

Address:	Ambassadors Theatre, West Street. London. WC2H 9ND.		3
Application Number:	2016/4869/P	Officer: Rob Tulloch	
Ward:	Holborn & Covent Garden		
Date Received:	05/09/2016		
Proposal: Demolition of existing Grade II Listed theatre building behind the retained West Street Façade and part of the Tower Court façade and redevelopment of site for a 4 storey plus mansard roof storey theatre building with 1 storey upward extension of retained façade, excavation of basement and installation of roof top plant.			
Background Papers, Supporting Documents and Drawing Numbers: Site Location Plan 11455-A-00-01; Existing Drawings: 11455-A-01-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22; Proposed Drawings: 11455-A-03-01; 02;03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22; 11455-A-05-01 Rev J; 02 Rev J; 03 Rev J; 04 Rev H; 05 Rev H; 06 Rev G; 08 Rev F; 09 Rev H; 1455-A-06-01 Rev J; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11455-A-07-01 Rev D; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11; 12; 13; 14; S091 Rev P1; S092 Rev P1; S098 Rev P3; S099 Rev P2; S100 Rev P2; S101 Rev P1; S102 Rev P1; S103 Rev P1; S104 Rev P1; S105 Rev P1; S200 Rev P5; S201 Rev P5; S0900 Rev P1; S0901 Rev P1; C100 Rev P2; C101 Rev P1; SSK100 Rev P2; SSK100 Rev P2; 1413 L(0)210; 1413 L(0)211; 1413 L(0)212; SSK101 Rev P2; SSK102 Rev P2; SSK103 Rev P3; SSK104 Rev P3; SSK105 Rev P1; SSK106 Rev P1; SSK107 Rev P1; SSK108 Rev P1; SDS00000.00; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/04; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/01; Heritage Statement by John Earl Jan 2015; Statement of Significance by Montague Evans October 2016; Design and Access Statement by Aedas Arts Team with Citizens Design Bureau March 2016; Planning and Heritage Statement by Montagu Evans dated September 2016; Archaeological Assessment by RSK September 2014; Interior Modelling Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Interior Planning Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Townscape Visual Assessment by Montagu Evans dated November 2016, Montagu Evans Additional Information Letter dated 12th July 2017; External Lighting - Planning Document August 2015; M&E Report by Power Plan dated 14th July 2016; Energy Statement by XC2 Energy May 2016; Sustainability Statement by XC2 Energy May 2016; Acoustic Report by Gilleron Scott Acoustic Design dated 9th January 2015; Overheating Report by XC2 Energy May 2016; Security Report October 2015; Ecology Report by Greengage May 2016; Daylight Sunlight Report by Delva Patman Redler September 2015; Asbestos Report by Healthy Buildings International dated 16th September 2015; Statement of Community Involvement by Four dated September 2016; BIA Audit Response by Conisbee dated 10th March 2016; Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Preliminary Risk Assessment by RSK dated August 2014; Basement Impact Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Utility Report by RSK dated July 2014; Structural Stage D Report by Conisbee dated 8th March 2016; Surface Water Drainage Statement by Conisbee dated 26th January 2017; Campbell Reith Audit F1 Dated May 2016; Refuse Storage Letter from Mousetrap Productions dated 25th January 2018			

Delivery and Servicing Outline Management Report by Mayer Brown dated October 2017; Delivery and Servicing Plan by Mayer Brown dated July 2017; Construction Management Plan by Conisbee dated 10th March 2015; Vehicle Route Plan; Servicing Plan Report by Theatre Projects Consultants February 2016; Get-In Vehicle Statement by Theatre Projects Consultants dated 28th August 2015; Transport Statement by Mayer Brown May 2016; Construction Site Waste management Plan by XC2 Energy July 2016; Swept Path Analysis 2016-2800-001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 10, 011, 012, 014; TS1311/200/2017

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant conditional planning permission subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement and referral to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a decision on whether to call in the application to make a determination himself

Date Received:	05/09/2016	4
Application Number:	2016/5032/L	

Proposal: Demolition of existing Grade II Listed theatre building behind the retained West Street Façade and part of the Tower Court façade and redevelopment of site for a 4 storey plus mansard roof storey theatre building with 1 storey upward extension of retained façade, excavation of basement and installation of roof top plant.

Background Papers, Supporting Documents and Drawing Numbers:

Site Location Plan 11455-A-00-01;
Existing Drawings: 11455-A-01-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;
Proposed Drawings: 11455-A-03-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;
11455-A-05-01 Rev J; 02 Rev J; 03 Rev J; 04 Rev H; 05 Rev H; 06 Rev G; 08 Rev F; 09 Rev H; 1455-A-06-01 Rev J; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11455-A-07-01 Rev D; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11; 12; 13; 14; S091 Rev P1; S092 Rev P1; S098 Rev P3; S099 Rev P2; S100 Rev P2; S101 Rev P1; S102 Rev P1; S103 Rev P1; S104 Rev P1; S105 Rev P1; S200 Rev P5; S201 Rev P5; S0900 Rev P1; S0901 Rev P1; C100 Rev P2; C101 Rev P1; SSK100 Rev P2; SSK100 Rev P2; 1413 L(0)210; 1413 L(0)211; 1413 L(0)212; SSK101 Rev P2; SSK102 Rev P2; SSK103 Rev P3; SSK104 Rev P3; SSK105 Rev P1; SSK106 Rev P1; SSK107 Rev P1; SSK108 Rev P1; SDS00000.00; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/04; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/01;
Heritage Statement by John Earl Jan 2015; Statement of Significance by Montague Evans October 2016; Design and Access Statement by Aedas Arts Team with Citizens Design Bureau March 2016; Planning and Heritage Statement by Montagu Evans dated September 2016; Archaeological Assessment by RSK September 2014; Interior Modelling Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Interior Planning Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Townscape Visual Assessment by Montagu Evans dated November 2016, Montagu Evans Additional Information Letter dated 12th July 2017;
External Lighting - Planning Document August 2015; M&E Report by Power Plan dated 14th July 2016; Asbestos Report by Healthy Buildings International dated 16th September 2015; BIA Audit Response by Conisbee dated 10th March 2016; Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Preliminary Risk Assessment by RSK dated August 2014; Basement Impact Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Utility Report by RSK dated July 2014; Structural Stage D Report by Conisbee dated 8th March 2016; Surface Water Drainage Statement by Conisbee dated 26th Jan

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant conditional listed building consent subject to referral to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a decision on whether to call in the application to make a determination himself

Applicant:

Mr. Richard Johnston
Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd
c/o Agent

Agent:

Montagu Evans LLP
5 Bolton Street
London
W1J 8BA

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:

	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace (GIA)
Existing	D2 Theatre		1028 sqm
Proposed	D2 Theatre		2095 sqm
Uplift	D2 Theatre		1067 sqm

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee: Major development involving the construction of more than 10 new dwellings or more than 1000 sq. metres of non-residential floorspace [clause 3(i)]; and which is subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement for matters which the Director of Regeneration and Planning does not have delegated authority [clause 3(vi)].

Decision route: The Victorian Society has requested that the applications be referred to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government ("Called in"). In this instance, when the Council is ready to make its decision, the application must be referred to the Secretary of State to decide whether the application merits being called in or not. If the Secretary of State decides that the relevant criteria have been met, a public inquiry will be held with a planning inspector making a recommendation on whether planning permission should be granted or refused. The Secretary of State will then make the decision taking into account the Inspector's recommendation.

1 SITE

- 1.1 The Ambassadors Theatre is situated in West Street, on the north-west corner of the junction with Tower Court, close to the boundary with the City of Westminster. The building was designed by WGR Sprague, who designed many London theatres, and opened in 1913. It was listed Grade II in 1973 and is one of Covent Garden's smallest theatres, with only 444 seats. The site falls within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and Archaeological Priority Area 2: London Suburbs.
- 1.2 The theatre stands adjacent to two Grade II listed buildings: St Martin's Theatre on the opposite side of Tower Court and the West Street Chapel, no. 24 West Street, on its northern side. The West Street Chapel shares a wall with the application site. Now used as studios, it was formerly St Giles (All Saints) Mission Church, dating from c1700, but the yellow stock brick and stucco façade was rebuilt in the early 19th century. St Martin's theatre is also by Sprague dating from 1916, and is a grander and more refined design.
- 1.3 Externally the building is composed of two main elements. The front façade, in stucco, addresses West Street and terminates in the curved corner at the junction with Tower Court. (Tower Court was widened when the theatre was built). The stucco façade returns into Tower Court, the corner denoting the theatre's main entrance. Beyond the entrance corner, extending along Tower Court and the façade facing Tower Street the treatment is simple, domestic brickwork, which is thought to date from the early 20th century. The front entrance corner is often substantially obscured by the needs of modern show graphics.
- 1.4 Internally there is a small auditorium, decorated in a Louis XVI style and with an ornate plaster ceiling. The building is little altered from the time it was built and has an uneventful planning history, with no proposals for major development. Minor applications have derived from the day-to-day

operation of the theatre. In the late 1980s consent was granted for air conditioning. Between the late 1990s and 2010 consents were for a fire alarm system, a temporary stage, and various signage.

- 1.5 The theatre is owned by Cameron Mackintosh's company Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd (DMT), and along with its neighbour St Martin's, plays an important role in London Theatreland.

2 THE PROPOSAL

Background to the proposals

- 2.1 The proposals involve substantial demolition to create a new theatre dedicated to receiving productions from the subsidised sector that would not normally have the opportunity to transfer to the West End. The subsidised sector is funded by the government via Arts Council, and such theatres must engage their local communities and be accessible to all. The subsidised sector emerged shortly after the Second World War, long after the majority of Theatreland was built, with the initial idea of a network of regional theatre companies. The sector has gradually evolved to include numerous new theatres in London, but outside the West End where costs are prohibitive, and subsidised theatres must keep ticket prices low and cannot make a profit. The aim is to provide a suitable venue providing runs of up to 16 weeks for productions which would otherwise have closed once their original runs in their originating venues had finished. The principle of the proposal is to allow more people to see the best productions coming from this sector and to do so in the heart of London's Theatreland.
- 2.2 The current theatre has a number of deficiencies resulting in a sub-standard audience experience. The new theatre would be provided behind the façade of the existing building, in order to create a modern and flexible internal arrangement. It is proposed that much of the building is rebuilt behind the retained West Street façade and the stucco return onto Tower Court. The proposal would involve excavations at basement level and the addition of a mansard roof with additional plant room on top. Historically significant elements of plasterwork (notably the ceiling to the auditorium) are to be relocated within the new theatre.
- 2.3 A key part of the proposals would be to remodel the performance venue omitting the traditional proscenium arched stage. The Ambassadors is typical of all the major West End Theatres having been designed at the beginning of the 20th century with a proscenium arched stage which is directly faces the audience. Whilst suited to traditional theatre, it considerably restricts the variety of plays which can perform at these West End venues because modern theatre has evolved, and newer productions, particularly those originating from the subsidised sector, are created to be performed, and originally staged, in ways that interact more with the audience such as "in the round" or on a thrust stage.
- 2.4 The core component of the project will be an intimately scaled, flexible, characterful theatre space specifically designed to receive a diverse array of non-proscenium/non-traditional theatre productions transferring from the

subsidised theatre sector. Central to the proposal is the creation of a performance space that aims to draw aesthetic inspiration from the original auditorium design - and the wider work of the original architect WGR Sprague.

- 2.5 It is intended that the new theatre space will be highly adaptable to allow productions to be staged in the same format as their originating theatre: end on, in the round or with a thrust stage, with 425–475 seats. The proposals would offer programming opportunities presented to both companies and audiences through an 8–16 week playing period. Alongside appropriately scaled public areas, and full accessibility, the proposal also provides on-site rehearsal rooms for current and future productions and would also be available to external companies to help address the shortage of rehearsal space in London.
- 2.6 The proposal would also allow a number of commercial productions to be staged at the theatre with runs of no more than 16 weeks and a maximum of 50 weeks within a 5 year period (effectively 20%). From their vast experience of West End theatre, and their lengthy consultation with the subsidised sector, the applicants are confident that they will be able to attract sufficient productions from the subsidised sector to fulfil their aims and a section 106 agreement would limit the amount of productions from the commercial sector. It is not anticipated that the theatre would have dark periods with no productions from the subsidised sector as scheduling would normally be at least a year in advance, and economically it would make no sense to have the theatre lie empty.

Description of works

- 2.7 A description of the proposal by floor is as follows:

Lower Basement Floor

- 2.8 This lowest level of the newly excavated would broadly correspond with the existing stalls seating of the current theatre. Set directly below the stalls of the new auditorium this level would contain a large foyer and bar to serve the stalls audience. The form of the foyer would be dictated by the reclaimed and reinstated elements of Sprague's auditorium. A new main stair would deliver audiences down to this level from the entrance foyer above. This level would also include dressing rooms, a bar and storeroom, and the plant/equipment room.

Upper basement

- 2.9 This level would include the central bar room of what is to be known as the 'Sprague salon'; with a mezzanine level forming part of the new front of house provision accessed by the new north circulation stair providing an elevated view into the main bar area below. The main stair would pass through this level from the lobby above arriving at the stalls Bar. Back of house accommodation would be located under the stage area allowing for the variable seating configurations required by the project. Principal cast member dressing rooms would be provided at this level with lift access to other floors.

Ground floor

- 2.10 At this level the building footprint would be moved out by 2.5m into Tower Court in order to provide space for the lift and theatre 'get in' (delivery point). The stage door will be accessed via Tower Court.
- 2.11 The new ground floor would establish a new datum level across the site – the entrance foyer, central stalls seats and the stage would all be set on the same level to coincide with the existing street level allowing level access through key areas of the building. Level access would be provided via ramp to the auditorium.
- 2.12 The classical stucco detailing of the original west street facade would be extended around the corner onto Tower Court. The primary public entrance and foyer would be accessed through the existing corner entrance doors at the junction of West Street and Tower Court with a further entrance located on West Street frontage.

First Floor

- 2.13 The first floor level would correspond with that of the original theatre building providing access to the first gallery seating level of the new auditorium. The form of the circle bar would be retained but opened up to provide more appropriate level of space to support audience numbers. Access would be provided to a new external balcony that forms part of the reworked entrance canopy – the level of the existing central window cill would be reduced to facilitate this. The enlarged foyer at this level would provide a small bar and level access for the audience of the auditorium. Two wheelchair accessible seating boxes would be provided at this level.
- 2.14 The lift would open to a small lobby which doubles as a sound/light lobby. The auditorium seating at this level would comprise a central block of 5 rows and single row of stepped side boxes which interconnect with the technical galleries either side of the stage.
- 2.15 The building directly abuts the former Episcopal Chapel in West Street and Nos 4-10 Tower Street at this level. Double height 'Get-in' delivery doors would be located on Tower Court to facilitate access and egress for large scenic elements.

Second Floor

- 2.16 The second floor plan broadly corresponds with that of the original theatre with access to the front rows of the upper seating gallery, a small foyer /sponsors room within the former office, with the rear wall modified to reflect the elliptical form of the floor below. The lift would again arrive via sound/light lobby which provides access to one of two main blocks of Male WC's with Female WCs accessed directly from the foyer. An accessible WC would also be provided at this level.

- 2.17 The auditorium seating would comprise a 5 row central block with side seating boxes interconnected with technical galleries on either side of the stage. The technical galleries could be used theatrically or as seating depending on the stage configuration.

Third Floor

- 2.18 The third floor would extend the retained West Street façade upwards replicating the lower floors' stucco in a loose classical style and will be primarily a technical level for theatre production and operational management of the theatre. At the junction of West Street and Tower Court a new elliptical space would be created mirroring the retained façade below. This space would open onto adjacent space along Tower Court frontage to provide the administration suite for the theatre
- 2.19 A control room and technical access via the auditorium would also be located at this level. The audience stairs rise to this level, providing an alternative means of access/escape to the control room and office, and escape from the rehearsal rooms above. The lift again services the floor via a sound/light lobby.
- 2.20 This floor contains the upper seats of the gallery accessed from the level below and a series of lighting bridge and side technical galleries wrap around the space.

Fourth Floor

- 2.21 The fourth floor and upper most level of the theatre would contain two attic rehearsal rooms within a mansard roof, with a reception and arrival space located on the Tower Court side of the building. A small suite dedicated to WCs and showers would also be accessed from this space. An external winch and large delivery doors on the tower court frontage would facilitate delivery of scenic elements for rehearsals incorporating a roll out beam.

Roof

- 2.22 Roof plant, including ventilation extract, chiller and A/C units, generators and water storage tanks would be contained at roof level within a screened plant enclosure.
- 2.20 The applicant for the proposed scheme is Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd (DMT), a theatre group that owns eight London theatres and is itself owned by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, in conjunction with Aedas Arts Team with Citizens Design Bureau and Braggs Theatre Architects. The intention is to rename the building in honour of the American composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim.

3 RELEVANT HISTORY

2004/3028/L Installation of internal fire alarm system. Granted 01/10/2004

L9601655R1 Internal alterations involving the erection of a temporary stage over the stalls area, temporary modification of the circle seating arrangements and temporary lighting. Granted 12/07/1996

9201079 Retention of an existing air conditioning system for a further limited period. Granted 05/11/1992

8770260 & 8701962 Installation of new air-conditioning system. Granted 26/08/1987

HB1651(R) The erection of an additional management office at roof level on the Tower Court frontage. Granted 06/12/1977

CTP/Q14/1/1/HB1103 Alterations to the cloakroom at ground floor level and to the Pay Box. Granted 03/07/1975

TP101392/28545 the erection of a new ventilation duct on the roof. Granted 17/04/1961

4 CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 Historic England advise that they have been involved in extensive pre-application discussions over the previous 18 months and have provided substantial pre-application advice following consideration by their London Advisory Committee. They state: “we accept the principle of the proposals and believe that, in this case, the substantial harm to the Grade II listed building is necessary to deliver public benefits that outweigh that harm. We are content for your authority to determine the application as you see fit, and enclose the necessary authorisation letter”.
- 4.2 The authorisation letter advises that the applications should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of the Council's specialist conservation advice.
- 4.3 Historic England (Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service) note that the site is on the edge of Saxon London Wick, but the existing basement will have heavily impacted on archaeological survival and recommend a written scheme of investigation be secured by condition.
- 4.4 Theatres Trust acknowledges the Ambassadors Theatre has many operational constraints as a result of its compact site and layout and would inevitably require substantial alterations in the foreseeable future to sustain it as a viable performance venue. The theatre has very little front of house or bar space for audiences to assemble and wait and the single staircase restricts circulation creating pinch points at key times immediately before and after a show and during the interval. There are limited WCs and there is no access for less mobile performers or audience members. The rear section of the stalls under the

balcony has extremely poor sight lines to the stage, meaning a large portion of seats cannot be sold for certain shows. The back of house facilities are very tight and there is no direct access between the front and back of house areas, making it difficult to operate the building. The theatre is also hampered by its limited wing space and the 'get in' doors being located several metres above the stage level. These limitations have a direct impact on the programming and management of the theatre and therefore its viability and it is unlikely the theatre would be able to continue operating commercially in the long term without subsidy or some form of physical intervention. Whilst a difficult decision needs to be made in terms of the theatre's historic fabric, the theatre does need to be in a position where it can attract the types of shows and audiences needed to sustain it. The proposal will also generally retain and enhance the appearance and setting of the theatre in the streetscape. The Trust is pleased that the proposed layout has been refined since the pre application consultation in 2015. In particular they welcome the rearrangement of the various stairs which creates more foyer and circulation space, while in the basement, more of the relocated plaster work is to be utilised. The introduction of a sound lobby to the entry of the auditorium at ground level is supported, and recommend one also be considered for the entry to the second gallery. They also support the additional WC provision. Whilst the Trust would normally regret the loss of interior historic building fabric to this extent, significant alterations are required and the proposals provide a real opportunity to remodel the theatre to provide a new type of theatre venue in the West End to meet the demands of modern producers and contemporary audiences and secure its future as a live performance venue. The Trust agrees there is a gap in theatre provision within the West End catering for the type of productions to be presented in the Sondheim and there is a strong need for a theatre building of this nature, a large 'black box' style flexible theatre space to enable leading subsidised theatres such as the Dorfman, Young Vic, Almeida, Hampstead Theatres and others from across the country to transfer to the West End and access the wider audiences and market available. Within this context, the Trust accepts that the vision for the Ambassadors / Sondheim Theatre will be beneficial for the theatre sector. This theatre needs significant intervention to make it fit-for purpose, and with the need for a theatre of this nature, together with the wider benefits to subsidised theatre, theatre provision and the West End as a whole, the Trust considers that the benefits of this proposal do outweigh the harm.

4.5 One objection was received from the Victorian Society:

The Society object and request that the application be referred to the Secretary of State should consent be granted as it is contrary to policy. Sprague was a highly accomplished theatre architect who designed almost all of London's turn of the century theatres. The Ambassadors is one of Sprague's thirteen surviving theatres out of forty-five or so he built in the country. It was not designed as a pair with St Martins Theatre as they had different patrons and are different conceptions. The low height of the theatre was to protect ancient rights of light and is an interesting element of its significance, and makes an upward extension all the more undesirable. There has been little thorough review of London theatres in the last 30 years so there can be no certainty as to how

much of a loss of Sprague's work the near total demolition of the theatre would invoke. The Society has applied to the DCMS for the theatre to be upgraded to Grade II*. Two of Sprague's other theatres are listed II* on the grounds of their relatively intact interiors and the Ambassadors should be seen as the most distinct and the pinnacle of his career. It is one of the most intact and coherent of all the West End theatres and the surviving stage machinery has worryingly not been addressed in the application, perhaps because the listing description says that it is no longer present, yet it is referred to in the English Heritage publication "Scene/Unseen: London's West End Theatres (2003)" as a good example. Stage machinery in historic theatres tends to have been motorized with the original mechanisms either redundant or removed, and this would be a shocking loss.

- 4.6 The proposal would result in substantial harm to the heritage asset which may result in its de-listing. The Society was not consulted prior to the application, although other statutory consultees were. The Society acknowledges that the theatre has some shortcomings which are compounded by its small scale, but it continues to be commercially viable and all period theatres suffer similar drawbacks and this should not be a factor in determining the application. Improving the theatre has not been properly considered and the advice the applicant received from the Theatres Trust could result in a conflict of interest as several of their trustees work for the Cameron Mackintosh Group and the Mackintosh Foundation is a major funder. The cost of developing a non-theatre site would be high, but not prohibitive. The alternative sites considered have been ruled out for irresolute reasons, and it seems that the site has been chosen precisely because it is a listed building. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, and the Society is not persuaded the project cannot be delivered elsewhere and thus there are not "exceptional circumstances" that paragraph 132 refers to. The default position is the refusal of consent, and if there are exceptional circumstances the case should be decided by a public inquiry, and no decision should be made until the outcome of the listing upgrade application is known.
- 4.7 Historic England reviewed the Victorian Society's application to upgrade the listing but did not agree that the theatre should be listed grade II*. They did however amend the description and go into more detail regarding its significance as a designated heritage asset on a number of aspects.
- 4.8 The Victorian Society maintain their objection and expect the application to now be assessed on the basis of the revised list description. The summary principal reasons for the theatre's designation makes it resolutely clear why this application is unacceptable:
- Architectural interest: as an 1913 theatre designed by W G R Sprague, one of the most important late C19 and early C20 theatre architects;
 - Completeness of design: both the Classical style exterior and the interior in Louis XVI style were designed by Sprague and include foyer, circle bar, auditorium and some original backstage features;
 - Degree of survival: both exterior and interior are little altered;

- Historical interest: the theatre saw the West End debut of many famous artists including Ivor Novello, Hermione Gingold, Paul Robeson, Margaret Lockwood and Vivien Leigh and it was the original home of 'The Mousetrap', the world's longest running show;
 - Group value: adjoins St Martin's Theatre of 1916, also by Sprague (Grade II) and 24 West Street (Grade II)
- 4.9 The Society assert that none of these qualities would be sustained by the proposals and retaining certain features in a severely compromised state is almost not worth the trouble, when it is the integrity and harmony of the original fabric which is so important. If the application is to be determined on the basis that the substantial harm is necessary to deliver a substantial public benefit, it is essential that the various issues that are being used to justify the proposals are separated out; it appears that two tenuous arguments are propping one another up. Firstly, that an alternative site is not possible. They note that a new theatre is set to open on Tottenham Court Road on newly acquired land (a rundown and unlisted music venue/night club, originally a cinema), compulsorily purchased as part of the Crossrail project. Although the applicant states that the search for a site has been 20 years long, which is a not inconsiderable length of time, a relatively small number of sites have been assessed which would suggest that the project has only been prioritised sporadically and that the search has not been exhaustive. Secondly, the challenges that the Ambassador's faces as a venue, due to its size and layout, should be caveated by the simple fact that the theatre is still open and therefore presumably viable. Therefore, these issues cannot be considered as a basis for the demolition of the theatre, particularly in the absence of investigation into possible sensitive solutions by a non-interested party.
- 4.10 The Society reiterate the conclusion of their original letter – as an application which would entail substantial harm to a Grade II listed building, the local authority's default position is the refusal of consent. If it is believed that the circumstances really are exceptional, then this is exactly the sort of case that should be decided by a public inquiry.
- 4.11 The following statutory consultees were notified, but no response was received:
- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
 - The Ancient Monuments Society
 - The Council for British Archaeology
 - The Georgian Group
 - The Twentieth Century Society

Local groups/stakeholders

- 4.12 Covent Garden CAAC were notified, no response has been received.
- 4.13 Covent Garden Community Association raise no objection.

Adjoining Occupiers

- 4.14 A site notice was displayed from the 2nd December 2016 until the 22nd December 2015. A press advert was placed in the Ham and High on 2nd December 2016.

<i>Total number of responses received</i>	4
<i>Number in support</i>	4
<i>Number of objections</i>	0

Representations summary

Four letters of support were received:

- 4.15 The Arts Council support the application and point out the lack of flexible theatre spaces in the West End. They state there is a clear demand for such flexible spaces and it is increasingly these types of spaces that theatre makers are turning to: midscale spaces where the constraints of the traditional proscenium arch does not impinge or compromise the type of work that artists and directors are making. If the Council supports the project it would enable the work of a new generation of theatre makers to find a more sympathetic space to present their work and find a wider audience in the capital.
- 4.16 The Royal Shakespeare Company support the application. They consider the proposal to be an excellent and sensitive design which is respectful to the original Sprague theatre, but creating much needed new space for London theatre. They highlight the difficulties they have had in transferring their important work, and their Swan Theatre productions have no obvious venue where they could be transferred successfully. A theatre like that proposed would create a real opportunity for their important work to be seen in the capital. Their relationship with regional partners would suggest that providing them with a platform in the capital could be a huge help in promoting their work. It is a vital and exciting project with potentially far reaching impact on the cultural economy of the country as a whole.
- 4.17 Chichester Festival Theatre support the application, noting that while there is still a place for more traditional theatre which sits within a proscenium arch, more and more companies are experimenting with form and configuration and a West End venue that can accommodate these new ways of presenting plays and musicals would be a huge advantage. It would improve the diversity of theatre on offer in the West End and better reflect the diversity of theatre making across the UK. There are numerous productions all over the country which could and should have transferred to London, but the appropriate space was not available. Having a theatre in London that is flexible and large enough can offer different types of experience for domestic and international audiences. A West End building that fosters and facilitates collaboration between regional theatres and London would have intrinsic value, increase the visibility of such innovative work and offer the regional institutions a small financial support in royalties.

4.18 The Hampstead Theatre supports the scheme. The proposed theatre would fill a gap in the West End theatre landscape and offer theatres such as the Hampstead to transfer work to a wider audience, it will also bridge the gap between the out-and-out commercial demand of the West End and creative demands of the subsidised sector. The Hampstead Theatre's auditorium is modern and adaptable and whilst they have transferred many pieces of work to the West End, they have also produced plenty of work that could have had a life beyond north London if the proposed theatre had been in existence.

4.19 The applicant's Design and Access Statement also contains letters of support from:

The Almeida Theatre
The Donmar
Maira Mirza, Deputy Mayor of London (Education and Culture)
Michael Grandage Company
The National Theatre
Sheffield Theatres
Stratford East
The Royal Court
Young Vic

5. POLICIES & Guidance

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

5.2 NPPG

5.3 The London Plan 2016

5.4 Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.5 Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy G1 Delivery and location of growth
Policy H2 Maximising the supply of self-contained housing from mixed-use schemes
Policy C2 Community facilities
Policy C3 Cultural and leisure facilities
Policy C5 Safety and security
Policy C6 Access for all
Policy E1 Economic development
Policy E2 Employment premises and sites
Policy E3 Tourism
Policy A1 Managing the impact of development
Policy A2 Open space
Policy A4 Noise and vibration
Policy A5 Basements

Policy D1 Design
Policy D2 Heritage
Policy CC1 Climate change mitigation
Policy CC2 Adapting to climate change
Policy CC3 Water and flooding
Policy CC4 Air quality
Policy T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport
Policy T2 Parking and car-free development
Policy T3 Transport infrastructure
Policy T4 Sustainable movement of goods and materials

5.6 Supplementary Planning Policies

CPG 1 Design
CPG 2 Housing
CPG 3 Sustainability
CPG 4 Basements and lightwells
CPG 5 Town centres, retail and employment
CPG 6 Amenity
CPG 7 Transport
CPG 8 Planning obligations

Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement 1998

6. ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are considered in the following sections of this report:

7	Consultation
8	Land use
9	Heritage and design
10	Amenity
11	Basement impact
12	Sustainability
13	Transport
14	Land contamination
15	Air quality
16	Employment and training
17	Planning obligations
20	CIL
21	Conclusion
22	Recommendation
23	Legal Comments

7. Consultation and procedure

- 7.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been submitted as part of the application which details the consultation that the applicant undertook prior to submitting their application. The applicant has consulted widely with Local groups
- 7.2 Four Communications, a specialist public relations agency, was appointed by the Applicant to develop and deliver a public consultation and community involvement strategy to inform the development of its proposals for the theatre. The brief was to consult local councillors, community groups, arts groups, local residents and businesses in the development of proposals for the scheme.

- 7.3 The consultation was carried out in conjunction with planning officers, the GLA and other statutory consultees, involving meetings with community groups and stakeholders, and an online resource.
- 7.4 Consultation began in July 2015 and included two public exhibitions, Development Management Forum and Developer's briefing events, and 1,850 newsletters. Officers consider this consultation was sufficient, with numerous events over a period of time.

8. Land use principles

Mixed use policy

- 8.1 Policy H2 generally requires development providing more than 200sqm of new floorspace to provide 50% of the additional floorspace as self-contained housing. In determining whether housing should be required as part of a mixed use development, a number of considerations are taken into account, including the character of the development site and whether self-contained housing would be compatible with the operational requirements of the proposed non-residential use.
- 8.2 The constraints of the existing building site and proposal are considered to preclude the inclusion of housing within the redevelopment. The application is for the redevelopment of an existing theatre, and the new theatre has been designed to accommodate the proposed use within the existing footprint with only a modest increase in height, with retained facades to lessen the harm to the building. Given the physical constraints there is no scope for the provision of any residential use given the requirements of the theatre use. Further, residential uses are not compatible with a theatre use which utilises late opening hours and requires after hours servicing between shows.
- 8.3 In this instance the listed status of the building also inhibits the inclusion of housing within the redevelopment as H2 states that proposals are not required to provide housing if the development involves an extension to an existing building (especially a listed building or a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area) that cannot accommodate new features necessary to support housing, such as entrances, windows, staircases and lifts.

Theatre use

- 8.4 Theatres are protected under various local plan policies and the proposal would provide a more adaptable and more accessible theatre dedicated to receiving productions from the subsidised sector, as well as providing rehearsal space and other community benefits.
- 8.5 The existing theatre is traditional in its layout and constrained, which in many ways determines what type of performance can be performed. Major arts organisations have identified the need for a transfer house to receive productions from the subsidized sector and so extend their life, and to do so in the heart of Theatreland.

- 8.6 At present, several factors prevent the easy transfer of such productions to the West End. Principally, traditional proscenium arched venues, where the audience faces the stage straight-on and which are mostly of Victorian and Edwardian construction, do not suit all modern theatre productions, which use contemporary and flexible formats enabling closer audience engagement and greater production flexibility. Adapting productions from the subsidised sector to proscenium theatres is costly and time consuming. There is also the size of the venue to be taken into consideration, and to function as intended, the venue must be in the West End. A location outside the West End would not meet the identified need. The site must be large enough to meet the accommodation requirements of a cc 450 to 475 seat, flexible theatre with sufficient room for 'get-in' and associated technical equipment.
- 8.7 Policy C3 (Cultural and leisure facilities) seeks to protect the borough's cultural heritage, and in cases where a cultural facility is re-provided on-site it should be at the same or better standard than the facility which is lost and accessible to its existing users. The proposal would comply with this policy.

9. Heritage and conservation

Statutory Framework

- 9.1 Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Listed Buildings Act") are the relevant sections of the Act.
- 9.2 Section 16(2) provides that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a Listed Building special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 9.3 Section 66(1) provides that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 9.4 Section 72(1) requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when considering applications relating to land or buildings within that Area.
- 9.5 The effect of these sections of the Listed Building Act is that there is a statutory presumption in favour of the preservation of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings. Considerable importance and weight should be attached to their preservation. A proposal which would cause harm should only be permitted where there are strong countervailing planning considerations which are sufficiently powerful to outweigh the presumption.

The NPPF - Heritage

- 9.6 The NPPF provides guidance on the weight that should be accorded to harm to heritage assets and in what circumstances such harm might be justified (section 12). Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be wholly exceptional.
- 9.7 Paragraph 133 states the where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, 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:
- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - conservation by grant-funding or some charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
- 9.8 The existing building is presently in beneficial use as a theatre and therefore the relevant issue is whether the substantial harm/loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm/loss. The justification must be wholly exceptional.
- 9.9 In this case, potential harm is likely to arise from the substantial demolition involved, which includes the removal of the main theatre auditorium and associated areas, plus the existing roof and the main rear and side walls away from the principal decorative facades.
- 9.10 Other relevant policy and guidance includes the PPG, The London Plan 2016; Camden Local Plan; guidance on demolition, and alterations to listed buildings as found in CPG 1 and in the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement.

Designation

- 9.11 The original listing description of 16th March 1973 is as follows:

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. 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.

- 9.12 Following on from the Victorian Society's application to upgrade the listing of the theatre to Grade II*, Historic England revised the listing description. The full report including the new listing is attached as an appendix to this report.

The existing building:

- 9.13 The Ambassadors Theatre is situated in West Street, on the north-west corner of the junction with Tower Court, close to the boundary with the City of Westminster. It has a low, stucco elevation of 3 storeys embellished by pilasters and recessed windows. It falls within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and stands adjacent to two Grade II listed buildings: St Martin's Theatre on the opposite side of Tower Court and the West Street Chapel on its northern side.
- 9.14 The theatre was designed by WGR Sprague and opened in 1913 and was Grade II listed in 1973. The theatre and its adjacent neighbour St Martin's (also by WGR Sprague) play an important role in London Theatreland. The world's longest running play, The Mousetrap, started here in 1952, and the theatre is one of Covent Garden's smallest venues with only 444 seats.
- 9.15 Externally the building is composed of two main elements. The front façade, in stucco, addresses West Street and terminates in the curved corner at the junction with Tower Court. (Tower Court was widened when the theatre was built). The stucco façade returns into Tower Court, the corner denoting the theatre main entrance. Beyond the entrance corner, extending along Tower Court and the façade facing Tower Street the treatment is simple, domestic brick work, which is thought to date from the early 20th century. There is little to distinguish these workaday elements of the building. The front entrance corner is often substantially obscured by the needs of modern show graphics. Internally there is a small auditorium, decorated in a Louis XVI style
- 9.16 The building is little altered from the time it was built. As such, it has an uneventful planning history, with no proposals for major development. Minor applications have derived from the day-to-day operation of the theatre. In the late 1980s consent was granted for air conditioning. Between the late 1990s and 2010 consents were for a fire alarm system, a temporary stage, and various signage.
- 9.17 The adjacent building to the north, the West Street Chapel, which is also Grade II listed, shares a wall with the application site. Now used as studios, it was

formerly St Giles (All Saints) Mission Church, dating from c1700, but the yellow stock brick and stucco façade was rebuilt in the early 19th century. It consists of two storeys spanning a width of three bays.

The proposal:

- 9.18 The proposals involve a major remodelling of the Ambassadors Theatre. The core component of the project will be an intimately scaled, flexible, and highly characterful theatre space specifically designed to receive a diverse array of non-proscenium/non-traditional theatre productions. Central to this vision is the creation of a performance space that aims to draw aesthetic inspiration from the original auditorium design - and the wider work of the original architect WGR Sprague.
- 9.19 It is intended that the new theatre space will be highly adaptable to allow productions to be staged in the same format as their originating theatre: end on, in the round or with a thrust stage, with 425–475 seats. The proposals would offer programming opportunities presented to both companies and audiences through an 8–16 week playing period. Alongside appropriately scaled public areas, and full accessibility, the proposal also provides on-site rehearsal rooms to meet demand from companies and address the shortage of rehearsal space in London.
- 9.20 Sir Cameron Mackintosh, and his team, have explored alternative sites in their search to create a purpose built West End theatre to support the transfer of innovative work from the subsidised arts sector. In addition, the Council has made the applicant aware that the Grade II listed cinema on the north side of Shaftesbury Avenue, which was built as the Saville Theatre, has become redundant. However, it is understood it would not work for the specific requirements of this project as it is more than twice the size needed and is not being openly marketed. A review of alternative sites considered by the applicant is addressed below.
- 9.21 The applicant states that it has taken nearly 20 years for this opportunity to address a long identified need to arise. There is, at present, no such theatre space that responds to this remit, and the lack of one represents a major lost opportunity for the subsidised sector to cultivate new audiences, nurture young theatrical talent and earn the vital additional income at a time when all arts organisations have to meet more of their running costs. A dedicated, additional venue such as this with facilities adapted to meet the needs of the 21st century, located in the heart of Theatreland, would also further enhance London's status as the theatre going capital of the world by increasing the scope and range of quality productions.
- 9.22 Since the theatre has remained largely unaltered, in many respects it fails to meet modern standards and requirements. During its history, audience requirements have changed, as have theatre production and performance. In addition, health and safety and accessibility requirements have become more demanding. The building has not kept pace with these changes in requirements

and the assessment that if it is to have a long term future as a theatre, re-modelling is likely to be required is accepted.

Assessment:

- 9.23 The proposal is of a radical nature, since it involves a sizeable degree of demolition, remodelling and extension of the existing theatre, which affects the special interest of the Grade II listed building, the setting of adjacent Grade II listed buildings, and on the character and appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The application identifies that the proposals have considerable public benefits providing a secure long term theatre use for the building and much needed theatre facilities in a key position in the West End.
- 9.24 The submitted Planning and Heritage Statement states that the application site is a tightly planned proscenium theatre on a cramped site, and that it is not possible to adapt the layout to the kind of flexible studio space which can accommodate transfers seamlessly from the subsidized sector.
- 9.25 The shortcomings of the existing building are numerous as noted by both Historic England (in their pre-app comments) and the Theatres Trust. The current building has remained largely unaltered since it was built but during that time audience requirements and expectations have dramatically changed. Particular issues include the poor front of house facilities, especially for visitors with disabilities. The public areas in the current building are very small and cramped and are the smallest of any theatre in the West End. The WC provision is inadequate with no accessible or adapted facilities. The auditorium is 'side loaded' meaning that all the audience enter from one side space with two entry points, both being directly off staircases. The main auditorium has one of the worst examples of the "letter-box" effect providing poor sightlines for audience members in particular locations and the provision of contemporary and essential technical production equipment has affected the impact of the original interior design.

Proposed external works:

- 9.26 The proposal includes the erection of a further storey on the existing two-storey building. The front façade onto West Street will be retained and adapted. New elements will be adorned with stucco decoration in a loose classical style, to complement the existing frontage as well as that of the adjacent Sprague-designed St Martin's Theatre, which was built with a three-storey stuccoed frontage.
- 9.27 The different staging arrangements required by production transfers and the need for rehearsal space will require a larger footprint at the south east of the site, resulting in a modest extension southwards into Tower Court, which will have no material impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 9.28 The proposals will have major structural implications for the Grade II listed building, both during demolition and construction, and once the rebuilding has been completed. The load of an extra storey will have major impacts on the fragile historic fabric to be retained, and the applicants have submitted a structural report and details which rely on a new steel-based structural system. Full method statements, in addition to the submitted report and details, will be required by condition governing the dismantling, salvage and reinstatement (where appropriate) of external fabric including the roof and external walls subject of demolition.

Impact on setting of adjacent listed buildings and on Conservation Area:

- 9.29 The proposed additional height will not only impact on the overall composition and architectural hierarchy of the principal facades of the theatre, which stands on a reasonably prominent corner, but will also affect the setting of the adjacent grade II listed West Street Chapel which is of roughly the same two-storey height as the Ambassadors Theatre, and also the setting of the Grade II listed St Martin's Theatre on the opposite corner of Tower Court, in addition to the effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.30 The setting of the chapel at no 24 West Street has been subject to substantial change in its history. It was built c1700 and was later incorporated into the new layout of the Seven Dials development by Thomas Neale, changing from its original setting to part of a designed townscape in the 17th century. Since the mid-19th century the building has been surrounded by smaller scale properties, and is now experienced against the backdrop of buildings of a range of scales. Due to the tight network of streets in the immediate vicinity of the Ambassadors, it is considered a further storey will not harm the setting of the chapel when seen from either direction along West Street.
- 9.31 WGR Sprague designed several West End theatres in pairs, and this may have been his original intention when designing the Ambassadors. However, any intention to create a new theatre that matched the height and scale of the adjacent St Martin's Theatre was never realised due to the rights to light of adjoining, now demolished, buildings. These restrictions alongside the small size of the plot meant that the Ambassadors was built to a much lesser scale than St Martin's. Whilst the Victorian Society argue that this is part of the significance of the building, the consequence is an asymmetry between the theatre's side elevation which is utilitarian and undermines the visual quality of the St Martin's façade. While the façade of the Ambassadors turns the corner into the lane, the return is shallow and the junction between is clumsy.
- 9.32 The new façade will return to Tower Court in a more traditional style, enhancing this part of the site. The remodelling and upward extension of the Ambassadors arguably can be seen as an enhancement by complementing the height and scale of St Martin's, and to the wider townscape of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. This very substantially outweighs any harm to the building's significance resulting from the increased height.

Proposed internal works:

- 9.33 As the Ambassadors Theatre is restricted by its layout, size and scale on a confined site, it is accepted that it is in need of remodelling to secure its long term future as a theatre. That re-modelling is also essential if it is to be capable of accommodating transfers of productions requiring very much more flexible performance space. Not only will this meet a clearly identified pressing need, it will also serve to future-proof the theatre from changing artistic, performance and functional requirements going forward. For this reason, the proposal is for substantial demolition of the theatre including the loss of the principal spaces including the main auditorium and associated areas. A new flexible auditorium space suitable for all types of production transfers will be created, together with state-of-the-art back of house facilities and rehearsal spaces. At front-of-house, the existing entrance lobby will be remodelled and the public areas will be opened up, creating more generous and accessible circulation routes than existing into the auditorium, bar and foyer spaces, together with increased cloakroom and WC facilities.
- 9.34 To mitigate the harm caused by the loss of the historic interiors, it is planned to relocate the entire historic plaster domed ceiling of the main auditorium within the new development. The ceiling, complete with chandelier, will be reinstated in the proposed Sprague Room, a large circular space below the main auditorium at basement level which will be used as a foyer for the stalls audience and occasionally as a cabaret bar. The dimensions of the space have been carefully considered to reflect the historic auditorium so that the historic ceiling is in proportion.
- 9.35 The internal elevations, designed by Citizens Design Bureau, will have a decorative finish which will complement the relocated dome and the internal elevations of the existing auditorium. The design concept is inspired by and based on WGR Sprague motifs, presented in a contemporary way but reflecting the heritage of the Grade II listed building and the legacy of other West End theatres. This approach analyses how the historic fabric can be re-used, renovated and reinterpreted for a modern theatre function. The aim is to provide a decorative but neutral backdrop, with a flexible layout and provision for new technical equipment.
- 9.36 The interiors will creatively re-use and re-position historically significant elements of existing plasterwork and draw on the character of original details in a contemporary and unexpected way to create a new architectural composition within the retained and extended envelope of the historic building. Careful studies of decorative motifs found in a number of Sprague theatres have influenced the design of the new wall panelling, which will employ modern plaster techniques.
- 9.37 In the event of the grant of listed building consent, a condition will require full recording of the building and identification of any architectural features capable of being incorporated into the design of the new building. A further condition will require a schedule of works identifying fixtures, fittings and other architectural features and plasterwork and other materials that can be

incorporated into the new scheme with details of their relocation, and those which are offered for salvage and interim storage arrangements.

- 9.38 A Method Statement for the dismantling and relocation of the fibrous plaster ceiling, and other key elements within the auditorium, has been prepared by Richard Ireland - an acknowledged expert in this field of work. The methodology comprises an introductory commentary on the issues surrounding the Apollo Theatre ceiling collapse and its impact on the West End's historic theatres - including the Ambassador's Theatre, a commentary on the proposed dismantling process itself, including the restricted access and reinforcement of the existing ceiling from above prior to taking it down. This illustrates the size of sections to be taken out, along with the proposals for their storage and care off site and the methods and procedures for the reinstallation of larger scale elements. The methodology will be further developed pursuant to a condition on the granting of listed building consent.
- 9.39 In the auditorium, reverse mouldings of decorative plasterwork will be cast in the walls as a rich negative relief. Moulds have been taken from traditional ribbon and reed, bead and reel, egg and dart, stylised honeysuckle and scale patterns. The concept has been compared by the designers to a watermark in relief running through the interior. In addition, slender brasswork balconies and lighting bridges will reference existing brass chandeliers and ironmongery. A delicate colour palette will be introduced, employing self-finished materials (natural leather, tinted plaster, timber panelling and filigree metalwork).

Identification of harm to listed building:

- 9.40 The proposed mitigation measures do not remove the harm caused to the special interest of the listed building. Consequently, there remains substantial harm to its significance that must be set into the balance against the public benefits. This harm is identified as follows:-
- Complete removal of the roof structure and covering.
 - Extension and partial remodelling of main front elevation and part of return elevation, altering the classical composition of the principal facades.
 - Demolition of the brick elevations facing Tower Court and Tower Street, although they are plainer and more utilitarian in character than the main frontage (having undergone alterations in the past), and their loss is of lesser significance in terms of the impact on the special interest of the listed building.
 - An almost complete loss of historic interior fabric. Much of the historic fabric in the auditorium remains, including the ceiling, and to a lesser extent the entrance lobby. The proposals will result in the loss of the interior of a historically significant theatre, and in particular the aesthetic value of the theatre's auditorium.

Assessed against the revised list description, the position is as follows:

- 9.41 Although the new list description has not affected the listed building's grade, it goes into more detail regarding its significance as a designated

heritage asset on a number of aspects, some of which are more relevant to the current proposals than others.

(i) Completeness of design: both the Classical style exterior and the interior in Louis XVI style were designed by Sprague and include foyer, circle bar, auditorium and some original backstage features.

Officer response: Although the principal elements of the façade will be retained on the West Street and Tower Court frontages, the proposals will harm the heritage asset by removing the roof, the rear section facing onto Tower Street, and the intact historic interior designed by Sprague (although elements will be reused/reconstructed in newly created internal spaces, eg the auditorium ceiling plasterwork will be incorporated into a circular basement bar space). This means the completeness of the theatre building's design will be destroyed and will thus cause irreversible substantial harm to the heritage asset. This substantial harm needs to be justified through the public benefit of the scheme in accordance with paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

(ii) Degree of survival: both exterior and interior are little altered.

Officer response: The same implications as above result from the proposals by altering the building extensively, both by reconstructing the interior and the rear, back-of-house sections of the building, and by extending the building upwards by a further storey. Surviving historic features will either be totally removed from the site or reincorporated into the building in new ways, meaning their significance as surviving features will be either destroyed or reduced, causing substantial harm. Again, this substantial harm needs to be justified through the public benefit of the scheme in accordance with paragraph 133 of the NPPF.

(iii) Group value: adjoins St Martin's Theatre of 1916, also by Sprague (Grade II) and 24 West Street (Grade II).

Officer response: Although the two Grade II listed buildings will continue to occupy adjacent sites and have group value as landmark stucco-fronted theatre buildings on street corners designed by Sprague, there will be a change in their relationship. Currently St Martin's Theatre is a whole storey higher at three storeys, whilst the Ambassadors Theatre is just two storeys. The Ambassadors is a full storey lower due to a right to ancient lights of an historically adjoining building at the time of its construction. It would seem the varying heights was not for townscape reasons. So, to alter the relationship of the two buildings by increasing the Ambassadors to three storeys may be seen to strengthen their group value by balancing their heights, provided that the new third storey is executed in a scholarly manner.

(iv) An additional floor of dressing rooms was added during construction

Officer response: The area of the existing building containing dressing rooms, which is the brick faced element looking over Tower Court and Tower Street, is

of secondary importance in terms of the hierarchy of the listed building, but is revealed in the new list description to not to have been built to Sprague's original plans, which arguably further reduces the significance of this part of the heritage asset.

(v) The auditorium was described in contemporary accounts as in Louis XVI style with ambassadorial crests and a colour scheme of Parma violet, ivory and gold.

Officer response: It is worth noting that although the majority of the interior of the auditorium remains intact, the original colour scheme in the Louis XVI style has long disappeared. Although the proposals will remove the majority of surviving decorative features from the building, a new scheme of decoration has been carefully designed which will be sympathetic to the decorative plaster emblems and their original colour scheme.

(vi) Original stage machinery includes two fly floors and the traditional system of hemp flying, although the ropes, flying bars and pulley blocks have been replaced. There is a timber grid-iron for suspending scenery with a now rarely surviving but disused single drum and shaft mechanism.

Officer response: The proposals will completely remove this equipment which will become totally redundant due to the conversion to a theatre 'in the round' involving a different stage layout at the heart of the auditorium rather than a traditional stage with a proscenium arch and fly tower behind.

Theatresearch has produced a detailed report on the back stage fixtures and fittings. This report was submitted to Historic England during the listing re-assessment and referred to in their revised listing, and in their report explaining their decision not to upgrade the theatre to grade II.*

Late 19th century theatres were designed in response to the intended use of the theatre: opera houses required machinery capable of mounting lavish, demanding productions of the time, provincial theatres required versatile machinery that could be adapted for opera, pantomime and melodrama, whereas drama houses would more likely be equipped with a more modest suite of equipment. The public had previously demanded sensation, drama and spectacle which required significant amounts of costly scenery, machinery and equipment, but by the beginning of the 20th century such productions were becoming increasingly old-fashioned and new drama was emerging which required less elaborate scenery. Theatre design diversified to take these changes into account and theatre construction rapidly declined after 1914 as a result of the First World War and the arrival of large modern cinemas which added financial pressure on theatres. It appears that the Ambassadors was not designed for elaborate spectacle and lacked the extensive equipment of earlier theatres.

The report notes that the traditions of stage machinery were based upon the principles of the "English Wood Stage" and continued to develop until the end of the 19th century. Trapdoors (traps) were fundamental to Victorian theatre

design and relied on counterweights, sometimes assisted by a timber drum, to raise the performer to stage level. The typical stage layout of the 19th century was two small corner traps and a larger centrally located “grave” trap. Moving towards the rear of the stage are normally a sequence of “bridges”, large wooden platforms that can be raised to stage level often loaded with three dimensional scenery or chorus girls, or raised above stage level with two dimensional scenery and “cuts”. The Ambassadors does not appear to have been designed with such traps or bridges.

The area around the stage is known as the stage house, it houses the trap mechanisms below the stage, and a “fly floor” above, or to the side of, the stage with a gridiron above where scenery suspension ropes are threaded, and above the grid a series of drum and shaft mechanisms to assist in the manual raising and lowering of heavy scenery.

Sprague’s original section drawing includes an indicative layout and indicates that the theatre was never provided with a cellar level for elaborate substage machinery, but it provides an indicative layout. At the beginning of the 20th century new theatres were provided with a stage structure that could be fitted out by others at a later date, so many theatres were never fully equipped with substage machinery and the fashion for spectacle had already waned and the economics of theatre could no longer support it.

Theatresearch’s assessment of the stage structure describes the stage as remaining largely as installed in 1913, and it is clear that the theatre was never equipped with a full working English Wood Stage, being without the customary traps or substage cellar. The original Historic England listing refers to “one frail single trap, no other machinery survives”. Theatresearch note that no evidence of this trap was found during inspection and it is likely that this may have been a later production-specific trap that has been subsequently removed. Sprague’s 1913 plan of the stage shows no indication of any corner traps.

The stage house was, and still is, equipped with two fly floors, one above each side of the stage. They should be considered as of limited interest only because the fly rail is an early rolled iron lattice and by 1913 iron and steel was commonplace within the theatre.

The theatre continues to operate the original traditional method of ropes and pulleys to hoist (fly) scenery known as hemp flying, although supplemented by some modern technology. However, in this instance there is little original machinery left; the ropes, flying bars, and the pulley blocks have all been replaced as might be expected within the environment of a working theatre. Furthermore, insurance requirements necessitate load testing and certification which rendered much of what had originally been installed in an early twentieth century theatre unworkable.

Hemp flying is still used in the West End, but only as a point of last resort. There are serious implications for any theatre management wishing to utilise these principles such as manual handling regulations and the limited physical lifting capabilities of the system. Most theatres throughout the country no longer

operate hemp flying systems because they are no longer fit for purpose. Modern productions demand modern lifting capabilities well beyond the safe working loads that can be achieved with hemp flying. On that basis, the retention of hemp flying principles (as opposed to original equipment) potentially limits the production that can be presented on the stage.

The gridiron from which all the scenery is suspended is constructed from timber in the traditional manner. The grid is considered unremarkable save for the survival of a disused single drum and shaft mechanism which assisted the in the lifting of heavy scenery whilst reducing the number of stagehands required to carry out the operation. The report notes that survivals of this kind are becoming increasingly scarce and that this item should be salvaged for display or re-use elsewhere.

Compared to other theatres the backstage fixtures and fitting can be considered unremarkable. Although the St. Martin's Theatre was completed in 1916, three years after the Ambassadors, it was provided with an extensive and comprehensive system of stage machinery based on the by then outdated principles of the English Wood Stage. The St. Martin's Theatre substage installation was fully equipped with bridges, sloats, drums and shafts and all the requisite equipment that might have been expected in a theatre built as early as 1860. In other theatres, hydraulic stage equipment had been installed at the Lyric Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue in the 1880s, the Theatre Royal imported hydraulic equipment from Vienna in the 1890s and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden installed electrically driven scenic equipment in 1901.

In conclusion, the report states that the technical installation at the Ambassadors Theatre was extremely limited, unquestionably influenced by the change in attitudes towards "the drama" and the introduction of the LCC regulations which influenced the use of materials in the design of the stage house. Contextually the stage house is interesting insofar as it demonstrates the end of the English Wood Stage, but it is interesting only for what was not installed rather than for anything that survives. The report states that it is difficult to see under such circumstances how a case could be made for retention – although it should certainly be carefully recorded as the final chapter in the evolution of what was known as the English Wood Stage. The Theatres Trust advised that the listing be updated to reflect the Theatresearch report.

Whilst the remaining stage machinery makes a contribution to the significance of the building, officers agree with the applicant's assessment that this is limited. Nonetheless, the loss of the machinery would, of itself, amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of the building albeit at the lower end of the scale of that harm. This harm could be partly mitigated by the retention of the drum and shaft, and gridiron albeit relocated, with details of their relocation secured by condition or obligation to be agreed by the Council (and preferably Historic England).

- 9.42 Overall, Officers are of the view that, having regard to the effects of the proposal and allowing for its mitigation of the harm to its significance, the proposal would

result overall in substantial harm to the Grade II listed building. Such harm should be sanctioned only in wholly exceptional circumstances having regard to the balance of harm and public benefits.

Public benefit of scheme:

9.43 The applicant relies on the following benefits:

- The shortcomings of the existing building have already been detailed, they include poor front of house facilities, especially for visitors with disabilities. The public areas in the current building are very small and cramped and are the smallest of any theatre in the West End. The WC provision is inadequate with no accessible or adapted facilities. The auditorium is 'side loaded' meaning that all the audience enter from one side space with two entry points, both being directly off staircases. The main auditorium has one of the worst examples of the "letter-box" effect providing poor sightlines for audience members from the front row and at the rear of the stalls. The new building will address all these deficiencies.
- The proposal will secure the long term future of the theatre as a performance venue with a design which will enhance the audience experience by providing appropriately scaled, high quality public areas with adequate WCs and support areas. The scheme will provide greatly improved access to building users.
- Providing a West End venue capable of accommodating productions designed for modern theatres which are otherwise unable to transfer to the West End. This will extend the life of subsidised productions and major arts organisations, including the Arts Council, have identified the need for a transfer house to receive such productions and so extend their life to the benefit of the public.
- At present several factors prevent the easy transfer of such productions to the West End, firstly the format of the theatres: most are traditional, proscenium arched venues of Victorian and Edwardian construction. This arrangement does not suit all modern theatre productions, which use contemporary and flexible formats enabling closer audience engagement and greater production flexibility. The design of the auditorium will accommodate various staging arrangements including in the round, end on or with a thrust stage.
- Even where it is possible, adapting productions in the subsidised sector to proscenium theatres is costly and time consuming, frequently leading to the loss of the original cast and staff due to other commitments. The burden of re-staffing adds to the already significant costs of transferring a production
- The Theatres Trust advise that the limitations of the existing building have a direct impact on the programming and management of the theatre and therefore its viability and it is unlikely the theatre would be able to continue operating commercially in the long term without subsidy or some form of physical intervention. However, due to the limitations of the site it would not be possible to adapt the layout to the kind of flexible studio space which can accommodate transfers seamlessly from the subsidised sector.
- The subsidised sector will be able to secure a longer run for critically acclaimed productions that would otherwise close for good, frustrating a

large unmet demand from the audience. Thus, the cultural life of the West End will be enhanced along with the audience's opportunity to see good quality subsidised productions for a longer period of time. In turn, the subsidised sector will realise the opportunity to increase their revenue in an environment of constantly reduced funding.

- It is proposed that subsidised productions would run for 8-16 weeks. Thus operating with a full programme over 5 years, subsidised productions running at 8 weeks would equate to a maximum of 32 productions, running at 16 weeks would allow for 16 productions, with commercial productions filling the remaining times.
- The applicant wishes to secure the continuity of this public benefit through a Section 106 agreement that would limit commercial productions to a maximum of 16 weeks of in any one year and a further cap of 50 weeks across any rolling 5 year period. The upper limit would therefore average at 10 weeks per year while still allowing for the unforeseen. On average the theatre will be available for use by the Subsidised Sector for a minimum of 80% of the time.
- There is an identified need for rehearsal space as there is only one other purpose built facility in the West End. Other than the rehearsal studios at Sadlers Wells (a theatre which is itself an example of a major redevelopment of a listed building to meet contemporary needs) and facilities at the Dominion Theatre, there is nowhere else in the West End with proper facilities to rehearse a decent sized play or musical. A shortage of West End rehearsal space is acknowledged across the industry.
- It is proposed that the rehearsal space would, subject to availability, be available for rent for cast rehearsals for other non-Sondheim productions. The rehearsal space would from time to time be available for occasional studio performances/productions, not exceeding two or three in any year with runs for more than a few weeks and a few others which would be for runs of a week or less. The individuals or companies using the rehearsal space for these performances will be companies for the most part with minimal financial means who are at the first stages of their career and professional development providing new opportunities for developing artists and producers and their productions. Consequently they are unlikely to be commercial, in terms of making profits or yet have an established record to attract subsidy, but could in the future be participants in either sector.
- This space will also be available for educational use and for public theatre programmes and this will be secured through the planning agreement. DMT themselves offer an extensive range of education activities around some of its longer running shows and will also work with incoming producers to develop educational programmes for plays and other productions.
- Specifically in relation to the new theatre, the applicant is proposing:
 - Offering two junior school performance skills workshops per year by the DMT education officer (these will accommodate approximately 40 pupils per workshop);
 - Offering two senior school performance skills workshops per year by the DMT education officer (maximum 40 pupils per workshop);
 - DMT will also commit to contacting secondary schools located in Camden (five community schools, one academy and four community aided schools), to offer specific one week work experience

placements at the Sondheim. DMT will be willing to make available one placement per school every other year so that there will be up to 5 placements available for work experience each year;

- DMT will also require contracted production companies (both commercial and subsidised companies) performing for six weeks or more to make known to the Camden Education Department any education activities which could be available for Camden schools.
- All DMT Sondheim job vacancies will be advertised through the outlets listed on the Camden Local Community Information Directory (CINDEX).
- Training for front of house positions will be provided to NVQ level 2/3.
- Various public realm improvements

- 9.44 In accordance with paragraph 132 of the NPPF, substantial harm as would arise from the proposals should only be permissible in exceptional circumstances, and considerable importance and weight should be attached to the presumption of preserving the heritage asset. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the above public benefits are such that they so clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the significance of the building which the proposals would cause that the Council can be satisfied that the circumstances are wholly exceptional. In making this judgement the following factors raised in consultation are relevant and should be afforded full weight prior to reaching a conclusion.

Consultation responses:

Historic England response dated 7 December 2016:

- 9.45 Historic England accepts the principle of the proposals and believes that, in this case, the substantial harm to the Grade II listed building is necessary to deliver public benefits that outweigh that harm. They also point out that they have been involved in extensive pre-application discussions over the previous 18 months and have provided substantial pre-application advice following consideration by their London Advisory Committee and state that “we accept the principle of the proposals and believe that, in this case, the substantial harm to the grade II listed building is necessary to deliver public benefits that outweigh that harm.”

Victorian Society response dated 16 January 2017:

- 9.46 The Ambassadors was not designed by Sprague as one of a pair with St Martin’s Theatre. They had different patrons and are very different conceptions. The low height of the Ambassadors was indeed largely to protect the ancient light rights of the building on the plot that St Martin’s now occupies. This is an interesting element of the theatre’s significance in itself and makes an upward extension of a retained façade all the more undesirable.

Officer response: Since the construction in 1916 of St Martin’s Theatre, it is no longer necessary to protect right to light. Although the design of the Ambassadors was originally constrained by this factor, it is not a matter which adds materially to the significance of the building and it does not have the effect that the building cannot be sensitively altered and extended in the 21st century

to provide an improved theatre facility without material harm to its significance. Arguably, the extension will improve aesthetics of the building, the townscape in West Street, as well as preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

There has been no thematic review of the West End's theatres since they were first listed. The interior of the Ambassadors was not even inspected when the building was added to the list. There is little understanding as to where the Ambassadors ranks both among listed West End theatres and in Sprague's oeuvre as well. Therefore, nobody currently has the knowledge as to how much of a loss to this important body of work the near total demolition of the Ambassadors would be, and this should have been the starting point. The Victorian Society has therefore requested that Historic England reviews the listed status of the theatre building, and recommends that a decision cannot be made until this has been completed.

Officer response: Although the list description states that the interior was not inspected when listed in March 1973, it does make a list of internal features of significance. Notwithstanding, it is accepted that the building a revised list description with a more comprehensive analysis of its significance was justified. This has now been put in place by Historic England and informs this report. As part of the current application, the Council has requested the applicant commission heritage experts to undertake a full assessment of the building's historic and architectural significance, the condition of its historic fabric and recording of surviving features, which form a baseline for assessing the impact of the proposals on the designated heritage asset. Its individual and comparative significance is therefore well understood.

The Ambassadors should be seen as the pinnacle of Sprague's career. As it is so unusually small for a West End theatre and Sprague packed it with his usual flair, the result is a particularly intense interior and one of his best. It is also one of the most intact and coherent of all the West End theatres, having undergone comparatively very few alterations because of its small size. The surviving stage machinery of the Ambassadors has worryingly not been addressed at any point in the application material – perhaps because the listing description states that is no longer present. The Society reiterates that the Ambassadors is quite possibly the most complete historic West End theatre and this would be a shocking loss.

Officer response: Officers acknowledge that the theatre is a good example of Sprague's work, as reflected in its grade II listed status. Officers have taken into account the intact nature of this designated heritage asset, which contains a number of fine historic features both internally and externally. On making a balanced judgement, officers share the view of Historic England, that the substantial harm to the grade II listed building is necessary to deliver public benefits that very clearly outweigh that harm.

All parties are in agreement that the proposed works would result in substantial harm to the heritage asset, which may well result in its subsequent de-listing.

Officer response: Officers accept that there will be substantial harm to special interest of the Grade II listed building due to the extent of demolition. However, it is considered the new-build elements of the proposed scheme, incorporating historic internal and external features, will offer a high quality architectural solution which will sustain its use as a West End theatre in the 21st century, and will not necessarily result in its de-listing.

Although the Ambassadors has some shortcomings as a 21st-century theatre venue, compounded by its small scale, it does function as a commercially viable West End auditorium. No exploration has been undertaken by an experienced theatre architect to make reasonable improvements to the Ambassadors to make viewing conditions and circulation better, because it is so compact.

Officer response: As a statutory consultee, The Theatres Trust has highlighted the shortcomings of the existing theatre building. The documentation submitted with these applications establishes that the building in its current form is so constrained by its inflexible layout and poor access and facilities, that it cannot attract the types of shows and audiences needed to sustain it in the 21st century. It should also be noted that the applicant has engaged consultants with theatre experience: architects Aedas Arts Team, who have worked with Donmar Warehouse and other Delfont Mackintosh Theatres, and Citizens Design Bureau who remodelled the interior of the Liverpool Everyman Theatre. Officers are satisfied that there is no material scope for materially less harmful interventions in the building which would realistically secure its long term future and provide for the identified need for flexible performance space..

Whilst the Society does not doubt the expertise of The Theatres Trust, it points out their apparent conflict of interest. Several of the Trust's trustees work for the Cameron Mackintosh Group and the Mackintosh Foundation is a major funder.

Officer response: The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres and a statutory consultee for applications such as this which affect theatre buildings. It champions the past, present and future of live theatre, by protecting the buildings and what goes on inside. It does this through providing advice on planning and development, and by supplying resources and advice to make theatres sustainable. The Council has no evidence that there has been partiality by Trust members with reference to the proposed scheme and its consultation response is consistent with the conclusions reached independently by Historic England.

The Victorian Society is not persuaded that the project cannot be delivered elsewhere and that the project constitutes the "exceptional" circumstances referred to in paragraph 132 of the NPPF to allow substantial demolition of a listed building. Although it acknowledges that an existing theatre site in the West End is preferred for numerous reasons, it considers a number of alternative sites have been ruled out for fairly irresolute reasons – for instance, sites that are too big – when it seems more realistic that the project could be delivered as part of a larger development. It is alarming to see that 'an established theatre venue designed by WGR Sprague' is one such criterion.

The Victorian Society's 2nd letter of objection 7th July 2017

- 9.47 The Victorian Society maintain their objections and expect the application to now be assessed on the basis of the revised list description. The summary principal reasons for the theatre's designation makes it resolutely clear why this application is unacceptable:
- Architectural interest: as an 1913 theatre designed by W G R Sprague, one of the most important late C19 and early C20 theatre architects;
 - Completeness of design: both the Classical style exterior and the interior in Louis XVI style were designed by Sprague and include foyer, circle bar, auditorium and some original backstage features;
 - Degree of survival: both exterior and interior are little altered;
 - Historical interest: the theatre saw the West End debut of many famous artists including Ivor Novello, Hermione Gingold, Paul Robeson, Margaret Lockwood and Vivien Leigh and it was the original home of 'The Mousetrap', the world's longest running show;
 - Group value: adjoins St Martin's Theatre of 1916, also by Sprague (Grade II) and 24 West Street (Grade II)
- 9.48 The Society assert that none of these qualities would be sustained by the proposals and if the application is to be determined on the basis that the substantial harm is necessary to deliver a substantial public benefit, it is essential that the various issues that are being used to justify the proposals are separated out; they contend that an alternative site has not been properly researched noting that a new theatre is set to open on the former Astoria site on Tottenham Court Road on newly acquired land (a rundown and unlisted music venue/night club, originally a cinema), compulsorily purchased as part of the Crossrail project and that the challenges that the Ambassador's faces as a venue, due to its size and layout, should be caveated by the simple fact that the theatre is still open and therefore presumably viable. Therefore, these issues cannot be considered as a basis for the demolition of the theatre, particularly in the absence of investigation into possible sensitive solutions by a non-interested party. The Society reiterate the conclusion of their original letter – as an application which would entail substantial harm to a Grade II listed building, the local authority's default position is the refusal of consent. If it is believed that the circumstances really are exceptional, then this is exactly the sort of case that should be decided by a public inquiry.

Officer response: The public benefit of securing the long term viability of this West End theatre cannot be delivered on any other site. Officers are satisfied that the future of this building, if it is to remain in theatre use, is likely to involve remodelling which will affect its significance (both exterior and interior). Given the constraints it presents there is no realistic prospect of this building surviving in its present largely intact form. Further, it is understood that since the mid-1990s Sir Cameron Mackintosh, and his team, have explored nine alternative sites in their search to create a purpose built West End theatre to support the transfer of innovative work from the subsidised arts sector. The applicant states that it has taken nearly 20 years for this opportunity to be identified. The

Ambassadors will provide a dedicated, additional venue with facilities adapted to meet the needs of the 21st century, located in the heart of Theatreland, which will further enhance London's status as the theatre going capital of the world by increasing the scope and range of quality productions.

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- 9.49 Since the theatre has remained largely unaltered, in many respects it fails to meet modern standards and requirements. During its history audience requirements have changed, as have theatre production and performance. In addition, health and safety and accessibility requirements have become more demanding. The building has not kept pace with these changes in requirements.
- 9.50 The shortcomings of the building currently include poor front-of-house facilities especially for visitors with a disability, with limited public areas including bar space and WCs, tight circulation and limited access to the auditorium. Within the auditorium, the audience is set over two levels with poor sightlines from the rear stalls. The theatre currently has poor access, due to stepped entrances to all areas, no lift and no accessible WCs; for visitors in wheelchairs the only access is via a transfer seat. During pre-application consultation, The Theatres Trust confirmed the shortcomings of the existing theatre building.
- 9.51 Whilst of themselves, the shortcomings of the existing building are not presently so serious as to justify the proposed level of interventions to the heritage asset, it is accepted that they are likely to necessitate physical intervention in the comparatively near future if the theatre is to remain viable. Further, in terms of assessing the public benefits of the proposal, it is relevant to compare the quality of experience which it will offer to the theatre going public and those involved in the theatre industry when compared with the existing constrained facilities. The improvement would be hugely significant. In addition, as mentioned, the need for a transfer house to receive productions from the subsidised sector and extend their life has been identified by major arts organisations such as the Arts Council, the Deputy Mayor (Education and Culture), the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.
- 9.52 The primary factor preventing the easy transfer of such productions to the Most West End theatres are traditional, proscenium arched venues of Victorian and Edwardian construction which does not suit all modern theatre productions, many of which use contemporary and flexible formats staging arrangements such as in the round, end on or with a thrust stage, which enable closer audience engagement and greater production flexibility. Adapting such productions from the subsidised sector to proscenium theatres is costly and time consuming, and in that process the original cast and staff will likely no longer be available because of other commitments and opportunities. The burden of re-staffing adds to the already significant costs of transferring a production. Thus the opportunity to extend the run of the most special shows only arises when there is the possibility of a straightforward, seamless transfer to a traditional West End proscenium theatre.

- 9.53 There is, at present, no such facility in the West End and the lack of one represents a major lost opportunity for the subsidised sector to cultivate new audiences, nurture young theatrical talent and earn additional income which is vital at a time when all arts organisations are having to meet more of their running costs
- 9.54 A capacity of around 450 seats is required for the transfer of a subsidised production to make economic sense without losing the intimate atmosphere in which they can thrive. This capacity will allow for the subsidised theatre productions to meet their transfer costs and achieve a return. There are only five West End theatres of such a size, namely the Ambassadors, Duchess, Fortune, St Martin's and Trafalgar Studio 1. Of these, Trafalgar Studio 1 does not primarily accept transferred productions and two are hosting long-running productions – Woman in Black at the Fortune, and The Mousetrap at St Martin's. This leaves just one theatre - the Duchess which is a conventional proscenium arch theatre – as a possible venue for incoming shows. At the time of writing this is also housing a long running commercial production.
- 9.55 A dedicated, additional venue such as this with facilities adapted to meet the needs of the 21st century, located in the heart of Theatreland, would also further enhance London's status as the theatre going capital of the world by increasing the scope and range of quality productions
- 9.56 There is an established and ongoing need for a dedicated transfer house in Theatreland to house productions that have originated in the subsidised sector. Without such a dedicated transfer house, productions that would normally achieve a larger audience (and thus secure increased income for the originating subsidised theatre), will otherwise have to close and these opportunities are lost. The need for a dedicated transfer house in the West End is well recognised within the industry, and the application is accompanied by letters of support for the creation of such a flexible facility to allow the staging of the full range of non-proscenium productions from the subsidised sector.
- 9.57 The Young Vic, the National Theatre, the Donmar, Stratford East, the Almeida and the Royal Court all support the proposal, and advise that they have produced numerous shows which could have transferred to the West End, but had nowhere to go once their runs had ended as they would not have fitted into a proscenium or would not have attracted sufficient audience numbers to justify a move to a West End theatre. The Deputy Mayor also acknowledged that there was a clear demand for the type of theatre proposed. The Government's statutory advisor on issues affecting theatres, the Theatres Trust, also acknowledges the need for such a facility:
- 9.58 The proposal also includes rehearsal space, which will meet a long established deficiency in Central London. Other than the rehearsal studios at Sadlers Wells (which is itself an example of a major redevelopment of a listed building to meet contemporary needs) and facilities at the Dominion Theatre, there is a lack of adequate facilities to rehearse a decent sized play or musical in the West End, and this shortage of West End rehearsal space is acknowledged across the industry.

- 9.59 Company rehearsals currently take place in large studios or church halls, all over London, in some cases, as far out as Stratford in the east which means that the directors and cast have to spend considerable time and expense travelling between the rehearsal spaces.
- 9.60 There is the potential (subject to availability) for the rehearsal space to be available for rent for cast rehearsals for other non-Sondheim productions. Therefore not only would a proper sized rehearsal space with appropriate ceiling height, sprung floor, balanced climate and a small office infrastructure, support the production within the Sondheim theatre but also the industry as a whole.
- 9.61 In light of the above it is considered that the benefits to the West End economy and the cultural life of Camden's residents and beyond to be afforded by this proposal are both unique and very substantial.

Consideration of alternative sites

- 9.62 The applicant has looked at a number of alternative sites as a potential home for the Sondheim Studio theatre project. The criteria for a suitable site which must be in a Theatreland location are as follows:
- 450/475 seat adaptable performance space;
 - An entrance lobby and box office;
 - A stalls foyer and bar;
 - A first floor/circle floor;
 - Sponsors rooms;
 - Public support spaces;
 - Backstage Performance support spaces;
 - Production/technical areas;
 - Rehearsal room suite;
 - Plant area;
 - It must be fully accessible to users;
- 9.63 It is accepted that a capacity of around 450 seats is required for the transfer of a subsidised production to make economic sense without losing the intimate atmosphere in which they can thrive. This capacity will allow for the subsidised theatre productions to meet their transfer costs and achieve a return.
- 9.64 The sites which have been considered are as follows:

The Queens/Gielgud Theatres Sites – These theatres formed an integrated part of a larger vision to refurbish the Gielgud Theatre, to reconstruct the Queen's Theatre and reinstate WGR Sprague's original facade (lost during the war). In this design the Sondheim was to be located above the two theatres. The project received full planning permission and listed building consent in February 2004. However, due to the continued successful run of Les Misérables at the Queen's Theatre, the urgent upgrade works required to the Gielgud, alongside the

structural, programming and logistical complexity, the delivery of the Sondheim in this incarnation became unfeasible.

The former Theatre Museum - The opportunity of creating the Sondheim Theatre at the site of the former Theatre Museum in Covent Garden was explored in the Summer of 2007. The space became available with the Victoria and Albert Museum's decision to relocate the Theatre Museum collection. The site provided a good location, especially with its high visitor footfall. Preliminary investigations showed that the available space could accommodate the required volume for a 500-seat venue. However, practical problems emerged including the need for the removal of three large structural columns supporting the residential accommodation above in order to achieve the required auditorium footprint and some operational shortcomings of the site were identified, with all backstage support accommodation on one side of the performance space - and a stage having to be set one level below ground. The project did not require the large amount of the available basement area, and this remaining space became much less commercially attractive without the ground floor and street presence onto Wellington Street. Consequently, the theatre diminished the commercial value of the remaining accommodation. This demonstrated the commercial difficulty of creating a new theatre on a non-established theatre site.

London Hippodrome - The aspiration was to combine the theatre space on the upper levels of the historic auditorium with a planned commercial development occupying the lower levels of the building. The site, was considered in the winter of 2009, when the Hippodrome was still a substantially forgotten and near derelict building. The Sondheim, being a much smaller scale venue than the former Hippodrome, could have comfortably occupied the upper levels of the space, whilst retaining the theatricality and 'found-space' quality of the historic shell. It also facilitated the effective commercial use of the lower levels of the block. The profile and position of the building also made it a highly attractive location for the project, whilst also providing an opportunity to restore the building to its former role. The Sondheim feasibility study work was undertaken during the period of the planning approval and listed building consent applications to turn the building into a casino. The ultimate success of these applications, alongside the granting of a casino licence, meant the Sondheim project could not be taken forward.

Bow Street / former Magistrates Court - The Sondheim auditorium could be accommodated within the rear courtyard of the site - with the remaining building being used for theatre support spaces and potentially other non-theatre related uses, due to the inherent scale of the buildings. Areas such as the former cells could form unusual and quirky dressing rooms, with the formal court rooms offering associated entertaining spaces. However, the Sondheim venue required little of the available accommodation within the main component of the listed building. As such the building did not provide a good fit with the core project. This meant that the site was not considered further.

The Centre Stage / former Astoria – This site was explored in the autumn of 2010. The inclusion of a theatre within the redevelopment of the Tottenham

Court Road area, as part of the Crossrail redevelopment, provided a high profile opportunity to deliver the Sondheim project. The development masterplan plan, by Derwent London, comprised two above-ground blocks located over each ticket hall of the integrated Tottenham Court Road station to serve both Crossrail and London Underground passengers. The available footprint and volume for the theatre within the development was tested, however the developer's design intent was to provide a much smaller, venue of circa 300 seats. Analysis and testing of the site indicated that to create a viable 500-seat venue would require adjustments to the space available. In the context of the wider commercial development this was not feasible for Derwent London and the project was not taken any further.

The Duchess Theatre site - The Duchess Theatre, and the building immediately behind it, were considered in 2010. The footprint of the Sondheim venue could not be accommodated within the site with the site being effectively too small to house the venue.

Haymarket Cinema site – This site, and the building immediately behind it, were considered in March 2008. The footprint of the Sondheim venue could have easily been accommodated within the site, but with the site being effectively too large to house the venue alone. The size of the site meant that the Sondheim project would have had to form part of a complementary development to utilise the available volume of the site. This complexity in delivering the core project meant that the site was not considered further.

The Shaw Theatre - During the development of the proposals for the Ambassadors Theatre site, the applicant was asked to consider looking at the Shaw Theatre as a possible alternative location. The 440 seat Shaw Theatre was designed in the late 1960s as part of a mixed use building comprising the St. Pancras Library and the headquarters of the Camden Library Group, the Shaw Theatre itself, a public house and an office block. The building opened in 1971 and was substantially remodelled in the late 1990s to form the Pullman Hotel. The hotel occupies the former public library, the office block and the pub, with new accommodation built all around the volume of the Shaw Theatre. The Shaw Theatre's primary use today is as a conference venue associated with the hotel, although it can be hired for ad-hoc events the Shaw Theatre does not provide suitable physical space to accommodate the Sondheim project. With the 1990s development of the hotel there is no available space in which the theatre could be expanded. The theatre has no public frontage and access is via the hotel lobby. The venue is also not within the Theatreland area.

The Cochrane Theatre - The Cochrane Theatre was designed in the early 1960s as part of the Central School - as the Art School Training Theatre. The building opened in 1965. It is attached to the former Central School of Arts and Crafts building and is within the Kingsway conservation area. Following the departure of the Central St Martins College of Art and Design (following their move to Kings Cross), the site was acquired by developer Grange Hotels with a view to demolish the theatre and build a hotel on the site. An application to have the building listed was declined by English Heritage in 2011. The Cochrane is currently not in use and does not provide suitable physical space

to accommodate the Sondheim project the venue is also not within the Theatreland area.

Odeon Cinema Shaftesbury Avenue – This site was suggested by the Council. The applicant found that there is no indication that this site is available and the building is not being openly marketed, it is still in use as a cinema. Furthermore it is nearly twice the size of the footprint of the Sondheim which would make it uneconomic for development. It was formerly the Saville Theatre which could accommodate 1250 patrons compared to the Sondheim's requirement of less than 500.

The applicant search for alternative sites is constrained by the specific requirements of the new theatre such as adaptability, capacity, and location. Over the last 20 years the applicant has looked at the 10 sites referred to, but none were considered suitable for the reasons outlined above.

The reasonable conclusion, which officers accept, is that the Ambassadors Theatre provides a unique opportunity to finally realise the aspiration for a West End transfer theatre meeting a longstanding and very pressing need.

Archaeology:

- 9.65 Archaeological investigations commissioned by the applicant have revealed that no known non-designated heritage assets would be affected by the proposals, including at basement level. However, there is potential for as-yet unidentified buried archaeological remains to be present, which may be of low to moderate significance, and may include human remains. It is possible that any such remains would have been destroyed during construction of the theatre; however, it is not possible to determine from desk-based assessment whether this is the case. GLAAS advise that a written scheme of investigation, to be carried out before works commences, be secured by condition

Asbestos:

- 9.66 A recently-commissioned asbestos report has found low levels of asbestos lagging pipes and appliances in the basement light store and props room areas, which do not cause significant risk. It is therefore unlikely that the removal of asbestos will have an impact on the historic fabric of the listed building, most notably those areas which are to be retained as part of the proposals.

Heritage conclusion:

- 9.67 It is widely acknowledged that the existing theatre is in need of substantial improvement requiring extensive remodelling that would compromise many aspects of its existing heritage value. While the proposed works may go further than strictly required in order to secure a use which safeguards the building in closer condition to its current form, there is significant public benefit to be derived from the proposed works.

- 9.68 On making a balanced judgement as required by paragraph 133 of the NPPF, officers share the view of Historic England that, taken as a whole the public benefits are very substantial, they cannot be delivered without the extent of physical interventions as proposed in the application and that they significantly outweigh the substantial harm which would be caused. Historic England in their pre-app response stated that “The circumstances of this case are in our view exceptional and include the range of the vision, the track record of the applicant and the potential to increase the resilience of the subsidised theatre, not just in London but across the country.” Officers are of the view that the circumstances are wholly exceptional and justify the loss of significance. It is considered that there will be no adverse impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings or upon the character and appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.
- 9.69 It is recommended that standard listed building conditions are used, together with conditions covering the recording of historic features to be lost, those to be salvaged, repaired and relocated in the new development, including method statements for the dismantling, repair and reinstatement of the dome ceiling and all other historic plasterwork, metalwork and joinery, and decorative features such as historic chandeliers. Conditions should also be imposed where a low level of information has been submitted at application stage, covering such aspects as details of new structural work, new external fabric (roof and wall construction, new windows and doors, etc), mechanical and electrical services, WC layouts, drainage, level access, signage, etc.

10. Amenity

- 10.1 Policies A1, A4 and CPG6 (Amenity) are relevant with regards to the impact on the amenity of residential properties in the area. The site is largely bordered by other commercial uses, but there are some neighbouring residential uses, mainly along Tower Street and Tower Court to the north.

Daylight and sunlight

- 10.2 A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Report has been submitted as part of this application which details any impact upon neighbouring residential properties and open spaces.
- 10.3 Vertical Sky Component (VSC) is the standard way for assessing daylight impact. It is calculated at the centre point of each affected window on the outside face of the wall in question. BRE guidelines suggest that 27% VSC is a good level of daylight (a window looking into an empty field will achieve a maximum value of 40%). If a window does not achieve 27% VSC as a result of development, then it is assessed whether the reduction in value would be greater than 20% of the existing VSC, which is when the reduction in light would become noticeable to occupants. However, officers consider that VSCs lower than 27% are normal for urban areas, with 20% still considered acceptable. ADF or Average Daylight Factor recommends minimum daylight figures of 1%

for bedrooms, 1.5% for living rooms and 2% for kitchens. No Skyline (NSL) looks the area of a room where the sky would be visible.

- 10.4 No. 22 Tower Street, and nos. 4-10, 6 and 5 Tower Court were analysed for the impact of the proposal on daylight and sunlight. A total of 38 rooms were assessed for VSC, with 33 complying with the BRE guidelines. For the five rooms which did not meet the guidelines, a ground floor kitchen/living room at no 22 Tower Street would see a reduction of VSC from 13.43% to 10.51%, or a 22.15% loss, which is just below the 20% advised by the BRE guidelines. The room would suffer an adverse impact on NSL, but would remain in excess of 50% which is considered to be adequate given the dense location. The ADF would exceed 2%.
- 10.5 The other four rooms are at 4-10 Tower Street, three of these are underneath balconies and the BRE guidance acknowledges such rooms can suffer from poor access to daylight and even modest obstructions may result in large relative impacts on VSC. NSL would remain above 50%.
- 10.6 Due to the orientation of the site and neighbouring room uses, relatively few windows were required to be tested for sunlight, but of the 5 windows tested none would see a loss of Annual Probable Sunlight Hours to below the BRE recommendations.
- 10.7 In conclusion the impact in sunlight and daylight are not considered to be significant due to the urban location and minimal losses.

Outlook

- 10.8 The proposed 4th floor would result in an increase in height of the building by approximately 3.5m, with the plant room to the rear of the roof adding a further 2.5m. Due to the location and distance from neighbouring residential properties it is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on outlook.

Noise and disturbance

- 10.9 The proposed use is not considered to have a greater impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers than the existing theatre use. Roof plant including ventilation extract, chiller and A/C units, generators and water storage tanks and would be contained at roof level within a screened plant enclosure. The rooftop plant has been assessed by an Environmental Health Officer who considered the submitted noise report to be acceptable and advises a standard condition be attached to any permission to ensure that the approved plant and machinery operate in line with the Council's noise standards.

Overlooking

- 10.10 The proposal would not introduce any new windows that directly face neighbouring residential properties, as such there would be no loss of privacy for adjoining occupiers.

11. Basement impact

- 11.1 The existing stall and stage are below street level, and the existing basement is concave in section with a maximum depth of approximately 4.4m below street level at its lowest point (18m OD). The proposal would extend and level the basement to 5.2m below street level with a water attenuation tank extending down a further metre. The basement will also extend below the adjacent Tower Court on its eastern boundary. There will be approximately 1.30m of excavation at the front and rear of the site and up to 2.50m in the centre to achieve the required profiles of the new basement.
- 11.2 A soils investigation of a single borehole and two trial pits has determined that the existing basement and its surrounding boundary walls are founded in either the Hackney Gravel or Langley Silt. The new basement will be underpinned locally into the London Clay, below the Gravel, on its western boundary party wall, "Pynford" stooled beam underpinning of the existing front façade, and a secant bored pile retaining wall elsewhere with an inner concrete wall.
- 11.3 The Basement Impact Assessment has been reviewed by Campbell Reith who advise that an indicative temporary works scheme has been provided which adequately shows an achievable methodology for each boundary condition suitable for development by a contractor prior to construction commencement. The proposed basement level is likely to be below the perched water table and sump pumping is likely to be required. Due to this situation a secant bored pile retaining wall will now be used to control water ingress during construction, which is likely to have the benefit of marginally reducing the current water ingress into the neighbouring St Martins Theatre. It is accepted that there are no slope stability concerns, no hydrogeological concerns and no hydrological concerns with respect to the development proposals. Although there are queries regarding the ground movement assessment (GMA), it is considered that with good workmanship and based on the proposals and sequence indicated, damage on the neighbouring properties should not exceed Category 1 (Slight) damage. Campbell Reith advise that the conclusions in the GMA and predicted damage be confirmed as still valid at detailed design stage which will be secured by condition.

12. Sustainability

Energy/sustainability

- 12.1 All developments of more than 500 sqm of (gross internal) any floorspace will be required to submit an energy statement demonstrating how the energy hierarchy has been applied to make the fullest contribution to CO2 reduction.
- 12.2 In accordance with this strategy, this development will incorporate a range of energy efficiency measures including levels of insulation beyond Building Regulations, the installation of high performance glazing and a mixture of natural ventilation and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. The implementation of these measures would potentially reduce regulated CO2 emissions by 22.6%, when compared to the baseline.

- 12.3 The Council will expect developments of more than 500sqm of gross internal floorspace to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from on-site renewable energy generation (which can include sources of site related decentralised renewable energy. The proposal would incorporate 35sqm of rooftop photovoltaic panels (28 panels) with 6.72kWp output proposed, resulting in further 3.1% reduction. The proposal would also include a biodiverse green.
- 12.4 Where the London Plan carbon reduction target cannot be met on-site, the Council may accept the provision of measures elsewhere in the borough or a financial contribution (charged at £60/tonne CO₂/ yr over a 30 year period), which will be used to secure the delivery of carbon reduction measures elsewhere in the borough. In this instance sustainability officers advise the shortfall will require a Carbon Offset contribution of £12,825 which would be secured through a section 106 agreement.
- 12.5 Energy saving measures include energy efficient lighting, solar glazing with a g-value of 0.4,. And a ventilation scheme designed to maximise overall efficiency, including heat recovery and 100% fresh air modes. The HVAC systems will satisfy the auditorium heat load via ventilation airflow alone with no additional space cooling or heat energy demand.
- 12.6 The applicant has submitted a BREEAM pre-assessment which indicates the development could achieve a total of 75.09% (Excellent) with the following scores: Energy – 17 credits out of 21 (81%), Water - 7 credits out of 8 (87.5%), Materials - 9 credits out of 14 (64.3%).
- 12.7 The energy efficiency measures a proposed and sustainability targets will be secured by a sustainability plan and energy efficiency/renewable energy plan via a section 106 agreement.

Flood risk

- 12.8 Major developments are expected to achieve greenfield run-off rates wherever feasible and as a minimum 50% reduction in run off rates. A 95sqm biodiverse green roof (growing substrate at least 100mm thick) is proposed which will intercept a rainfall depth of up to 15mm which equates to a volume of 1.4m³ attenuation. Attenuation tanks will also be located in the basement. Full details of these measures will be secured by condition.

13. Transport

Loss of Public Highway Assets and Pedestrian Right of Way

- 13.1 The proposals for the redevelopment of the theatre include the extension of the existing building line by 2.7m into Tower Court, an alleyway which runs adjacent to the theatre, linking West Street and Tower Street. Tower Court is currently between 5.9 - 8.5 metres wide, which means that this proposal will reduce the width of the alleyway by up to 45% in certain areas. Tower Court is partially

privately owned and partially public highway. All of this space is classified as established public right of way, as the public have been able to pass over the land freely for over 20 years and any loss of this right of way would be subject to a Stopping Up order under section 31 of the Highways Act being approved.

- 13.2 Any loss of public highway (or public right of way) raises concern, as once a stopping up order is processed that land will be lost to public ownership and will from that point be considered private land and free for development depending on the outline of the planning permission. The loss of established public rights of way should also be given careful consideration as to what benefits can compensate for the loss.
- 13.3 As part of the consideration of stopping up part of the alleyway, it was requested that the applicant submit a Pedestrian Comfort Assessment (PCA), undertaken in accordance with the TfL guidance 'Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London'. This sets out the proposed footway width for the court, with anything less than 600 pedestrians per hour (pph) considered to be a low flow and a highly accessible footway.
- 13.4 As part of the PCA a pedestrian count was conducted over a week, focusing mainly on peak times for the theatre, before and after the shows. The highest level of two-way trips along the Court was 347 two way trips on a Friday (21:30-22:30). The levels are substantially below the 600 pph level that is considered to be low level for a court 2.9m wide.
- 13.5 The current width of the court is between 5.9m and 8.5m and displays a comfort level of A+, the highest achievable. Using these counts to predict pedestrian comfort on a proposed reduction in court width, the comfort level remains at the highest level of A+. This demonstrates that there is plenty of spare capacity for pedestrian movement. The applicant has also conducted a Sensitivity Test by adding an additional 500 pedestrians per hour which would only reduce the comfort level to "A" (the second highest level). Based on these findings transport officers consider that in terms of comfort levels, the proposed reduction would not reduce the quality of the footway.
- 13.6 There are currently bins stored along the south side of Tower Court that belong to St. Martin's Theatre. These bins are a significant size and if left in their current location would further impact on the alleyway, which would be unacceptable as it would reduce the width of Tower Court by an additional 1.25 metres. In order to rectify this the applicant has engaged with St Martin's Theatre and has made arrangements for these bins in future to be stored inside the building, unless being placed out for collection.
- 13.7 As part of the reduction in width of Tower Court, it will also provide an opportunity to do much needed improvements to the footpath and to upgrade the surface material from the low quality tarmac currently in place. Some alterations to the existing street furniture will also be needed and it is proposed to upgrade the street lighting, which will need to be relocated.

- 13.8 It is therefore considered that the proposed reduction of the established public right of way is acceptable due to the public realm improvements and wider public benefits of the scheme, on the condition that the applicant provide evidence that an agreement has been entered into with St Martin's Theatre to permanently remove all bin storage from Tower Court, unless being placed out for collection, and any costs related to alterations and upgrades to Tower Court will be covered by the applicant. This will be secured as part of the section 106 agreement.

Deliveries and Servicing

- 13.9 The current level of servicing for the site is very low as the site only consists of a small bar and limited office space to run the theatre. This would generate at most 3-4 deliveries a day and does not have much impact of the public highway or any noticeable impact on the street. The bar and office is currently supplied via West Street using existing on street facilities.
- 13.10 With the new proposal the theatre will be increasing in size from 397 seats to 475, with increased rehearsal spaces and office area. This will increase the number of daily deliveries with materials for the office, rehearsal materials and additional supplies for the bar. However, this is expected to be an increase of no more the 2 deliveries a day bringing the maximum expected to no more than 6 deliveries a day. These deliveries can be accommodated with the same methodology as current and are not anticipated to cause any additional impact on the public highway.
- 13.11 The other servicing for the site is more complicated and is linked to the requirements of the productions themselves. The previous show "Stomp" was a long term occupant of the theatre for many years, so there was no regular requirement for the removal or delivery of new sets, costumes and staging equipment as part of a change of show, this is known as the "Get-in" and "Get-out".
- 13.12 The proposed development will host a variety of shows which will change every 8-16 weeks, meaning 3-6 times a year there will be a Get in/Get out. In the "Get-In Statement" provided it is outlined that this will need to be done with a variety of vehicles from 10m rigid vans to 12.5m articulated lorries, depending on the needs of the show. Parking suspension is likely to be required each time to facilitate the lorries as it would not be possible to keep the road open without doing so. These vehicles are 2.55m wide and the road width is a maximum of 4.7 m, allowing 2.15m for passing vehicles. The Get-in/ Get-out will be conducted late on a Saturday evening after the final show of a run which is standard theatre practice.
- 13.13 As access to the site is restricted with narrow roads, transport officers have been working with the developer to produce a methodology that will ensure the different vehicles will be able to access the site safely. Officers have devised four options for vehicles to approach the site and each option will be used depending on the size of the vehicle and the nature of the delivery.

Option 1 – Smaller Vehicles restricted to 10metres will approach the site via the use of Earlham Street onto Tower Street.

Option 2/3 – The use of West Street. Under Option 2 the vehicle would be required to unload and cage the goods from a position close to the junction with Upper St. Martins Lane. This is considered suitable for certain loads such as rigging and lighting. Under Option 3, a closure of West Street would be required to allow a vehicle to load outside of the Theatre. As Option 3 requires a temporary stopping order approved by Camden Council, it would therefore only be available in certain instances.

Option 4 – For the use of the largest vehicle which, would be a 15m articulated lorry, the introduction of a raised servicing bay on Tower Street and alteration to the junction of Monmouth Street and Tower Street would be required. This would allow a managed reverse from Upper St Martins Lane or a temporary closure of Tower Street during the production changeover. For the purpose of the managed reverse, trained banksmen would be used.

- 13.14 Unforeseen issues may arise with these arrangements, so the Council will require a 2 year trial Service Management Plan. If during, or at the end of, this trial alterations to these arrangements are required, this can be accommodated within the SMP.
- 13.15 It has been agreed that during this trial an initial notification of likely production changes is provided at the start of each year to the Council and the system operated for an initial period of 2 years. Formal notification would be provided two months before the Production Change, which would provide details including:
- The proposed route option to be used
 - The type of vehicle to be used
 - The likely loadings
 - Details of the required parking suspensions and road closures
- 13.16 Transport officers find these arrangements acceptable, and if planning permission is granted a 2 year trial Service Management Plan will be required as part of a section 106 agreement.

Cycle Parking

- 13.17 Local Plan policy T1 requires developments to provide for accessible, secure cycle parking facilities exceeding minimum standards outlined within the London Plan and design requirements outlined within our supplementary planning document. The London Plan provides guidance on minimum cycle parking standards outlined in Table 6.3 of the London Plan.
- 13.18 The London Plan requirements for D2 uses such as cinemas (and it is assumed theatres) are 1x space per 8 members of staff (long stay) and 1x space per 30 seats (short stay). Theatres function with shift workers with a large number of temporary staff for one off shows, and the average working week is often set at 30 hours over 6 days. The applicant estimates 52 staff as being required at any

one time. This would equate to the following requirement to meet London Plan Standards:

- Long Stay Cycle Parking 52 Staff = 7 spaces
- Short Stay Cycle Parking up to 475 seats = 16 spaces

13.19 The proposed development would only supply 3x spaces for long stay and none for short stay. While the proposed cycle parking is below the London Plan requirement, it is considered that an exception can be made in this instance. For the theatre to gain the additional adaptability which will allow it to host a wide range of shows, it will need to increase in size at the ground and basement floor. It will need to take over additional public space from Tower Court, and by losing space in the Court it is not considered that visitor parking being placed in this area would be an effective use of the space, and that saving space for pedestrians is the priority. The enhanced theatre provision and community benefits should also be taken into account. The developer has outlined their commitment to a robust Travel Plan on site which could include enhanced provision of off-site parking and/or making folding bikes available to staff.

13.20 Taking a balanced assessment, it is considered that with a strong commitment to a Travel Plan and a Pedestrian, Cycling and Environment contribution the proposal is acceptable in this instance, however it is important to outline that this is an exceptional set of circumstances and will not stand as a precedent for future schemes. Therefore if planning permission is granted a condition should be attached to provide 3x long stay parking spaces, with the PCE contribution and a Workplace Travel Plan secured as part of a section 106 agreement.

Travel Planning

13.21 The applicant has provided a framework Travel Plan (TP) in support of the planning application. The aim of a Travel Plan is to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport through a range of soft measures, as well as highlighting the benefits of travelling by modes other than the private car. This will be vital for this scheme due to the lack of space for cycle parking on site and the loss of 2x Sheffield stands on Tower Court. However, the site is proposed as car free and there are a number of cycle hire stations in the local area which can be utilised by staff and visitors to the theatre.

13.22 The Council would require a strategic level Workplace Travel Plan to satisfy policy A1 and Camden Planning Guidance; CPG7 (Transport); this includes references to TfL and DfT guidance.

13.23 A financial contribution of £6,244 would also need to be secured by to cover the costs of monitoring and reviewing the travel plan over a 5 year period. This would also need to be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation if planning permission is granted.

13.24 Transport for London encourages developers to use the TRICS database (formerly TRAVL) for trip generation predictions. The applicant will be required to undertake a TRICS after study and provide TfL and Camden with the results

on completion of the development. TfL would then be able to update the TRICS database with the trip generation results for the various use categories associated with this development. The necessary after surveys and results will form part of the Workplace Travel Plan review and monitoring process.

Highway and Public Realm Improvements

13.25 Policy A1 of the Local Plan states that 'Development requiring works to the highway following development will be secured through a planning obligation with the Council to repair any construction damage to transport infrastructure or landscaping and reinstate all affected transport network links and road and footway surfaces'.

13.26 As outlined above there will also be major alterations to Tower Court, including:

- Alteration to the boundary of the Theatre
- Alteration to levelling of the public highways as required
- Upgrade to paving
- Relocation of the street lighting
- Relocation of the two cycle Sheffield stands
- Reinforcement of public highway to facilitate Heavy Goods Vehicles on Tower Street Monmouth Street

13.27 Due to the servicing requirements, which are outlined in further detail above, the Council will need to make alterations to the junction of Tower Street and Monmouth Street to create space for the 12.5m articulated lorry that is required to service the site. The current layout does not allow enough space for these larger vehicles to turn without running over the footway. This would cause ongoing damage to the pedestrian area, as the footway is not able to support the weight and is likely to break which would ensue ongoing costs to the Council for repairs.

13.28 This will require a larger than usual Highways Contribution to make the required alterations, which will likely be resolved by creating a wider raised area. This will have the added advantage that when not being used by vehicles it will provide a better public space in what is a very busy central London area. An estimate is awaited from the Highways team and will form part of the section 106 agreement if planning permission is granted.

Pedestrian, Cycling and Environment Contribution

13.29 The Council will require a contribution of £8,000 from the developer if planning permission is granted for improvements to cycle infrastructure in the area. As part of the development 4x existing spaces that currently exist on the public highways would be lost and the development is deficient by 4x long stay spaces and 16x short stay spaces. The amount is based on the loss of public space, consultation, design and implementation costs. The contribution would be secured as part of the section 106 agreement.

Management of Construction Impacts on the Public Highway in the local area

- 13.30 The site is located on West Street just off Shaftesbury Avenue which is part of the Strategic Road Network in the Central London Area. The proposal would involve a significant amount of demolition and construction works which will generate a large number of construction vehicle movements during the construction period in what is a highly restricted site. This is likely to lead to impacts to surrounding buildings and occupiers as well as have a disruptive effect to servicing and people passing through the area. It is probable that surrounding roads will have prolonged closures or restrictions and the limiting of parking to facilitate this development.
- 13.31 The proposed works therefore are likely to have a significant impact on the operation of the public highway in the local area, the Council will need to work with the developer to manage the works effectively to minimise this impact. Due to the restricted nature of the site it is likely to require temporary alterations to Tower Street and West Street to facilitate the build, however it will be imperative to keep Tower Street open for servicing requirements for surrounding buildings such as those on Earlam Street.
- 13.32 The primary concern is public safety but it is also important to ensure that construction traffic is minimised so that it does not create (or add to existing) unnecessary traffic congestion or impact on the road safety or amenity issues of other highway users. The proposal is also likely to lead to a variety of amenity issues for local people (e.g. noise, vibration, air quality).
- 13.33 The draft CMP proposes to utilise both West Street and Tower Street to provide loading bays on, this is likely to cause major issues for servicing on surrounding streets and may require closures and traffic redirection. The size of the vehicles needed for a build of this size are likely to be of significant size as to block other traffic along West Street and Tower Street, this could lead to a major impact on surrounding sites and will require careful consideration as to whether streets should be closed and whether they can be closed without causing undue harm to local businesses.
- 13.34 These challenges will have to be overcome before construction can commence and a more detailed CMP will need to be prepared once a principal contractor has been appointed. The CMP should consider the following points:
- Construction vehicle routes to and from the site will need to make the most efficient use of the highway network in the Central London Area. Such routes will require discussion with Highways Management.
 - The proposed works are likely to generate a significant amount of workers on the site at any given time. The Principal Contractor will be expected to prepare travel planning guidance to encourage workers to use sustainable transport instead of private motor vehicles.
 - Various highways licences would need to be obtained from the Council prior to works commencing on site (e.g. temporary parking bay suspensions, road closures, scaffolding licence, hoarding licence, crane licence etc).
 - As mentioned, the site is located near the strategic road network (Shaftesbury Avenue) in the Central London Area. Traffic congestion is

already a significant problem in this part of the borough, particularly during morning and afternoon/evening peak periods. The Council will therefore expect construction vehicle movements to be scheduled to avoid 0800 to 0930 and 1600 to 1830 hours on Monday to Friday.

- Details will be required to describe how pedestrian and cyclist safety will be maintained, including any proposed alternative routes (if necessary), and any Banksman arrangements
- Additional evidence to show that vehicles can make the routes to and from the site without damage to the public highway or private property.
- Details to show how existing servicing arrangement for surrounding buildings can be maintained as well as keeping open routes for emergency vehicles.
- The site should be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. The Council will also expect the proposed works to be undertaken in accordance with the best practice guidelines in TfL's Standard for Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety (CLOCS) scheme:

13.35 The Council needs to ensure that the development can be implemented without being detrimental to amenity or the safe and efficient operation of the highway network in the local area. Therefore, if planning permission is granted the Construction Management Plan will be secured as part of a Section 106 agreement, along with a financial contribution of £35,000 for CMP monitoring for a high impact site.

Highways conclusion:

13.36 Following lengthy consultation with the Council's transport officers, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in transport terms subject to the relevant conditions and planning obligations.

14. Land contamination

14.1 A Contaminated Land Assessment, including geotechnical and geo-environmental desk studies has been submitted as part of this application. The site investigation found no evidence of contamination within the made ground beneath the site. Following the construction of the proposed building the entire site will be fully covered with buildings/concrete hardstanding, breaking the pathway between any possible contaminations present within the made ground. As such, it is considered that the soils at the site do not pose an unacceptable risk to human health, controlled waters or building materials, and no specific remediation or alleviation measures are required.

14.2 However, Environmental Health officers advise that a condition requiring a targeted investigation and specific sampling/analytical strategy will be required for the presence of groundwater contamination and an intrusive pre-demolition and refurbishment asbestos survey in accordance with HSG264.

15. Air quality

- 15.1 The sustainability officer advises that given the scale of demolition and construction, mitigation measures in regards to control construction related air quality impacts should be secured within the CMP. The applicant will be required to complete the checklist and demonstrate that all mitigation measures relevant to the level of identified risk are being included. It is not considered that an air quality neutral assessment is required as the proposal is car free and no combustion plant is proposed on site.
- 15.2 It is also recommended that a condition be attached requiring air quality monitoring, with monitors installed at least three months before the development is implemented and retained and maintained on site for the duration of the development.

16. Employment and training opportunities

- 16.1 The proposed development is large enough to generate significant local economic benefits. Policies E1 and E2 , and Camden Planning Guidance state that in the case of such developments the Council will seek to secure employment and training opportunities for local residents and opportunities for businesses based in the Borough to secure contracts to provide goods and services.
- 16.2 In line with CPG8, a range of training and employment benefits are to be secured in order to provide opportunities during and after the construction phase for local residents and businesses. This package of recruitment, apprenticeship and procurement measures will be secured via S106 / condition and will comprise:
- The applicant should work to **Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) benchmarks for local employment** when recruiting for construction-related jobs as per clause 8.28 of CPG8.
 - The applicant should advertise all construction vacancies and work placement opportunities **exclusively with the King's Cross Construction Skills Centre** for a period of 1 week before marketing more widely.
 - The applicant should provide a specified number (to be agreed) of **construction or non-construction work placement opportunities** of not less than 2 weeks each, to be undertaken over the course of the development, to be recruited through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre.
 - If the build costs of the scheme exceed £3 million the applicant must recruit 1 **construction or non-construction apprentice** per £3million of build costs and pay the council a support fee of £1,700 per apprentice as per clause 8.25 of CPG8. Recruitment of construction apprentices should be conducted through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre.
 - As the end user is known, the developer should provide a specified number of non-construction apprentice and work experience places within the development post-construction as per CPG 8.31.
 - If the value of the scheme exceeds £1 million, the applicant must also sign up to the **Camden Local Procurement Code**, as per section 8.30 of CPG8.

- The applicant provide a **local employment, skills and local supply plan** setting out their plan for delivering the above requirements in advance of commencing on site.
- One week work experience placement per Camden secondary school every other year (up to 5 placements available for work experience each year)
- All DMT Sondheim job vacancies will be advertised through the outlets listed on the Camden Local Community Information Directory (CINDEX).

17. Planning obligations

- 17.1 The following contributions are required to mitigate the impact of the development upon the local area, including on local services. These heads of terms will mitigate any impact of the proposal on the infrastructure of the area.

Contribution	Amount (£)
Highways	Tbc
CMP monitoring	£35,000
Pedestrian, cycling and environmental contributions	£8,000
Travel Plan monitoring	£6,224
Carbon Offset Fund	£12,825
Construction apprentices	£1,700 per apprentice
TOTAL	Tbc

18. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 18.1 The proposal will be liable for the Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Based on the Mayor's CIL charging schedule and the information provided as part of the application, the Mayoral CIL would be £53,350 (£50 per sqm x 1,067sqm). This would be collected by Camden after the scheme is implemented and could be subject to surcharges for failure to assume liability, submit a commencement notice and late payment, and subject to indexation in line with the construction costs index.
- 18.2 The proposal would also be liable for the Camden Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The site is located within Zone A and the charge for other commercial uses in this zone is £25 per sqm. The Camden CIL would be £26,675 (£25 per sqm x 1,067sqm).

19. CONCLUSION

- 19.1 The proposal would provide a new, purpose built theatre replacing one that lack the facilities and audience experience which modern audiences expect. It would provide a viable, secure long term future for the theatre and allow modern, subsidised productions the opportunity to seamlessly transfer to the West End. The need for the proposals is undeniable and has been outlined and supported by numerous arts organisations.
- 19.1 The applicant has been through a thorough pre-application process, which included Historic England and the Theatres Trust, and their view has been that

the substantial harm to the heritage asset would be clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. The proposed public benefits are numerous, the proposed theatre would replace a poorly designed building and be highly accessible, and have the ability to house different formats of production, with a legal agreement ensuring that the majority of the shows are from the subsidised sector. Other public benefits are the creation of new rehearsal space in the West End, and highways and public realm improvements to the area. It is accepted that the applicant has considered alternative sites over the years, and that none is suitable.

- 19.3 On making a balanced judgement as required by paragraph 133 of the NPPF, officers are of the view that, taken as a whole the public benefits are very substantial, they cannot be delivered without the extent of physical interventions as proposed in the application and that they significantly outweigh the substantial harm which would be caused. Officers are of the view that the circumstances are wholly exceptional and planning permission and listed building consent can be granted. It is considered that there will be no adverse impact on the setting of adjacent listed buildings or upon the character and appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.
- 19.4 There are transport implication arising from the proposed more regular changeovers, but other Victorian theatres in the West End manage to get in/get out and transport officers have been working closely with the applicant to secure a robust construction management plan.
- 19.5 The new building would be sustainable, and the proposals would not affect the amenity of adjoining occupiers nor would the basement works affect the local built or natural environment.
- 19.6 As such, the proposal is considered to comply with the Local Plan and the NPPF.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 20.1 **Planning Permission is recommended subject to conditions and a Section 106 Legal Agreement covering the following Heads of Terms, and subject to referral to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a decision on whether to call in the application to make a determination himself:-**

Community facilities

- Two junior school performance skills workshops per year by the DMT education officer (these will accommodate approximately 40 pupils per workshop);
- Two senior school performance skills workshops per year by the DMT education officer (maximum 40 pupils per workshop);
- One week work experience placement per Camden secondary school every other year (up to 5 placements available for work experience each year)

- All DMT Sondheim job vacancies will be advertised through the outlets listed on the Camden Local Community Information Directory (CINDEX)
- Training for front of house positions to be provided to NVQ level 2/3
- In any five consecutive calendar years the total length of Production Runs created or originated other than by a Subsidised Theatre Company shall not exceed 50 weeks without the written consent of the Council
- In any one year the total length of individual Production Runs shall not exceed 16 weeks without the written consent of the Council.

Employment and training

- The applicant should work to CITB benchmarks for local employment when recruiting for construction-related jobs as per clause 8.28 of CPG8.
- Advertisement of all construction vacancies and work placement opportunities exclusively with the King's Cross Construction Skills Centre for a period of 1 week before marketing more widely.
- A specified number (to be agreed) of construction or non-construction work placement opportunities of not less than 2 weeks each, to be undertaken over the course of the development, to be recruited through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre, or a specified number (to be agreed) of work experience placements following the completion of the building.
- If the build costs of the scheme exceed £3 million the applicant must recruit 1 construction or non-construction apprentice per £3million of build costs, and pay the council a support fee of £1,700 per apprentice. Recruitment of construction apprentices should be conducted through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre.
- If the value of the scheme exceeds £1 million, the applicant must also sign up to the Camden Local Procurement Code
- The S106 should broker a meeting between the end user(s) of the ground floor retail units and the Economic Development team to discuss our employment and skills objectives.
- The applicant provide a local employment, skills and local supply plan setting out their plan for delivering the above requirements in advance of commencing on site.

Energy and sustainability

- BREEAM Excellent level and minimum credit targets in Energy (60%), Materials (40%) and Water (60%).
- Energy provisions to be secured through S106 EE&RE plan – 25.7% reduction beyond Part L 2013 AND 3.1 % reduction through renewables
- Future proofing details
- Carbon Offset Fund (£12,825)

Transport

- CMP to be approved prior to any works starting on site, restricting HGV movements to and from the site to within the hours of 09:30 to 16:30 Monday to Friday, 08:00 till 13:00 Saturdays and fully restrict movement on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- A financial contribution of £35,000 for CMP monitoring.

- 2 year trial Service Management Plan
- Workplace Travel Plan (TP) stating that the TP shall be approved prior to the first occupation of the site and the approved plan shall be followed, unless otherwise agreed with the Highway Authority. The applicant be required to undertake a TRAVL after survey and to provide TfL and Camden with a copy of the results as part of the travel plan review and monitoring process.
- A financial contribution of £6,224 to cover the costs of monitoring and reviewing the Travel Plans for a period of 5 years.
- A financial contribution (tbc) to cover the cost of public highway and public realm improvement works in the general vicinity of the site, including but not limited to:
 - Alteration to the boundary of the Theatre
 - Alteration to levelling of the public highways as required
 - Upgrade to paving
 - Relocation of the street lighting
 - Relocation of the two cycle Sheffield stands
 - Reinforcement of public highway to facilitate Heavy Goods Vehicles on Tower Street Monmouth Street
 - Major alteration to the junction of Monmouth Street and Tower Street
- A financial contribution of £8,000 towards Pedestrian, Cycling, Environmental, and Public Realm improvements in the vicinity of the site.
- Car free

20.2 **Listed Building Consent is recommended subject to conditions and referral to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a decision on whether to call in the application to make a determination himself.**

LEGAL COMMENTS

Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

Condition(s) and Reason(s): **2016/4869/P**

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans Site Location Plan 11455-A-00-01;
Existing Drawings: 11455-A-01-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;
Proposed Drawings: 11455-A-03-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;

11455-A-05-01 Rev J; 02 Rev J; 03 Rev J; 04 Rev H; 05 Rev H; 06 Rev G; 08 Rev F; 09 Rev H; 1455-A-06-01 Rev J; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11455-A-07-01 Rev D; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11; 12; 13; 14; S091 Rev P1; S092 Rev P1; S098 Rev P3; S099 Rev P2; S100 Rev P2; S101 Rev P1; S102 Rev P1; S103 Rev P1; S104 Rev P1; S105 Rev P1; S200 Rev P5; S201 Rev P5; S0900 Rev P1; S0901 Rev P1; C100 Rev P2; C101 Rev P1; SSK100 Rev P2; SSK100 Rev P2; 1413 L(0)210; 1413 L(0)211; 1413 L(0)212; SSK101 Rev P2; SSK102 Rev P2; SSK103 Rev P3; SSK104 Rev P3; SSK105 Rev P1; SSK106 Rev P1; SSK107 Rev P1; SSK108 Rev P1; SDS00000.00; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/04; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/01;

Heritage Statement by John Earl Jan 2015; Statement of Significance by Montague Evans October 2016; Design and Access Statement by Aedas Arts Team with Citizens Design Bureau March 2016; Planning and Heritage Statement by Montagu Evans dated September 2016; Archaeological Assessment by RSK September 2014; Interior Modelling Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Interior Planning Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Townscape Visual Assessment by Montagu Evans dated November 2016, Montagu Evans Additional Information Letter dated 12th July 2017;

External Lighting - Planning Document August 2015; M&E Report by Power Plan dated 14th July 2016; Energy Statement by XC2 Energy May 2016; Sustainability Statement by XC2 Energy May 2016; Acoustic Report by Gilleron Scott Acoustic Design dated 9th January 2015; Overheating Report by XC2 Energy May 2016; Security Report October 2015; Ecology Report by Greengage May 2016; Daylight Sunlight Report by Delva Patman Redler September 2015; Asbestos Report by Healthy Buildings International dated 16th September 2015; Statement of Community Involvement by Four dated September 2016; BIA Audit Response by Conisbee dated 10th March 2016; Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Preliminary Risk Assessment by RSK dated August 2014; Basement Impact Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Utility Report by RSK dated July 2014; Structural Stage D Report by Conisbee dated 8th March 2016; Surface Water Drainage Statement by Conisbee dated 26th January 2017; Campbell Reith Audit F1 Dated May 2016; Refuse Storage Letter from Mousetrap Productions dated 25th January 2018 Delivery and Servicing Outline Management Report by Mayer Brown dated October 2017; Delivery and Servicing Plan by Mayer Brown dated July 2017; Construction Management Plan by Conisbee dated 10th March 2015; Vehicle Route Plan; Servicing Plan Report by Theatre Projects Consultants February 2016; Get-In Vehicle Statement by Theatre Projects Consultants dated 28th August 2015; Transport Statement by Mayer Brown May 2016; Construction Site Waste management Plan by XC2 Energy July 2016; Swept Path Analysis 2016-2800-001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 10, 011, 012, 014; TS1311/200/2017

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 The external noise level emitted from plant, machinery or equipment with associated noise mitigation at the development hereby approved shall be lower than the lowest existing background noise level by at least 5dBA, by 10dBA where the source is tonal, as assessed according to BS4142:2014 at the nearest and/or most affected noise sensitive premises, with all machinery operating together at maximum capacity.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the [adjoining] premises [and the area generally] in accordance with the requirements of policies G1, CC1, D1, and A1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 4 Once the route(s) of the supply pipe(s) are known and at least 28 days before development commences:
- (a) a targeted investigation and specific sampling/analytical strategy may be required for the presence of groundwater contamination and the results submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in accordance with the UKWIR 2010 Guidance; and
 - (b) following the approval detailed in paragraph (a), a written scheme of remediation measures [if necessary] shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.
- The remediation measures shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved scheme and a written report detailing the remediation shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to occupation.

Reason: To protect future occupiers of the development from the possible presence of ground contamination arising in connection with the previous industrial/storage use of the site in accordance with policies G1, D1, A1, and DM1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 5 In the event that additional significant contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported in writing immediately to the local planning authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Agency's Model Procedures for the Management of Contamination (CLR11), and where mitigation is necessary a scheme of remediation must be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the local planning authority before any part of the development hereby permitted is occupied.

Reason: To protect future occupiers of the development from the possible presence of ground contamination arising in connection with the previous industrial/storage use of the site in accordance with policies G1, D1, A1, and DM1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 6 No development shall take place until full details of the air quality monitors have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. Such details shall include the location, number and specification of the monitors, including evidence of the fact that they have been installed in line with guidance outlined in the GLA's Control of Dust and Emissions during Construction and Demolition Supplementary Planning Guidance and have been in place for 3 months prior to the proposed implementation date. The monitors shall be retained and maintained on site for the duration of the development in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies G1, A1, D1 and CC4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 7 Prior to commencement, detailed plans showing the location and extent of photovoltaic cells to be installed on the building shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The measures shall include the installation of a meter to monitor the energy output from the approved renewable energy systems. The cells shall be installed in full accordance with the details approved by the Local Planning Authority and permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development provides adequate on-site renewable energy facilities in accordance with the requirements of Policy G1, CC1 and CC2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 8 Prior to commencement of any development other than site clearance & preparation details of the feasibility of rainwater and greywater recycling proposals should be submitted to the local planning authority and approved in writing. The development shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure the development contributes to minimising the need for further water infrastructure in an area of water stress in accordance with policies CC1, CC2, CC3 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 9 The development hereby approved shall not commence until such time as a suitably qualified chartered engineer with membership of the appropriate professional body has been appointed to inspect, approve and monitor the critical elements of both permanent and temporary basement construction works throughout their duration to ensure compliance with the design which has been checked and approved by a building control body. Details of the appointment and the appointee's responsibilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development. Any subsequent change or reappointment shall be confirmed forthwith for the duration of the construction works.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance and structural stability of neighbouring buildings and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1, D2 and A5 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 10 The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved basement information (Revised Basement Impact Assessment compiled by RSK dated March 2016, Revised Structural Stage D Report (SSDR) by Consibee dated March, Construction Management Plan (CMP) by Consibee dated December 2014, Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Assessment (GGSA) by RSK dated October 2014, Consibee revised construction sequence sketches) and the recommendations advised by Campbell Reith in their report (Revision F1) dated May 2016,

Reason: To safeguard the appearance and structural stability of neighbouring buildings and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1, D2 and A5 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 11 Before the relevant parts of the works commence, confirmation that the conclusions in the Ground Movement Assessment and predicted damage are still valid at detailed design stage shall be submitted to and approved by the Council. The basement works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance and structural stability of neighbouring buildings and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1, D2 and A5 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 12 No demolition or development shall take place until a stage 1 written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no demolition or development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, and the programme and methodology of site evaluation and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works. If heritage assets of archaeological interest are identified by stage 1 then for those parts of the site which have archaeological interest a stage 2 WSI shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the stage 2 WSI, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed stage 2 WSI which shall include:
- (a) The statement of significance and research objectives, the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works
 - (b) The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the stage 2 WSI.

Reason: Important archaeological remains may exist on this site. Accordingly the Local planning authority wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 13 Prior to commencement of development, full details in respect of the living roof in the area indicated on the approved roof plan shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The details shall include
- i. a detailed scheme of maintenance
 - ii. sections at a scale of 1:20 with manufacturers details demonstrating the construction and materials used and showing a variation of substrate depth with peaks and troughs
 - iii. full details of planting species and density

The living roofs shall be fully provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter retained and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to ensure the development undertakes reasonable measures to take account of biodiversity and the water environment in accordance with policies G1, CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, D1, D2 and A3 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 14 Before the development commences, details of secure and covered cycle storage area for 3x cycles shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The approved facility shall thereafter be provided in its entirety prior to the first occupation of any of the new units, and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development provides adequate cycle parking facilities in accordance with the requirements of policy T1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Party Wall etc Act 1996 which covers party wall matters, boundary walls and excavations near neighbouring buildings. You are advised to consult a suitably qualified and experienced Building Engineer.
- 3 Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You are advised to consult the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444 or search for 'environmental health' on the Camden website or seek prior approval under Section 61 of the Act if you anticipate any difficulty in carrying out construction other than within the hours stated above.
- 4 Your attention is drawn to the fact that there is a separate legal agreement with the Council which relates to the development for which this permission is granted. Information/drawings relating to the discharge of matters covered by the Heads of Terms of the legal agreement should be marked for the attention of the Planning Obligations Officer, Sites Team, Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street, WC1H 8EQ.
- 5 Written schemes of investigation will need to be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified professionally accredited archaeological practice in accordance with Historic England's Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Greater London. This condition is exempt from deemed discharge under schedule 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 6 You are advised that this proposal will be liable for the Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Camden CIL as the additional floorspace exceeds 100sqm GIA or one unit of residential accommodation. Based on the information given on the plans, the Mayor's CIL Charging Schedule and the Camden Charging Schedule, the charge is likely to be £53,350 (1,067sqm x £50) for the Mayor's CIL and £26,675 (1,067qm x £25 using the relevant rate for uplift in that type of floorspace) for the Camden CIL.

This amount is an estimate based on the information submitted in your planning application. The liable amount may be revised on the receipt of the CIL Additional Information Requirement Form or other changes in circumstances. Both CIL's will be collected by Camden after the scheme has started and could be subject to surcharges for failure to assume liability or submit a commencement notice PRIOR to commencement and/or for late payment. We will issue a formal liability notice once the liable party has been established. CIL payments will also be subject to indexation in line with the construction costs index.

Conditions and Reasons: **2016/5032/L**

- 1 The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan 11455-A-00-01;
Existing Drawings: 11455-A-01-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;
Proposed Drawings: 11455-A-03-01; 02; 03; 04; 05; 06; 10; 11; 20; 21; 22;
11455-A-05-01 Rev J; 02 Rev J; 03 Rev J; 04 Rev H; 05 Rev H; 06 Rev G; 07 Rev F; 09 Rev H; 11455-A-06-01 Rev J; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11455-A-07-01 Rev J; 02 Rev D; 03 Rev C; 11; 12; 13; 14; S091 Rev P1; S092 Rev P1; S098 Rev P3; S099 Rev P2; S100 Rev P2; S101 Rev P1; S102 Rev P1; S103 Rev P1; S104 Rev P1; S105 Rev P1; S200 Rev P5; S201 Rev P5; S0900 Rev P1; S0901 Rev P1; S0902 Rev P2; C101 Rev P1; SSK100 Rev P2; SSK100 Rev P2; 1413 L(0)210; 1413 L(0)211; 1413 L(0)212; SSK101 Rev P2; SSK102 Rev P2; SSK103 Rev P2; SSK104 Rev P3; SSK105 Rev P1; SSK106 Rev P1; SSK107 Rev P1; SSK108 Rev P1; SDS00000.00; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/04; 11455_2016/10/28_AAT SK/01;

Heritage Statement by John Earl Jan 2015; Statement of Significance by Montagu Evans October 2016; Design and Access Statement by Aedas Arts Team October 2016; Citizens Design Bureau March 2016; Planning and Heritage Statement by Montagu Evans dated September 2016; Archaeological Assessment by RSK Sept 2014; Interior Modelling Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Interior Planning Report by Citizens Design Bureau dated 5th May 2016; Tower Visual Assessment by Montagu Evans dated November 2016, Montagu Evans Additional Information Letter dated 12th July 2017;

External Lighting - Planning Document August 2015; M&E Report by Power Plan dated 14th July 2016; Asbestos Report by Healthy Buildings International dated 16th September 2015; BIA Audit Response by Conisbee dated 10th March 2016; Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Preliminary Risk Assessment by RSK dated August 2014; Basement Impact Assessment by RSK dated March 2016; Utility Report by RSK dated July 2014; Structural Stage D Report by Conisbee dated 8th March 2016; Surface Water Drainage Statement by Conisbee dated 26th Jan.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 3 All new work and work of making good shall be carried out to match the existing adjacent work as closely as possible in materials and detailed execution.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 4 Prior to the commencement of works, a method statement, describing the dismantling, salvage and reinstatement of external fabric, including the roof, architectural details and fittings and external walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 5 Prior to the commencement of works, full recording of the building's exterior and a scheme to keep the recordings in the public realm in perpetuity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory recording of heritage assets of historic interest, in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 6 Prior to the commencement of works, identification of all external architectural features to be incorporated into the new building and identification of all external architectural features to be demolished with justification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 7 Prior to the commencement of works, details of new structural work, new external fabric (roof and wall construction, new windows and doors, etc) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 8 Prior to the commencement of works, samples of all new external surface materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 9 Prior to the commencement works, a full recording of the building's interior and a scheme to keep the recordings in the public realm in perpetuity to be submitted and agreed in writing.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory recording of heritage assets of historic interest, in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 10 Prior to the commencement works, a detailed explanation of the future of the staging machinery, including but not limited to the drum, shaft and grid iron, and superfluous internal and external historic material shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the local authority prior to works beginning.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 11 Prior to the commencement works, a recording of interior historic features to be destroyed and justification for their non-retention/non-salvage and a scheme to keep the recordings in the public realm in perpetuity shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the local authority.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory recording of heritage assets of historic interest and to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 12 Prior to the commencement works, a list of historic features to be retained in their original position and method statement for their protection during works to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 13 Prior to the commencement works, a list of historic features to be salvaged and disposed of, including method statements for their dismantling and justification for their non-retention shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local authority.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 14 Prior to the commencement works, the method statement outlining the techniques for dismantling, repair, protection and reinstatement of the fibrous plaster ceiling to be further developed and submitted to and agreed in writing by the local authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 15 Prior to the commencement works, a list of other internal features, including, but not limited to historic plasterwork, metalwork and joinery, chandeliers and fittings, to be relocated in new positions within the new development, and drawings of those new positions, and method statements for their dismantling, protection and reinstallation to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 16 Prior to the commencement works, details of mechanical and electrical services, WC plumbing layouts, drainage, level access, signage, etc, to be submitted and agreed in writing by the local authority prior to works beginning. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 17 Prior to the commencement of works, a level 2 photographic record of interior historic fixtures and fittings shall be compiled and a scheme to keep the recording in the public realm in perpetuity shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the local authority.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory recording of heritage assets of historic interest and to preserve the special interest of the grade-II-listed building in accordance with Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 You are advised that any works of alterations or upgrading not included on the approved drawings which are required to satisfy Building Regulations or Fire Certification may require a further application for listed building consent.
- 3 Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You are advised to consult the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444 or search for 'environmental health' on the Camden website or seek prior approval under Section 61 of the Act if you anticipate any difficulty in carrying out construction other than within the hours stated above.

Annex 1**List Entry****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, London, WC2H 9ND

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	Camden	London Borough	Non Civil Parish

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 16 March 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

Legacy Number: 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**

Theatre, opened in January 1913, designed by W G R Sprague in Classical style with Louis XVI style interiors. The builder was Kinglerlee and Sons. The Stalls were re-seated in 1924 and the Circle in 1929 by Sprague and Barton.

Reasons for Designation

Ambassadors Theatre is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Architectural interest: as an 1913 theatre designed by W G R Sprague, one of the most important late C19 and early C20 theatre architects;
- * Completeness of design: both the Classical style exterior and the interior in Louis XVI style were designed by Sprague and include foyer, circle bar, auditorium and some original backstage features;
- * Degree of survival: both exterior and interior are little altered;
- * Historical interest: the theatre saw the West End debut of many famous artists including Ivor Novello, Hermione Gingold, Paul Robeson, Margaret Lockwood and Vivien Leigh and it was the original home of 'The Mousetrap', the world's longest running show;
- * Group value: adjoins St Martin's Theatre of 1916, also by Sprague (Grade II) and 24 West Street (Grade II).

History

The Ambassadors Theatre was designed by the theatre architect W G R Sprague (1865-1933) and opened on 5 June 1913. Sprague (1865-1933) was one of the three leading theatre architects of the period 1890-1914 and designed more than thirty theatres during his career, including eight in London's West End

A new theatre had been proposed for this site in 1898-9 but had been twice rejected because of the narrowness of the surrounding streets, particularly Tower Court. In 1912 Sprague applied on behalf of Herbert Jay to build 'a comparatively small theatre' for 506 seated patrons and 40 standing, mainly for amateur productions. He argued that although the streets were narrower than normally allowed for access to a theatre there would be access to the site on three sides if the narrow Tower Court, only 13 feet wide, was included. Permission was granted on condition that Tower Court was widened to 20 feet, which made a restricted site even smaller. The height of the theatre was restricted by Ancient Lights acquired by neighbouring properties.

Sprague's plans, which included the interior decorative scheme, date from April 1912. An additional floor of dressing rooms was added during construction and the theatre opened on 5 June 1913. The auditorium was described in contemporary accounts as in Louis XVI style with ambassadorial crests and a colour scheme of Parma violet, ivory and gold.

A sprinkler system was added in January 1914. The stalls seats were replaced in 1924 and the circle seats in 1929 by Sprague and Barton. Apart from re-decoration the auditorium remains virtually intact. The theatre can currently seat 408.

From the start it was used for professional performances, specialising in small ensemble pieces and also revues, which were pioneered here by Charles B Cochran in 1914, and ran through the Second World War. Performers who made their West End debut in plays here included Ivor Novello and Hermione Gingold (both 1921), Paul Robeson (1925), Margaret Lockwood (1934) and Vivien Leigh (1935). In 1952 'The Mousetrap' opened here and remained until 1974 when it transferred to St Martin's Theatre next door. The building was also in occasional cinema use.

Details

Theatre, opened in January 1913, designed by W G R Sprague in Classical style with Louis XVI style interiors. The builder was Kinglerlee and Sons. The Stalls were re-seated in 1924 and the Circle in 1929 by Sprague and Barton.

MATERIALS: the frontage to West Street and the corner to Tower Court is stuccoed, the remainder of brick in English bond. There is a metal and glazed canopy to West Street and the corner with Tower Court. The roof is concealed by a parapet.

PLAN: a splayed almost triangular site with a circular foyer at the corner of West Street and Tower Court, a circular bar above and stairs leading off. The auditorium comprises stalls and circle, the proscenium arch is 24 feet 6 inches wide with a box each side, and the stage depth is 20 feet 6 inches. The stairs, offices and lavatories adjoin Tower Court. There are three storeys of dressing rooms behind the stage along Tower Street.

EXTERIOR: the West Street elevation is of three storeys and five bays with a balustraded parapet with ball finials and a deep moulded cornice. The central three bays are separated by pilasters and have deeply recessed flat-arched casement windows. The slightly advanced end bays have channelled pilasters under segmental pediments, circular openings on the second floor and flat-arched casements to the first floor. The ground floor has a continuous metal and glazed canopy, deep moulded cornice and alternate mahogany double doors and casement windows. The curved corner between West Street and Tower Court has

mahogany half-glazed doors and triple casement windows above flanked by pilasters. The stuccoed southern bay of the Tower Court elevation is identical to the southern bay on West Street.

The remainder of the Tower Court elevation is in brick and plainer, the southern end of three storeys and a semi-basement with three elliptical-headed windows, the central part of two storeys with two elliptical-headed windows and a tall opening for loading scenery, and the northern part of three storeys with two elliptical-headed casement windows and a narrow stage door.

The Tower Street elevation has a taller three storey southern bay with an elliptical-headed casement on each floor and a lower three storey and semi-basement section of four bays with elliptical-headed windows and an elliptical-headed fire door.

INTERIOR: the interior plaster decoration is in Louis XVI style. Public areas have mahogany doors. The circular foyer has pilasters below a decorative plastered ceiling. The circle bar above is similar. The auditorium has a circular high relief decorated plaster ceiling with central chandelier, a panelled border with roundels and a deep cove penetrated by arches springing from fluted Ionic pilasters. The richly framed and festooned roundels have coloured armorial decorations in the arch tympana. The Circle has a horseshoe-curved balcony front with panelled and festooned plasterwork decoration, and there is a narrower section raised up at the back with a smaller similar balcony. Its ceiling has large fielded panels. The Stalls side walls have oval decorations with festoons, containing looking glasses, but, according to an old photograph in the Metropolitan Archives, originally held paintings. The flat basket-arched proscenium arch is crowned by three armorial decorations, flanked by fluted Ionic pilasters and tall single splayed round-headed boxes with urn decoration above and closed balustrading below.

Original stage machinery includes two fly floors and the traditional system of hemp flying, although the ropes, flying bars and pulley blocks have been replaced. There is a timber gridiron for suspending scenery with a now rarely surviving but disused single drum and shaft mechanism.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

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Barson, Susie, Kendall, Derek, Longman, Peter, Smith, Joanna , Scene/Unseen, (English Heritage 2003), 22

Earl, John, Sell, Michael, The Theatres Trust Guide to British Theatres 1750 - 1950, (2000), 98

Kilburn, Mike, London Theatres, (2002)

Stuart Gray, A, Edwardian Architecture A Biographical Dictionary, (1988), 335-336

Map**National Grid Reference:** TQ3000781007

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Former List Entry**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	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	Camden	London Borough	

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 16 March 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

Legacy Number: 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

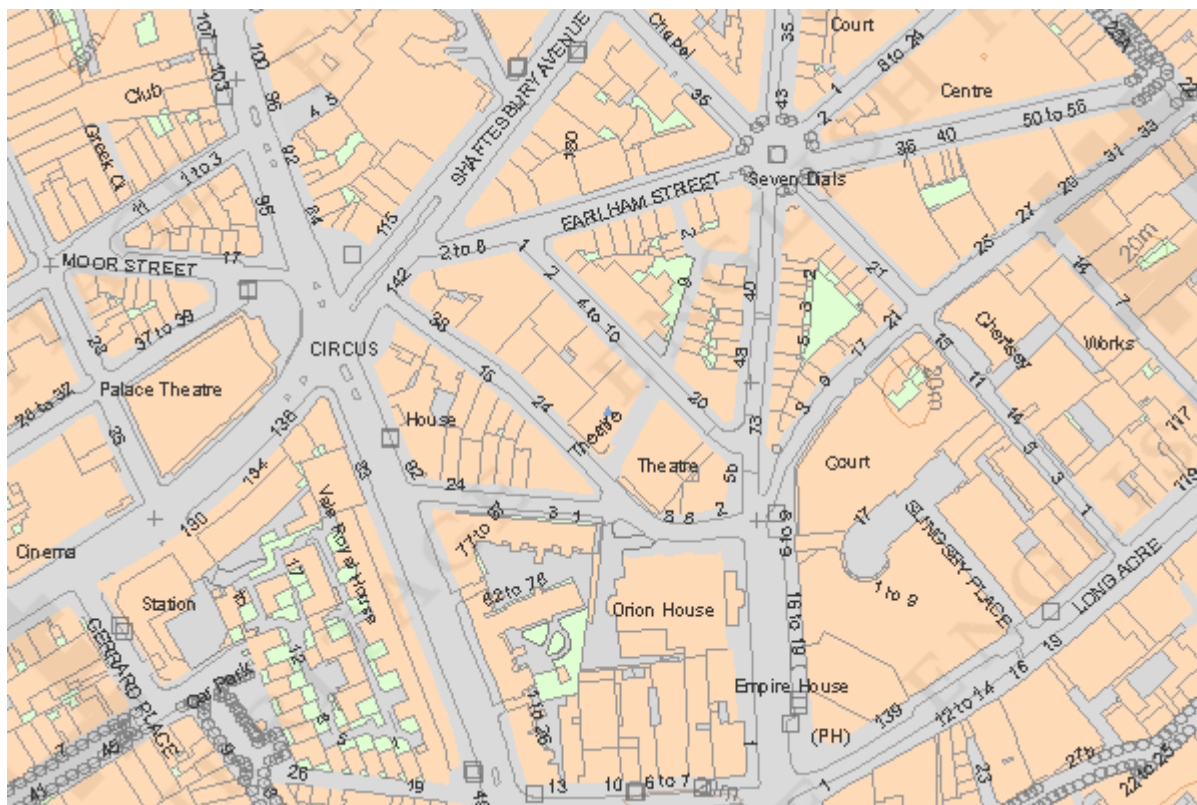
Theatre. 1913. By WGR Sprague for a syndicate. Built by Kingerlee and Sons. Stucco.

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. 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.

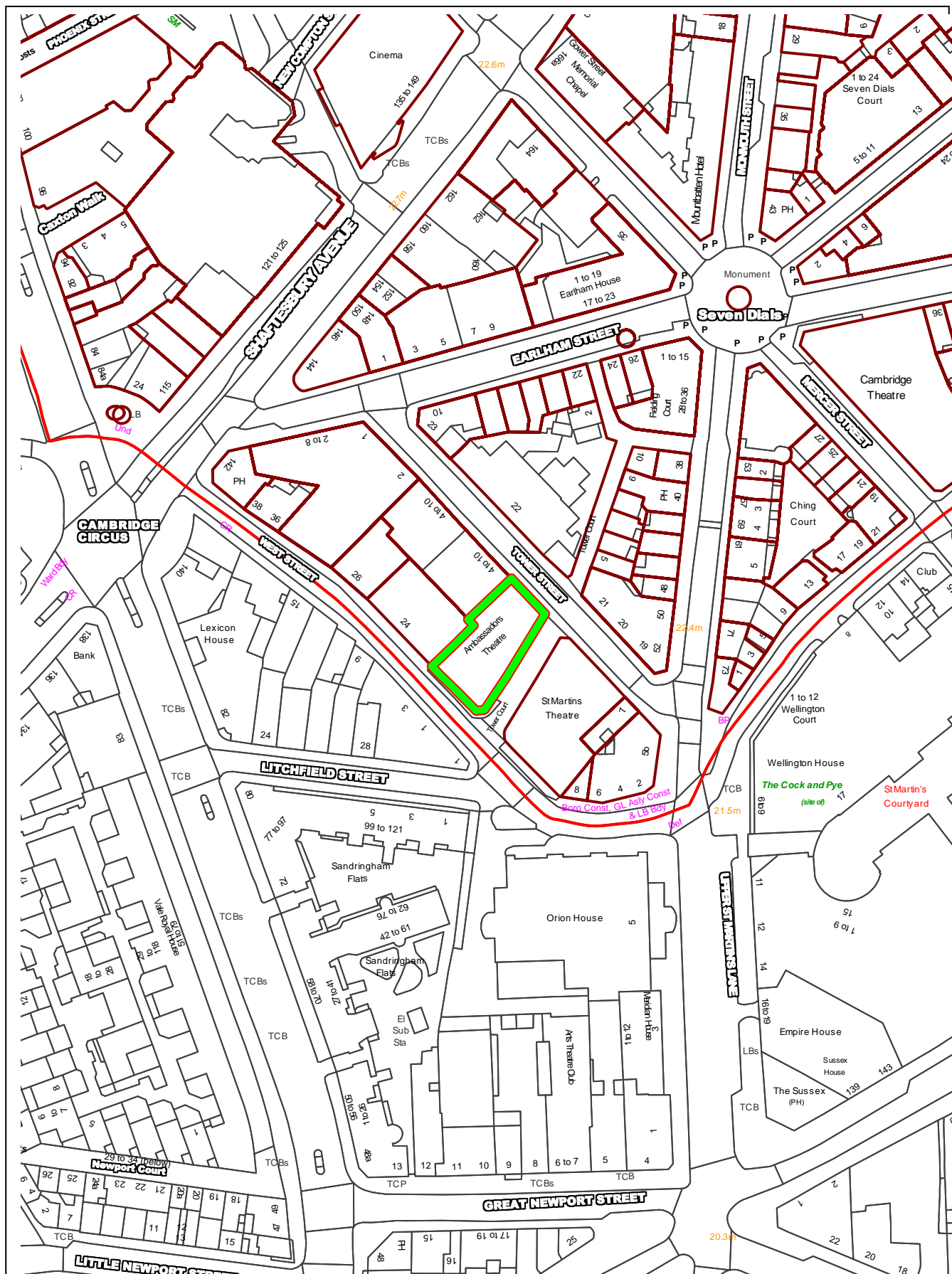
Listing NGR: TQ2999881002

Selected Sources

Map**National Grid Reference:** TQ 30008 81005

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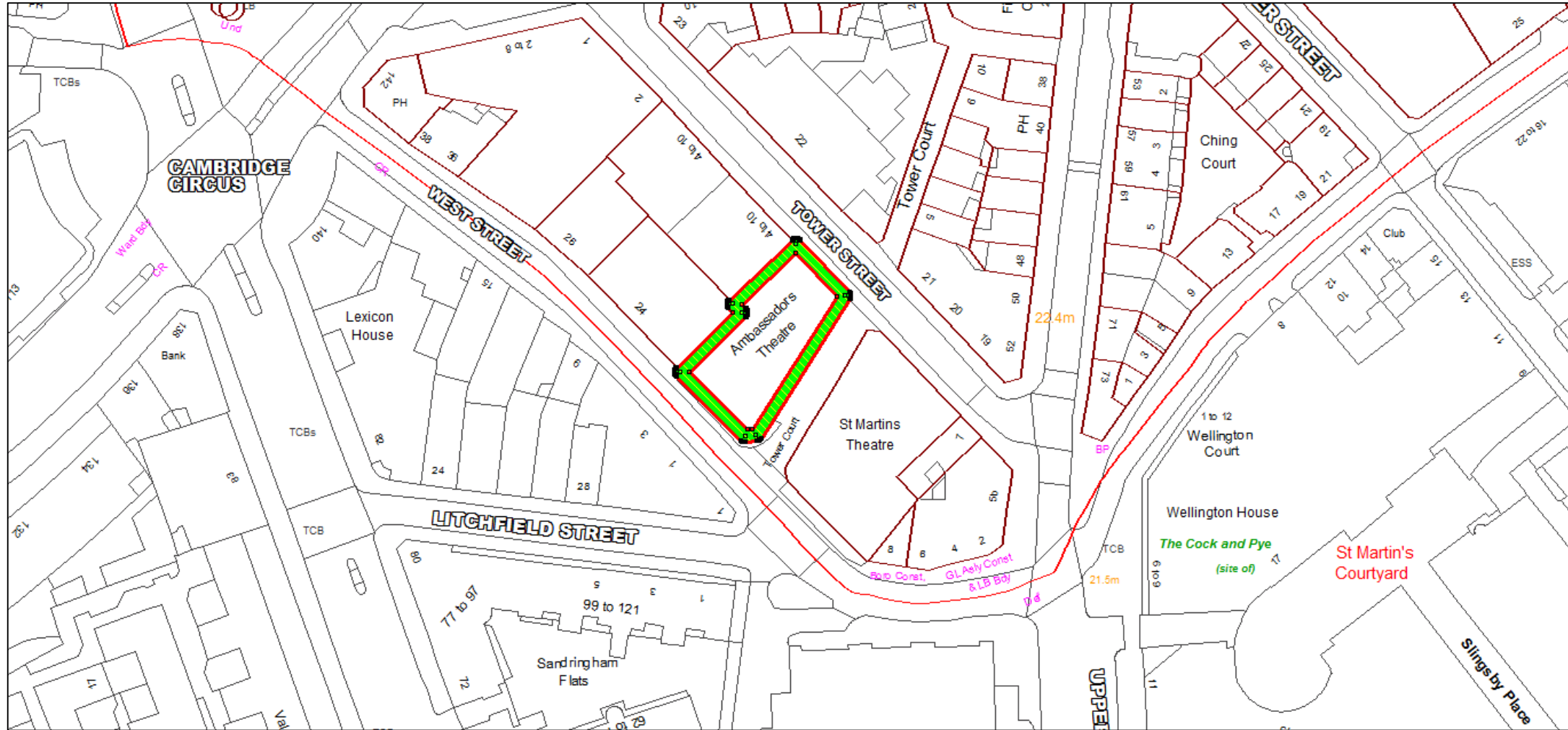
Application No: 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L
Ambassadors Theatre, West Street
London. WC2H 9ND.

Scale:
1:1250
Date:
9-Feb-18



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Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Side elevation
Tower Court

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Rear Elevation
Tower Street

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



St Martin's Theatre

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing



Proposed CGI

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing



Proposed CGI

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Restricted view from back of circle



Restricted view from back of stalls

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Cramped front row
with orchestra pit

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Circle Bar



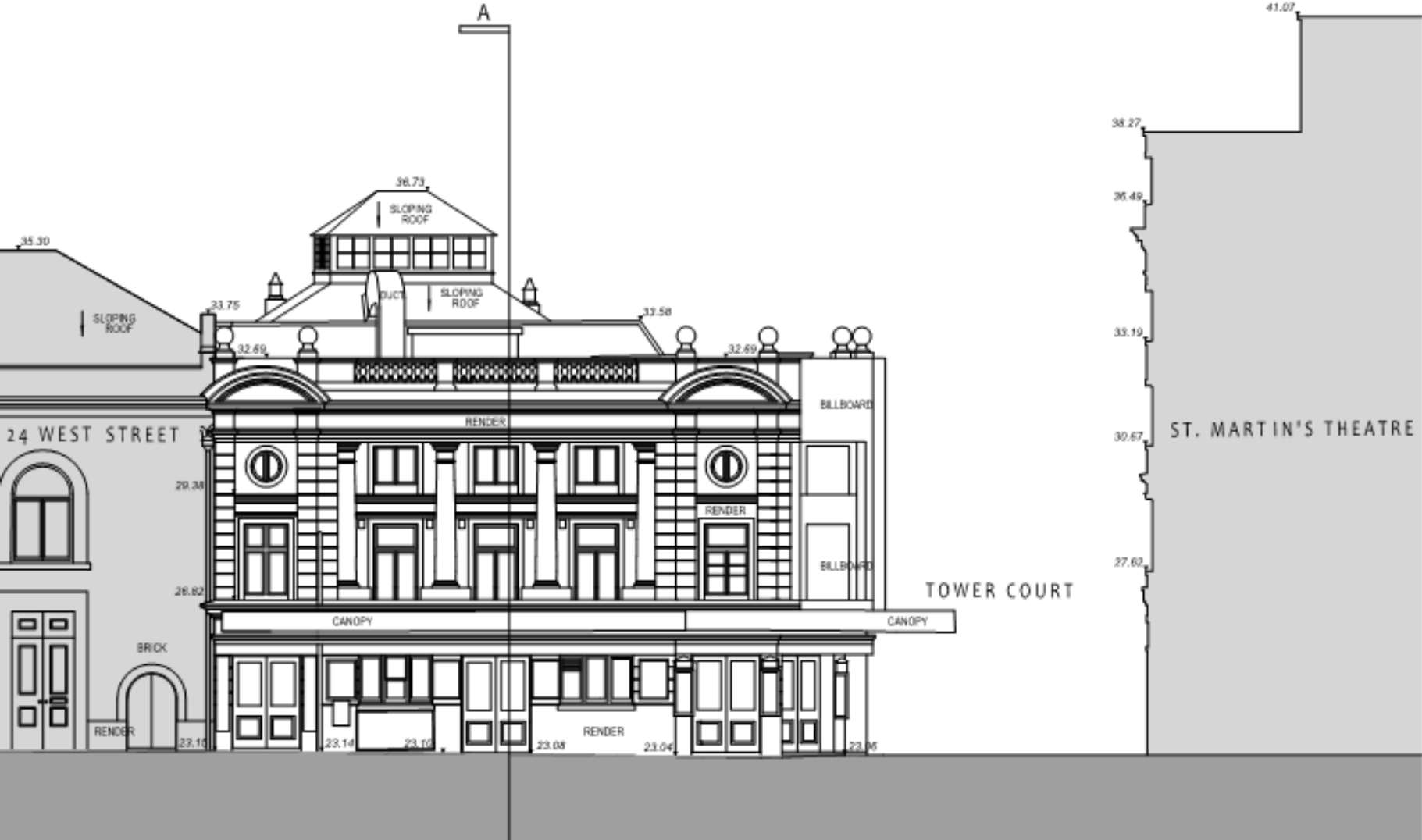
Stalls Bar

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Auditorium ceiling

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing Front Elevation
West Street



Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L

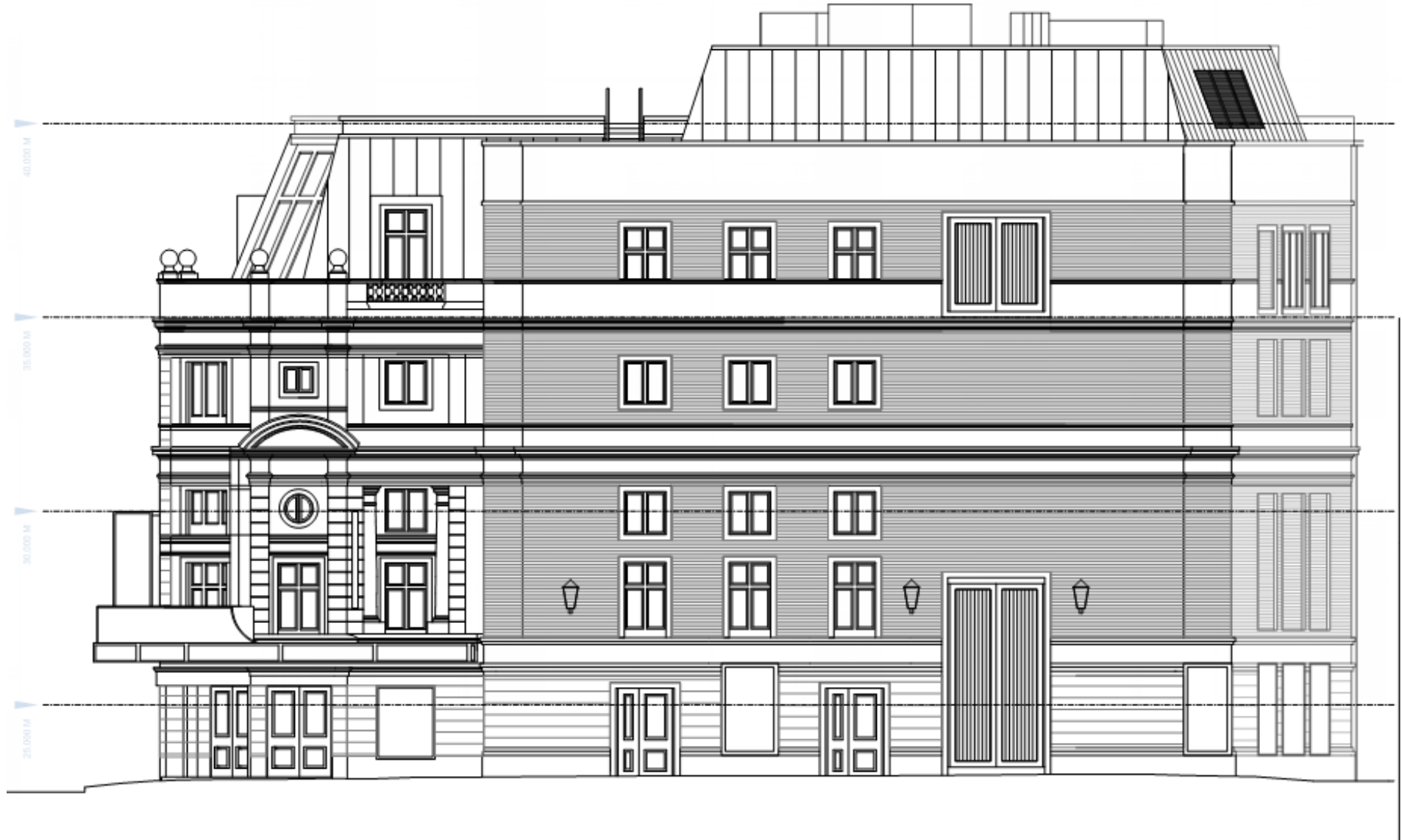


Proposed Front
Elevation West Street

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L

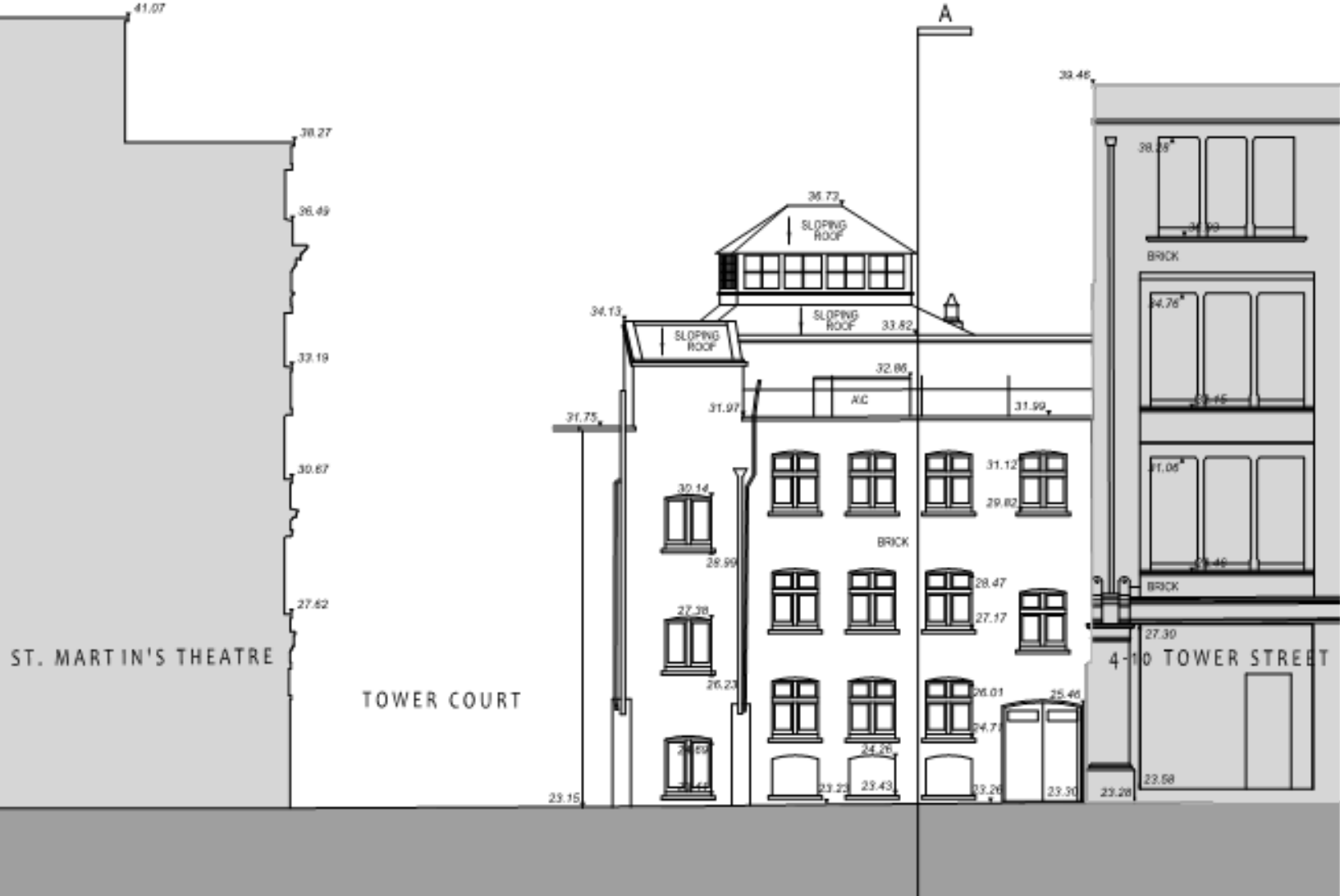


Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Proposed Side
Elevation Tower Court

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



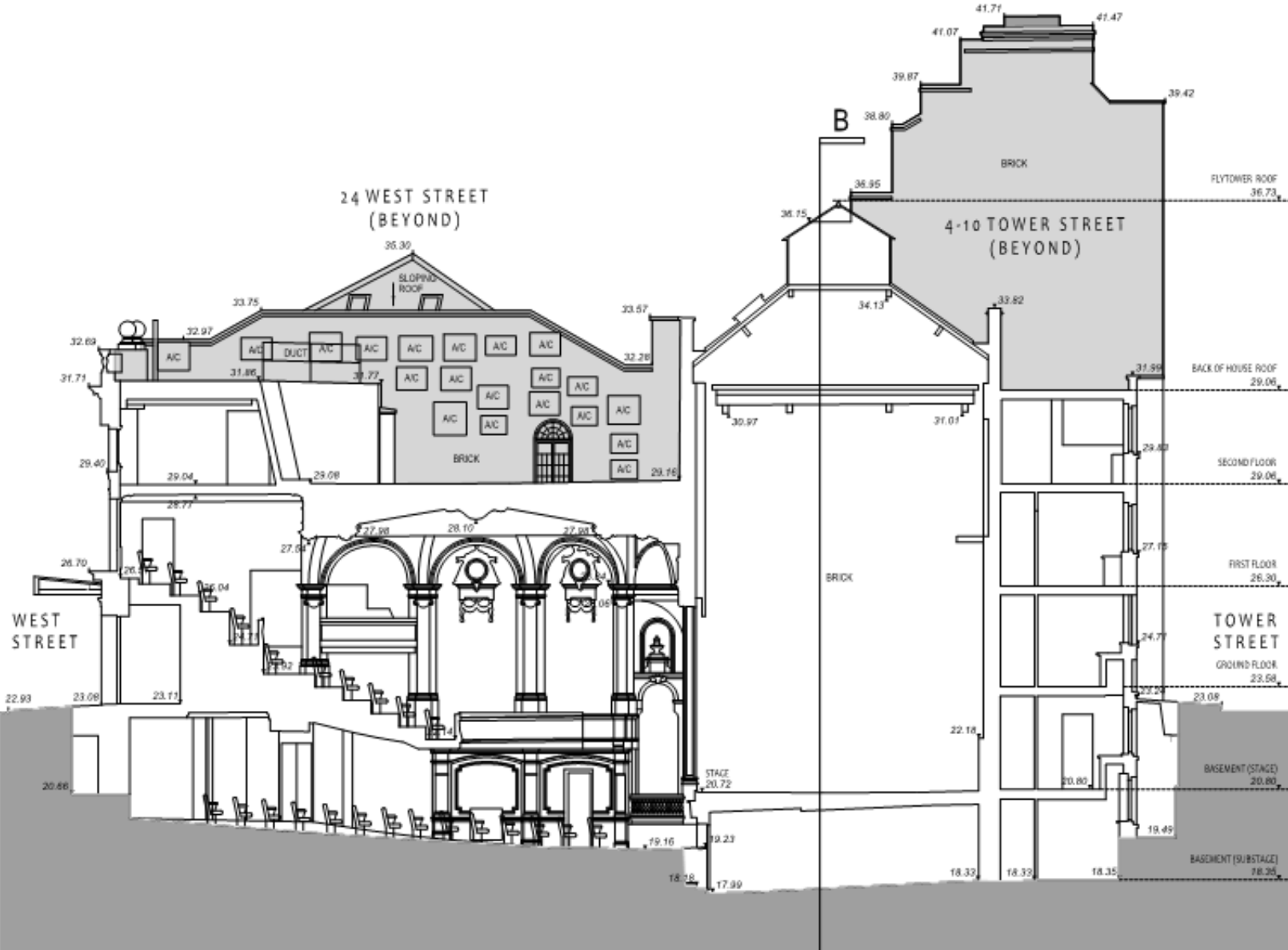
Existing Rear Elevation
Tower Street

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



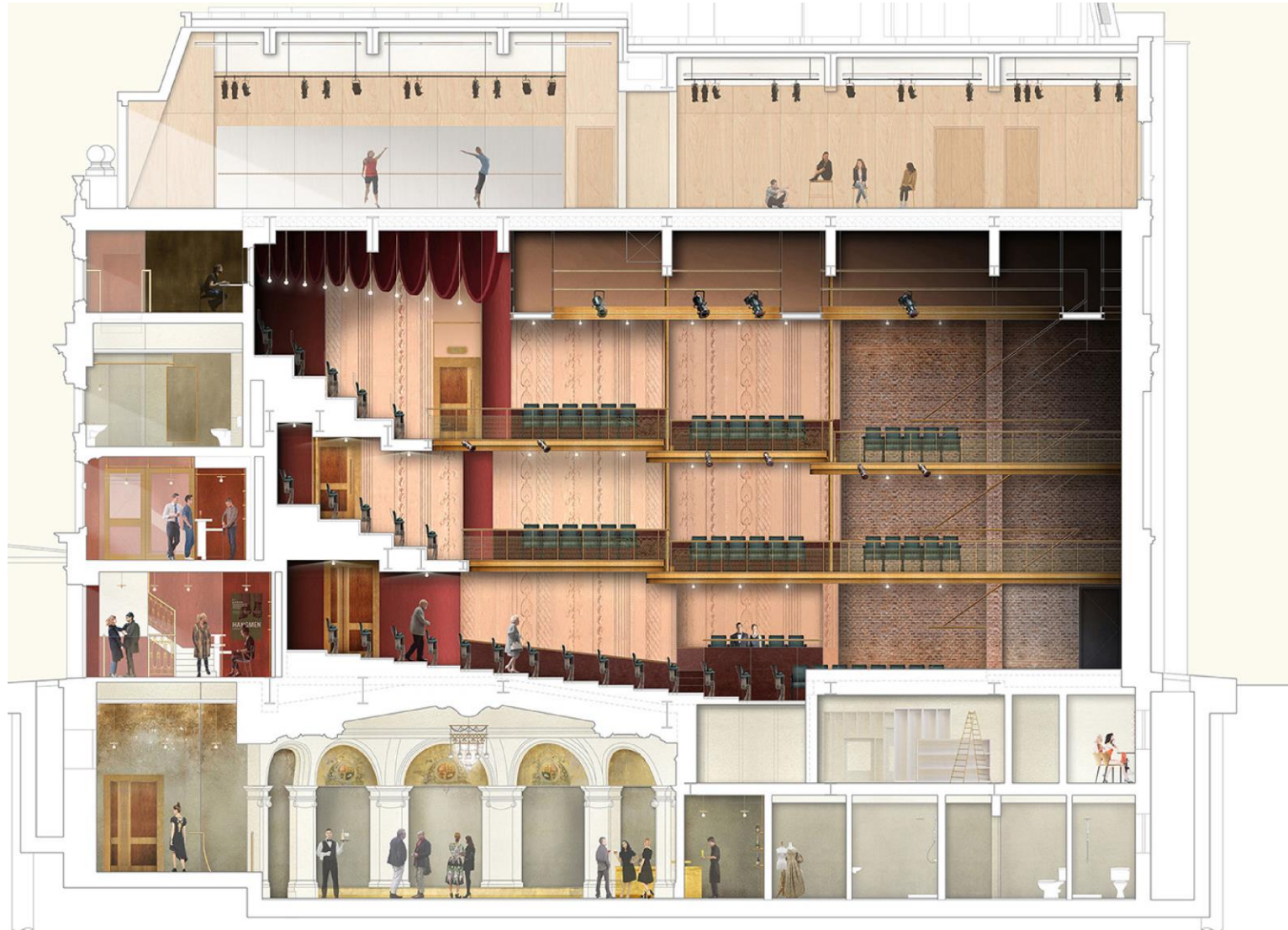
Proposed Rear
Elevation Tower Street

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



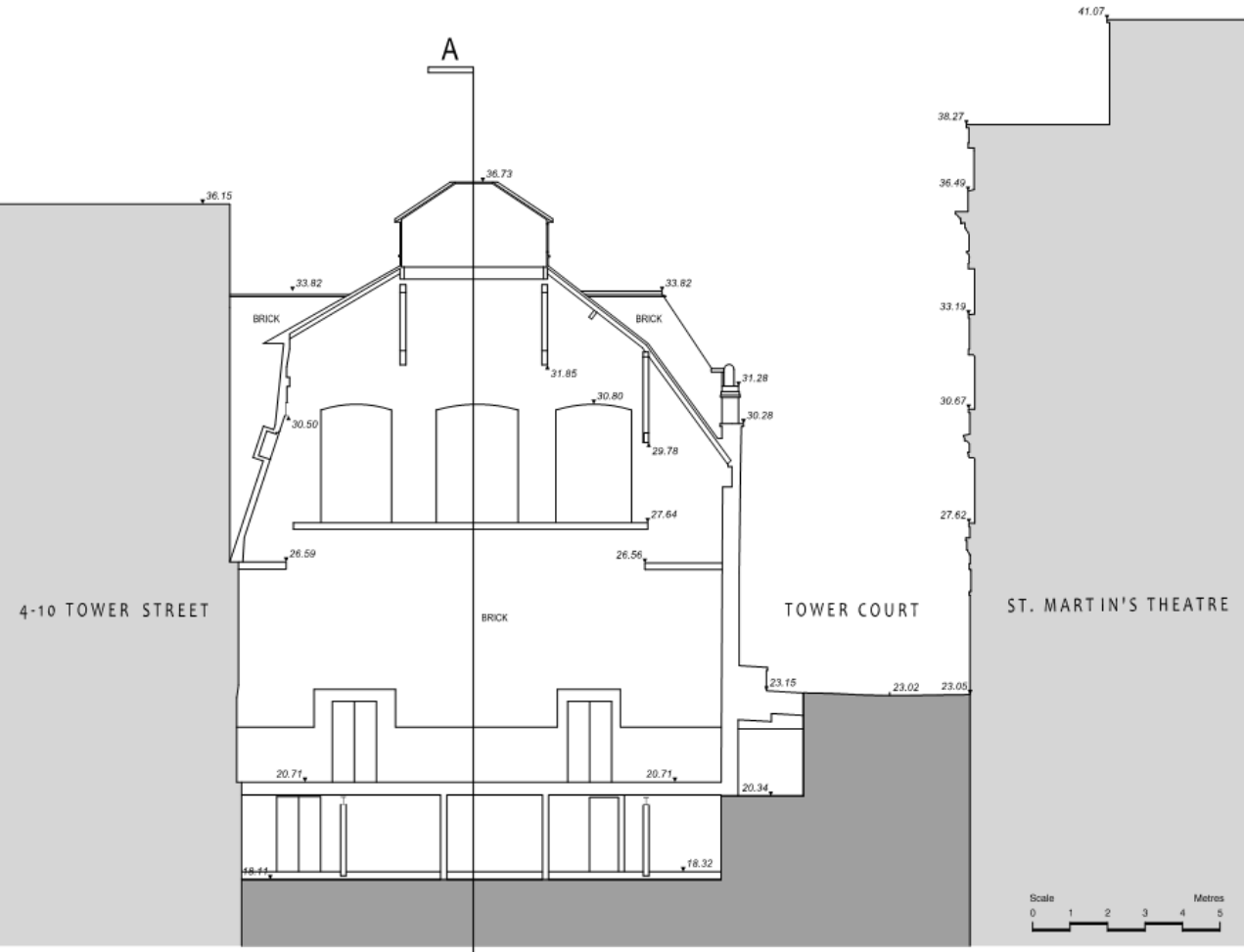
Existing Section A

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Proposed Section A

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing Section B

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



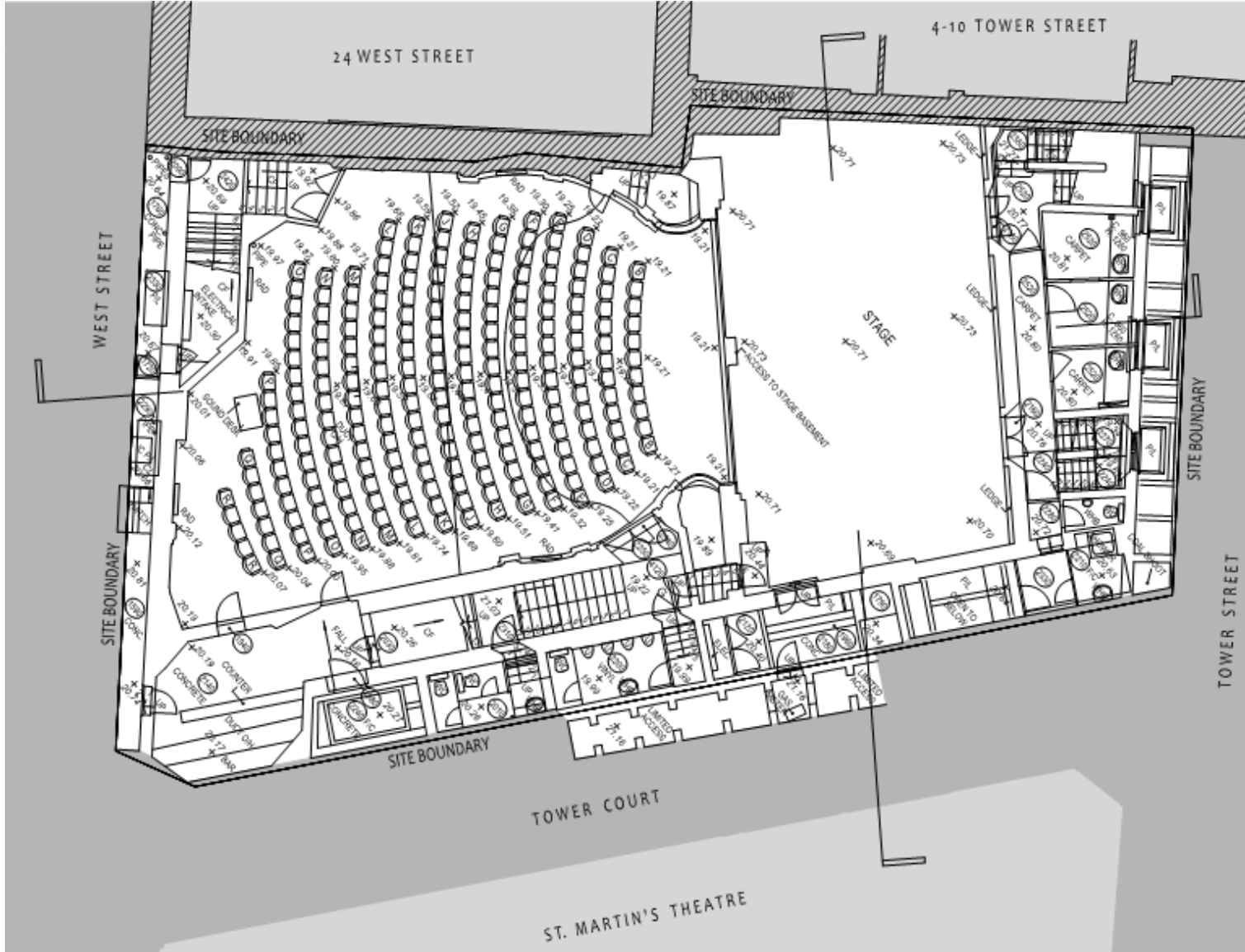
Proposed Section C

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



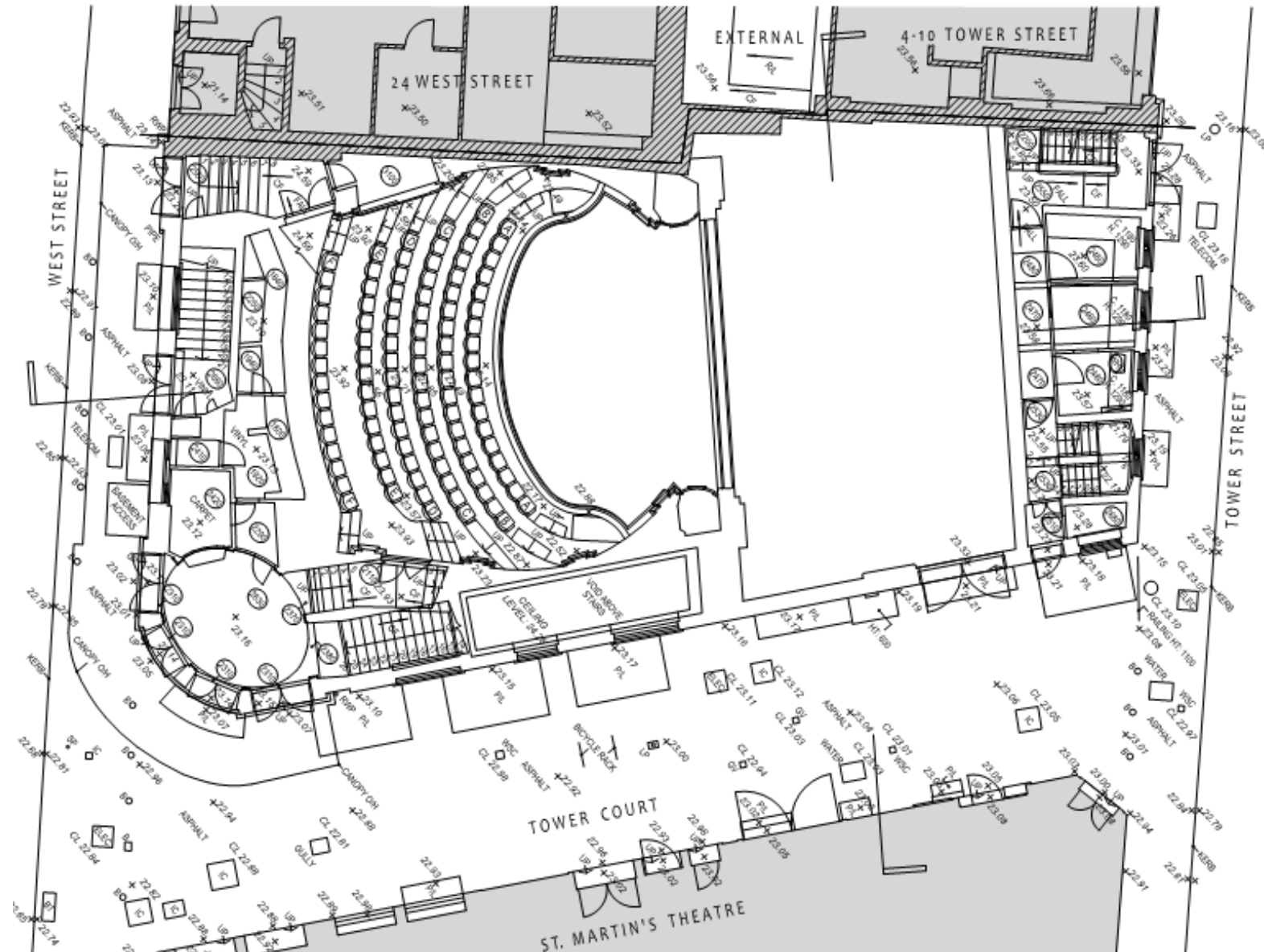
Existing Basement (Sub Stage)

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing Basement Stalls

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing Ground Floor

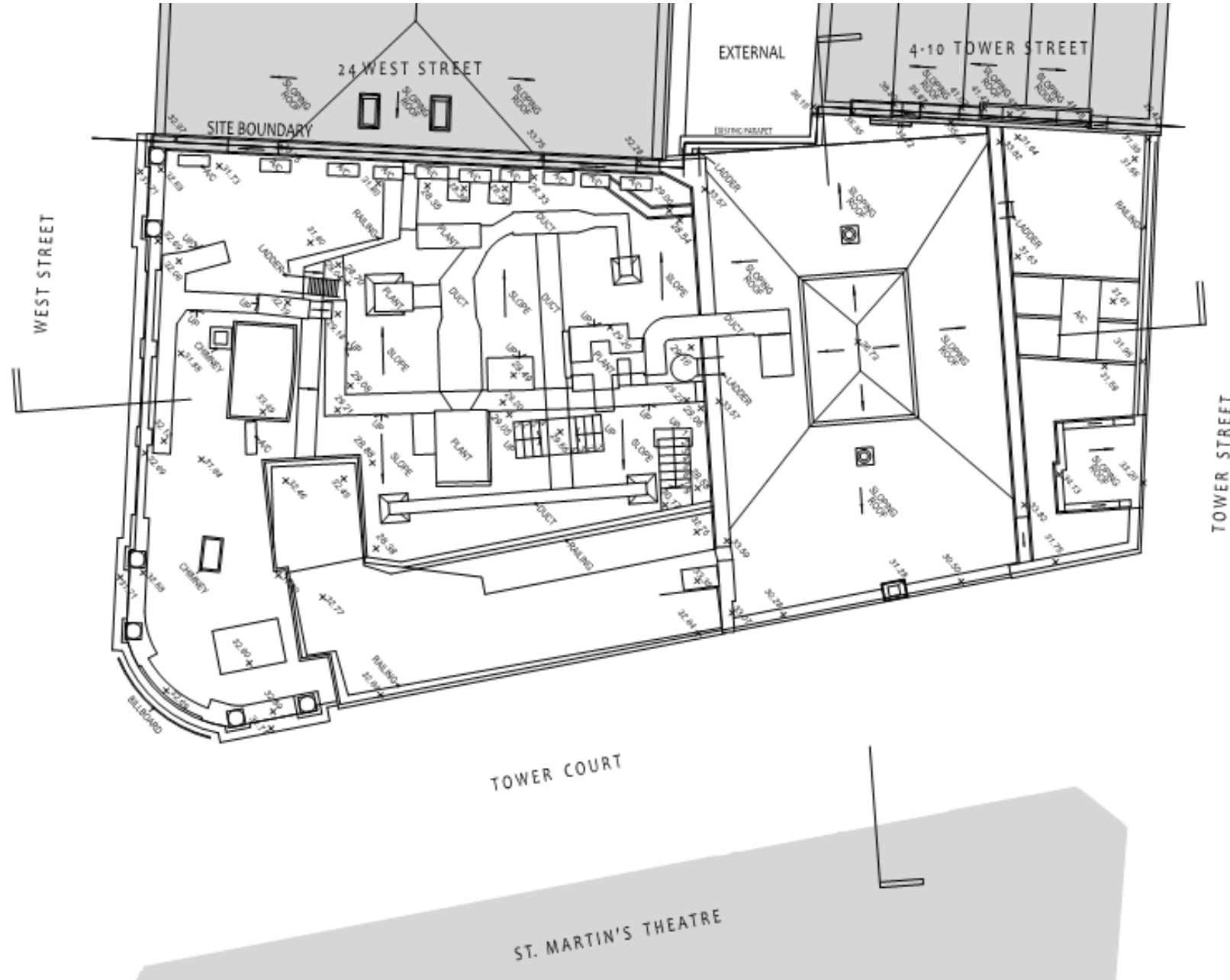
Existing First Floor

This architectural floor plan illustrates the first floor of St. Martin's Theatre. The plan is bounded by 24 West Street to the north, 4-10 Tower Street to the east, and Tower Court to the south. Key features include:

- Entrances:** A main entrance is located on the south side, adjacent to Tower Court, featuring a set of stairs and a ramp. Another entrance is on the east side, near 4-10 Tower Street.
- Rooms and Spaces:**
 - Rehearsal Room:** A large room on the left side, containing a stage area and various equipment.
 - Office:** A room on the right side, near the main entrance.
 - Storage:** Several storage areas are indicated throughout the plan, including a large storage area on the left and smaller ones near the entrance.
 - Corridors and Stairs:** A network of corridors and stairs connects the various rooms and provides access to the building.
- Structural Elements:**
 - Walls:** Various wall types are indicated, including "WALL 1/2\"/>

Existing Second Floor

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Existing Roof Plan

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



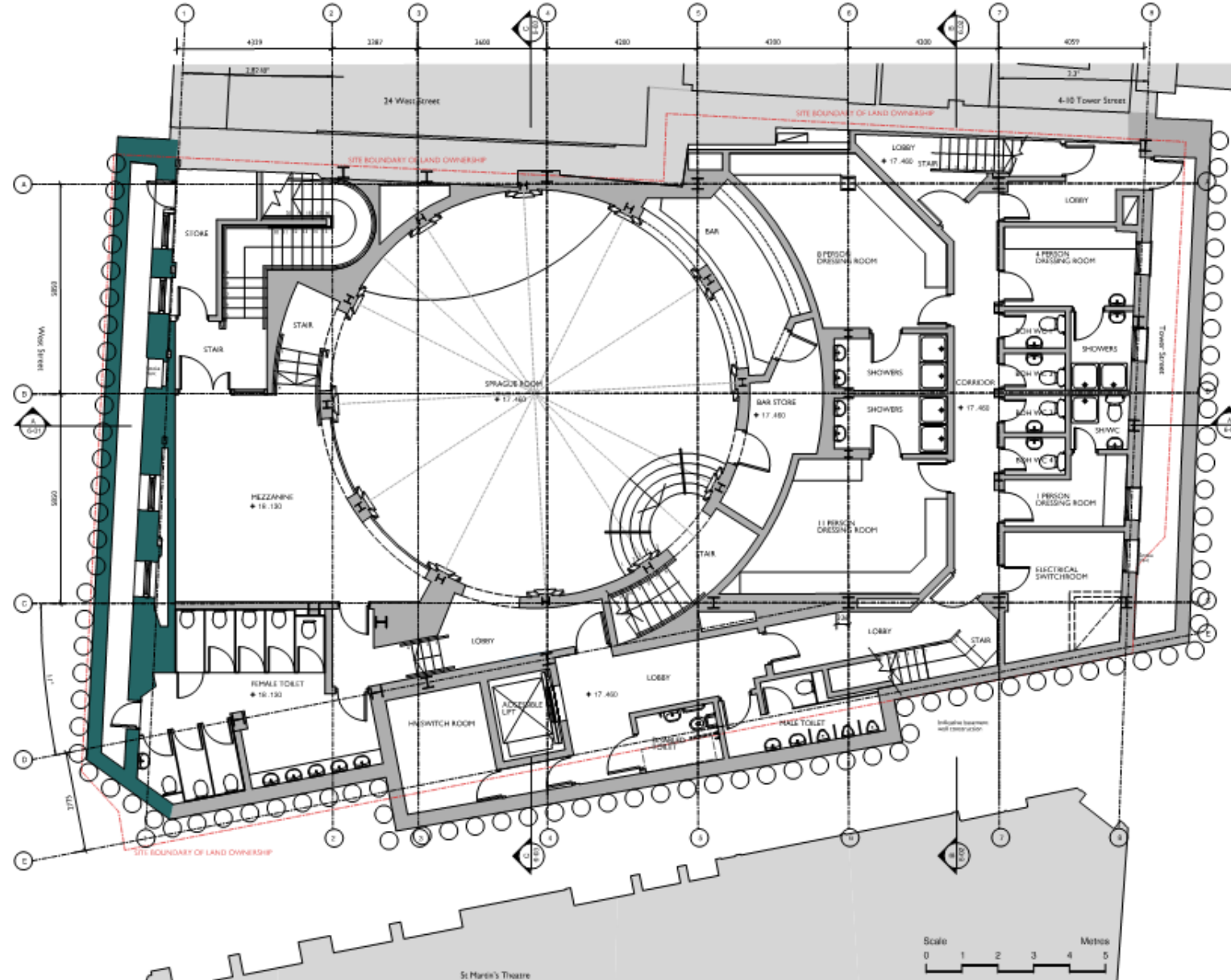
Proposed Front Elevation Contextual

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



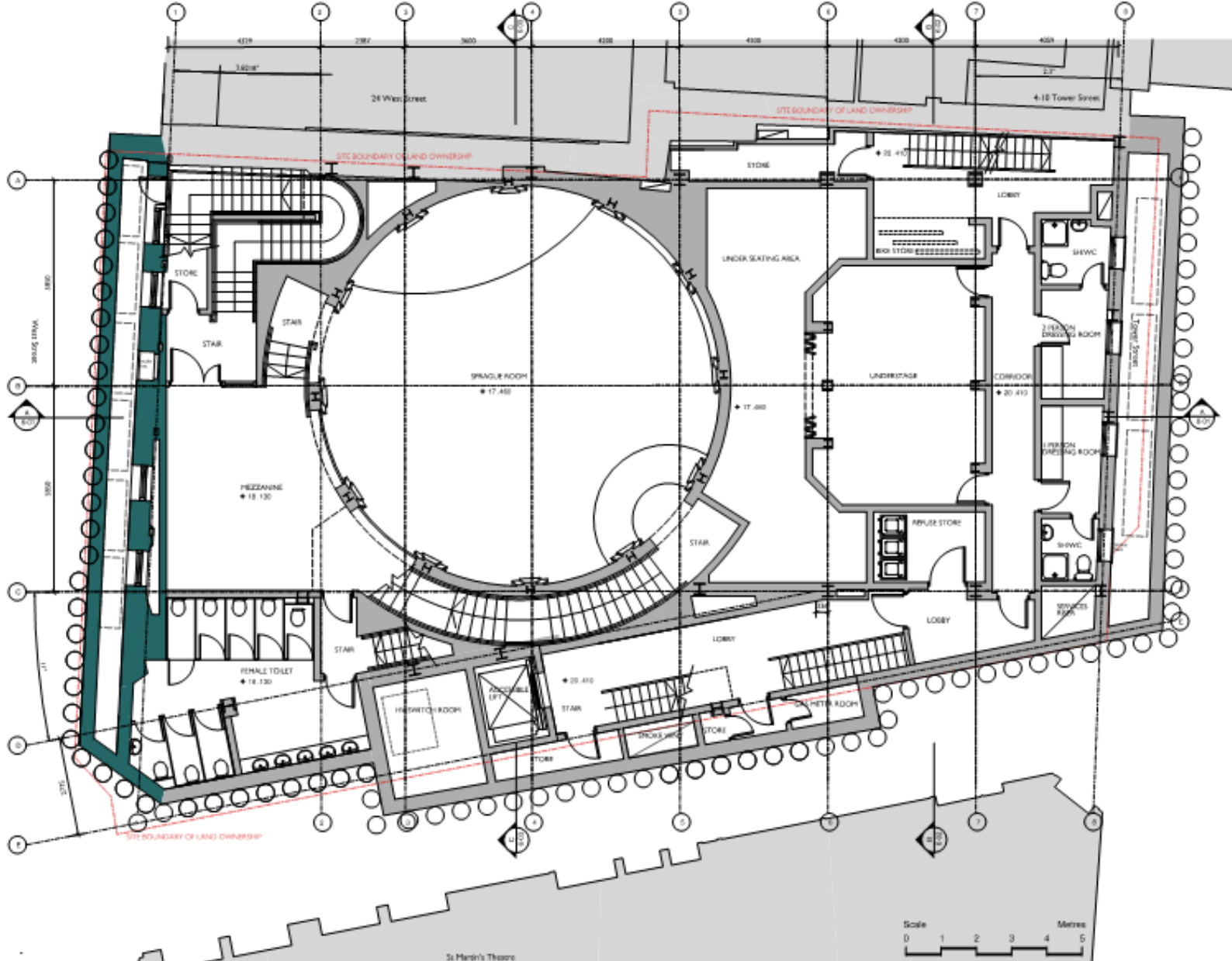
Proposed Side Elevation Contextual

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



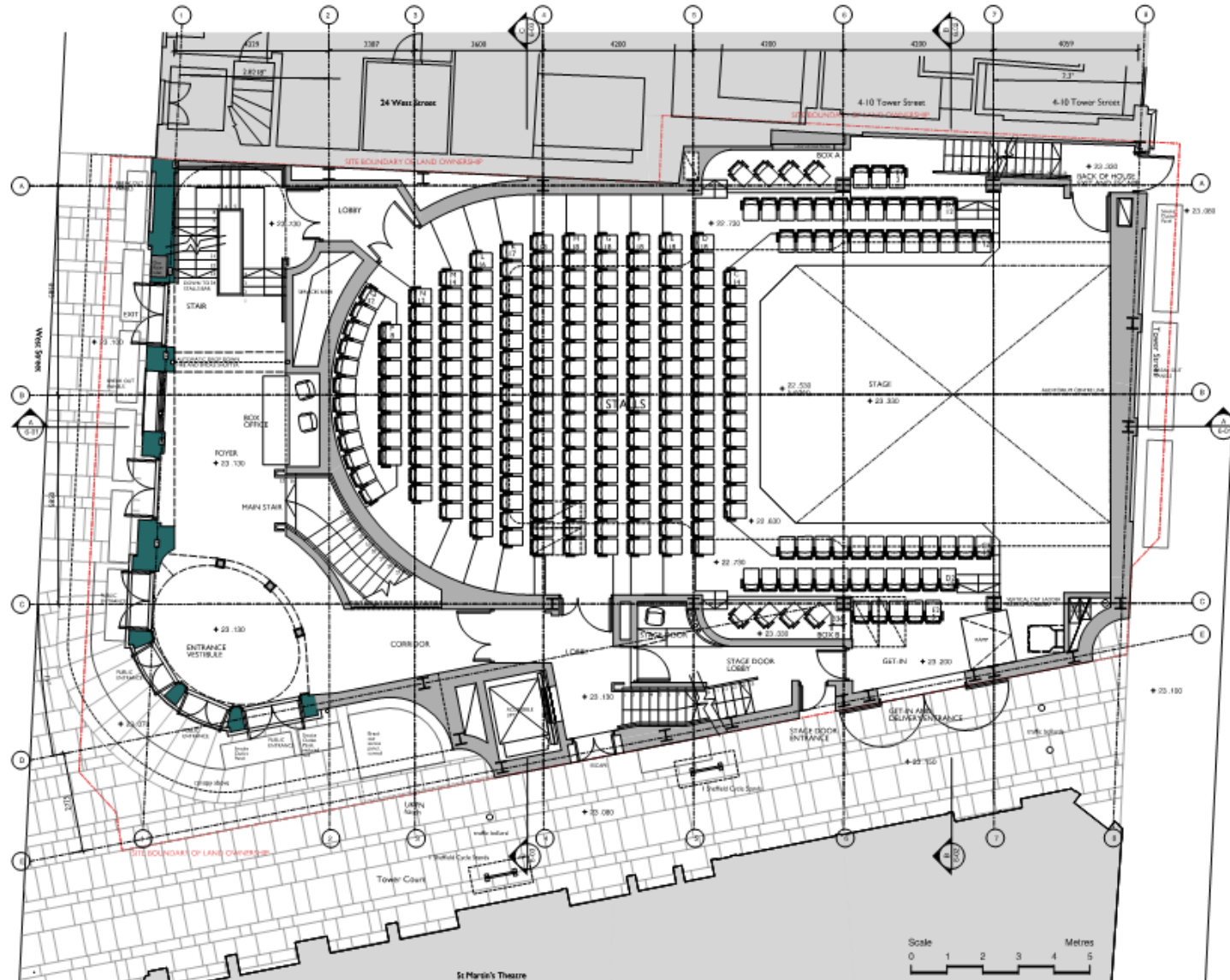
Proposed Lower
Basement Plan

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



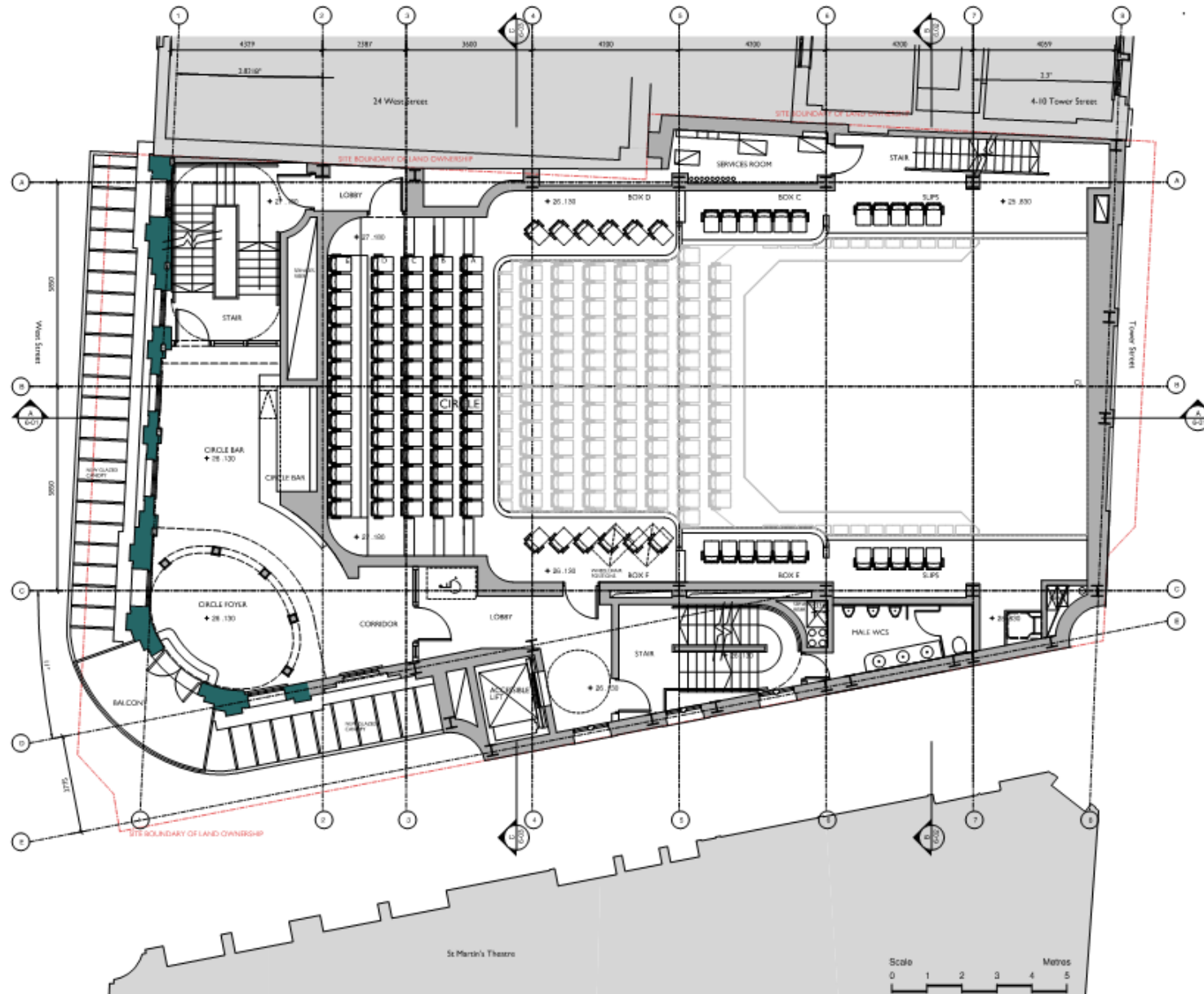
Proposed Upper Basement

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



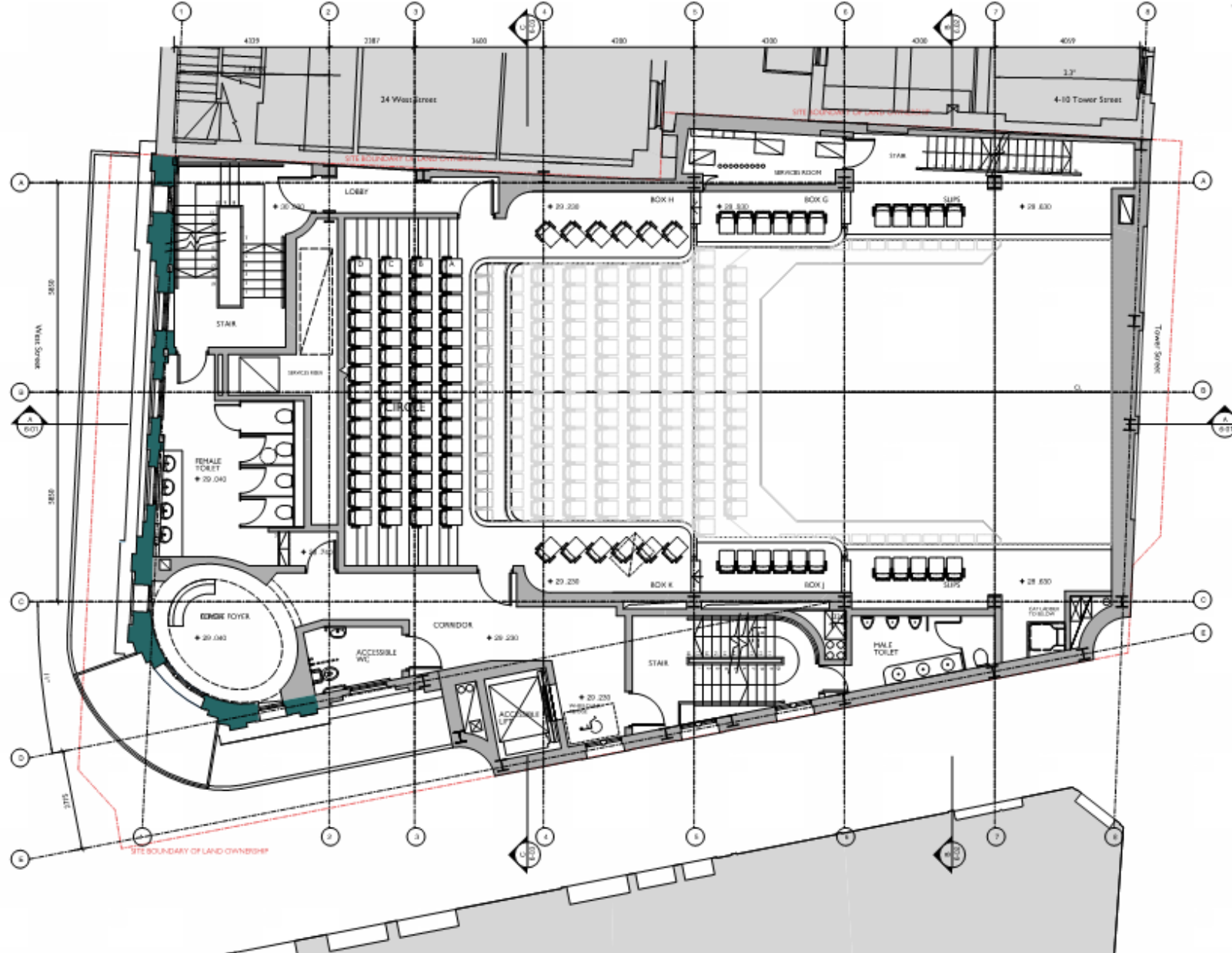
Proposed Stalls Plan

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Proposed First Tier

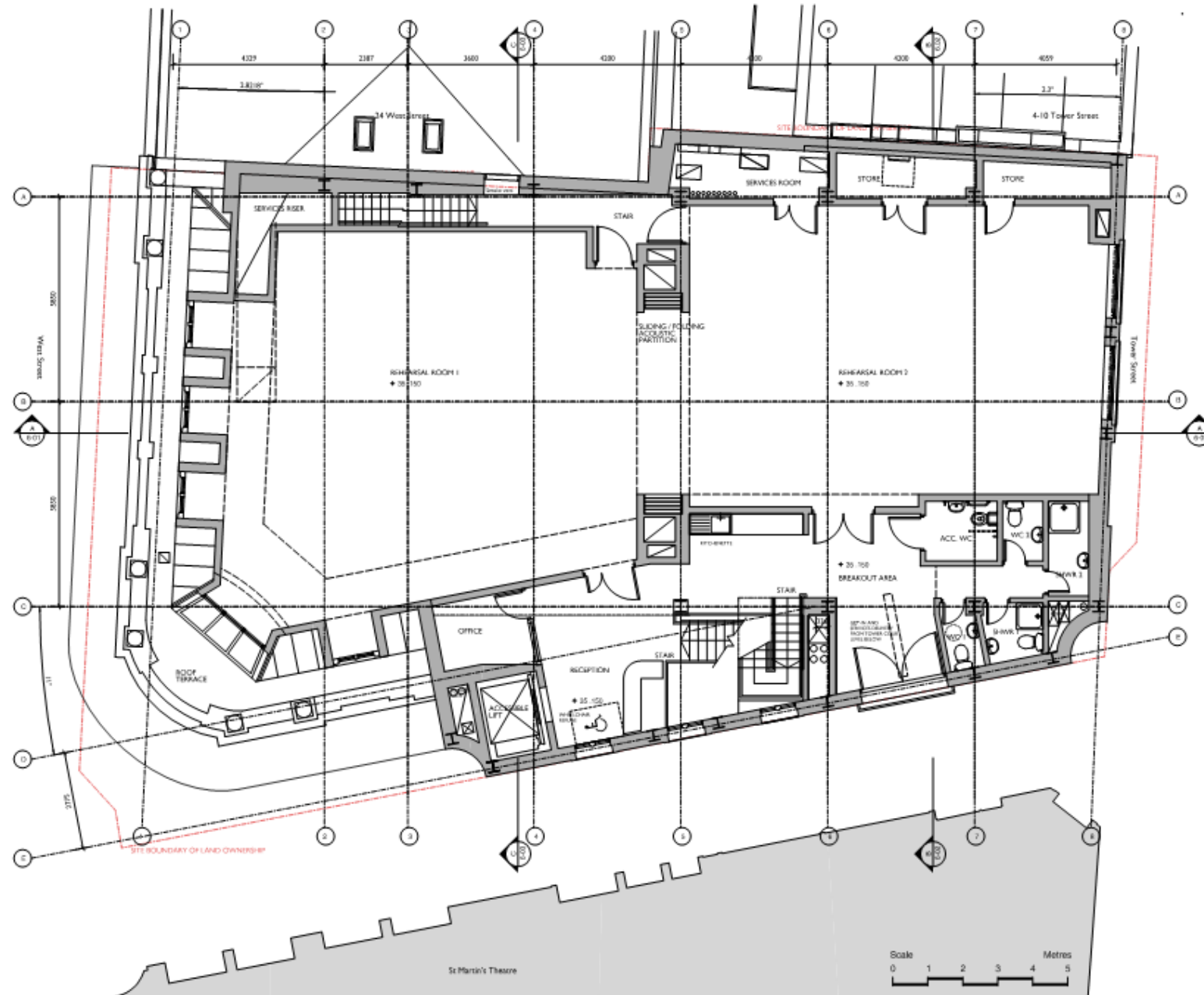
Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Proposed Second Tier

Scale	1	2	3	4	More
0					

Ambassadors Theatre 2016/4869/P & 2016/5032/L



Proposed Rehearsal Suite

[illegible]

Proposed Roof Plan