

**HERETAGE STATEMENT: Draft 1**

in connection with **ACADEMY MUSIC GROUP LTD**

At

**O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN  
9-17 HIGHGATE ROAD  
LONDON  
NW5 1JY**

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## **Re: O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN**

### **Heritage Statement**

#### **Introduction**

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

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

#### **Proposed Brief**

The purpose of this application is to remove the existing non-original stud walls in order to extend the existing auditorium left bar by approximately 3.5m. It is worth noting that on a historic photo from 2006 of this area, the bar extended up to this point, in which case we propose to reinstall the bar to this area.

#### **Architectural Significance**

##### **History**

The venue was built in 1934, by J Stanley Beard and WR Bennett, and was originally used as an art deco cinema. After the cinema closed, the venue re-opened as an Irish dance hall called The Forum. In the mid-1980s, it changed direction and re-opened again as a 2,100 capacity live music venue under the name of The Town & Country Club. In 1993, Mean Fiddler purchased the venue and renamed it The London Forum. The final show at The Town & Country Club was Van Morrison on the 21st of March 1993.

In 2007, MAMA & Company purchased The Forum from Mean Fiddler and spent £1.5m on renovations and increased the capacity to 2,300. In 2015, the venue was acquired by Live Nation and rebranded as The O2 Forum Kentish Town as part of the O2 Academy Group.

The building is a steel frame clad in brick with a faience brick front. The auditorium is double height with a balcony reached via a single-storey entrance hall and foyer, this also provides access to the proposed bar area. The front façade is a 3 storey, 7

bayed elevation in an Egyptian style. The central 5 bays to the front elevation are separated by 6 half columns with streamlined acanthus capitals. Between these columns are the original stained-glass windows with decorative metal calme inserts. The front façade also features a heavily moulded parapet and cornice that continues across the flanking towers of the outer bays.

On the interior of the building, the foyer has a foliate cornice, fluted capitals to piers and staircases to the upper foyer which has Pompeian-style capitals to piers. There is also a Victorian scroll cornice and decorative metal panels flanking the doorways to the circle and a cigar shaped ceiling. This foyer also provides access to the proposed bar area which is currently a tearoom which contains original timber panelling, moulded plasterwork to the ceiling and decorative iron grilles over the radiators and above the main entrance door. For photos of this please see Appendix A.

The auditorium is decorated in a Roman style and has a heavily fluted proscenium arch and flanking side walls with shields and banners to spandrels. The fluted side walls have grilles also decorated in the Roman style with urns (damaged at time of listing), and legionary standards having Roman medallions and eagles on top. The remaining sections of the side walls have friezes of centurions and chariots to in keep with the Roman styling. The ceiling has a central dome surrounded by coffering with original circular light brackets/ventilators. The side walls also feature panelled exit doors and stairs, in a matching style from the stalls level to the circle balcony level.