

THEATRE: *Hulme Hippodrome***Listed:** Grade II**Address:** Preston Street, Hulme, Greater Manchester M15 5EU**Local Authority:**

Manchester City Council

City Centre Group, Room 7034

Planning Regeneration Division, PO Box 463, Town Hall Extension

Manchester M60 3NY

Tel: 016 1234 4556

Email: k.borland@manchester.gov.ukwww.manchester.gov.uk**Current Freehold Owner:** Gilbert Deya Ministries**Current Leasehold Owner:** Gilbert Deya Ministries**Current Operator/Manager:** None**Local Contact:** Ms Kate Borland, Buildings at Risk Officer, Manchester City Council Tel: 016 1234 4556Email: k.borland@manchester.gov.uk**The Theatres Trust Contact:** Suzanne McDougall. Tel 020 7836 8591Email: Suzanne.mcdougall@theatrust.org.uk

Original theatre architect(s): 1901: J J Alley**Building Description**

The *Hulme Hippodrome* was built in 1901 and is situated alongside the *Hulme Playhouse* (1902). Both theatres were built by the same architect and originally connected by an arcade which was flanked by the Broadhead Circuit offices. It opened as the *Grand Junction Theatre and Floral Hall*, originally seating 3,000 – today it would seat around 2,000. Internally it had a magnificent auditorium, with two galleries and a proscenium arch in gilded Rococo plasterwork. The balconies were supported by iron columns with foliated capitals. The main ceiling was covered and decorated with festoons at the sides and panelled at the centre. The proscenium was flanked by giant fluted Ionic columns, with an enriched straight entablature and a large central cartouche supported by putti. Externally, the building is constructed of brick with decorative banded string courses.

Theatre Use

The *Hulme Hippodrome* was last used as a theatre in the late 1960s. It was then used for bingo from the mid 1970s. In 1987 a floor was inserted into the Floral Hall to form a snooker club and lounge bar and the auditorium used for bingo. In 1999 an Evangelist group called the Gilbert Dega Ministries bought the building and currently use the foyer of the theatre, mothballing the auditorium and Floral Hall. The building is in fair condition.

Occupancy: Vacant.**Building Location**

The *Hippodrome* is situated alongside the *Hulme Playhouse* and both are in an area targeted for regeneration. The area has been substantially redeveloped in the last 20 years and is highly populated with direct road links into central Manchester.

Risks

The auditorium of the theatre remains vacant, deteriorating slowly and effectively 'mothballed'. There is currently no Friends or pressure group but Manchester City Council is also looking to ways in which the *Hippodrome* can be brought back into proper use. The theatre is also on Manchester City Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

THEATRE: *Hulme Playhouse***Listed:** Grade II**Address:** Warwick Street, Hulme, Greater Manchester M15 5EU**Local Authority:**

Manchester City Council

City Centre Group, Room 7034

Planning Regeneration Division, PO Box 463, Town Hall Extension

Manchester M60 3NY

Tel: 016 1234 4556

Email: k.borland@manchester.gov.ukwww.manchester.gov.uk**Current Freehold Owner:** Northern Estates**Current Leasehold Owner:** Vacant**Current Operator/Manager:** None**Local Contact:** Ms Kate Borland, Buildings at Risk Officer, Manchester City Council Tel: 016 1234 4556Email: k.borland@manchester.gov.uk**The Theatres Trust Contact:** Suzanne McDougall. Tel 020 7836 8591Email: Suzanne.mcdougall@theatrust.org.uk

Original theatre architect(s): 1902: J J Alley**Building Description**

The *Hulme Playhouse* was built in 1902 and situated alongside the *Hulme Hippodrome* (1901). It opened as the *Hippodrome*, changing its name several times, finally becoming the *Playhouse* in 1951. Originally seating 3,000, today it would seat around 1,500. The design of the auditorium is very similar to that of the *Hippodrome*, with two straight balconies, the front upper balcony set well back from the one below; however, the upper balcony also has slips which run along the side walls directly to the proscenium. Iron columns support the balconies and their slips. The plasterwork is Baroque in style with large shell motifs between trophies of musical instruments and the capitals are of stiff-leaf Gothic foliage with polygonal tops. A lozenge-shaped panel decorates the ceiling. The proscenium is framed by giant fluted Ionic demi-columns supporting a straight entablature with a trophy of arms above. Externally, the building is constructed of brick with decorative banded string courses.

Theatre Use

The *Hulme Playhouse* was last used as a theatre in the late 1950s. From 1956-1987 it was used by the BBC as a recording studio for radio and television. In 1990 the theatre was converted into the Nia Centre, a middle scale touring venue for promotion and production of culturally diverse programmes of drama, music and dance. The stalls floor was flattened to accommodate 700 or 950 standing. Workshops and other additional uses were accommodated backstage. The many demands made on space by this multiple use led to alterations including a loss of stage depth and restrictions in sightlines from parts of the house. The Nia Centre has been closed since 2000.

Occupancy: Vacant**Building Location**

The *Hulme Playhouse* is situated alongside the *Hippodrome* and both are in an area targeted for regeneration. The area has been substantially redeveloped in the last 20 years and is highly populated with direct road links into central Manchester.

Risks

The *Hulme Playhouse* is currently being marketed for a user but continues to stand empty. It is in fair condition but continues to deteriorate. With no potential user, its future remains uncertain. There is currently no Friends or pressure group but Manchester City Council is looking to ways in which the *Playhouse* can be brought back into proper use. The theatre is also on Manchester City Council's Buildings at Risk Register.