



Our Ref: 2588/DS

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

recorded at

**The Forum  
9-17 Highgate Rd  
Kentish Town  
London  
NW5 1JY**

on behalf of

**Academy Music Group Ltd  
211 Stockwell Road  
Brixton  
London  
SW9 9SL**

**Removal of Redundant Safety Curtain**

## **History**

The venue was built in 1934 and was originally used as an art deco cinema. After the cinema was closed, the venue re-opened as an Irish dance hall called The Forum. In the mid-1980s, it changed direction to a 2,100-capacity live music venue under the name of The Town & Country Club.

## **Proposal**

The proposed works are to remove the redundant safety curtain which contains asbestos and dispose of it all from site.

## **Design Access Statement**

The purpose of the report is solely to assess what effect that the removal will have on the building. The safety curtain is redundant and serves no purpose in its present state. Due to the curtain not being used for over 30+ years the original steel wire ropes have deformed around the pulley's and prevent the curtain from being flown in to carry out the required repairs to avoid the building from being contaminated with asbestos. After careful consideration, the simplest solution is to remove the safety curtain, the counterweights, steel wire ropes and subsequent asbestos in its entirety, and thus removing a 5 ton dead weight from the building. The original pulley's would be left in place.

## **Materials & Detailed Design**

The safety curtain consists of a steel frame grillage clad in steel sheets on each side and lined with asbestos. The curtain is hung via steel wire ropes connected to 5No. pulley's, secured to the pros, with 2No. counterweight cradles on each side. Upon its removal no additional materials will be installed in its place.

## **Historic Building Impact Assessment**

### **Introduction**

This report shall seek to identify those elements of The Forum which are of historic importance and consider the impact which the proposed works will have on those elements.

Historic importance should not be considered only in Architectural terms but also extend to encompass the social significance of the building in the locality. Similarly it should not be assumed that the impact of all works will be detrimental to the historic significance of the building. There is potential for much which may be beneficial to the long term future and appreciation of the historically valued elements of this building.

**Proposed Brief** – To remove the safety curtain contain asbestos, counterweights and steel wire ropes.

### **Architectural Significance**

#### **History**

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#### **Visual Impact**

The safety curtain can only be seen from the stage looking up or from the grid looking down. No aspects of the curtain could be deemed of architectural significance and its removal would not deter from its Grade II listing. The counterweights are currently concealed by a steel sheet and again are of no

architectural significance. The steel wire ropes are also of no architectural significance and in any instance, will require replacing due to their age. The pulleys, again, are of no real architectural significance but will remain in place.

Overall the safety curtain has become a hindrance to the operations of the venue, causing a potential health risk due to the asbestos and the deformed steel wire ropes. It is of our opinion that there are far greater working examples of safety curtains in the West End.