

PATRICK WILSON | ARCHITECTS

15-21 Library Street

Wigan

WN1 1NN

Tel: 01942 927 547

pw-a

Heritage Statement

December 2021



CONTENTS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 LOCATION
- 3.0 WIGAN TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT
- 4.0 ADJACENT LISTED BUILDINGS
- 5.0 RELEVANT PAST PLANNING HISTORY
- 6.0 BUILDING TIMELINE
- 7.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT
- 8.0 LOCAL PLAN CONTEXT
- 9.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
- 10.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION
- 11.0 PROPOSAL
- 12.0 CONCLUSION
- 13.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



1.00 Introduction

- 1.01 The Royal Court Theatre, 48-50 King Street, Wigan, WN1 1BT, is the focus of this Heritage Statement. The building is Grade II Listed and is within the Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area.

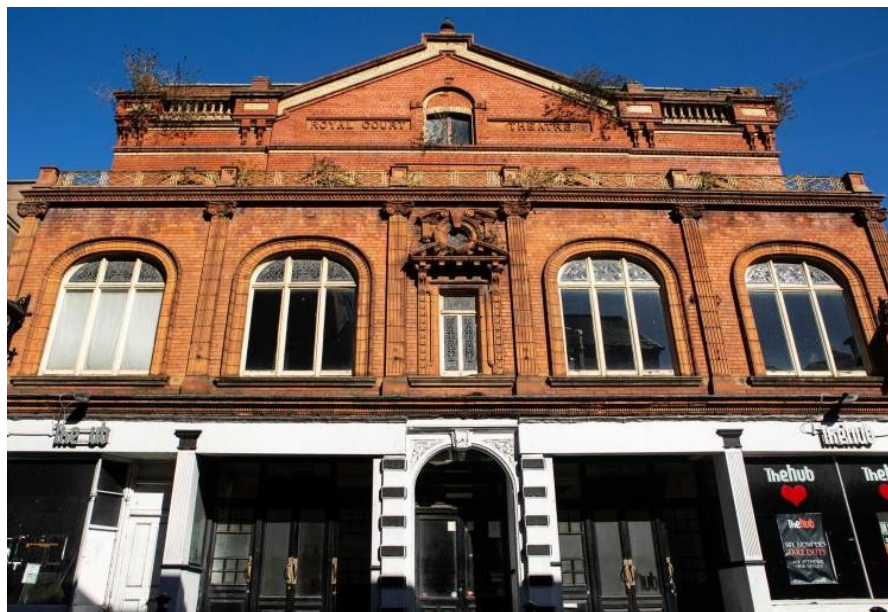


Figure 1: King Street Elevation [Source: Arthurlloyd.co.uk]

- 1.02 Patrick Wilson | Architects have been commissioned to prepare this document as part of the application for planning approval and listed building consent to undertake the proposed works. The purpose of this document is to provide the Local Planning Authority with the necessary and appropriate information that will inform the proposal.

It is produced in response to policies set out in Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, where it states; *“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”*

This document has been commissioned by Arts @ the Mill, who are the applicants in this case. This document is for the sole purpose for which it has been commissioned and is to be read in conjunction with all other application and supporting documents.



2.00 Location

2.01 The Royal Court Theatre, 48-50 King Street, stands at NGR: 58327 05476, in Wigan, Greater Manchester. The site comprises the former Royal Court Theatre, a 3no. storey red terracotta and yellow brick building with a 2no. storey projected foyer which lies to the southeast of Wigan town centre. The Theatre is grandly situated on King Street, which was largely developed during the late 18th and 19th centuries as part of a planned extension to the town at a time of rapid growth of manufacturing industries and the associated railway connections nearby. In more recent times, King Street has been identified as a key focus for regeneration by the Wigan Town Centre Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) and in 2019 secured High Street Heritage Action Zone status, receiving £1.2m of Government funding, delivered through Historic England.

2.02 A location plan showing the site is submitted with the application, whilst an aerial image of the current site in its wider setting is illustrated below.

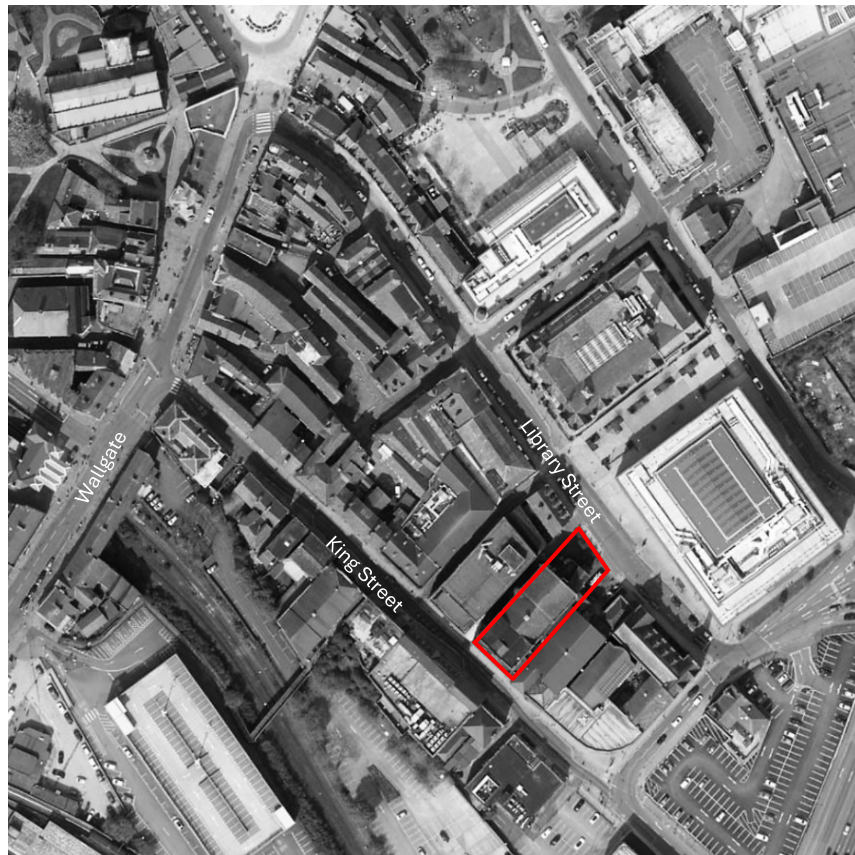


Figure 2: Aerial Image showing site location (nts) [Source: Google Maps]



- 2.03 There are 2no. roads adjacent to the Theatre, King Street to the front and Library Street to the rear. There are 2no. properties neighbouring the Theatre. The attached building to the east is in private ownership; it is not listed, and the Theatre has a right of access to the alleyway between the building and a flying freehold over the alleyway. To the west, a gated alleyway separates the neighbouring building; it is not listed, and the Theatre has a right of access to the alleyway which separates them.
- 2.04 The Royal Court Theatre, 48-50 King Street, the subject of the application, was constructed in 1886. Alterations were made in 1899 by famed Theatre architect, John P. Briggs, to the front elevation and entrance areas, along with changes to the Circle and dressing room spaces. Following further alterations in 1930 by architects Grey and Evans of Liverpool, the Theatre was redesigned as a cinema, functioning as so until 1974. Since then, the building has served as a Bingo Hall and also as bars named 'Springbok' and 'The Hub'; the latter ceased trading in 2016. The series of maps below record the changing nature of the context surrounding the site.



Figure 3: Ordnance Survey Maps surveyed in; 1892 (Top Left), 1907 (Top Right), 1928 (Bottom Left) 1938 (Bottom Right) Royal Court Theatre 48-50 King Street is outlined in red.

- 2.05 The area around the Royal Court Theatre has traditionally been a focal point for entertainment and commercial uses. In recent times, its character has shifted to focus almost exclusively on late-night bars and nightclubs, at present, it is in a cycle of decline.



- 2.06 The Theatre was granted Grade II Listing in 1998 under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further to this, the site was included in the Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area boundary.

3.00 Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area Statement

- 3.01 The Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area was originally designated in 1980 by Wigan Borough Council. The conservation area covers 10.69 hectares and is characterised as a Historic Town Centre, comprising several principal buildings dating from the 18th and 19th century.



Figure 4: Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area (Yellow) Royal Court Theatre (Red)

- 3.02 The site is located on King Street, with rear access to Library Street, southeast of the town centre. The front façade of the building has a prominent and decorative design which adds value to the architectural interest of King Street; a street which has suffered from unsympathetic modifications and alterations.
- 3.03 The Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area is described in the conservation area statement as having *“several key features which can be found within the town centre, as well as the wider townscape, these include:*
- Red brick construction
 - Slate roofing material
 - Detailing on properties



- Varied architectural styles
- Strong building lines along streets



Figure 5-8: King Street Frontage (Top Left) Library Street rear (Top Right) King Street (Bottom) [Source: Google Maps]

- 3.04 As stated in 2.04 and illustrated in Figure 3, Royal Court Theatre was constructed in 1886, it is therefore, one of the older buildings within the Conservation Area and is suitably befitting of the description of characteristics noted above.
- 3.05 The proposed works do not involve any demolition of the exterior, they seek to enhance the heritage of the Theatre by restoring it to its former use and positively contributing to the Conservation Area.
- 4.00 Adjacent Listed Buildings**
- 4.01 There are in total 8 no. listed buildings, or groups of buildings, along King Street within the Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area in which the Royal Court Theatre lies. The listings are included below:



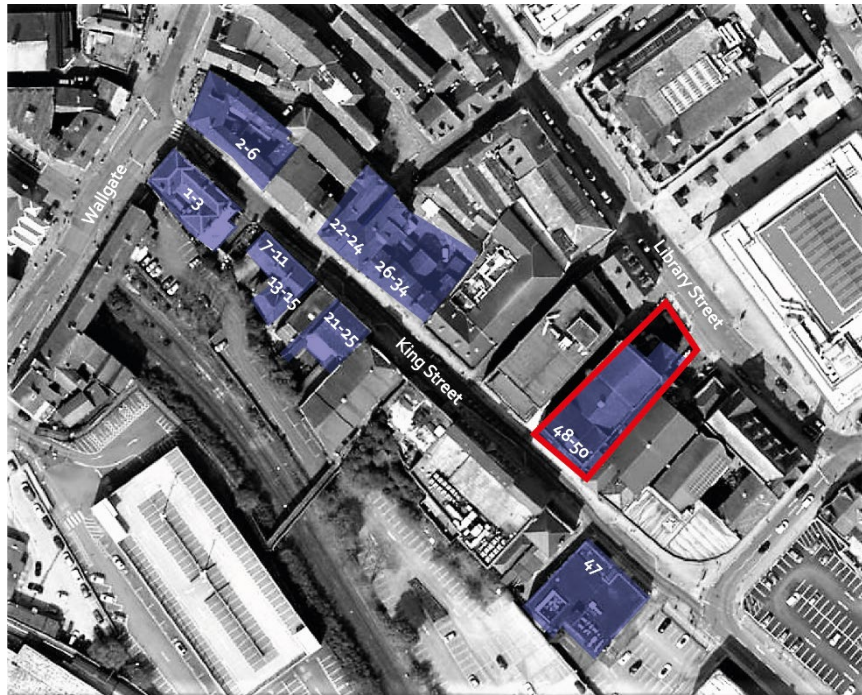


Figure 9: King Street Listed Buildings (Blue) Royal Court Theatre outlined in red.

- **Former Royal Court Theatre, 48-50, King Street (Applicant Site)**
List Entry Number: 1384479
Theatre, subsequently cinema, bingo hall when surveyed. Red brick in English garden wall bond with dressings of matching red terracotta and some yellow brick dating from late 19th century.
Grade II Listed
- **47, King Street**
List Entry Number: 1384478
Former Wigan Savings Bank with Sandstone ashlar façade in Italian palazzo style.
Grade II Listed
- **26-34, King Street**
List Entry Number: 1384477
Terraced row of 4 town houses late Georgian style dating from mid-19th century.
Grade II Listed
- **Grimes Arcade Building, 22-24, King Street**
List Entry Number: 1384476
Commercial building incorporating short shopping arcade, with offices over, brick with façade of sandstone ashlar and some polished granite, cast iron and glass roof to the arcade. mid-late 19th century.
Grade II Listed



- 13 and 15, King Street
List Entry Number: 1384474
Town house plus another added to rear dating from early 19th century, handmade brown brick in Flemish bond.
Grade II Listed
- 7, 9 and 11, King Street
List Entry Number: 1384473
Row of 3no. town houses, now 2no. shops with offices over, handmade brown brick in Flemish bond with some sandstone dressings. Dating from early 19th century.
Grade II Listed
- Former National Westminster Bank, 1-3, King Street
List Entry Number: 1384472
2 no storey, with a 4-window façade to Wallgate and a 4x2 window façade to King Street. Sandstone ashlar in classical style with Italianate accent dating from mid-19th century.
Grade II Listed
- Public House, 2-6, King Street
List Entry Number: 1384546
Public house and shops dating from early 19th century. Red brick in English garden wall bond, some sandstone and terracotta dressings.
Grade II Listed

5.00 Relevant Past Planning History

Using the Wigan Council Planning Applications index on the applicant property, a record of historic planning and advertisement applications were recorded. The following list outlines in reverse order from the oldest recorded application to the most recent, along with a brief description of the works and the planning decision.

5.01 A/79/12240

Change of use from cinema and ballroom to bingo hall.

Granted Permission 14/05/1979

A/82/19725

Proposed new shop front.

Granted Permission (with conditions) 21/05/1982

A/98/48447

Change of use from bingo hall/ amusement arcade and entertainment centre to class A3 (food and drink).

Granted Permission (with conditions) 26/05/1998



A/00/52155

To carry out external alterations and erect 2.4m perimeter wall following demolition of rear section.

Granted Permission 22/08/2000

ADV/00/04381

To display internally illuminated fascia sign.

Granted permission 22/08/2000

A/04/62858

Listed Building Consent: For the external refurbishment of, and the carrying out of internal alterations, including ramped access, at licensed premises together with the display of externally illuminated and non-illuminated signage.

Granted permission 22/02/2005

ADV/04/04956

To display 2no. externally illuminated hanging signs together with 2no. non-illuminated fascia signs on front elevation of building.

Granted permission 22/08/2005

A/07/68022

Formation of beer garden to rear together with erection of canopy, creation of new entrance doorway, installation of external access ramp, erection of 2.5m high wall with infill railings and installation of illuminated bollards.

Granted permission 05/02/2007

A/07/69922

To remove existing fire escape together with installation of new fire escape and alterations to first floor to provide cocktail bar and function area at Grade II Listed Building.

Granted permission 13/11/2007

6.00 Building Timeline

- 6.01 Following the varied history of the building outlined in the Planning History records above, a study was carried out aiming to find any photographic documentation that illustrated the changing functions of the building. Several records were found, including plans, texts, and illustrations. The following figures chronologically depict the changing functions, interiors, and layouts of the Royal Court Theatre throughout its history.



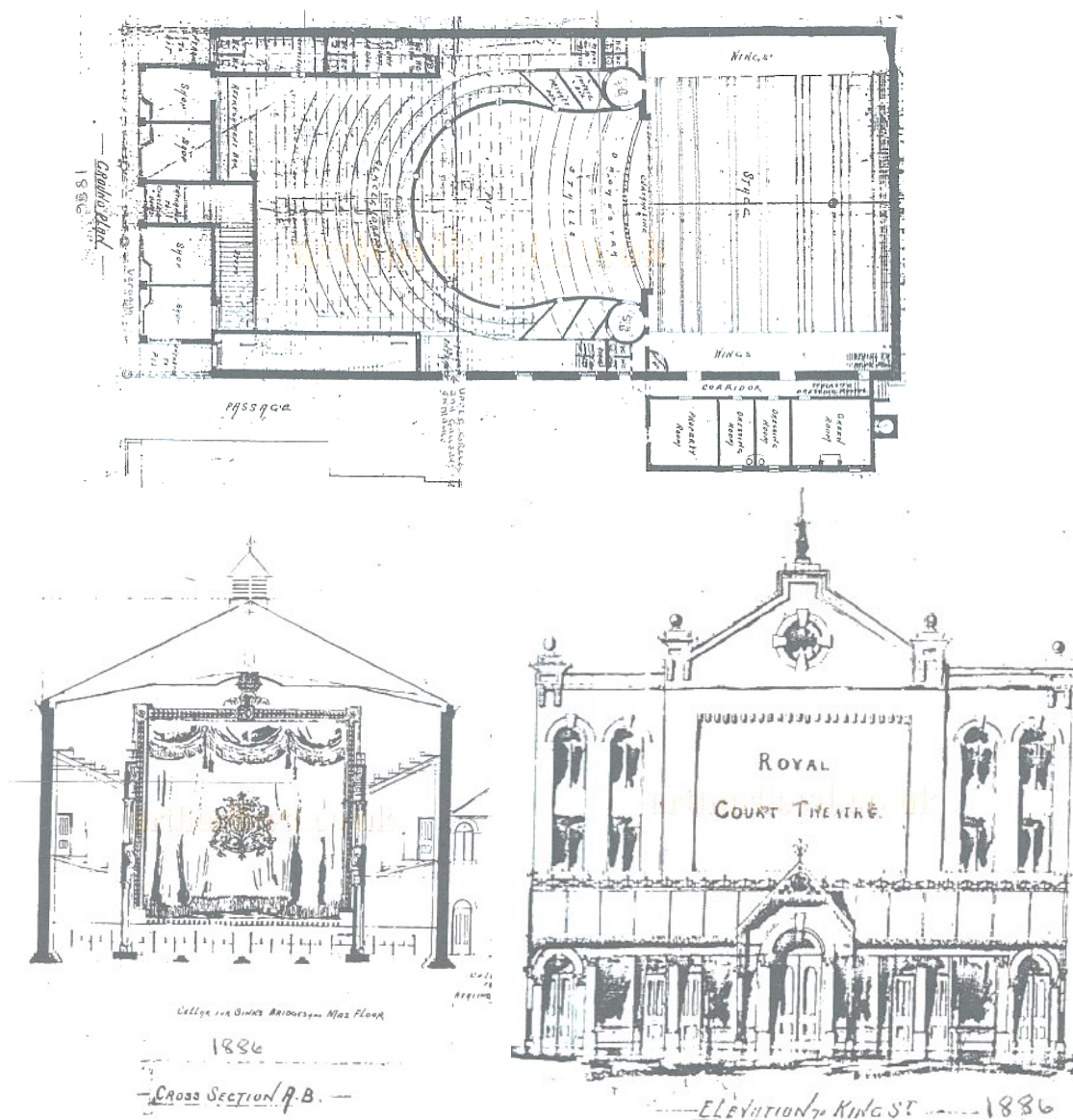


Figure 10: 1886 Original Plan, Section and Elevation drawings. [Source: Arthurlloyd.co.uk]

- 6.02 The Royal Court Theatre opened on 22nd of November 1886, designed by architect Richard T. Johnson who also worked on the designs of the Theatre Royal and Empire Theatre in Wigan. Newspaper articles published at the time praised the design commenting, 'Simplicity solidity and utility have been constantly kept in view, and this more particularly in the façade in which "Ruabon" bricks and terracotta...' The site and building cost £18,000 in which it seems no expense was spared with descriptions of the interior remarking '*Polished granite and marble adorn the handsome and spacious vestibule...The dress circle is upholstered in copper coloured satin and velvet plush with gold tassels...The stage is 45ft by 56ft...contains all modern improvements.*' The opening acts were very well received, and the Theatre gained a reputation for its attractiveness.



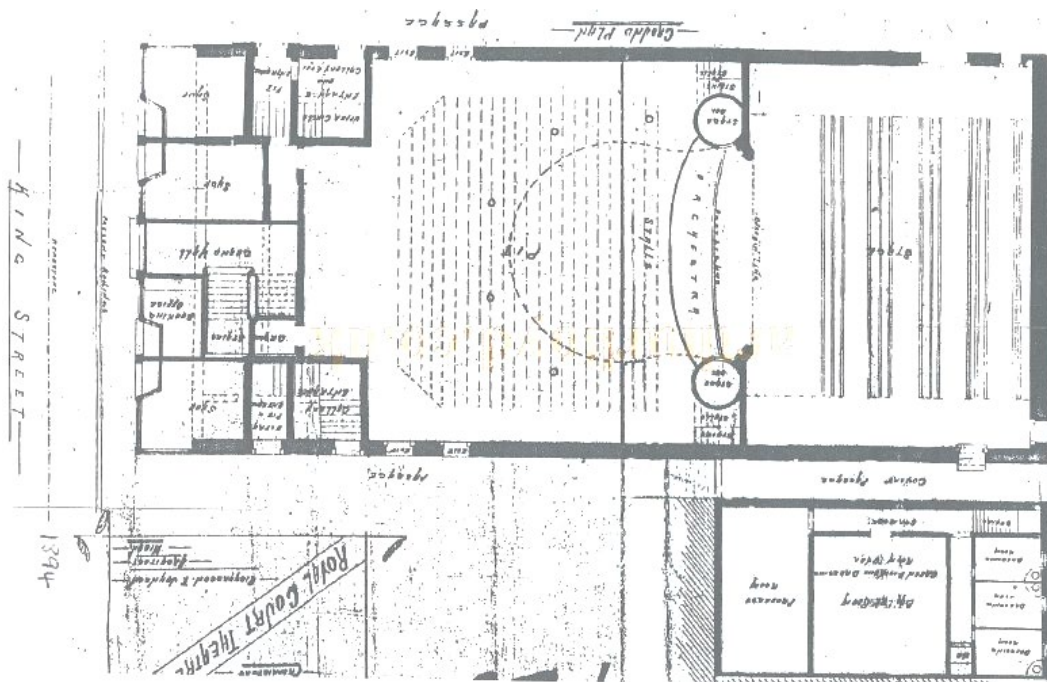


Figure 11: 1894 Plan with ground floor alterations. [Source: Arthurlloyd.co.uk]

- 6.03 Alterations were made to the original design in 1894. The Dress Circle was enlarged, allowing for a greater capacity, the private boxes upgraded and with advancement in technology, the amount of electric lighting increased. To increase the capacity within the ground floor shops, the Pit, Upper Circle and Gallery entrances was relocated, whilst a new staircase was incorporated into the Circle, Stalls and Booking Office. The 2no. shops were enlarged over the former Pit entrances and former veranda area. The area of the shop, on the right of the front entrance, was incorporated into the Foyer to provide space for a new staircase layout to the Circle and Stalls, and a Booking Office. Access to the Stalls was via 2no. sets of stairs, which flanked the Proscenium which was unusual for Theatre layouts. Further enhancements were made to the Dressing Rooms, doubling them in size.



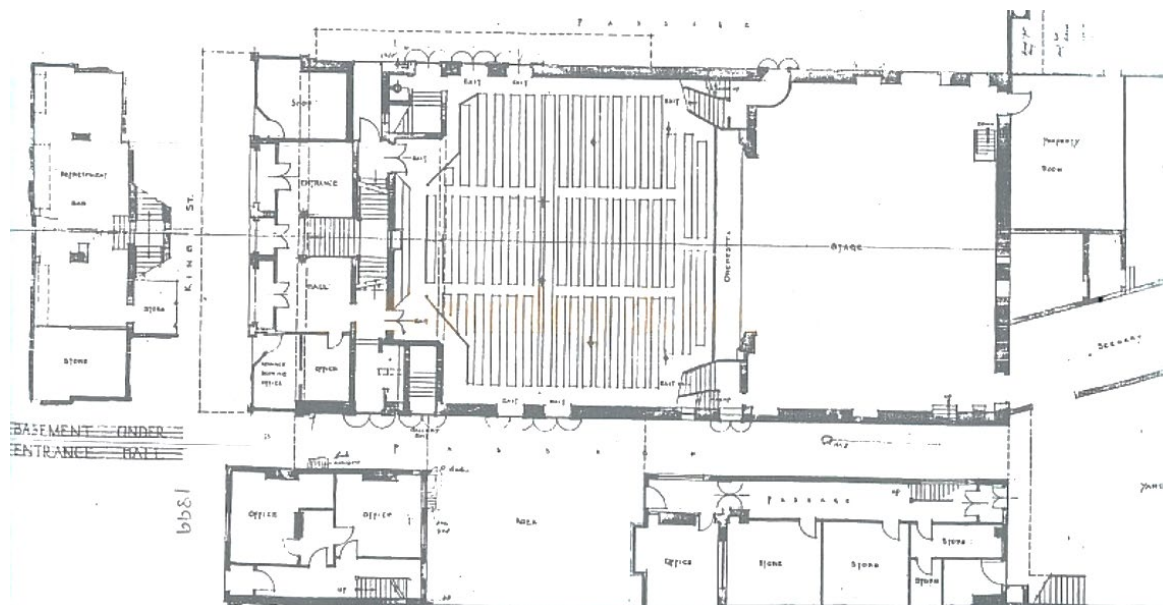


Figure 12-13: 1899 Major alterations carried out by John P. Briggs (Above) Early 20th century postcard of King Street (Below) [Source: Arthurlloyd.co.uk & Ron Hunt Wiganworld.co.uk].

- 6.04 Famed Theatre architect John P. Briggs carried out major alterations to the Theatre in 1899. His centre flight to half landing staircase with flights left and right leading to a new bar above remains intact to the present day and is believed to be one of only 3no. staircases design by Briggs to still exist. Of the many alterations carried out, the principal change was his overhaul of the King Street elevation. A mezzanine level was introduced above the Entrance Hall with 5no. large windows set between Doric pilasters introduced overlooking King Street. The ground floor Entrance Hall was made more spacious with new double doors placed left and right of the original entrance doors. The 1886 Upper Circle and Gallery were replaced with a single large Upper Circle, whilst further alterations were carried out to the Back of House, including a large scenery store and enlarged Dressing Room space.





Figure 14-16: Court Cinema from King Street c.1960's (left) Staff from cinema (top right) Compton Cinema organist (Bottom right) [Source: JohnAlan, Ron Hunt, Frank Healy Wiganworld.co.uk].

- 6.05 After several years of live entertainment, the Theatre underwent further remodelling by Liverpool architects Grey and Evans. The works included substantial modifications to the Upper and Dress Circle by introducing a cantilever system to support them. The Proscenium arch was moved back, allowing for increased seating capacity at Stalls level and the stage boxes were removed with alterations also made to the auditorium exits. A Compton Cinema Organ was installed, which could rise from an Orchestra pit which had been installed in the Stalls section. Alterations were made at upper levels, including the removal of the first-floor dressing rooms lost to the neighbouring Court Ballroom which was enlarged into the space. The remodelled Theatre reopened in December 1930 as the Court Cinema, with a cinema projection room added in the 1950's allowing it to function as a place of entertainment in this form until 1974.





Figure 17-19: County Bingo Hall from King Street c.1990's (Left) Interior from stage (Top Right) Interior from Stalls (Bottom Right) [Source: Ron Hunt, Ian Grundy wiganworld.co.uk].

- 6.06 The Cinema's closure in the mid 1970's was temporary, the building was reopened in 1979 as County Bingo Hall and later Walkers. Alterations made during this period to the upper floors included blocking off the Upper Circle as well as inserting a false ceiling hiding John P. Briggs' dome in the auditorium.



Figure 20-21: King Street frontages from early 2000's as 'Springbok' bar (Left) 2010's as 'The Hub' (Right) [Source: Ron Hunt wiganworld.co.uk & Arthurlloyd.co.uk].

- 6.07 The use of the Theatre as a Bingo Hall ceased in the late 1990's with the building's use once again changed to cater the market of late-night bars and nightclubs. It is anticipated that a level floor was installed over the raked floor during this period at Stalls Level. The Theatre had several occupiers throughout the 2000's with bar names including 'Springbok' and 'The Hub'; the latter of which ceased trading in 2016.



7.00 Planning Policy Context

7.01 Statutory Legislation

The national planning policies regarding the conservation of the historic environment are contained within section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) and the relevant policies to proposals affecting heritage assets consist of the following;

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's 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.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.



203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

7.02 As well as the protection of the historic environment the NPPF (2021) provides planning policy on design and consists of the following paragraphs;

126. The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

127. Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.

130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);



- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

8.00 Local Plan Context

The Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy sets out in Policy CP11 – Historic Environment *'We will conserve and enhance our historic environment, thereby helping to make the borough a better place to live, visit and work in, by:*

- 1. Conserving and enhancing where appropriate our heritage assets and their settings, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, locally listed buildings and structures, key historic landscape characteristics and other important features, in accordance with legislation and national planning policy as appropriate.*
- 2. Encouraging the sympathetic and appropriate re-use of existing buildings and structures, especially those which make a positive contribution to the special character of their locality and are identified as 'at risk'.*
- 3. Promoting the value of our historic environment through signing, interpretation, public art and other measures as appropriate.*

- 8.01 Further to this, the document states under Core Policies subpoint 9.69 *'There is clear evidence that the retention and enhancement of the best of our historic built environment is important to 'quality of life' and helps make places that people want to live, work and otherwise spend their time in and in which businesses want to invest. It is, therefore, important to manage the process of change within our historic environment and to promote the benefits of the repair, renovation, extension and alteration of our historic assets.'*
- 8.02 Subpoint 9.70 states, *'Clearly we need to act on 'buildings at risk' and our Conservation Areas 'at risk and work towards preventing the condition of other such buildings and areas declining to such a level where the historic value is lost.'*



9.00 Statement of Significance

9.01 The former Royal Court Theatre was constructed in 1886. The building was designated **Grade II Listed** status in 1998 (UID: 1384479)

The significance of the Royal Court Theatre is assessed using Historic England's 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'. The document identifies 4 no. ways to assess the significance.

- Evidential value
- Historical value
- Aesthetic value
- Communal value

9.02 This section provides a statement of significance for the project area as a whole and in relation to the key individual elements. The Royal Court Theatre has been assessed and is considered to be of **medium significance**.

9.03 Within the identified categories, significance has been assessed using hierarchical levels. These follow guidelines established by James Semple Kerr (The Conservation Plan, 1996), which have been adopted by the English Heritage and others. The accepted levels of significance are:

- **Exceptional** - important at national to international levels, including the most important scheduled ancient monuments. Buildings and places of exceptional significance demand the highest level of care and protection. Any proposals for change will require the highest level of scrutiny and justification. In mitigation for change, an appropriate level of recording will be required.
- **High** - important at a regional level or sometimes at a national level, including most Grade II listed buildings and parts of scheduled sites that are not exceptional. The retention of these buildings or elements is a priority and considerable care is needed in their adaptation. In mitigation for change, an appropriate level of recording will be required.
- **Medium** – important at local to regional level, including locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. May include less significant or altered parts of designated assets. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation that takes account of adjoining heritage structures and setting.
- **Low** – of limited heritage or other cultural value. May include altered parts of designated assets or modern additions. The removal or adaptation of buildings or features in this category is usually acceptable, provided that care is taken to protect adjoining historic features, setting and buried archaeology.



- **Negative or intrusive features** - those that harm the value of the site as a whole or harm individual elements. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of adjoining historic features or archaeology and the benefits of the change to the entity as a whole.

9.04 The identified areas of assessment have been categorised into 7no. key spaces as follows:

- **Exterior**
The Theatre's main façade faces King Street having an attractive red brick frontage consisting of numerous features including elaborate terracotta moulded surrounds and leaded stained glass. Individually, some elements may arguably be of greater or lesser relative interest, but they are all part of an entity considered to be of **high significance** for evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values.
- **Foyer Area**
A pair of composite columns flank the foot of an imperial staircase with a centre flight leading to a half landing with flights left and right featuring a brass handrail. With this staircase being one of three remaining staircases in the country designed by famed Theatre architect John P Briggs', it is considered to be of **high significance** for historical and evidential value. Further to this, the recessed entrances with wooden panelled and plate-glass doors hold **medium significance** for aesthetic and historical value.
- **Ground Floor Stalls**
The main auditorium space within the Theatre, featuring elaborate plasterwork on the walls with large pictorial relief panels flanking the Proscenium to the east and west. A large Proscenium arch with moulded plaster enrichment frames the stage and a very large circular gilded ceiling dome remains intact centrally above the Stalls. Many of the elements within the space are considered to be of **high significance** for evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values. However, certain elements have been altered to accommodate the changing building uses, notably the flooring, which was levelled for its use as a bar in the 2000's. Also, the lower sections of the walls, which adopted egg crate water proofing; a method now considered inappropriate. Therefore, these modifications have detrimentally impacted the overall the space leading it to be considered of **low significance**.
- **Stage and Back of Stage (Including fly tower)**
This lower space is considered of **low significance** having been altered with unsympathetic elements intervening with the historic fabric. The upper space is unable to be accessed therefore its significance has not been assessed.



- **First Floor Foyer**
Forming the link between the Entrance Foyer and the Dress Circle and believed to have been remodelled in 1899. This area features a breakout space with 5no. bays divided into 4no. outer large windows with elliptical arches and leaded glass, and a smaller central window with oeil-de-boeuf over, this area is considered to be of **medium significance**.
- **Dress Circle**
Retaining the steeply-raked stepped floor and timber guard rail with decorative plasterwork on walls and ceilings, this space is considered to be of **medium significance** for historical and aesthetic value.
- **Upper Circle**
Alterations were made to the Upper Circle in the 1950's with the introduction of a projection room for the cinema, features of this alteration remain including the door. Much of the plasterwork remains along with the steeply-raked stepped floor. Overall, this area is considered to be of **medium significance** for historical and aesthetic value.

10.00 Heritage Impact Assessment and Mitigation

- 10.01 The NPPF defines a heritage asset as, *"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."*
- 10.02 As stated previously, The Royal Court Theatre is **Grade II** nationally listed and lies within the Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 10.03 The following impact assessment will judge the impact of the proposals on the Royal Court Theatre as a **Grade II** listed asset. The proposed works will be grouped into the same 7no. key spaces outlined in the Statement of Significance and assessed against the following magnitudes:



Magnitude of Impact	
High Beneficial Impact	The proposed development will significantly enhance the heritage asset or the ability to better reveal or enhance its heritage values and overall significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact	The proposed development will considerably enhance the heritage asset or the ability to better reveal or enhance its heritage values and overall significance.
Low Beneficial Impact	The proposed development will provide minor enhancement to the heritage asset or the ability to better reveal or enhance its heritage values and overall significance.
Neutral Impact	The proposed development will neither cause harm, nor benefit or enhance the heritage asset, its values or significance.
Low Harmful Impact	The proposed development will cause minor harm to the heritage asset, its heritage values, significance or setting. Suitable positive mitigation to be provided to justify proposals.
Moderate Harmful Impact	The proposed development will cause clearly discernible harm to the heritage asset, its heritage values, significance or setting. Works of this magnitude should generally be avoided but may be considered acceptable if suitable positive mitigation can be provided.
High Harmful Impact	The proposed development will cause severe harm to the heritage asset and will substantially harm its significance. Will cause obvious disruption or destruction of features contributing to significance and harm to its setting. Such works of this magnitude should be avoided.

11.00 Proposal

The proposed internal works are extensive, given the heavily deteriorated state of some areas of the building which have suffered prolonged periods of water ingress and have ongoing dry and wet Rot issues. The proposed works which follow are the result of surveys carried out by PW-A and Dry Rot specialist Robinson's Preservation Ltd.

11.01 Exterior

Works were carried out to the exterior in Act 1 Emergency Works by Coccion Construction Ltd. These works are not included within this application



11.02 Foyer Area

Proposed works include:

- Removal of paint applied to existing tiles.
- Damaged metalwork to be carefully removed to metal workshop for refurbishment.
- Remove defective plaster to ceiling which has been affected by water damage.
- Repair damage to wall to allow for reinstatement of plasterwork.

The proposed works to the Foyer Area are assessed as having a **low beneficial impact** on the heritage asset.

11.03 Justification:

As previously stated, this area features the grand staircase designed by John P. Briggs, the proposed works remove modern inappropriate interventions, which will greatly improve the appearance of the entrance space. Due to the damage caused by water ingress, it will be necessary to remove defective plaster from the ceiling, which will have low harmful impact. However, the balance achieved between the loss of historic fabric countered against the repair of metal work and reinstatement of plaster mouldings, thereby upholds the low beneficial impact assessment.

11.04 Ground Floor Stalls

Proposed works include:

- Removal of plasterboard and modern lining which includes removal of inappropriate egg-crate waterproofing system.
- Removal of historic plaster which has been affected by water damage.
- Removal of defective plasterwork moulding (with replacement, where appropriate).
- Removal of decayed timber sections until end of decay has been located.
- Removal of ceiling sections for dry rot treatment (with replacement of material, where appropriate).
- Repair of Proscenium Arch to allow for reinstatement of plasterwork moulding.
- Exposed brickwork walls to be carefully cleaned down, patch repaired and repointed.
- Areas of high level to be inspected for Dry Rot treatment with removal of historic material, where necessary.
- Repair damage to ceiling to allow for reinstatement of plasterwork.
- Allow for reinstatement of plaster mouldings in position of missing mouldings.

The proposed works to the Ground Floor Stalls are assessed as having a **low-moderate harmful impact** on the heritage asset.



11.05 Justification:

It is unfortunate that this area has been greatly damaged by water ingress with large sections of the ceiling missing. Consequently, large areas of the historic plasterwork, mouldings and timber floor are suffering from the impacts of water ingress with signs of mould and dry rot identified. Inappropriate modern interventions have also exacerbated the problem. Thus, the proposed works seek to resolve and mitigate against further damage, with the removal of the inappropriate egg-crate waterproofing, which is considered to have a low beneficial impact. However, given the extent of the damage it is unfortunate that the areas of historic plasterwork at higher levels within the auditorium will also need to be removed, along with damaged plaster mouldings, considered as having a low-moderate harmful impact. The retention of plaster mouldings and appropriate reinstatement aim to counterbalance the loss of historic fabric, however, the extent of damage and further investigative work required for dry rot treatment will lead to a significant overall loss of historic fabric.

11.06 Stage and Back of Stage (Including fly tower)

Proposed works include:

- Area of poor quality plasterwork to be removed back to existing brick.
- Remove ceiling which has been affected by water damage and dry rot.
- Allow for reinstatement of plaster mouldings in position of missing mouldings – possible modern design.
- Removal of defective plaster, allow to dry.
- Repair of Proscenium Arch to allow for reinstatement of plasterwork moulding.

The proposed works to the Stage and Back of Stage are assessed as having a **low beneficial impact** on the heritage asset.

11.07 Justification:

This area has been heavily modified throughout the Theatre's history with unsightly and inappropriate modern interventions added to cater for the changing functions. Further to this, the poor quality plasterwork and damage caused by water ingress have left the space in a very deteriorated condition. The proposed works seek to remedy the damage, whilst allowing for the reinstatement of plaster mouldings to the damaged Proscenium Arch; the removal of defective plasterwork and inappropriate interventions will improve the overall aesthetic quality of the space.



11.08 First Floor Foyer

Proposed works include:

- Removal of plasterboard which has been affected by water damage back to masonry.
- Remove plasterboard back to original façade.
- Remove defective plaster to ceiling which has been affected by water damage and cracking.
- Removal of decayed timber sections until end of decay has been located.
- Former fire exit opening to be reinstated.
- Allow for reinstatement of plaster mouldings in position of missing mouldings.
- Removal of decayed timber sections until end of decay has been located.

The proposed works to the First Floor Foyer are assessed as having a **low beneficial** impact on the heritage asset.

11.09 Justification:

The extensive damage caused by water ingress and Dry Rot to this area result in the loss of a significant amount of defective plasterboard, plasterwork and timber floor sections which is considered to be of low harmful impact. However, the opportunity to reveal the original façade and reinstate the former fire exit opening, as well as reinstate plaster mouldings where possible is considered to have a moderate beneficial impact; as it allows the history of the building to be better understood therefore, contributing to the aesthetic, historic and evidential values of the Theatre.

11.10 Dress Circle

Proposed works include:

- Removal of decayed timber sections until end of decay has been located.
- Removal of ceiling sections for Dry Rot treatment (with replacement of material, where appropriate).
- Removal of plasterboard which has been affected by water damage and Dry Rot back to masonry.
- Allow for reinstatement of plaster mouldings in position of missing mouldings.
- Removal of historic plaster which has been affected by water damage.
- Repair damage to ceiling to allow for reinstatement of plasterwork.
- Remove defective plaster to ceiling which has been affected by water damage and cracking.



The proposed works to the Dress Circle are assessed as having a **moderate harmful** impact on the heritage asset.

11.11 Justification:

As previously stated, the condition of the building is poor, and deteriorating at a rapid rate. This area is one of the most visibly affected areas, with extensive Dry Rot fruiting bodies evident on the timber floor, walls, doors and ceiling. The resultant loss in historic fabric to allow for treatment will be extensive, replacement of timber flooring and plaster mouldings will be introduced where appropriate, nonetheless the damage caused will require widespread treatment.

11.12 Upper Circle

Proposed works include:

- Partitions to be removed, indicative floor strip to be applied, in brass, or similar.
- Allow for reinstatement of plaster mouldings in position of missing mouldings.
- Exposed brickwork walls to be carefully cleaned down, patch repaired and repointed.
- Removal of decayed timber sections until end of decay has been located.

The proposed works to the Upper Circle are assessed as having a **low harmful impact** on the heritage asset.

11.13 Justification:

The Upper Circle, much like the Dress Circle below, has suffered from extensive water ingress and dry rot. There is evidence of previous repair work being carried out with some plaster already removed back to brick. The proposed works seek to complete the necessary repair and removal of defective material, which will result in the loss of sections of the raked timber floor due to evidence of dry rot within the area, these works are considered to have moderate harmful impact due to the extent of historic fabric lost. The Upper Circle currently houses the projection room which was installed in the 1950's; as part of the proposed works, the partitions which form this are to be removed and brass indicative strips put in its place; the projection room door is to be retained. The result of removing the projection room and retaining the door will allow for the Upper Circle to be united as a whole space and be reused as it was originally designed. Thus, the act of removing the projection room is considered a low beneficial impact, in particular given that the indicative remains contribute to the fabric and historic and evidential values.



12.00 Conclusion

The proposed works will allow the building to be repaired and save the building from further damage caused Dry Rot outbreak internally. A large portion of the historic fabric will be lost by this due to the extent of the widespread dry rot; which it is anticipated will continue to spread untreated. The proposed works seek to retain, where possible, historic plaster mouldings, plasterwork and other elements of retained heritage, such as the cinema projection room door. It is unfortunate that the required treatment will see a significant loss of historic fabric. This is assessed as having a **moderately harmful impact** on the interior

12.01 The impact that the proposed works will have form the first stage in allowing for the Theatre to reopen for the public. The current communal value of the building is negligible, as it is closed for use. However, the proposed works seek to save as much of the fabric as possible whilst making it safe for future restoration, thus starting the journey to recovery and eventual reopening. In this sense the proposal is assessed as having a **moderate beneficial impact**.

12.02 When the proposal is considered alongside the repair elements, as well as the securing of the building's future and the positive impact this scheme would have on the community when complete, it is concluded that the proposals have a **low harmful impact** on the overall building as a heritage asset.

13.00 Design & Access Statement

At this stage, there is no design work to assess, as only essential repair and removal works are to be carried out. With regards to access, the King Street entrance doors are to be secured, such as not to disturb vehicular and pedestrian flow along King Street during the works. There is a gated alleyway along the western side of the Theatre of which the Theatre retains right of access along. The alleyway leads from King Street to Library Street at the rear of the building forming a secured mini compound. The principal access point for contractors would be along the western side entrances, within the secured compound. The site cabin is currently located to the rear of the Theatre, along Library Street, it is located within the fenced boundary of the site, which has gated access.

