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ODEON

Client: London Borough of
Camden

Property: Odeon Cinema
135-149 Shaftesbury Ave
London
WC2H 8AH

Heritage Review of Planning Proposal

Inspection Date: 10th August 2018

Job No: 2924886

Issue No: 1

A report by Listed Building Surveys Ltd

SAHGB
The Society of
Architectural
Historians of
Great Britain

IHBC
INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC
BUILDING CONSERVATION

RICS
Certified
Historic Building
Professional

Heritage Review of Planning Proposal on...:

Odeon Cinema
135-149 Shaftesbury Ave
London
WC2H 8AH

Prepared on behalf of

London Borough of Camden

Prepared by...:

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Introduction

- 1.1 The inspection and preparation of this report was carried out by Duncan Philips, Chartered Building Surveyor.
- 1.2 I was elected a Professional Associate of the RICS on 13th January 1989.
- 1.3 I am a Fellow of the RICS
- 1.4 I am a RICS Certified Historic Buildings Professional
- 1.5 I am Chair of the RICS Building Conservation Steering Group
- 1.6 I am a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)
- 1.7 I am Chair of the IHBC South-East region
- 1.8 I am IHBC HESPR Accredited
- 1.9 My academic qualifications include BSc(Hons) Building Surveying, MPhil Building Surveying (Subsidence damage of residential buildings) and PhD (Frost damage of historic brick and stone due to cement mortar).
- 1.10 I am author of 'Buying and Owning a Listed Building – A Brief Guide'.
- 1.11 I have passed the BTEC Level 7 Advanced Professional Award in Expert Witness Evidence
- 1.12 I have passed the RICS recognised Expert Witness Training and Assessment Programme
- 1.13 I am a Chartered Building Surveyor and have been advising clients on all aspects related historic and Listed Buildings since 1989. This advice ranges from pre-purchase advice, surveys and reports through to specific building conservation advice on historic building repairs. I lecture (to other professional Surveyors, Architects and Conservation Officers) regularly on a wide range of topics relating to architectural history and building conservation.
- 1.14 I am a Director of Listed Building Surveys Ltd.

Date of Inspection

- 2.1 My inspection was carried out on 10th August 2018.

The Brief

- 3.1 I have been asked by London Borough of Camden to carry out an independent professional review of the application for a proposed development project at the Odeon Cinema, 135-149 Shaftesbury Ave, London, WC2H 8AH.

Background to the Report

- 4.1 There is a Planning Application in progress for the redevelopment of the Odeon Cinema site.
- 4.2 A considerable volume of professional reports have been produced as part of the application process in order to quantify and seek justification for the proposals.
- 4.3 London Borough Camden have requested an independent review of these documents, together with a site visit, to seek an expert independent opinion from a heritage perspective.
- 4.4 The outcome is to provide an opinion on whether the proposed development is justified from a heritage point of view and whether there is any impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

Relevant Planning Application Documents

- 5.0 I have been provided with the following documents for review which I have read, studied and understand
- 5.1 Building Condition Report, Hallas & Co., August 2017
- 5.2 Heritage and Townscape Assessment, Iceni, December 2017
- 5.3 Planning Viability Report, Iceni Projects, January 2018
- 5.4 Supporting Appendices for Planning Viability Report
- 5.5 Independent Viability Review, BPS, March 2018

Relevant Other Documents

- 6.0 I have taken into consideration the following additional documents that are relevant and should be understood
- 6.1 Valuation of Historic Buildings 1st Edition. This is an RICS Information Paper and has been effective since May 2014.
- 6.2 RICS Historic Building Conservation 1st edition. This has been effective since 2009.
- 6.3 BS 7913:2013 – Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings
- 6.4 NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) 2018 – esp. Chap. 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 6.5 PPG s.18a and HE GPA Note 2

Review

- 7.0 Odeon Cinema, 135-149 Shaftesbury Ave, London, WC2H 8AH is a Grade II Listed Building. It was added to the National List on 1st July 1998. A copy of the Listing description is as follows..:

TQ2981SE SHAFTESBURY AVENUE 798-1/104/1899 Former Saville Theatre 01/07/98

II

Former theatre, now cinema. Designed 1929-30, built 1930-1 by TP Bennett and Son for AE Fournier, theatrical impresario. Steel frame clad in red-brown brick with artificial stone plinth and sculpted frieze to front, and parapet round the building. Rectangular building, originally comprising a theatre on 3 levels, but converted in 1970 into 2 cinemas set one above the other and with large foyer and staircase. EXTERIOR: the elevation is particularly handsome. Rusticated stone plinth with band supports frieze by Gilbert Bayes depicting Drama through the Ages. Moulded band over, above which a blind facade of rusticated brickwork interrupted only by 5 pairs of roundel plaques, and a giant arch over the entrance, framed by simple stone banding with a flat keystone. The arch originally with bronze metal glazing, since 1970 tiled over. Simpler brickwork to side elevations and rear. INTERIOR: remodelled in 1970 and nothing of the 1930-1 work remains on view. The Saville Theatre is remarkable as a fine composition that incorporates architecture and sculpture with rare intelligence, and which fulfills Bayes' vision of a unity between the two arts. Bayes' frieze is one of the largest and most important works of public sculpture of its age, and won him the silver medal of the Institute of Sculptors for the best piece of applied sculpture of its year. It is 129 feet long and made from artificial stone. It consists of a frieze of dramatic players and dancers set between a broad curtain which is folded round the side of the building. It depicts from left to right: St Joan; the Chester players; St George; a Roman triumphal procession; Bacchanalian dancers; a Harlequinade in Comedia dell'arte costume; Shakespearean figures; figures from contemporary drama and (round the corner) a figure in Boer War uniform. The plaques above depict art of Egypt; Assyria; the Italian Renaissance; Medieval (initialled); Pompadour; Victorian period (signed); Elizabethan and Georgian.

Image 1

- 7.1 1998 is very late for a building such as this to be added to the List and consequently earlier alterations to the interior have removed the original historic interior. These alterations pre-date the Listing and were done apparently without consideration for any heritage impact.
- 7.2 By comparison, many years ago I did the survey of the Grade II* Odeon Cinema at the Dreamland amusement park in Margate, Kent. That building was of comparable age and

was an almost complete survival with ceilings, light fittings, staircases, doors and a Wurlitzer organ that could rise from the floor.

- 7.3 It is thus important that the significance of the heritage asset is clearly understood and taken into context of the proposed development.
- 7.4 The site is surrounded on all sides by roads. Any construction project will face considerable logistical challenges which will no doubt add to the cost. This can be seen as follows...:

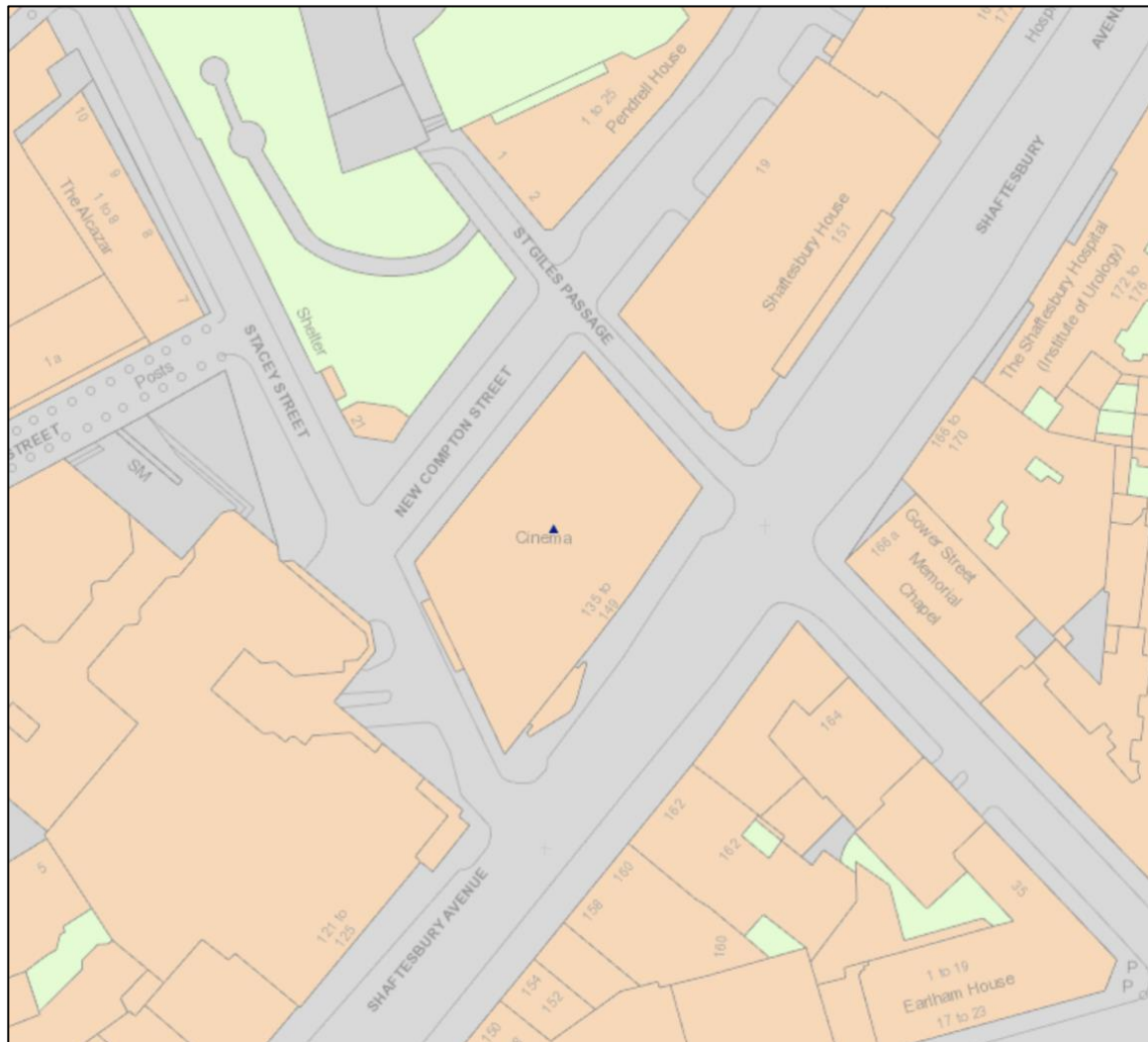


Image 2

- 7.5 I have read and understand the documents that have been given to me in relation to the proposed development project. I have taken these into account during my site visit and this review.
- 7.6 Prior to my site visit, I read the Building Condition report, by Hallas & Co. I have formed my own opinion of the condition and this can be summarised in the following annotated photos...:



Image 3 – the front elevation has great significance to the heritage asset and is largely intact



Image 4 – the frieze survives, although dirty from road pollution



Image 5 – damage to the artificial stone render, with stress cracks from steel frame expansion



Image 6



Image 7 – note the straps to secure brickwork – perhaps due to steel frame corrosion?



Image 8



Image 9 – rear elevation – original canopy now missing



Image 10 – roof, with asphalt surface



Image 11 – defective asphalt coping



Image 12 – stress cracks in brick skin, presumably due to steel frame corrosion

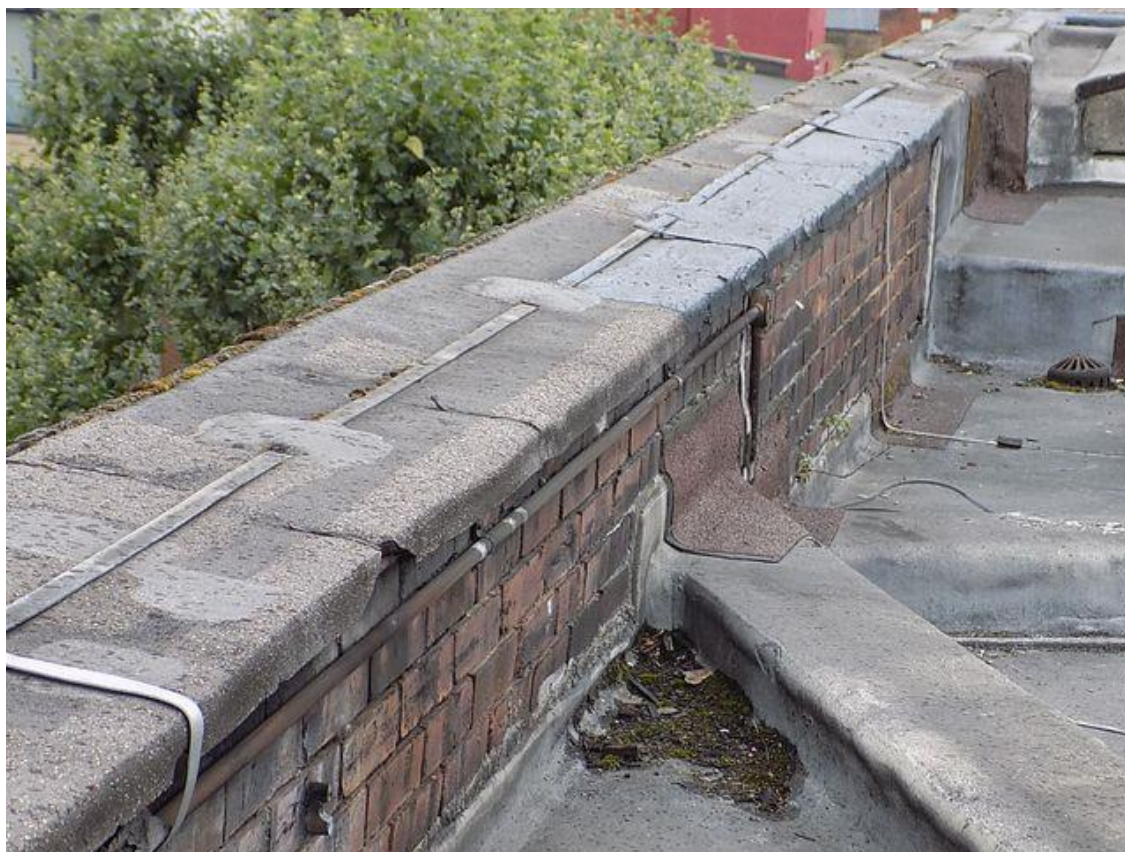


Image 13 – repairs to previous damp penetration



Image 14 – flooded roof surface due to blocked downpipe



Image 15 – interior of roof, with expanded metal lath ceiling construction supported on a C20 frame



Image 16 – an example of damp penetration through the roof

- 7.7 I can confirm from my inspection of the building that there is nothing of any historic significance remaining internally. Previous works and alterations have removed any original building fabric. I saw nothing of any historic significance.
- 7.8 I can confirm from my inspection of the building that the current condition is consistent with a building that has been largely neglected and has received the absolute minimum of repair.
- 7.9 BS 7913 discusses the importance for an understanding of the significance of a heritage asset or part of heritage asset. For this building, it is very clear that the significance remains in the frieze on the front façade and the entrance arch with infill panels. Any future project for development of the building should seek to protect and conserve the front façade.
- 7.10 In my opinion, the rear elevation and the two side elevations have less historic significance in terms of the building fabric. The extent of visible damage caused by corrosion of the steel frame is such that it should be accepted that some loss of the brickwork will be inevitable in order to undertake a satisfactory long-term repair to the frame as exposure will be required.
- 7.11 NPPF 2018, para 190 states.: *“ Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”* This directly relates to my previous comment about the exposure that will be required to repair the structural frame.
- 7.12 NPPF 2018, para 193 states.: *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the heritage assets conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. “* The current interior of the building has no historic significance and therefore the proposed removal of the internal structure in its entirety poses no harm to the heritage asset.
- 7.13 The proposals seek to retain the external elevations, and thus will conserve the significance of the heritage asset.
- 7.14 NPPF 2018, para 196 refers to a development that leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. In my opinion, there will be no harm to the significance of the heritage asset as long as the front façade is retained and conserved. Just for the sake of clarity and completeness, the potential public benefit from the project would outweigh the loss of the existing internal structure and fixtures.
- 7.15 I have read and understood the Building Condition Report by Hallas & Co. and I would broadly agree with the comments about the condition of the building.
- 7.16 I have read and understood the Heritage and Townscape Assessment by Iceni and I have no specific comments to make.
- 7.17 I have read and understood the Planning Viability Report by Iceni Projects and have no specific comments to make.
- 7.18 I have read and understood the Independent Viability Review by BPS. The financial details provided are extensive and have already been considered and assessed. As far as my opinion on the impact of the project on the heritage asset is concern, I have no specific comments to make.

Conclusion

- 8.0 The building is Grade II Listed and the significance of the historic interest is entirely due to the front façade. This has great importance and it is important that it is conserved and remains intact and undamaged. It will require reasonably modest repairs which can be carried as part of the development project. Careful sympathetic cleaning would be beneficial too.
- 8.1 The current interior structure, fixtures and fittings have no historic interest. The removal of these parts will cause no harm to the significance of the historic interest in the building.
- 8.2 In my opinion, purely from a heritage point of view, the proposed project does not impact on the significance of the historic interest in the building – on the proviso that the front façade remains complete and undamaged.
- 8.3 I have thoroughly considered all aspects of this development that have been made available and this is my professional independent opinion.

9.0 Statements

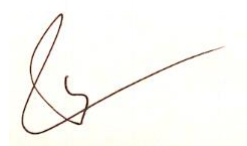
I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.

I confirm that I have no conflict of interest of any kind, other than any which I have set out in this report. I do not consider that any interest which I have disclosed affects my suitability to give expert evidence on any issue on which I have given evidence and I will advise the party by whom I am instructed if, between the date of this report and the trial, there is any change in circumstances which affects this statement.

I confirm that I am not instructed under any contingency or conditional fee arrangement.

I confirm that my report complies with the requirements of RICS – Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – as set down in the RICS Practice Statement '*Surveyors Acting As Expert Witnesses*'

Signature



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Date of Report 31st August 2018