

# Save Hulme Hippodrome

## OUTLINE BUSINESS PLAN



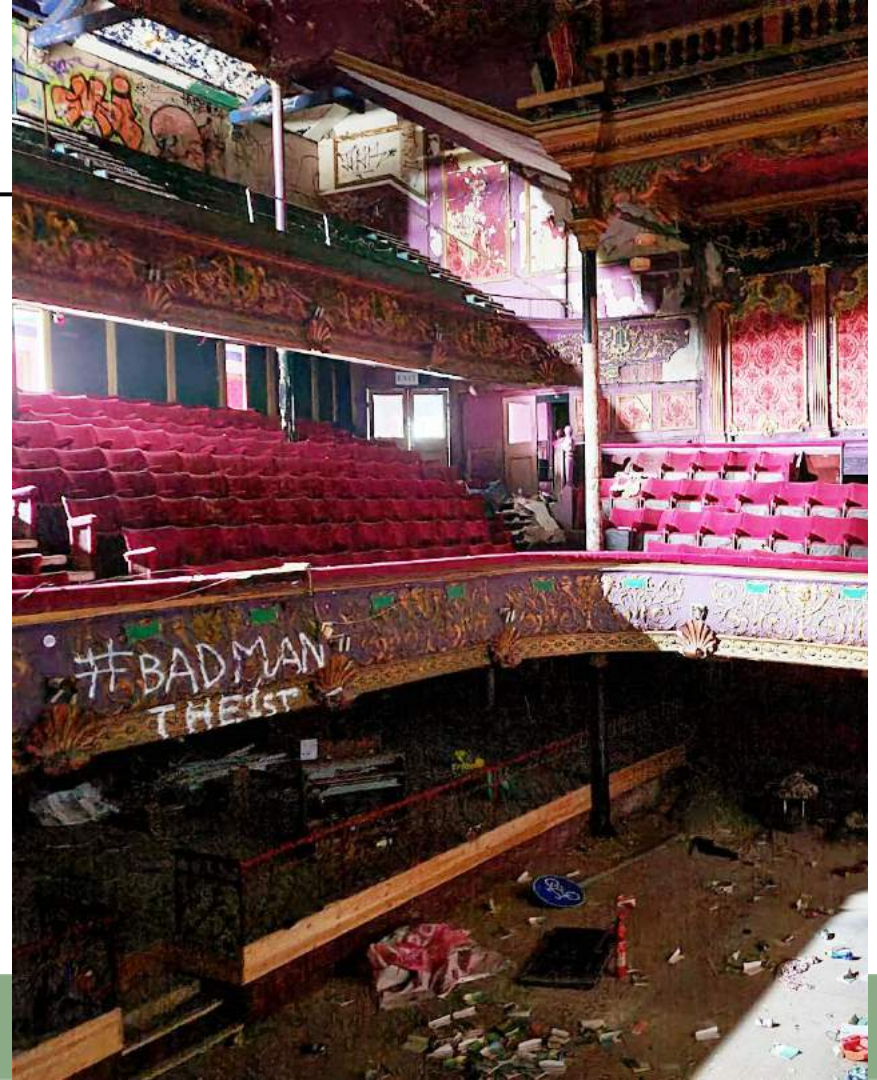
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hulme Hippodrome is an extraordinary, turn-of-the-century, heritage building in urgent need of rescue and restoration. Once our project completes it will be an outstanding cultural and community asset providing employment and leisure opportunities for the people of Greater Manchester.

At its heart the Hippodrome is a 2000 seat theatre capable of staging both live music and theatre. The site will also provide bar and cafe areas, function rooms and a flexible gallery and exhibition space providing opportunities to local artists to celebrate Manchester's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

There will also be collaborative working office areas and meeting rooms, as well as a studios for rehearsal, film, dance, wellbeing and exercise. Work and retail spaces would be available for use by local artists or businesses as a hub for our cultural industries and supply chains.

The programme to rescue this phenomenal community asset is being led by Save Hulme Hippodrome, which with your support, will bring it into community ownership, undertake immediate essential works to make the building secure and weather-proof to prevent any further decline. Save Hulme Hippodrome are looking for your support to make this fantastic community project a reality.



# THE BUILDING

Hulme Hippodrome is a splendid Grade II listed music hall which opened on 7th October 1901, being called the Grand Junction until 1905. It was constructed for the Broadhead Circuit which operated seventeen venues in the North-West of England, mostly now lost, but which made a significant contribution to working-class entertainment. Hulme Hippodrome was built alongside the Hulme Playhouse (1902) and designed by the same architect, Joseph John Alley. The two theatres together represent an unusual twin theatre arrangement with strong group value and great significance.



The magnificent auditorium at the Hippodrome remains largely unaltered and is decorated in a spectacular riot of gilded Rococo plasterwork. The auditorium design incorporates straight rows of seats to the balconies; a characteristic of theatres designed by Alley for the Broadhead Circuit but unlike any contemporary theatre or music hall. It is an iconic building of social, historical, and architectural significance.

Hulme Hippodrome has a footprint of 1,685 sqm (18,135 sqft) and is largely of brick construction in salvageable condition structurally. Water ingress has caused damage to the interior in several places. Pigeons have contributed further to the current poor state having gained access through holes in the roof. The electricity, gas and water supplies have been disconnected but can be re-supplied.

Although the building has had various uses throughout its life, including as a theatre, night club, bingo hall, social club and church, it is now abandoned and has been on the Theatres at Risk Register, maintained by the Theatres Trust, for a number of years now. The Theatres Trust is supporting the Save Hulme Hippodrome campaign.

## Ownership peril

The Hippodrome was bought by Gilbert Deya Ministries in 2003, and sold by them via an intermediary to a shell company HHM20 Ltd in January 2021. This transfer is currently pending at HM Land Registry. It is believed that there were intentions to flip the property quickly to make money, believing that it could be sold to developers for unsympathetic residential conversion.

The building was rapidly put up for auction in February and advertised as suitable for residential use, but this attempt at a quick onward sale was stopped by intervention from our campaign and our partners, Manchester City Council. As it cannot be put to residential use, it is believed that the property has less significant value to the current owner, who would not be able to sell it for its unencumbered land value because of its Grade II listing.

The Gilbert Deya Ministries charity is currently under investigation by the Charity Commission, who have appointed an Interim Manager to take control of the assets of the charity whilst possible misconduct allegations are investigated. Our current advice is that this process will not adversely impact on the good title of the property, though naturally we are assisting such investigations where we find new evidence in the course of our work.



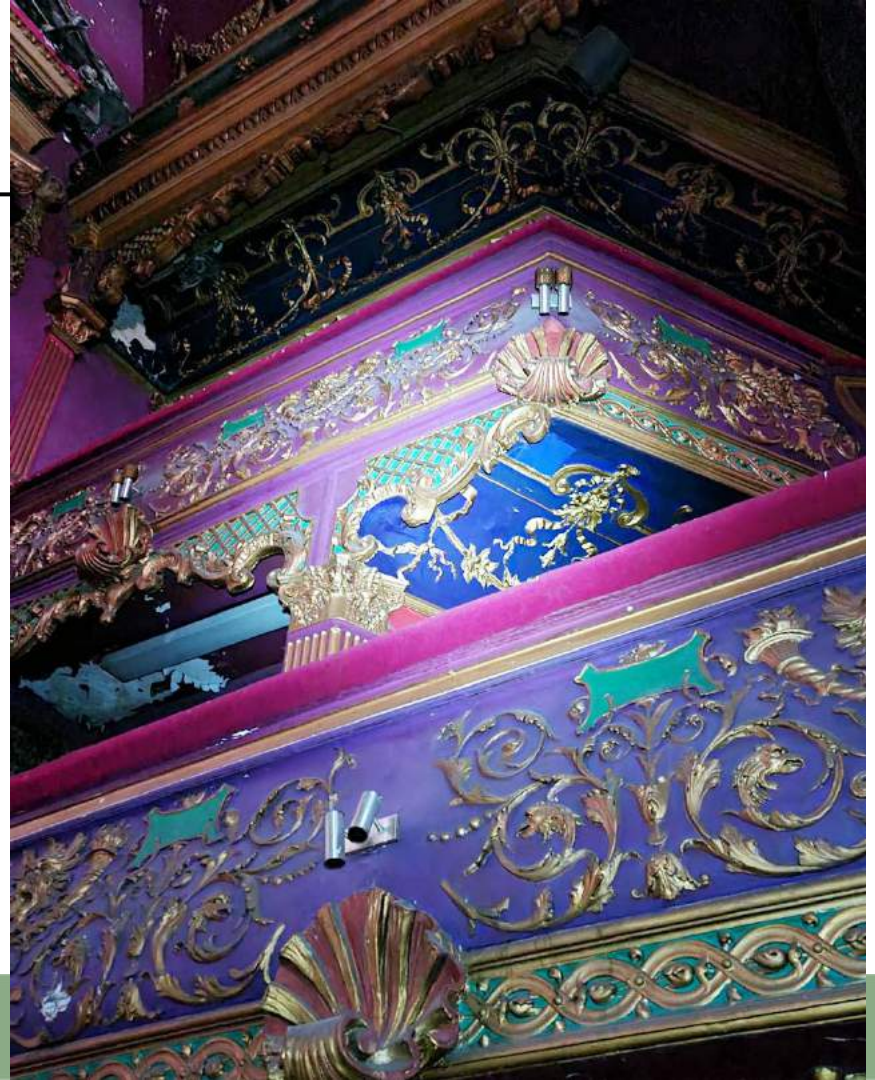
It is hoped that HHM 20 Ltd will wish to sell to us to recoup the investment. There is a technical possibility that the Interim Manager will recommend to the Charity Commission that they should “unwind” the January sales and dispose of the charity asset responsibly, but we’ve been informed by the Interim Managers that this outcome is unlikely. Either way, we hope to be in a prime position with a credible plan to restore and reuse the space to benefit the community locally and Manchester as a whole, and we have developed a sophisticated acquisition strategy to cover off these possible complications, informed by legal advice.

# OUR VISION

At present the building is in a poor state, but none of the damage is terminal, and with investment and effort, it will be given a fantastic future which respects and honours its former glory - we will set out herein a path to so do that involves the community and interested parties at every turn, and also involves the teaching of skills in the restoration and use of the building that will empower future generations to be skilled in trades.

The overarching business plan covers three key phases: acquiring the building following its recent sale to a London-based property developer; making the building safe through urgent remedial works; a rolling programme of early community use in areas alongside the full restoration of the building. Upon completion of the restoration a full launch and celebration of this cultural revival by the people of Hulme, of Manchester, and of the wider world attracting multiple sustainable uses for generations to come.

Work, exhibition, performance and retail spaces would be available for use by local artists or businesses as a hub for our cultural industries and supply chains.



# OUR VISION CONTINUED

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The primary asset, the theatre space itself, is of great interest to the campaign. It has potential use as a live venue for both music and theatre performance, and with a proper fit out to restore the fly tower and theatre facilities, it will also serve as a teaching facility. An aspiration is to make the entire building wheelchair accessible, including the fly floor, to enable teaching of backstage skills to an otherwise excluded group.

Adjoining the theatre is the former Floral Hall. The ground floor area of the former Floral Hall would function as the theatre foyer area providing access to bars and cafes. The space would also function as a flexible gallery, exhibition and museum space to feature local work and events.

Former retail space at the Preston Street elevation of the building would become a cafe, serving both the local community and also audiences and building users.

The upstairs of the former Floral Hall would be refurbished to provide a flexible work space with open plan office areas and meeting rooms, as well as a studio space for rehearsal, film, dance and exercise.

There would be jobs created through staffing of the theatre, potentially teaching staff, and further employment for ancillary services such as bars and a cafe, all within the building. There is strong potential to create jobs for local people, and a space for the community to use and enjoy. There is great potential here to generate a new skills base in protecting our heritage in the built environment while also improving its environmental performance and sustainability - a landmark to zero-carbon heritage.

As a restoration project leading to a major new cultural asset the initiative to save Hulme Hippodrome would have a positive economic impact on Manchester and the surrounding area. Save Hulme Hippodrome is highly appreciative of the support and advice it is receiving from professional individuals and companies in Manchester, and is open to further suggestions and advice on workable models to deliver this fantastic and complex programme for enriching our shared future.



## Community

Rescuing this historic building and providing it as a facility for the community is the core goal of this project. Our aim is to become responsible owners of the building, protecting and restoring the fabric of the building.

To achieve this, we intend to form a Community Benefit Society and undertake a Community Share Offer to raise sufficient funds to purchase the building and bring it into community ownership.

During the initial and phased restoration work phases, our aim is to engage with local tradespeople across a range of disciplines. We will support the creation of apprenticeships to provide employable skills to people from the local community.

Throughout the various phases that the project will undergo, we are looking for the engagement of local media operators and historians to document the process with a view to having a detailed case history and archive for others to study.

Once re-opened, local jobs would be created through staffing of the theatre, potentially teaching staff, and further employment for ancillary services such as bars and a cafe, all within the building.



# ACTION PLAN

## Phase 1 - Acquiring the building

Acquiring ownership of Hulme Hippodrome is key to our campaign, both to allow us to secure, protect and restore the building, and to prevent anyone from profiting from the continued neglect of this important heritage asset.

Following our professional legal advice, it has become clear that a private purchase from the current owner is the only realistic prospect of bringing Hulme Hippodrome into responsible ownership. We are in dialogue with the current owner, and have made an offer subject to a number of key conditions.

Save Hulme Hippodrome intends to form a Community Benefit Society and undertake a Community Share Issue to raise sufficient funds to purchase the building and bring it into community ownership.

An independent RICS valuation has been commissioned in order to understand an accurate and fair valuation of the building as it stands.



## Phase 2 - Making safe

£100,000, 3-6 months

Following acquisition of the building, an initial phase of urgent repair works would be undertaken. This phase would aim to control the major safety issues with the building and to urgently prevent further decline.

This programme of works would include “enveloping” the building - fixing the roof, rainwater goods, leaks and securing doors and windows - as well as urgent tasks such as pigeon and waste removal.

Utility connections to the building will need to be restored in order to provide key services such as electricity and water. This will enable the creation of a project office and to provide welfare facilities.

A full structural survey undertaken at this phase will allow us to control any urgent safety hazards and to accurately plan the restoration phase.

As soon as the building is safe, we plan to open some parts for immediate use, and Phase 3 onwards will be a “rolling programme” inside the building, but always with some areas in public use.



### Phase 3 - Phased restoration and use

~£14,000,000, 5-7 years

The restoration phase of works will involve major repairs to structural elements of the building, a full refit of mechanical, electrical and plumbing services throughout and a comprehensive restoration of key architectural features.

The restoration will aim to bring the building back to its former glory, while providing the spaces and facilities needed to enable the envisaged community uses of the facility. Our plans include the creation of a range of flexible work, hospitality and entertainment spaces for long-term sustainable use by the local community.

Funding would be sought in a blended, phased approach to provide for the planned restoration stages of the project, which would be undertaken by the Community Benefit Society as responsible owners.

The building lends itself to being refurbished in phases due to being largely divided into the Theatre and Floral Hall. This will allow the building to be used, in part, during our restoration works.



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## **Save Hulme Hippodrome Ltd**

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