



# SAVILLE THEATRE

135 SHAFTESBURY AVENUE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED  
ASSESSMENT



A TETRA TECH COMPANY

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

Former Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH

00186  
Former Saville Theatre  
WC2H 8AH  
January 2024

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by RPS on behalf of YC Saville Theatre Limited

The subject of this assessment is the Site of the Former Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH, located in the London Borough of Camden.

In accordance with central and local government policy and guidance on archaeology and planning, and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, August 2020), the Applicant has commissioned RPS to undertake this archaeological desk-based assessment.

In terms of relevant designated heritage assets, the study site does not lie within the vicinity of a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck.

In terms of relevant local designations, the site lies within the Tier I Archaeological Priority Area '*Lundenwic*'.

The site can be considered to have had archaeological potential in 1930 or, in advance of the original building construction of the Former Saville Theatre. This assessment suggests that the construction of the theatre, to accommodate the stalls floor and the two basements beneath to a depth of 8.8m below pavement level, will have removed the Site's archaeological potential.

With regard to Archaeology the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

On the basis of the information provided in this assessment, it is considered that the LPA may consider that this assessment fulfils their archaeological requirements in relation to this Site.

The final decisions regarding this lies with the LPA and their Archaeological Planning Advisers. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.

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# Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Scope of Study .....	1
Limitations .....	2
<b>2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>4</b>
National Planning Policy.....	4
Regional Planning Policy.....	5
Local Planning Policy .....	7
<b>3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Timescales used in this report.....	12
Introduction.....	12
GLHER Data.....	15
Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets).....	18
Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets).....	19
<b>5 SITE CONDITIONS, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT &amp; REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Site Conditions .....	20
Proposed Development.....	20
Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets.....	20
Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets.....	20
<b>6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>FIGURES</b> .....	

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2a	Summary of cultural heritage designations (data from GLHER)
Figure 2b	Summary of previous archaeological works (data from GLHER)
Figure 2c	Results from the London Urban Archaeological Database (data from GLHER)
Figure 3	c.1570 Ralph Agas map of London
Figure 4	1681 Morgan map of London
Figure 5	1720 St Giles in the Fields parish map
Figure 6	1745 John Rocque's Map of London
Figure 7	1813 Richard Horwood map of London
Figure 8	1877 Ordnance Survey
Figure 9	1888 GOAD Insurance Plan
Figure 10	1914 Ordnance Survey
Figure 11	1929 Building cross section drawing
Figure 12	1930 Street Level plan
Figure 13	1938 GOAD Insurance Plan

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Figure 14 1953-4 Ordnance Survey

Figure 15 Existing basement 2

Figure 16 Existing: basement 1

Figure 17 Existing ground floor

Figure 18 Existing Site section

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 SI Data

Appendix 2 Proposed Section drawings

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This document provides an archaeological desk-based assessment for the Site known as the Former Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH, located in the London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2 The Site (Figure 1 - central NGR circa 529978,181143) is located wholly within the administrative area of the London Borough of Camden.
- 1.3 The report has been prepared, by Simon Blatherwick, Technical Director (Heritage) of RPS, on behalf of YC Saville Theatre Limited to provide the archaeological background to the site as part of the planning submission. The report addresses below ground archaeology only.
- 1.4 In accordance with central and local government policy and guidance on archaeology and planning, and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, August 2020), the Applicant has commissioned RPS to undertake this below ground archaeological desk-based assessment.
- 1.5 In terms of designated archaeological assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Historic Battlefield, or Historic Wreck Sites occur within the Site.
- 1.6 In terms of relevant local designations, Greater London Historic Environment Records (GLHER) data shows that the Site is located within the Tier 1 'Lundenwic' Archaeological Priority Area.
- 1.7 The site can be considered to have had archaeological potential in advance of the construction of the Former Saville Theatre. This assessment suggests that the construction of the theatre, to accommodate the stalls floor and the two basements beneath, to a depth of 8.8m below pavement level, will have removed the Site's archaeological potential.
- 1.8 With regard to Archaeology the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.
- 1.9 On the basis of the information provided in this assessment, it is considered that the LPA may consider that this assessment fulfils their archaeological requirements in relation to this Site.
- 1.10 The final decisions regarding this lies with the LPA and their Archaeological Planning Advisers. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.

## Scope of Study

- 1.11 To compile the baseline assessment, the following actions have been undertaken;
- A search of the Greater London Historic Environment Records (GLHER) database for archaeological sites, and other heritage assets, recorded within a 250m radius of a central National Grid Reference (GLHER commercial dataset search 18187 - 23/11/2023);
  - An examination of national and local planning policies in relation to heritage assets;
  - A map regression exercise looking at the cartographic evidence for the Site;
  - An examination of available topographical evidence;
  - An inspection of geological sources (maps/borehole logs/trial-pit data) available for the Site;
  - A review of the results of archaeological field work undertaken within the vicinity of the Site;

- An assessment of existing impact on the Site;
- An assessment of relevant published and unpublished sources;
- A Site visit;
- Review of archaeological Research Agendas and Frameworks in relation to archaeological assets.

1.12 The Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (2020) sets a "standard" for desk-based assessment as follows:

Desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area. Desk-based assessment will be undertaken using appropriate methods and practices which satisfy the stated aims of the project, and which comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant regulations of CIfA. In a development context desk-based assessment will establish the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment (or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so), and will enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention that impact.

1.13 The "Definition" of an assessment is given as:

Desk-based assessment is a programme of study of the historic environment within a specified area or site on land, the inter-tidal zone or underwater that addresses agreed research and/or conservation objectives. It consists of an analysis of existing written, graphic, photographic and electronic information in order to identify the likely heritage assets, their interests and significance and the character of the study area, including appropriate consideration of the settings of heritage assets and, in England, the nature, extent and quality of the known or potential archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest. Significance is to be judged in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

1.14 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence on the GLHER and other sources, together with the results of a historic map regression exercise.

1.15 This document draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the Site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential identified.

1.16 The document has been completed with reference to current national guidelines, as set out in the;

- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 'Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment' (CIfA 2020);
- Historic England, 2016, Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines;
- Historic England documents 'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment' (Historic England 2015a);and
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning' (Historic England 2015b&c).

### Limitations

1.17 In any desk-based assessment a degree of uncertainty is attached to the baseline data sources. This includes:



- 1.18 The Historic Environment Records (HER) can be limited because it often depends on "random" opportunities for research, fieldwork and discovery;
- Lack of dating evidence for sites;
  - Documentary sources are rare before the medieval period and many historic documents are inherently biased; and
  - The extent of truncation caused by previous development impacts and landscaping works cannot be fully ascertained.

## 2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 National legislation regarding archaeology, including scheduled monuments, is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002, and updated in April 2014.
- 2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and it was last updated in December 2023 (DLHC, 2023).
- 2.3 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014, with the guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment last updated 23 July 2019. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>).
- 2.4 The NPPF and NPPG are additionally supported by three Good Practice Advice (GPA) documents published by Historic England: GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans; GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (both published March 2015). The second edition of GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets was published in December 2017.

### National Planning Policy

- 2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF, entitled Conserving and enhancing the historic environment provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
- Delivery of sustainable development;
  - Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
  - Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
  - Recognition that heritage makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.6 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 200 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.7 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.
- 2.8 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 2.9 A *Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.
- 2.10 *Significance* (for heritage policy) is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural,

artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

- 2.11 *Setting* is defined as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.12 In short, government policy provides a framework which:
- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets;
  - Protects the settings of such designations;
  - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk-based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions;
  - Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit in-situ preservation.
- 2.13 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest.
- 2.14 Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 2.15 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

## Regional Planning Policy

### The London Plan (The Spatial Development Strategy for London) – March 2021

- 2.16 The relevant Strategic Development Plan framework is provided by the London Plan. Policy relevant to archaeology at the Site, includes 'Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth'. This sets out the following:
- A Boroughs should, in consultation with Historic England, local communities and other statutory and relevant organisations, develop evidence that demonstrates a clear understanding of London's historic environment. This evidence should be used for identifying, understanding, conserving, and enhancing the historic environment and

heritage assets, and improving access to, and interpretation of, the heritage assets, landscapes and archaeology within their area.

B Development Plans and strategies should demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the effective integration of London's heritage in regenerative change by:

- 1) setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making
- 2) utilising the heritage significance of a site or area in the planning and design process
- 3) integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings with innovative and creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place
- 4) delivering positive benefits that conserve and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing.

C Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

D Development proposals should identify assets of archaeological significance and use this information to avoid harm or minimise it through design and appropriate mitigation. Where applicable, development should make provision for the protection of significant archaeological assets and landscapes. The protection of undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest equivalent to a scheduled monument should be given equivalent weight to designated heritage assets.

E Where heritage assets have been identified as being At Risk, boroughs should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and place-making, and they should set out strategies for their repair and reuse

### 2.17 Supporting paragraphs include the following;

7.1.1 London's historic environment, represented in its built form, landscape heritage and archaeology, provides a depth of character that benefits the city's economy, culture and quality of life. The built environment, combined with its historic landscapes, provides a unique sense of place, whilst layers of architectural history provide an environment that is of local, national and international value. London's heritage assets and historic environment are irreplaceable and an essential part of what makes London a vibrant and successful city, and their effective management is a fundamental component of achieving good growth. The Mayor will develop a London-wide Heritage Strategy, together with Historic England and other partners, to support the capital's heritage and the delivery of heritage-led growth.

7.1.9 Understanding of London's archaeology is continuously developing with much of it yet to be fully identified and interpreted. To help identify sites of archaeological interest, boroughs are expected to develop up-to-date Archaeological Priority Areas for plan-making and decision-taking. Up-to date Archaeological Priority Areas (APAs) are classified using a tier system recognising their different degrees of archaeological significance and potential as presently understood. Tier 1 APAs help to identify where undesignated archaeological assets of equivalent significance to a scheduled monument – and which are subject to the same policies as designated assets – are known or likely to be present.

7.1.10 Across London, Local Plans identify areas that have known archaeological interest or potential. The whole of the City of London has high archaeological sensitivity whilst elsewhere the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Review Programme is updating these areas using new consistent London-wide criteria.

Each new APA is assigned to a tier:

- Tier 1 is a defined area which is known, or strongly suspected, to contain a heritage asset of national significance, or which is otherwise of very high archaeological sensitivity.
- Tier 2 is a local area with specific evidence indicating the presence, or likely presence, of heritage assets of archaeological interest.
- Tier 3 is a landscape-scale zone within which there is evidence indicating the potential for heritage assets of archaeological interest to be discovered.
- Tier 4 (outside APA) covers any location that does not, on present evidence, merit inclusion within an Archaeological Priority Area.
- Other APAs which have not yet been reviewed are not assigned to a tier.

7.1.11 Developments will be expected to avoid or minimise harm to significant archaeological assets. In some cases, remains can be incorporated into and/or interpreted in new development. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site and opportunities taken to actively present the site's archaeology. Where the archaeological asset cannot be preserved or managed on site, appropriate provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, and must be undertaken by suitably qualified individuals or organisations.

## Local Planning Policy

### Camden Local Plan

- 2.18 The Site is located within the London Borough of Camden.
- 2.19 The Camden Local Plan is the key strategic document in Camden's development plan. It sets out the vision for shaping the future of the Borough and contains policies for guiding planning decisions.
- 2.20 The Local Plan was adopted by Council on 3 July 2017. It has replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents. It is now the basis for planning decisions and future development in Camden.
- 2.21 Policy D2 Heritage states;
- The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings,

archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

### Designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

### Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

### Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
- j. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and
- k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

### Archaeology

The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

### Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares.

The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## 2.22 Further information regarding archaeology includes;

7.64 The archaeological priority areas provide a general guide to areas of archaeological remains, but do not indicate every find site in the borough. These are based on current knowledge and may be refined or altered as a result of future archaeological research or discoveries.

7.65 It is likely that archaeological remains will be found throughout the borough, both within and outside the archaeological priority areas. Many archaeological remains have yet to be discovered, so their extent and significance is not known. When researching the development potential of a site, developers should, in all cases, assess whether the site is known or is likely to contain archaeological remains. Where there is good reason to believe that there are remains of archaeological importance on a site, the Council will consider directing applicants to supply further details of proposed developments, including the results of archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation. Scheduled monument consent must be obtained before any alterations are made to scheduled ancient monuments. Camden has only one scheduled ancient monument: Boadicea's Grave in Hampstead Heath.

7.66 If important archaeological remains are found, the Council will seek to resist development which adversely affects remains and to minimise the impact of development schemes by requiring either in situ preservation or a programme of excavation, recording, publication and archiving of remains. There will usually be a presumption in favour of in situ preservation of remains and, if important archaeological remains are found, measures should be adopted to allow the remains to be permanently preserved in situ. Where in situ preservation is not feasible, no development shall take place until satisfactory excavation and recording of the remains has been carried out on site and subsequent analysis, publication and archiving undertaken by an archaeological organisation approved by the Council.

7.67 The Council will consult with, and be guided by, Historic England and the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) on the archaeological implications of development proposals. The Greater London Historic Environment Record, maintained by Historic England, contains further information on archaeological sites in Camden. When considering schemes involving archaeological remains, the Council will also have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines (Historic England, 2016)

2.23 This document produced by Historic England Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (Archaeological Advisers to the London Borough of Camden) provides the definition of an Archaeological Priority Area (APA) as;

... a defined area where, according to existing information, there is significant known archaeological interest or particular potential for new discoveries.

2.24 In setting out four "Tiers" of APA the following is provided;

- Tier 1. This is a defined area which is known, or strongly suspected, to contain a heritage asset of national significance (a scheduled monument or equivalent); or is otherwise of very high archaeological sensitivity.
- Tier 2. Used for a local area within which the GLHER holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.
- Tier 3. This is a landscape scale zone within which the GLHER holds evidence indicating the potential for heritage assets of archaeological interest. The definition of Tier 3 APAs involves using the GLHER to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future .
- Tier 4 (outside APA) is any location that does not, on present evidence, merit inclusion within an Archaeological Priority Area. However, Tier 4 areas are not necessarily devoid of archaeological interest and may retain some potential unless they can be shown to have been heavily disturbed in modern times.

2.25 The site lies within the Tier I Archaeological Priority Area '*Lundenwic*'.

2.26 Historic England (2016) Guidelines for Greater London Archaeological Priority Areas state;

It is expected that as a minimum all major applications within Archaeological Priority Areas (Tiers 1-3) would trigger an archaeological desk-based assessment, and if necessary, a field evaluation, to accompany a planning application.

In the more sensitive Tier 1 and 2 areas this procedure would also apply to some smaller-scale developments. Outside Archaeological Priority Areas (that is in tier 4) most planning applications will not need an archaeological assessment, but a few will.

2.27 This assessment provides the required archaeological desk-based assessment.



### 3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The On-Line BGS viewer describes the Bedrock of the Site as London Clay Formation with Superficial Deposits of Lynch Hill Gravel Member- Sand and Gravel.
- 3.2 GEA, 2017 (see Appendix 1) report a single borehole undertaken on New Compton Street immediately adjacent to the Site. This revealed 3.5m of Made Ground above 1.20m of Sand with Clay beneath the Sand.
- 3.3 Topographic Survey shows New Compton Street to the north of the Site at circa 23.5m OD with Shaftesbury Avenue to the south at circa 22.80m OD.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Timescales used in this report

#### Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age	600 -	AD 43

#### Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post Medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

### Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological evidence for the Site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the Site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of known archaeological assets recorded on the GLHER, within a 250m radius of a central National Grid Reference (See Figures 2a to 2c).
- 4.3 Other sources have also been utilised and additional research provides further background to the Site.
- 4.4 The archaeological background is referred to by recognised archaeological periods;
- Palaeolithic 900,000 to 10,000 BC
  - Late Glacial/Mesolithic 10,000 to 4,000 BC
  - Neolithic/Early Bronze Age 4,000 to 1,600 BC
  - Middle to Late Bronze Age 1,600 to 700 BC
  - Iron Age/Roman Transition 700 to AD 43
  - Roman AD 43 to 410
  - Saxon AD 410 to 1066
  - Medieval AD 1066 to mid-C16th
  - Post-Medieval circa AD 1550 to 1900
  - Modern 1900-present day.

- 4.5 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.
- 4.6 The site lies within the 'Lundenwic' Tier I Archaeological Priority Area (GLHER Ref DLO38609). 'Lundenwic' is described in the GLHER data as follows;

### Summary and Definition

This Archaeological Priority Area includes the Anglo-Saxon international trading emporium of Lundenwic which grew along the Thames and Fleet rivers in the seventh to ninth century. It is bounded on its western, eastern and southern sides by the boundary between the Boroughs of Camden and Westminster and by High Holborn road to the north. This APA also contains archaeological evidence of Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval occupation.

The APA is allocated to Tier 1 because it is an urban and proto-urban area of national (and international) archaeological interest where heritage assets could be judged equivalent to a Scheduled Monument. It is closely associated with the adjacent Westminster APA 1.2 'Lundenwic and the Strand'.

### Description

The earliest recorded archaeological evidence is of a number of Palaeolithic stone tools which have been discovered along Chancery Lane and Kingsway. Oxford Street is thought to preserve the line of the Roman road which west from Londinium to Silchester. There are also sporadic Roman sites including domestic features at Holborn Town Hall. It indicates the potential of early activity which pre-date the Saxon settlement of Lundenwic.

Lundenwic was a middle Saxon trading settlement which grew along the Thames and Fleet rivers in the seventh to ninth century. The settlement was divided into two separate areas, occupation of the old walled town in the City of London, and the larger mercantile centre to the west, (Lundenwic). The south border of the Borough of Camden is situated on the peripheries of Lundenwic in close proximity to Aldwych Street which existed along the Strand. The name indicates that there was a Saxon port or 'wic' at this position on the river again confirming its mercantile roots. Recent excavations of Lundenwic sites have revealed evidence of houses, agriculture and industries such as metal working, antler working and cloth production particularly in Westminster following the Strand.

Lundenwic was described by Bede in the 730s as a "metropolis" and "a mart of many nations resorting to it by sea and land". Clearly it was an important trading centre but its precise location was not discovered until the 1980s. It had previously been assumed that any Saxon settlement would have been located within the walls of the former Roman city but the archaeological finds from the city did not corroborate that theory. In the 1980s the idea that Lundenwic was located in the Strand area started to gain momentum and an excavation at Jubilee Hall in 1985, to the south of Covent Garden, and subsequent excavations have confirmed that the Anglo-Saxon settlement was actually built to the west of the city. Lundenwic appears to have been abandoned during the period of Viking raids in the mid to late 9th century.

A number of archaeological excavations have been undertaken south of High Holborn Road and evidence of Middle Saxon occupation, including preserved wattle and daub wall and hearths, has been uncovered at Shorts Gardens. Two wells and a number of

pits and ditches have been found on Great Queens Street as well as beam slots, indicating structural remains. Excavation at Macklin Street discovered layers of dump and organic material with the potential to preserve a range of archaeological evidence well dated with finds of Saxon pottery.

Similarly, the waterlogged deposits uncovered through a borehole survey at Tower Street could potentially preserve paleo-environmental evidence or textile finds. The concentration within this APA of evidence for Saxon occupation confirmed by excavation as well as a number of loom weight and pottery spot finds, suggests that the likelihood for further archaeological remains is high. The potential for the preservation of these remains in the less developed areas of the APA is considered high. The remainder of the Lundenwic settlement lies in the City of Westminster leading down to the Thames.

### Significance

The south of the Camden Borough contains evidence of a number of occupation periods within its preserved archaeological deposits; these include both prehistoric and Roman material. The focus of this APA is, however, on the Saxon settlement of Lundenwic which represents a critical and still relatively poorly understood episode in the history of London. Much has been learnt about the settlement since the confirmation of its location in the 1980s but only a fraction of the settlement has been thoroughly investigated. Evidence of urban development in England between the ending of Roman administration and the 9th century is limited. About 700 AD, coastal trading places known as wics began to emerge around the North Sea. Lundenwic was one of the most important of these rare places ranking alongside Hamwic (Southampton), Gippeswic (Ipswich) and Eoforwic (York). Lundenwic is clearly a nationally and potentially internationally significant example of a thriving Middle Saxon trading centre which in places still possesses stratified deposits rich in structural remains, artefacts and environmental evidence. Remains of Lundenwic therefore have high potential to contribute to research into the re-establishment and structuring of urban life and commerce after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the later conflict and interaction between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. This northernmost extremity of Lundenwic could provide evidence for its outer boundary, the period of maximum expansion away from the Thames and relationship to the Londinium - Silchester Roman road.

As one of only a handful of major Middle Saxon international trading emporia in England, Lundenwic is of national and international significance for the study of Anglo-Saxon settlement patterns, governance, commerce and economy. If remains of this kind were identified in open land, they would undoubtedly qualify as being of national importance in their entirety and for this reason Lundenwic has been assigned to Tier 1. Large areas of settlement within modern towns and cities have seldom been protected by scheduling but this should not obscure the fact that remains of national importance may well be present.

#### 4.7 Bibliographic references provided in the GLHER APA description includes;

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### GLHER Data

- 4.8 The GLHER Data contains the following information.

#### Palaeo-environmental remains

- 4.9 Excavation and borehole survey work carried at 18-18A Tower Street – circa 150m south of the Site (GLHER Ref ELO4729 / 157335 – Figure 2b) revealed a deep sequence of alluvial and water lain deposits below the basement floors. The borehole survey indicated that archaeological deposits occurred up to 7.50m below modern ground level, suggesting that the site is located above a deep natural or man-made feature in which archaeological deposits have accumulated. Archaeological trenches excavated to a depth of 2.90m (about 5.00m below street level) revealed water lain deposits.
- 4.10 The construction of the Saville Theatre with basement to a depth of 8.8m below pavement level is likely to have removed any Paleoenvironmental remains. A Negligible to Low potential can be identified for these remains at the Site itself as the GEA borehole reveals that the basements for the Site will have been excavated into the London Clay.

### Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age & Iron Age

#### Early Prehistoric

- 4.11 The GLHER records no Palaeolithic activity on or adjacent to the Site.
- 4.12 There is one reference to a worked flint flake dated to the Neolithic/Bronze Age (GLHER Ref 165323 Test Pit at 107-109 Charing Cross Road) circa 100m west of the Site (Figure 2b).
- 4.13 A Prehistoric flint scraper was identified at 18 Tower Street, circa 150m south to the south of the Site. This was thought to be located over a natural or man-made feature within which archaeological artefacts have accumulated (GLHER Ref MLO58975 / ELO4729 /157335 – Figure 2b).
- 4.14 GLHER Ref 161841 records an archaeological desk based assessment at 210 Shaftesbury Avenue. Lynch Hill Gravel deposits were identified within the Site during geotechnical investigations at approximately 20.8m aOD. Lynch Hill Gravels are considered to be significant deposits having the potential to preserve early Palaeolithic archaeology and have been used to characterise developing Neanderthal behaviour in Britain.
- 4.15 Although the presence of Early Prehistoric material is notoriously difficult to predict, given the low quantity of material identified within the study area and the depth of the existing basements, a generally Negligible to Low potential can be identified for the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods at the Site itself.

### Later Prehistoric

- 4.16 At 107 and 109 Charing Cross Road, a residual worked flint flake dated to the Neolithic/Bronze Age was recorded (GLHER Ref ELO14749/ 165323 ).
- 4.17 GLHER Ref 081762 records a Bronze object on a wooden shaft found in Tower Street in (?) 1883 but there is no further information regarding this.
- 4.18 GLHER Ref 168389 records an excavation at 10-14 Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2, circa 250m south-east of the Site (Figure 2b). The excavation recorded residual finds including a pottery sherd dated to the Iron Age and pottery and building material dated to the Roman period.
- 4.19 The paucity of Prehistoric evidence and the depth of the existing basements, indicates that the archaeological potential for Prehistoric evidence – of all periods - on the Site can be considered to be Negligible to Low.

### Roman

- 4.20 GLHER Ref 155809 circa 250m south-east of the Site (Figure 2b) records an excavation and watching brief at East Slingsby Place. Evidence for pre-Saxon activity was limited to residual finds of Roman building material and pottery recorded in later contexts.
- 4.21 At St Giles Circus (GLHER Ref 156028, 100m north of the Site – Figure 2b) excavation recorded a ditch or gully of prehistoric or Roman date, and containing a quantity of burnt flint, was recorded cutting the natural in the area east of 22 Denmark Street.
- 4.22 At 18 Tower Street, circa 150m south to the south of the Site. (GLHER Ref 157335 – Figure 2b) archaeological trenches excavated to a depth of 2.90m (about 5.00m below street level) revealed water laid deposits with a few abraded Roman sherds, and possibly Late Saxon and Medieval wares, as well as copper alloy weighing scales and a Prehistoric flint scraper.
- 4.23 At Nos. 10-14 Upper St Martin's Lane circa 250m south of the Site (GLHER Ref ELO11111 / 168389) excavation recorded residual finds including building material dated to the Roman period.
- 4.24 The line of Theobalds Road and New Oxford Street to the north of the Site is thought to follow the line of the Roman road from Silchester to Colchester (Margary 1955).
- 4.25 Roman material often appears in HERs because of the volume of cultural material relative to most other periods and because much of that material is readily identifiable. The paucity of findspots in the study area and the depth of the existing basements indicates the Site is considered to have a generally Negligible to Low archaeological potential for the Roman period.

### Anglo Saxon

- 4.26 The GLHER contains no Saxon findspots on the Site.
- 4.27 The site lies within the 'Lundenwic' Archaeological Priority Area '*Lundenwic*' (a Tier I APA) is described as an international trading emporium which grew along the Thames and Fleet rivers in the seventh to ninth century. It is bounded on its western, eastern and southern sides by the boundary between the Boroughs of Camden and Westminster and by High Holborn road to the north.
- 4.28 The course of Charing Cross Road, running north-south to the west of the study site, is considered likely to have Anglo Saxon antecedents (MLO8691).
- 4.29 Substantial quantities of Anglo-Saxon material have been derived from the nationally important Middle Saxon mercantile settlement of Lundenwic, which is known to have lain in the area of Aldwych, the Strand and Covent Garden, to the southeast of the study site. It is thought that

Lundenwic was established by c.600 AD as a discrete settlement from the Roman City, and during the 7th and 8th centuries developed into a major trading port ('wic').

- 4.30 To the south excavations at 10-14 St Martins Lane revealed a ditch and artefacts of Saxon date (GLHER Ref ELO11111). On Longacre, excavations at 132-139 revealed quarry pits, timber buildings, refuse pits, pottery, external gravel surfaces and cask-lined wells, overlain by dark earth (GLHER Ref ELO11112.). Similar finds were made at Shelton Street, including disarticulated human remains and glass (GLHER Ref ELO11113) and at 127-131 Longacre (GLHER Ref ELO11114).
- 4.31 Saxon settlement and activity remains were also identified at 10 Upper Saint Martin's Lane (GLHER Ref ELP17043), at Shorts Gardens and Earlham Street where metalworking evidence was found (GLHER Refs ELO2573, MLO222) and also at 10 Great Newport Street (MLO869). To the east, Saxon pottery was identified during monitoring at Neal Street (GLHER Ref ELO226).
- 4.32 It is important to note that the bulk of the Saxon findspots within the study area are concentrated to the southeast, almost wholly within the Covent Garden area. It therefore appears probable, upon the strength of the evidence set out above, that the study site lay outside the core of Lundenwic, beyond the western/northern boundary.
- 4.33 The potential of the study site for the Saxon period can therefore be categorised as having been moderate, and is most likely to be represented by finds of quarrying and refuse deposition, together with evidence of agricultural activity and land division. However deep truncation from the construction of the current building is considered likely to have removed that potential and as such, the Site is considered to have a generally Negligible to Low archaeological potential for the Saxon period.

### Medieval

- 4.34 The GLHER contains no Early Medieval or Medieval findspots on the Site.
- 4.35 Medieval remains associated with the Convent of St Marys, Covent Garden have been identified to the south of the study site (GLHER Ref MLO11180). Remains of St Giles Leper Hospital and later associated structures have been identified at St Giles Street, to the north (GLHER Ref MLO18049). The course of the hospital wall is suggested on Ordnance Surveys of 1877 and 1953-4, running along the south-eastern frontage of the study site (Figures 8 and 14).
- 4.36 Medieval occupation is recorded at St Giles Court immediately north of the Site (GLHER Ref MLO98203).
- 4.37 Masonry remains dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were identified during archaeological work at Denmark Place to the north of the Site, possibly related to the hospital (GLHER Ref ELO4509).
- 4.38 Residual pottery, interpreted as the remains of a backfilled quarry, was identified at Phoenix Street immediately west of the study site (GLHER Refs ELO338, MLO75820). Residual, abraded pottery was identified at 18 Tower Street to the south, at a site thought to be located over a natural or man-made feature within which archaeological artefacts have accumulated (GLHER Refs ELO4729, MLO74).
- 4.39 In view of the available information, the potential of the study site for the Medieval period can be identified as having been moderate. However deep truncation from the construction of the current building is considered likely to have removed that potential and as such, the Site is considered to have a generally Negligible to Low archaeological potential.

### Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.40 The GLHER contains no Post Medieval or Modern entries for the Site.

- 4.41 Ralph Agas map of c.1570 (Figure 3) shows the study site lying within woodland to the south of St Giles in the Fields.
- 4.42 The Morgan map of 1681 (Figure 4) shows the development of the area, the layout of the streets around the study site, and the development of the Site with buildings fronting the boundaries.
- 4.43 No change is shown within the Site on the 1720 plan of St Giles in the Fields (Figure 5). John Rocque's Survey of London (Figure 6: 1745) shows the Site developed and the 1813 Richard Horwood survey (Figure 7) shows the individual units fronting Monmouth Street to the southeast and New Compton Street to the northwest.
- 4.44 The First Edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 8: 1877) shows the Site occupied by fourteen building units in two terraces. The 1888 GOAD Insurance plan (Figure 9) shows that the buildings occupying the Site to be of four storeys and to comprise shops and houses (Hayes 2006).
- 4.45 Shaftesbury Avenue opened in 1886 as a new route linking Piccadilly, Charing Cross Road and Bloomsbury, following the line of existing streets, including Dudley Street along the south eastern Site boundary (Weinreb, Hibbert & Keay, 2008).
- 4.46 The Site was formerly occupied by 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, and 13-18 New Compton Street, comprising four storey terraced buildings including shops and houses (Hayes 2006).
- 4.47 The Third Edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 10: 1914) shows minor alterations within the centre of the study site.
- 4.48 The Saville Theatre opened at the site 8 October 1931, to designs of TP Bennett & Son, with Bertie Crewe as a consulting architect. The frieze around the building above ground floor level comprises 'Drama Through the Ages' by Gilbert Bayes. It is noted that for the construction of the theatre, 'to accommodate the stalls floor and the two "huge rooms" beneath, the site's London blue clay had to be excavated to 29 feet [8.8m] below pavement level' (Hayes 2006; Cherry & Pevsner 1999; Weinreb, Hibbert & Keay 2008).
- 4.49 Figures 11-12 reproduce the TP Bennett section drawing and street level plan of the theatre, dated 1929-1930. Note 'Approximate Pavement Level' and the depth of foundations below the 'Stage Basement Level' indicating the extent of truncation across the Site.
- 4.50 The 1938 GOAD Insurance Plan (Figure 13) shows the Saville Theatre.
- 4.51 Damage sustained by bomb damage in October 1940 required the theatre to close and repairs to the roof canopy (Hayes 2006).
- 4.52 The 1953-4 Ordnance Survey (Figure 14) shows no change within the Site.
- 4.53 The Saville remained as a theatre until 1966, when the Beatles manager Brian Epstein turned it into a musical venue, following which it was converted into a cinema which opened in December 1970 (Hayes 2006). Plans of the existing basements and ground floor, together with a section, are reproduced at Figures 15-18.
- 4.54 In view of the available information, the potential of the study site for the Post-Medieval period can be identified as having been moderate. However deep truncation from the construction of the current building is considered likely to have removed that potential and as such, the Site is considered to have a generally Negligible to Low archaeological potential.

### **Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)**

- 4.55 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.



4.56 There are no nationally designated archaeological assets recorded within the GLHER Search undertaken for this assessment.

### Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

4.57 The Site is located within a Tier 1 APA, as defined by London Borough of Camden. This is based on the Site’s location within the ‘Lundenwic’ Archaeological Priority Area.

4.58 Tier 1 APA’s are defined area which is known, or strongly suspected, to contain a heritage asset of national significance (a scheduled monument or equivalent); or is otherwise of very high archaeological sensitivity.

4.59 Historic England guidelines(2016) states that it is expected that as a minimum all major applications within Archaeological Priority Areas (Tiers 1-3) would trigger an archaeological desk-based assessment, and if necessary, a field evaluation, to accompany a planning application.

4.60 Topographic Survey shows New Compton Street to the north of the Site at circa 23.5m OD with Shaftesbury Avenue to the south at circa 22.80m OD. The construction of the Saville Theatre with basement to a depth of 8.8m below pavement level suggest that the basement goes to circa 14.0m OD with foundations appearing to extend deeper (see Figure 11). The GEA SI data for New Compton Street immediately adjacent to the Site revealed 3.5m of Made Ground above 1.20m of Sand with Clay beneath the Sand. A depth of 8.8m on the GEA borehole reveals that the Site will have been excavated into the London Clay.

4.61 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the Site is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Potential	Archaeological Identified Significance
Palaeo-environmental	Negligible to Low	Low (Local)
Palaeolithic and Mesolithic	Negligible to Low	Low (Local / Regional)
Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age	Negligible to Low	Low (Local / Regional)
Roman	Negligible to Low	Low (Local / Regional)
Anglo-Saxon / Medieval	Negligible to Low	Low (Local / Regional)
Post Medieval	Negligible to Low	Low (Local)

## 5 SITE CONDITIONS, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS

### Site Conditions

- 5.1 The former Saville Theatre at 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue is a grade II listed building. It was built in 1930-1931 as a three-level theatre and opened in 1931. The building was designed by architect T.P Bennett & Son. The building was damaged during the blitz in 1941 but later restored.
- 5.2 The Site is an island site, bordered by Shaftesbury Avenue to the south, St Giles Passage to the east, Stacey Street to the west, and New Compton Street to the south. It is currently occupied by the former Saville Theatre, constructed in the early 1930s with later additions and alterations (Figures 14-18).
- 5.3 The construction of the existing building can be considered likely to have a significant negative archaeological impact, primarily through the creation of the double basement, together with the cutting of foundations and services.
- 5.4 The construction and subsequent demolition of the buildings previously occupying the Site can be considered likely to have had a cumulative negative archaeological impact, through the cutting of basements/cellars, foundations and services, together with their subsequent grubbing out.

### Proposed Development

- 5.5 The Proposed Development is described as;
- Part demolition, restoration and refurbishment of the existing Grade II listed building, roof extension, and excavation of basement space, to provide a theatre at lower levels, with ancillary restaurant / bar space (Sui Generis) at ground floor level; and hotel (Class C1) at upper levels; provision of ancillary cycle parking, servicing and rooftop plant, and other associated works.
- 5.6 See Appendix 2 for Proposed Section drawings.

### Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

- 5.7 It is considered that there will be no development impacts on nationally designated archaeological assets.

### Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.8 The Site is located in an Archaeological Priority Area. However the truncation caused by the construction of the Saville Theatre suggests that there will be no development impacts on non-designated archaeological assets due to the depth of the existing construction.

## 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Site has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.
- 6.2 In accordance with central and local government planning policy, a desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the Former Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH, located in the London Borough of Camden.
- 6.3 There are no nationally designated archaeological assets recorded within the GLHER Search undertaken for this assessment.
- 6.4 There are no non-designated archaeological assets recorded on the Site in the GLHER Search undertaken for this assessment although the GLHER data records the Site I within the 'Lundenwic', Tier 1 Archaeological Priority Area.
- 6.5 Tier 1 is a defined area which is known, or strongly suspected, to contain a heritage asset of national significance (a scheduled monument or equivalent); or is otherwise of very high archaeological sensitivity and it is expected that as a minimum all major applications within Archaeological Priority Areas (Tiers 1-3) would trigger an archaeological desk-based assessment, and if necessary, a field evaluation, to accompany a planning application.
- 6.6 This document forms the archaeological desk-based assessment to accompany a planning application.
- 6.7 With regard to Archaeology the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.
- 6.8 This assessment suggests that the construction of the theatre in 1930 or, to accommodate the stalls floor and the two basements beneath to a depth of 8.8m below pavement level, will have removed the Site's archaeological potential.
- 6.9 On the basis of the information provided in this assessment, it is considered that the LPA may consider that this assessment fulfils their archaeological requirements in relation to this Site.
- 6.10 The final decisions regarding this lies with the LPA and their Archaeological Planning Advisers. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.

## Sources Consulted

### General

British Library

Greater London Historic Environment Record

The National Archive

British Geological Survey – <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

British History Online – <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Domesday Online – <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/>

Historic England: The National Heritage List for England – <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Historic England: Greater London Archaeological Priority Areas - <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-archaeological-priority-areas/>

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**FIGURES**



