

Heritage Assessment

13 Bedford Road, London

N22 7AU

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Introduction

1. This Heritage Assessment has been prepared to support a planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and their replacement with a mixed-use development up to five storeys high at 13 Bedford Road, London. The building on the site is not on the statutory National Heritage List for England or in a conservation area but is close to the eastern boundary of the Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area. The summary scheme description is as follows:

Demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new mixed-use development up to five storeys high with commercial uses (Use Class E) at ground level, 12 no. self-contained flats (Use Class C3) to upper levels and plant room at basement level. Provision of cycle parking, refuse, recycling and storage, lift overrun and pv panels at roof level.

2. The document will set out the policy context, a brief description of the site and its relevant surroundings, a discussion of the significance of heritage assets which have the potential to be affected by the development, and an assessment of the impacts of the proposed works on that asset.
3. This document is intended to be read alongside the relevant drawings and reports submitted with this application.

National Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4. Section 72 of the Act establishes a duty in the exercise of any function under the Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. A conservation area is an area of local interest designated principally by the Local Planning Authority.

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

5. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in September 2023. Section 16 of the NPPF deals with the consideration of heritage assets and sets out the importance of being able to assess the impact of a development on the significance of heritage assets. Significance is defined as the value of an asset because of its heritage interest. The setting of an asset can contribute to this interest. The setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. A conservation area, designated under the relevant legislation, is a heritage asset; the NPPF does not define conservation areas as being of the 'highest significance'.
6. The NPPF recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the preservation of the significance of a heritage asset and delivering public benefit. With regard to designated assets, paragraph 205 states that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be on its conservation. Distinction is drawn between those assets of highest significance and those of a lesser significance.
7. The NPPF identifies harm as being either substantial or less than substantial. Paragraph 207 states that where the proposal would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset consent should be refused unless the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweighs that harm. In cases where less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset is anticipated, paragraph 208 requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
8. Paragraphs 212 and 213 specifically discuss Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites; paragraph 212 states that opportunities should be sought to better reveal the significance of these assets, whilst paragraph 213 reminds the reader that not all elements of a conservation area will contribute to the significance of that area; in this way assessments should take account of the relative value of the element subject to change, and its contribution.
9. In accordance with the NPPF, this Heritage Impact Assessment sets out the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposed works. The information provided in this assessment conforms to paragraph 200 of the NPPF, thus the level of detail provided is proportionate to the significance of the

affected heritage assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

10. Guidance on the application of heritage policy within the NPPF is provided within the Historic England 'Good Practice Guides' and the on-line National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) for the Historic Environment.

National Planning Practice Guidance 2019

11. The NPPG provides guidance as to the application of policy as regards heritage assets and defines the qualities of a listed building and conservation area, including reference to curtilage structures or features.

London Plan

12. Regional policy for the London area is defined by the London Plan, with the latest version of the Plan having been published in March 2021.

The London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (2021)

13. The London Plan sets out the Spatial Development Strategy for the London region, comprising a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital for the next 20-25 years.
14. Chapter 7 of the Plan is titled Heritage and Culture, and policy HC1 relates to 'Heritage conservation and growth'. The policy states at point A that boroughs should be 'identifying, understanding, conserving and enhancing' the historic environment and heritage assets through the creation of policy and in consultation with Historic England. Point B notes that development plans and strategies at borough level should promote the 'effective integration of London's heritage in regenerative change'.
15. Point C relates to built environment assets during development, and states that:

Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

Local Plan

16. The London Borough of Haringey Local Plan consists of the Strategic Policies DPD 2013, and the Development Management DPD adopted in 2017.
17. Within the Strategic Policies DPD, there are two policies relevant to this assessment. SP11 (Design) states that development should be “of the highest standard of design that respects its local context and character and historic significance”. SP12 (Conservation) says that development should “ensure the conservation of the historic significance of Haringey’s heritage assets, their setting, and the wider historic environment”, including conservation areas, parks and gardens, and listed buildings.
18. Within the Development Management DPD, policy DM5 has regards to locally important views. Figure 2.1 accompanying this policy shows that 13 Bedford Road is outside of any recognised local viewing corridors. The site is also outside of the significant view corridor from St Paul’s Cathedral towards Alexandra Palace.
19. DM9 is concerned with the management of the historic environment. Part A states that development should “ensure the conservation of the historic significance of Haringey’s heritage assets, their setting, and the wider historic environment”, and Part B continues, adding that “proposals affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset and its setting will be assessed against the significance of the asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposals on that significance”. The setting of conservation areas is not specifically mentioned within the section relating to conservation areas, though it is noted that conservation areas play “an important role in shaping local character and creating sense of place”.

Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area

20. There is currently no Appraisal adopted for Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area, and therefore the policy related to the conservation area is as per the Development Management policies above.

Site and Surroundings

21. 13 Bedford Road is situated on the west side of Bedford Road, a relatively busy road to the other side of which is the fenced western boundary of Alexandra Palace Railway Station. The junction with Alexandra Park Road is to the south of the site, whilst to the north are a row of red brick, turn of the century building in mixed commercial and residential use. On the western boundary of the site is a retaining wall, above which is an access road and a 20th century flatted development. Building heights in the area tend to be three or four storeys and appear taller as the land rises quite sharply in the west along Alexandra Park Road and Palace Gates Road to the north and to the south-west up to Alexandra Park. To the south of the site, Bedford Road runs slightly downhill with houses to its western side, rounding a corner to meet the north-eastern corner and road entrance of Alexandra Park.



Proposed

development site from across Bedford Road



View north from the corner of Alexandra Park along Bedford Road

22. The site itself is composed of a two storey auto-repair centre and associated yard and parking. The buildings on the site are simple flat roofed industrial buildings dating from the late 20th century. Ordnance survey mapping shows that the site was unoccupied until the 1930s. Alexandra Palace, and its surrounding park, was first constructed in 1873, to the south of the site. Alexandra Park Road and Bedford Road were by 1894 thinly developed with short clusters of houses; the eastern side of Wood Green Station as it was then known (now Alexandra Palace Station) was more developed in the late 19th century. By 1920 the streets around Alexandra Park including Bedford Road and Alexandra Park Road were almost fully developed with residential properties; however, the site itself remained as a yard until 1937 when the mapping shows a single building across the front of the site. By 1955 this building was noted to be a 'garage'. The current building on the site dates from the second part of the 20th century, and appears to have been purpose built for its commercial garage use.
23. The site is currently out of character with the surrounding residential uses to the south, west and north, and unrelated to the railway land to the east. Views to and from the site are restricted from the north and south by buildings and by the mature trees lining the roads, as well as the truncation afforded by bends in the road. Similarly, there are minimal views from the west along Alexandra Park Road due to the built form along the street, and the site is only clearly visible in close proximity.



View of the side of the site close to the bottom of Alexandra Park Road

Heritage Assets

Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area, Alexandra Park Registered Park and Garden and Alexandra Palace Listed Building

24. The Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area was designated in September 1978. At present there is no Conservation Area Appraisal for the conservation area, however the Registered Park and Garden (Grade II, ref: 1001253) and listed building entry (Grade II, ref:1268256) cover the extent of the conservation area. The National Heritage List descriptions can be found at Appendix 1 of this document, and summary descriptions and excerpts are used here to set out the character and appearance of the conservation area. For the purposes of this assessment, the conservation area is the primary heritage asset considered, as it is recognised that any impact to the conservation area would likewise have an impact on the designated Park and Garden and potentially the listed building.
25. The former International Exhibition Hall and 'People's Palace' of Alexandra Palace was built with Alexandra Park in 1873 and rebuilt to designs by John Johnson and Alfred Meeson in 1875 following a fire. The building was subject to various 20th century alterations prior to another fire in 1980, following which the building was restored. Alongside the 'People's Palace' is a former railway station which is no longer in operation and now houses a community centre.

26. Alexandra Palace had a variety of uses over time; primarily as an exhibition and place of entertainment, for which it was built and is used today, but also as studios for the BBC, and as a refugee and internment centre during the Second World War. The building combines brick faces and iron work elements in a large structure purpose built to provide spaces for public entertainment. Its value lies in this architectural form, as well as in the associations of its uses, and its setting within the surrounding park which was also a public space.
27. Alexandra Park itself was originally conceived in the mid-19th century as a rival to Crystal Palace Park to the south of the Thames. Funding to realise the project proved elusive until the Alexandra Park Committee was instigated in 1863, after which the project began to take place as a place for 'public recreation and amusement'. At 173 acres, the park developed its facilities until at the height of its use it contained Alexandra Palace, the railway station, a banqueting hall (no longer extant), horse racing course, cricket ground, miniature golf course, diving centre and rifle range, alongside relatively informal landscaped parkland. The boundaries of the park are formed by the railway line running north-south on the eastern boundary, and dense housing to the others. The Palace is situated at the top of a hill and the land falls to each boundary. Within the park, the boundaries are tree lined, and historic mapping shows that this sense of enclosure to the boundaries was probably designed to separate the parkland from the surrounding townscape.



Example of northern boundary of Alexandra Park

28. The setting of the park is formed by the dense housing noted above, much of which was built in the late 19th century and early 20th century and therefore relates in terms of historic development to the park itself; likewise, the railway is a 19th century development and gives further legibility to this age of development. However, due to the heavy mature tree cover along the boundaries of the park, which offer only glimpses through at lower levels and create a screen through which buildings close to the park are largely hidden, this legibility is mostly perceived as one moves in and out of the park, rather than looking out from within the park, and is confined to those streets within very close proximity. The contribution that this part of the setting makes to the heritage value of the asset, and to listed Alexandra Palace, is therefore limited. As one moves further from the boundaries of the park, the townscape becomes more varied in quality and detached from any perceptions of the heritage asset; these areas make no contribution towards the heritage value of the conservation area or corresponding Park and Garden and are not considered to be part of their setting.
29. Views to and from the park and Palace are of greater value, and are recognised both by the London view corridor from St Paul's to Alexandra Palace (located to the opposite side of the park than the site under consideration here), and the locally significant views set out in the Local Plan which span across the park boundaries but do not take in the area where the proposed development is located.

30. Overall, the Palace and Park combine to form the designated conservation area, and as such the conservation area is of high value; the immediate setting and longer range views contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and consequently to the special interest of the Park and Garden. The area of the conservation area which is in closest proximity to the site under consideration is the north-eastern road entrance, though there is no intervisibility between the two due to a curve in the road and screening from trees and buildings. Likewise, the northern boundary of the park in this area is tree-lined and partially hedged, adjoining the rear of houses on the western side of Bedford Road and the southern side of Alexandra Park Road.

Other Heritage Assets

31. Two other conservation areas are close to the proposed site: Hornsey Waterworks and Beds to the south, running between part of Alexandra Park and the railway line, and Wood Green Common to the east, on the opposite side of the railway. Site appraisal has confirmed that there is no intervisibility between these assets and the site due to their location, distance from the site and the level of built form screening any longer views. These assets are therefore scoped out of further assessment.

Extent of the works

32. The full extent of the external works proposed are shown in the drawings and DAS which accompany this application. A summary description of the development proposed is as follows:

- Demolition of existing buildings on the site;
- Erection of a new mixed-use development up to five storeys high including ground floor commercial uses and 12 self-contained flats;
- Provision of associated cycle parking, refuse and recycling storage and plant.

33. The materials to be used have been chosen in recognition of the mixed character of the surrounding buildings, and the modernity of the proposed development. A combination of red and buff brickwork alongside brick cladding will enliven the elevations, and photovoltaic panels to the roof will enhance the energy efficiency of the building. The massing of the upper storeys and progressive set-back of balconies is intended to reduce any dominance of the building in the streetscape.

Impact of the works

Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area, Alexandra Park Registered Park and Garden and Alexandra Place Listed Building

34. The proposed works take place outside of the boundary of the Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area, the Alexandra Park Registered Park and Garden, and are located approximately 800 metres from Alexandra Palace. The site lies outside regionally and locally recognised significant view corridors.

35. The lack of intervisibility or other relationship between the listed building of Alexandra Palace and the site ensure that there will be no direct impact on this heritage asset. There will also be no change to its setting, which is composed of Alexandra Park only with the exception of those recognised views to and from the listed building. Therefore, the heritage value of the listed building will not be harmed as a result of the development.

36. The Alexandra Park Registered Park and Garden, and the Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area, cover the same area, including in the location to the north-east of the park which is closest to the proposed development site. As described above, there is no intervisibility between the site and the edge of the park due to the curve of Bedford Road and the extent of existing built form and tree cover. The site lies outside of the legible immediate setting of the park provided by Alexandra Park Road alongside its boundary, in an area of more mixed built form which has no relationship to the park either aesthetically or in terms of

development history and does not add or detract from any public perception of the park. Therefore, it is considered that the site does not form any part of the setting of the heritage assets. As such, the development of the site in the sensitive manner proposed, taking into account the surrounding built form and topography, will not result in an indirect impact on the assets, and will cause no harm to their heritage value.

37. The development proposed will generally improve the streetscape in the area of the site; however, as this streetscape and the site itself is not part of the setting of Alexandra Park it cannot be said that any benefit is afforded to the designated heritage assets.

38. As such, there will be no change to the character and appearance of the conservation area, no direct impact on any nationally designated heritage asset, and no change to the setting of these assets which may result in an indirect impact. No harm will be caused to the value of the heritage assets.

Conclusions

39. In summary, the works proposed to 13 Bedford Square are intended to provide high quality, sustainable commercial and residential space within a highly popular area of London. The site lies outside of the setting or associated view corridors of Alexandra Palace Listed Building, Alexandra Park Registered Park and Garden, and Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area.

40. The proposals adhere to the requirements of the 1990 Act in that they seek to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area close to which the site is located. With regards to the NPPF, Section 16 discusses change to assets in relation to harm; there will be no harm to any designated heritage asset as a result of the proposals.

41. The proposed development adheres to Haringey policy SP11 in that they are of the highest quality design and respect local context and character, and SP12 in that the development ensures the conservation of Haringey's heritage assets. No locally significant views will be disrupted, as per policy DM5, and as per policy DM9 the significance of heritage assets and their settings are conserved.

42. In conclusion therefore, it is considered that though these proposals will cause no harm to any designated heritage asset and as such are acceptable and in alignment with national and local policy.

APPENDIX 1

Designated asset descriptions

ALEXANDRA PARK

Heritage Category: Park and Garden

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1001253

Date first listed: 08-May-1995

A public park laid out by Alexander McKenzie and opened in 1863.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

On his death in 1856, Thomas Rhodes' grandchildren inherited Tottenham Wood Farm, a large dairy farm between the villages of Muswell Hill, Wood Green and Hornsey. Influenced by the success of the Crystal Palace (1851), they drew up a scheme for a similar venture for a north London Palace of the People. The site was described as 'undulating and well timbered with abundant springs and water', and the situation with its extensive and beautiful views was considered 'remarkably healthy' (The Times, 12 November 1858). Of the 450 acres (187.5ha), 150 acres (62.5ha) was to be set aside as park, and the remaining 300 acres (125ha) was sold for building to finance the project. By 1858, a layout of the grounds had been submitted by Mr John Spencer of Bowood, but nothing came of these early plans. Mr Francis Fuller then made a detailed survey of Muswell Hill Park, dated 1860, with a view to opening the park as an amusement centre, with a building to rival the Crystal Palace of which he had been manager for three years. Fuller failed to raise the necessary funding and his scheme was also shelved.

In 1863, the 'Alexandra Park Committee' was formed with the purpose of acquiring the land in order to lay it out as a place for public recreation and amusement. The exhibition building from the Great International Exhibition of 1862 was at the time being taken down at South Kensington, and this was bought to the site and re-erected. Financial difficulties meant that the Palace was not opened until 1873. Sixteen days after the formal opening, it burnt down. Rebuilding to the designs of a Mr Johnson started at once and the new Palace was opened in 1875, many new features having been added to the park. The 200 acre (c 83ha) park which surrounded the Palace was opened in July 1863 and included 10 acres (c 4ha) of the grounds of the adjacent Grove estate, purchased in 1863. The layout was designed by Alexander McKenzie, who chose an informal landscape style, in direct contrast

to the formal approach used at the Crystal Palace, and kept in view that the place was a park rather than a flower garden, and so required general effects rather than minute detail.

Efforts to improve the financial situation of the series of companies who ran the Palace resulted in parliamentary powers being obtained in 1877 to sell off 80 acres (c 33ha) of the grounds north of the Palace for housing. The land to the west of Alexandra Park Road, including what became Grove Avenue, was sold off in the late 1870s and used for housing. Bills in the 1880s and 1890s to sell off the whole of the park for building were however unsuccessful. Land to the east of the northern end of The Avenue was also later sold, with the subsequent development of Vallance and Elgin Roads; houses were also built to either side of The Avenue itself.

Following an Act of Parliament, in 1901 the Alexandra Palace and Park Trust was set up, administered by the local authorities. It required that the Trustees maintain the Palace and Park and keep them 'available for the free use and recreation of the public forever'. Only 173 acres (c 72ha) were purchased, despite the 1864 Act which had specified that 240 acres (100ha) were to be devoted to public recreation in perpetuity. In 1935, the BBC leased the eastern part of the Palace; the first public transmissions were made from here in 1936. In 1967, the Palace and park were handed over to the Greater London Council. In 1980, the Palace again caught fire, the damage being followed by a programme of restoration and development by Haringey Borough Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Alexandra Park, c 76ha, lies to the north of Hornsey, north-east of Muswell Hill and to the west of Wood Green. The site is surrounded by dense housing except to the east where the boundary is formed by the railway line. The Palace stands on a natural platform with extensive views over London to the south. The land falls steeply from the platform to the south-east and north-east.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the park from the north is at the south end of The Avenue and leads directly to the terrace on the north side of Alexandra Palace. As first laid out, the park was entered via the gate off the west end of Alexandra Park Road, and The Avenue, lined with chestnuts, led through the park.

A second entrance is situated at the south end of Bedford Road at the north-east corner of the site. From here a drive leads south-west across the site to the north-east corner of the Palace platform.

There are also entrances from the north off Alexandra Park Road; into the west side of the park from the south end of Grove Avenue; and north from the junction of Muswell Hill and Priory Road, into the south end of the park. The entrance from Duke's Avenue, under the railway arch, was opened in 1906, mainly to provide access from Muswell Hill to the new tram terminus.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The original Alexandra Palace was the exhibition building from the Great International Exhibition of 1862 which was re-erected in Alexandra Park and opened in 1873. It burnt down sixteen days after the opening but was rebuilt by Meeson and Johnson and re-opened in 1875. The building was again destroyed by fire in 1980. Alexandra Palace (listed grade II) was restored and re-opened in 1988 and now provides facilities for exhibitions, conferences, and an ice-rink.

The Palace stands on a natural platform c 76m above the level of the railway to the east, from where there are extensive views. Originally at the centre of the park, due to subsequent housing development the Palace now stands towards the west side of the site.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The Palace forms the focus of the park. To the south-east, the ground slopes steeply down towards the southern boundary. When laid out, this was set with a pattern of informal walks leading down through lawns set with specimen trees, shrubs, and informal bedding. The arrangement has since been simplified. Due east of the Palace, a miniature golf course was added in the 1920s, one of several sports facilities put in at this time. On the upper slopes of the park north of this is an oval, hedge-enclosed rose garden at the centre of which is a fountain, moved here following the fire in 1980 from its original site in the Italian Garden which occupied the courtyard of the Palace between the Great Hall and the western conservatory. On the level ground at the foot of the hill is a race course (opened in 1868), the centre of which is now used as a cricket ground. Between the rose garden and the east entrance is the site of the Banqueting Hall and former diving pavilion and tank.

To the north of the Palace is a substantial terrace, c 300m long by c 50m wide, supported by Italianate arcades. This covered the new railway station (closed in 1954) from which a branch line ran to Highgate, giving a through-connection to King Cross and City termini. Beyond the northern end of this feature a substantial area of hard standing has been put in, used for events and car parking.

The main feature in the northern part of the park is the irregular boating lake which lies immediately north of the Palace. This was one of a series of ornamental pools formed by the damming of the stream which originally ran down the western boundary of the site. Originally it formed the setting for a water village, constructed on piles within it. The rest of the lakes were lost as part of the sale of land in the late 1870s. Until the 1880s a permanent circus, with provision for seating an audience of 3000, was situated to the east of The Avenue. The land was sold for housing and developed in the 1880s.

To the south-west of the Palace, the Park continues beyond Grove Avenue as an area known as The Grove, linking the site to Muswell Hill station. A miniature Japanese village, exhibited at the Vienna Exhibition of 1873, was re-erected in this area, placed in its own miniature landscape laid out by a Japanese gardener. It was burnt down in 1897, to be replaced, in the 1920s, by tennis courts. In 1911, a chalet was built in The Grove to

accompany the bandstand which had already been put up. In the 1920s, a new avenue was planted and an area was made for dancing.

Although the site has been subject to a number of alterations, the arrangement of the original path system can still be traced in most areas of the park.

ALEXANDRA PALACE

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1268256

Date first listed: 30-Sep-1996

Date of most recent amendment: 30-Jan-2012

List Entry Name: Alexandra Palace including former Alexandra Palace Station to North

Statutory Address 1: Alexandra Palace including former Alexandra Palace Station to North, Muswell Hill, London Borough of Haringey N22

Summary

Former International Exhibition Hall and 'People's Palace'. Rebuilt 1873-5 by John Johnson and Alfred Meeson following fire damage to the first building of 1868-73 by the same architects. Built by Kelk and Lucas. Restored 1980-88, following second fire in 1980, by the Alexandra Palace Development team led by Dr Peter Smith. Various C20 alterations before the second fire.

The former Alexandra Palace Station building of 1873 stands immediately to N of the Palace. No platforms or other associated structures survive.

Reasons for Designation

Alexandra Palace and the former Alexandra Palace Railway Station are designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Historic interest: a rare survival of a large-scale Victorian exhibition and entertainment complex, and for the surviving BBC studios where the world's first high-definition television programme was

transmitted in 1936; also the complete set of Victorian stage machinery in the theatre; * Architectural interest: for the surviving Victorian fabric and internal spaces, as described above * The former railway station has special interest as a well-detailed building in the Italianate style, and for close historical associations with Alexandra Palace; it has strong visual group value with Alexandra Palace

History

The spectacular success of the Great Exhibition of 1851 inspired similar events worldwide. The idea of a 'People's Palace' in north London was propagated by the architect Owen Jones (1809-76) who had designed much of the interior décor of Paxton's Crystal Palace. Although his plans for a vast iron and glass building never materialised (mainly on grounds of cost), in 1863, after five or six years' planning, a former dairy farm on high ground between Muswell Hill, Wood Green and Hornsey began to be developed by the Alexandra Park Co Ltd as a north London rival to the Crystal Palace. The building from the Great International Exhibition of 1862 was then being dismantled in South Kensington, and this was acquired by the company, although financial difficulties delayed its re-erection. Work did not actually begin until 1868 when parts of that structure, designed by Captain Fowke, were reused in the new building designed by Alfred Meeson and John Johnson. Only in 1873 did the Alexandra Palace open as 'The Peoples' Palace', a recreation centre and visitor attraction for north Londoners. This was serviced by a new railway line from Highgate Station which terminated at a station alongside the north terrace. Two weeks later the palace was virtually destroyed by fire. A replacement building opened two years later, also designed by Meeson and Johnson. Covering seven acres it was centred on the Great Hall with its immense steam-powered Willis Organ, while four corner towers each supported 16,000 gallon water tanks supplied by steam pumps from the New River Company's reservoirs.

Palace and park faced successive financial difficulties, closure and changes in ownership. The theatre/music hall had been unsuccessful from the outset, partly due to poor sight lines and acoustics. No provision was made for moving scenery on or off stage. A mechanised timber stage was designed and installed by the Grieve family of stage carpenters and scenic artists and was ingeniously adapted to compensate for the idiosyncrasies of the theatre design. The theatre however only began to return a profit once film shows were introduced in the early 1900s, which also attracted more people to the palace complex as a whole. The Palace closed during the Great War; during this time it was initially used to house refugees, including those coming from Belgium, and later for the internment of German prisoners of war. The theatre was refurbished under the management of W Macqueen-Pope and reopened in 1922, but it ceased to be used as a cinema the following year when it was leased to Archie Pitt - Gracie Fields' first husband - who used the stage for rehearsals.

The BBC's involvement with Alexandra Palace dates from June 1935 when it leased the eastern part of the building - 31,840 sq ft within the south-east wing and a further 24,525 sq ft comprising the theatre and associated rooms - following advice from the government-backed Television Advisory Committee that it was the most suitable site for the development of high-definition television, including the testing of two rival systems.

To facilitate broadcasting, the cupola on the south-east tower was removed and a 225 ft lattice mast was erected, which gave an aerial height of 460 ft above sea level. Below, the tower was converted to offices and the colonnade arches were bricked up. On the ground floor two former coffee rooms became transmitter halls for the two companies, while the tea room between them housed the shared transmitter. The first floor was converted to two studios separated by control rooms and rooms for film scanning, with dressing and make-up rooms across a corridor. Test transmissions took place in August 1936.

On 2 November 1936 the BBC introduced the first, regular, high-definition, 405-line television service in the world. Before that there had been episodic low-definition broadcasting in Britain and elsewhere, for instance in the USA and Germany. Later advances also took place there: tele-recording, colour broadcasting, the launch of the Open University, and video tape demonstrations.

Studio A was equipped with the relatively well-developed Marconi-EMI television system employing four Emitron cameras, Studio B with the more experimental and varied equipment installed by Baird Television Ltd. In January 1937 the decision was taken to adopt the Marconi-EMI system as the London Television Standard for the future of television. The Baird equipment was removed and by September Marconi-EMI equipment was in Studio B too. At the same time a Central Control Room was constructed in the former Baird Control Room to enable all programme sources - from the two studios, outside broadcasts, and film channels - to be controlled separately. Almost immediately technical and production standards improved, and over the next two years the annual number of hours of television broadcast grew fourfold to over 900 hours in 1938. With this came an expansion in set ownership, which on the outbreak of war stood at 20,000 sets.

The BBC Television Service shut down two days before war was declared in September 1939, closing with a Mickey Mouse cartoon. Transmitters were adapted to radio counter-measures against German bombers, using settings derived from Enigma intercepts to jam or 'bend' German navigational radio beams known as the 'Knickebein', and later the X- and Y-Gerät Systems, thereby giving important protection to London and the Home Counties from Luftwaffe attacks, notably during the Blitz. This was one of a number of installations for this purpose.

Broadcasting resumed on the day of the Victory parade on 7 June 1946, and although take up was slow due to post-war conditions, there were technical advances such as the recording of outside events which, for instance, allowed film of the 1953 coronation to be rushed by plane to America. After the BBC acquired the former Gainsborough film studios in Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush, Alexandra Palace closed as a production centre, apparently for good, in 1954. However, it reopened months later as the home of BBC TV News, which it remained until 1969, colour television being launched in 1967. Then, until 1981, Alexandra Palace was from where the Open University was broadcast.

In 1980 a second major fire seriously damaged the Palace (only Palm Court and the area occupied by the BBC escaped damage). After restoration of the central hall and west end the Palace reopened in 1988.

The former Alexandra Palace railway station was the terminus of a short branch line from Highgate station and stands immediately adjacent to the north-west of the Palace. It was built by the Muswell Hill Railway and opened in 1873 along with the Palace. In 1911 the line was taken over by the Great Northern Railway (GNR), becoming part of the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) in 1923. In 1935 London Underground planned to take over the line from LNER together with the LNER's routes from Finsbury Park to Edgware and High Barnet, modernise it for use with electric trains and amalgamate it with the Northern Line. Works were completed from Highgate to High Barnet and Mill Hill East and that section was incorporated into the Northern Line, but further works on the Highgate and Alexandra Palace section were postponed and the line continued under the operation of the LNER. Wartime economies meant that services were reduced to rush hours only, so that after the war the dwindling passenger numbers and a shortage of funds led to the cancellation of the unfinished works. Passenger services to Alexandra Palace station and the other stations on the line ceased on 3 July 1954.

Alexandra Park is included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Details

MATERIALS: cast-iron and steel columns with walls of white Huntingdon and yellow stock brick embellished with patterned red brickwork in the Italianate style. Classical mouldings and ornaments such as cornices, volutes, keystones, lions' heads etc. made of Portland cement.

PLAN: the Palace covers about seven and a half acres. Symmetrical plan about a great central hall which corresponds with the central transept of the original building and runs between the north and south frontispieces that survived from that building. Flanking the great hall were an Italian garden to the west and an exhibition hall to the east, beyond them were two conservatories. The entire south front was occupied by refreshment rooms including a large banqueting hall; the corresponding spaces on the north front held a concert room and a large theatre. Most of the internal walls defining this plan survive, but the roofs have been replaced, and open areas roofed over. The concert hall and refreshment rooms have gone. The theatre auditorium to the north east and the BBC studios to the south, adapted from former refreshment rooms in 1935, survive.

EXTERIOR: north elevation: Least fire-damaged area. Central frontispiece with pedimented gable and large, recessed rose window (now blocked) above entrance porch which connected to the approach from the former railway station. East and west elevations: entrance fronts and vestibules behind largely rebuilt 1980-88 following original form and reusing structural ironwork in part. Palm Court entrance, now main public entrance, to west has pedimented gable and arcaded ground floor. South elevation: central pedimented and gabled frontispiece with large recessed rose window (reinstated after fire) above entrance porch. Patterned brickwork in gable. Arch

flanked by tall three-light windows separated by half columns with segmental pediment above. Two storey, fifteen bay colonnade either side, divided into three sections and terminating in square towers. The upper colonnade is arched with stone columns, the lower has flat arches resting on brick piers. The tower at the south east corner was adapted in 1935 to house offices and studios for the BBC with metal canted bays and the addition of a tall steel latticed girder mast on top.

INTERIOR: survival of the original interior is patchy. The principal areas of interest lie in the eastern part of the building: the theatre auditorium in the north east and the television studios in the BBC wing in the south east corner. The theatre auditorium has fittings of interest dating from 1875. These include a balcony to the rear, a large raked stage, a proscenium with niches and, below the stage, a complete set of Victorian stage machinery designed by Messrs Grieve and Son. The machinery comprises a series of wooden bridges, traps, pulleys and levers to enable large scene transformations in pantomime and melodrama, and the projection of props and actors onto the stage. It is the most pristine example in the country and therefore of particular special interest. Neoclassical decoration on either side of the auditorium dates from the 1920s when W Macqueen-Pope was manager. The former BBC studios 'A' and 'B' have historic rather than architectural interest. A significant feature in studio 'A' is the glazed control room or 'gallery'. Some original doors to the studios with brass porthole windows survive. To west of the studios the original staircase survives with ramped wooden handrail, turned balusters and chamfered newel posts. Some original cast-iron columns with capitals survive on the ground floor in this part of the building. Some areas of the Palace have been demolished and are therefore of no interest; these are the unroofed spaces at the south west and north west corners, and the area occupied by the skating rink. The Great Hall has been renewed sympathetically following its almost total destruction in the 1980 fire. The columns and glazed roof were not reinstated; instead a new pitched roof slung below tubular lattice girders was constructed, with a ceiling of tensioned acoustic fabric imitating a barrel vault. It is the overall spatial quality of this interior and that of the west hall which are of interest. The original Willis organ, restored in the 1980s, stands to the north of the Great Hall. The Palm Court to the west, originally a conservatory, escaped serious fire damage, has cast-iron columns and piers with foliated capitals. Roof has been reglazed.

FORMER RAILWAY STATION: now a community centre. The style is Italianate to complement that of the Palace. Small, single-storey building with gabled cross wing and pitched slate roof, built in white bricks with red brick banding and dressings. Round-headed keyed windows linked by string courses; segmental headed entrance. Rusticated angle piers. Cross wing has roundel in gable and moulded brick parapet. Moulded brick chimney stacks. The interior has no features of interest.

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 4 September 2023 to amend the description and to reformat the text to current standards