

## **CASEWORK REPORT: May 2010**

### **REGAL, Camberwell Road, Camberwell, London Leslie Kemp, 1940, Grade II**

Having been used as a bingo hall since the 1970s this building was suddenly sold to a church in February. No one was aware that closure of bingo here was imminent and the local MP has written a letter of complaint to Boris Johnson about the lack of consultation on this case. It is really very concerning that publicly accessible venues like this historic cinema can be sold and thus taken away from the general community. So many cinemas in church use do not encourage "outsiders" to enter their building. If this were to happen to the Granada in Tooting it would simply be disastrous.

We are planning to put together a list of historic cinemas owned by Gala and Mecca and request planning conditions be put in place early on by the relevant local authorities regarding the use options and public access to these buildings.

### **GAUMONT PALACE, Corporation Street, Taunton, Somerset William T. Benslyn, 1932, Grade II**

Adam Unger and Mark Price attended a meeting with the council set up by the local campaign to bring the historic cinema back into performance, film and community use. This is a proactive effort to include a clause in the local policy, setting out the building's potential as a theatre and performing arts venue and possibly even for film should it close for bingo. The council has agreed to be cooperative although they were not entirely convinced by the business plan at this point.

A very good write-up is posted on the BBC web site:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/somerset/hi/people\\_and\\_places/arts\\_and\\_culture/new\\_sid\\_8545000/8545364.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/somerset/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/new_sid_8545000/8545364.stm)

There is a box at the bottom of the list of comments where additional comments can be attached. The more comments, the better and the campaigners are hoping to get the opportunity for a phone-in programme on the same subject. So please do your bit!

## **CINEMAS AT SERIOUS RISK**

### **ASTORIA, Gloucester Place, Brighton, East Sussex Edward Albert Stone, 1933, Grade II**

There are plans at pre-application stage to demolish this historic cinema. A new scheme for the site is being drawn up by Conran & Partners. Eva Branscome has been on site with them to assess the condition of the cinema first hand.

Regrettably there was no artificial lighting at all inside. The torches brought along were not enough to see if the building is still in a reasonable condition, especially

with later suspended ceilings from the building's bingo era concealing much of what is still above. The building has been empty for several years doing damage to the plasterwork and it is the combed plasterwork that is of principal interest and the abstract Jazz Moderne plasterwork above the proscenium. The linoleum patterned floors in the foyer spaces are still there as well as original seating in the balcony. Eva was informed that a restoration would cost upwards from £3 million. A very sad and difficult case.

**LONSDALE, Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria**  
**Percy L Browne and Son, 1931, Grade II**

An application for demolition of this cinema has been taken off the planning register.

**MODERNE, Wimborne Road, Winton, Bournemouth, Dorset**  
**E. de Wilde Holding, 1935, Unlisted**

We are very sorry to have to report that this cinema has now been gutted and the wonderful surviving Bauhaus style tubular steel furniture thrown away. Two years ago we had visited the building and put together a listing application. Regrettably English Heritage turned this down. Our efforts to campaign for the retention of the interior without the statutory protection were not successful, as there was no understanding or interest in the building locally.

The Lifecentre church has proudly posted the demolition comprehensively on their website:

<http://seethechange.org.uk/latest-photos/>

**METROPOLE, 160 Victoria Street, Westminster, London**  
**George Coles, 1929, Unlisted**

This cinema frontage and excellent Beaux Arts foyer space is still at risk because of the comprehensive Victoria Street redevelopment. When Sutton's Pawnbrokers next door was finally listed we had hoped this might possibly help save this building too. But the future of the shop and offices is still very uncertain with the possibility of dismantling the shop and reinstating it elsewhere.

**PARAMOUNT/ODEON, Oxford Street, Manchester**  
**Frank Verity and Samuel Beverley, 1930**

The planning permission to demolish this building is about to expire and happily the building still stands. We had put a listing application together for this former Paramount in 2007. When the English Heritage inspector got there it had been trashed. Very, very sad. Now there is a local campaign to keep the building.

Their press release reads:

*"Let's all meet at the Odeon."*

*The Manchester Municipal Design Corporation, in conjunction with the Manchester Modernist Society, will be hosting a special event outside the Odeon Cinema at the top of Oxford Road.*

*The Odeon is one of Manchester's much-loved alternative landmarks. Sadly since its closure in 2004 it has sat vacant and is currently under threat by plans to construct a 14-storey office block on the site.*

*The event will involve a mass meet outside the old cinema, followed by a projection onto the Odeon façade. Afterwards a seminar hosted by the Manchester Modernist Society will delve into the Odeon's rich past and future prospects.*

*Please show your support for the Odeon. There will be popcorn.*

Do attend and support this cause if you can somehow manage to get there on 4 May at around 10pm. This late time is to aid with the quality of the projection that will be going on the Odeon façade as part of the campaign.

## **SHORT CAMPAIGNING UPDATES**

### **GLOBE, High Street, Stockton-on-Tees Percy L Brown & Son, 1936, Grade II**

We have some good news on this cinema. Having been closed now since 1993, the building is to come back to life as performance venue! Have a look at the press coverage here:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tees/8505514.stm>

### **ODEON, Northgate Street, Chester Harry Weedon with Robert Bullivant, 1936, Grade II**

Jon Williams has sent a letter objecting to the most recent application and has been supported by the C20 Society who have complained about insufficient documentation made available to assess the case.

### **REGAL, Crouch Street, Colchester, Essex Cecil Masey, 1931, unlisted**

There is local interest in bringing this into use as an art house cinema, community theatre and workshop space with a café and craft shop. This building has a good Spanish style street frontage. We wish them much luck!