

**An Historic Building Record of the Former
Cannon Cinema, Abington Square,
Northampton (SP7592 6079)**

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For the Jesus Army Charitable Trust

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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An historic building record of the former Cannon Cinema, Abington Square, Northampton (SP7592 6079)

Richard Buckley and Heidi Addison

Summary

An historic building record of the former Cannon cinema, Abington Square, Northampton was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services in June and July 2001 on behalf of the Jesus Army Charitable Trust in advance of refurbishment. The building is listed grade II and is a fine example of modernist architecture of the interwar period. It was designed by the house architect for Associated British Cinemas, William Riddell Glen, and opened its doors as the Savoy in 1936. The white 'permacrete' modernist facade is largely intact, as is the main auditorium with its spectacular proscenium arch, curving balcony and concealed lighting. The conversion to a triple screen theatre in the 1970s involved the boxing-in of the rear stalls, but fortunately caused comparatively little non-reversible damage to original features. The main foyer, however, has suffered rather more loss, although surviving detailing and historic photographs would make accurate restoration a viable proposition. Documentary research has produced a wealth of information, including contemporary newspaper reports, interior and exterior photographs and a set of original plans by W.R. Glen in Northampton Records Office. The building record will be deposited with Northamptonshire Heritage in due course.

1. Introduction

The Cannon Cinema is located at Abington Square just outside Northampton town centre at the junction of three main roads, NGR (approx. site centre) SP7592 6079). The building is listed grade II (appendix 1) and is a fine example of modernist architecture of the interwar period. It was designed by the house architect for Associated British Cinemas, W.R. Glen, and opened its doors as the Savoy in 1936. In the early 1970s, it was converted to a triple screen complex and became the Cannon in the 1980s. The cinema closed in 1995 and was subsequently purchased by the Jesus Army Charitable Trust.

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned in May 2001 by GSS Architecture on behalf of the Jesus Army Charitable Trust to carry out an historic building record of the cinema in accordance with a Brief issued by Northamptonshire Heritage (Ellison 2001). The Brief provided details of the work required to satisfy a condition imposed by Northamptonshire Borough Council on planning consent for the redevelopment of the cinema into a worship and care centre, to be known as The Jesus Centre. The proposed centre is to feature large and small halls for Christian worship which are available for hire for other events. The Centre will also offer a drop-in cafe and skills training and aims to be able to offer anyone practical facilities, counselling and other help and advice (<http://www.jesus.org.uk/jact/northampton/index.html> July 2001).



Fig. 1 Site Location. 1938 1:2500 OS, sheet XLV9.

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The brief set by Northamptonshire Heritage requires the historic building record to comprise the following elements:

- a) Photographic survey of the interior and exterior to RCHM level 2: items 1, 2, 4, and 6. Specifically, the brief (para. 3.1.3) requires colour photographs of all three auditoriums, public spaces, staff rooms, stage, orchestra pit and other significant areas. Large format monochrome images are required for the main auditorium and principal facade.
- b) Written account to RCHM level 2, to include items 1,2,4,8 and 9. The brief specifies that this is to draw together into one account the known sources of information about the architect W.R. Glen including a note on the importance of his work in the context of cinema history and the significance of the Cannon within Glen's portfolio. The description of the building is to include details of provision for staff and audiences, seating capacity and a technical note on the projectors.
- c) Drawn record (already in existence).

A preliminary site visit was made by Richard Buckley, Heidi Addison and Pat Marsden on 7 June 2001 to prepare an initial description of the building. This was followed by the main photographic survey on 19 June by Colin Brooks (University photographer) assisted by Richard Buckley. Further photographs and site inspections were made by Richard Buckley and Heidi Addison 5 July 2001. The work was monitored on behalf of Northamptonshire Heritage by Martin Ellison.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or structures*.

2. Aims and Objectives

The objective is to make a written, drawn and photographic record of the cinema building as it exists prior to refurbishment and conversion (Brief, para. 2).

The aim of the photographic survey is to provide good coverage of all public spaces, including auditoria and foyers, and service areas together with a record of original fixtures and fittings (Brief 3.1.3). The written account aims to draw together into one report the known sources of information about the cinema's architect and to provide further information relating to the design and operation of the building and its significance in terms of cinema design (Brief 3.1.1).

3. Methodology

3.1 Photographic survey

The main part of the photographic survey was supervised by Richard Buckley and undertaken by Mr. Colin Brooks, Head Photographer at Leicester University, using a 35mm format Nikon SLR for the colour prints and a Mamiya SLR RZ 67 in 60mm by 70mm negative format in monochrome and colour for the large format pictures. The main auditorium and certain other areas were lit with an array of studio daylight flash lamps triggered simultaneously. Photographs of smaller rooms and detail shots were lit with camera-mounted flash. The main series of photographs is numbered by volume number/sheet number/negative number (00/00/00), reflecting the system used by the University of Leicester AVS photographic archive. The main survey was supplemented by additional colour detail photographs taken with an Olympus OM10 35mm SLR camera. These photographs are numbered using the format #00 etc. The photographs are listed in appendix 2 and have been cross-referenced using their unique identification numbers to the plan sheets supplied by GSS architecture. A selection of photographs from the survey, supplemented by original illustrative material which has come to light has been scanned at 300 dpi to create a digital archive, stored on CD ROM as .jpeg files.

At the time the photographic survey was undertaken, lighting in the building was extremely poor in certain areas, particularly service rooms and the main auditorium. Coverage of the survey is good, although certain areas - such as the main air conditioning unit on the top floor - were not inspected for reasons of health and safety.

3.2 Documentary research

The following sources have been consulted:

- 1) Sites and Monuments Record, Northamptonshire Heritage.
- 2) Northamptonshire Records Office.
- 3) Northamptonshire Studies Collection (Northamptonshire Central Library).
- 4) Background material (Leicester University and De Montfort University Library).
- 5) Cinema Theatre Association archive
- 6) Architectural drawings (Gotch Saunders and Surridge)

- 7) Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the RIBA help line.
- 8) National Monuments Record, Swindon and English Heritage Review of Historic Cinemas
- 9) The British Library (contemporary periodicals), by Allen Eyles, on behalf of ULAS.
- 10) Odeon Cinemas head office, Property and Development Department, Bromley; Mr. G. Arnold. (ABC now part of this group)
- 11) ABC Cinema, Hereford (manager)
- 12) Encyclopaedia Britannica CDROM edition, 1999
- 13) Web sites, all accessed July/August 2001:
www.northamptonshireweb.co.uk/oldcinema.htm;
www.scotland-heritage.org (W.R. Glen)
www.cinephoto.co.uk (projection equipment)
<http://www.jesus.org.uk/jact/northampton/index.html> (Jesus Army site)
<http://www.cinema-theatre.org.uk> (Cinema Theatre Association)
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/>
- 14) Individuals: Mr Tony Moss, Cinema Organ Society; Mr. Alan McCann, former Technical Director for ABC, now consultant; Mr Allen Eyles.

4. Historical background

4.1 Cinema history

(Main source: Encyclopaedia Britannica CD ROM edition 1999, supplemented by references in text)

The earliest practical demonstration of moving pictures is thought to date from as early as the 1830s, in the form of children's optical toys such as the zoetrope and praxinoscope. These gave the illusion of animation to a sequence of illustrations on the inside of a revolving cylinder, viewed through slots cut in its circumference (zoetrope) or reflected in mirrors (praxinoscope). The illusion of movement is due to the phenomenon of 'persistence of vision', where a visual stimulus continues to be registered by the brain for a very short time after the stimulus ends. With the development of photography in the mid 19th century, a natural progression was for the drawings to be replaced by photographs. In 1877, a sequence of photographs of a galloping racehorse was taken by Eadweard Muybridge using multiple cameras linked to tripwires. When mounted on a zoetrope, the results gave the illusion of movement and finally proved that all four of the horse's hooves left the ground at the gallop. In 1882, the French physicist, Étienne-Jules Marey constructed a camera which could take 12 successive photographs per second. He mounted the images on a rotating glass plate and attempted to project them. The introduction of celluloid roll film by George Eastman in 1887 subsequently provided the impetus for the development of the first practical movie camera in 1888 by William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, an employee at Edison's West Orange, New Jersey, laboratories. Edison had commissioned Dickson to invent the camera with the aim of providing visual accompaniment to the phonograph, invented by

him in 1877. Dickson's camera was patented as the Kinetograph in 1893, and it initially imprinted up to 50 feet of celluloid film at the rate of about 40 frames per second. The films were shown using a 'Kinetoscope' - a type of peep show viewing device - which was soon introduced into penny arcades and semi public places. In 1894, the first 'Kinetoscope parlour' was opened in Broadway, New York (Crossland and Parrish 1933, 297) with a bank of five machines. The phonograph, similarly, had been introduced to the public at about the same time in coin-operated form.

Inspired by viewing a Kinetoscope exhibition in Paris, Auguste and Louis Lumière developed the 'cinématographe', a combined camera and projector running at 16 frames per second which was first demonstrated commercially in 1895. Meanwhile, Edison bought the rights to a sophisticated projector, the 'Vitascope', developed by Thomas Armat, and proceeded to market it from 1896. The first public performances were in a music hall programme in New York in April 1896 (*ibid*, 299). At the same time, Edison's rivals introduced the Mutoscope, a peep-show device and the American Biograph camera and projector.

In Britain, in the early years of the century, movies were housed in 'any old hall where occasional magic lantern shows were meant to be given' (Morton 1933, 19). The first cinematographic show in Britain was organised by M. Treway for the Lumière brothers. It was held at the Marlborough Hall of the Polytechnic Institute, Regent Street, London and was accompanied by a running commentary delivered from the platform. Each subject ran for but a few minutes as the films at this time were only a few hundred feet long. Incidents of everyday life and travel scenes were interspersed with comics and such spectacular recordings as the 'Charge of the Cavalry'. This first show was held on February 20th 1896. The programme included such items as 'bathing in the Mediterranean', 'arrival of a train in a country station' and 'Russian View', 'Arrival of a Mailboat at Folkestone' etc (*ibid*).

Another development of the cinema industry was the travelling show organised by an advertising company where shows were given free of charge. The bioscope and films were carried in a four-horse van. One example illustrated by Morton is of the 'Aelion Advertising Co' showing a film from a horse drawn van, on top of which is a horn gramophone providing sound accompaniment (Morton 1933, 182).

The earliest films, unless they were shown in variety theatres at the end of the programme to play the audience out, or in town halls, were shown in shops converted into halls. This proved dangerous, as fires were frequent due to the flammability of early cellulose nitrate film and few buildings were provided with proper fire exits. The Cinematographic Act was passed in 1909 and controlled the design of cinemas, film licensing and Sunday opening. Its principal requirement was for a separate, fire resistant projection box connected to the auditorium by shuttered projection portholes and its own emergency exit (Harwood 1999, 4). The emphasis on safety has been maintained through the years in other enactments such as the Celluloid and Cinematograph Film Act 1922, Cinematograph Act 1952 and the Fire Precautions Act 1971, the two latter having been consolidated in the Cinemas Act 1985. Properly built and equipped cinema theatres began to appear shortly after the act, one of the earliest of which was built at Hitchin in 1911 (Morton 1933, 197).

Although Edison had experimented in the synchronisation of sound with film, using his phonograph, the first practical system for talking pictures did not appear

until 'Vitaphone' was introduced in the 1920s. This was used in the 'Jazz Singer' of 1926 and consisted of an audio soundtrack on disc, played on a turntable and synchronised to the film by controlling the speed of the projector. It was a simple but very effective way to add audio to a movie. In the early 1930s, 'sound-on-film', where the soundtrack is printed on to the film and read optically, began to supplant the sound-on-disc technology.

4.2 The Savoy Northampton

4.2.1 The first films are believed to have been exhibited in Northampton in July 1897 at the Town Hall by travelling showmen, Messrs. Poole, as part of their popular 'Myriorama show'. In these early days, films were generally incorporated into the acts of travelling showmen who used various halls and theatres in the town, including the Temperance Hall, the Palace of Varieties, the Opera House and the New Theatre. With the new safety requirements introduced under the Cinematographic Acts, many halls ceased to show films and an impetus was provided for the construction of dedicated cinemas. (NRO 725.823).

4.2.2 Although a number of cinemas had been built in the town by the early 1930s, at the time of its construction in 1935-6, the Savoy was regarded as the only purpose-built super cinema in Northampton. Photographs of the facade under construction in 1936 (photo:Ed1) show advertising billboards proclaiming 'The Savoy Will Tower Above Them All' and 'Opening Shortly, The Savoy, Northampton's Only Super Cinema'. It was designed by William Riddell Glen, house architect for the chain 'Associated British Cinemas'. ABC had been established in 1928 as a subsidiary of British International Pictures, beginning as an amalgamation of three exhibition circuits controlled by the entrepreneur, John Maxwell. Initially a private company, ABC was registered as a public company on 26 November 1928 with a capital of £1 million for establishing a circuit of forty cinemas. In all, the three circuits gave ABC forty-three or possibly forty-four properties to which were added many more by takeover or construction during the first half of the 1930s. Over one hundred cinemas were opened in the 1930s and 1940 (Eyles 1993, 18-28).

4.2.3 The architects W.R. Glen and Albert Gardner had designed ABC's first new cinema, the Ritz Edinburgh, in 1929 and Glen subsequently dissolved the partnership with Gardner and accepted an offer to become the staff architect for ABC. Glen initially prepared plans for cinemas in Surbiton and East Molesley, Surrey (not built) (Eyles 1993, 28) and subsequently designed about 62 cinemas for ABC, his most prolific period – in terms of opening dates – being between 1935-1939 (table 1, below compiled from Eyles 1993, 128-159).

It is worth noting that some projects may have taken some time to come to fruition. Appendix 1 provides a full list of Glen cinemas, those in the East Midlands comprising Savoy, Leicester (closed); Savoy, Northampton; Savoy, Lincoln (demolished), Regal, Derby (demolished) and Carlton, Nottingham (demolished). In addition, Glen modified the plans of the Regal, Chesterfield. Hence, there are only two Glen cinemas surviving in the region: Leicester and Northampton, the latter being the best preserved. Many ABC schemes were halted with the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939 and Glen's latest works appear to have been in about 1940-41. He died in 1950.

1930	1	1936	9
1931	1	1937	17
1932	1	1938	15
1933	2	1939	9
1934	1	1940	3
1935	3		

Table 1: Numbers of Glen-designed cinemas opened by year

4.2.4 The building was constructed by A. Glen and Sons (no relation to the architect), Northampton to W.R. Glen's plans. Plans and elevations of the proposed building deposited with Northampton Record Office bear the stamps of 'Borough Engineers Northampton', with dates of 26 Mar 1935 for receipt and 18 May 1935 for approval (NRO Y327; figs. 41-9). As discussed below, the structure as-built differs in detail from that shown on the plans, which may have been submitted for Building Control Approval. The old shops, advertising billboards and disused premises of the old grammar school were swept away (Burman 1999) and the building was erected in record time over the winter of 1935-6 (A. Glen, pers. comm), an 'epic of speed against frost and extremely rainy weather' (*Chronicle and Echo* 4.5.1936).

4.2.5 On opening day, Saturday May 2 1936, the auditorium was packed with local dignitaries including the architect, W.R. Glen, the General Manager of ABC, A.S. Moss; the managing director of the Compton Organ Co., J.J. Road and other local notables including the mayor and mayoress and the manager T.P. Purdie. The opening ceremony was performed by the MP Sir Mervyn Manningham Buller. The programme consisted of the 'Broadway Melody of 1936' starring Jack Benny, Robert Taylor, Eleanor Powell and Una Merkel, followed by *Ice Floes* in Technicolor and the newsreel, Pathe Super Sound Gazette (*Kinematograph Weekly*, 7.5.1936). A musical interlude was incorporated into the programme at which the Compton Organ 'rose from the pit' and there 'surrounded by an ever-changing array of coloured lights was the organist, Wilfrid Southworth' (Burman 1999) The opening was clearly regarded as a significant local event, not only as the only 'super kinema' to be built in the town for many years but also an all British enterprise, drawing upon local labour (*Kinematograph Weekly*, 7.5.1936).

4.2.6 Coverage of the opening of the Savoy in the local paper, the *Chronicle and Echo* (May 4th 1936) extols the virtues of the new building, regarded as 'the last word in comfort, splendour and modern equipment'. The building could accommodate 1,954 persons, including circle seating of 696, was furnished with a state-of-the-art air conditioning plant, projection and sound systems and could be evacuated in minutes in the event of fire.

4.2.7 The souvenir programme produced by ABC for the opening includes important technical details relating to features of the new cinema and also contains advertisements which record the main contractors. The External 'permacrete' facings together with entrance hall pavings, linings to lavatories etc. were carried out by Standard Pavements Co. of London. The air conditioning and heating was by Norman Turner Engineering Co. of 121 Victoria Street, London and the electricians by a W Draper and Co. of the same address. Decorative metalwork was

by Garton and Thorne of Camden Town, Asphalte by Scudamore and Luck of Northampton and interior decoration including ceilings and decorative plasterwork by Clark and Fenn of Clapham. Theatre specialists, Hall and Dixon Ltd (Garrick St, London) supplied the tableaux curtains, stage draperies, suspension gear etc. and light fittings were manufactured by Best and Lloyd of Handsworth, Birmingham 'to the architect's instruction'. The latter two firms survive and contact has been made with a view to determining whether any archives survive. The choice of local firms for the main construction work and non-specialist installations clearly provided a boost to the local economy at a time of high unemployment at the peak of the Depression.

4.2.8 Contemporary descriptions in the local press and specialist cinematographic publications provide considerable detail on the appearance and special features of the building as originally constructed.

The *Chronicle and Echo* of May 4th 1936 described the new cinema in glowing terms, so much so that the copy was almost certainly taken from a press release issued by ABC:

The Savoy is constructed of steel and concrete and is absolutely fireproof. The operating chamber is built upon the roof of the building. This takes the fire risk occasioned by use of films entirely away from the auditorium and from any places to which patrons have access. The exits are so designed that a full house can be cleared comfortably in two minutes. In the event of a breakdown in the electricity supply, the cinema has an emergency lighting plant which is entirely electric current being supplied from immense storage batteries'. 'So cleverly has the building been designed that it has a compact and comfortable atmosphere'

'The colour scheme is a delight. Walls are artistically painted in patterns in which green shades are harmoniously blended with tinges of pink. The concealed lighting system throughout the cinema is a marvel. Rainbow effects can be obtained in the proscenium, which is formed by a series of graceful converging silver arches, setting off the screen in a remarkable fashion.

The organ console lighting is so blended with that it can be made to harmonise and change with the moods of the music of the great Compton organ, another of the theatre's outstanding features. The mighty Compton organ embodies many new features. Amongst these is the 1936 Compton electrone which lends itself to a variety of tonal effects, apart from its beauty as a solo voice.

The electrone enables the most famous carillons, such as those at Bruges and Malines as well as the equally famous Westminster chimes to be reproduced with the utmost fidelity and with a power and purity of tone hitherto unknown in theatre organs.

A further feature of the instrument is the wonderful illuminated console... first produced and fully patented by the Compton company. By means of an amazingly clever system of interior lighting this console yields a remarkable combination of colours. The instrument thus attracts the eye as well as the ear'.

'Another remarkable feature of the Savoy is its air conditioning plant. Within a few minutes, millions of cubic feet of air can be passed through the theatre at any desired temperature. On hot summer nights, the air in the Savoy can be kept delightfully cool. On bitter winter nights the cinema will be cosy and snug. The seats are all that could be desired, with comfortably sprung upholstery...with air cushion arm seats'.

'Every expert attention has been given to secure everyone an uninterrupted view of the screen whilst excellent acoustics, coupled with the latest wide-range sound equipment and projection ensures perfection in the picture and sound reproduction'.

A short article in *Cinema and Theatre Construction* of May 1936 notes that the Savoy Northampton 'is similar to the Savoy Croydon and Regal Hackney. In the case of the former, the entrance hall differed little from that at Northampton, whilst the latter has a very similar elevation'. The foyer at Croydon may still be seen today as it survives as the *Safari Cinema*, whilst the Regal Hackney has been demolished (A. Eyles, pers. comm.)

4.3 Savoy to ABC to MGM: later history

4.3.1 In the late 1950s ABC embarked on modernisation schemes and dropped individual theatre names by calling them all 'ABC' (Eyles 1993, 92). Photographic evidence suggests that the interior of the building, including the foyer remained largely unchanged, although photographs of the early 1960s suggest that main entrance doors had, by this time, been replaced.

4.3.2 The Savoy was apparently the first cinema in the town to pioneer 3D films in the 1950s, installing specialist equipment and was also the venue for many famous live acts (*Chronicle and Echo* 24.1.2000). In November 1963, the Beatles performed ten numbers on stage, culminating with 'Twist and Shout' during '26 minutes of mass frenzy' (unattrib.).

4.3.3 The *Chronicle and Echo* of 17.4.73 (NRO 198.954) records the fact that EMI (who had taken control of ABC cinemas in 1969; Eyles 1993, 102) were to withdraw their application to introduce Bingo to the theatre as a result of local opposition, many people being alarmed at the possibility of losing a stage 'upon which many of Britain's famous entertainers have performed'.

4.3.4 A newspaper report of 19 December 1974, from the *Chronicle and Echo* (NRO 198-954) documents the conversion of the cinema to three screens. Work commenced on October 14 1974 and the cinema was closed from December 8th until 26 December.

'ABC 1 is the largest cinema, and will seat 698. It is formed in the original circle area and the decor consists of scarlet, orange and magenta walls with amethyst ceiling and deep red seating and carpet.

ABC 2 and 3 have been constructed in the old rear stalls by means of soundproofed divisional walls below the existing circle.

ABC 2, which seats 263, has red seating with flame and mustard coloured walls, aubergine ceiling and red carpeting.

ABC 3 has a seating capacity of 208 and is decorated in tones of chocolate, beige and orange, with bronze carpeting and seating. Entrance to the triple cinema is through the redesigned foyer which has a colour scheme of orange and sienna walls with Lebanon green ceiling and bronze carpet.

The exterior remains the same but the entrance doors have been modernised and the lower elevation has been clad in aluminium.

The existing projection room will serve ABC 1, while ABC 2 and 3 will have a combined projection room with the latest in automatic equipment.

The traditional screen curtains have been dispensed with in ABC 2 and 3. Lightshow projectors have been installed and the designers say they will provide exciting screen effects during intervals.'

The films shown at the reopening were *Murder on the Orient Express* (ABC1), *Airport 75* (ABC2) and *Super Dad* (ABC3).

It was also recorded (Chronicle and Echo 21.12.74) that Screens 2 and 3 were served by 'fully automated and computerised projection rooms'. 'A unique feature of the Northampton cinema conversion is the retention of the stage facilities ... largely as a result of the persistence of the ABC manager, Mr Ken Porter who has been an active member of amateur operatic companies'.

4.3.4 The cinema closed in 1995, the last films shown being *Pulp Fiction*, *Terminal Velocity* and *Just Cause*. (Chronicle and Echo 24.1.2000).

5. Description of the building

5.1 Setting and plan

The Savoy Cinema is located in a prominent position, on the corner of Abington Street, at its junction with Lower Mounts and York Road, Northampton (fig. 1). In plan, the building consist of two distinct linked units: the foyer block, located on the corner and taking full advantage of the prime, elevated site, and the main body of the building, housing the auditorium, stage and service rooms, orientated NW-SE and placed at right angles to Abington Street (see plans at end of report).

5.2 Foyer Block: exterior

5.2.1 Whilst the exterior frontage of the Savoy is perhaps not the most impressive example of 1930s cinema design, it conforms to the International Modernist style of architecture. Located centrally on the corner plot of Abington Street, the building's original all white facade, considered as a 'passable facade' would nevertheless have imposed itself monumentally as a new architectural expression of the age (Gray 1996, 111). The facade is essentially a tripartite arrangement, comprising a tall, modernist central piece above the entrance doors, flanked by angled two-storey wings containing shops. The central portion of the facade, rising to a height equivalent to about three storeys, is in white 'permacrete' and has a symmetrical composition of stepped back, almost cylindrical, forms. The height and mass of the central piece is accentuated by the six vertical fins: two tall outer ones with curved tops flanking four shorter and more slender ones with stepped tops, above which was the 'Savoy' sign in a geometric font, characteristic of the period. The verticality was further enhanced with neon lighting on the fins. Flanking the central part of the facade, and set slightly further forward are two flat-roofed projecting wings following the acute angle of the adjoining streets. The curved ends of the wings, finished in white cement render, are embellished with a parapet and string course and encroach slightly into the central piece. The strong horizontal elements of these features are further enhanced by the glazing bars of the first floor metal windows, and provide an interplay with the vertical fins of the central facade in classic International Modernist style (Zaczek 2001, 46).



Fig. 2 The Savoy, Northampton in 1936. Main south-facing facade



Fig. 3 The Savoy, Northampton in 1947. Main south-facing facade

5.2.2 Five pairs of doors, three in the middle of two well-defined rectangular columns with one pair of doors either side of them, stand in a splayed recess from the pavement. The glass doors bear a distinctive design comprising stepped and circular elements contained within a rectangle, presumably in leadwork or applied metal strips. The stepped motif echoes the stepped ribs in white concrete of the upper facade, whilst circles with intersecting lines are very familiar Art Deco devices, appearing on domestic items, such as ceramics (e.g. Shelley Ware) and architect-designed appliances, such as Wells Coates' Ecko AD 76 radio (Hill 1986, 216). It is perhaps worth noting that this motif is also remarkably similar to the symbol for a valve in electrical circuit diagrams. Illuminated signage of the film titles - in a font reminiscent of that devised for London Transport by Edward Johnston in the 1920s (Arts Council 1979, 219) sits above these doors and columns. The simple unfussy Art Deco styling of the doors echoes the rhythm of geometric regularity that lies beneath the curvaceous projecting canopy. The canopy was mirrored with ribbon-like banding running through double scalloped ends. Set into the canopy, the day's interlude entertainment was illuminated. Again the scalloping effect appears to be mimicked in miniature along the upper rim of the canopy. The canopy can be seen to interrupt subtly the linear theme and introduce the building's more distinct curves as well as giving a contrasting addition of colour against the light.

5.2.3 It is clear from architect's drawings deposited with the Borough Engineer in March 1935 (Northampton Records Office), that the principal elevation was originally intended to be a lot 'safer' in terms of its architectural style (fig.42) and the cinema was to be a 'Regal'. The drawing shows a rather bland brick facade, again with a tripartite arrangement of shops flanking the main entrance, but this time with a much lower central portion dwarfed by the auditorium block behind it. Clearly the facade was redesigned at the eleventh hour, since construction was completed just over a year later, by May 1936. Whether the redesign resulted from comments by local planners or by ABC management remains uncertain.

5.2.4 In the most successful of Modernist buildings, every element of the design was strictly regulated by the architect, often down to the 'smallest lick of paint and the last pane of glass' (Zaczek 2001, 30). To an extent this was originally true of the Savoy Northampton, where signage, windows, canopy and doors contributed to the harmony of the facade as a whole. Unfortunately, unsympathetic alterations in the 1960s and 70s have been to the detriment of this unity: the canopy and doors appear to have been changed early in the 1960s, whilst the Savoy sign was removed and two of the fins were cropped later, perhaps in the 1970s, and the lower part of the facade received metal cladding.

5.3 Foyer block: interior

5.3.1 Main Foyer

Although the main foyer has suffered some damage from post war alterations, including the installation of a lower ceiling (since removed) and inserted block walls, sufficient survives to gain an impression of its original appearance. Evidence for details of interior decoration, fixtures and fittings is provided by a monochrome illustration of 1936 from *Kinematograph Weekly* (fig. 4). The

following description is of the original appearance, noting where relevant, any subsequent alterations.

The entrance foyer is approximately square in plan and rises to the full height of the central portion of the principal elevation - the equivalent of almost three storeys. The side walls, each containing a tall niche with circular arch, slope inwards slightly and curve to join the ceiling, giving the appearance of a huge transverse flat arch over the foyer. The soffit of this arch is pierced by three large concave circular ceiling roses (photo: 50-57-4a) from which originally hung the elaborate glass and metal light fittings shown in fig. 4. These each consisted of a thin tubular metal (?chrome) stem, punctuated with trumpet shapes and flat metal plates and terminating in a ball finial, which carried two translucent circular glass dishes and a circular transparent plate. Surviving photographs of other Glen foyers, such as the Regal Streatham, show similar vast glass light fittings in this case comprising a cylinder, stepped towards the bottom, slotted over which appears to be a six arm chrome candelabrum with uplighters (Eyles 1993, 8). These hang from circular ceiling roses, as at Northampton, with scalloped decoration. The fittings at the Savoy Portsmouth are similar whilst the Savoy, Exeter, has slightly simpler fittings, comprising three glass cylinders of diminishing size (downwards) producing a stepped effect, within a metal framework.

Although the floor now has a modern covering, a small area of the underlying mosaic floor is exposed (50-57-8a), showing that it was of a polychrome geometric design, similar perhaps to that of the Royal, Plymouth (Eyles 1993, illus. on p.42).

Directly opposite the entrance doors was a symmetrical arrangement consisting of a central double width flight of stairs down to the stalls foyer flanked in turn by semi-circular glass pay booths and axial staircases up to the balcony. The latter led up to quarter landings, before turning transversely to meet at a central mezzanine landing with decorative iron balustrade (50-56-32; 50-57-14a). At this level is a symmetrical arrangement of three arches, square headed with rounded corners, mirroring the arch of the foyer as a whole. The central arch is of double width, and provides access to the corridor leading to the balcony foyer. On either side, is a small arch with iron balustrade (50-56-30), looking out over the quarter landings of the staircases. The wall above the arches curves to meet the foyer ceiling, giving the appearance of deep coving. Hanging from the left hand arch (in fig. 6) was a glass sign - 'BALCONY'. Above the central arch is a curved illuminated box sign in classic Art Deco streamlined style, 'TO BALCONY', (50-57-1a; missing 'TO' and 'B' fig. 9). Above this, the wall was decorated in abstract style.



Fig. 4 Main foyer, 1936, view north-west



Fig. 5 Main Foyer 2001, view north-east

From the illustration of 1936 (fig.4), it would seem clear that the foyer was decorated with pale, pastel shades giving a clean airy feel, conceivably the coral pink and pale green preserved on the walls of the left hand staircase, boxed-in at the time of tripling. The clean lines of the circular pay booths, with curved glass tops, parallel steel bands and stepped side walls supporting a flat roof with curved front are of classic modernist style. Rather more perplexing stylistically is the decorative iron balustrading for the staircases. Although the parallel steel handrails are modernist, the curvilinear detailing of the balustrade itself seems to owe more to Art Nouveau than Art Deco.



Fig. 6 Left hand (western) staircase to mezzanine landing

Photographic evidence suggests that the foyer survived largely intact until at least 1964, but at the time of tripling, the pay booths were removed and replaced with a

large structure on the left hand side (since removed). This necessitated the closure of the left hand balcony staircase, which was boxed in with breeze blocks and stud walling (fig. 6). The right-hand staircase remained in use, but the balustrades of the stair and mezzanine landing appear to have been removed. The colour scheme visible above the level of the former suspended ceiling comprises copper-coloured ceiling roses, turquoise blue transverse arch and pale greenish walls at frieze level and creamy-white ceiling (50-57-7a). This decoration is impossible to date, but the colour combination would be consistent with fashions of the 1960s or 1970s and it is tempting to associate it with the tripling of 1974, when similar lurid colours were used in the three screens (according to contemporary newspaper reports, see above). If this is the case, the suspended ceiling and the stark red and white interior decoration beneath it must come later, perhaps when the cinema changed to 'Cannon'.



Fig. 7 Tessellated floor to main foyer

5.3.2 *Link Corridor to Stalls Foyer*

A double-width flight of eight steps (50-57-15a) placed centrally between the pay booths led down into a short corridor leading to the stalls foyer. Above the staircase were illuminated glass signs - 'Stalls' - flanking a square electric clock (fig.4). These have all now disappeared. On either side of this corridor, doors marked 'Private' led to narrow wooden stairs leading up to each of the pay booths. Although the booths were swept away in the 1970s, the stairs survive. Also opening off this corridor, on the left hand side, is a small switch room. The corridor itself has no other architectural features of any note.

5.3.3 *Link Corridor to Balcony foyer*

The two opposing transverse staircases from the main foyer converged at a central mezzanine landing, leading, through a square-arched doorway, into a wider corridor, with curving walls on either side and square-arched openings with wrought iron balustrades providing a view back to each staircase. The approved plans suggest that the original intention was to have Ladies' and Gents' lavatories (fig. 50) in this position, the walls sweeping in a graceful 120° curve to meet the

Balcony Foyer. Toilets in this position would have necessitated solid walls backing on to the transverse staircases of the foyer, as appears more usual in Glen foyers (Eyles 1993, 42). Quite why the toilets were dispensed with is uncertain, although it may be due to the fact that a cafe planned for the Balcony Foyer was also omitted (see below). The alterations of the 1970s resulted in the boxing-in of the left hand corner of the link corridor, preserving the arched opening, balustrade and most of the transverse staircase (50-56-32; 50-57-14a). The photograph of the foyer in 1936 suggests that the link corridor was lit from above with simple glass ceiling lights set into circular concave ceiling roses.



Fig. 8 Surviving arch, view south into main foyer



Fig. 9 Balcony sign on mezzanine landing

Part way along the link corridor, the axis of the building then changes quite sharply to the north-east as one is led into the main block containing the balcony foyer, auditorium and service rooms

5.4 Auditorium Block

5.4.1 Stalls Foyer (Level 1)

At ground floor level, the link corridor from the main foyer provides access via glazed fire doors into the stalls foyer which runs transversely across most of the end of the auditorium block. Upon entering the stalls foyer, on either side are toilets, as shown on the original plans. The Ladies' toilet, on the left, was subsequently modified to make room for the entrance to a corridor running axially along the left-hand side of the main auditorium, giving access to the mid point of the stalls. Originally, centrally placed double doors then provided access to the rear stalls. These were removed with the installation of a projection box serving the two new screens which occupied the former rear stalls (50-57-27A). At the extreme right hand end of the stalls foyer, doors lead to a fire exit serving the foyer and rear stalls and a separate, private, staircase up to service rooms on the mezzanine levels and main projection room above. There is also access to a small room beneath the stairs housing the centralised vacuum cleaner plant (see below).



Fig. 10 Stalls foyer (50-57-27A) view south-west



Fig. 11 Stalls foyer, view north-east showing later projection box

It is clear that a suspended ceiling, perhaps of the 1980s, has been removed from this foyer comparatively recently, revealing earlier decoration comprising a turquoise blue ceiling, copper cornice and pink frieze, probably of the same period as the scheme in the main foyer. Ceiling panels, some with graceful curves (fig.11 above) are edged with decorative scalloped plasterwork, the same as that in the balcony foyer. Decoration below the level of the suspended ceiling is white with red woodwork.

5.4.2 *Staff/Service rooms: Balcony Foyer Level 2*

The south-east end of the auditorium block is entirely taken up with staff and service rooms on five floors. Opening off the Balcony Foyer is a corridor leading to the principal administrative rooms for the cashier, assistant manager and manager, together with a key room. The north-eastern end of the corridor opens onto the main service staircase. The approved plans show that an engineer's room was originally envisaged, but that this was dispensed with, probably at the time of construction, and the manager's office was enlarged and provided with its own washroom (figs. 12 and 13). The rooms in this range are all utilitarian with no architectural features of significance, although the original wash-hand basin with white vitrolite splash back and chrome fittings survives in the manager's washroom. The access corridor leads to one of the main exit staircases in the south-east corner of the building.



Fig. 12 Manager's office washroom



Fig. 13 Manager's office

5.4.3 *Balcony Foyer, Level 2*

The balcony foyer extends almost across the full width of the auditorium block and is partially beneath the rear part of the tiered balcony. It is entered at its SW end from the link corridor via a short flight of steps through an opening with a centrally-placed cylindrical column. The foyer is essentially a rectangular space with central doors in the transverse wall, originally with small leaded windows, leading out on to the balcony. The photograph of 1936 (fig.14) shows that these doors were flanked by open alcoves with central columns, the ceilings curving back, presumably reflecting the slope of the balcony floor above. The photograph also shows an illuminated box sign 'CIRCLE' above the doors and a curvaceous ceiling lighting console, both now missing, the latter having been replaced with simple pendant chandeliers in concave roses. The cornice is scalloped and survives intact. The 1936 photograph shows that the foyer was originally decorated in pastel shades with stylised cloud (?) and plant forms on the curved ceiling and vertical wavy lines in the niches. The carpets bore a repeating fan-shaped pattern.

At the SW end of the foyer, stairs lead up to the rear circle and at the SE, is an exit to the main corner staircase. A pair of adjacent single doors (with rectangular leaded windows as elsewhere) within the NE alcove lead through to a room of uncertain function which contains a island worktop with cupboards beneath and , a Belfast sink. The doors suggest one was for entry and one for exit, since there is no evidence of a former partition, suggesting this is a possible kitchen. The deposit plans –although different in plan here – show this room as a kitchen with service counter connecting to a scullery, suggesting a cafe was originally envisaged. Northover (2001) refers to a fridge room, presumably for storage of ice creams, and it is possible that it is this room which is referred to.

At the SW end of the foyer, the deposit plans indicate that a female staff room with toilets was originally envisaged.

Later alterations within this foyer consisted of the construction of a large box-like structure, probably for the sale of popcorn, ices, drinks and confectionery. The present decorative scheme is a pink ceiling with white walls and red woodwork, as elsewhere.

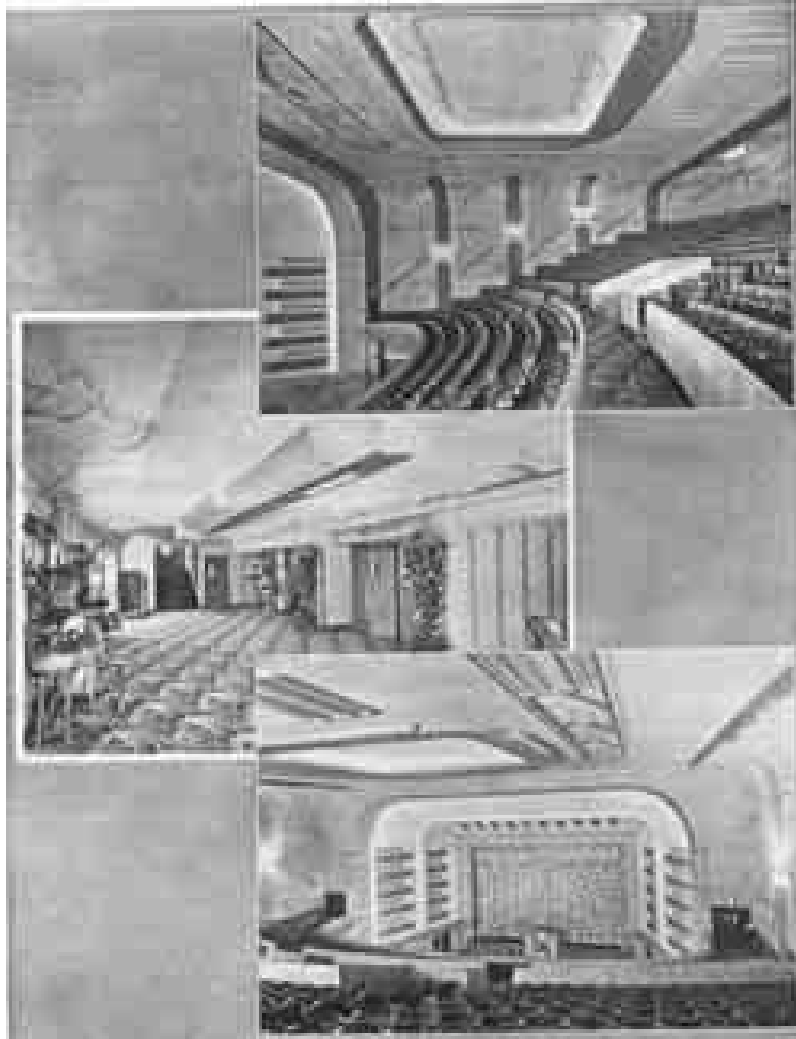


Fig. 14 Main auditorium (top: view NE, bottom NW) and balcony foyer (centre, view W in 1936 (*Kinematograph Weekly*))



Fig. 15 Balcony foyer 2001, view SW. Note changes to lighting and boxed in alcoves (right).



Fig. 16 Balcony foyer. Boxed-in NE alcove with two doors to ?kitchen



Fig. 17 Balcony foyer: view up stairs into main auditorium

Opening off the SW alcove is a small door providing access below the balcony floor where the substructure can be seen. The area was not entered for reasons of safety. One of the steel girders is labelled 'Dorman, Long and Co. Ltd.'. Another room opening off this alcove contains plant associated with the plenum air conditioning system (see below).

5.4.4 Staff/Service rooms: Mezzanine level 3

Mezzanine level 3, accessed by the main service staircase, contains various service rooms accessed from a transverse corridor. One is clearly a staff room, with plastered walls, easy chairs and a cooker, with a frosted window providing light to the corridor. Another room is labelled 'Projectionists' on the door and contains 1930s bentwood chairs. Other rooms include the 'letter room', with shelves holding individual letters for making up film titles to advertise showings on the front of the cinema, a room with spare parts for seats, and a room containing electric light bulbs. All rooms are plain and utilitarian, with metal Crittal windows, painted brickwork (in some cases plastered and painted), and typical

1930s 3-panel doors with simple ovolo mouldings and wooden doorknobs. Unfortunately none of these rooms appears on the original deposit plans, therefore the intended original function must remain uncertain

5.4.5 *Rear balcony foyer and service rooms, level 4*



Fig. 18 Emergency lighting battery



Fig. 19 Workshop, level 4

A small plain foyer, with male and female toilets, serves the rear part of the balcony. Toilet doors have small leaded-light windows (fig. 29) as used on exit doors and toilets elsewhere in the building. Also on this level are further service rooms at the NE and SW corners, identified respectively as 'Rectifiers and Workshop' and 'Emergency Lighting Battery' with 'Rectifier' opening off it on the deposit plans. The former now contains a sink, electrical switch board, bench, the remains of apparatus labelled 'Westinghouse, volts etc'; a twin tub washing machine, an old rusty film reel, and other scrap materials. On the wall, is a large mirror.

The battery room (providing the cinema's emergency electricity) contains timber racks with quantities of comparatively recent Chloride batteries and a painted sign (original) declares 'No Smoking or Naked Flame Allowed'. Adjacent to the battery room is the 'Keepalite Chloride Batteries Ltd' battery charger, possibly of the 1950s or 60s, but not earlier. Doors are of oak – presumably to resist against fire – with small rectangular window, similar to those to the projection room.

5.4.6 Staff Service rooms: Projection room level 5

The original main projection room is located at the back of the rear balcony and, for reasons of fire safety (in line with the 1909 cinematographic act), is essentially an external structure located on the roof of the rear part of the main auditorium (see fig 20 below). Although now locked, doors lead from the corridor outside the projection room on to 'a large verandah, encircling the place, with fine views of the town and the surrounding countryside' (Northover 2001, 2); this was not accessible at the time of the survey. Further fireproofing comprised oak fire doors of characteristic 1930s design with small rectangular windows set high up.



Fig. 20 Aerial view of cinema. Projection room can be seen on the rear part of the auditorium roof. (Jesus army Web Site)



Fig. 21 projection room view SW (before removal of equipment). Northamptonshire Web

The projection box is a large, parquet-floored rectangular room with a bench along the rear (SE) wall backed with blue tiles and furnished with adjustable lamps. The front (NW) wall has sliding metal shutters closing the projection ports into the auditorium. On the SW wall is an RCA monitor amplifier volume control, next to which is a large bank of lever-throw switches. The upper set is coloured red, white and blue and labelled Batten no. 1, Batten no. 2 etc. Beneath this array is another bank of levers, again labelled with batten numbers, again in banks of red, white and blue. Other switches relate to the emergency power supply. The workings of the switch boards are accessible from the back, in a separate room, referred to as the 'dimmer room' on the original plans. Further research will be necessary to understand the purpose of the controls in this area: some are presumably for house lights, whilst others may have controlled curtains and stage apparatus, judging by matching colour coded sockets on the stage itself.

Of the other apparatus in this room, little survives. The projector, illustrated in fig. 21, has now been removed, leaving just its grey-painted iron base, and was presumably of comparatively recent date as it is unlike the original Ross projectors installed in 1936 (fig. 22, see below). The rectifier adjacent to the projector (shown in fig.21) remains. It is a Westinghouse (Westinghouse Brake and Signal Company Ltd) type HI 85/100, specification R19178, 360 440 volts, 50 cycles, 3 phase. It has an instrument panel with ammeter and voltmeter and rotary knob for controlling input voltage. Information on the appliance tells us that it is a power supplier for carbon and xenon arcs 'read instruments before installing this set'.



Fig. 22 The Ross projector (from souvenir programme, 1936)

Above the projector is a glazed skylight and a flue above the site of the projector was presumably part of the extraction system for hot gases, as shown on the original plans.

The pre-war reminiscences of a former projectionist, Arthur Northover, (2001, 2-3) provides considerable detail on the workings of the projection room:

The box was spacious, some twenty feet in length. The twin Ross rear-shutter projectors in the centre were flanked by a heavy Ross spotlight on the left by the dimmer board, and a bi-unial lantern on the right; close by the twin turntable non-sych. With the exception of the hand-fed low intensity arcs of the lantern, all the lamps were Ross automatics, and the tubes of the western electric Monophonic sound system were at the rear wall, yet the box was so large that all this equipment appeared dwarfed. In the adjoining rewinding room [to the NE], with a glass port overlooking the box, were two hand re-winders plus fireproof cabinets containing the programmes, each double reel of twenty minute duration in separate narrow containers.

The walls were blue-tiled and washed weekly, and the inlaid wooden-block floor was kept highly polished. The small switch gear recess [SW] adjoined a large battery room for emergency lighting [actually on the floor below] and another containing the arc resistances. The trio of rooms was completed by a water closet and wash-hand basin. Near the Hewittic mercury arc rectifier was a rest room containing a wireless.

The projection and sound equipment installed in 1936 comprised twin Ross 'Kinematographic Projectors and Lamps' projectors (described by Northover) and 'the latest and improved type of Western Electric Wide-range Sound Equipment' (souvenir programme). The Ross projectors with Ross arc lamps, spotlights and lenses were supplied and installed by the 'sole selling agents', Pathe equipment Ltd of Wardour Street, London. Illustrations from the 'Cinphoto' website show a

similar arrangement in the projection room of the ABC, Beckenham, Kent, this time with twin Ross GC3 projectors and American Peerless Carbon Arcs. (www.cinephoto.co.uk/photos_robin_martin.htm Sept. 2001).

Two projectors were required to change film reels during a presentation. Until 30 or so years ago, 35mm films were supplied to cinemas on 2,000-foot (22-minute) reels. Hence, a typical feature film might consist of five or six reels, requiring the projectionist to change projectors this many times in one screening. Circular cue marks printed in the upper right corner of the picture indicated when each changeover should take place. (EB 1999). Northover (2001, 4) tells us that 'The Chief' managed the reel changes: 'The sprocket holes by the [four standard] dots were dampened and bright yellow watercolour paint applied to the four frames indicating motor start on the incoming machine followed by the second set of four for 'over'. One could view easily the yellow strip travelling down the projector film path. As the 'over' appeared Doug [assistant to the Chief] would push both arc shutters across smartly together.' In inexperienced hands, this could clearly go horribly wrong, as happened during the Second World War when a new Chief caused chaos in the projection room, resulting in a tangled mass of coiled film on the floor' (Northover 2001, 4).

Today, with the advent of xenon lamps, films are normally 'made up' by splicing reels together so only one changeover is required or the entire feature is shown on one reel. Trailers and announcements can be spliced into the beginning and end of the reel or might be on a separate reel. Often there may be just one projectionist operating the equipment for several auditoriums (www.howstuffworks.com Sept. 2001).

5.5 The Main Auditorium

5.5.1 Seating

The main auditorium originally accommodated 1,954 persons, including circle seating of 696 (*Chronicle and Echo*, May 5 1936). The deposit plans show 1258 stalls seats and 696 balcony seats. The stalls are arranged in three distinct blocks separated by gangways, with additional gangways on the side walls, to the rear and at the front. Also, the two side blocks of seating are split towards the front with a transverse gangway providing access to the fire exits on either side of the stage. The stalls seating appears to be original and the cast iron bench ends have a geometric Art Deco design (fig. 30 left). The balcony seating is also arranged in three distinct blocks with gangways between them, and against the side and rear walls. Again, the seats appear original, with cast iron bench ends bearing curvilinear decoration (fig. 30 right).

5.5.2 Circulation

The rear stalls were entered via double doors from the stalls foyer, whilst the front stalls were accessed by a corridor from the stalls foyer running externally to the main auditorium, with entry approximately at the mid point. Exits were provided on the left and right hand sides of the stage at balcony and stalls level via double doors with standard leaded light windows as elsewhere, leading to axial corridors, emerging from the NW elevation. Opening off the corridors at stalls level are toilets, the 'Gents' retaining the original urinals. A fire exit from the rear stalls was

also provided in the SE corner of the stalls foyer, leading into a corner stair which also serves fire exits from the main balcony and rear balcony foyers.

5.5.3 Description

The main auditorium is dominated by the massive proscenium arch which could be described as streamlined in style: rectangular, with curved corners, and pronounced cylindrical ribs following the curve of the arch, those in the centre and adjacent to the screen of massive proportions. The sloping jambs of the arch are decoratively pierced to allow the sound to escape from concealed organ pipes (originally behind the right-hand grille only). As with the facade of the cinema, the interplay of strong verticals and horizontals (in the grilles) is evident. The junction of the walls with ceiling is deeply coved – echoing the curves of the proscenium arch – and the lighting is concealed, coming from a rectangular ceiling unit, with curved corners and dentil edges. Sweeping around this, a larger rectangular ceiling feature contains grilles for the air conditioning system.

The illustration of 1936 shows that the walls of the auditorium were painted in pastel shades with stylised ferns and other geometric forms. The view of the N wall (fig.14) shows three distinct vertical bands on the side walls, each of which appears to have carried a glass wall light. A contemporary account tells us that 'the concealed lighting system throughout the cinema is a marvel. Rainbow effects can be obtained in the proscenium which is formed by a series of graceful converging silver arches, setting off the screen in a remarkable fashion.' (*Chronicle and Echo*, 4.5.1936).

Underneath the elegant curve of the balcony were the rear stalls, now boxed in as a result of the tripling of the theatre in the 1970s. Further original curvaceous concealed lighting consoles may be seen in the ceilings of the two later screens.



Fig. 23 Main auditorium in 1936 view NW



Fig. 24 Main auditorium 2001 view NE



Fig. 25 Main auditorium 2001 view SE



Fig. 26 Main auditorium 2001 view NW



Fig. 27 Main auditorium in 1995: concealed lighting (courtesy David Trevor-Jones)



Fig. 28 Main auditorium in 1995: concealed lighting (courtesy David Trevor Jones)



Fig. 29 Leaded lights to exit doors, main auditorium (and elsewhere)



Fig. 30 Bench ends: front stalls (left), Balcony (right)

5.6 Later small auditoria in rear stalls

5.6.1 Screen 1 (left hand side of original rear stalls)

This screen has 213 seats

This screen is accommodated immediately beneath the balcony, and in the ceiling the curve of one of the original concealed lighting units may be seen. The seats seem to be fairly recent replacements, in that they do not have any Art Deco detailing like those in the front stalls, the bench ends being made of plywood. The screen has now been removed, revealing two very large loudspeakers. There are no other significant features.

5.6.2 Screen 2 (right hand side of original rear stalls)

This screen has 275 seats and is similar to screen 1.

5.7 The Compton Organ

5.7.1 The centrally-placed lift and mechanism for the for the organ console survives intact in front of the stage and is flanked by spaces for the orchestra, accessed via doors from a service corridor beneath the stage.

5.7.2 The original Compton was a transfer from the *Princess*, Dagenham, Essex where it was installed in 1932. It therefore had one of the first illuminated consoles of a square type, which was outdated by 1936. Normally it would have had a 6-rank Compton with ABC-style surround, but, probably as a cost-cutting exercise, a 3c/7 was transferred from Dagenham. Two of the three manuals (keyboards) were fully unified in that all the ranks were available on them but the top manual was only a coupler, which meant that stops could not be drawn on it and it could only be used coupled to the other two. When the Compton was reinstalled at the Savoy Northampton, a Compton Melotone (electronic) Unit was added, this being a standard attachment to most Compton theatre pipe organs from 1935 onwards. The console was placed on a lift in the centre of the orchestra pit, still there today. (source: Mr Tony Moss, President of the Cinema Theatre Association. 12.7.01)

5.7.3 Contemporary press accounts provide further details:

The organ console lighting is so blended that it can be made to harmonise and change with the moods of the music of the great Compton organ, another of the theatre's

outstanding features. The mighty Compton organ embodies many new features. Amongst these is the 1936 Compton electrone which lends itself to a variety of tonal effects, apart from its beauty as a solo voice. The electrone enables the most famous carillons, such as those at Bruges and Malines as well as the equally famous Westminster chimes to be reproduced with the utmost fidelity and with a power and purity of tone hitherto unknown in theatre organs

A further feature of the instrument is the wonderful illuminated console... first produced and fully patented by the Compton company. By means of an amazingly clever system of interior lighting this console yields a remarkable combination of colours. The instrument thus attracts the eye as well as the ear. (*Chronicle and Echo* 4.5.1936)

5.7.4 The Compton was opened, as were most ABC organs at that time, by Wilfred Southworth, who remained for two weeks. Southworth was followed by Gordon Spicer (1936), Joaseph Flitcroft (1937-38), Raymond Charles (1938-41), Verden Waugh (1941-45) and Harold Nash (1945-56). After that, the Savoy was visted by the ABC touring team until 1960, when it was removed by Davis of Northampton, organ builders (Tony Moss pers. comm.). The *Chronicle and Echo* of 24.1.2000 suggested the organ was removed in 1953 and sold for £50, although this may be apocryphal.



Fig. 31 The Compton Organ (from opening programme)

5.7.5 To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the ABC Northampton, a fully operational Compton Cinema Organ was restored and reinstalled in the orchestra pit. ABC located the organ formerly installed in the Ritz, Cleethorpes which was now owned by Mark Burgess who agreed to loan it to them for four years. The organ, comprising ten tons of parts, was transported on a convoy of lorries to Northampton and installed over a period of three months. The organ lift was repaired and the old pipe chambers which had been turned into dressing rooms were cleared (ABC 1986). The inaugural concert was held on May 4th 1986 – the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Savoy. The organ was removed in c. 1990.

5.8 North-east end of auditorium block

5.8.1 Stage

The end of the auditorium block is occupied by the stage which rises to the full height of the building. As specified on the deposit plans of 1935, the floor is of narrow oak boards. Ropes and pulleys for the flies are all still in position, but the screen appears to have been removed. Photographs from the Jesus Army Web Site (fig. 32) show a suspended screen partially raised to reveal the loudspeakers behind. Screens are normally perforated to allow the sound to pass through.



Fig. 32 Stage with screen and speakers in position



Fig. 33 View N of the stage



Fig. 34 Stage controls



Fig. 35 Dressing rooms backstage

In a corner of the stage is a small area furnished with an intercom and controls for the electrically operated curtains. Behind the stage is a dock or loading bay accessed through a large door. The upper parts of the stage area, accessed via ladders, were not entered at the time of the survey for reasons of health and safety, but at the northern end of the stage is a gallery labelled 'electrician's gallery' on the deposit plans.

5.8.2 *Rooms on either side of the stage at balcony foyer level*

A staircase on the left-hand (SW) side of the stage leads up to dressing rooms 1-6. The dressing rooms are fairly unexceptional and of a functional nature with little evidence of original fittings, save for the doors and some of the toilet pans and wash hand basins (fig.35). However, the painted signs for the dressing rooms on the brickwork of the corridors and the corridor decoration – particularly in the top level of the stair which provides access to the roof – retains its original cream and green decorative scheme.

Rooms on the right-hand side of the stage are labelled on the deposit plans as organ 'chamber and blower room', presumably rooms containing the organ pipes and

blower which had been converted to dressing rooms in *c.* 1960. They were cleared out again in 1986 for the reinstallation of the organ (see above). The wall between the organ chamber and auditorium is decoratively pierced to allow sound through.

5.8.3 *Basement beneath stage*

The area beneath the stage is occupied by the fuel store, boiler room, organist's room, band room and intake room. A transverse corridor serves these rooms, with doors opening off it into the orchestra pit and organ console lift.



Fig. 36 Boiler room

The fuel store is now occupied by a large fuel oil tank, with level indicator in the boiler room itself. The original boiler has now been removed and replaced with a NECA Maxi, although cast iron apparatus next to it may be original. It is suspected that the original boiler was probably coal-fired, although no evidence for this has emerged as yet. The Cinephoto web site (www.cinephoto.co.uk, accessed 5.10.01) illustrates Nu-way oil burners at the ABC Beckenham, in 1966, but does not state whether or not they are an original feature. A light well at the rear of the cinema (now roofed over with corrugated iron and enclosed with a wall) has an external stair leading down to the boiler room. Access to the boiler room could also be achieved from the transverse service corridor to the other rooms at this level.

An area of recent brick build to the rear of the stage, above the light-well, provides additional storage space, one room containing loudspeakers and other apparatus.

5.9 *Toilets*

Ladies and gentleman's toilets were provided in the rear stalls foyer, balcony foyer, rear balcony foyer and for the front stalls, on either side of stage in the exit corridors. All original fittings have now been removed with the exception of the Shanks porcelain urinals in the Gentlemen's toilets near the right hand exit of the

front stalls. Original toilet pans survive in the stage dressing rooms and in the manager's washroom (see above).

5.10 Fire prevention and fire exits

A newspaper article at the time the cinema was opened reported that

'The Savoy is constructed of steel and concrete and is absolutely fireproof. The operating chamber is built upon the roof of the building. This takes the fire risk occasioned by use of films entirely away from the auditorium and from any places to which patrons have access. The exits are so designed that a full house can be cleared comfortably in two minutes'

(*Chronicle and Echo* 4.5.1936)

Doors at the level of the projection booth, where the fire risk is greatest, are of oak, presumably as a fire prevention measure. Both public and service areas are well-provided with fire exits leading outside via corridors or staircases, in all cases of plain brick. The front of the auditorium is provided with exits on either side of the stage at balcony and stalls level. The rear of the auditorium has exits at stalls foyer, balcony foyer and rear circle levels leading outside via a corner stair. This stair also serves staff accommodation.

6 Plant

6.1 Air Conditioning

The cinema was furnished with a state-of-the-art air conditioning plant, described in glowing tones by the *Chronicle and Echo* (4.5.1936):

Another remarkable feature of the Savoy is its air conditioning plant. Within a few minutes, millions of cubic feet of air can be passed through the theatre at any desired temperature. On hot summer nights, the air in the Savoy can be kept delightfully cool. On bitter winter nights the cinema will be cosy and snug.

The main part of the plant is located at projection room floor level, on the left hand (SW) side of the stage, unfortunately not accessible at the time of the survey. This area is labelled 'plenum room' on the deposit plan and was furnished with a large air intake, also visible on deposit elevation drawings. The system worked by drawing in air which was then washed and heated or cooled, before being blown via ducts through the auditorium. Arthur Northover notes (2001, 3) that 'the plenum [opposite of vacuum] air conditioning unit proved a terrible chore. Every three months the huge tank was drained of the brown nicotine stained water to reveal the walls covered in amber sludge which had to be scraped off and repainted with red oxide'. The 'brown nicotine stained water', however, must surely have resulted from the cleaning of air drawn in from outside which, before the Clean Air Act, was probably very polluted.

A small room opening off the left hand (SW) alcove of the balcony foyer contains further plant for the air conditioning system (fig. 37). Here, there is a large electric motor labelled 'ECC' which is connected to the electricity supply via a wall-mounted control box, labelled 'set pointer at slow before starting' and 'The Acme Electrical Manufacturing Company, Tottenham Ltd'. The control box does not appear to be original. On top of it is an ammeter labelled 'extract' and amperes from 5-20. The large grey electric motor is mounted on a concrete block, and links

via a belt to a pulley wheel mounted to a flywheel. A shaft from the flywheel goes into a very large circular grey metal housing which contains the fan, labelled 'Turner Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning Equipment 121 Victoria Street, London SW1'. From this, a large square section metal duct links to the outside through the brick wall. Another duct then goes into the steel substructure of the balcony. Although this area was not entered for safety reasons, it would seem likely that the ducts lead to grilles beneath the seats, and the large fan sucks the air from the auditorium and out of the building through a duct.



Fig. 37 Air conditioning plant

6.2 Remote Vacuum Cleaning System

In a small room at the right hand (NE) end of the rear stalls foyer (behind the present right hand auditorium), next to the emergency exit, is the remote vacuum cleaning system. This comprises a large cylinder labelled BVC type 106, no 36731 'British Vacuum Cleaner and Engineering Company London'. It is a large cylinder which has pipes which go down to an electric motor, which then joins on to a motor labelled 'Hopkins Induction Motors, North Acton, London W3 stall'. It is a 5hp motor, three phase, 465v, 50 cycles, 1440 rpm. This is connected to the power supply and next to this is a pump which sucks the air through the BVC outfit. Also, on the wall is a label 'Parkin and Hopkinson induction Motors London W3'. This is the switch box. Within the auditorium, are small metal sockets in the skirting, c. 25mm in diameter, closed with a hinged metal flap, which are presumably the sockets for cleaner hoses for the remote system.

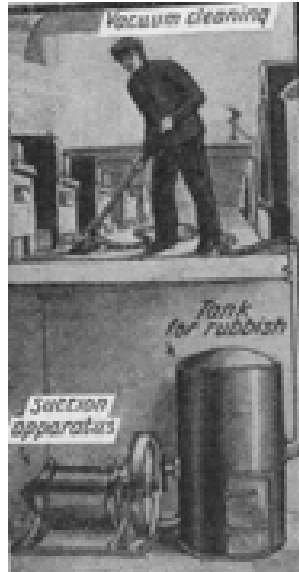


Fig. 39 System illustrated in 1930s Children's encyclopaedia



Fig. 40 The BVC centralised vacuum cleaner plant

According to Arthur Northover, 'the entire cinema including the carpeted rows of seats' was vacuumed after each performance (Northover 2001, 4).

7. Discussion

7.1 The Architect

William Riddell Glen (1884-1950) began his architectural training at the Glasgow School of Art with architects Frank Burnett and Bowson & Carruthers. Glen started in private practice in 1904 with J.A.Campbell and A.D.Hislop. Glen later entered a partnership with a cinema architect A.V.Gardner. After Glen finished the partnership in 1919, he became staff architect for John Maxwell's cinema circuit ABC (Eyles,1993, 29). Notable works of Glen's are the Queen Victoria Memorial School, Dunblane and almost 100 cinematographic theatres across England and Ireland (RIBA Bibliographic Record). It is Glen's interior designs, especially his high and spacious foyers, which have brought him greatest recognition as cinema architect; having an ability to plan and manage fluently interior volume (Gray, 1996, 111). However his exteriors are generally being viewed as 'undemonstrative' in comparison to what became the 'house name' of cinema style, the Odeon Style. (*ibid*)

7.2 British Cinema History

Early cinemas of the 20th century were often converted old shops, the theatres, village halls or anywhere that could house the showing of film including tents set up by travelling showmen (Gray, 1996, 10-14). Significant to the onset of purpose-built cinemas was the Cinematographic Act of 1909. The basis of the act was to ensure a safer environment for the public. The act required that the potential fire hazard of nitrate-based celluloid film was separated from the auditorium by a solid wall and that there must be designated escape areas (Gray, 1996, 22). It had been usual for the projector equipment to stand amongst the audience. It was stipulated that access into the projection room was to be from the open air. The portholes had to be glazed and fitted with fire-proof shutters. The preferred location for the

projection room was over the entrance foyer; this generally became part of the standard design for cinema buildings (Gray, 1996, 22, 23). As a result of the act many cinema/picture houses closed (Gray, 1996, 23).

Despite the new stringent requirements for cinema buildings, they were constructed in increasing numbers from the 1920s onwards. Typically the facades of these rectangular buildings were lavishly decorated in the prevailing styles of the Baroque and Neo-Classical (Richards, 1984,19). The onset of the talking movies by the closing years of the 1920s spurred the heyday of cinema construction during the 1930s as the earlier cinemas were on the whole not economically adaptable for sound (Field, 1974, 107). They were neither large enough to accommodate the increasing trend in cinema going, the installation of ventilation plants, nor the arrival of the Wurlitzer organ by the late 1920s. In addition, the high ceilings and large interior volumes of theatres designed for live performances produced sound reverberation times of two seconds or more, whilst well-designed theatres employed curved, often serrated walls, avoiding parallel walls and right angles that can produce short-path reflections (EB 1999).

In this period of technological advances and cultural changes, it was not long before architects began to look for a suitable new style for their cinema designs (Gray, 1996, 23-24). They followed the Modernists' ideas which disengaged with tradition and argued that the technological culture could not be expressed in anything other than a style reflecting the age. The Modernists' advocated simplicity; elimination of ornament thus no reference to historicism; forms that expressed the structural strength and versatility of modern materials and construction methods of the age; smooth shear surfaces, clean lines and curves. These attributes of the Modernist idiom were advocated greatly by the architect Le Corbusier who was inspired by the period's 'progressive' technology and more specifically the ocean liner, aeroplane and the motorcar, which used selected industrialized materials of geometric proportions. Le Corbusier envisaged that the same precision engineering that created the clean, crisp and continuous smooth surfaces of these machines could be (and was) applied to architecture.

British cinema design at its turning point in the late 1920s-early 1930s was influenced considerably by Modernist German cinema architecture noted by the architect Ernest Wamsley Lewis who had studied there (Gray, 1996, 80). Eric Mendlesohn's UFA Univerum, Berlin, 1928 is considered a primary source of design, particularly the streamlined curves and finned towers. The emergence of these German design elements were best exemplified in the chain of Odeon cinemas in their exciting play of asymmetry, streamlining cleverly integrated with neon lighting defining and accentuating the building's forms. Subsequently the distinctive Odeon style was followed by other cinema circuits bringing the image of the cinema as an identifiable building type (Gray, 1996, 113).

8 Conclusion

The photographic survey and documentary research has shown that the Cannon Cinema, Northampton, survives remarkably intact as one of the few remaining examples of purpose-built 'super cinemas' of the ABC chain in the region. Architecturally, the building is of high quality both internally and externally, reflecting its status as a grade II listed building. Minor damage has occurred to the facade since construction, whilst the main auditorium – despite tripling in the

1970s and redecoration – is largely intact and retains its concealed lighting, regarded as one of the most remarkable features of the building when it closed and integral to the proper ambience (A. Eyles pers. comm.). The foyer has not escaped quite so lightly, the modernisations of the 1970s having removed one transverse staircase, pay booths and other original fittings, ruining an excellent Modernist design and one of the hall marks of the architect, W.R. Glen's style. However, sufficient information has emerged from the research to inform an accurate restoration of the foyer and other areas to their original splendour.

Not only is the building considered to be innovative in relation to its architectural style, but also in terms of provision for fire prevention, means of escape and environmental controls. It is clear from the layout that careful consideration was given to following the requirements of the 1909 Cinematographic Act by locating the projection booth on the roof of the building and introducing fireproof shutters and solid oak doors to provide a barrier to the auditorium. The building is also very well-served with fire exits at all levels, suggesting that ABC's statement that the auditorium could be cleared in minutes was probably no idle boast. The safety and comfort of the audience along with a desire to create an atmosphere of opulence and escapism as part of the picture-going experience was clearly at the forefront of the architect's brief.

English Heritage (1999) has recognised the value of cinema history and has undertaken a study of surviving buildings throughout the country with a view to adding to the 123 already listed and 30 recommended for listing (now accepted in toto), noting that 'many cinemas and former cinema buildings are not only a unique, but a much loved part of our culture' (1999, 3). The restoration of a number of cinemas in London has been granted-aided by English Heritage – including those to be adapted to new uses – and it is suggested that approaches might be made to them to assist with the restoration of the Cannon Northampton. In addition, it is recommended that a watching brief during stripping out would be desirable to ensure that original fabric and lighting scheme remains untouched and any features obscured at the time of the survey may be recorded satisfactorily.

9. Archive

The site archive consists of:

219 colour photographic prints

Photographic index

1 CD ROM containing a selection of photographic images, copies of original photographs and souvenir programme, and digital index

The archive will be deposited with Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record

10. Publication

A short note presenting the results of the project will be submitted to the editor of *Northamptonshire Archaeology* for inclusion in that journal.

11. Acknowledgements

We are particularly grateful to GSS architecture and The Jesus Army Charitable Trust for commissioning what has proved to be a most interesting and rewarding project. Invaluable assistance has been received from Allen Eyles, Tony Moss, Martin Ellison (Northants. Heritage), Odeon Cinemas Head Office (Property and Development Department, Bromley), Mr. G. Arnold, manager of the ABC Hereford and Mr. A. Glen.

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Appendix 1

Cinemas Designed by W.R. Glen

Arbroath, *Palace* 1940 dem
Aston Cross, Birmingham, *Gaiety*, 1939 dem
Bedminster, Bristol, *Rex*, 1940
Birkenhead, *Savoy*, 1938
Birmingham, *Forum*, 1930
Bournemouth, *Westover*, 1937
Bradford, *Ritz*, 1939 dem
Brighton, *Savoy*, 1930
Chatham, *Regent*, 1938
Cheltenham, *Regal* (with L. Norton), 1939 dem.
Chester, *Regal*, 1937
Clapton, *Ritz*, 1939, dem
Coventry, *Empire*, 1933
Croydon, *Savoy*, 1936
Derby, *Regal*, 1938 dem
Dublin, *Adelphi* (with W. Donnelly), 1939
London, Edgware Rd., *Regal* 1938
London, Elephant and Castle, *Elephant and Castle Theatre*, 1934
Exeter, *Savoy*, 1936, dem
Grimsby, *Regal*, 1937
Hackney, *Regal* 1936 dem.
Halifax, *Regal* 1938
Hammersmith, *Regal* 1936
Harrogate, *Regal* 1937 dem
Holloway, *Savoy* 1940
Hounslow, *Regal*, 1937 dem
Ilford, *Regal*, 1937
Knotty Ash, *Regent*, 1938 dem
Leeds, *Ritz*, 1934
Leicester, *Savoy*, 1937
Leigh, *Regal*, 1938
Levenshulme, *Regal*, 1937
Leyton, *Ritz*, 1938
Leytonstone, *Rex*, 1936
Lincoln, *Savoy*, 1936 dem
Liverpool, *Forum*, 1931

Luton, *Savoy*, 1938
Mile End, *Empire* 1939
Muswell Hill, *Ritz*, 1936 dem
Northampton, *Savoy*, 1936 (abc from c1961
Nottingham, *Carlton*, 1939 dem.
Plymouth, *Royal*, 1938
Portsmouth, *Savoy*, 1937
Putney, *Regal*, 1937
Rochdale, *Regal*, with Norton, 1938
Romford, *Ritz*, 1938 dem.
Salisbury, *Regal*, 1937
Southampton, *Forum*, 1935,
Southport *Regal*, 1938
Staines, *Regal*, 1939
Stoke Newington, *Savoy*, 1936,
Streatham, *Regal*, 1938
Sunderland, *Ritz*, 1937
Swindon, *Savoy*, 1937
Teddington, *Savoy*, 1937 dem.
Torquay, *Regal*, 1933, dem
Twickenham, *Regal*, 1939 dem.
Wakefield, *Regal*, 1935
Walham Green, *Regal*, 1935 dem
Walsall, *Savoy*, 1938
Wandsworth, *Savoy*, 1932 dem
Wembley, *Regal*, 1937 dem
Wolverhampton, *Savoy*, 1937
York, *Regal*, 1937, dem

Appendix 2

Photographic Index

Notes:

The main series of photographs is numbered by volume number/sheet number/negative number (00/00/00), reflecting the system used by the University of Leicester AVS photographic archive. Supplementary photographs are numbered using the format #00 etc. All photographs are cross referenced to the plan sheets supplied by GSS architecture.

Photograph number(s)	Number	Plan name	Details
50/54/ 1A/2A/3A/4A/5A/6A/7A	7	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from rear right towards stage.
50/54/ 9A-13A	5	Balcony	Main auditorium: concealed lighting in ceiling.
50/54/ 14A/16A	2	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from the balcony to the stage.
50/54/ 18A/20A/21A/	3	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from balcony level showing right hand side of proscenium arch; decorated grille and both upper and lower seating levels.
50/54/ 22A/23A/25A	3	Balcony	Main auditorium: view overlooking balcony to lower stalls, stage and proscenium arch.
50/54/ 26A/27A/29A	3	Balcony	Main auditorium: right hand side of proscenium arch, showing decorated grille originally concealing organ pipes.
50/54/ 30A/31A/33A	3	Balcony	Main auditorium: view of balcony.
50/54/ 35A	1	Balcony	Main auditorium: view of concealed lighting in ceiling.
50/54/ 36A	1	Balcony	Main auditorium: view of cast iron seat end on balcony.
50/55/ 1A/2A	2	Balcony	Main auditorium: view of cast iron seat end on balcony.
50/55/ 4A-11A	8	Balcony	Art Deco styled stained glass window in exit doors, right of the stage.
50/55/ 12A-19A	8	Top floor. Level 5	Views of projection room.
50/55/ 20A/21A	2	Top floor. Level 5	Skylight ventilator.
50/55/ 22A	1	Top floor. Level 5	Solid oak fire door of projection room.
50/55/ 23A/24A	2	Top floor. Level 5	Rear of projection room switchgear.
50/55/ 25A	1	Top floor. Level 5	Staff room adjacent to main projection room.
50/55/ 26A	1	Top floor. Level 5	Winding room.
50/55/ 27A/28A	2	Balcony	Balcony foyer: showing entrance to toilets.
50/55/ 29A/30A	2	Balcony	Battery room: batteries on standby for emergency power system.
50/55/ 31A/33A/34A	3	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from rear of balcony seating towards the stage.
50/55/ 35A/36A	2	Balcony	Stairs from circle down to circle

			foyer.
50/56/ 1/2	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: view left showing stairs up to balcony.
5056/ 3/4	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: ceiling rose.
50/56/ 5/6/7	3	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Steps leading from circle foyer.
50/56/ 8/9	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	View of steps up to circle foyer.
50/56/ 10/11	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: view of left hand side alcove, now boxed-in.
50/56/ 12/13	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: view right. Doors on left lead up to circle.
50/56/ 14	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Room off link corridor to balcony foyer.
50/56/ 15/16	2	Level 1	Art Deco handrail.
50/56/ 17/18	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Administration room.
50/56/ 19/20	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Staff room.
50/56/ 21/22	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Manager's office on same level as link corridor to circle foyer.
50/56/ 23/24	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Manager's office: washroom off, with original wash hand basin and mirrored vitrolite splash back.
50/56/ 25/26	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Manager's room.
50/56/ 27/28	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Corridor to administration rooms.
50/56/ 29	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: view from circle foyer.

50/56/ 30	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: left hand square arch with balustrade providing view of left hand staircase and main foyer.
50/56/ 31/32	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Left hand staircase, main foyer to landing, view from landing via square arch. (See 50/56/ 30)
50/56/ 33/34	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Link corridor to balcony foyer.
50/56/ 36	2	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: staircase balustrade.
50/56/ 37	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Illuminated 'To Balcony' sign at top of landing in main foyer.
50/57/ 1A/2A/3A	3	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Illuminated 'To Balcony' sign at top of landing in main foyer.
50/57/ 4A/5A	2	Level 1	Main foyer: ceiling roses.
50/57/ 6A/7A	2	Level 1	Main foyer: view of right hand side of entrance showing ceiling rose and right hand pay booth.
50/57/ 8A/11A	2	Level 1	Main foyer: view of small section of exposed mosaic floor.
50/57/ 12A-14A	3	Level 1	Main foyer: view from foyer up left hand staircase towards square arched opening into link corridor.
50/57/ 15A/16A	2	Level 1	View from main foyer towards stalls foyer.
50/57/ 17A/18A	2	Level 1	View from stalls foyer up stairs towards main foyer.
50/57 19A	1	Level 1	Fuse room.
50/57 20A	1	Level 1	Stalls foyer: view right towards later projection booths.
50/5721A	1	Level 1	Stalls foyer: ceiling rose.
50/57 22A/23A	2	Level 1	Main auditorium: view of front of left hand side of rear stalls (now separate screen) showing concealed lighting.
50/57 24A/25	2	Level 1	Main auditorium: view of back of left hand side of rear stalls (now separate screen) showing concealed lighting in ceiling.
50/57 26A	1	Level 1	Staircase balustrade, main foyer down to stalls foyer.
50/57 27A/28A	2	Level 1	Stalls foyer: view left with later projection booth on right.
50/57 29A	1	Level 1	Main auditorium: view from back of right hand side of rear stalls (now separate screen) showing concealed lighting.
50/57 30A	1	Level 1	Main auditorium: view from the front of right hand side of rear stalls.

50/57 31A/32A/33A	3	Level 1	Projection room to ground floor auditoria.
50/57 34A/35A	2	Level 1	Typical door furniture of a non-public area.
50/57 36A	1	Level 1	Typical radiator in foyer.
50/58 1	1	Balcony	Main auditorium: view left of proscenium arch.
50/58 2	1	Level 1	Orchestra pit.
50/58 3	1	Level 1	Lift for organ console.
50/58 4	1	Balcony	Stage.
50/58 5	1	Level 1	Main auditorium: cast iron bench end with geometrical design, typical of seating in front stalls.
50/58 6/7	1	Level 1	Exit doors from balcony, pull handle on corridor side.
50/58 8/9	2	Level 1	Typical 'Exit/Ladies' illuminated sign.
50/58 10/11	2	Level 1	Main auditorium: door furniture of exit doors.
50/58 12-16	2	Balcony	Stage gear.
50/58 17-21/23	6	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from the stage back towards the balcony. Note: rear stalls beneath balcony now occupied by separate screen.
50/58 25	1	Balcony	Main auditorium: fish eye view from stage.
50/59 1/3/7	3		Exterior: front of foyer block.
50/59 9/11	2	Balcony	View from rear of main auditorium looking towards stage.
50/59 13/15/16/18	4	Balcony	Main auditorium: view from stage looking to rear of upper seating.
50/60 2/4/5/7/9/11/13	7		Exterior: view of front of the foyer block. (Principal elevation) 2001
#3/4	2	Top floor-level 5	Projection room: rectifier
#5/6	2	Top floor-level 5	Projection room: view left to switch gear.
#7	1	Top floor-level 5	Projection room: right hand end of rear wall with bench.
#8	1	Top floor-level 5	Projection room: left hand side showing shutters into auditorium.
#14	1	Top floor-level 5	Typical oak fireproof door at projection level.
#16	1	Balcony	Sign on stage.
#17	1	Level 1	Sign showing way to dressing rooms 1-6.
#20	1	Balcony	Wash hand basin in a dressing room.
#22/23	2	Balcony	Backstage: dressing room 6
#24/25	2	Balcony	Backstage: toilet
#26/27	2	Balcony	Backstage: stairwell leading to roof with original cream and green colour scheme.
#29/30/31	3	Level 1	Exterior: rear of foyer block.
#32	1	Level 1	View showing right side of building looking towards Abington Street.

#33/36	2	Level 1	Exterior: rear of auditorium block showing later lean-to structure over boiler room light well.
#34/35	2	Level 1	Exterior: left hand side of auditorium block.
#E	1	Level 1	Rear view of cinema.
#7A/8A/9A/10A	4	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Plenum air conditioning motor and fan.
#12A	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Steel sub structure to balcony.
#13A	1	Mezzanine-level 3	Shelf for storage of bulbs.
#14A	1	Mezzanine-level 3	Staff room.
#15A	1	Mezzanine-level 3	Staff room.
#16A	1	Mezzanine-level 3	Maintenance storeroom.
#17A/18A	2	Mezzanine-level 3	Winding room.
#20A	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: right hand side, doors to possible kitchen/ 'fridge' room.
#21A	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Main auditorium: vacuum cleaner point.
#22A	1	Mezzanine-level 3	Letter room: shelves for storing 'letters' for film titles on front of cinema.
#23A/24A	2	Level 1	Timber staircase to pay booths.
#25A	1	Level 1	BVC central vacuum cleaner cylinder.
#27A/28A/29A	3	Level 1	BVC central vacuum cleaner motor.
#31A	1	Level 1	Main foyer: view of right hand side pay kiosk.
#32A	1	Floor plan between stalls and balcony.	Circle foyer: left hand side, public stairs up to rear balcony, ladies' toilet and boxed-in area to right of picture.
#33A	1	Level 1	Gents' urinals.
#34A	1	Level 1	Stage equipment.
#35A	1	Level 1	Electrical switches on the stage.
#36A	1	Basement-level 0	Boiler room.
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Appendix 3

Selection of photographs and other material on CDROM

Main Auditorium	
50-54-29a	Main Auditorium: right hand side of proscenium arch showing decorative grille originally concealing organ pipes
50-54-33a	Main auditorium: view of balcony
50-54-35a	Main auditorium: view of concealed lighting in ceiling
50-54-36a	Main auditorium: view of cast iron seat end on balcony
	Main auditorium: view of leaded windows on balcony exit doors on the left hand side of the proscenium arch
50-57-24a	Main auditorium: view from the back of left hand side of rear stalls (now separate screen) showing concealed lighting in ceiling
50-57-29a	Main auditorium: view from the back of right hand side of rear stalls (now separate screen) showing concealed lighting in ceiling
50-58-23	Main auditorium: view from the stage back towards the balcony. Note rear stalls beneath balcony now occupied by separate screens.
50-58-25	Main auditorium: fish eye view from stage
50-58-5	Main auditorium: cast iron bench end with geometric design, typical of seating in front stalls.
50-58-6	Exit doors from balcony, pull handle on corridor side
50-58-9	Main auditorium: proscenium arch from balcony
7	Main auditorium: proscenium arch 1995 (David Trevor-Jones collection)
8	Main auditorium: right hand side of proscenium arch 1995 (David Trevor-Jones collection)
9	Main auditorium: proscenium arch 1995 (David Trevor-Jones collection)
Cannon1	Main auditorium: proscenium arch with curtains open, showing screen (JA web site)
JApic	Main auditorium: front stalls and stage (JA web site)
JApic3	Main auditorium: screen raised showing speakers (JA web site)
JAPic4	Main auditorium: front stalls and stage (JA web site)
Backstage	
#22	Backstage: Dressing room 6
#24	Backstage: toilet (as #25)
#25	Backstage: toilet (as #24)
#27	Backstage: stairwell leading to roof with original cream and green colour scheme
Battery room	
50-55-29a	Battery room: batteries on stand for emergency power system
Exterior	
#31	Exterior: rear of foyer block
#35	Exterior: left hand side of auditorium block
#36	Exterior: rear of auditorium block showing later lean-to structure over boiler room lightwell
1	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) on opening day, May 4 1936. Eyles collection
2a	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 1946. Eyles collection
2b	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 1975
2c	Exterior: aerial view 1970
5	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 1946
6	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 1964 (Eyles collection)

50-60-5	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 2001
50-60-7	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) 2001
Ed1	Exterior: view of the front of the foyer block (principal elevation) during construction 1935-6
Ed3	Exterior and Foyer: 1967
Ed5	Exterior: aerial view 1964
Ed6	Exterior: 1962
Foyers and Corridors	
#20a	Circle foyer: right hand side, doors to possible kitchen/'fridge' room
#32	Circle foyer: left hand side, public stairs up to rear balcony, ladies' toilet and boxed-in area to right of picture (see also No 4)
3	Main foyer: ('The Ideal Kinema', supplement to 'Kinematograph weekly' May 14 1936)
4	Circle foyer and main auditorium, 1936; see also #32
50-55-27a	Balcony foyer showing entrance to toilets
50-55-35a	Stairs from Circle down to Circle foyer
50-56-1	Circle foyer: view left, showing stairs up to balcony.
50-56-10	Circle foyer: left-hand alcove, now boxed-in.
50-56-13	Circle foyer: view right. Doors on left lead up to circle
50-56-29	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: View from circle foyer.
50-56-30	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: left hand square arch with balustrade providing view of left hand staircase and main foyer
50-56-32	Left hand staircase, main foyer to landing, view from landing via square arch (see 50-56-30)
50-56-36	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: staircase balustrade
50-56-4	Circle Foyer: ceiling rose and light
50-56-7	Circle Foyer: view up stairs into auditorium
50-56-9	Circle foyer/main foyer landing link corridor: view towards circle foyer
50-57-14a	View from foyer up left hand staircase towards square arched opening into link corridor
50-57-15a	View from foyer down stairs towards stalls foyer
50-57-17a	View from stalls foyer up stairs towards main foyer
50-57-1a	Illuminated sign [To Bal]cony at top of landing in main foyer
50-57-20a	Stalls Foyer: view right towards later projection booths
50-57-21a	Stalls Foyer: ceiling
50-57-26a	Staircase balustrade - main foyer down to stalls foyer
50-57-27a	Stalls foyer: view left with later projection booth on right
50-57-3a	Main foyer: right hand staircase up to landing with 'To balcony' sign
50-57-4a	Main Foyer: ceiling roses
50-57-7a	Main foyer: view to right hand side
50-57-8a	Main Foyer: small section of exposed mosaic floor
50-58-8	Typical Exit s/ladies illuminated sign
Ed4	Main Foyer: anniversary cake ABC minors 1964
Staff rooms	
#22a	Mezzanine Level 3: shelves for storing 'letters' for film names on front of cinema
50-56-22	Managers office on same level as link corridor to circle foyer
50-56-23	Manager's office: washroom off, with original wash hand basin and mirrored vitrolite splash back.
Parallels	
AA_Portsmouth_foyer	View of Portsmouth ABC, staircase from balcony corridor down into main foyer. Note scalloped decoration to ceiling
AA_Swindon_then	View of Swindon ABC facade: note similarity of decoration on doors to ABC Northampton
AA_Wakefield_then	View of Regal Wakefield: note similarity of decoration on doors to ABC Northampton

Plant	
#25	BVC central vacuum cleaner cylinder
#29a	BVC central vacuum cleaner motor
#36a	Boiler room
#7a	Plenum air conditioning motor and fan
#10	Air conditioning motor
Projection room	
#3	Rectifier
#5	View left to switch gear
#7	Right hand end of rear wall with bench
#8	Left hand side showing shutters into auditorium
50-55-15a	View towards left
50-55-18a	View towards right
50-55-21a	Skylight ventilator
50-55-22a	Oak door to projection room
Cannon3-000121-4b-33	View of projection room towards left with projector in situ (JA website)



Fig. 41 Deposit plan: south-east elevation NRO Y327



Fig. 42 Deposit plan, principal elevation NRO Y327

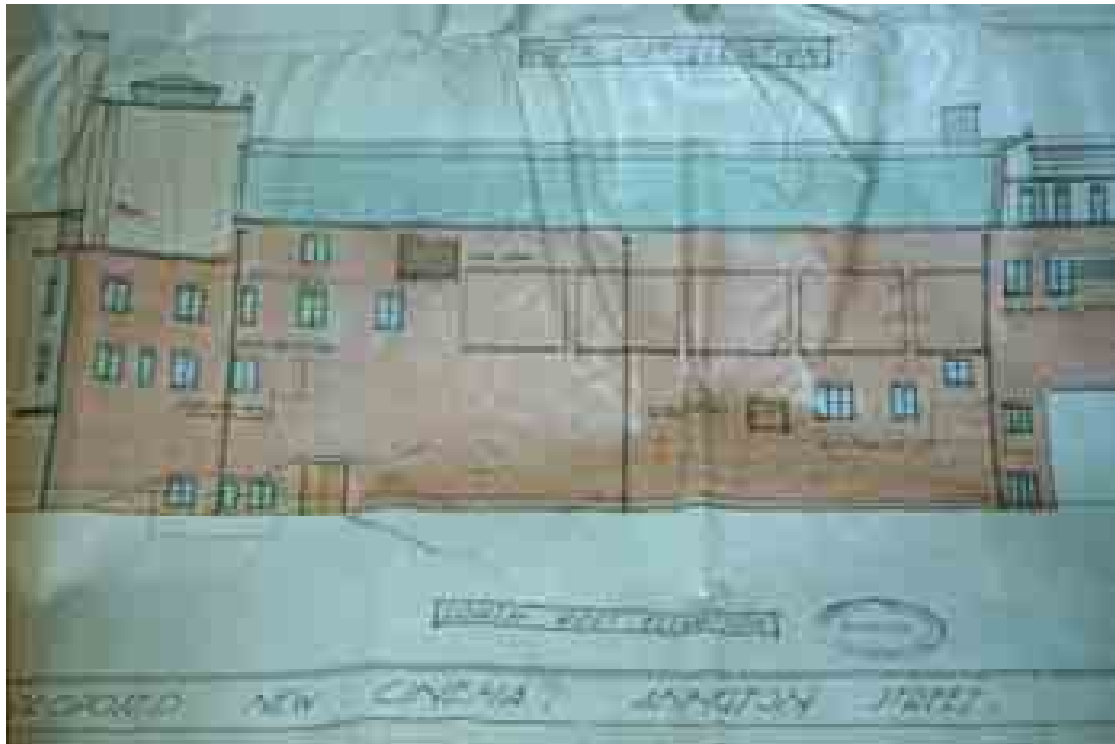


Fig. 43 Deposit plan: south-west elevation NRO Y327

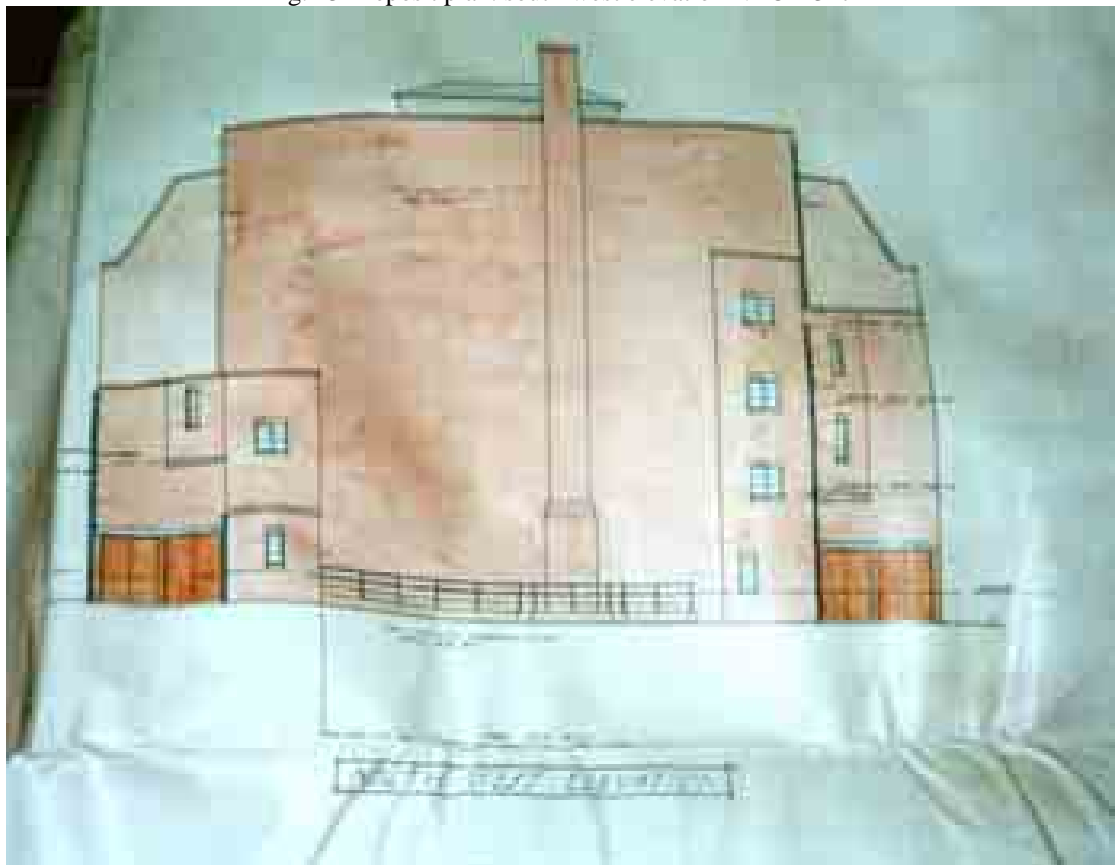


Fig. 44 Deposit plans: north-west elevation NRO Y327

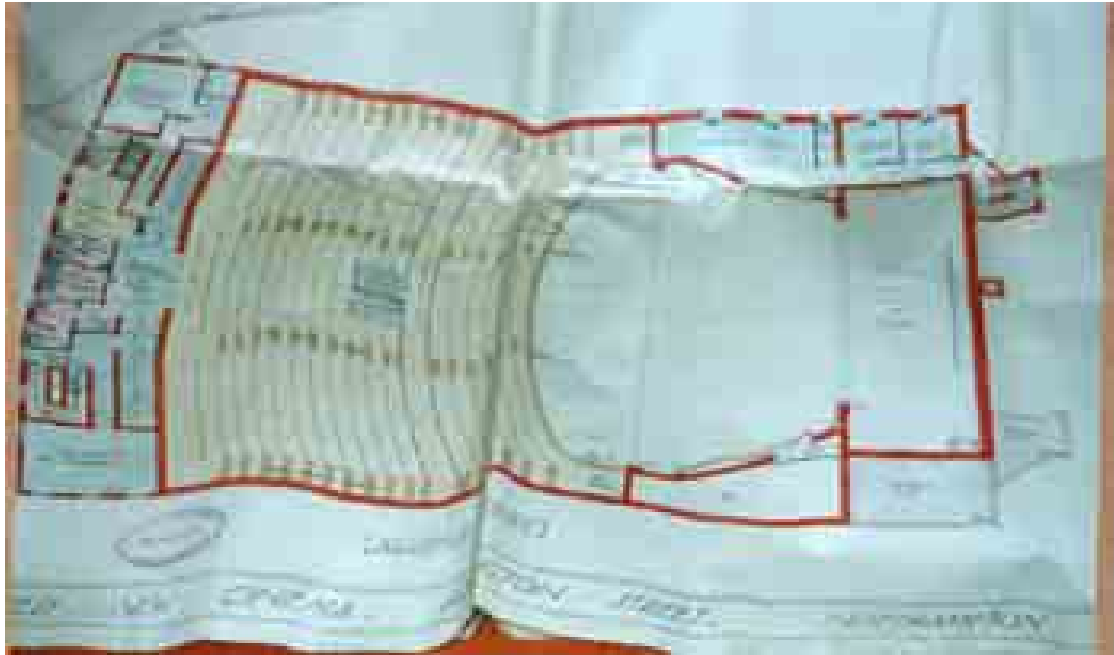


Fig. 45 Deposit plans: Balcony plan NRO Y327

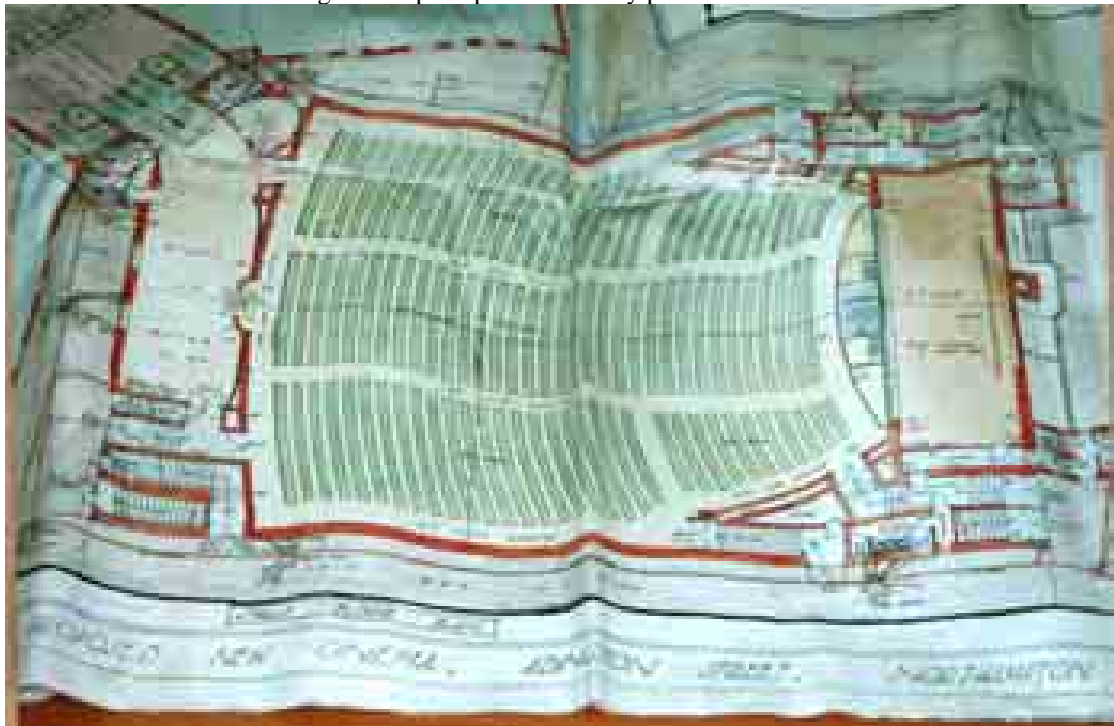


Fig. 46 Deposit plans: stalls floor plan NRO Y327



Fig. 47 Deposit plan: projection room floor level NRO Y327

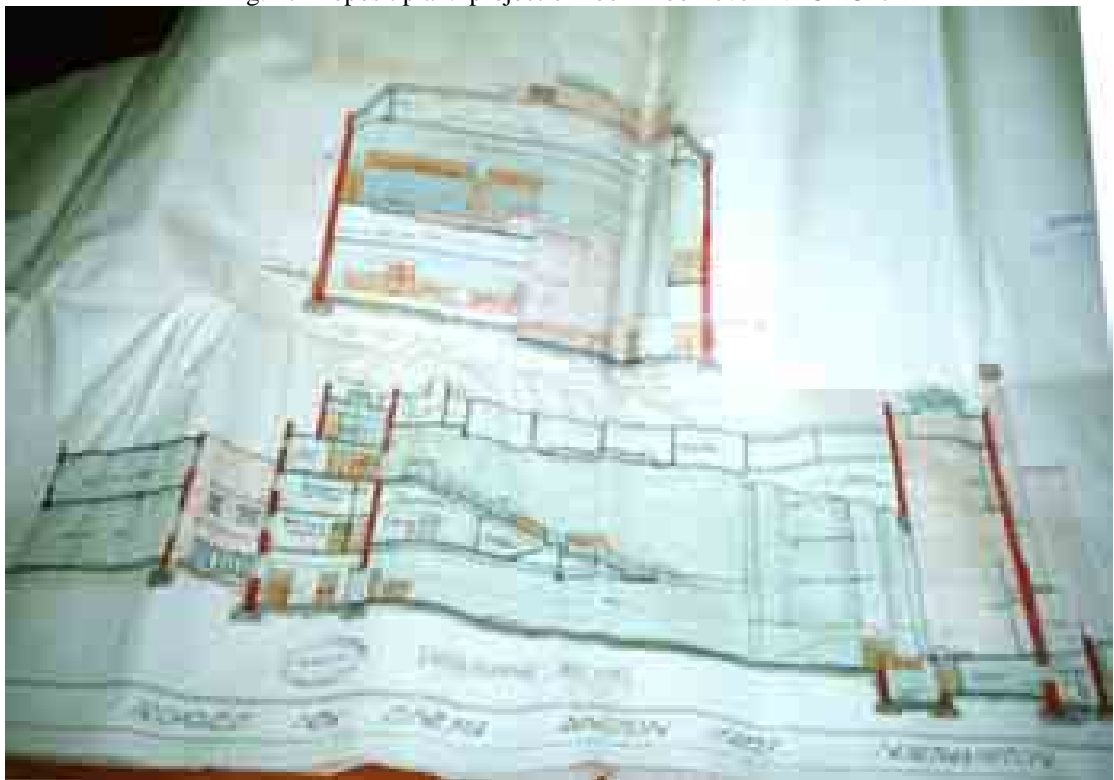


Fig. 48 Deposit plans: longitudinal section NRO Y327



Fig. 49 Deposit plans: main roof plan NRO Y327

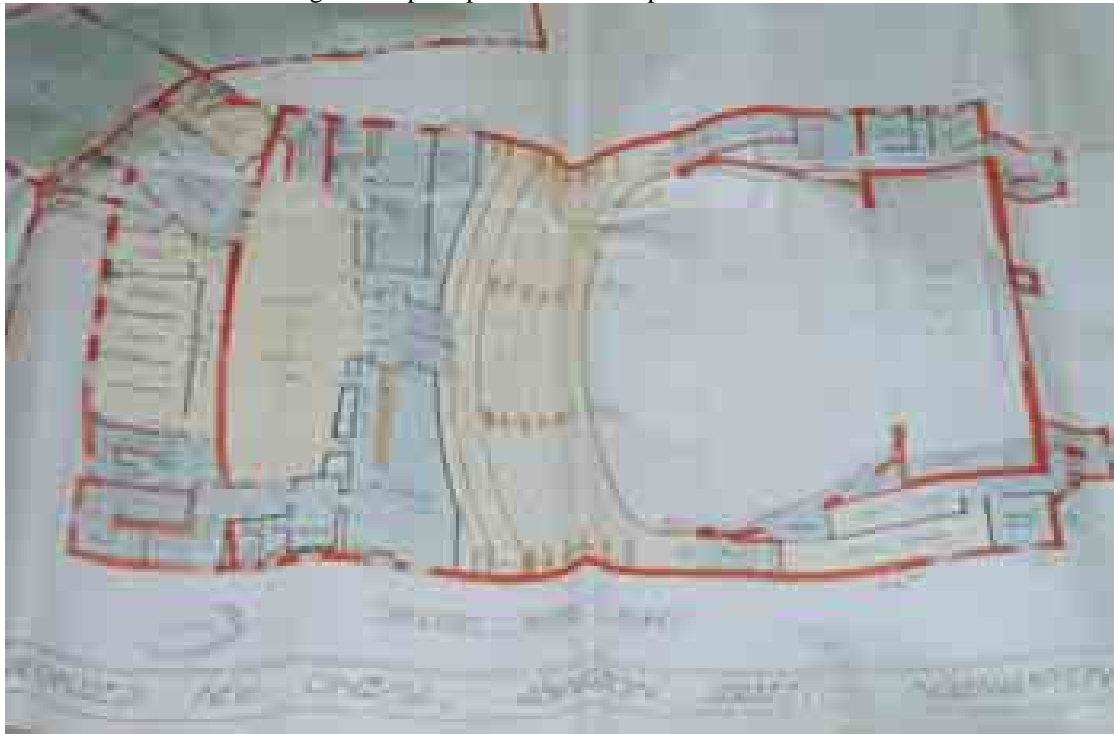


Fig. 50 Deposit plans: balcony foyer level NRO Y327

- Fig. 51 Ground floor plan (GSS Architecture)
- Fig. 52 Floor plan between stalls and balcony (GSS Architecture)
- Fig. 53 Balcony plan. (GSS Architecture)
- Fig. 54 Elevations (GSS Architecture)
- Fig. 55 Cross section of balcony (GSS Architecture)
- Fig. 56 Levels 0, 3 and 5 plans. (GSS Architecture)