

Regal Cinema, Ormskirk Historic Building Survey

December 2020



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological building survey was required prior to the conversion of the Regal Cinema, Ormskirk. The work was carried out on behalf of Stockton Properties by Steven Price of The Archaeology Co.

The cinema was erected in 1936 in an Art Deco style by the architect Lionel A. G. Prichard, who designed several cinemas in the area. The cinema closed in the 1960s, becoming a Bingo Hall and later a supermarket. Several features of the cinema have survived, including the projection booth and balcony seating area. The basement was inaccessible at the time of the survey.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Steven Price of The Archaeology Co. has been commissioned to perform a level 2/3 historic building survey of the former Regal Cinema, Ormskirk. It is a requirement of condition 15 of Planning Application 2019/0089/FUL that:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work. This must be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall first have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: As the site is of archaeological interest and in order to comply with the provisions of Policy EN4 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan

- 1.2 The proposal is for the "demolition of two existing buildings (No. 33-35 and 37 Church Street) and erection of four/five story mixed-used building comprising spilt-level retail unit (Class A1) at Ground and Lower Ground Level with Student Accommodation above. Landscaping to site areas as detailed. The proposal includes the formation of 2no. 'drop-off' car parking spaces and cycle storage on site".
- 1.3 This procedure followed the advice of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This came into effect in March 2012 and requires that "Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible" (NPPF 2019, 141).
- 1.3 Luis Stockton of Regal Ormskirk Ltd has commissioned Mr. Steven Price BA (Hons), MA, MPhil, PCIfA of The Archaeology Co., to carry out the historic building recording. Steven Price is a Practitioner of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists with over 15 years' experience of surveying and recording buildings of many types.



He has carried out numerous standard Level 2 and 3 surveys for this type of property.

2. SITE LOCATION

2.1 The building is situated on the southwest side of Church Street, Ormskirk, close to the junction with the A570. The postal address is 37 Church Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 3AG and the NGR is SD 41323 08324. The cinema is an entry on the Lancashire Historic Environment Record (PRN20899) and lies within the Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Buildings are an important part of the historic environment as they provide information on historical technology, social structure and lifestyles. The alteration of such buildings may remove evidence of their past uses and occupation and make it more difficult for future historians to understand and interpret them. The aim of the survey was to preserve 'by record' the information that may be lost as a result of demolition or alteration. This was achieved by recording and analysing the plan form, function, age and development of the building and by the provision of a written, drawn and photographic archive for future reference.
- 3.2 The purpose of an Historic Building Recording, according to the CIfA (2014) is to "examine a specified building, structure or complex, and its setting, in order to inform a) the formulation of a strategy for the conservation, alteration, demolition, repair or management of a building, or structure, or complex and its setting or b) to seek a better understanding, compile a lasting record, analyse the findings/record, and then disseminate the results".
- 3.3 The objective for this project was to seek a better understanding, compile a lasting record, analyse the findings/record, and then disseminate the results.



4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 An appropriate record has been made of the building. Floor plans are required which have been modified from those supplied by the architect after being checked on site. A cross section is also required which was drawn on site using permatrace. The drawn record shows all features of interest that have been recorded photographically, as well as showing other features of historical significance that may not be directly affected by the proposal but which are necessary to put those features in context.
- 4.2 Construction techniques and sequences were appropriately illustrated or described, if visible.
- 4.3 The archaeologist on site identified and noted:
 - Truss positions and form;
 - Any significant changes in construction material this is intended to include significant changes in stone/brick type and size, coursing, etc.
 - All blocked, altered or introduced openings;
 - Evidence for phasing, and for historical additions or alterations to the building.
- 4.4 Drawing conventions conform to Historic England guidelines as laid out in Understanding Historic Buildings A guide to good recording practice, Historic England 2016.
- 4.5 Photographs were taken with an Olympus E600 Digital SLR camera (12 Megapixels) in RAW format. All detailed photographs and general shots contain a 2-metre ranging-rod, discretely positioned, sufficient to independently establish the scale of all elements of the building and its structure, where it was safe to do so.
- 4.6 The photographic coverage includes:
 - General photographs of the interior and exterior of the building/complex, along with photographs of the site/setting of the building.
 - The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
 - Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point



- of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.
- Any external detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.
- The building's relationship to its setting, and to significant viewpoints.
- Internal detail, structural and decorative which is relevant to the building's
 design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general
 photographs. Elements for which multiple examples exist (e.g. each type of
 roof truss, column or window frame) have been recorded by means of a single
 representative illustration.
- 4.7 A plan showing the location from which the photographs have been taken has been produced.
- 4.8 A photographic register listing all photographs taken has been produced. For ease of use each set of photographs have been numbered sequentially 1, 2, 3, etc.
- 4.9 The site was visited on 15th December 2020 when the building was surveyed. Detailed notes were made of the structural details of the buildings and photographs taken. Measurements were taken with hand held and electronic 'tapes' which enabled the floor plans to be checked and altered appropriately and the section drawn.
- 4.10 The project was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* 2nd ed. 1991 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* 2020.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 An iron foundry dating from 1796 was on the site prior to the cinema, and shown on the 1927 OS map. The cinema was erected in 1936 in an Art Deco style by the architect Lionel A. G. Prichard.



- 5.2 Prichard graduated with a first-class degree in 1921 and founded "LAG Prichard, Chartered Architects" in Liverpool the same year. Prichard went on to design several cinemas, with The Clubmoor Picture House in Liverpool being one of his first, in 1925. The West Derby Picture House was opened in 1927 (Cinema Treasures (b)) and appears to have been the basis for the Regal Cinema in Ormskirk, with a 'block' frontage hiding the gable but without the decorative features found on the Regal Cinema and some of his later buildings (figure 8).
- 5.3 The Regal Cinema was opened on 26th January 1936 with a stage production of Gilbert & Sullivan's "Yeoman of the Guard", presented by the Ormskirk Operatic & Dramatic Society. The first films were screened on 10th February 1936. The cinema had seating provided in stalls & circle levels, with a decent sized stage and an orchestra pit. Lighting in the auditorium was contained in troughs in the ceiling. It was equipped with a Western Electric sound system (Cinema Treasures (a)).
- 5.4 The seats were of "peacock crushed velvet, [with] silver trimmed covers, deep sprung seats and distinctive silver panels at the end of each row". There were 800 seats in lower stalls and 300 seats on the balcony. The foyer was decorated with blue woodwork and doors with silver metalwork. A concierge was employed at the entrance complete with cap and uniform (Ormskirk Bygone Times).
- 5.5 In the mid 1960's the building closed as a cinema and was converted to a bingo hall. The seats were removed in 1865 and sold in four lots, with one lot going to a Liverpool church (Ormskirk Bygone Times). The bingo hall closed in the 1980's and the building was converted to a supermarket.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

General Description

6.1 The building is a rectangular brick-built building in English Garden Wall bond (3:1) aligned roughly north – south. The frontage is constructed of a brown brick, whereas the sides and rear are of a redder brick. The building is three stories plus



half basement. The latter lies at the southern end and is accessible externally due to the sloping ground level. The second floor lies only at the northern end of the building

Exterior

- 6.2 North elevation (Plates). This forms the main frontage of the building, facing onto Church Street. The frontage is 5 unequal bays with the central three stepped forward. At ground floor level a large tiled shop front has been inserted into the central bays with three large entrance ways. Flanking this, in the end bays, are tall narrow portrait windows, blocked, with soldier headers. At first floor level these are windows are again present in the end bays. Bays 2 and 4 each have a pair of similar windows, although these are slightly wider. The central bay contains two matching windows flanking a landscape window. The second floor matches the first with the exception that there are no windows to bays 2 and 4. All windows are blocked.
- 6.3 West elevation (Plates). This elevation is ten bays. The northernmost, bay 1, is featureless, but to the south bays 2 7 each contains a modern timber framed landscape window at first floor level. At ground floor level bays one and three contain a blocked window at ground floor level, with bay 1 having an additional blocked window at second floor level. At basement level in bay 6 a blocked loading door is present, evidenced by its sandstone lintel. To the south bays 8 10 are blocked by a loading bay extension at basement and ground floor level. A lift shaft has been added to bay 8 reaching up to first floor. Bays 9 and 10 each contain a row of small timber framed windows. At the northern end the brown bricks of the frontage form a quoins appearance.
- 6.4 South elevation (Plates). This forms the rear of the building and the gable end. The face can be divided into three bays, with the central projected forward from basement level to first floor. A metal rail sits on the top and a personnel doorway leads into the building. At basement level there are a pair of wide openings. The eastern bay contains two personnel doorways at basement level with a wider double doorway to the east of them. The former pair are later insertions and a blocked window is evident between them. At ground floor level both east and west bays contain a pair of blocked windows. On the west bay, to the west of the windows, a blocked doorway is present. Above them, at first floor level is a small



timber framed window. Final, close to the gable, three tall ventilation slots are present.

6.5 East elevation (Plates). This elevation matches the west, being comprised of ten bays, each with a window at first floor level, with the exception of the first. Here the first bay contains a fire exit at ground floor level and bay 3 contains a blocked square window at ground floor level. Bays 6 and 9 contain blocked loading doorways. The former has a sandstone lintel, whereas the latter is lower and has an RSJ. Bay 9 also contains a fire escape doorway at ground floor level, accessed via a fire escape staircase crossing bay 8. Bay 8 contains a small blocked window at basement level and bay 10 contains a doorway.

Interior

- 6.6 The ground floor is, for the most part, a single open space, open to the high ceiling above. This partially masks the double pitched roof above, although is missing at the southernmost bay. This timber ceiling is segmented, with arches spanning the width east west, as well as being arched north south, each segment spanning two bays. Above the timber ceiling a metal truss is visible at each bay.
- 6.7 At ground floor level the only area not open to the ceiling is the modern loading bay extension to the west side. This is constructed of brick and concrete block. Within the main building, at the northern end of the first two bays lie now redundant corridors. The walls are tiled, but above where the false ceiling has been removed the brickwork is visible. Although openings have been inserted, above these the rounded arch lintel of a former doorway is visible, likely showing the location of access to the staircase to the first floor.
- 6.8 The first floor is still present in the two northernmost bays. The underside is shown to be of concrete and sloping up from south to north, supported on RSJ beams. The first floor itself is formed of a series of nine shallow concrete steps, formerly the balcony seating area of the cinema. The second floor above is likewise concrete and lies above the first five steps. It is supported by three simple cast iron stanchions. In the north wall the blocked windows visible on the exterior are also visible here. To the east and west are brick walls each with a personnel doorway, giving access to



now redundant corridors. The western corridor contains a metal ladder leading up to the second floor.

6.9 The second floor is the former projection area. Throughout the area the walls are bare brick painted green with cream at picture rail level, and the ceiling and floor are concrete. The ladder from the corridor below leads to a small access room with a doorway in the east wall. This leads to a small room which leads through to the main projection room. The southern wall here is painted black and contains a row of eight holes, each 300mm square. Each is covered by a metal shuttler, with the label "THE WALTURDAW CINEMA SUPPLY CO. LTD.". These shutters are connected to a metal lever system above, with handles allowing the shutters to be raised or lowered. In the north wall the blocked windows visible externally are again visible here. From here a corridor leads off to the east. A room to the south is the former electrical room and east of this is a work area. "NO SMOKING" is painted on the walls. At the east end of the corridor is a sliding doorway with "OPERATING ROOM" painted on the eastern side. The corridor here turns south. On the east is a blocked area, although through the timber boards a large circular hole is visible to first floor level. At the southern end of the corridor is a former WC, now removed.



7. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The cinema was erected in 1936 by the architect Lionel Prichard. The building shares similarities with other cinemas he built, showing the evolution of his work. One of his earlier works, the West Derby Plaza is a smaller and simpler cinema, but shows the origins of this development.
- 7.2 Despite having been converted to a supermarket several features of the cinema still survive. The projection room and operating areas on the second floor are much as they were when built, with the shutter system still in place. The first floor balcony area still retains the stepped seating area, although the seats were removed in the 1960's. It is thought that the balcony area had 300 seats, which would allow for 30 seats on each of the 10 steps. The remains of the timber ceiling are still present, although the plaster is not. The curved profile was likely for acoustic purposes.



8. ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The results of the survey will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current Historic England guidelines ("The Management of Archaeological Projects", 2nd edition, 1991), the "Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage" (UKIC 1990), and current CIfA "standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive" (published October 2009). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the CIfA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 8.2 The written and drawn archive will be placed with Lancashire Records Office (with reference DDX 3172) within a reasonable time of completion of the project. A digital copy of the report and photographs shall be deposited with ADS through the OASIS database. A copy of the final report will also be deposited with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record (HER) as well as the client. Should the results warrant it, a summary report, or detailed article on the work shall be submitted for publication in a regional or national journal, appropriate to the significance of the results and findings of the project. This shall be done no later than one year after the completion of the work. Should this be required, an updated Written Scheme of Investigation will be produced, which will define in detail the nature the form of the proposed publication.



9. COPYRIGHT

9.1 Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

CIfA Chartered Institute for archaeologists

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

OS Ordnance Survey

Sources

Cinema Treasures (a). Accessed online 17/12/2020 at:

http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/39244

Cinema Treasures (b). Accessed online 17/12/2020 at:

(http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/49615)

Ormskirk Bygone Times. Accessed online 17/12/2020 at:

http://ormskirkbygonetimes.co.uk/tag/regal-cinema-ormskirk/

CIfA 2014 "Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures" accessed online at:

http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-

files/ifa_standards_buildings.pdf>

Historic England 2016 "Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice"

"National Planning Policy Framework" 2019 accessed online at www.communities.gov.uk

Maps

1849 OS Lancashire Sheet XCII



1894 OS Lancashire Sheet LXXXIV.13

1908 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1

1926 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1

1969 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1



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Figure 6: 1926 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1

Figure 7: 1969 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1

Figure 8: West Derby Plaza Cinema from 1927

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Figure 10: Photograph showing the porched entrance, showing 'Bonnie Scotland'

Figure 11: Seats removed from the Regal Cinema

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Figure 14: First floor plan

Figure 15: Second floor plan

Figure 16: Section

Figure 17: Ground floor photo location plan

Figure 18: First and second floor photo location plans

Figure 19: Photograph Register





Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

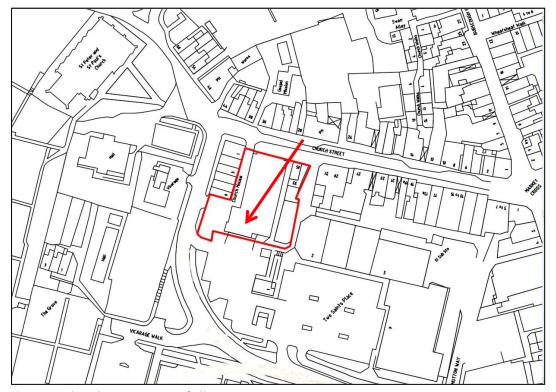


Figure 2: Site Plan (Courtesy of client)



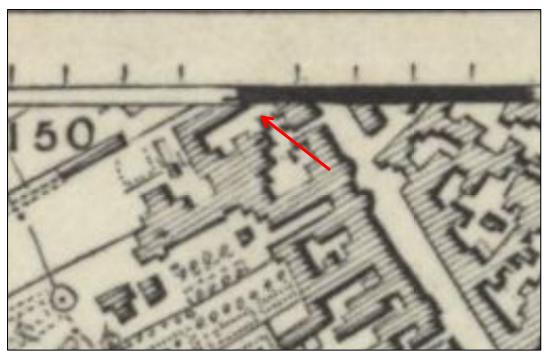


Figure 3: 1849 OS Lancashire Sheet XCII

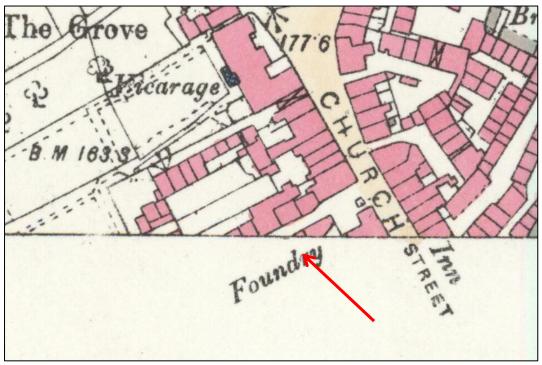


Figure 4: 1894 OS map Lancs. Sheet LXXXIV.13



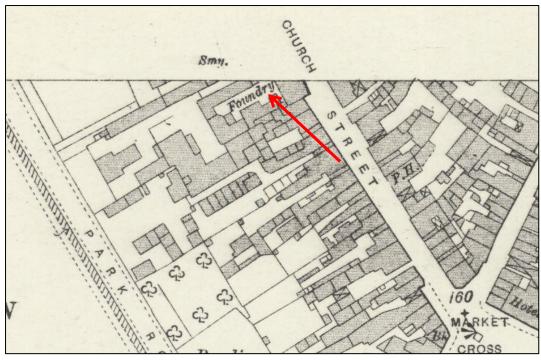


Figure 5: 1908 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1

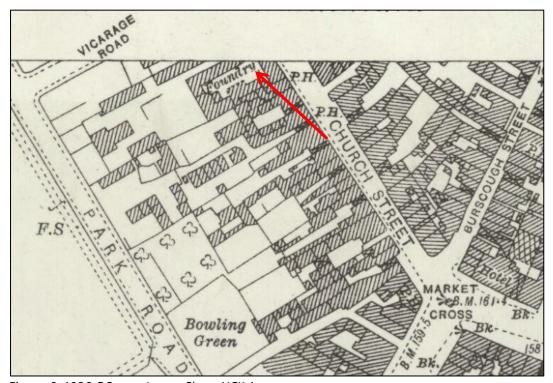


Figure 6: 1926 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1



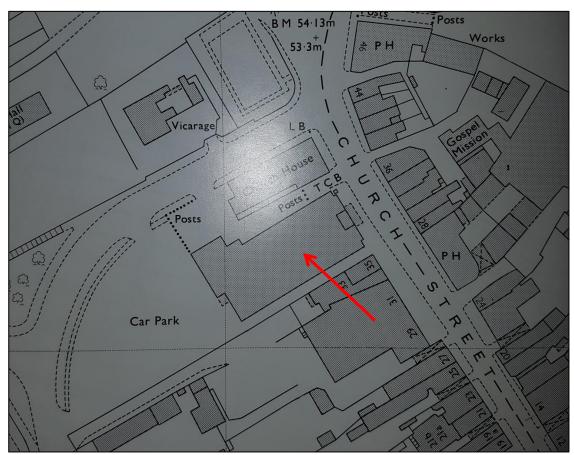


Figure 7: 1969 OS map Lancs. Sheet XCII.1



Figure 8: West Derby Plaza Cinema from 1927 (Cinema Treasures (b)).



REGAL CINEMA, ORMSKIRK

PHONE ORMSKIRK 444.

OPENING

(Subject to Justices' Licence)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10th, 1936,

By SIR SAMUEL BRIGHOUSE

(His Majesty's Coroner for Lancashire).

ADMISSION - - - 6d. (No Tax), 1/- and 1/6 (Including Tax).

Continuous from 6-30 p.m. at Same Prices.

Commencing Tuesday, February 11th, 1936,

AND EVERY WEEK-DAY.

MATINEES at 2-45 p.m. Admission 3d. and 6d. (No Tax).

EVENINGS (Monday to Friday) Continuous from 6-30 p.m.

ADMISSION: 6d. (no Tax), 1/- and 1/6 (including Tax).

CHILDREN 3d. and 6d. (no Tax).

(Balcony seats booked free of charge).

SATURDAYS. Two Performances, 6-30 and 8-30 p.m.

ADMISSION: 6d. (no Tax), 1/- and 1/6 (including Tax).

No half price after 8-30 p.m. Balcony Seats booked free of charge.

PATRONS PLEASE NOTE: FREE CAR PARK FOR 500 CARS.

The Car Park may be used by ALL MOTORISTS IN ORMSKIRK at a charge of 6d. per day.

Figure 9: Opening poster from 1936





Figure 10: Photograph showing the porched entrance, showing 'Bonnie Scotland'.

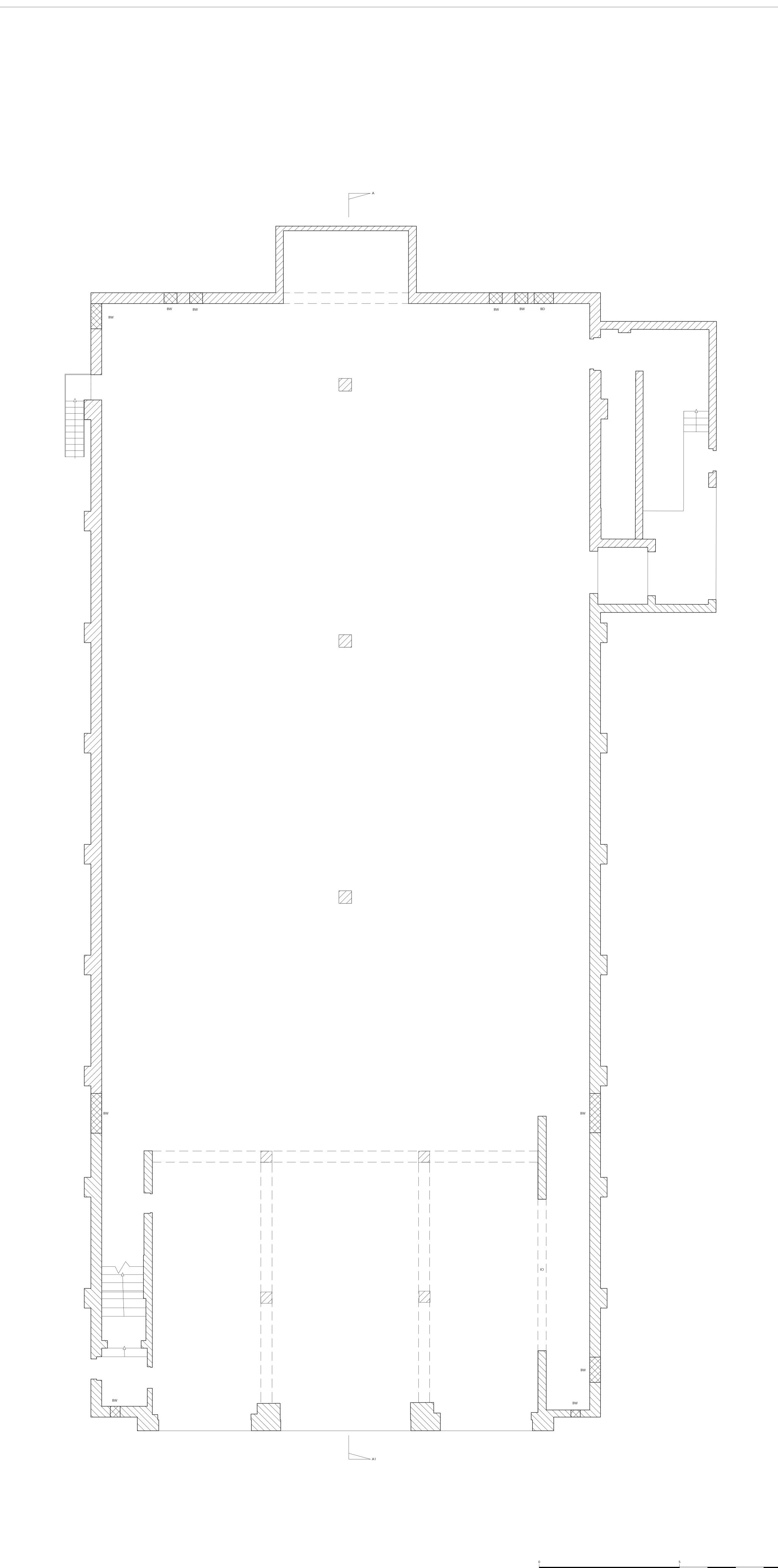




Figure 11: Seats removed from the Regal Cinema (Ormskirk bygone times)

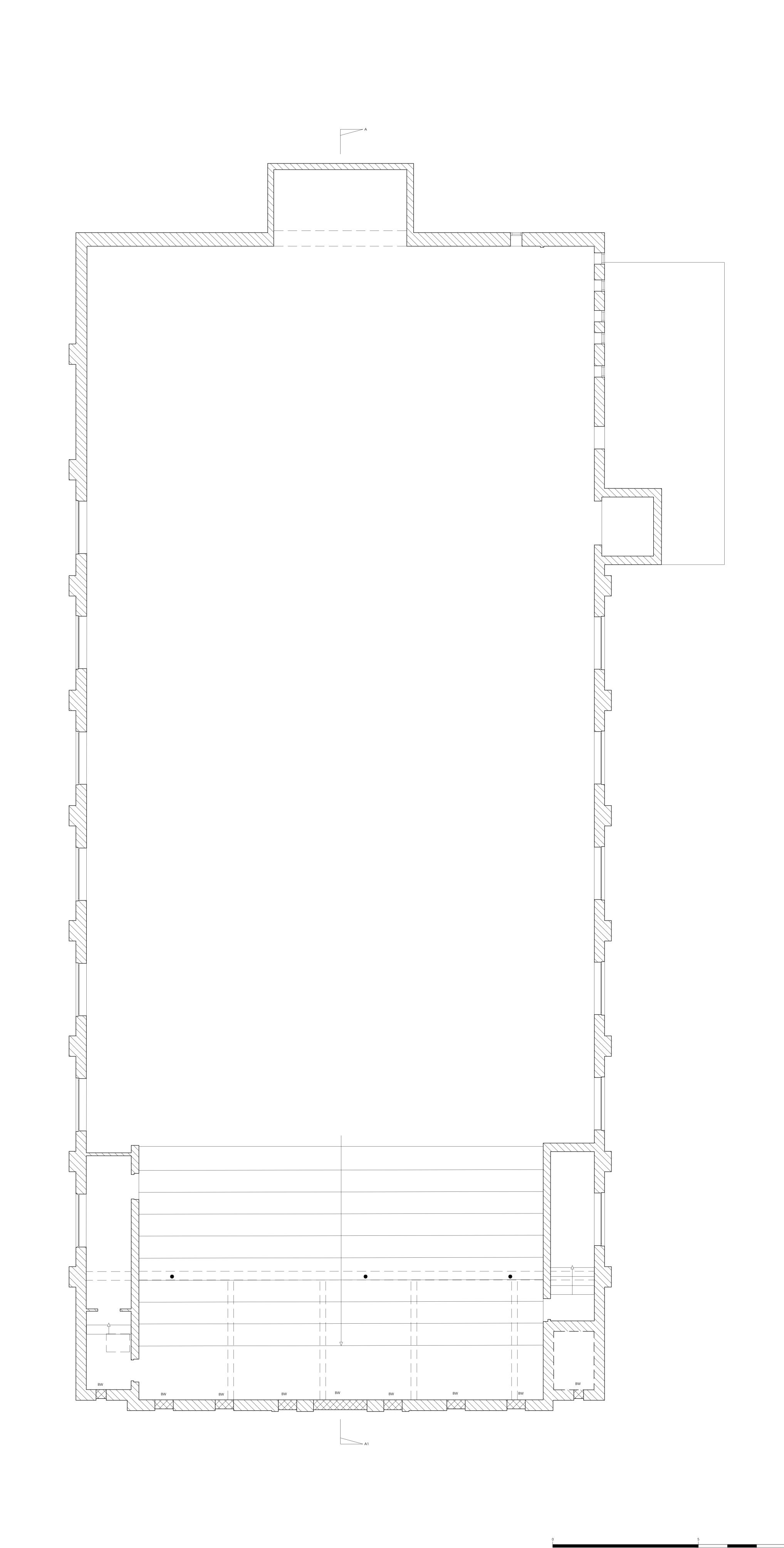


Figure 12: Art deco detailing (Ormskirk bygone times)





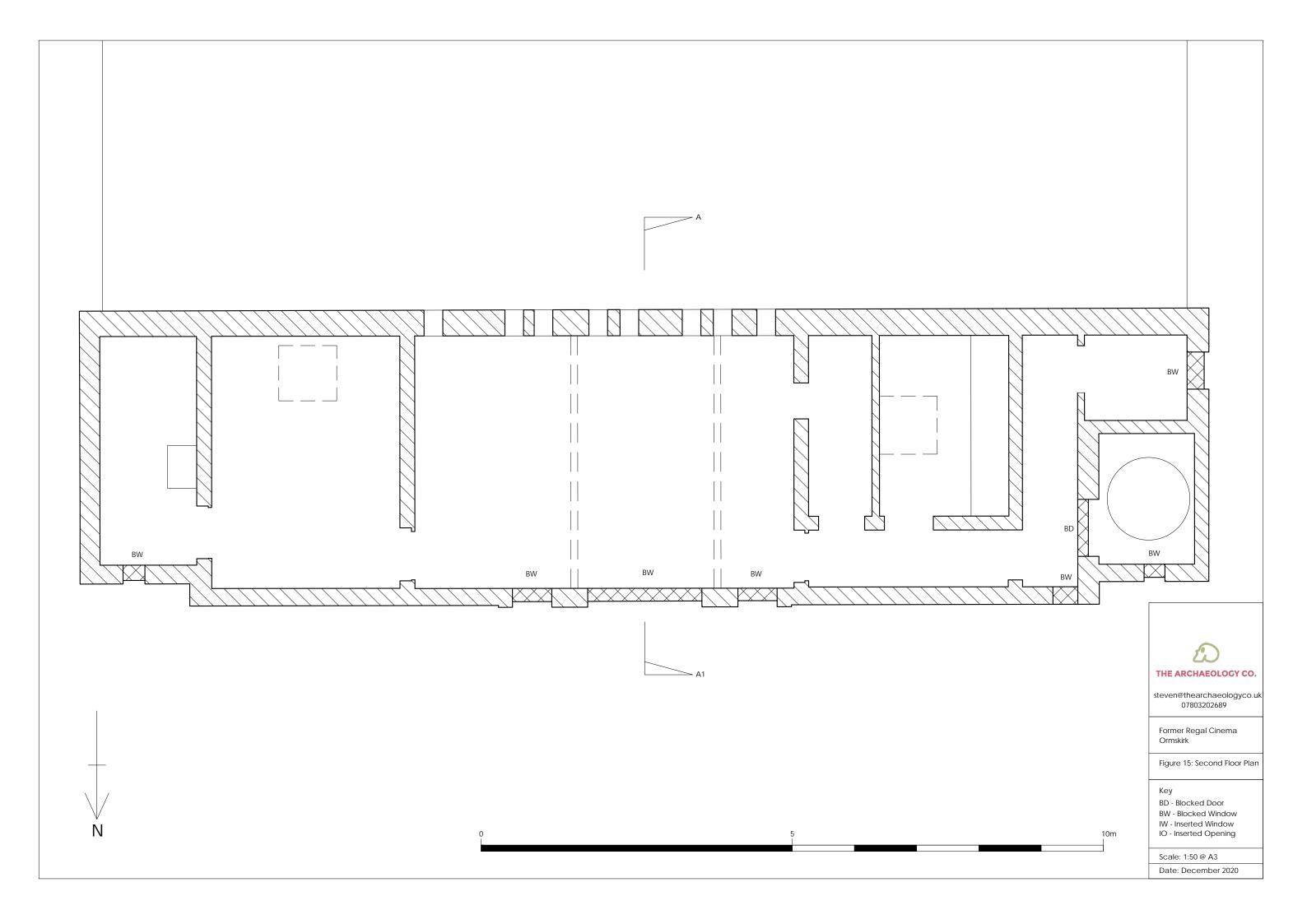
Date: December 2020

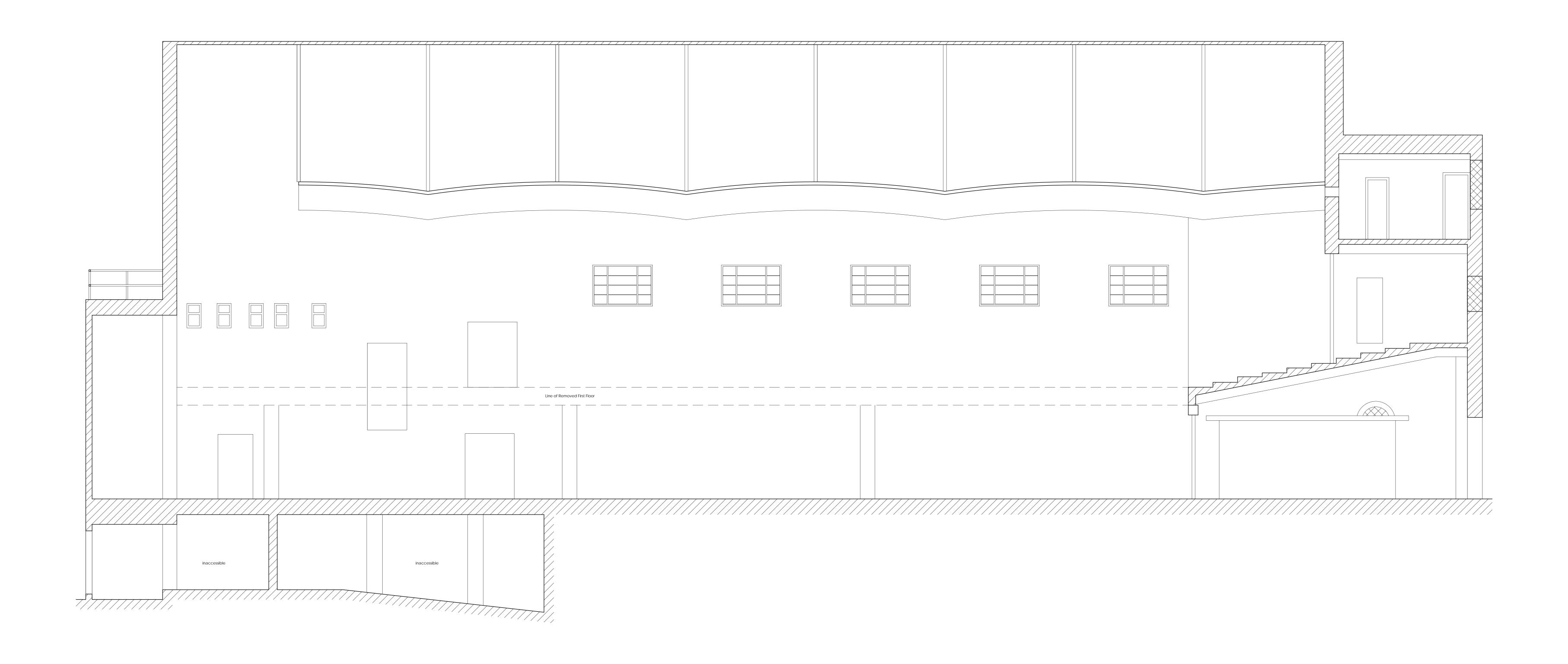




Scale: 1:50 @ A0

Date: December 2020







Former Regal Cinema Ormskirk

Figure 16: Section A - A1

BD - Blocked Door
BW - Blocked Window
IW - Inserted Window
IO - Inserted Opening

Scale: 1:50 @ A0

Date: December 2020

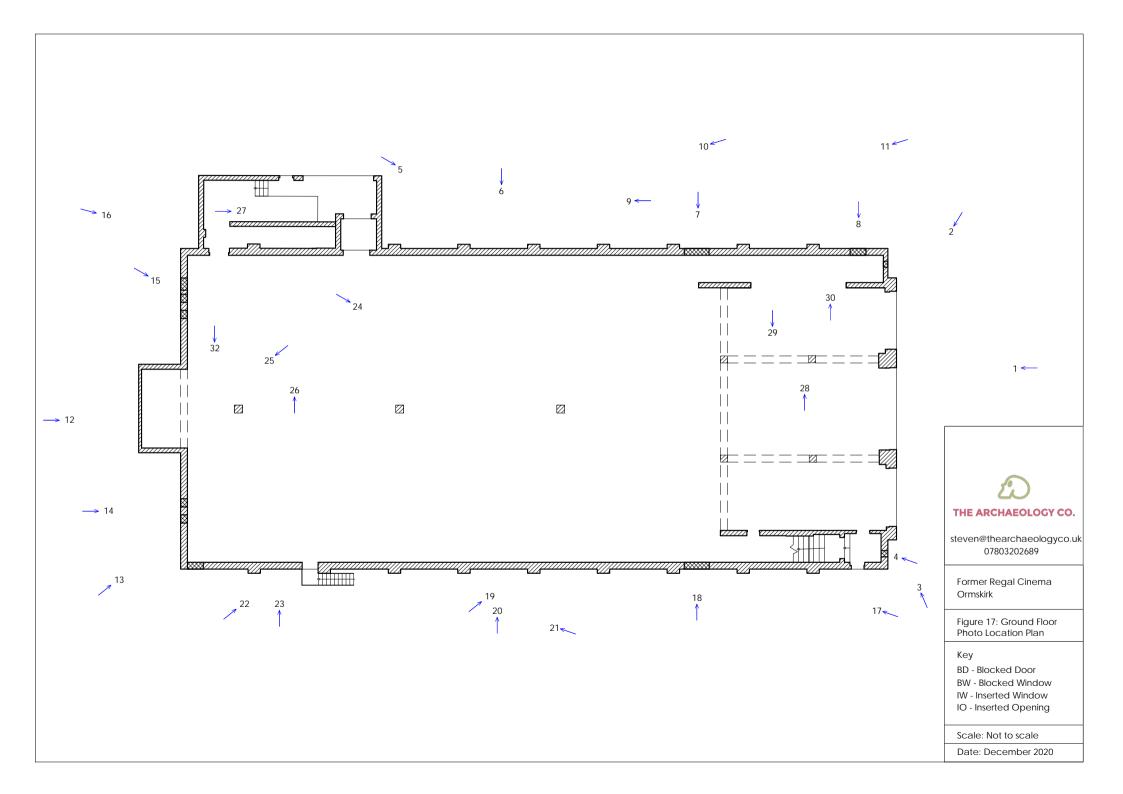






Figure 19: Photographic Register

Plate No.	Digital No.	Description	View to
1	PC159047	North elevation showing main frontage	S
2	PC159099	As above showing inserted shop fronts	SE
3	PC159100	As above	SW
4	PC159101	Blocked window	S
5	PC159092	West elevation looking north	NE
6	PC159093	Blocked loading door to bay 6	Е
7	PC159094	Blocked window to bay 3	Е
8	PC159097	Blocked window to bay 1	Е
9	PC159095	Loading bay extension	S
10	PC159096	As above showing lift shaft	S
11	PC159098	West elevation looking south	S
12	PC159112	Rear (south) elevation	N
13	PC159111	As above	NE
14	PC159113	Blocked windows to east side	N
15	PC159114	Blocked windows and doorway to west side	N
16	PC159115	South elevation showing loading bay extension	N
17	PC159102	East elevation looking south	S
18	PC159109	Blocked window to bay 3	W
19	PC159103	East elevation looking north from bay 6	NW
20	PC159104	Blocked loading door to bay 6	W
21	PC159105	East elevation looking south from bay 5	SW
22	PC159106	South end of east elevation	NW
23	PC159107	Blocked loading door to bay 9	W
24	PC159086	General shot of ground floor	NE
25	PC159085	South end of ground floor	SE
26	PC159090	West wall of ground floor showing inserted doorways to loading	W
		bay	
27	PC159091	Loading bay interior	N
28	PC159082	North end of ground floor showing first floor above	W
29	PC159084	As above looking east	E
30	PC159083	Round arch lintel of former doorway	W
31	PC159054	Curved timber ceiling	S
32	PC159088	Southern end where ceiling ends	E
33	PC159055	General shot of removed first floor	SW
34	PC159049	As above looking south	SE
35	PC159050	North wall of first floor showing blocked openings	N
36	PC159051	As above	NE
37	PC159081	Shot to the east showing steps	E
38	PC159053	Timber ceiling meeting the second floor projection room	NW
39	PC159078	Eastern first floor corridor	S
40	PC159056	Eastern first floor corridor showing ladder to second floor	N
41	PC159057	Room located between ladder access and projection room	W
42	PC159058	General shot of projection room showing shutters in south wall	SE
43	PC159060	As above	SW
44	PC159061	Doorways in west wall of projection room	W
45	PC159064	Blocked windows in north wall	NE



46	PC159069	Doorway to east room	Е
47	PC159066	Detail of shutter and mechanism	S
48	PC159067	As above	S
49	PC159074	As above	S
50	PC159068	Detail of shutter label	S
51	PC159076	Former electrical room	NE
52	PC159077	Former electrical room	S
53	PC159070	Room to the west of the projection room	S
54	PC159071	Room to the west of the projection room	SW
55	PC159072	Room to the west of the projection room	NW
56	PC159073	Corridor showing sliding door to "OPERATING ROOM"	N
57	PC159075	Former WC at western end with blocked window	W



Appendix 2: Plates





Plate 1: North elevation showing main frontage



Plate 2: As above showing inserted shop fronts





Plate 3: As above

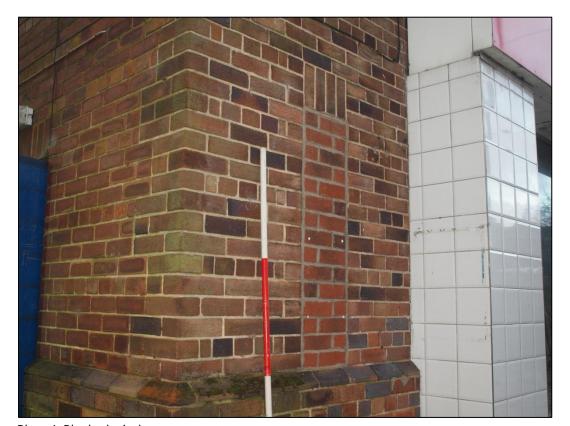


Plate 4: Blocked window





Plate 5: West elevation looking north



Plate 6: Blocked loading door to bay 6





Plate 7: Blocked window to bay 3

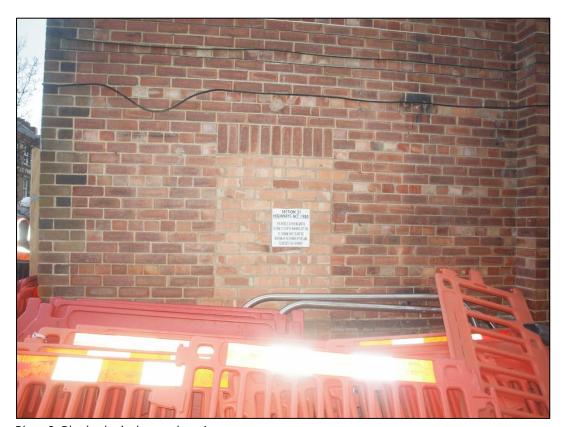


Plate 8: Blocked window to bay 1





Plate 9: Loading bay extension



Plate 10: As above showing lift shaft





Plate 11: West elevation looking south



Plate 12: Rear (south) elevation





Plate 13: As above



Plate 14: Blocked windows to east side





Plate 15: Blocked windows and doorway to west side



Plate 16: South elevation showing loading bay extension





Plate 17: East elevation looking south



Plate 18: Blocked window to bay 3





Plate 19: East elevation looking north from bay 6



Plate 20: Blocked loading door to bay 6





Plate 21: East elevation looking south from bay 5



Plate 22: South end of east elevation





Plate 23: Blocked loading door to bay 9



Plate 24: General shot of ground floor





Plate 25: South end of ground floor



Plate 26: West wall of ground floor showing inserted doorways to loading bay





Plate 27: Loading bay interior



Plate 28: North end of ground floor showing first floor above





Plate 29: As above looking east



Plate 30: Round arch lintel of former doorway





Plate 31: Curved timber ceiling



Plate 32: Southern end where ceiling ends





Plate 33: General shot of removed first floor



Plate 34: As above looking south





Plate 35: North wall of first floor showing blocked openings



Plate 36: As above



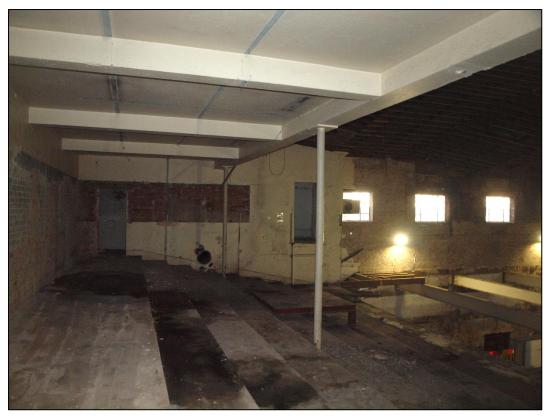


Plate 37: Shot to the east showing steps



Plate 38: Timber ceiling meeting the second floor projection room





Plate 39: Eastern first floor corridor



Plate 40: Eastern first floor corridor showing ladder to second floor





Plate 41: Room located between ladder access and projection room



Plate 42: General shot of projection room showing shutters in south wall





Plate 43: As above



Plate 44: Doorways in west wall of projection room





Plate 45: Blocked windows in north wall

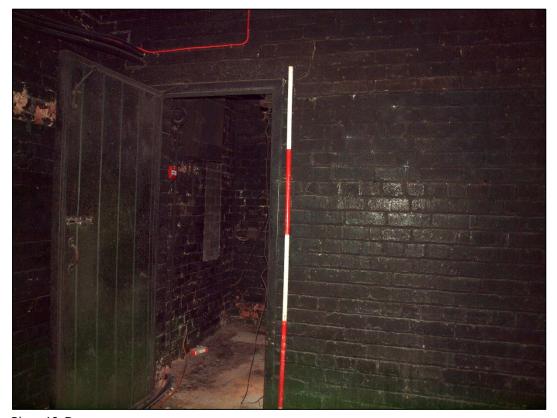


Plate 46: Doorway to east room





Plate 47: Detail of shutter and mechanism



Plate 48: As above





Plate 49: As above



Plate 50: Detail of shutter label





Plate 51: Former electrical room

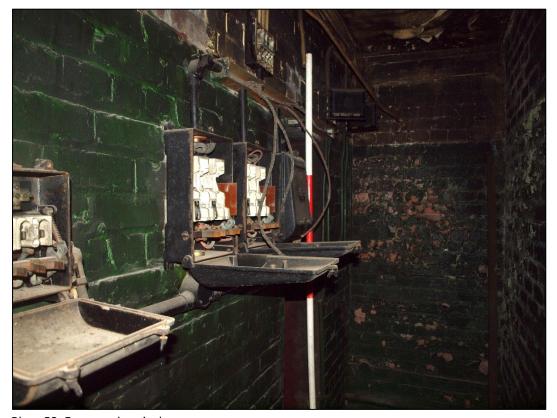


Plate 52: Former electrical room





Plate 53: Room to the west of the projection room



Plate 54: As above





Plate 55: As above



Plate 56: Corridor showing sliding door to "OPERATING ROOM"





Plate 57: Former WC at western end with blocked window