

‘BAT OUT OF HELL’

SHOW SIGNAGE



PLANNING HERITAGE AND DESIGN STATEMENT

DOMINION THEATRE,  
268 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD,  
LONDON W1T 7AQ

JANUARY 2018

## Proposed Signage

1. This application seeks permission to erect show signage on the canopy of the Dominion theatre for the forthcoming production of the musical 'Bat Out Of Hell'.



2. The signage consists of two flaming motorbikes as used in the show's flyers and general publicity material.



3. The signage is to be located on the theatre canopy as shown on the application drawings.

|          |                                |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| 2845-001 | Existing Elevation and Section |
| 2845-002 | Existing Canopy plan           |
| 2845-003 | Proposed Elevation and Section |
| 2845-004 | Proposed Canopy plan           |
| 2845-005 | Proposed Photographic Image    |
| 2845-006 | Location Plan                  |

4. The signage is solely for the show and will be removed when it closes.

## The Dominion Theatre – Significance and Impact

6. The Dominion is a Grade II listed building and lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The listing description is as follows:-

*“CAMDEN TQ2981SE TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD 798-1/104/1643 (East side) 10/10/88 Dominion Theatre GV II Theatre. 1928-29. Designed by W and TR Milburn. Steel-framed construction with Portland stone facade. EXTERIOR: narrow facade of 3 main bays; recessed entrance doors to full width of facade. Wooden doors, glazed in panels to full height, enriched with carved moulding, beneath projecting canopy facade above with pilaster strips to corners and projecting centre of 3 bays. Bases of pilaster strips with sculptured plaques with masks. Facade above concave in shape, with 3 square headed apertures filled with decorative wrought-iron work. Simple cornice band above, slightly raised to centre. INTERIOR: grand 2-storey entrance foyer with flights of stairs to left and right linking to central balcony; stripped Classical detailing and original pendant lights. Circle lounge and lower circle lounge with similar detailing. Auditorium with two galleries (one disused) also with Roman Classical detailing to walls and ceiling having 2 tiers of galleries and round cornered boxes (upper pair never seated) to left and right of proscenium. Original light fittings. HISTORICAL NOTE: The Dominion Theatre is a grand composition which embodies a transitional phase in the history of theatre design, incorporating the broad plan and decorative detailing more usually associated with cinemas of the period though always intended primarily for theatrical use. (Architects' Journal: 2 October 1929; Architect & Building News: 4 October 1929).”*

7. The Theatre was constructed in 1928-29 with a steel-framed construction and a concave Portland stone facade. It is the work of W and TR Milburn and, compared with other London venues, was very large with 2,835 seats with excellent circulation space to the foyers and circles.
8. The venue had dual capacity as a theatre and cinema and has alternated between the two. After relatively unsuccessful early years as a stage venue it became Gaumont Cinema in 1933 with occasional use as a variety theatre. It continued as a cinema until the 1970's when it becoming a music venue, its declining fortunes threatened it with demolition in 1992.
9. The building was saved from demolition and acquired by its current owners Nederlander who have attracted a series of major musical productions to the theatre. On the closure of 'We Will Rock You' in 2014 the building underwent a very major restoration inside and out which has been warmly received.



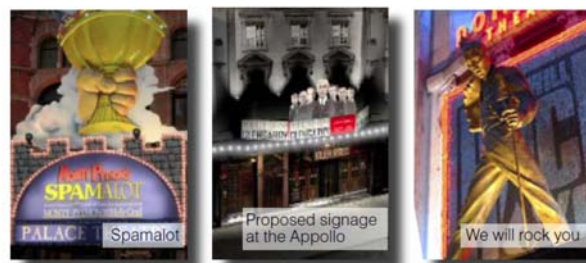
10. From its very early years the Theatre's stone facade was hidden by cinema readograph signs and large poster signage. This was removed in the 2014 and the facade restored.

11. An advantage of The Dominion is its ability to house the large West End and Broadway stage sets and large seating capacity. The arrival of 'Bat out of Hell' continues this tradition and makes full advantage of the theatre's strengths.
12. Although a part of Theatreland the Dominion is located in Camden and is an important cultural asset to the Borough that occupies a key position at the gateway between Westminster and Camden.
13. The history of the theatre is well documented and as this is a temporary sign mounted on the canopy the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the listed building is clearly limited to the visual considerations.

### **Impact**

14. Show signage and lighting is an intrinsic characteristic of London's Theatreland and the tradition for venues to incorporate bespoke signage ads to the attraction and excitement of theatres especially at night.
15. The use of 3 dimensional forms on canopies is one of the devices deployed by theatre venues and the statue of Freddie Mercury which adorned this canopy during 'We Will Rock You' became a celebrated example of the genre.
16. The advantages of this form of signage being highlighted with the Dominion as an example in the 'Theatreland Lighting and Signage Guide' produced by Society of London Theatre, the Theatres Trust and English Heritage, Westminster City Council in 2008.

Examples of the use of these three-dimensional structures include the canopy of the Palace Theatre with the production of 'Spamalot', while the statue at the Dominion in Camden for the 'We Will Rock You' show is also another good example.



17. This proposal is therefore in the tradition of Theatreland and the Dominion in particular. By placing the signage on the canopy the show can be promoted without hiding the restored facade. Indeed as shown on the CGI the facade becomes part of the backdrop.
18. The bespoke nature of the signage is also far preferable to the use of flat poster boards as were the norm in the past.

### **Conclusion**

19. For these reasons the sign is considered to meet the requirement of section 66(i) of the Act because it will firstly help to preserve the building in the use for which it was designed by meeting the needs of show producers for show related signage at the venue.
20. The bespoke nature of the signage is best practice and preserves the setting, and external character of the building which are of special architectural and historic interest.