



TEMPORARY EXTERNAL SCAFFOLD STAIRS

HERITAGE STATEMENT

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This statement has been written by Osbornes Architects on behalf of the applicants, Ambassador Theatre Group to support the application for the proposed works to install a new temporary Haki Stair to the canal side of the theatre building. These temporary stairs are proposed to provide access during works associated with recently approved applications, 133732/LO/2022 and 133731/FO/2022 which, involve the installation of new plant on the roof of the building.



Manchester Palace Theatre

SITE

The site of the proposed works is within the Palace Theatre building, Manchester. The building is a Grade II listed building and is situated within the Whitworth Street Conservation area in Greater Manchester, located at the intersection between Oxford Street and Whitworth Street.

The Whitworth Street conservation area was designated by the City Council in September 1974. The extent of the conservation area is bordered by Oxford Street, Portland Street, Cobourg Street and the Piccadilly to Oxford Road railway viaduct.

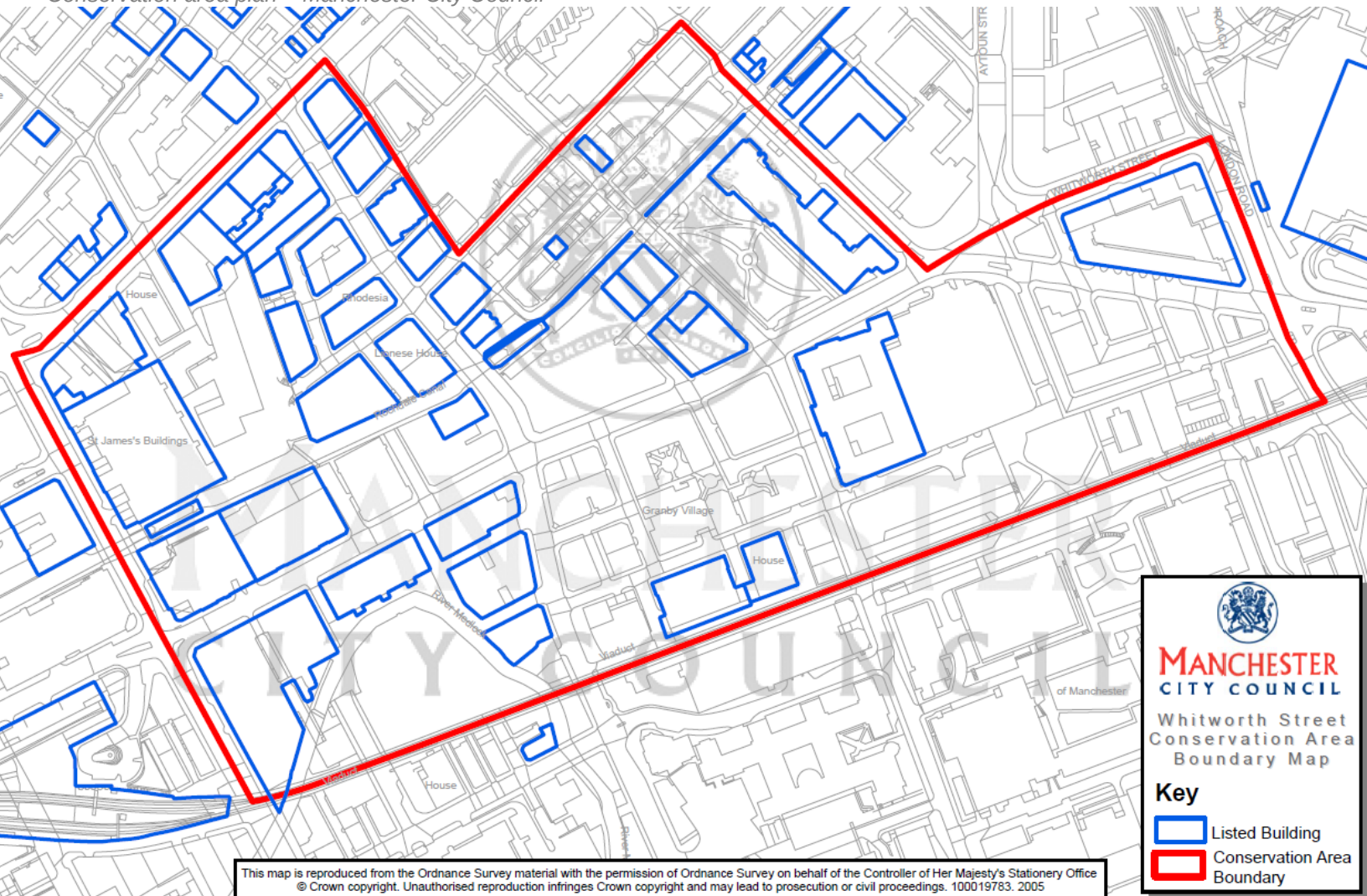
The conservation area contains a large number of buildings that are examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture constructed between 1850 and 1920. These buildings are related to and reflect the historical importance of the textile industry in the city.

The area's history is connected with the working of cotton within Manchester. Manchester's first cotton mills were water powered and first built in the Ancoats area. As the city's textile industry grew so did its need for warehouse space. This led to the construction of many of the buildings found within the conservation area. The style and scale of the buildings in the area allowed their owners to express their wealth whilst also providing practical building for use for cotton storage and inspection of products.

Historic buildings in the area are six to seven stories in height with extravagant modelled facades in brick and terracotta, The rear of these building were typically constructed with large areas of glazing. Other buildings built later in the early 20th Century were of a grand Edwardian commercial architectural style, where examples of these can be found along Whitworth Street.

Palace Theatre, Manchester is located at the South West of the conservation area and is surrounded by several other listed buildings

Conservation area plan – Manchester City Council



BUILDING HISTORY

As a Grade II listed building the Palace theatre is of historical importance. The listing details of the building are as follows:

OFFICIAL LIST ENTRY

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1271227
Date first listed:	08-Jun-1977
Statutory Address:	THE PALACE THEATRE, OXFORD STREET

LOCATION

Statutory Address:	THE PALACE THEATRE, OXFORD STREET
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The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:	Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
National GridReference:	SJ 84106 97617

DETAILS

SJ 8497 NW 698-1/32/269

MANCHESTER OXFORD STREET (East side) The Palace Theatre

08/06/77

GV

II

Theatre. 1891, by Alfred Darbyshire and F.Bennett Smith; altered 1913 by Bertie Crewe of London; re-fronted 1956. Probably iron-framed, clad with brick and now faced with buff glazed terracotta; slate roof. Rectangular plan. Three storeys and basement. The facade, in debased modern classical style, is of less interest than the INTERIOR: auditorium with two tiers of segmentally curved balconies (the Circle and the Grand Tier) with bowed ends, the fronts decorated with continuous series of cartouches, anthemions, etc, and two tiers of boxes carried by standing Atlantes, with tetrastyle architraves of giant fluted Ionic columns; and a circular dome in the ceiling with a hinged lighting panel. Circle promenade with Ionic columns and semi-columns, and elaborate pedimented architraves to the staircase doors.

Listing NGR: SJ8410697617

The Palace theatre was designed by Architect, Alfred Derbyshire and constructed by William Brown and Son of Salford. It was first opened on the 18th May 1891 as the Manchester Palace of Varieties. The cost of construction £40,500. Not long after opening the building was further altered with redesigns carried out to the interior, by renowned theatre Architect Frank Matcham in 1899.

According to the listing information the building was likely constructed with an iron frame and the design of the building was of a modern classical style. Originally the theatre was clad with brick, as is evident in older photographs of the building. This means that the building would have resembled the style of neighbouring buildings, more so than it does today, following changes to the building's external appearance.

In 1913, the auditorium was reconstructed by Bertie Crewe. Of the 1891 building, he retained the stage and basic out-side stage.

The theatre was damaged during the Manchester Blitz in September 1940 although damage is believed to have been confined predominantly to the corner of the front facade.



Further alterations were carried out to the Theatre in 1953 when the exterior was refaced and modernized. The change to the façade was lamented by some and as described by the Theatres Trust, 'Darbyshire's splendidly opulent façade was obliterated by unprepossessing faience tiles.'

These changes are what give the building its appearance today.

In 1979 the theatre was threatened with closure due to audience number declines through the 1970s, however the theatre was eventually chosen as Manchester's touring house of the future and the theatre was supported in the 1980s by the Arts Council.

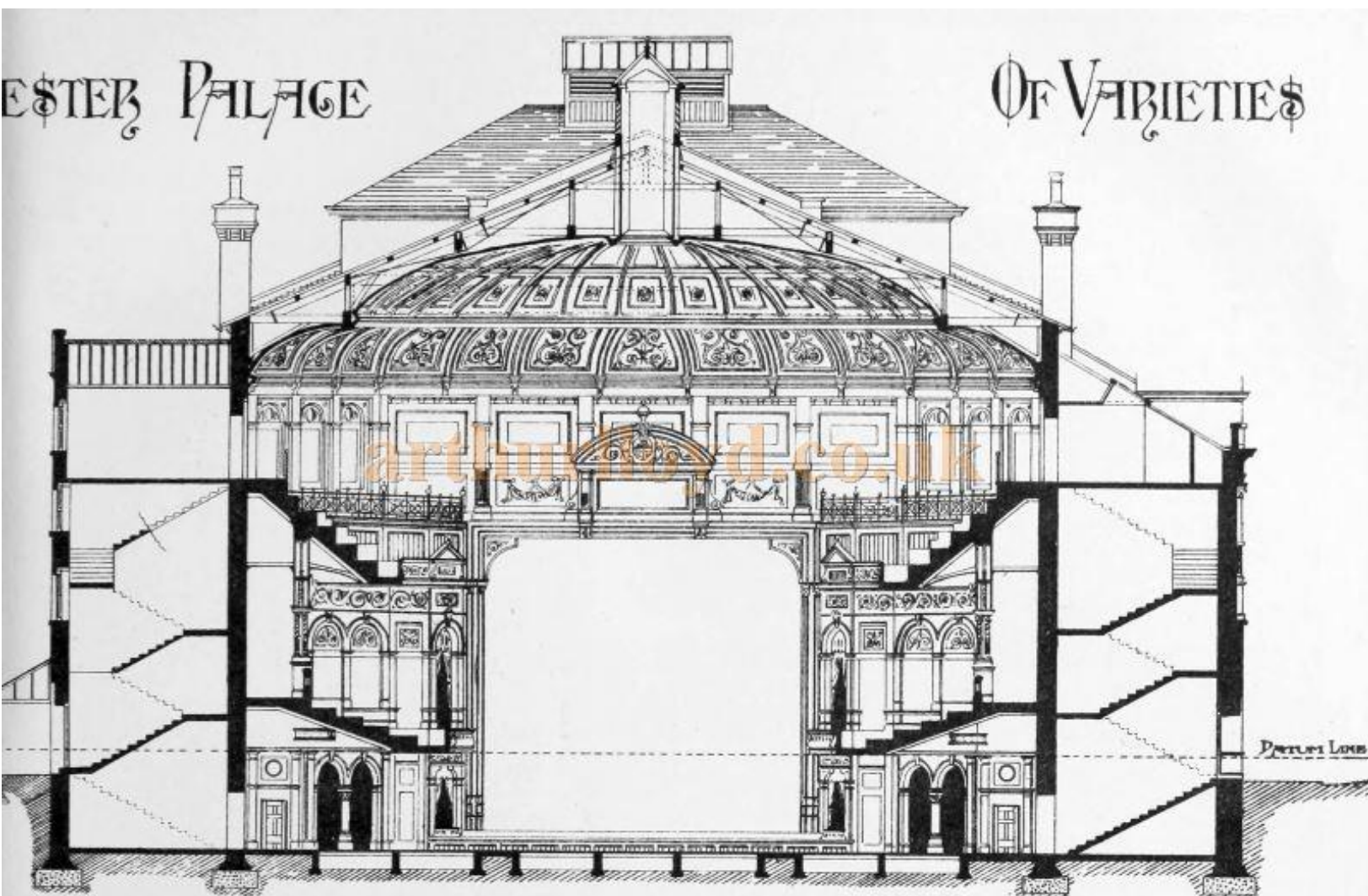
Extensive refurbishment works were complete in 1981, this saw enlargement of the stage, raising of the fly tower, enlargement of the orchestra pit and modernization of dressing rooms. The theatre was re-opened in March 1981 under the ownership of Raymond Slater, who bought the Theatre from Moss Empires. The theatre was subsequently sold to the Ambassador theatre group in 2009.

Externally the theatre building has a number of pitched roofs of traditional construction covered in green and blue slate. There are also a number of asphalt roofs, some with their original finish some which have been recovered in the past with bituminous felt. External walls are masonry construction with the main elevations finished with terracotta, the remaining original elevations are finished in red brick.

Internally the auditorium of today's Palace Theatre is on three levels: Stalls, Circle and Grand Tier, with a capacity of 2,000 people.

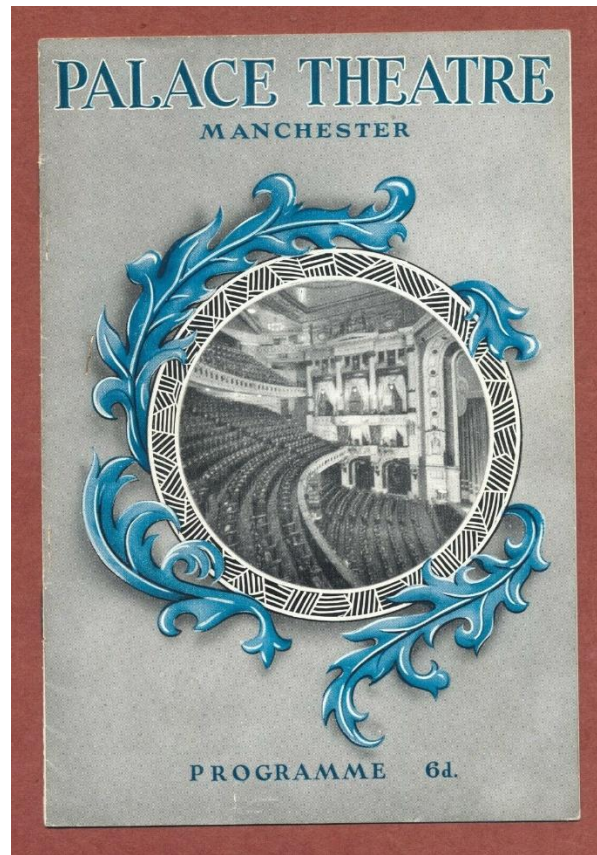
Auditorium

The following drawings were initially published within the Building News and Engineering Journal of 24th January 1890 and were drawn by Alfred Darbyshire & F B Smith's. These drawings were accessed from www.arthurlloyd.co.uk.



The drawing shows a section through the auditorium and shows the intended design for this area before the building was constructed. The above drawing shows that the appearance of the auditorium ceiling has greatly changed since the building was first completed in 1891. The ceiling depicted shows a larger dome than, what is currently existing. Additionally, there is an outer curved area of ceiling between the main central dome and above the frieze around the perimeter of the room.

As it currently existing the auditorium ceiling consists of a single smaller domed area with areas of flat ceiling surrounding. It is likely that this ceiling has existed in this form since 1913 with the changes to the auditorium ceiling likely taking during the 1913, reconstruction works by Bertie Crewe. The following images seen on the front cover of a 1950s programme for the theatre.

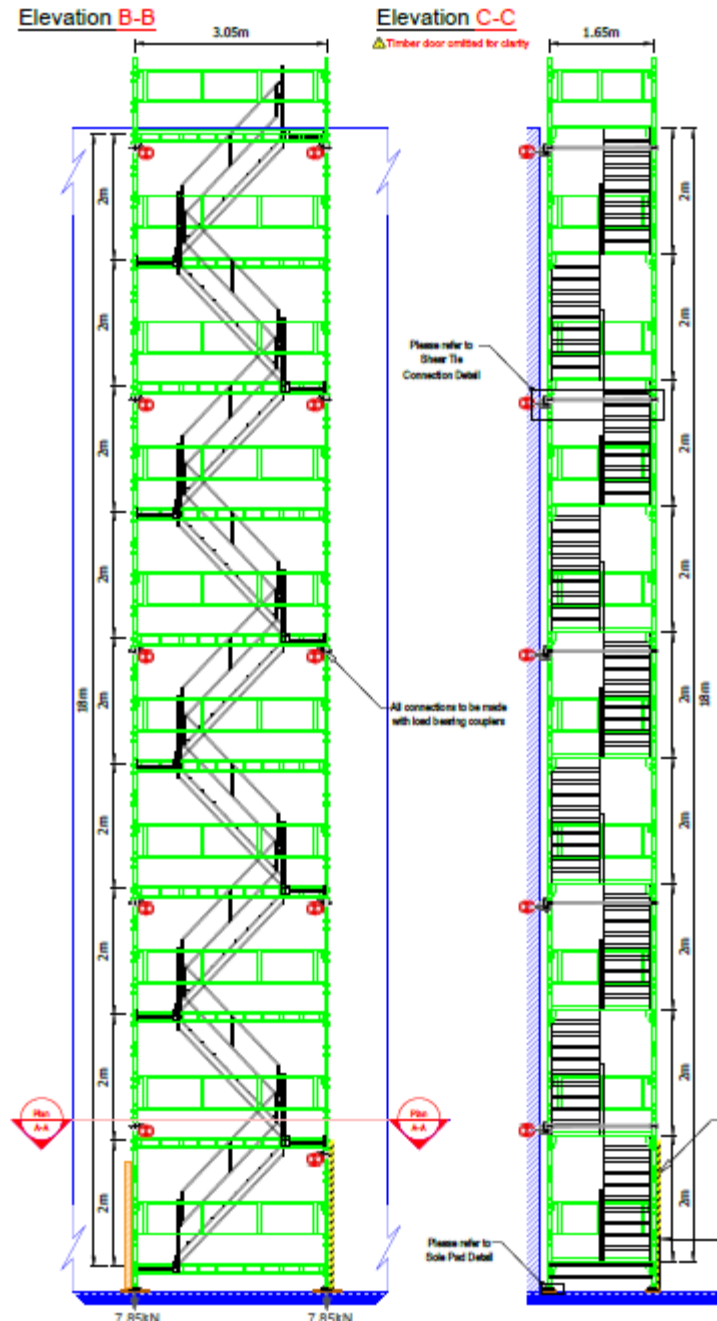


Although cropped, the flat ceiling areas surrounding the central dome is visible. This shows that these alterations to the ceiling had already taken place by the 1950s.

PROPOSALS

The proposals forming this application involve the erection of new temporary scaffolding stairs to the canal side of the Palace theatre building. The proposed stairs are required to facilitate the proposed works associated with previously approved applications 133731/FO/2022 & 133732/LO/2022. These applications included works to install new plant on existing flat roof areas of the Palace Theatre building.

The proposed new stairs will provide a separate means of access for contractors that avoids the main theatre visitors entrances. This would help to prevent disruption to shows.



Proposed Stair tower elevations

The previous drawing shows the proposed stair tower. The tower will have a 1.65m x 3.05m footprint and will be approximately 19.5m above ground level. The tower will sit on the existing path adjacent to the North West side of the building and will be between the building and the canal. The tower will take up relatively little of the existing path and will leave 4.18m space between itself and the canal. This, along with the temporary nature of the proposals mean that there will be little impact to users of the path.

This tower will be anchored to the existing modern brick wall at this location. Following the works and once the installation of the rooftop plant is complete the stair tower will be removed, and any holes made to the existing wall will be made good.



View from Canal level (Google Street View)

HERITAGE IMPACT

The proposed stairs will have little to no lasting impact on the building itself. Where the stair tower is to be anchored to the existing building, these holes will be filled/ made good following the works. In addition, it is worth noting that the wall that the stairs will be anchored to is of a relatively modern construction and of a lesser historic importance compared to other areas of the building.

The stairs will be visible on the exterior of the building from the buildings opposite on the canal side of the building, as well as from ground level by the canal itself. The visual impact to the area, would be limited due to its temporary nature.

ACCESS

Main access to the building is via Oxford street with other entrances to the building along Whitworth Street. Local public transport is available in the local area, with bus stops for local bus routes nearby along Oxford Street and Whitworth street. The nearest train station is Oxford Road which is situated directly opposite the theatre. Piccadilly train station is approximately 0.3 miles from the theatre. These stations connect the site to the wider national transport systems.

The proposed stair tower will provide access to the roof of the building without the need to go through the theatre building itself and therefore would reduce disruption to the use of the theatre.