



# Statement of Significance

Ambassadors Theatre

October 2016



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## Introduction

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Significance has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP on behalf of Delfont Mackintosh Theatres in relation to the Ambassadors Theatre on West Street, Covent Garden, London. It has been prepared with the assistance of John Earl who is a consultant to Delfont Mackintosh Theatres on this project. This statement should be read with the Planning and Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement which also accompany the application for planning permissions and listed building consent.
- 1.2 This Statement of Significance, prepared in accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF, is concerned with the Ambassadors Theatre, West Street, Covent Garden, London designed by the theatre architect WGR Sprague in 1913. The subject site contains a purpose built theatre which is in continued use for its original purpose. It has a formal design relationship with the adjacent St Martin's Theatre which was designed by the same architect.
- 1.3 Delfont Mackintosh Theatres own a number of theatres by the Architect WGR Sprague theatres, namely:
- Gielgud Theatre (Grade II)
  - The Queen's Theatre (Grade II)
  - Wyndham's Theatre (Grade II\*)
- 1.4 Cameron Mackintosh acquired these over over twentymany years and we are advised has spent over £50 million in renovating them to a high standard. Defont Mackintosh Theatres do not yet own the Ambassadors Theatre but do have an interest in its purchase subject to planning consent for the new theatre being achieved.
- 1.5 In the 2002 publication *Scene/Unseen: London's West End Theatres* by English Heritage, Susie Barson states:
- "Theatres have always been subject to change. English Heritage understands this when advising on adaptations of the building to ensure their continued use for the future, while also insisting on the importance of conservation, not least as a means to the same end. Sir Cameron Mackintosh's significant investment in his theatres, the latest phase of which was announced in June 2003, is a major next step, warmly welcomed by English Heritage in a close working relationship."*
- 1.6 The Ambassadors Theatre is designated as a Grade II listed building and is situated within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden. The site is on the edge of the Westminster City Council boundary. The heritage list description for the Ambassadors Theatre is given as **Appendix 1.0**. The Conservation Area boundary map is attached as **Figure 3.1**.
- 1.7 There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, these are listed below:
- Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area (Camden)
  - Covent Garden Conservation Area (Westminster)
  - St Martin's Theatre (Grade II)
  - North Wing (Grade II)
  - Guildhouse (Grade II)
  - 24 West Street (Grade II)
  - 22 Tower Street (Grade II)
  - 5-8 Tower Court (Grade II)
  - The Spirit of Electricity (Grade II)
- 1.8 This report is informed by a number of secondary sources in the production of this report. We have made a full inspection of the building prior to the preparation of this report. A Heritage Statement has been produced by theatre historian John Earl and a Planning and Heritage Statement by Montagu Evans. We seek only to summarise the history of the site, and to make an assessment of its significance accordingly, relying on Mr Earl's judgements and incorporating these as appropriate. Mr Earl reviewed and commented on a draft of this statement.
- 1.9 The sources used in the compilation of this report include but are not limited to:
- The Theatres Trust Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950 by John Earl and Michael Sell (2000)
  - Theatres: A guide to Theatre Conservation from English Heritage (1995)
  - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, English Heritage (2008)
  - Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement (Camden)
  - English Heritage National Heritage List – Ambassadors Theatre and nearby listed buildings.
  - *Scene/Unseen: London's West End Theatres* (2002) by Susie Barson et al
  - Draft Statement of Significance by John Earl (submitted separately)



2.0

// AMBASSADORS THEATRE



Building History



## 2.0 BUILDING HISTORY

- 2.1 Prior to the development of the theatre the site was made up of a number of different properties on West Street and what was known as Lumber Court (now Tower Court). The site is situated adjacent to the former Huguenot Chapel which was founded in 1700 and remodelled in the 1840s (Grade II). A public house was situated on the corner plot of the site that now houses the entrance to the theatre. This can be seen in the Ordnance Survey Map from 1893 (**Figure 2.1**).
- 2.2 In 1898 plans to re-develop the site into a theatre were submitted to the London County Council (now held by the London Metropolitan Archives) by architect Frank Swift (Earl, 2015, Pl 21).
- 2.3 Swift's designs were not taken forward and new designs were made by the renowned theatre architect WGR Sprague (1863-1933) in 1913. Sprague was a noted theatre architect born in New Zealand and was articled to Frank Matcham (1854-1920) in London. Sprague designed over forty theatres, of which twelve remain and are designated heritage assets: ten listed at Grade II and two at Grade II\* (Earl/National Heritage List for England).
- 2.4 The Ambassadors Theatre has its principle façade on West Street, and has a simpler, utilitarian return façade on Tower Street.
- 2.5 A site plan amongst Sprague's drawings (reproduced by Earl, 2015, Pl 16) show the change in the street line of Lumber Court, renamed Tower Court. When the new theatre was built to Sprague's designs the street was widened from 12ft 9in to 20 feet which reduced the overall area for building (Earl, 2015, Pl 16). This can be seen on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1914 (**Figure 2.2**).

- 2.6 Mr Earl has pointed out that eight of Sprague's West End commissions resulted, for different reasons, in the building of four-closely sited pairs. He writes:  
*"It is a curious fact about Sprague's eight West End Playhouses that four of them appear in architecturally balanced pairs (Gielgud with Queen's and Ivor Novello with Aldwych), while the remaining four, although not paired in an architectural sense, are grouped two and two in close proximity (Wyndham's with Noel Coward, back to back and Ambassadors with St Martin's, side by side."* Earl, 2015, para 2.5
- 2.7 The Ambassadors Theatre, and its intended partner and St Martin's Theatre were Sprague's last theatre designs to be realised. These theatres may be located side by side, and employ a common architectural language, but they are very different in scale and architectural ambition. When the Ambassadors Theatre was being designed and built there were still daylight issues restricting its size from the buildings which were on the site of St Martin's Theatre. These restrictions alongside the small size of the plot meant that the Ambassadors was built to a much lesser scale than St Martin's.
- 2.8 St Martin's Theatre has a prominent, well composed elevation which is clad in stone, rather than the cementitious mortar as used on the Ambassadors Theatre. Like the Ambassadors Theatre, St Martin's has a return to Tower Court but this is handled better by Sprague: the classical frontage returns for two bays following pattern of the façade, albeit in an Ionic pilastered order, rather than the columns in antis like the façade. The rest of the return is of a lesser architectural quality and is more coherent with the façade, the cornice lines above the ground floor and the third floor continue in the returns and the fenestration is the same height throughout. The fact the entire frontage is light coloured helps to disguise the change from the formal approach from the street and the stage entrance to the rear of the site. The auditorium is on a completely different scale to the Ambassadors with two serpentine balconies and a number of boxes: it was completely refurbished in 1996.

- 2.9 The theatres were also constructed for different clients. The Ambassadors was built on behalf of a small consortium (Earl, 2015, para 2.6). St Martin's Theatre was built for an individual client but was constructed a number of years later opening in 1916. Earl discusses the date of construction of these two theatres in relation to the wider trend of theatre building. He states:  
*"The Ambassadors and St Martin's theatres were the last to arrive and they effectively mark the end of the great theatre building boom."* (Earl, 2015, para 2.6)
- 2.10 The Ambassadors Theatre has like all West End theatres, a traditional proscenium arch; this theatre has been 'squeezed' onto a small site (reduced with the widening of Lumber/Tower Court) with 425 (originally 490) seats. The description by Simon Bradley in the Buildings of England Series reads:  
*"East of the Chapel two theatres by WGR Sprague, planned as a non-matching pair. The little Ambassadors', 1913, has a pilastered front and a charming, compact interior ornamented with ambassadors' crests"* (Bradley and Pevsner, 2003, p. 383)



Figure 2.1 Ordnance Survey Map 1893



2.11 The description of the Ambassadors by the Theatres Trust states:

“A small theatre on an impossibly small site, it is a planning tour de force by Sprague, probably his most striking feat of compression, front and back of house. Next door to the St Martin’s Theatre. Low, three storey ashlar-faced elevation, curving into Tower Court. Restrained classical style with channelled pilasters carrying segmental pediments. Crowning parapet and balustrade with ball ornaments. Elegant auditorium, described in contemporary reports as being in Louis XVI style with ambassadorial crests and a colour scheme of Parma violet, ivory and gold. Apart from redecoration the auditorium has remained virtually intact. Circular ceiling with central chandelier; panelled border and deep cove penetrated by arches springing from fluted Ionic pilasters. Richly framed and festooned roundels with armorial decorations in arches. Flat basket-arched proscenium flanked by single tall boxes. Horse-shoe curved single balcony with raised tier at rear. An architecturally pleasing auditorium with an intimate atmosphere.” (<http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/resources/theatres/show/1097-ambassadors-london>, accessed 13 March 2015)

2.12 Notwithstanding that, and as analysed in the RHWL work, the sight lines in the theatre are compromised from about 20% of the seats. The front of house support spaces are very cramped and access is particularly challenging.

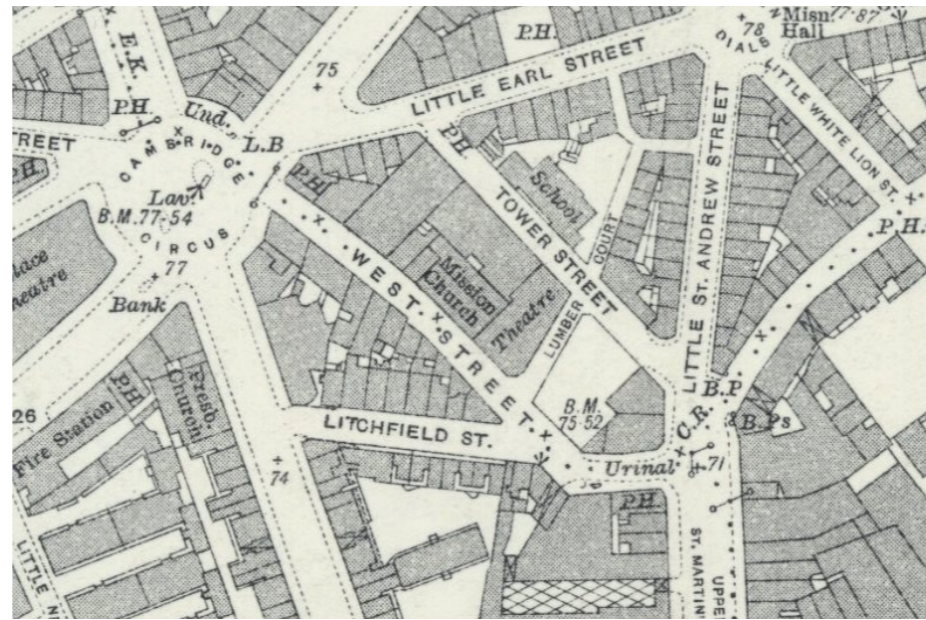


Figure 2.2 Ordnance Survey Map 1914

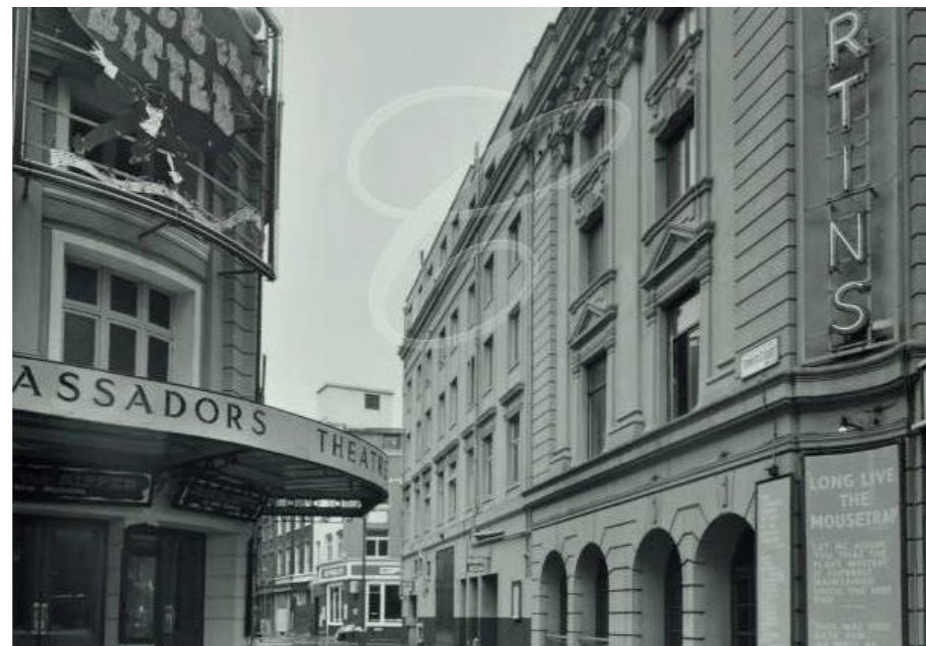


Figure 2.3 Photograph of Ambassadors and St Martin's Theatre, COLLAGE



Figure 2.4 Photograph of the Ambassadors Theatre, The Theatres Trust





Figure 2.5 The Elevation of the Ambassadors Theatre with the former Huguenot Chapel to the left and the Tower Street return to the right



Figure 2.6 Elevation of St Martin's Theatre

### Description of the Building – Exterior

- 2.13 The primary façade of the theatre is adjacent to the chapel and has a long elevation on West Street and shallow return in the same architectural language around the corner on to Tower Court. A longer return extends in a different architectural language along Tower Court in red brick to a simpler brick elevation which is utilitarian in character **Figure 2.7**. This pavement is unattractive and in poor condition.
- 2.14 The Tower Court façade includes the corner of the classical design. The brick return has a sunken basement level and three floors above (over three bays) with a lower range towards the east of the site in the area closest to the stage door. There is no detailing on this façade and the windows are set within brick arch heads, with a straight unadorned parapet.
- 2.15 The classical design of the primary façade is simple in contrast to its neighbour St Martin's (this is described more fully in Earl, para 3.3) (**Figure 2.6**). The entire facade has channelled rustication and a modest giant pilastered order. As Mr Earl has pointed out the cornice level is equal to that of the adjoining chapel. The roofline of the theatre is adorned with a balustrade and ball finials and a trio of segmental pediments, with three round windows situated below.



Figure 2.7 Elevation of the main entrance of the Ambassadors Theatre and the Tower Street return

### Description of the Building – Interior

- 2.16 The Ambassadors Theatre has a relatively small interior, having previously been described as 'compact', and 'charmingly intimate' by Earl (2015) and Bradley and Pevsner (2003) respectively (**Figure 2.8 & Figure 2.10**). One enters the theatre into a small elliptical entrance with simple, classicising decoration. From this entrance there are two staircases, one up, one down which lead to the stalls and circle levels of the auditorium.
- 2.17 On each floor there are compact bars which serve each level of the auditorium. The lower bar functions by way of system of entry doors which channel the audience through the limited available space. The other bar is on the upper level and at the top of a staircase which limits the flow of people in and out of the spaces. The circulation spaces are described by Mr Earl in the following way:
- "The entrance foyer is minuscule, as are all circulation spaces. Meetings of friends and pre-show chats are more likely to take place outside than within the theatre. Bars and toilets are extremely tightly planned. The dressing rooms are adequate, but their linking corridor, at all levels, is no wider than a doorway which makes it difficult for two actors to pass."* (Earl, 2015, para 5.3)
- 2.18 The main auditorium would originally have had a seating capacity of 490 and it is currently at 425, split between a circle and stalls level. The rear stalls level has a restricted view which is described in detail by Earl:
- "Seating configuration, notably at stalls level, shows Sprague straining for a greater capacity than the volume of the building could comfortably contain. Rear stalls extend back under the overhang of the circle, so that the rear nine rows cannot be described as better than tolerable. The rear seven rows have, in fact, what can only be called a 'letterbox' view"*
- 2.19 He goes on to state:
- "While the rear-most seats in both stalls and circle are so close to the rear walls that noises from the street can clearly be heard (probably not a great distraction while the present production 'Stomp!' continues its run."* (Earl, 2015, para 5.2)



- 2.20 Part of the reason for the restricted site-lines is the constrained plot, where Sprague was struggling to contain the seating within confines of the auditorium. The rear of the stalls is located, outwith the main dome of the auditorium, and as a result the site lines are poor as is described above by Earl.
- 2.21 Within the auditorium itself many of the original features of the theatre can be identified, alongside some alterations and some adaptations for the modern functioning of the theatre (Figure 2.10).
- 2.22 There is a considerable amount of original plasterwork in situ but this retained has been painted over, disguising the original colour scheme of the theatre (Figure 2.9). The central part of the auditorium is located beneath a round domed space with a central chandelier. There is also ornamental plasterwork around the curved balcony of the dress circle.
- 2.23 The plasterwork forms part of a classical decoration scheme and a number of pilaster and arches 'support' the dome. The design language is eclectic, albeit based loosely on a C18 continental architecture. It is handsome if typical for a building of this type and date. On entering one feels a sense of compression: the space which is positive initially presents certain practical challenges.
- 2.24 Below the dome, within the arches there is plasterwork depicting ambassadorial crests, therefore linking the decoration with the name of the theatre (Figure 2.9).
- 2.25 Over time the capacity of the theatre has reduced due to some functionality and practicalities associated with the running of the theatre. As can be identified in Figure 4 the box to SR has now been blocked up and it presently used as the control room for the lighting of the theatre. The front areas of the circle have been given over to the provision of equipment.
- 2.26 The original orchestra pit can be identified in front of the stage which is no longer in use and is now covered up. The level of the stage is currently higher than the original stage to suit the present show.

- 2.27 The auditorium also has considerable rigging and equipment which are attached to the historic fabric. Figure 2.9 and Figure 2.10 show a number of pieces of equipment attached to the balcony of the circle. Again, these appear specific to the show.
- 2.28 As mentioned above, the backstage areas are similarly small and have no lift access at all. This includes the workshops below the stage which currently requires materials and props to be brought down and taken up the very small staircase.

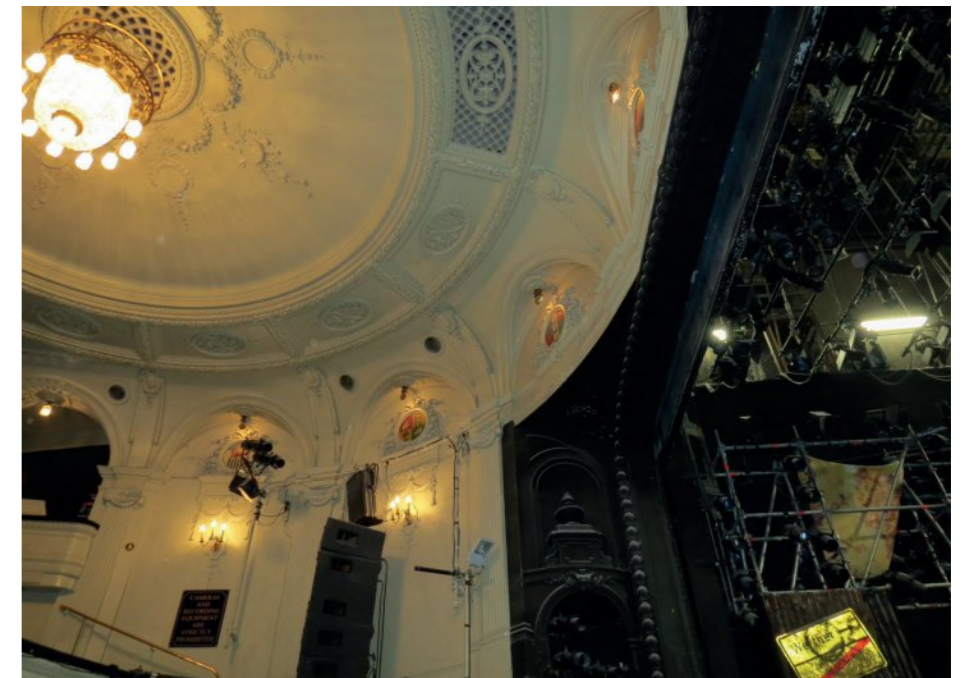


Figure 2.9 View from the stalls of the domed ceiling, including the Ambassadorial Crests



Figure 2.8 View of the auditorium from the stage, showing the raised tier of seating at circle level behind the domed ceiling



Figure 2.10 View of the Auditorium from the rear of the dress circle showing the rigging at various levels of the theatre attached to the historic fabric of the building





// AMBASSADORS THEATRE



Assessment of Significance

### 3.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate to an asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact any alteration on its significance. Accordingly, we set out a statement of significance for the Ambassadors Theatre below.

3.2 The NPPF (2012) defines significance as:

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*

#### Designations

3.3 The Ambassadors Theatre was first designated in March 1976. The list description, the starting point of this analysis, states:

*"Theatre. 1913. By WGR Sprague for a syndicate. Built by Kingerlee and Sons. Stucco. EXTERIOR: low elevation of 3 storeys, 4 bays. Ground floor entrances with continuous canopy. Centre with 4 pilasters & deeply recessed windows, above & below a central moulded string course. Slightly advanced end bays with banded pilasters and circular opening on 2nd floor, crowned by segmental pediments. Cornice, balustered parapet with ball finials. Righthand end corner on curve with flanking, slightly advanced repeat of the end bay. INTERIOR: not inspected but noted to retain a small auditorium, with seating for only 450, the decoration in Louis XVI style with fluted Ionic pilasters around walls, supporting round arches containing small roundels with ambassadorial crests. Circular decorated plaster ceiling. Dress circle with curved balcony front with plasterwork decoration, and part of the same tier at the back is another small circle raised up. Within the proscenium tall narrow roundheaded boxes with balustered balconies. Rectangular proscenium arch with rounded angles. Stage machinery: one frail single trap, no other machinery survives. Small lobby with firstfloor bar over. A small but exquisite design."*

3.4 It is situated within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area, within The London Borough of Camden (**Figure 3.1**). It is situated close to the Covent Garden Conservation Area within the boundary of Westminster City Council. Although the boundary between Camden and Westminster is West Street, the nearest Westminster Conservation Area is Covent Garden. It does not, however, have a direct visual relationship with the site.

3.5 The Seven Dials Conservation Area was designated in 1974. The area is divided into a number of sub-areas and the subject site is located within the sub-area centred on Seven Dials. Towards the end of the C19 the area underwent a significant transformation with a programme of slum clearances and a traffic management scheme by the Metropolitan Board of Works. Part of these works involved the creation of Shaftsbury Avenue in 1889 which widened the original Monmouth Street, making a completely new cut across the fabric of the West End from what is now New Oxford Street to the pre-circus Piccadilly. The early C20 saw the development of a number of theatres including the Ambassadors in the area, following on from this intervention.

3.6 There are a number of heritage Assets within the immediate vicinity of the Ambassadors Theatre which have been considered in the preparation of this report, and would need to be considered in the final heritage report.

- St Martin's Theatre (Grade II)
- North Wing (Grade II)
- Guildhouse (Grade II)
- 24 West Street (Grade II)
- 22 Tower Street (Grade II)
- 5-8 Tower Court (Grade II)
- The Spirit of Electricity (Grade II)
- Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area (Camden)
- Covent Garden Conservation Area (Westminster)



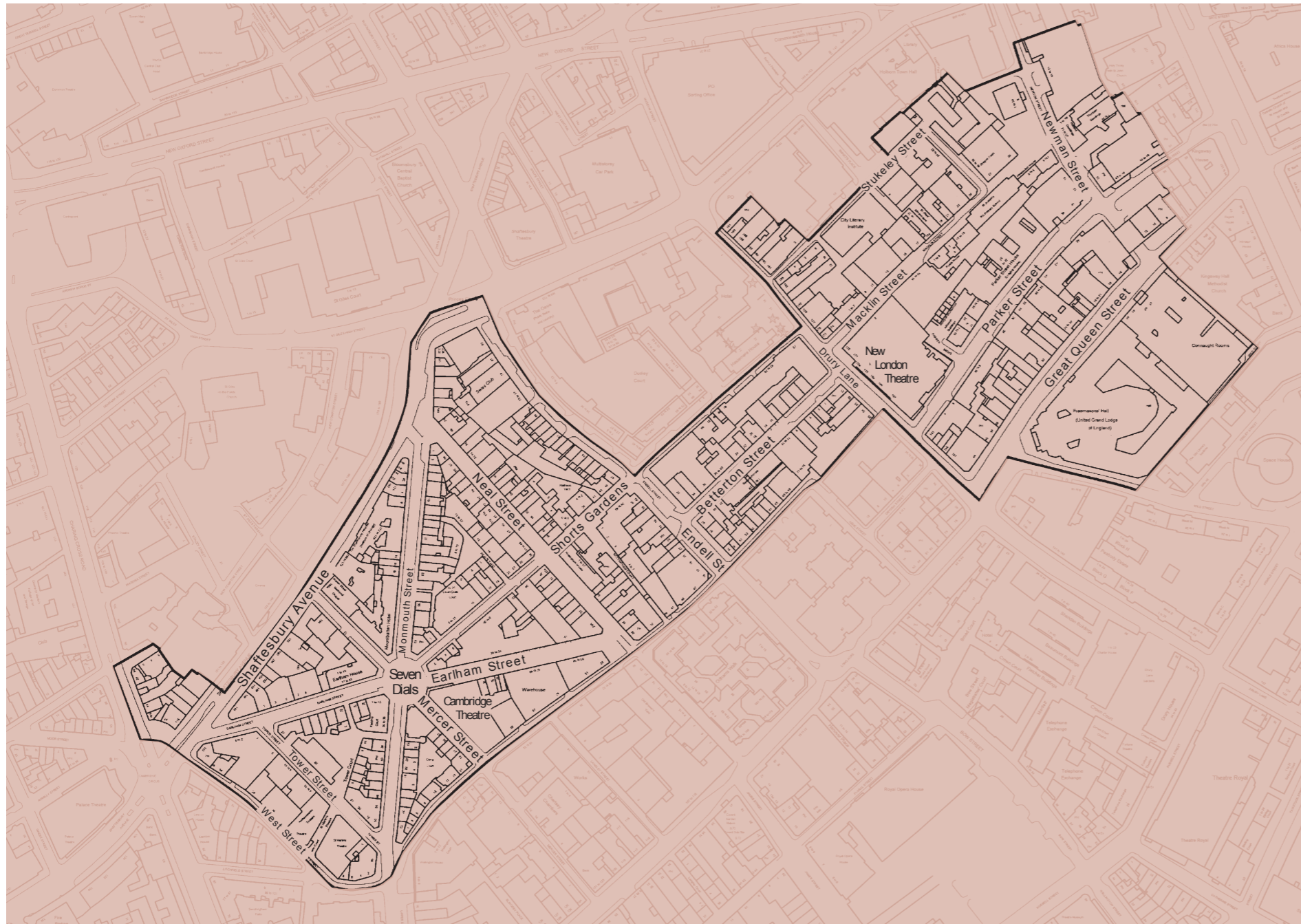


Figure 3.1 Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area (Camden) Boundary Map

### Ambassadors Theatre

- 3.7 The Ambassadors Theatre has evidential value in its ability to convey the historic and present use as a theatre on the site. One issue that may be worth noting is the change in the line of building on what was Lumber Lane, now known as Tower Court which was widened from 12ft 9in to 20ft when the theatre was built. This changed the street frontage and the layout of this lane.
- 3.8 The Ambassadors has historic value as a building which was designed as a theatre and continues with original use for its intended function. It is typical of a Victorian/Edwardian theatre, although is a very late example of its sort.
- 3.9 It is also of historic value because it was designed by a recognised theatre architect WGR Sprague, who was articulated to Frank Matcham the best known Victorian theatre designer. A number of Sprague's buildings have been recognised as buildings of interest and are designated heritage assets; are listed at Grade II, two at Grade II\*. In total, there are 38 West End theatres, the largest group of historic theatres in Europe.
- 3.10 Part of its historical value lies in its intended formal design relationship to the adjacent St Martin's Theatre which was designed by the same architect at around the same time. Although they were conceived as a pair the two theatres were built at different times, for different clients. They have a similar architectural language yet the scale of the buildings are greatly different. The scale of the Ambassadors was to an extent dictated by its small plot and historic rights of light restrictions. The size restricts the interior layout of the building, and front and back of house. It is reputed to be the smallest theatre in the West End.
- 3.11 The building has aesthetic value as it is a handsome building, evocative of its age and function. The facade uses the same classical language as the adjacent St Martin's but to a lesser scale. Where St Martin's uses an Ionic order, the Ambassadors employs an astylar pilastered order which is combined with channelled rustication and three segmental pediments. It is a simple rather than elaborate design.
- 3.12 The brick return on Tower Court has less aesthetic value and, indeed arguably detracts from the surrounding area the way it is.

- 3.13 The theatre's auditorium has aesthetic value. Much of the historic fabric of Sprague's auditorium remains and it is visually attractive. However there have been major changes, alterations and adaptations to the theatre overtime which have compromised its value. The backstage operations of the theatre have naturally developed over time and the ancillary spaces have developed as the needs of the theatre has changed. The most significant internal elements are the ceiling which is proposed to be relocated physically in a new bar area – and the wall treatment which will be reused or remade without new context and a full photographic survey is included in **Appendix 2.0**.
- 3.14 The changes, alterations and adaptations are not unique to the Ambassadors Theatre and the inclusion of technical equipment is common problem in historic theatres adapting to the requirements of modern theatre production. With regard to modern as well as historic intervention Susie Barson (2002) notes:  
*“Up to and through the 19th century fire was a great and ever present risk to theatres; they regularly burned down and were generally rebuilt from scratch. Improved fire and safety regulations mean that far fewer buildings have since been lost in this way, and many aging theatres have been repaired, refurbished and adapted, often with little readily discernible impact. Others have gone – demolished or converted – and there should be no illusion that there was ever a static golden age when change was not in the air. Over the last few years, however, pressure for more radical change within the buildings has been increasing.*  
*There are perennial questions of attendance levels and economic viability, staging costs and the recouping of investments as well as issues of legislative change. Theatre owners need to provide better access and circulation; they also want to be able to provide improved sightlines, more comfortable seats and ambient temperatures, along with better ancillary facilities. Backstage old machinery has become redundant and can be deemed a health and safety hazard even if not in the way. The staging of ambitious production in spaces that were not designed for large heavy sets, with elaborate sound and light equipment, has also caused problems.”*
- 3.15 The dome and associated plasterwork of the Ambassadors is of interest, although none of the original colour scheme of the theatre remains. The whole auditorium, including the plasterwork has been re-painted, it appears that Interior surface decoration can of course be restored.
- 3.16 The interior has also seen a number of physical changes which impacts on its overall significance. Some of the seating has been altered and changed to accommodate various productions and technical needs. There is no longer seating around the edge of the dress circle balcony and these spaces are now filled with speakers/technical equipment to facilitate the shows. Similarly the box on the SR has been covered to house the lighting controls and therefore does not function for its intended use.
- 3.17 The orchestra pit has now been covered and there have been changes to the configuration of the seating at the front of the stage. The recent production has necessitated the raising of the stage which has changed the dynamic of the stage and altered/further restricted the view from the rear of the stalls.
- 3.18 Throughout the auditorium there have been interventions into the historic fabric to accommodate the additional technical needs of the show. Various additions can be seen on the upper level behind the dress circle where a large horizontal lighting rig has been added. Further horizontal scaffolds to either side of the stage have been erected to support further lighting and sound provision. These additions have compromised the historic fabric and reduced the significance of the space.
- 3.19 The theatre doubtless has associations for the many people who have attended, performed in, created and supported numerous performances spanning generations. There will likely be associations with particular shows rather than the physical fabric or particular design elements. Communal value due to its long standing use as a theatre, and its long associations with particular stage shows will be present. It is most famous as the venue for the Mousetrap, which was forced to move as the facilities were no longer suitable at the Ambassadors and now runs in the adjacent St Martin's. The most recent long running show has been Stomp.
- 3.20 The auditorium seating plan is eccentric, working to the site's size and orientation, and sightlines are poor. Therefore in summary the listed building has the following values:
- Evidential Value in that it conveys the historic and present use as a theatre on this site;
  - Historic Value as a building which was designed as a theatre and continues in its original use for its intended function. It is typical of a Victorian/Edwardian theatre, although it is a late example of its sort;
  - The building also historic value because it was designed by noted theatre architect WGR Sprague. A number of Sprague's buildings have been recognised as buildings of interest and consequently listed in the Grade II and II\* categories;
  - Part of the historic interest of the building comes from its intended design relationship with the adjacent St Martins Theatre, which is the work of the same architect at the same time. Although the two theatres were built at different times for different clients, they have a similar architectural language, albeit they differ in scale. The Ambassadors was dictated by its small plot and historic (now removed) rights of light restrictions;
  - The building has aesthetic value as a handsome classical structure, evocative of its age and function. Compared to the adjacent St Martin's theatre, it is a simple design. The brick return on Tower Court and Tower Street has less aesthetic value and arguably detracts from the appearance of the immediate area and the detailed main façade;
  - Internally, there is aesthetic value to the theatre's auditorium. Much of the historic fabric in the auditorium remains, the most significant internal elements are the ceiling, and to a lesser extent the entrance lobby;
  - There are communal associations for the many people who have attended, performed in, created and supported numerous performances spanning generations. There will likely also be associations with particular shows, for instance in particular the long-running mousetrap, before that show relocated to the St Martins. The most recent long-running show is Stomp.



3.21 In summary, the Ambassadors is a late example of Sprague's work and furthermore the architectural design of the building clearly suffered from the constraints of the size and the nearby rights to light. As a result the original intention to create a building that matched St Martin's was never realised. Asymmetry between the theatres side elevation is utilitarian and undermines the visual quality of the St Martin's façade. While the façade of the Ambassadors Theatre turns the corner into the lane, the return is shallow and the junction between is clumsy.





// AMBASSADORS THEATRE



APPENDIX 1: List Description

# AMBASSADORS THEATRE

## List Entry Summary

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

Name: AMBASSADORS THEATRE

List entry Number: 1379185

## Location

AMBASSADORS THEATRE, WEST STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 16-Mar-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

## Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 478552

## Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

## List entry Description

### Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Details

CAMDEN

TQ3081SW WEST STREET 798-1/105/1713 (North East side) 16/03/73  
Ambassadors Theatre

GV II

Theatre. 1913. By WGR Sprague for a syndicate. Built by Kinglerlee and Sons. Stucco. EXTERIOR: low elevation of 3 storeys, 4 bays. Ground floor entrances with continuous canopy. Centre with 4 pilasters & deeply recessed windows, above & below a central moulded string course. Slightly advanced end bays



with banded pilasters and circular opening on 2nd floor, crowned by segmental pediments. Cornice, balustered parapet with ball finials. Right-hand end corner on curve with flanking, slightly advanced repeat of the end bay. INTERIOR: not inspected but noted to retain a small auditorium, with seating for only 450, the decoration in Louis XVI style with fluted Ionic pilasters around walls, supporting round arches containing small roundels with ambassadorial crests. Circular decorated plaster ceiling. Dress circle with curved balcony front with plasterwork decoration, and part of the same tier at the back is another small circle raised up. Within the proscenium tall narrow round-headed boxes with balustered balconies. Rectangular proscenium arch with rounded angles. Stage machinery: one frail single trap, no other machinery survives. Small lobby with first-floor bar over. A small but exquisite design.



Listing NGR: TQ2999881002

## Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: TQ 30008 81005

## Map

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale.  
For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1379185 .pdf](#)  
([http://mapservices.HistoricEngland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/342132/HLE\\_A4L\\_Grade|HLE\\_A3L\\_Grade.pdf](http://mapservices.HistoricEngland.org.uk/printwebservicehle/StatutoryPrint.svc/342132/HLE_A4L_Grade|HLE_A3L_Grade.pdf))

The PDF will be generated from our live systems and may take a few minutes to download depending on how busy our servers are. We apologise for this delay.

This copy shows the entry on 27-Oct-2016 at 11:22:13.

End of official listing





// AMBASSADORS THEATRE



## APPENDIX 2: Photographic Survey

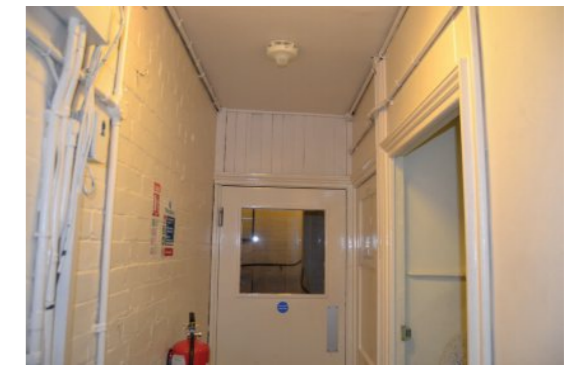
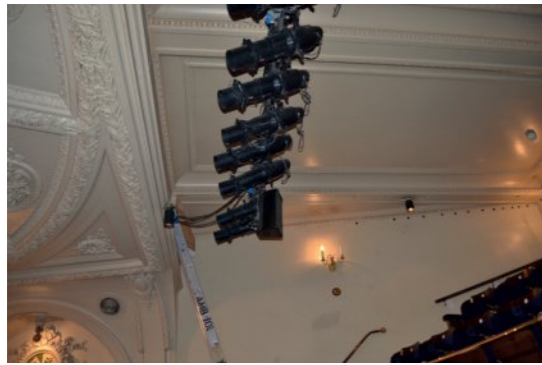


## AUDITORIUM



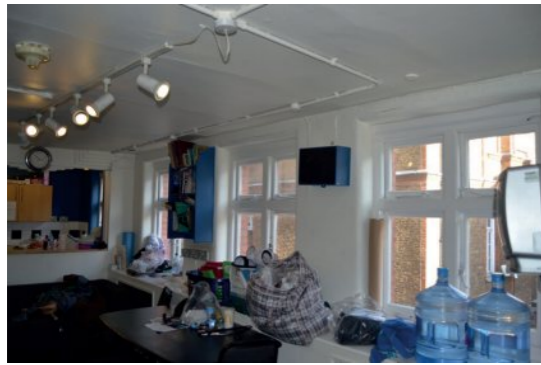
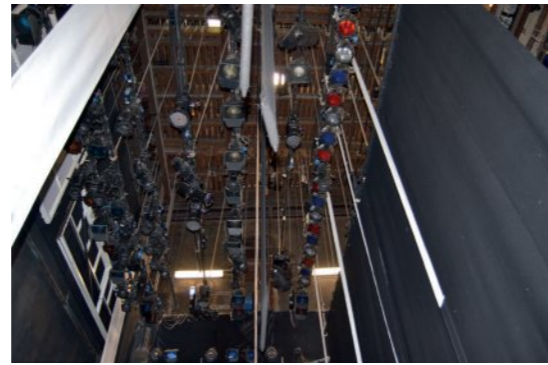
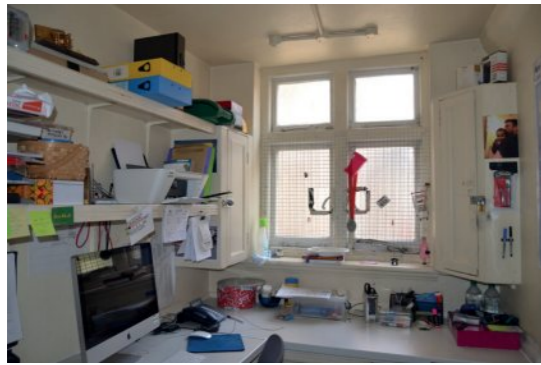


BACK OF HOUSE





BENEATH PAVEMENT PASSAGE

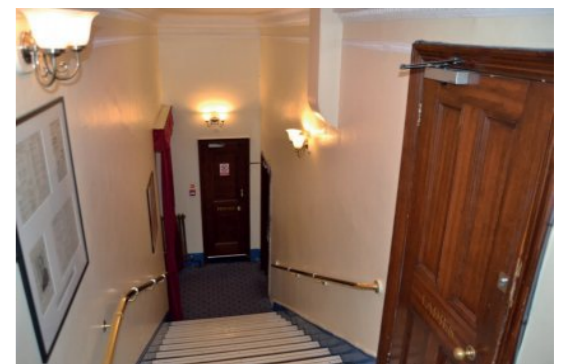
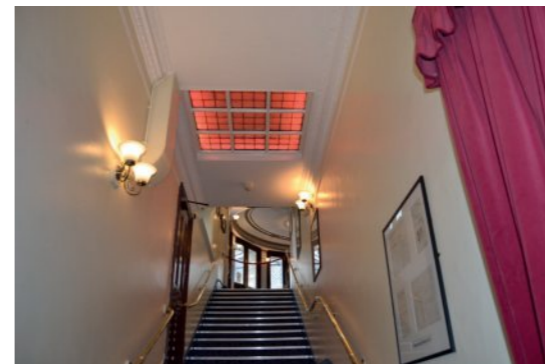
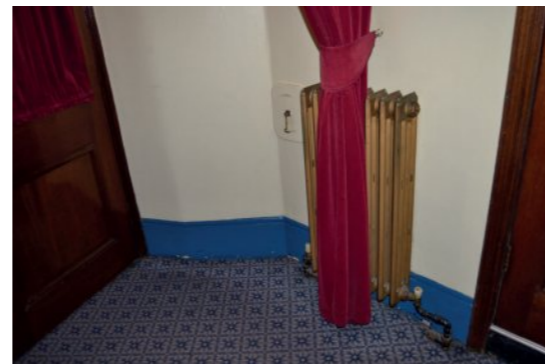




EXTERIOR



FRONT OF HOUSE





ROOF

