



Our Ref: 2243/VR

Date: 30th April 2014

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Recorded at

**The Dominion Theatre
Tottenham Court Road
London
W1T 7AQ**

on behalf of

Nederlander Dominion Limited

New Flying System and Galleries

Re: Dominion Theatre, LONDON

Design & Access Statement

Purpose of Proposal

The purpose of this application is to detail the proposed new flying system and galleries. Following the removal of the long running show `We Will Rock You` the venue would like to take the opportunity to increase the capacity the venue can currently fly by carrying out improvements to the flying system and galleries. The existing structures are to be removed and replaced with new, which will allow for greater loads to be flown/hung in the venue.

Materials

The current construction of the flying system and galleries are steel. The intention is to replace these structures with new steel section sizes with greater capacity. The steel is to be finished with a black paint.

Impact

The impact this will have on the building is minimal as a like for like structure is to replace the old in approximately the same positions. The impact this will have on the building users/venue will be massive due to the increased flying capacity and therefore the ability to fly larger productions.

Effects to Public

The proposed works will not affect accessibility for any members of the general public as the works are all being carried out back of house.

Dominion Theatre History

The Dominion was built in 1928–29, designed by W and TR Milburn with a steel-framed construction and a concave Portland stone facade. It was built as a theatre for live shows but after faltering business in the early 1930s the building was converted to also allow it to show films. The theatre was built on the location of the former Horse Shoe Brewery, which was the site of the 1814 London Beer Flood.

Despite its huge seating capacity (given as 2,858 in 1940), the Dominion did well thanks to its excellent location where Charing Cross Road, Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road

all meet. The cinema closed temporarily at the height of the Blitz early in October 1940, but re-opened for good on 12 January 1941. After the war, it continued the link with the New Victoria, almost invariably playing with the Gaumont circuit programme for a pre-release week before it went into the Northwest London area to commence its suburban run. In December 1956 Rank first considered making regular use of the Dominion for live shows again and had internal estimates of the cost involved for rewiring and refurbishing the stage facilities. The first major use as a live venue came when the Judy Garland Show ran from Wednesday 16 October to Saturday 16 November 1957. Films continued to be shown at all other times, although the theatre restaurant had closed on 15 June 1957.

The theatre was then selected to show films in the new Todd AO system. Two Phillips 70mm / 35mm projectors were installed in a new projection box at the back of the stalls, providing a 78ft level throw to the screen and an immense 46ft wide screen, with a 5ft deep curvature erected in the 54ft wide proscenium opening. Stereophonic sound was provided and seating came down to 1,654 with the upper gallery being curtained off. South Pacific inaugurated the new road show policy on 21 April 1958 and racked up the longest ever run of 4 years 22 weeks, closing down on 30 September 1962.

Samuel Goldwyn had patiently waited more than three years to open Porgy and Bess here but South Pacific's success did not rub off on it. Cleopatra was another mammoth attraction that opened here in August 1963 but it was The Sound of Music (29 March 1965 to 31 June 1968) that confirmed the Dominion's pull as a home of musicals. However Star, which followed redecoration on 18 July 1968, proved more successful at the Dominion than anywhere else. However, once Hollywood stopped making the big budget extravaganzas the Dominion was in trouble. Live shows came back between the films and following a two-day revival of MGM's The Band Wagon, the Dominion was earmarked for live use only from 8 November 1981, although The Return of the Jedi opened there in 1983 in a joint première with the Odeon Leicester Square.

During the 1980s it became a popular venue for music concerts. Tangerine Dream's album Logos was recorded there in 1982, and contains a tune called "Dominion" in tribute. In the mid-1980s the Dominion hosted the musical Time, and the interior was extensively reconstructed to accommodate the shows effects.

Since the early 1990s the venue has played host to David Ian and Paul Nicholas' new production of Grease, Scrooge: The Musical, Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake, Disney's Beauty and the Beast, a return of Grease, and Notre Dame de Paris among others. Bernadette the Musical, written by Maureen and Gwyn Hughes, also enjoyed a short run in 1990.

In the 1990s the Dominion also hosted the Royal Variety Performance on a number of occasions.

It now has a seating capacity of 2,182 in two tiers of galleries, following the closure many decades ago of the former upper circle. The theatre retains its 1920s light fittings and art deco plasterwork.

There has been a lot of renovation of the theatre over the past couple of years. The large dressing room block at the rear of the theatre, had its stone work cleaned and new exact replica windows fitted. Inside the building has also seen many changes with the reinstatement of the once derelict area originally occupied by the theatre's restaurant/tea rooms and which was utilised by Rank in its time at the Dominion as office space. This large space above the main foyer is now a state of the art rehearsal studio and events space. The entrance way to the Studio and the impressive main foyer have had their original plasterwork carefully restored. This new space is called 'The Studio' and has already housed the auditions or rehearsals of a number of the West End's top shows including We Will Rock You, Matthew Bourne's Edward Scissorhands, Les Miserables, Cats, National Tour, Hairspray and Zorro, making it the best located rehearsal studio in London.

In 2002, the hit stage musical **We Will Rock You**, based on the songs of **Queen**, created by Queen guitarist **Brian May** and drummer **Roger Taylor** together with British comedian **Ben Elton** opened. The show was due to close in October 2006 before embarking on a UK tour, but due to popular demand has been extended until 2014. The show is currently in its 12th year and as such is the longest running musical ever to play at the **Dominion Theatre**.

On Sundays, Hillsong London holds four church services throughout the day there.

Dominion Theatre Ownership

The Dominion has had a variety of owners during its history. It has been operated by The Rank Organisation and Apollo Leisure from 1988 to 1999. In 1999 Apollo Leisure was taken over by SFX Entertainment and in 2001 SFX Entertainment was bought by Clear Channel Entertainment, part of the US based multinational. It was run by Live Nation UK – Clear Channel's entertainments spin-off organisation, on behalf of the Nederlander Organization. On Friday 23rd October 2009 the **Nederlander Organisation** took full control of the venue, buying out Live Nation UK's third ownership taking the venue into a new era.