, 1912, remodelled from two C19 townhouses. Edwardian Neo-Baroque style.

MATERIALS: stucco plaster and render; red brick masonry, steel and concrete frame, slate roof.

PLAN: the building comprises three elements: a cinema with a front range that includes the public foyer and offices and a broadly rectangular auditorium projection to the rear; and two-room deep and single-room deep front ranges attached to the east.

EXTERIOR: the building is positioned on the south side of Kemble Street, east of the junction between Market Place and Sewell Street. The main (north) elevation has six bays of three and two storeys, plus a partial basement, of rendered brick masonry with pitched roofs. The eastern three-bays, of three-storeys, forms the front of the original cinema and comprises a blind balustraded parapet with a central segmental shaped moulded panel, decorated with a scrolled and garlanded cartouche, set above a moulded roof cornice and entablature. The parapet conceals a pitched roof with two rendered edge brick stacks to the east and another below the roof ridge west of centre. Rising from the first floor, above a moulded string course, are rusticated stucco quoins and three slim and moulded stucco pilasters, each pilaster terminated with a shield applique with acanthus leaf drops. Each upper floor has

three windows all with ornamented moulded reveals, and most with replacement modern wooden windows. The second floor has two moulded square windows set either side of a circular keystone window which is ornamented with a double swagged garland surround. The tall first floor windows are each surmounted by a pulvinated entablature, the outer windows with a frieze ornamented with plaster double swagged garlands, which connect to the windows above, and the central window terminated by a bracketed semi-circular pediment with acanthus scroll appliques to jambs. The ground floor has ashlar inscribed render with a modern central flat lintelled doorway and two arched windows either side. To the west an early-C20 blocked flat lintel doorway (the former projectionist's entrance stair) has a rusticated stucco quoined right pilaster jamb (a remnant of the original ground floor pilaster main entrance jambs). The east return is rendered with a range of blocked windows across floors, all with projecting sills, and a blocked doorway. There is one off-set window, with projecting sill, at first floor level and a small square upper window off-set in the gable end. Number 10, to the east, is a two-bay three-storey C19 building and has a moulded roof cornice with two windows to each floor (the ground floor windows are late-C20 insertions), all with projecting stone sills. An early-C20 moulded and decorated stucco pilaster rises from the first floor in the eastern bay to match the cinema frontage. Number 8 is an early-C20 single-bay, two-storey shop with an Edwardian shop front to both ground and first floor, both with cornices resting on moulded shop-front brackets. The ground floor has a stall riser and external east door. The east return is blind.

Extending from the rear of the cinema is a two-storey seven-bay auditorium constructed of brick with six brick piers concealing reinforced concrete or steel columns. Flat sandstone lintel windows, with projecting sills and curved lintel soffits, puncture the upper walls of its east and west elevations. The auditorium's east elevation has four upper windows and a blocked ground

floor row-lock arched window and arched emergency door at the north end. Attached to its south end is a 1970s flat roof single-storey extension. The west elevation is supported by five brick piers and the southern six-bays project outwards to form a wider auditorium. There are two upper windows in the second and fourth bay northwards. The ground floor has a blocked rowlock arched doorway but is mostly obscured by a 1970s extension attached to the auditorium. The south return is plain brick with a stone skew-coped gable end and a 1990s first-floor two-leaf patio door with metal balcony.

INTERIOR:

CINEMA ENTRANCE FOYER: the original rectangular foyer, accessed through a late-C20 entrance porch, retains early-C20 (1912) acanthus leaf ceiling roses and egg and dart plasterwork coving. The south wall has three original two-panel doors with decorative projecting moulded mid-rail motifs and glazed top panels; two two-leaf doors with moulded architrave access the rear of the auditorium and the other, opens to the balcony staircase. An inserted toilet sits behind the late-C20 east foyer window.

CINEMA AUDITORIUM: the double-height barrel-vaulted rectangular auditorium, decorated in Edwardian Baroque style, extends south from the foyer, and its plaster decoration is unchanged. It has a segmental barrel-vaulted ceiling with six rib bands decorated with interlocking plait plasterwork and edged by egg and dart mouldings. Between each rib are three moulded plaster panels: the central panels ornamented with six stucco acanthus wreaths, with inset decorative ventilation roundels set every alternate wreath, and the outer panels with ceiling rose light fittings every alternate bay. The auditorium side walls are divided into bays by six pilasters, with a projecting entablature (with egg and dart moulding) and string course. The latter and plaster framed panels form keystone lintels to the upper auditorium windows, and the bays without windows are ornamented with

A: LIST DESCRIPTION

double swag of fruit and foliage garlands with a central scrolled cartouche (one partially concealed beside the balcony's first floor emergency exit). The floor is raked with 120 early-C20 tip-up cinema seats re-set and re-upholstered, some with wavy Art Deco motifs to the steel end panels. The structural frame of an original balcony remains, with stairs, at the rear of the auditorium; late-C20 temporary partition walls are attached at ground and first floor. Four original cast-iron balcony columns remain to the ground-floor (boxed in) with supporting beams above. The balcony has a flat floor, apart from a section of original raked flooring which leads to an early-C20 first-floor fire escape door. Late-C20 wall partitions have been inserted within the space to form temporary rooms, one of which re-uses a ground floor balcony column for structural support. The 1940s stage lighting and other electric switchboards are retained against the rear west wall of the auditorium. At the south end of the auditorium, the suspended flat lintel proscenium arch survives in situ. The string course forms the lintel of the arch, with keystoned mouldings set either side of the opening. It has scrolled brackets resting on ionic capitals, with rectangular moulded panels to the soffit, marking the width of the screen. Set above is a scrolled cartouche, ornamented with a cherub's head and roundel with the painted inscription: 'God is Love | John. CH.4. VS8.' An inserted late-C20 L-shaped staircase at the east side of the late-C20 stage gives access to an inserted upper room behind the arch. Late-C20 doors in the southern bays of the auditorium access the east and west extensions.

CINEMA FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS: the first floor is accessed from the auditorium balcony which opens into a corridor to a bathroom and two rooms; all with moulded C19 door architraves, dado rails, skirting boards and C20 doors. The second floor (now accessed by the late-C19 staircase in number 10) leads to a corridor giving access to a bathroom and three small rooms. South of the corridor the floors and walls are built of heavy solid filler-joist concrete, with cast-iron supports, and house the early-C20 projection room. The second floor projection room is off-set higher than the auditorium vault and retains an early-C20 side room for film reeling or storage, with original opposing doors, one four panel wooden door and a steel-door.

OTHER SPACES: (partial inspection) the interiors of number 8-10, now sub-divided, are accessed through openings in the cinema auditorium walls. The north room of number 10 has a cupboard door opening into the former ground floor projectionist's stairwell (now void, with one quarter winder in situ) and the south rooms retain a re-modelled early-C19 timber door with C20 etched glass panes. There are further subdivided rooms to the first floor of numbers 8-10, with early-C19 reeded cornicing and a late-C19 first-floor open string staircase, with decorative brackets.

Sources

Other

Kinematograph Weekly Thursday 27 February 1913
Kinematograph Weekly, Thursday 21 March 1912
The Bioscope, Thursday 14 August 1913
The Bioscope, Thursday 18 July 1912

Legal

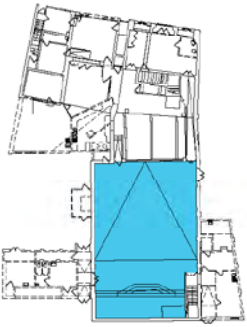
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

APPENDIX B

PHOTO GAZETTEER

01

High Significance

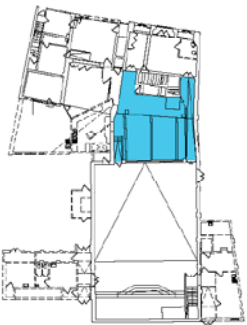


Auditorium. Double-height segmental barrel-vaulted ceiling with six rib bands decorated with interlocking plait plasterwork and edged by egg and dart mouldings. Double swag of fruit and foliage garlands with a central scrolled cartouche. Original cinema seats on a raked floor. Flat proscenium arch to gable end. Scrolled cartouche, ornamented with a cherub's head and roundel.



02

High Significance



Cast iron columns supporting balcony currently boxed in.



03

Detrimental Significance

Modern inserted stair



04

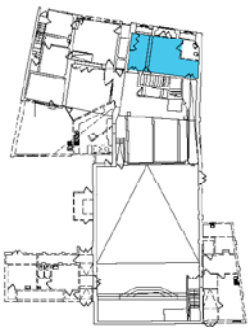
Detrimental Significance

Modern inserted room behind screen

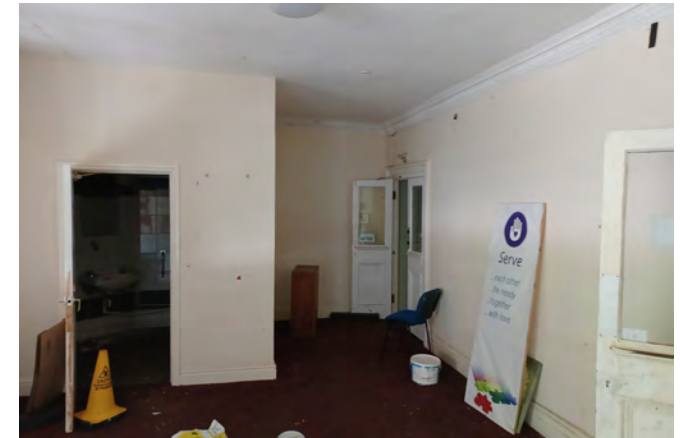


05, 06

High Significance

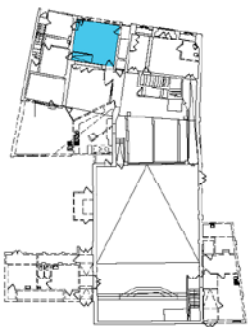


Cinema entrance foyer. 1912 double entrance doors into auditorium. Egg and dart cornice. Modern inserted WC



07

Low Significance



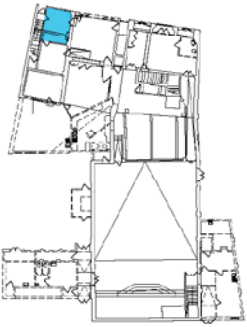
Modern windows in place of 19th century shopfront. Side corridor, possible location of removed staircase or former entrance.



08

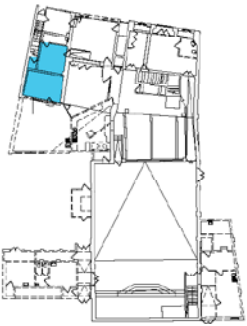
Low Significance

Modern inserted stair



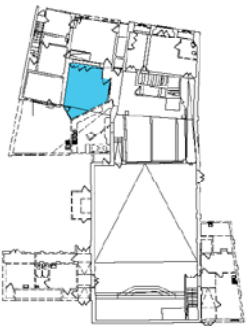
09

Low Significance



10, 11

Low Significance

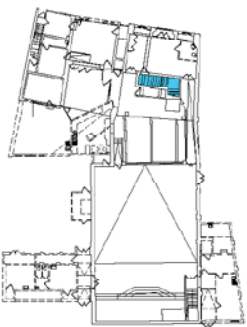


Screen and door with glazed panels featuring etched national emblems: rose; thistle; leek; shamrock. Not shown on 1976 plans but may be older fabric from elsewhere



12

High Significance

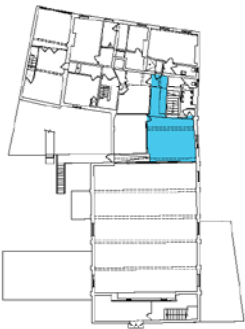


Concrete staircase to cinema balcony, 1912-13



13,14,15

High Significance



Former balcony / part of auditorium. Modern subdivides. Plasterwork and ceiling as per auditorium



16

Low Significance



Modern WCs. Chimney breast visible



17

Detrimental Significance



Modern room formed out of balcony.



18

Detrimental Significance



Modern room formed out of balcony. Cast iron column. Historic electrical equipment in the cupboard.



19

Detrimental Significance

Modern inserted toilet



20, 21

Low Significance

Chimney breast, dado and skirting



23

Low Significance

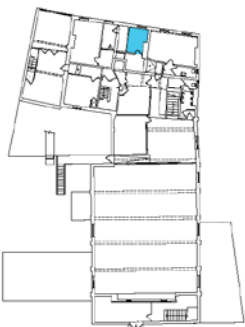


Dado and skirting



24

Low Significance



Dado and skirting, chimney breast. Modern subdivides.



25, 27

Low Significance

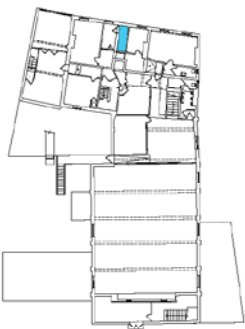


Reeded coving (19th century)
subdivided by modern divisions



26

Medium Significance



Timber staircase to upperfloor,
19th century



28

Low Significance



Chimney breast, reeded coving (19th century) subdivided by modern divisions



29

Low Significance



Dado and skirting



30/31

Low Significance



32

Low Significance



33

Medium Significance



Staircase probably mid-late 19th century with later alterations

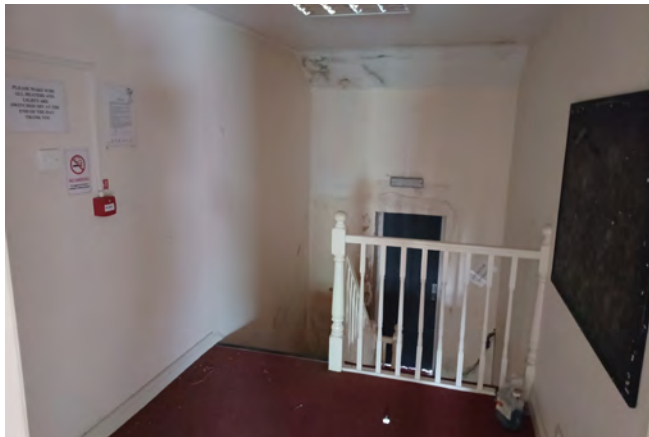


35

Medium Significance



Staircase probably mid-late 19th century with later alterations



36

Low Significance

Chimney breast



37

Low Significance



38

Low Significance



Chimney breast, modern
subdivides



39

Low Significance



40

Low Significance



41

Medium Significance



Film store, steel door.
Presumably 1912 paint scheme.



42

Low Significance



43

Low Significance



44, 45, 46

High Significance



projectionist's room, 1912.
Viewing and projection holes
visible in wall. Steel doors



