

THEATRE: *Plymouth Palace***Listed:** Grade II***Address:** 121-123 Union Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3NB**Local Authority:**

Planning Policy, Plymouth City Council

Civic Centre

Plymouth PL1 2AA

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Email: john.salvatore@plymouth.gov.ukwww.plymouth.gov.uk**Current Freehold Owner:** Mr Manooch Bahamanzadeh**Current Leasehold Owner:** Vacant**Current Operator/Manager:** None**Local Contacts:** John Salvatore, Conservation OfficerEmail: john.salvatore@plymouth.gov.uk**The Theatres Trust Contact:** Suzanne McDougall. Tel 020 7836 8591Email: Suzanne.mcdougall@theatrust.org.uk

Original theatre architect(s): 1898: Wimperis & Arber**Building Description**

The *Palace* opened in 1898 as a music hall, forming part of a development which included the adjoining Grand Western Hotel. Following a fire in 1900 it was rebuilt internally to include an intimate auditorium which seated around 1,600 with two deep balconies that were decorated with rich plasterwork incorporating military motifs. A curious feature were large boxes flanking each side of the proscenium at dress circle level that had canopies with two projecting ship lanterns. The theatre also had a domed ceiling and uniquely the stalls were crossed by a tunnel. The building still retains these internal features along with a terracotta façade which is highly elaborate in Flemish Renaissance style with the central entrance bay surmounted by a Flemish gable with two statues of Spanish soldiers on protecting brackets. There are three large arched windows between Ionic demi-columns in the piano nobile, flanked in the end bays by semi-circular panels of coloured tiles depicting scenes of the Spanish Armada. There is also much Art Nouveau decorative detail, e.g. on the frieze above the first floor windows, and in the panels below the windows.

Theatre Use

The *Palace* was last used as a theatre in 1981, and theatrical activity was then concentrated at the *Theatre Royal* (opened 1982). Since 1983 it has been leased to a nightclub operator. Externally it is in a poor condition and has been closed since 2006.

Occupancy: Vacant.**Building Location**

The *Plymouth Palace* is not in a central location, but is adjacent to an area targeted for regeneration.

Risks

The building remains empty, unsecured and unused. It is located in an area known for vandalism and the condition of the building is not being maintained. The Millfields Community Economic Development Trust has an interest in the long-term use and operation of the building and its regeneration. Plymouth could lose its only highly graded listed Victorian theatre.