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Specialists in Traditional Lime, Heritage and Fibrous Plasterwork

FIS
CONTRACTORS
AWARDS 2025
PROJECT OF THE YEAR



PROJECT: **BRADFORD LIVE**

FOREWORD



“Over the last four decades I have had the pleasure to lead a team of dedicated and talented craftsmen, working alongside them on the restoration of some of the most magnificent, historic buildings throughout the country.”

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As Managing Director of Ornate Interiors, I'm incredibly proud to share this special moment in our company's journey. Being honoured in the **Heritage Plastering category**, sponsored by **Go Interiors**, and receiving the overall **Project of the Year** award, sponsored by **Minster**, at the **FIS (Finishes and Interiors Sector) annual awards 2025**, is an achievement that means the world to us.

Restoring a beloved but derelict building is more than just a construction project, it's a journey of preservation, revitalisation and community engagement. Whether it's a historic home, a cherished public space, or an architectural landmark, bringing a neglected structure back to life requires vision, dedication and respect for its past.

This restoration was not just about bricks and mortar; it was about honouring the building's history while ensuring its future. It was about breathing new life into forgotten spaces and reconnecting them with the people who cherish them.

For the last two decades this project faced many challenges but has ultimately been created into something that balances tradition with modern needs. Craftsmanship has blended with innovation to ensure the building stands proudly for generations to come.

The judges commented: “This project not only represents an exceptional technical achievement but revitalised a historic building which had stood derelict for two decades.”

To see our team's dedication and craftsmanship recognised in this way is truly humbling. This book is a celebration of that work and a heartfelt thank you to everyone in our team who helped make it possible and the FIS for championing excellence across our industry.

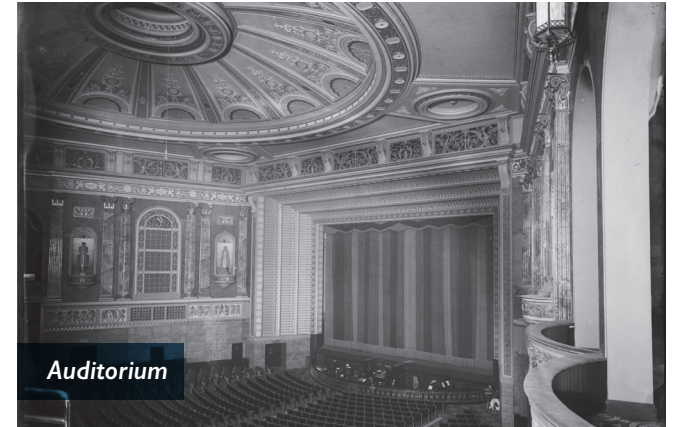
Ronnie Clifford
Managing Director



THE DAWN OF THE SUPER CINEMA



Ballroom



Auditorium



Event Spaces

The 1920s and 1930s saw the boom of the Super Cinema. This was the golden age for cinema throughout Great Britain and introduced the “talkies”.

But these were more than just cinemas, they incorporated cinema screens, theatre stages, restaurants, ballrooms and areas for pampering.

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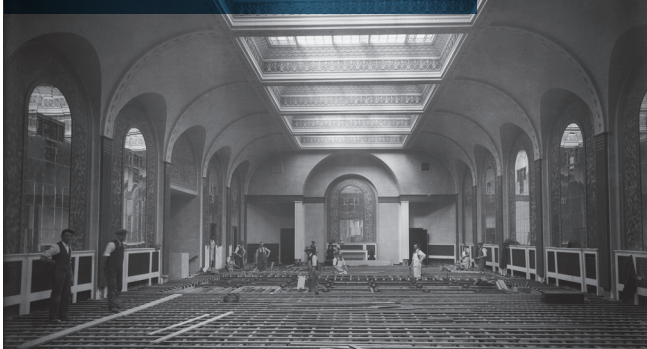
The term “Super Cinema” conjures up images of the romance and glamour associated with the silver screen and reflected Britain’s love for film. With opulent lobbies, marble floors, lavish auditoriums, intricate plasterwork, chandeliers, sweeping staircases and plush seating these were surely designed for the elite. But these architectural places of fantasy were also affordable allowing all classes to experience their grandeur.

“The golden age of the Super Cinema reflected Britain’s love for film and offered a glamorous escape from reality.”

Construction of the New Victoria Restaurant



Laying the New Victoria Ballroom floor



William Illingworth

Yorkshire born architect, William Illingworth, began his career in Bradford in 1894. Following his employment at the Bradford City Architect's Office, between 1898 to 1902, he then established his own practice.

He was recognised for his work on a number of picture houses and cinemas in the North of England, the most reputable being **The New Victoria Theatre in Bradford**, which he designed in an Italian Renaissance style.

THE ARCHITECT AND THE CONTRACTOR

McLaughlin and Harvey

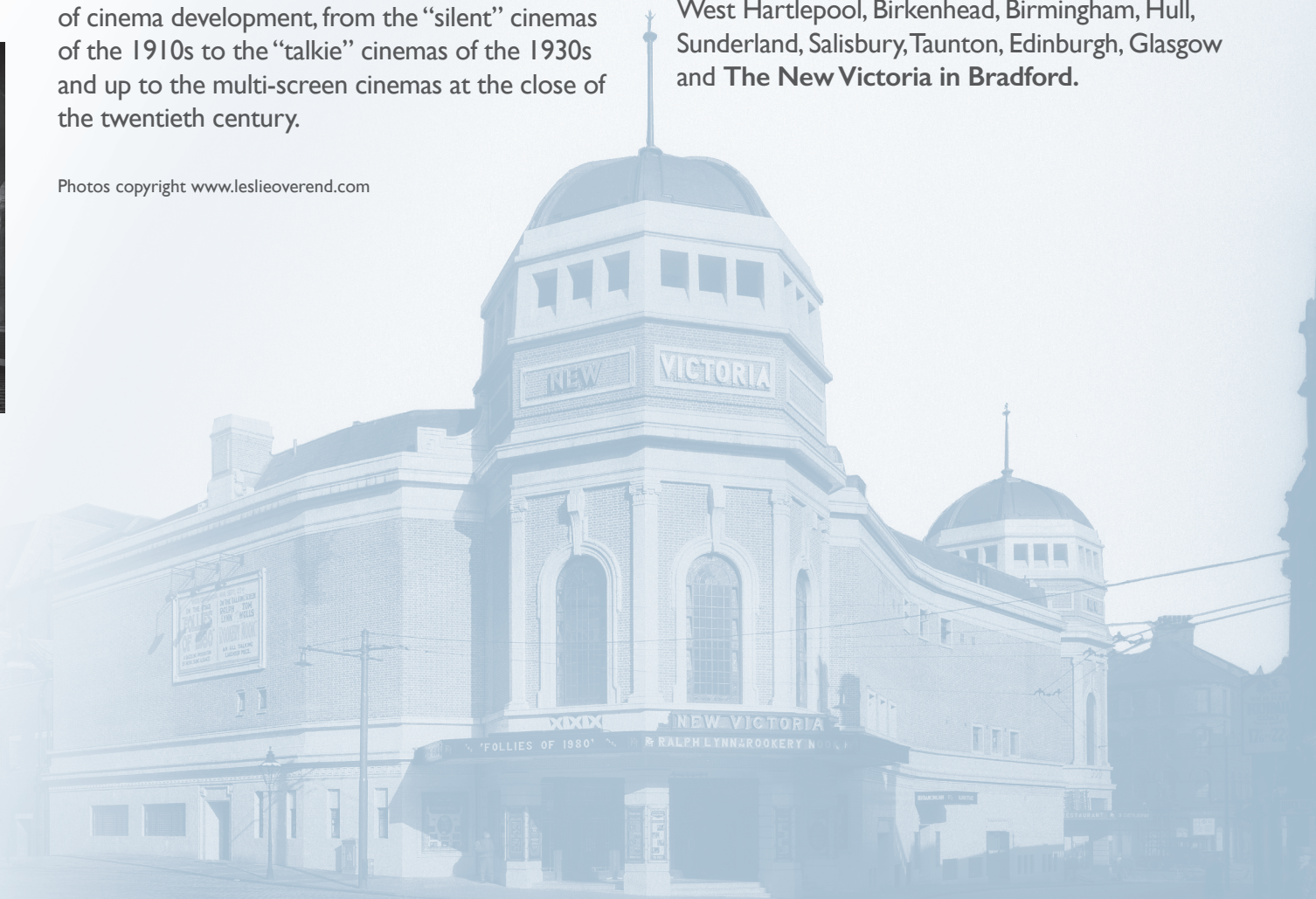
In 1853, Henry McLaughlin and William Harvey, establish McLaughlin and Harvey as builders and contractors in Belfast. In 1905 they set up their office in London and expanded their works throughout the British Isles.

They established a unique record of building theatres and cinemas covering one hundred years of cinema development, from the “silent” cinemas of the 1910s to the “talkie” cinemas of the 1930s and up to the multi-screen cinemas at the close of the twentieth century.

McLaughlin and Harvey were involved with over sixty cinemas for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres (PCT) and the Gaumont British Picture Corporation, which took over PCT in 1929

In addition to the locations in London, extensive cinema work was completed at Liverpool, Nottingham, Walsall, Axminster, Brighton, Bristol, Portsmouth, Redditch, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, West Hartlepool, Birkenhead, Birmingham, Hull, Sunderland, Salisbury, Taunton, Edinburgh, Glasgow and **The New Victoria in Bradford**.

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THE NEW VICTORIA, BRADFORD



New Victoria circa 1945

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Built on the site of a former brewery the New Victoria cinema/theatre opened in September 1930.

It is said to have employed around 500 local people to build it at a cost of £250,000.

The New Victoria had a theatre auditorium, restaurant, café and ballroom and was designed in an Italian Renaissance style.

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Lavish Interiors



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“ **The distinctive domes of the New Victoria were designed to complement those on the neighbouring Alhambra Theatre to intentionally create a visually impressive and distinctive domed vista.** ”

It was built for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres (PCT) and Gaumont British Theatres.

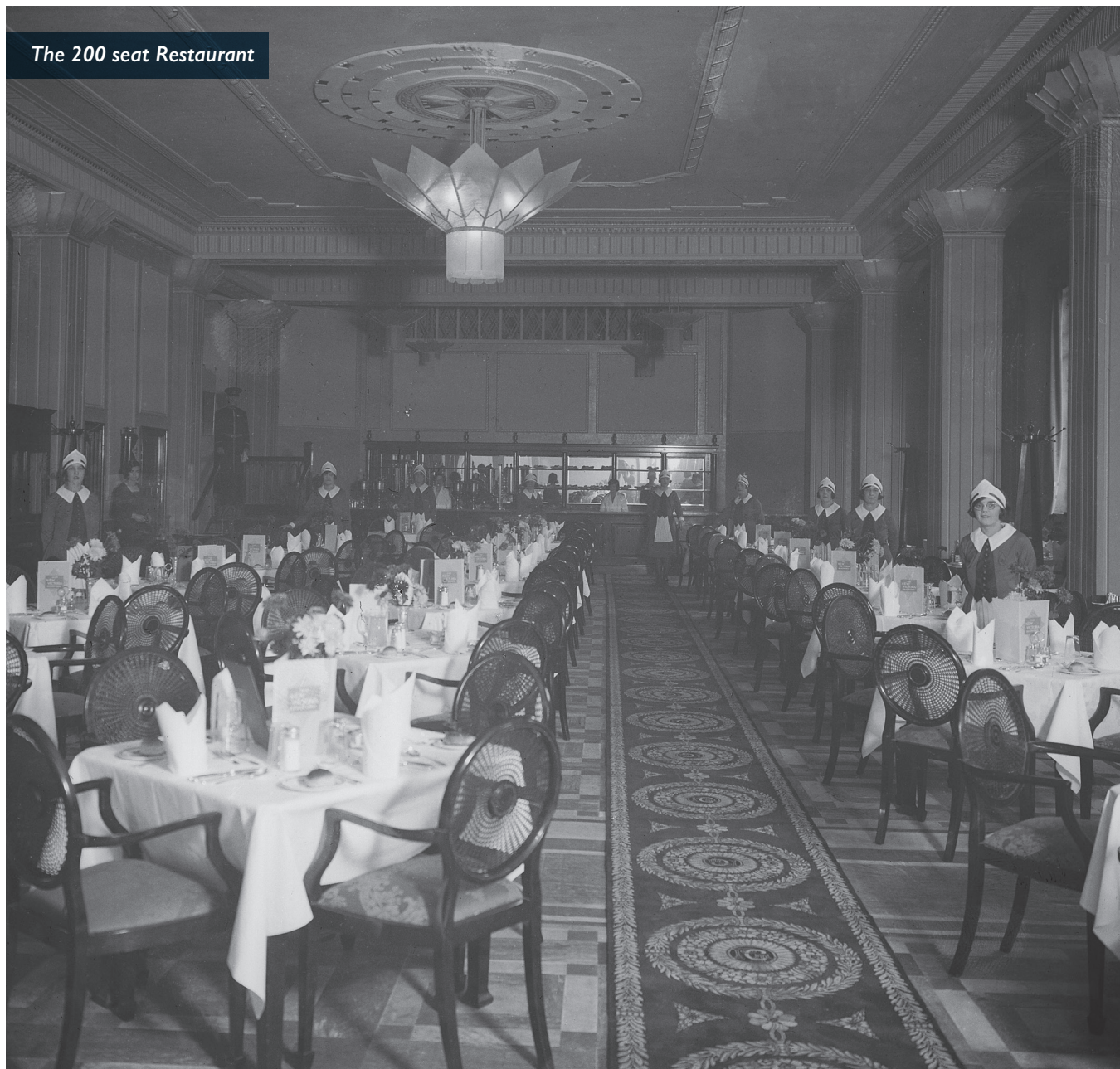
The third largest super cinema in Britain at the time of its opening and the first specifically built for talking cinema.

The cinema was renamed in the 1950s to The Gaumont and began hosting live music events, attracting prominent bands like The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

In the 1960s, The Rank Organisation, converted the building into a cinema, named The Odeon, and a bingo hall.

The New Victoria Ballroom closed for two decades before itself being reopened as a cinema.

Further adaptations were made to the building hiding its once lavish interiors and in June 2000 it closed its doors, its future uncertain.



THE DECLINE OF THE BRADFORD ODEON



Collapsed ceiling rose in Lobby



Damaged mouldings in Cabaret Bar



Water damaged mouldings

Since 2000 the building remained unused. The building surprisingly had never received listed status so was not protected by any official bodies.

In the early 2000s the owners had applied to Bradford Council Planning Department to demolish the building with plans for new offices and car parking. This plan was challenged by members of the public.



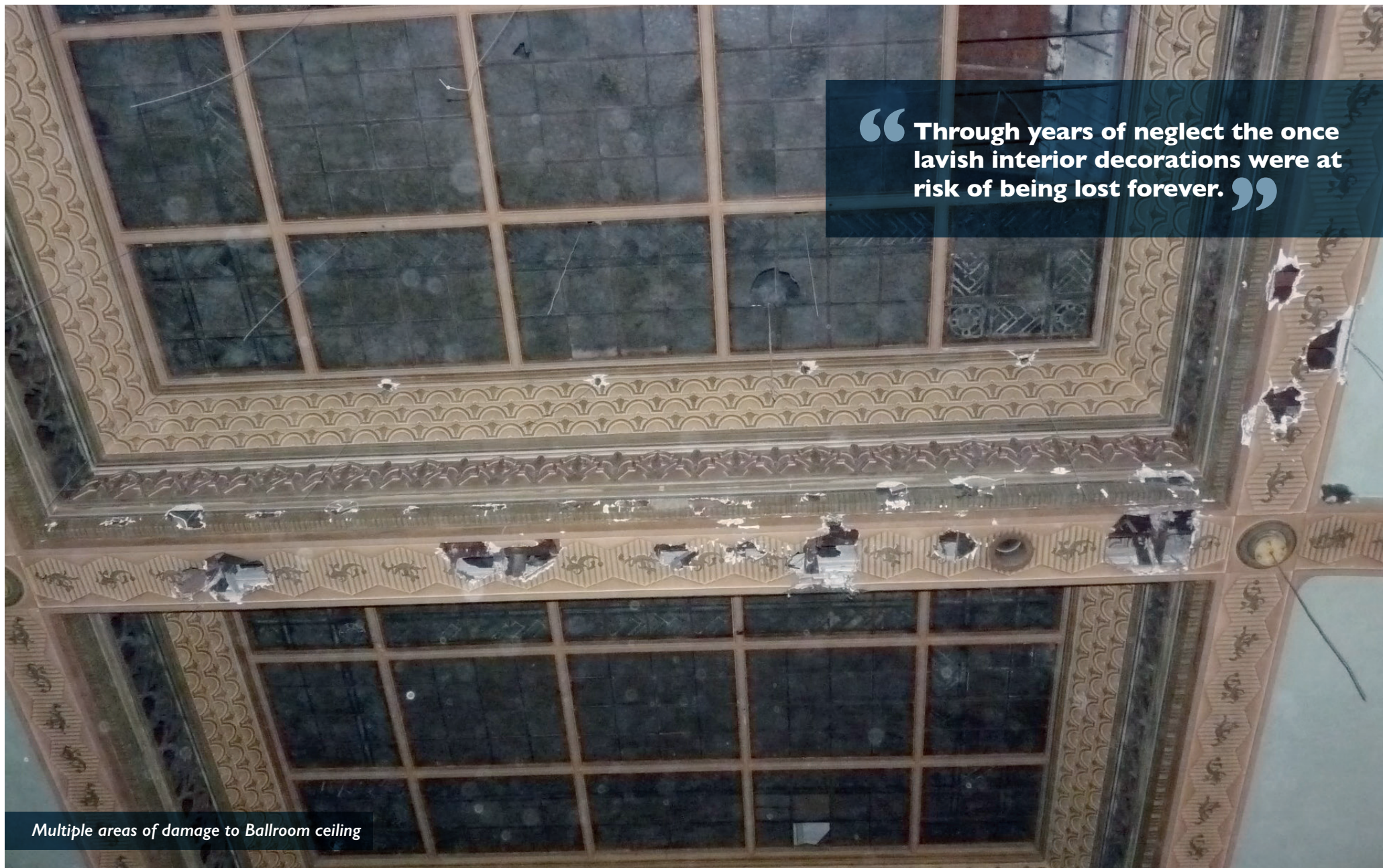
Collapse of ceiling mouldings



Damaged balcony front



Unstable mouldings to Turret Bar



“Through years of neglect the once lavish interior decorations were at risk of being lost forever.”

Multiple areas of damage to Ballroom ceiling

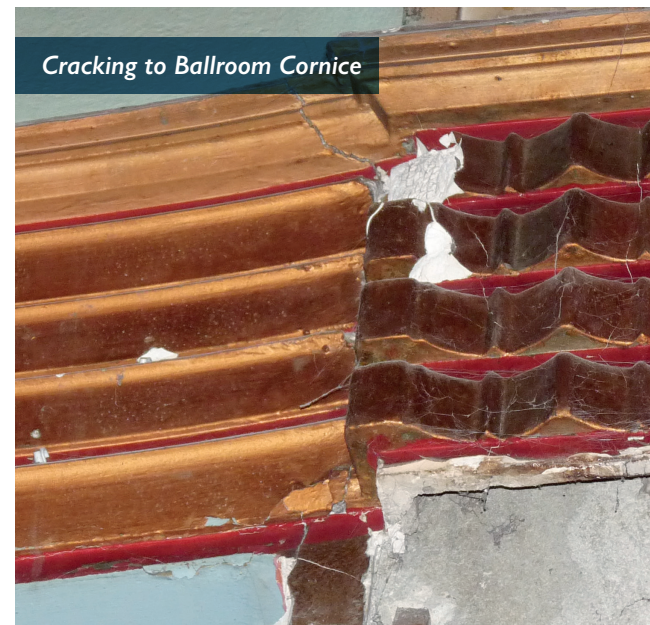
“In 2002 English Heritage concluded that this once important local cinema is too altered to merit listing as a building of architectural or historic interest.”



Water damaged ceiling rose to staircase



Damaged Cabaret Bar ceiling



Cracking to Ballroom Cornice

Water damaged coffers to South Staircase



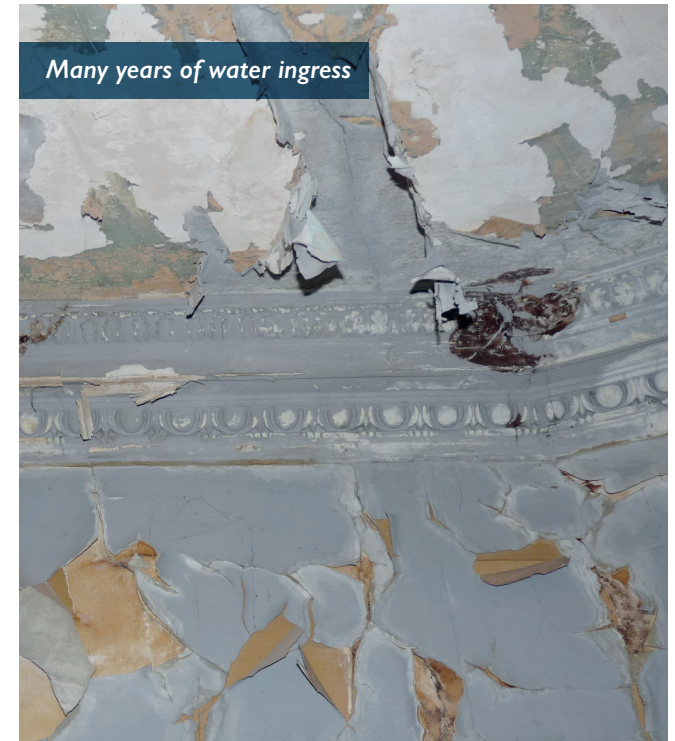
In 2004 the Bradford Odeon Rescue Group (BORG) was formed. The members of BORG requested the building be listed and lobbied the council to save it from demise.

Demonstrations, petitions, social media and news outlets were used to raise the profile of the campaign which subsequently gained support from many celebrities.

In 2013 Bradford Council took ownership of the building, having bought it for £1.00.

The council invited bids for the building's redevelopment and Bradford Live's bid was accepted.

Many years of water ingress



Ballroom Renovation



BRADFORD LIVE – THE RESTORATION BEGINS

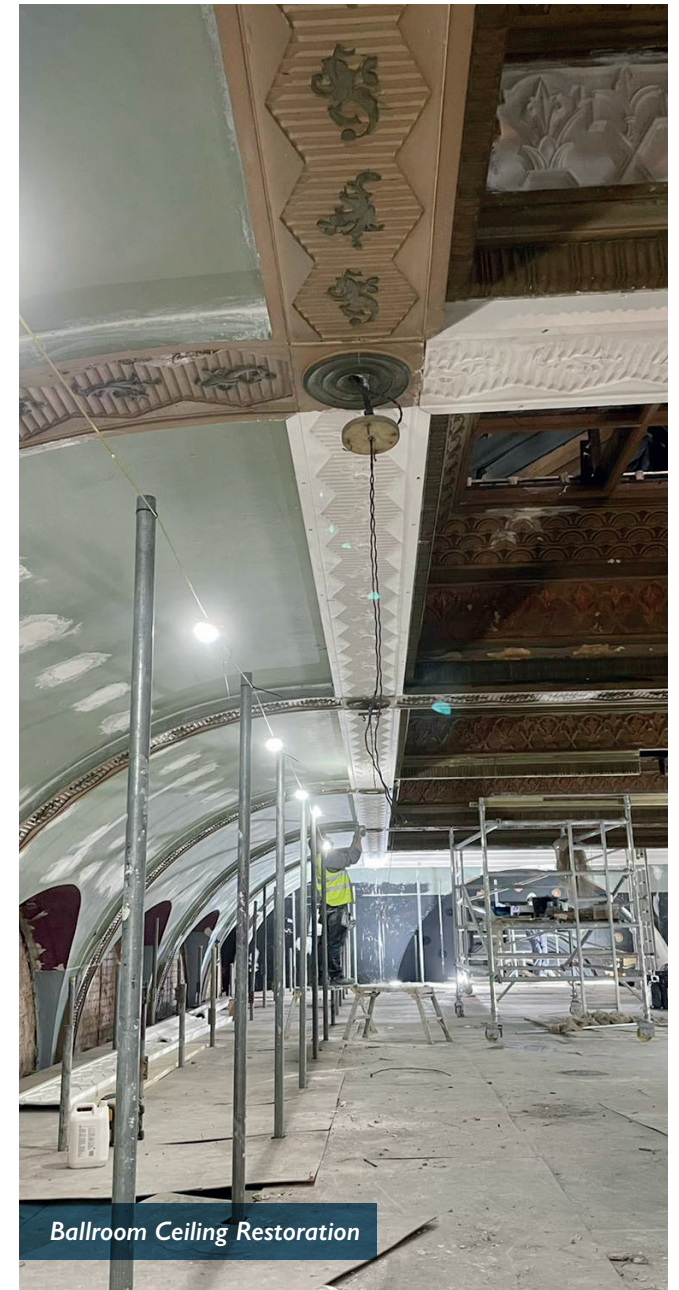
The discussions around the future of Bradford Odeon frequently made local news and was closely followed by Ornate Interiors' marketing staff who recognised that this local project was close to many people's hearts and a building that most of the team at Ornate Interiors had seen decline.

In 2014 Ornate Interiors' made contact with Lee Craven, Director of Bradford Live, to offer initial assistance.

A number of meetings and conversations followed and in 2019 budget costs for surveys were requested.

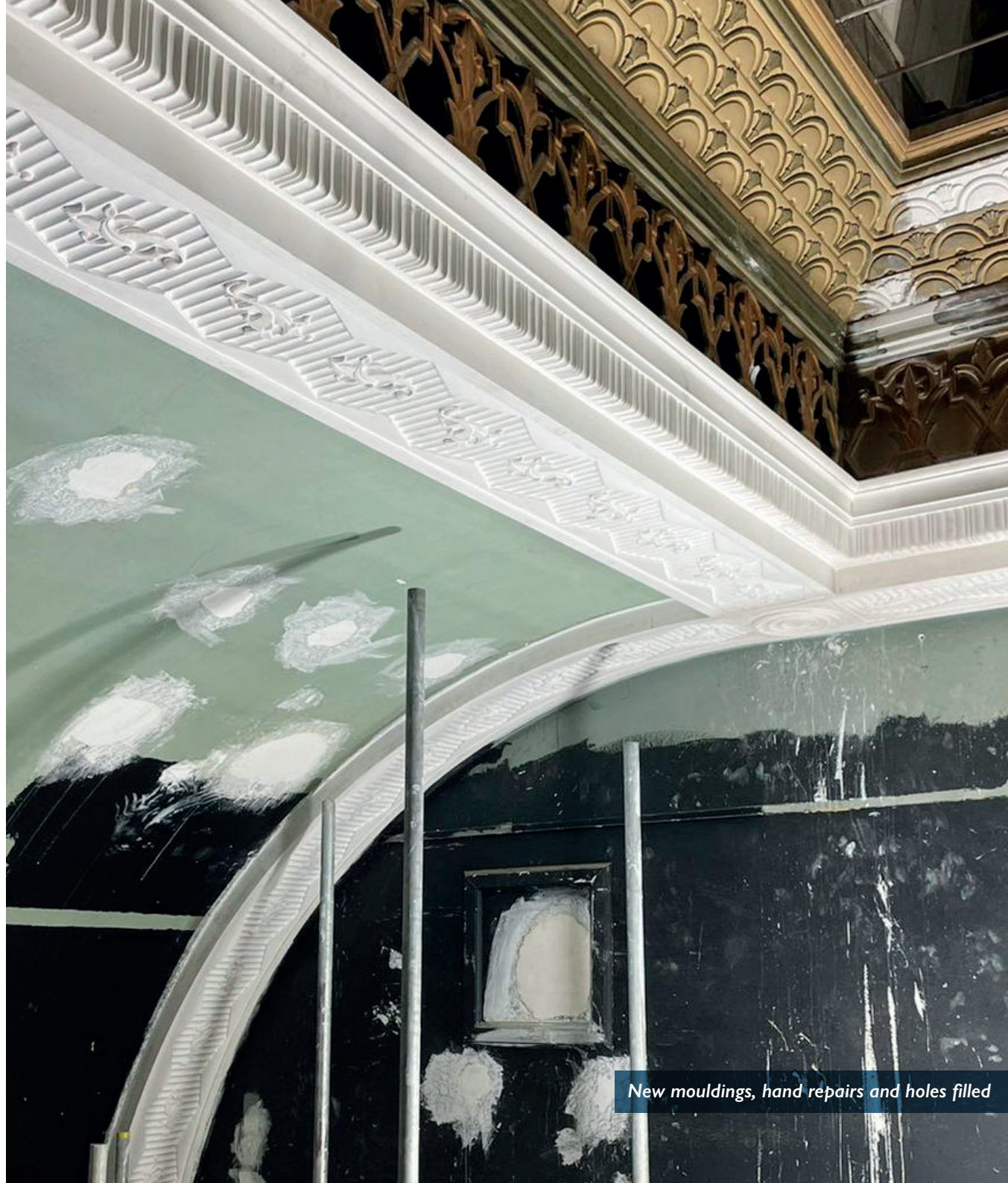


Repairs to Balcony Fronts





Small Ceiling Rose repairs in workshop



New mouldings, hand repairs and holes filled

Bradford Live's plan was for the venue to host world class music, comedy and family entertainment events as well as providing the city with great conference, meeting and banqueting spaces.

The project was planned to be finished in 2021 but the Covid19 pandemic delayed the start and also meant parts of the building that were planned to be refurbished now required replacement.

Keighley based, R N Wooler were appointed as main contractors and sent their initial enquiry for the plaster repairs to Ornate Interiors in November 2020.

Ornate Interiors were appointed in May 2021 and commenced on site in June 2021.

The scope of works was to reinstate the original ceilings and features to the following areas: -

Ballroom

Cabaret Bar

Auditorium Balcony fronts (part)

Staircase One including entrance area

Staircase One VIP Bar ceiling and wall feature

North Turret ceiling

South Turret ceiling

Staircase Two Barrel Vaulted ceiling (part)

Staircase Two VIP Bar

BRADFORD LIVE – THE BALLROOM

The original intention was to retain and restore ceilings and features where possible but, due to the building being derelict and without heating and substantial water ingress, this was not possible.

Throughout the building the fibrous plaster casts had all but perished and the jute Hessian scrim and lath reinforcement had rotted.





Restored Ballroom

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The original Ballroom from the 1930's

“In fibrous plastering, a “squeeze” refers to a process where a flexible mould, usually made of rubber, is taken from an existing piece of decorative plasterwork (like a cornice or moulding) to capture its exact design details, allowing for the creation of identical replicas later on in a workshop by casting new plaster pieces into the mould.”

The architect and client decided to re-manufacture all the mouldings with new sections.

Works to The Ballroom included the renovation and reinstatement of the Turret Pilasters, Mouldings and Capitals.

The renovation, conservation and repair work to 359m² of ceiling allowing for taking a squeeze of each moulding profile for replication.

Plain sections of Panel Mould were manufactured and fitted around the bevelled mirrors.

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Restored Ballroom

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The 200 seat Restaurant

BRADFORD LIVE – THE CABARET BAR

The newly named Cabaret Bar was originally the New Victoria's 200 seat restaurant.

Due to fire regulations the Cabaret Bar ceiling had to be totally removed in order to protect the steel structure above. Prior to this Ornate Interiors went to site to take site sections and squeezes of the original ceiling and take dimensions of the original mouldings so the new ceiling could be faithfully replicated.

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Ornate Interiors then produced working drawings which were submitted for approval prior to commencing the production of the new mouldings.

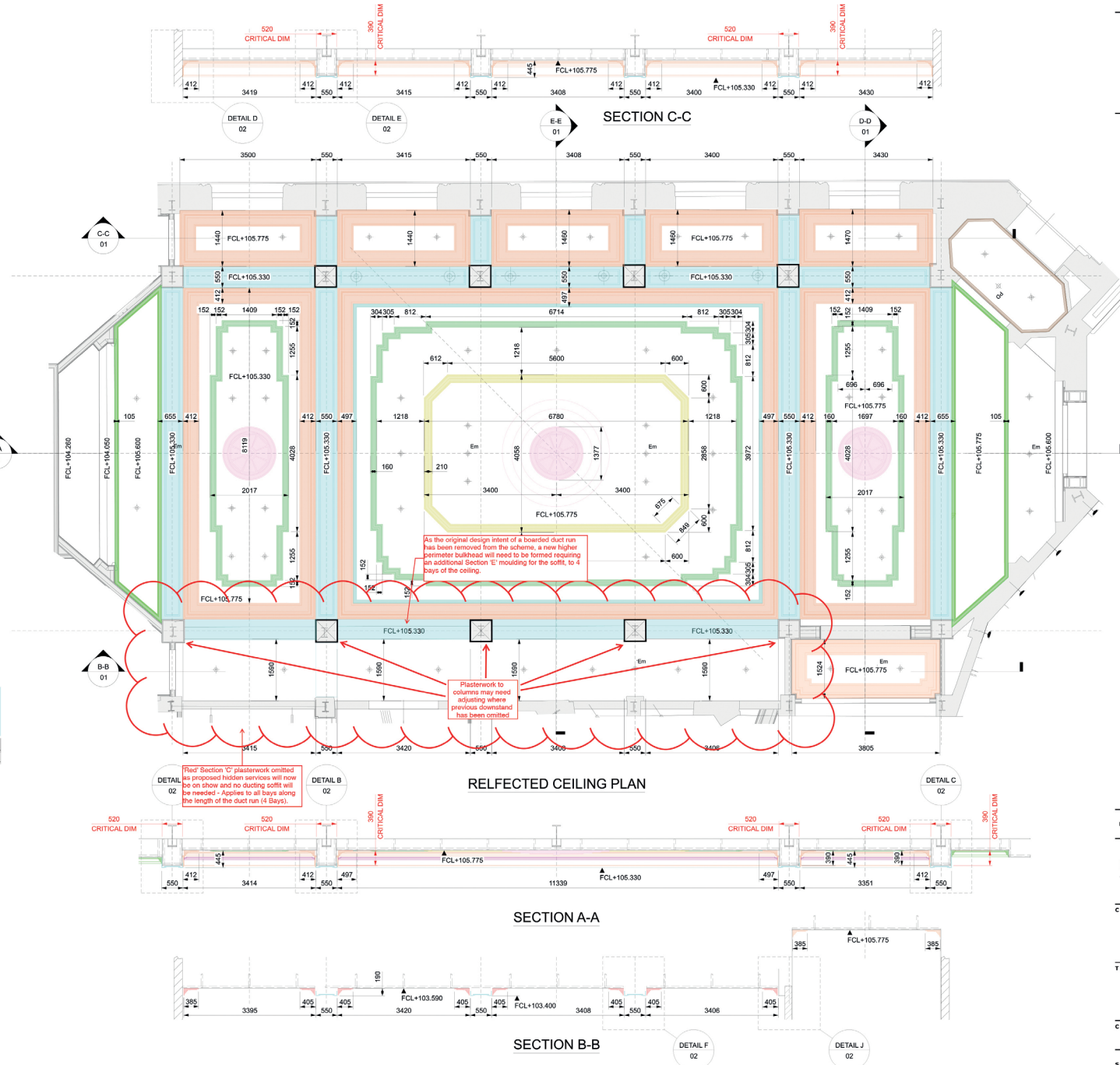
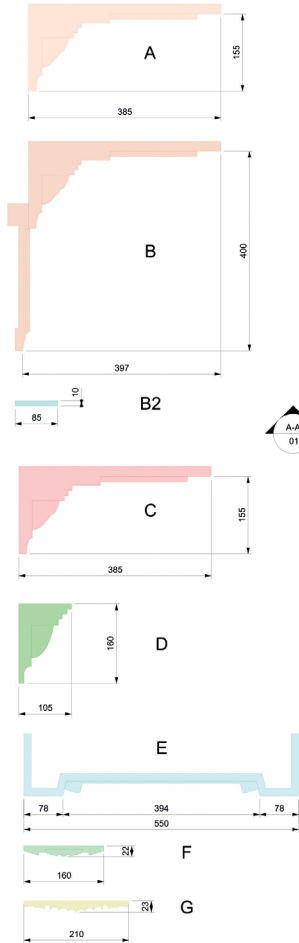
The restored ceiling was constructed with new fibrous plaster and GRG beam cases, cornices, mouldings and ceiling centres. Prior to manufacture the paint was removed back to the original plaster detail and new sections were then re-drawn at full size and submitted for Architect's approval.

Once approved new plaster models of all the ceiling elements were run in the workshop and the enrichments bedded down into the model. When complete the models were poured in silicone rubber to pick out the fine detail that was exposed following the paint removal.



Damaged section of ceiling

MOULDING TYPES



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B	30/11/21	CEILING HEIGHT REVISION	AG
A	10/10/21	REVISED AS PER COMMENTS	AG

Rev	Date	Details	By
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Fibrous Plasterers GRG & Restoration Specialists

Contract

BRADFORD LIVE

Title
CABARET BAR REFLECTED
CEILING PLAN AND SECTIONS

Checked	Scale	Date
JD	1:50 / 1:5	09/11/2020

Status : FOR COMMENT

Revision	Drawing No.
B	J206962-01



Ceiling Rose before restoration



Restored Ceiling Rose

The Square Column Casings provided a different challenge as the original detail was run in-situ. Ornate Interiors solution to this was to take site dimensions and squeezes of the original detail and re-produce them in cast GRG.

The shaft of the column is split diagonally in sections to wrap around the newly fire protected steel column and manufactured in one piece vertically. The cap detail is again split diagonally and installed in two pieces. GRG column casings provide good impact resistance for the columns in this public area.



Fully restored Cabaret Bar



Beautifully restored balcony fronts



Damaged balcony fronts

BRADFORD LIVE – THE AUDITORIUM

The original scope of works in the Auditorium had to be scaled down considerably due to the extent of deterioration and collapse of significant pieces, including the tragic loss of the auditorium dome.

Repairs to the balcony front were not a part of the original remit for plaster repairs.

Only around 45% of the original features were still intact and the balcony had remained boxed in and protected throughout the restoration.

As the project neared completion, the balcony protection was removed to assess the extent of damage. The amount of repair was to be dictated by budget constraints so Ornate Interiors suggested the Architect mark up an elevation drawing to highlight the client's preferred areas of repair.

The restored portion of the balcony was consolidated with new wires and wads.

BRADFORD LIVE –NORTH AND SOUTH TURRETS



The North and South entrances are housed in the two octagonal towers.

One of the domes housed the original tea room and the other accommodated the 200-seat restaurant.

Newly installed mouldings to the North Entrance included dentil block cornice, a Greek key frieze to the wall, a 3200mm diameter ornate ceiling rose and 6 plaques all manufactured to match the original of the 1930s.

The restored north entrance is now the New V.I.P. Entrance leading to the restored V.I.P. Bar on the second floor of the turret.



Damaged Ceiling Rose to North Entrance



North Entrance after restoration

South Turret Ceiling



“ A “cyma recta” is a classical, architectural moulding that features a curved profile with a concave upper section and a convex lower section, presenting as an “S” shape, often used as the top moulding on a cornice. ”

The Turret ceilings are identical in size. The client specified that they would like both of these ceilings reinstated as original in fibrous plaster to uphold the buildings past heritage.

Measurements of both turret ceilings were taken and incorporated the walls and window openings; including lengths, radii for the 6no window openings and the reveal depths. Working drawings were then produced for the turrets and sent to the Architect and Client for approval and construction use.

The central ceiling roses to the turrets consists of two sections, the outer section was cast in one piece with the central section omitted, a rebate detail is inserted to provide a fixing detail for the central diminishing fluted lower rose.



New ceiling moulds installation



Renovated ceiling to the new V.I.P. Bar

The Octagonal cove section with the lunette feature is manufactured in two pieces, one left-handed and one right-handed. The Cyma Recta section is $\frac{1}{8}$ of the octagon transforming the ceiling feature from an octagon into a circle.

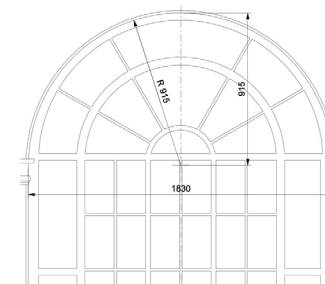


North Turret Ceiling

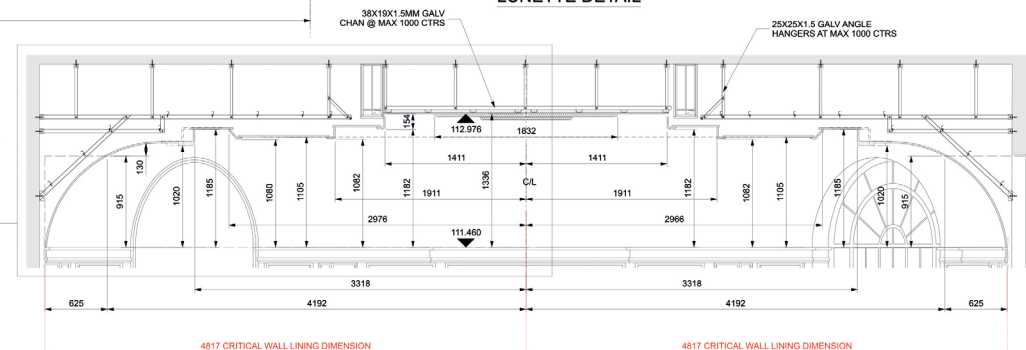
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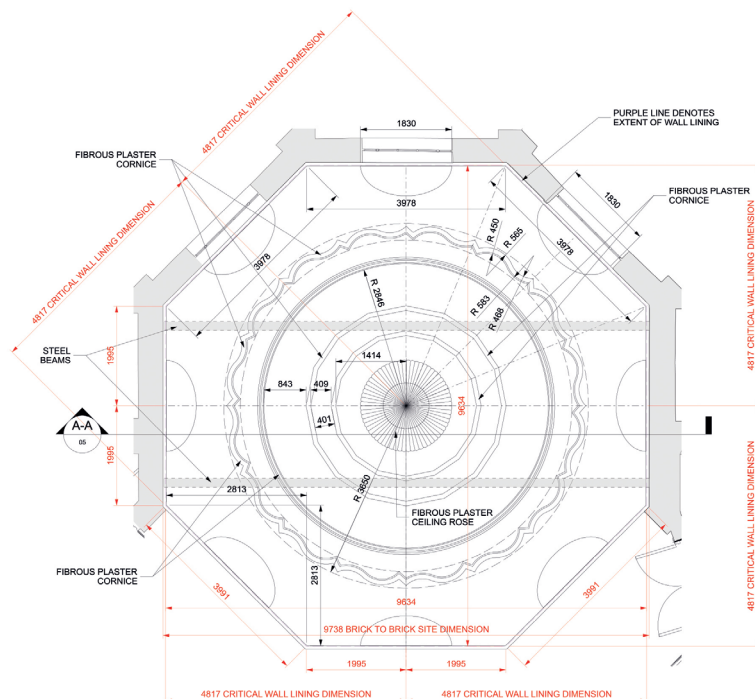
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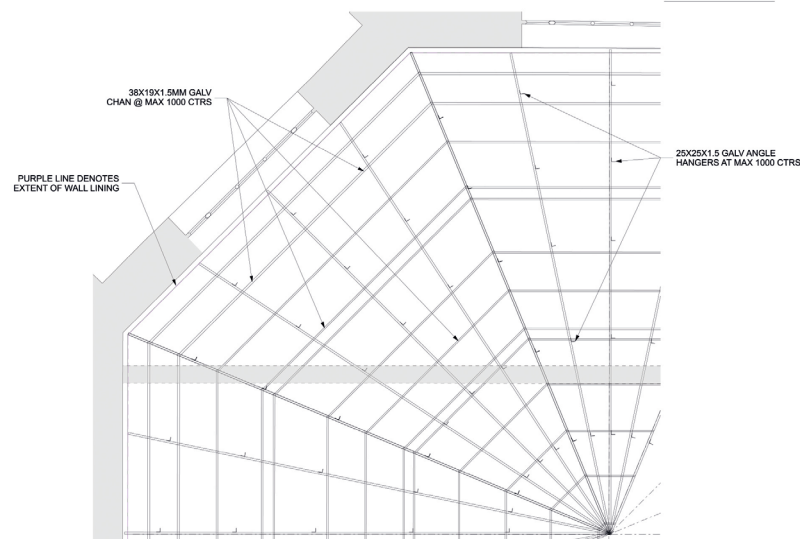
DETAIL A



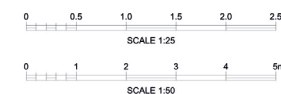
SECTION A-A



VIP NORTH TURRET CEILING PLAN




VIP NORTH TURRET FRAMEWORK PLAN



C	06/11/23	ADJUSTED AS PER ARCHITECTS COMMENTS
B	26/10/23	CORNICHE PLAN SECTION & FRAMEWORK REVISED
A	06/10/23	CORNICHE PLAN SECTION & FRAMEWORK REVISED

Rev	Date	Details
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Fibrous Plasters GRG & Restoration Specialists


Contract		
BRADFORD LIVE		

Title		
NORTH TURRET VIP/ BALLROOM CEILING PLAN AND SECTIONS FIRST FLOOR		

Checked	Scale	Date
JD	1:50 / 1:25	12/09/23

Status :	FOR CONSTRUCTION
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Revision	Drawing No.
C	J206962-05



Restored V.I.P. Bar ceiling

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Damaged Barrel Vaulted Ceiling to South Staircase



SOUTH TURRET STAIRCASE

The raking barrel vaulted and coffered ceiling to Staircase Two in the South Turret was a big challenge to replicate. By the time a scope of works was agreed the ceilings had been removed due to the rotten wooden framework above.

There was no information to work from, no drawings existed and there were no elements left to take site sections and squeezes from. The only parts to remain were the solid plaster arches and the three raking lengths of each barrel ceiling; all of different rakes. Site dimensions were taken and a solution where one size would fit all was needed.

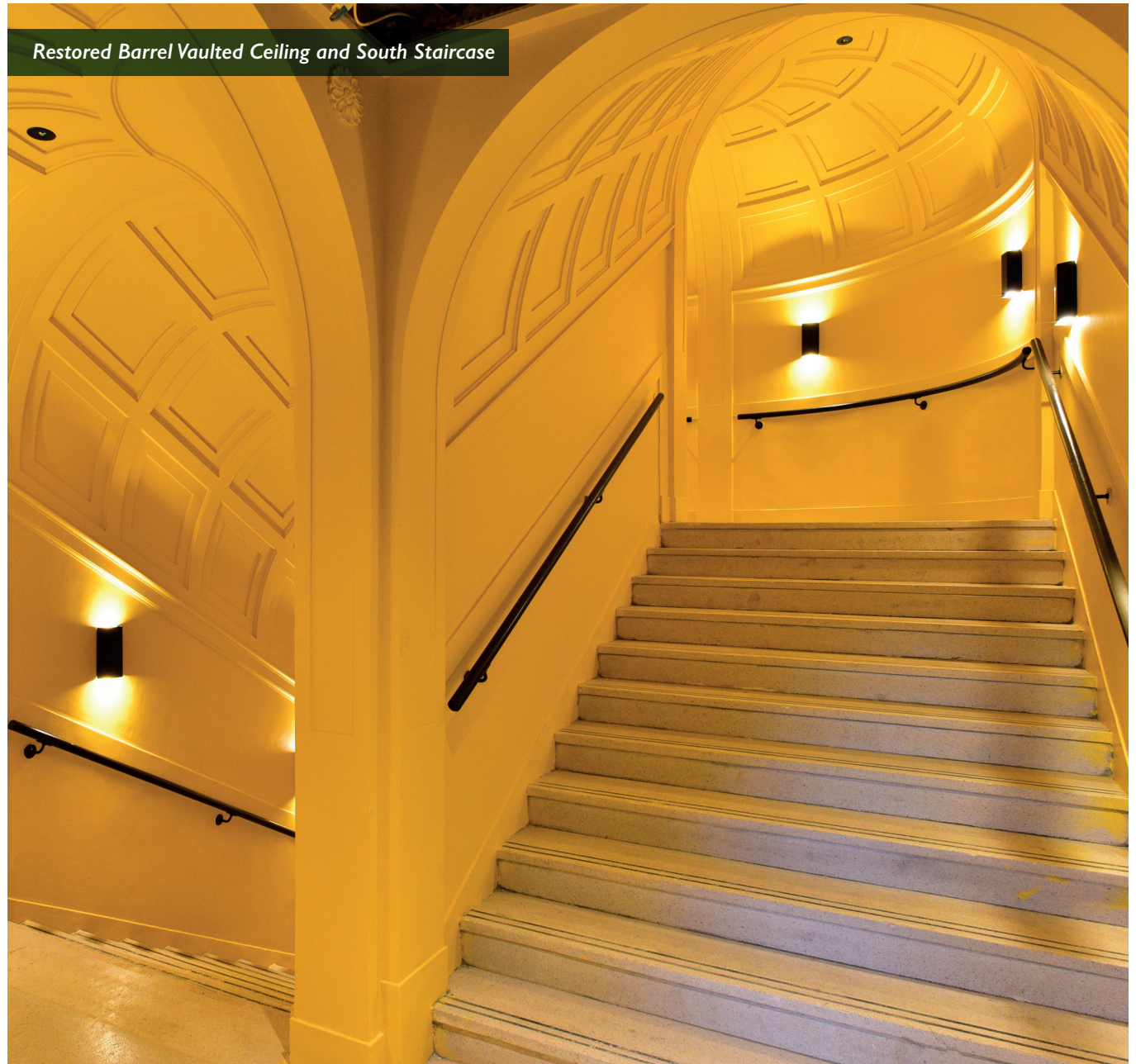
The impact from years of being left derelict

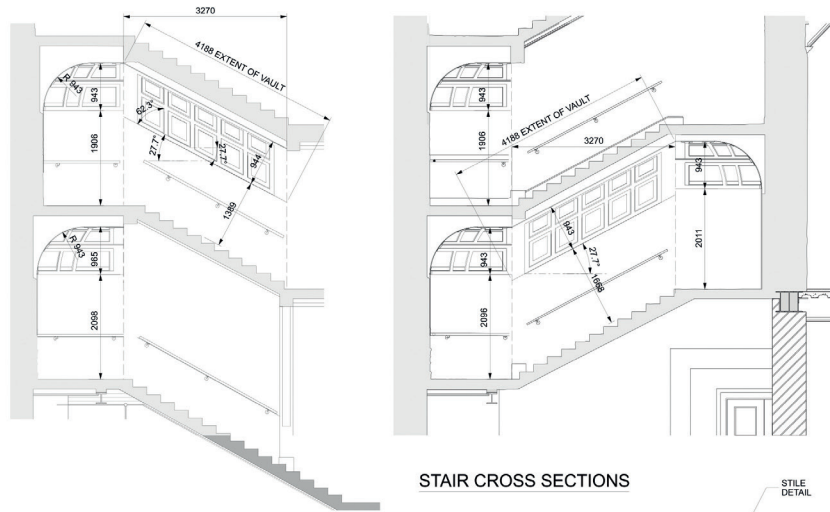


It was decided to produce the vaults in GRG with as much tolerance as possible by constructing the main portion of the vault in two halves, with the bottom raking stile attached to the vault. The additional 3 raking stile sections were produced separately and installed on site.

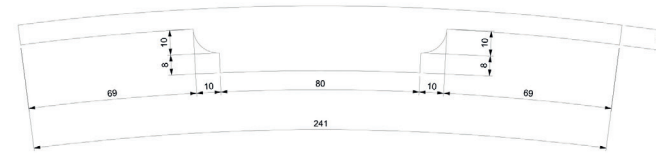
The vertical stiles were modelled in the workshop in a full section of the vault to a 27.69° rake to ensure that the stiles were vertical when installed on site. The stile model was poured in silicone rubber and a total of 90 separate stiles were cast and installed on site.

The curved landing sections were addressed in the same way, with the exception of the inner radius section which had its own model and mould produced.



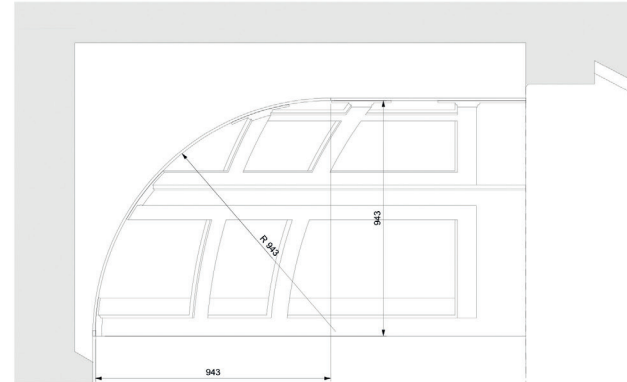


STAIR CROSS SECTIONS

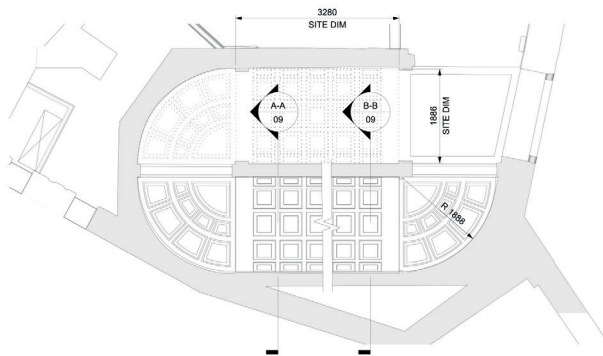


STILE DETAIL

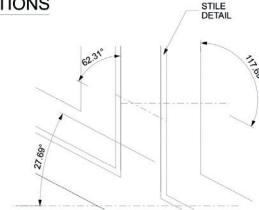
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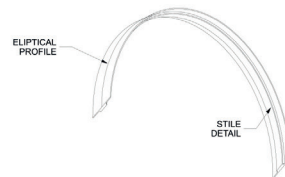
TOP FIX DETAIL



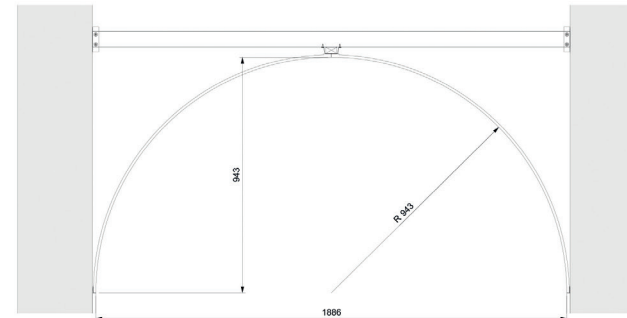
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



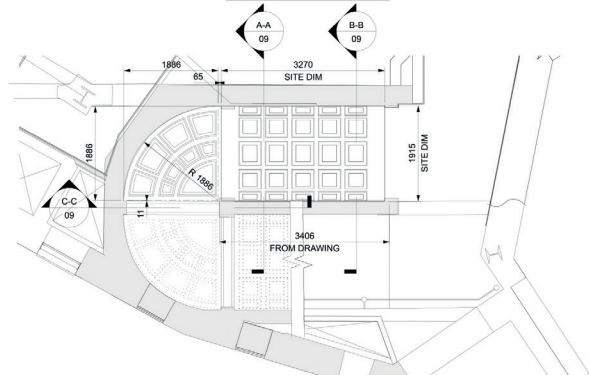
VAULT/ STILE ANGLE



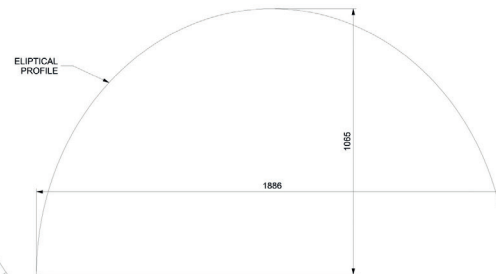
SPUN PROFILE



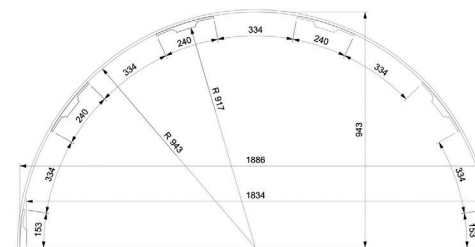
SECTION A-A



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



TRUE VAULT PROFILE
WHEN CUT AT TRU VERTICAL



SECTION B-B

B	18/02/24	DIMENSIONS ADDED	AG
A	12/02/24	ADDITIONAL DETAILS/ DIMS ADDED	AG

Rev	Date	Details	By
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Contract

BRADFORD LIVE

Title

STAIRCASE 2 BARREL VAULT
PLANS, SECTIONS AND DETAILS

Checked	Scale	Date
JD	1:5	08/01/2024

Status : FOR CONSTRUCTION

Revision	Drawing No.
B	J206962-09

TESTIMONIALS

“Ornate interiors were approached to provide their services and expertise to assist RN Wooler with the refurbishment of this 1930s building, that had once been a highly decorative theatre of a bygone era. Following several redevelopments in the 60s and the closure of the then cinema in 2000 it had laid dormant and empty for over 20 years and had fallen into a very poor state of dis-repair.

With a view to creating a premiere music venue for Bradford the new owners wished to try and restore as much of the building, recapturing the buildings history and its original appearance. This restoration included a considerable amount of decorative fibrous plasterwork that adorned many areas of the building. From cabaret bars and ballrooms to turret ceilings; balcony frontages and access staircases, the decorative features of the building were many.

Ornate Interiors approached the works in a professional manor, undertaking surveys and plaster casts of remnants of existing plasterwork mouldings to all the spaces to ensure as accurate a restoration as possible. These mouldings they then developed into schematics detailing every individual component that would be manufactured by hand and then installed to replicate the once great features of the building. Collaborating with the project's design team their traditional methods of working and installation were integrated into the architect's and engineer's concepts to make sure the reproduction was as authentic to the original building as possible. Whilst the refurbishment of the building had taken considerably longer to complete due to the extent of the deterioration of the main structure being far worse than initially believed, Ornate Interiors worked closely alongside the principal contractor, RN Wooler, adjusting their installation programme around the essential structural works that had to be completed, continually moving the works forward as needed.

When on site, as areas became available, they painstakingly rebuilt the decorative ceilings and columns back to their former glory in a speedy and efficient manor, always mindful of the other trades they were working alongside and the need to achieve a perfect finish.

Upon completion of the fibrous plasterwork, the ornate finish elevated any area they were located in to a new level, always turning visitor heads when they entered a space.

For the restoration of ornate fibrous plasterwork, we could not have chosen a better partner to undertake this work with us than Ornate Interiors. ”

Tony Heseltine Senior Project Manager RN Wooler

TESTIMONIALS

“ **Ornate Interiors played a crucial role in the redevelopment of Bradford’s former Odeon, bringing this much-loved, iconic building back to life as a multi-functional entertainment venue - Bradford Live.**

Throughout the building fibrous plaster ceilings and features have been replaced and restored to the highest standard thanks to the expertise and attention to detail of the Ornate Interiors’ team.

During the long and complex restoration, Ornate worked closely with the client team, design team and other contractors to produce stunning features that have surpassed expectations and been admired by everyone who has seen them.

Often working in difficult spaces in a building that provided many unforeseen complications, the Ornate team got on with the job in hand with skill, knowledge and enthusiasm. Throughout the process, during which there were many delays and changes in design, Ornate demonstrated flexibility and patience, delivering quality workmanship that will stand the test of time and contribute to the appeal of the building for years to come.

It has been a privilege to work with such a capable local business. Bradford Live would like to express our gratitude to Ornate Interiors for their role in producing an end result that we can all be proud of! ”

Chris Morrell Director Bradford Live

TESTIMONIALS

“Ornate Interiors have been a valuable part of the team from the outset of the project and have worked collaboratively with the rest of the design team and contractors to provide solutions that work with the architectural intent for the refurbishment of this 1930's former cinema and concert hall. Jim and his team have shown enthusiasm and passion for the building from day one and have clearly enjoyed working on this special heritage scheme. The building was in a derelict state and considerable specialist skills were required to recreate and bring life back to these key spaces. The results are stunning and have contributed immensely to the success of the project.”

Kirsten Branston Director Bradford Live

“Restoring the Old Odeon in Bradford has been an incredible journey, one that has brought new life to a much-loved landmark while honouring its rich history. From the intricate ceiling details to the ornate mouldings, every piece of plasterwork told a story of the Odeon's past grandeur. Our skilled craftspeople worked tirelessly to repair, replicate and revive these beautiful features, ensuring that the craftsmanship of the original design was preserved. Seeing the delicate details emerge once again, just as they were decades ago, has been truly special.”

Jim Dodd Contract Manager

ORNATE INTERIORS PROJECT TEAM

Managing Director

Ronnie Clifford

Contract Manager

Jim Dodd

Fibrous Plasterers (workshop and site)

Iain Clifford

Ameha Shewaye

Jake Clifford

Jason Rider

Neil Williams

Shaun Chamberlain

Tyler Stafford

Paul Malyon

Adam Butterill

Matthew Kilmartin (Apprentice)

Kyle Andrews (Apprentice)

“ This project provided an excellent platform for Ornate Interiors’ newest apprentices to gain relevant and varied experience of a restoration project. I think the end results speak for themselves. What a stunning project carried out by our team and completed to award winning standards. ”

Iain Clifford Director Ornate Interiors

Ornate Interiors started on site in June 2021 and completed the contract in May 2024.

The total contract value was £534,000

Our thanks go to our highly skilled team who worked very hard on delivering a very high standard on this project.

PREVIOUS PROJECTS available to view online at ornateinteriors.co.uk



Grand Theatre, Leeds



Wellington Place, Leeds



County Hall, Northallerton

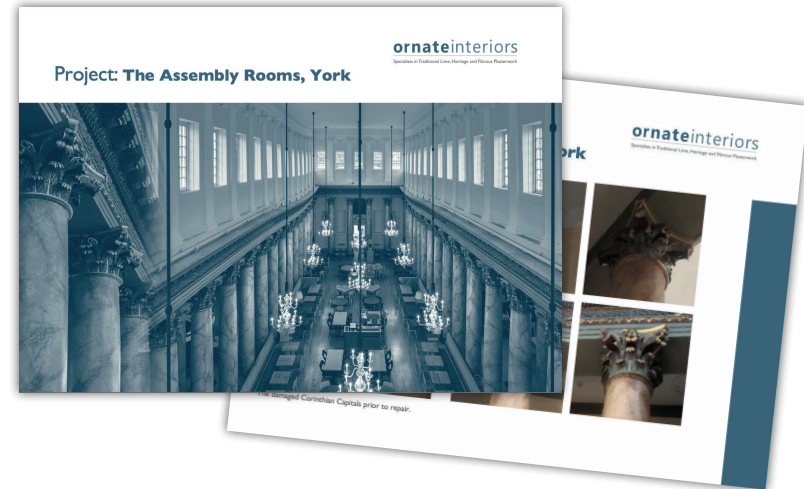


Oldham Town Hall

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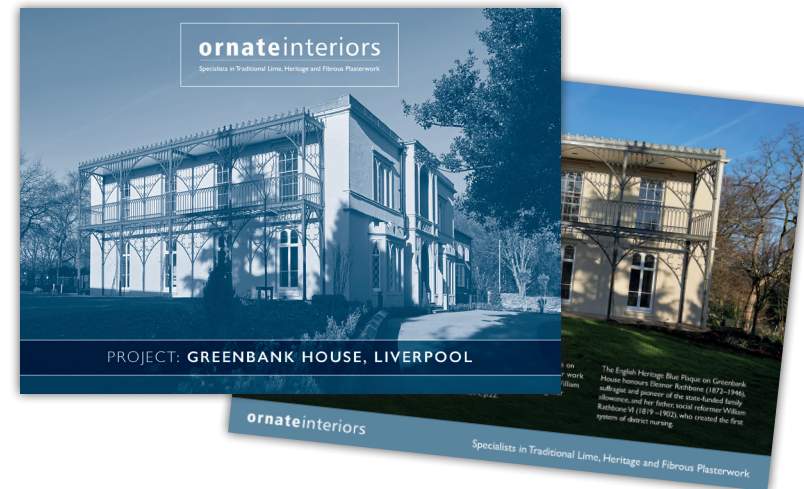
Bath House & Chapel in Private Estate



The Assembly Rooms



Georgian Residence



Greenbank House

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