

# VICTORIA PAVILION, MORECAMBE, LANCASHIRE



## Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment



**Oxford Archaeology North**

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**IWA Architects and The  
Friends of the Victoria  
Pavillion**

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## SUMMARY

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by IWA Architects, on behalf of the Friends of the Victoria Pavillion, to undertake a cultural heritage desk-based assessment of the Victoria Pavilion, also known as the Winter Gardens, Morecambe, Lancashire (NGR 343096 464395). The Pavilion, which is a statutory designated Grade II\* Listed Building, survives as a heavily ornamented Victorian theatre with two horseshoe-shaped balconies and eight boxes either side of the proscenium.

The desk-based assessment, undertaken in February 2006, focused on the history of the Victoria Pavilion and its development within the larger Winter Gardens complex. The study included visits to the Lancashire Record Office, Morecambe Library and Lancaster Library.

The Victoria Pavilion was opened in 1897 as an addition to the People's Palace and Winter Gardens, which had been in existence since 1878. The Pavilion was built on the site of the complex's sea water swimming baths, and the two buildings were advertised as the Victoria Pavilion and the Oriental Ballroom, but after the death of Queen Victoria were renamed the Kings Pavilion and Empress Ballroom. In March 1909 the property was acquired by William Henry Broadhead of Manchester, well known for his chain of northern music halls. After the Great War of 1914-18 the theatre had a policy of showing silent pictures during the winter months, and variety shows in the summer season, as well as catering for such events as the annual Music Festival. In 1933, a group of local businessmen floated a new company and purchased the block for £24,000. There was a grand opening on March 26th 1934, and the hard work of Harry Smirk, who travelled great distances to see and book performers, saw the variety theatre become one of the most popular and successful in the country. The list of artists who appeared contained household names of stage, screen and radio, including George Formby and Laurel and Hardy.

After a short period of closure following the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the theatre reopened with performances of plays, large musicals, opera and ballet, adding to the popular variety shows. Moss Empires Ltd., the largest live show organisation in the country, acquired a controlling interest in the Winter Gardens in 1953, which by this time included the theatre, ballroom, restaurant and land occupied by the fairground and car park. Val Parnell was the managing director of the company and the Winter Gardens became part of a huge chain of theatres throughout the country. Moss Empires leased the complex to Trust House Forte in 1968.

The theatre has remained closed since 1977, when a combination of poor management, unsustainable financial losses, and a negative report on the state of the building by the County Architect, saw the curtain fall for the final time at the end of summer season. The adjacent ballroom was closed the following year and demolished in 1982.

Sympathetic restoration of the Victoria Pavilion will be of great cultural heritage benefit. With the aid of imaginative redevelopment, the Victoria Pavilion could become a valuable tourist and community amenity for Morecambe and the North

West, and provide an attractive and pleasing aesthetic element for the town once again.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank IWA Architects for commissioning the project. Thanks are also due to Evelyn and Mike Archer of the Friends of the Victoria Pavillion for providing valuable advice and access to the theatre.

The desk-based assessment was researched and written by Tony Lee, with the drawings produced by Mark Tidmarsh. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by IWA Architects, on behalf of the Friends of the Victoria Pavilion, to undertake a cultural heritage desk-based assessment of the Victoria Pavilion, also known as the Winter Gardens, Morecambe (Fig 1; NGR 343096 464395). The Friends of the Victoria Pavilion have commissioned IWA Architects to undertake an options appraisal of the building, of which this report will form part, for the purposes of restoration and redevelopment, to provide a multi-functional entertainment and leisure venue.
- 1.1.2 The desk-based assessment, undertaken in February 2006, comprised a search of both published and unpublished information held in the archives of the County Record Office, Preston, and visits to Morecambe Library and Lancaster library.
- 1.1.3 This report sets out the results of the desk-based assessment in the form of a short document, outlining the findings, followed by a statement of heritage significance, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed redevelopment.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was not required for this project but the programme of work was undertaken in full compliance with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

### 2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1 The study focused on the Victoria Pavilion building. The building is, however, inextricably linked to the wider Winter Gardens complex: the now demolished ballroom, and the former fairground, gardens, baths and aquarium. Therefore, all of these have been given consideration, in order to place the results of the assessment into historical context.
- 2.2.2 **Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR):** the Lancashire SMR was consulted for Listed Building information regarding the Victoria Pavilion.
- 2.2.3 **Lancashire Record Office (LRO), Preston:** the LRO was visited to consult relevant maps and secondary published sources. It was intended to consult the building plan for the 'Baths etc Winter Gardens' of 1875 (LRO MBMO/HE 7/1251/0, submitted by Waugh and Issit, Plan no. 372), and the building plan for the 'Grand Pavilion adjoining Winter Gardens' (MBMO/HE 7/1251/0, submitted by Thomas Baxter and Richard Abbot, Plan no.1965). Both of these plans were found to be missing from the archive, however.
- 2.2.4 **Morecambe Library:** the reference section of the library was visited to consult their extensive archive of relevant primary and secondary sources.
- 2.2.5 **Lancaster Library:** the reference section of the library was visited to consult relevant secondary sources and maps.
- 2.2.6 **Oxford Archaeology North:** OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the LRO on completion of the project. A paper copy of the report will be forwarded to the Lancashire SMR.

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## 3. BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 LOCATION

- 3.1.1 The Victoria Pavilion is located on Marine Central Road and occupies a dominant position on Morecambe's seafront (Fig 1). Morecambe is situated on the southern side of Morecambe Bay in Lancashire, four miles north-west of Lancaster.

### 3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** the historical background has considered not only the development of the Victoria Pavilion, but also that of the adjacent Ballroom and all associated leisure facilities that over the years have been collectively known as the Winter Gardens. A considerable amount of the information regarding the origins of the entertainment complex has been collated from the proliferation of newspaper articles that appeared in the Morecambe Visitor in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the Winter Gardens was threatened with closure and demolition. Principal amongst these were: *When they fought to get into the Winter Gardens* (by Terry Potter, 3rd January 1979), and *It began just over 100 years ago...* (by John R. Spalding, 3rd February 1982).
- 3.2.2 Morecambe as a town grew up from the villages of Poulton-le-Sands, Bare and Torrisholme. Early maps show the three hamlets surrounded by fields and marshes. In 1820, Poulton-le-Sands was known only as a small fishing village on the shores of Morecambe Bay, but it was well served with links to other districts. The Lancaster Canal provided a regular service to Kendal, Lancaster and Preston; turnpike roads connected Preston, Lancaster and the North, while Richmond turnpike provided links with Yorkshire. Although almost unknown outside the vicinity, the area was, however, frequented as a bathing place. In 1829 coaches ran between Lancaster and The Bull Hotel in Poulton 'to suit the times of bathing' (Wilman 2003).
- 3.2.3 The passing of the Morecambe Railway and Harbour Act of 1846, and the building of the North Western Railway Company line, cemented the links with the principal industrial towns of the North (Kelsall 2003). The new harbour at Morecambe brought steamers from Liverpool and Ireland, bringing passengers, cargo and cattle (Wilman 2003). The name 'Morecambe' was officially adopted by the resort in 1889 (Mitchell 2005).
- 3.2.4 **The Winter Gardens before the Victoria Pavilion:** an unoccupied piece of land at the south-western edge of the growing resort became the site of the new swimming baths, built by the Morecambe Baths and Winter Gardens Company in 1876. The seawater baths were entered from Bath Street and were surrounded by the gardens that gave the Winter Gardens its name. The total cost of the baths was £12,000 and an advert in the Lancaster Guardian dated May 18, 1877, stated that the baths were ready for the public. The facilities included three plunge baths, 24 private, and two medicated baths (Plate 1).

Seawater for the baths and aquarium was collected in four large tanks which were situated beneath the former wooden jetty situated approximately 50m from the promenade. Remains of these tanks were discovered when the wooden jetty was demolished in 1982 (Brindle 1982). A reminder of the swimming baths can be found in the names of the Bath Hotel on Northumberland Avenue, and Bath Street, which at that time ran full length across the back of the Winter Gardens, but was later shortened when the Victoria Pavilion was built.

- 3.2.5 In April 1877 a proposal was made for three restaurants to be erected next to the Baths: a first and second class restaurant, and, behind these, a third class restaurant for 'excursionists', who would, on the payment of 2d, be able to enter without being required to buy anything. The site, adjacent to Craven Terrace, was purchased from the North-Western Railway Company and consisted of 5025 square yards (Fig 3) and cost £10,551. On 5th June 1878, the Lancaster Gazette listed the attractions to be found at the Morecambe Baths, Winter Gardens and Aquarium during Whit week: *'Opening days, June 10-13, with band contest and grand aquarium, 30ft long with salt and freshwater fish, ferneries, fountains, plants, fine arts gallery and pure filtered sea water, swimming and private baths.'* The advert also stated that *'Prof. Cavell, the Channel Swimmer, and his 'clever children' would entertain during Whit week.'* There was a *'splendid restaurant with first, second and third excursionist departments and a selection and quadrille band will be in attendance.'* Originally known as 'The People's Palace', the principal building of the entertainment complex was described as being in the Italian style and cost the grand sum of £48,000 (Bingham 1990, 88) (Plate 2). Spread between two domes, the building had a large glazed arch and a correspondingly enormous semi-circular window facing the western sun. The interior (Plate 3) was fronted with exotic plants, although these were beset with problems: frost in the winter penetrated the glazing and killed the palms, and, in summer, the magnified sun wilted the foliage and overheated the patrons (*op cit*, 89). Accordingly, in 1885 it was decided to slate the whole roof with the exception of the space necessary for lighting purposes.
- 3.2.6 In the early 1890s the entertainment at the People's Palace included Ada Webster and her troupe of lady swimmers, whose performances in the large bath were close to 'other living curiosities of the deep' in the aquarium. In 1891 the much vaunted ten hours of continuous entertainment was extended to twelve hours. The 'all for sixpence' admission charge included dancing to M. Jules Rivieries' band, an exhibition of 160 engravings of Rondell's Shakespeare and a brass band (*op cit*, 147).
- 3.2.7 In 1896 the People's Palace, Baths and Aquarium was sold by Mr W Morgan to Messrs T Baxter and RB Abbott, who were both directors of the West End Pier Company. It was their intention to float a company named the 'Morecambe Winter Gardens Company', with a capital of £45,000, to carry out construction alterations and improvements to the premises. It was proposed thoroughly to overhaul and renovate the interior, enlarge the stage and improve the dressing room accommodation. The aquarium was to be removed and a promenade erected a few feet above the floor level, and the

basement, originally used as a dance room, to be converted into a first class restaurant. The sea water baths were to be cleared away and a new theatre built.

- 3.2.8 ***The Victoria Pavilion, the early years:*** in 1897 the Victoria Pavilion was opened and the two buildings were advertised as ‘The Victoria Pavilion and Oriental Ballroom’. The Pavilion was designed by the Manchester firm of Messrs Magnal and Littlewood, with the sculpted relief in the auditorium by Bardell. Once through the carved walnut doors, a marble staircase took patrons up to the wide red carpeted promenade corridors, leading to the massive auditorium with its roof span of 118 feet, built by Handyside’s Ironworks of Derby (Christian 1961), and considered to be the largest in the world at the time for a place of entertainment. The stage was larger than that of any London theatre, and was adorned by an enormous fire curtain painted by Lionel Hart to resemble Heysham village (Bingham 1990, 148). A contemporary newspaper article gave a very complimentary description of the theatre (Plate 4). A page from a Winter Gardens programme from 1897 details the entertainment on offer on Monday August 16th, which included an orchestra, acrobats, comedians, singers, dancers, jugglers, and a strongman (Plate 5). Observant patrons may have noticed a spelling mistake as they crossed the threshold of the new building: the mosaic tiled entranceway read ‘The Victoria Pavillion’; the error was blamed on an Italian craftsman and can still be seen.
- 3.2.9 In 1898, the Victoria Pavilion was internally rebuilt and a Grand and Upper circle were created, bringing the number of seats to 2,200, and total building costs to £100,000. An article from the Lancaster Observer dated the 15th April 1898 enthused about the renovated building and the entertainment on offer *‘the immense pavilion which, now that it is nearly finished, strikes everybody who enters it with its beauty and size, was on Monday filled with pleasure seekers. The room for dancing was crowded to excess. Music for dancing was played by Devine’s Band, but a listener could hardly distinguish it amid the chatter of so many excited tongues. The entertainment in the pavilion was an excellent one. Miss Norah Emerald gave a couple of pretty songs and dances, and was received with favour. Vasco, the ‘mad musician’ was extremely humorous, and has a command over a number of musical instruments, many of which he plays extremely well. Alexandra and Bertie, on a balanced trapeze, gave a clear though dangerous performance. The Donaldson Brothers and Ardell were as screamingly funny as ever in their ‘Fun at the Zoo’, Madame Holland sang ‘Whisper and I shall Hear’ very pleasingly, and was encored. There were also other excellent turns and the management may be congratulated on the good start made this season. So far as can be judged, the popularity of the place is as great as ever.’*
- 3.2.10 The Victoria Pavilion saw entertainment other than live theatre from very early in its existence. Animated picture shows were a popular feature, as well as lantern slides of still pictures. The first lengthy cinema showing was of the Diamond Jubilee procession shown at the Winter Gardens in 1897. From then on there were ‘two representations each evening, 7.30 and 9.30’ which included pictures of the Oberamergau Passion Play. Newsreels comprised the



main part of the first programmes with ‘living pictures’ of the Boxer Rebellion (1900), the Boer War (1900) and ‘Lord Kitchener returning in triumph’ (1903) (*op cit*, 149). Although the Winter Gardens complex was popular, especially in the summer months, the investment had been a massive one, and the owners found themselves increasingly undercapitalised, a fact compounded by the slump which followed the Second Boer War of 1899-1902. Morecambe was hit particularly badly by this national slump, rows of houses stood empty and bankruptcy was common. In 1908 the company which owned the Winter Gardens went into liquidation; the buildings were put up for auction at the Midland Hotel in August 1908, but no buyers were found. The programme of sale particulars (*Appendix 1*) and plan (Fig 4) produced for this auction is, however, a valuable historical document, as it contains a wealth of detailed information about the Winter Gardens.

- 3.2.11 ***The Winter Gardens under new ownership:*** in 1909, the Winter Gardens came to the attention of WH Broadhead and Sons’ Variety Circuit, who were the owners of a chain of northern Music Halls. The company bought the complex and set about completely renovating the interior and adding a balcony and glazed canopy, and six green and white kiosks fronting the promenade, which replaced a jumble of stalls and shacks (Plates 8 and 9). On the other side of the Winter Gardens the old cattle fields became the resort’s main funfair. Along the promenade was a mini rink, automatic parlour and the Verandah Cafe; behind was the Katzenjammer Castle ‘a scream from start to finish’ and a zoo containing a young alligator and a giant lizard. ‘See a living boa constrictor coiled round a man’s throat’, ran the advert for the opening of the grounds on Maundy Thursday 1908 (*op cit*, 149). Following the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the Victoria Pavilion and Oriental ballroom were renamed the Kings Pavilion and Empress Ballroom, and a sketch plan showing the layout of some of the extensive improvements appeared in a contemporary newspaper (Fig 5). During this time the entrance fee was sixpence, and this entitled patrons to move between the theatre and ballroom, or below the ballroom to the restaurant, which later became the billiard room and bar. There was also a temperance bar in the theatre.
- 3.2.12 As the largest place of entertainment in the resort, the Winter Gardens was considered of paramount importance to Morecambe, and shows were kept running by Broadhead long after the summer visitors had departed. ‘*The Winter Gardens intend to make Morecambe very lively this winter*’ reported the Morecambe Visitor on September 11th, 1911. The newspaper added ‘*besides a three-hour picture show each night in the Victoria Pavilion, there is to be dancing in the Empress Ballroom not to mention bowling and admission to the grounds, which are now looking very charming. Who will venture to say that the winter season of 1911 will be dead and dull?*’
- 3.2.13 During and after the First World War (1914-18) the theatre had a policy of showing silent pictures during the winter months and variety shows during the summer season, as well as catering for such events as the annual Music Festival and the annual prize giving ceremony for local schoolchildren. ‘Stirring scenes’ were witnessed in the Spring of 1915 when Lord Derby’s Band visited the Winter Gardens, where the allied flags were unfurled to

recitations of 'Abide With Me' (*op cit*, 156). Among the many innovations at the Winter Gardens in the 1920s, perhaps the most famous of all was made by the fairground employee Mr Frank Ainsworth, when he introduced the game of Bingo to the world.

- 3.2.14 The annual Trades Exhibition was held at The Winter Gardens each spring in the early 1920s and demonstrated the growing commercial importance of the town. The Winter Gardens continued under the Broadhead regime until 1933, when a group of local businessmen purchased the block £24,000.
- 3.2.15 **1930s and 40s, the Golden Age of the Winter Gardens:** the Chairman of the new ownership company was Mr Harry Smirk; other associates were Alderman JW Carleton, Councillor William Birkett Clarke, Alfred Edmondson, AR Walmsley and Dick Inman. After large-scale renovations and alterations had been carried out, there was a grand opening on March 26th 1934 (Plate 10). The directors had hoped that their sweeping changes and lavish expenditure would bring about instant success but they were disappointed; at first the Winter Gardens failed to attract sufficient numbers to justify the expense. Eventually business picked up, however, after Mr Smirk retired from business and took a more active role in the day-to-day running of the theatre. Slowly but surely Morecambe's Winter Gardens became one of the most important theatres in the country. Many acts were seen in Morecambe before London, and many shows had their debut in Morecambe before going to London. The successes of these times were largely due to Mr Smirk, who travelled thousands of miles to see and book shows himself, rather than leave it to the agencies, who had proved unsatisfactory.
- 3.2.16 The 1930s and 40s were undoubtedly the 'Golden Age' of the Winter Gardens; the list of artistes who appeared contained household names from stage, screen and radio, such as Layton and Johnson, George Formby and Laurel and Hardy. There were also the big bands of Jack Hylton, Jack Payne, Roy Fox, Billy Cotton and Geraldo. On September 3rd 1939, Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels were booked to appear, but all the theatres in the land were closed due to the outbreak of war.
- 3.2.17 The wartime ban on indoor entertainment lasted only ten days and the theatre was reopened quickly. As well as the best in variety, there were now performances of plays, large musicals, opera and ballet. Appearing were stars such as Flanagan and Allan in Panto, Lupino Lane in 'Me and My Girl', Richard Tauber in 'Land of Smiles' and the 'Dancing Years' of Ivor Novello. During the war years Morecambe was considered a safe area and became home to hundreds of evacuees, civil servants and the Royal Air Force. The gardens at the rear of the Pavilion were replaced by a large car park, which was used for drilling thousands of RAF recruits. During the day the theatre was used for lectures and instructions, and at night played to a full house. The theatre flourished more than ever, its 2,000 seats were filled night after night, and the venue was on the list of all the major show business stars of the day. Another notable 'scoop' for the Winter Gardens occurred when the Labour Party chose the venue for their annual party conference in October 1952. 15,000 delegates and 5,000 press men were in attendance, and, coming as it

did after Labour's defeat by Churchill's Tories in 1951, the conference attracted worldwide attention (*op cit*, 257).

- 3.2.18 Until his death in 1953, Mr Harry Smirk continued his progressive booking policies and the theatre was as popular as ever. Virtually anyone who was famous in show business appeared at Morecambe's Winter Gardens, whether in acting, singing, comedy, variety, or dance bands. The bill for the year before Mr Smirk's death aptly illustrates this point: Ann Shelton; Max and Harry Nesbitt; Norman Evans; Max Wall; Beryl Reid; Peter Brough and Archie Andrews; Donald Peers; Al Reid; Frankie Howard; Winifred Atwell, as well as the dance bands: Ted Heath; Jack Parnell; Harry Roy; Syd Phillips; Vic Lewis; Geraldo; and Edmundo Ros. Mr Smirk's popularity frequently found him socialising with the entertainment stars of the day (Plate11).
- 3.2.19 **Moss Empires:** in 1953, Moss Empires Ltd., the largest live-show organisation in the country, acquired a controlling interest in the theatre, ballroom and restaurant, and the land occupied by the fairground and car park. This was, at the time, the largest property deal ever executed in the town, with the amount of money involved around £146,000. Soon after the takeover, redecoration and reseating of the theatre's upper circle took place. The Winter Gardens thus became part of a huge chain of theatres: as well as owning London's Palladium, the Prince of Wales Theatre and the Hippodrome, Moss Empires Ltd were in possession of variety theatres in most of the other major towns and cities in Britain. The directors of the company were known as the 'Kings of Live Entertainment', and included Prince Littler and Val Parnell.
- 3.2.20 Throughout the 1950s there were always three pantomimes in the winter season at the Winter Gardens, interspersed with other shows such as the Royal Imperial Circus or Emile Littler's *When Knights Were Bold*. The Winter Gardens always outshone the other theatres in Morecambe: a crystal Cinderella coach pulled by four real Shetland ponies and Pat Kirkwood's swinging across the stage as Peter Pan in were typical examples. *Snow White* in 1956 featured seven dwarfs played by 'seven real little men, a treat for old and young (*op cit*, 269). The Carla Rosa Company provided opera and major orchestras played occasionally at the Winter Gardens. Marie Rambert brought her own Ballet Rambert in 1950, and Saddlers Wells Ballet visited in 1955 (*op cit*, 269).
- 3.2.21 Early in 1958, managing director Val Parnell implemented a bold new policy for the theatre for the coming season and the following winter. Departing from the previous policy of a different variety show every week, a new resident summer show was planned, featuring such top stars as Alma Cogan, comedian Ken Platt, Morecambe and Wise, and pianist Semprini. The following winter there was a short repertory season to fill the gap closed by the closure of Morecambe's Royalty Theatre, which had been the only live show in the area outside Blackpool during the winter. Leslie A Macdonall assumed the role of company managing director in 1959, and this heralded the departure of Louis Benjamin, who, over the previous five-and-a-half years, had been one of the most successful managers the Winter Gardens had ever seen. Benjamin was responsible for the innovative management that had enabled the venue to weather a general slump in theatre attendances, when many other theatres

closed. In the theatre the Sunday night concerts had been changed to Sunday concerts with more family appeal, and featured popular vocalists and supporting artistes. These were turned into twice-nightly shows on Sundays, with great success.

- 3.2.22 In the late 1950s, a new entrance was built to the public bar, and the ballroom became the Palm Court; this proved extremely popular with holidaymakers on wet days. In an attempt to counteract a decline in theatre attendance, which was believed to have been caused by the increasing popularity and availability of television sets, the stars of the small screen were increasingly brought into the live shows. The Winter Gardens even called its summer show of 1957 *T.V. Highlights of 1957*. Though eyebrows were raised in some quarters, new 'artistic adult' entertainment began to be allowed on stage in the 1950s (*op cit*, 271). The first exotic note was struck by Della Kay Deare, the Golden Poseuse, at the Winter Gardens in 1951. She belonged to the 'if it moves it's rude' genre, but, over the next two years, there followed less static performances. Warnings announced 'Nude Life Size Beauties not fit for children to see'.
- 3.2.23 The Winter Gardens appeared to have remained largely unaffected by the downturn in Morecambe's economic fortunes that began in the 1960s. After the Pantomime in 1960 there remained dancing on most nights, wrestling and concerts at weekends, a Doyly Carte Gilbert and Sullivan season, as well as popular amateur productions. With the early season came a run of professional shows, featuring such popular names as Adam Faith, John Hanson and David Whitfield. Nineteen Sixty-two saw the Black and White Minstrel Show at the Winter Gardens for the summer season; this proved hugely popular and was repeated in 1964 and 1974. Brian Rix appeared in 'Chase me Comrade' in 1966, his first appearance outside London for 15 years.
- 3.2.24 ***Trust House Forte:*** in 1968 Moss Empires leased the Winter Gardens to Trust House Forte, who handed over the administration of the complex to their leisure division Entam. It is thought that the theatre was left largely unaltered, but in 1969 Entam brought in Robert Nesbitt, to convert the ballroom into the Dixieland Palace Showbar and Coral Reef Bar. This was done by inserting a low false ceiling, thus cutting off the balcony and first floor levels from public use. The former Winter Gardens restaurant became the Golden Fry self-service restaurant, and the Parisian bar was converted into The Crystal Room Amusement Centre. The whole of the lower facade was removed, and replaced by steps leading down to the amusements.
- 3.2.25 For reasons that remain unclear, the theatre remained popular during the 1970s, but regularly made large, ultimately unsustainable financial losses. In 1974 the Black and White Minstrels Show performed for a 13 week summer season; 125,000 people watched the show during this time, but the show lost £13,000. Around 1975 the theatre went into summer-only operation, but the show by Norman Vaughan and Stars from New Faces lost a similar sum of money. In 1977 Holiday Showtime lost £14,000 over its 13 week run. The theatre closed at the end of September when the temporary operating licence expired. The last night of the season attracted a capacity crowd of 1,600 for a show by the Central Band of the RAF. The Mayor of Morecambe, Harry

Holgate, told the audience it was a pity that the theatre had to close, but the City Council would do its best to see something worthy of Morecambe went on the site.

- 3.2.26 Combined with the economic problems Morecambe faced in the 1970s, it seems that poor management of the Winter Gardens by Entam contributed significantly to the decline. A general lack of structural maintenance had taken place: both the internal and external appearance of the buildings was run down, shabby, and advertisements for shows were two years out of date (Jones 1994, 6). The management of the theatre was widely criticised at the time: Richard Condon (Management) Ltd., an acknowledged theatre expert, commented 'Management of the theatre shows a less than competent handling' (*ibid*).
- 3.2.27 It is thought that one of the principal reasons Trust House Forte did not seek to extend the temporary operating licence was due to the findings contained in a confidential report by the County Architect on the structural condition of the buildings. The survey was carried out in early 1977 although not made public until later in the year. According to contemporary newspaper reports of comments made by the City Chief executive, this was due to the negative effect there might have been on audiences on the summer show (Morecambe Visitor, 12th October 1977).
- 3.2.28 In 1977 Trust House Forte announced that they were not prepared to spend the large sum of money required on essential repairs to the Winter Gardens and the theatre failed to reopen the following season. After the adjacent Dixieland Showbar closed the following year the lease holders proposed the demolition of the two buildings and the building of a new hotel, nightclub and entertainment complex on the site. In response the Winter Gardens Action Group was formed to conduct a campaign to safeguard the theatre and the theatre and ballroom were spot listed by English Heritage on October 7th.
- 3.2.29 After planning applications for the demolition of the ballroom were thrown out in 1980 and 1981, the Winter Gardens was sold to the Tyneside company Johnny's Entertainment. The new owners' planning proposals involved the demolition of the ballroom and renovation and reopening of the theatre. Listed building consent was granted for this work, and the following year the ballroom was demolished and replaced with the Pleasureland Amusements, Breakers Snooker Club and The Gardens Disco. The theatre failed to reopen, however, the owners pleading that they hadn't realised the cost of repairing the theatre would be so great.
- 3.2.30 In 1986 the Friends of the Winter Gardens was formed and a restoration appeal broadcast on Granada Television brought 3,000 people to view the building. In the same year the Winter Gardens Amusement Park closed after 78 years. The following year English Heritage declared the Victoria Pavilion to be of 'outstanding architectural and historic interest' for grant aid purposes. Nineteen Ninety saw the purchase of the building by Mr Fred Edmondson, and in 1992 English Heritage and Lancaster City Council upgraded the listed building status to Grade II\* (Jones 1994, 6). The following year the Victoria Pavilion was placed on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register, where it

remains to this day. In 1995 the Buildings at Risk Trust acquired the building and a two-year programme of restoration of the exterior of the building was initiated in 1996, funded by the governments Single Regeneration Budget (£537,000), English Heritage (£400,000) and Lancaster City Council (£200,000). In 1997 the Friends of The Winter Gardens changed their name to the Friends of the Victoria Pavillion, and were granted charitable status. The purchase of the building by the Friends from the current owners, Barnfield Construction, is expected to be completed in February 2006.

### 3.3 MAP / PLAN REGRESSION ANALYSIS

- 3.3.1 ***Ordnance Survey, 1891*** (Figs 2 and 3): these maps were surveyed five years before the Victoria Pavilion was built, and identified the People's Palace and Aquarium. The site of the Pavilion was shown as an open area between the Palace and Cravens Terrace.
- 3.3.2 ***Ground plan of the Winter Gardens, drawn for the auction of the property in 1908*** (Fig 4): the ground plan of the buildings shows that the Pavilion was exactly symmetrical. The layout of the pavilion has changed little in the subsequent 98 years, as can be seen by comparing this plan with the present day ground plan (Fig 11).
- 3.3.3 ***Extract from an unidentified newspaper circa 1909, showing the alterations to the Winter Gardnes being undertaken by the owners, Messrs Broadhead and Sons*** (Fig 5): this shows the layout of the Winter Gardens in some detail for the first time, including the extensive gardens, bowling green, open air dancing board and funfair, with a helter skelter and switchback rides.
- 3.3.4 ***Ordnance Survey, 1913*** (Fig 6): the Winter Gardens were shown as one block; the six shops fronting the pavilion either side of the entrance were also identified on this map.
- 3.3.5 ***Ordnance Survey, 1937*** (Fig 7): the gardens and bowling green were not shown on this map, suggesting that the car park had been built by this time. This would later be used as a parade ground during the years of the Second World War.
- 3.3.6 ***Ordnance Survey, 1967*** (Fig 8): this map is less detailed but shows that the fairground had moved to the area previously occupied by the car park, its former position fronting Marine Road Central having been occupied by a large building.
- 3.3.7 ***Ordnance Survey, 1993*** (Fig 9): the ballroom had been demolished by this time and the map shows a new building: the Pleasureland Amusements. The Victoria Pavilion is confirmed as being vacant, as is one of the six shops fronting the building. The entranceway to the Pavilion is identified as 'store', it remains unclear whether this meant it was used for storage, or was occupied by a shop.

3.3.8 ***Ordnance Survey, 1997*** (Fig 10): all of the shops fronting the Victoria Pavilion were vacant by this time.

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## 4. SIGNIFICANCE

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The Victoria Pavilion has been a Grade II\* listed building since English Heritage upgraded its listed status in 1992. The Pavilion was originally spot listed in 1977 after it became apparent the building was under serious threat from demolition.
- 4.1.2 The following is the information contained in the listed building entry for the Victoria Pavilion, compiled for English Heritage.

MORECAMBE AND HEYSHAM SD4364 MARINE ROAD CENTRAL, Morecambe 939-1/5/45 (South side) 07/10/77 Nos.207-214 (Consecutive) The Winter Gardens II\* Theatre. 1896 by Mangnall and Littlewood. Rear elevations rendered, facade of red terracotta and brick. Slate roof. Facade has central doorway, and 6 shop units with some degree of C20 disfigurement but with some original doors and fascias. In front are cast-iron columns which supported a glazed canopy, now demolished. Above, the two 3-storey corner towers are linked by a glazed 1st floor arcade with balustrade and central projection. The towers have 3rd floor lunette windows, and shaped gables with finials. The wide central gable is set back and has a lunette below a stepped coping with volutes and finials. Interior: the richly-decorated entrance foyer has a mosaic floor, a ceiling of elaborate plasterwork, dark timber revolving doors, 3 box offices, and inner carved doors with leaded glazing. The walls are of terracotta and colored glazed tiles. Stairs rise to left and right and have marble steps, mosaic landings, glazed terracotta balustrades, and tiled dados. At 1st floor level the foyer to the circle is in a similar style, with a plasterwork ceiling and wall panels, and 2 flights of stairs leading to the upper circle. The auditorium has a plasterwork ceiling with arched ribs spanning the 118ft width and with richly decorated panels. The 2 tiers of balconies have raking seating and ornamented fronts. The proscenium arch has an entablature, columns, and scrolled brackets, all enriched with ornament. It is flanked by 2 tiers of paired boxes with curved fronts. The earliest part of the Winter Gardens complex, originally the 'People's Palace', which opened in 1878, lay to the west of the surviving building and was demolished in 1982. (Bingham R: *Lost Resort?*: 147, 273).

### 4.2 CRITERIA

- 4.2.1 Listed Buildings are those considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, and are classified in grades in order to show their relative importance: Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest; Grade II\* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; Grade II buildings are of special interest. The lists are compiled on the merits of the building by reference to national criteria recommended by English Heritage. In selecting buildings, particular attention is paid to their importance in illustrating economic and social history, their architectural quality, their association with well known events, characters or works of literature, and their group value (DMRB 1994).



### **4.3 SIGNIFICANCE**

- 4.3.1 The outstanding importance of the Victoria Pavilion is confirmed by its status as a Grade II\* Listed Building, putting it in the top 6% of importance for all buildings in England. The Pavilion is of historical and architectural importance both to Morecambe and the North West, in terms of the contribution which it makes to the townscape of the promenade, and in terms of its intrinsic architectural character.
- 4.3.2 The Victoria Pavilion also plays an important role in the social history of Morecambe. Familiar elements, visual reminders and a sense of continuity play a part in defining a sense of place, and the Victoria Pavilion represents a very significant aspect of this history.

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## 5. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 IMPACT

- 5.1.1 Listed buildings are afforded protection as an extension of planning control. This means that a developer cannot, without penalty, demolish, alter or extend a listed building in any way that affects its architectural or historic character, unless listed building consent has been obtained from the local planning authority.
- 5.1.2 Sympathetic restoration of the Victoria Pavilion will be of great cultural heritage benefit. With the aid of imaginative redevelopment, the Victoria Pavilion could provide an attractive and pleasing aesthetic element for Morecambe and become a valuable tourist and community amenity for the town once again. Maintaining a feeling of continuity will provide the community with its roots in their past, stimulating a sense of belonging and pride in where they live.

### 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 Previous studies have concluded that an economically sustainable future for the Victoria Pavilion lies in its conversion into a multi-functional entertainment and leisure venue. Consideration should be given, however, to preserving as much of the original fabric of the building as is practical. The interior detail of the building defines the theatre's historic character, and its preservation will ensure that it retains its acknowledged architectural qualities and ambience.
- 5.2.2 It is recommended that a recording of the historic structure is undertaken before redevelopment works commence. The recording should be consistent with the requirements of a 'Level 2' Survey as described by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (1996). In addition, the recording should also include internal and external photographs of the building, and scaled detailed photographs of features of particular architectural or historic interest. This work will ensure that future generations can understand how the building has evolved.
- 5.2.3 Given that listed building consent will be required for any alterations to the fabric of the building, it is recommended that close liaison be maintained with English Heritage throughout the proposed redevelopment process.

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## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Much of the historical background is unreferenced, but frequently taken from cuttings from the *Morecambe Visitor* newspaper which appeared in the late 1970s and 1980s, and which are held at Morecambe Library.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1891, 1:500

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Figure 5: Extract from an unidentified newspaper (*c* 1909), showing a plan of the alterations to the Winter Gardens being undertaken by the owners, Messrs Broadhead and Sons

Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1913, 1:2500

Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1937, 1:2500

Figure 8: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1967, 1:10,000

Figure 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey map (Chas E Goad Ltd. agents version), 1993, 1: 1056

Figure 10: Extract from Ordnance Survey map (Chas E Goad Ltd. agents version), 1997, 1:1056

Figure 11: Victoria Pavilion, existing ground plan

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Plate 7: Back cover of the Winter Gardens programme for 1897. Note the drawings showing the interior of the Oriental Ballroom (top), and Victoria Pavilion (bottom)

Plate 8: Postcard of the Winter Gardens *c* 1909

Plate 9: *c* 1920s photograph of the Winter Gardens. Note the advertisements for the performers and the six shops fronting the Victoria Pavilion

Plate 10: Interior view of the theatre, *c* 1930s. The art deco style lights seen at the top of the picture were installed during the renovations of 1933-34

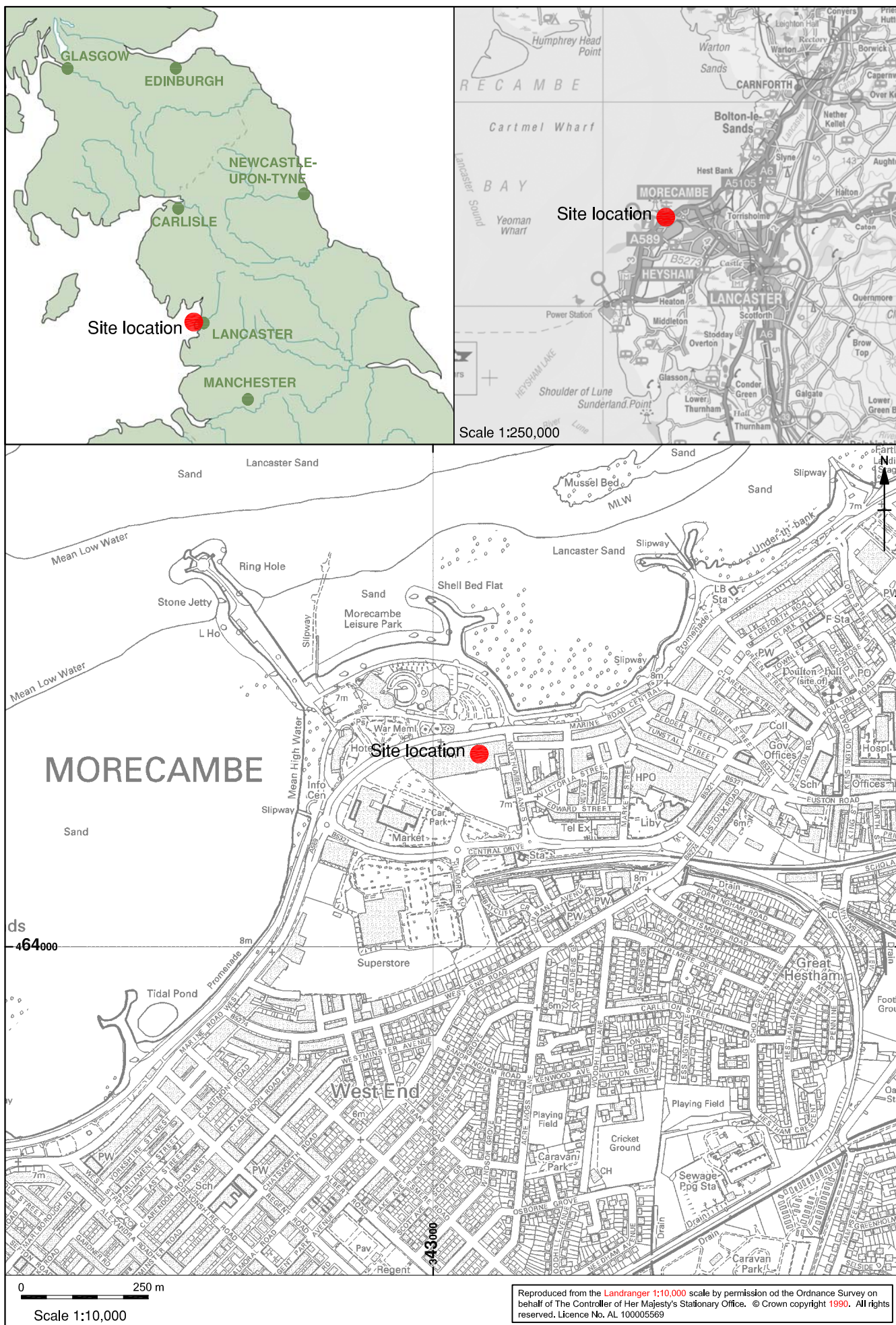
Plate 11: Laurel and Hardy's invitation to the owner of the Winter Garden's, Mr Harry Smirk, dated 1947

Plate 12: *c* 1950s photograph showing the north-east corner of the Victoria Pavilion. Note the former house (with bay window) adjoining the Pavilion, occupied by the theatre Stage Manager.

Plate 13: *c* 1960 postcard of the Winter Gardens

Plate 14: Poster advertising the popular Black and White Minstrel Show of 1974

Plate 15: The Victoria Pavilion in February 2006





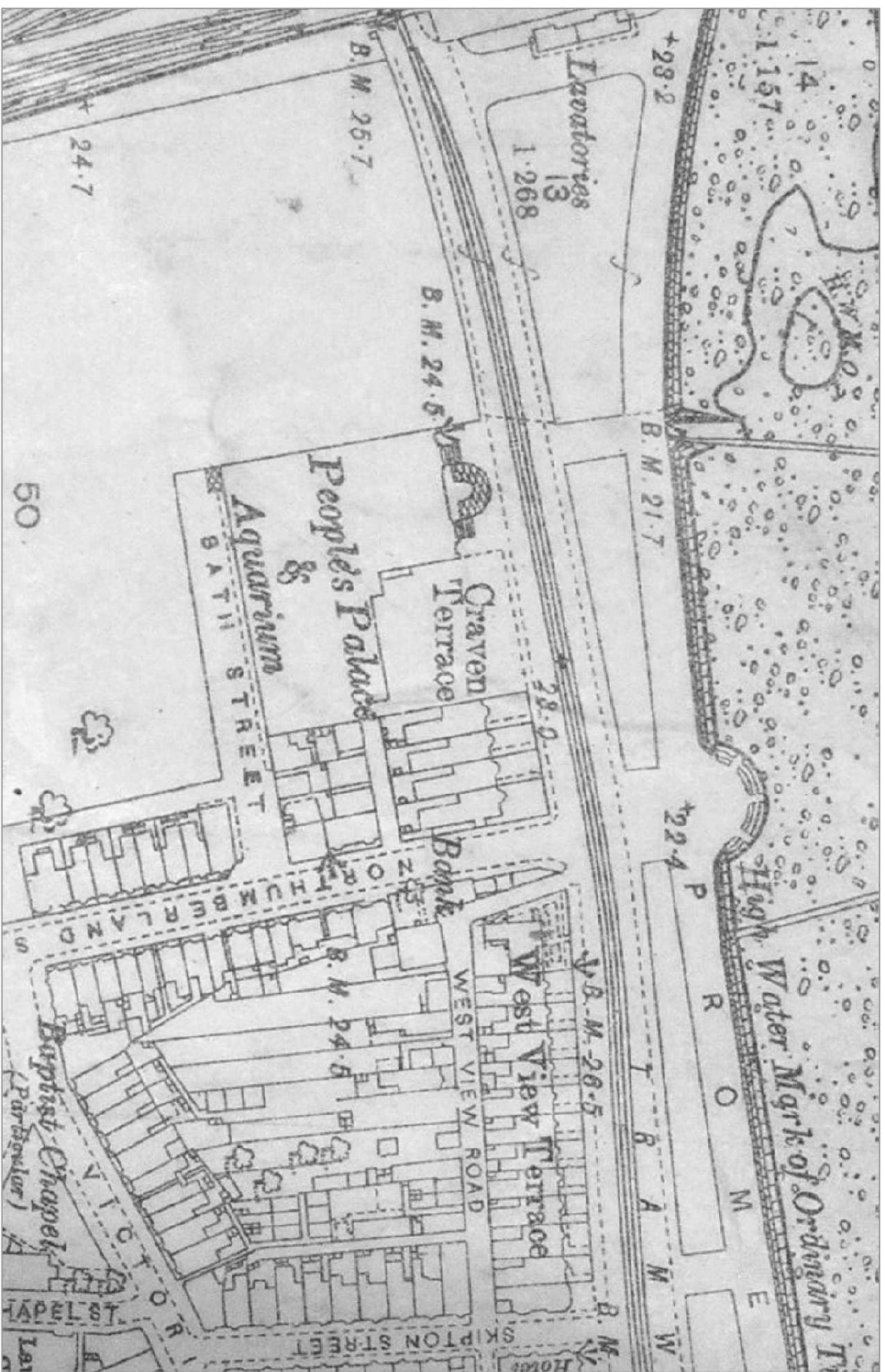
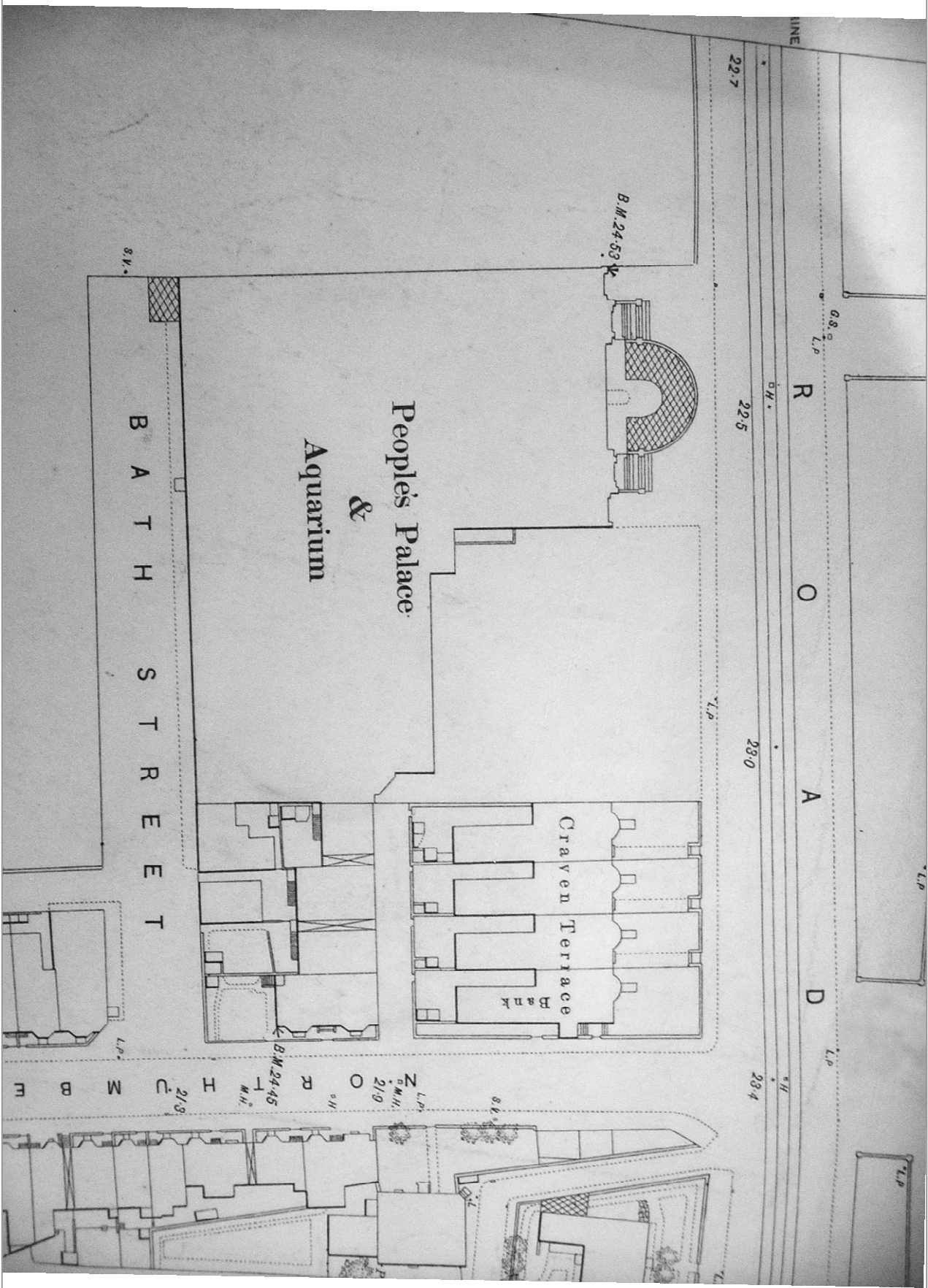


Figure 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1891, 1:2500

Not to Scale



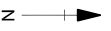
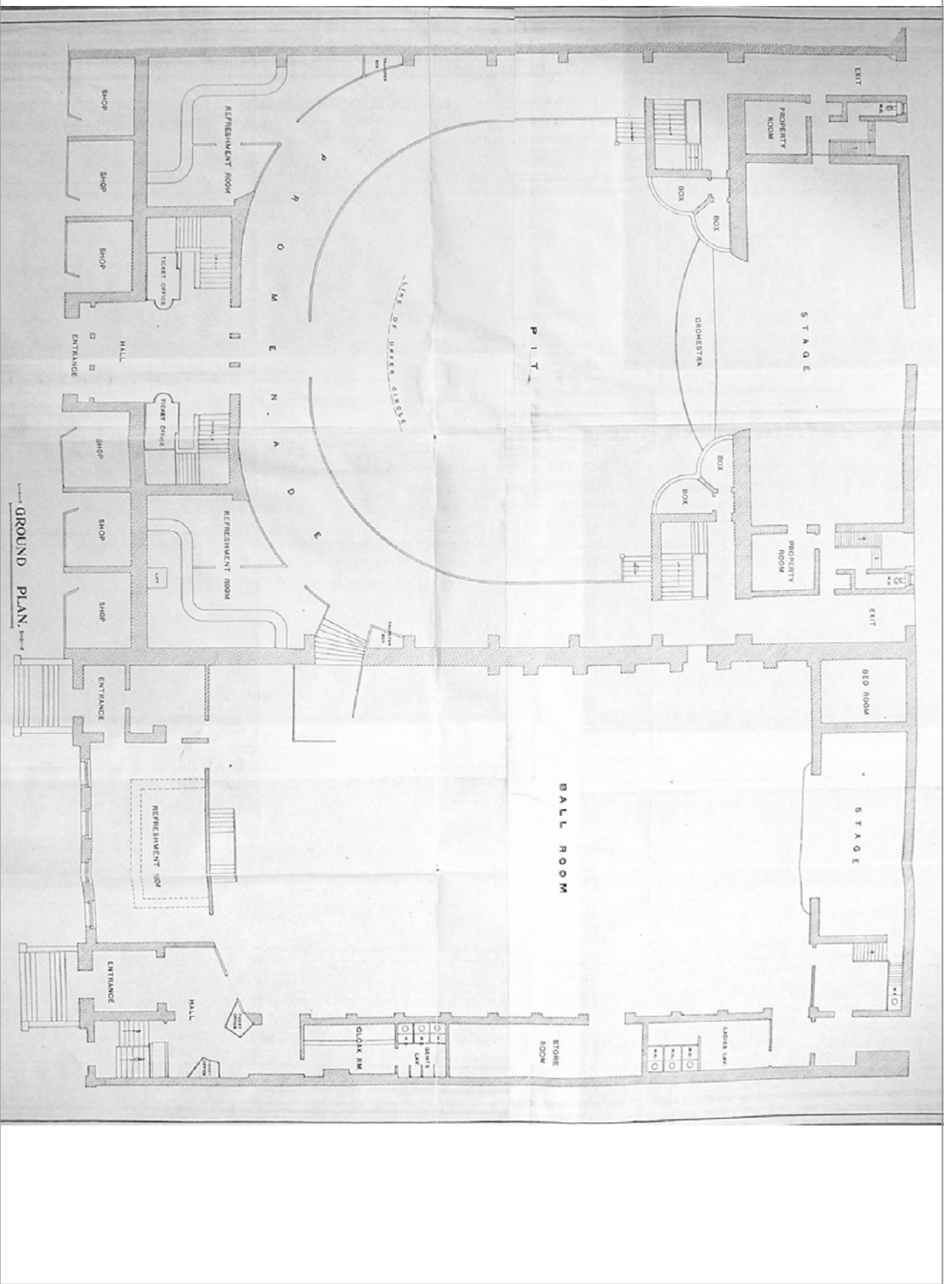




Not to Scale



Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1891, 1:500



Not to Scale



Figure 4: Ground plan of the Winter Gardens drawn for the auction of the buildings in 1908, 1:120



The following is a sketch showing the extensive improvements which are being carried out by Messrs. Broadhead and Son, at the Winter Gardens. A detailed description appears below, under the heading of "All for Sirpence."



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Figure 5: Extract from an unidentified newspaper (c1909), showing a plan of the alterations to the Winter Gardens being undertaken by the owners, Messrs Broadhead and Sons

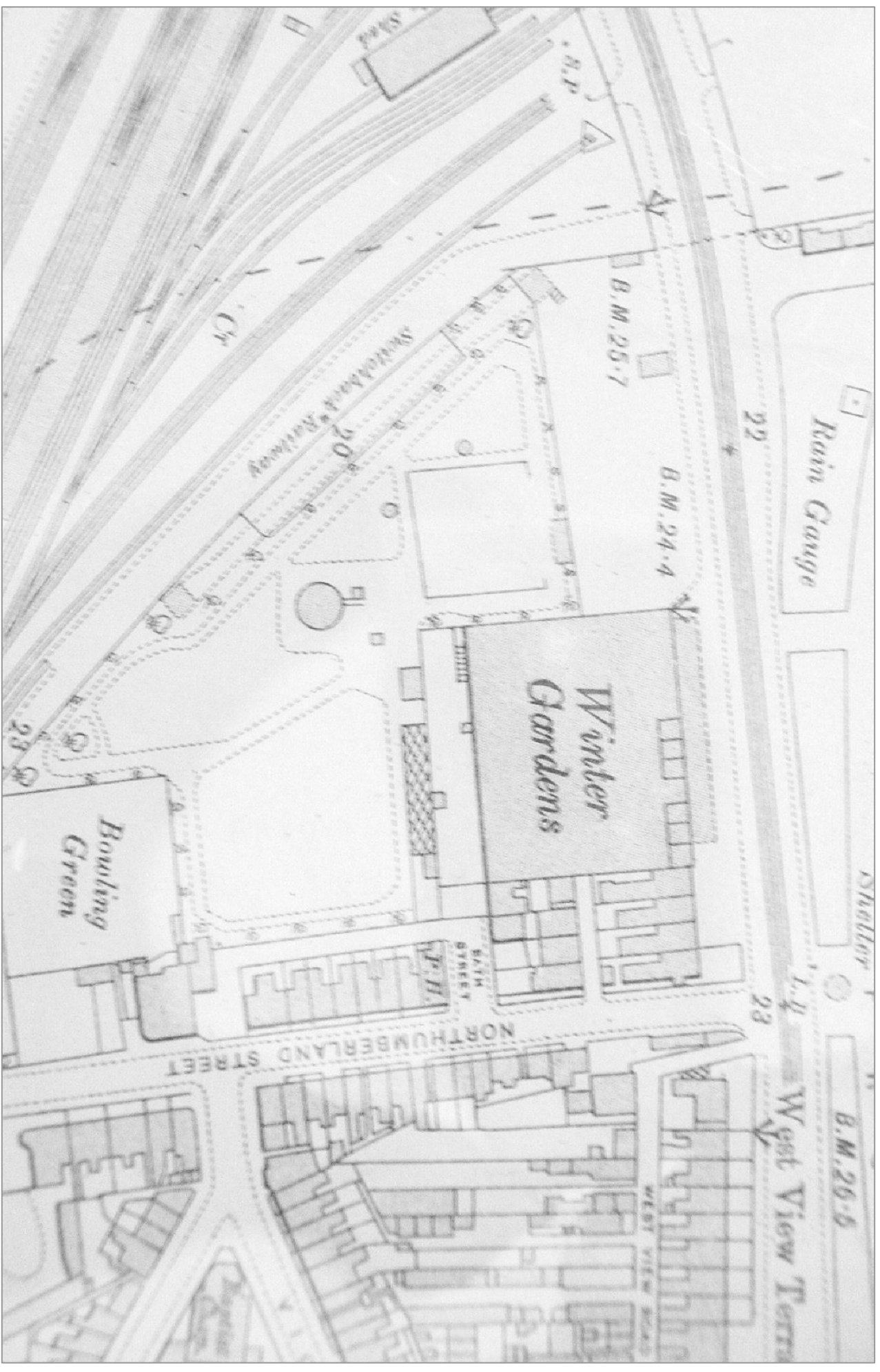


Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1913, 1:2500

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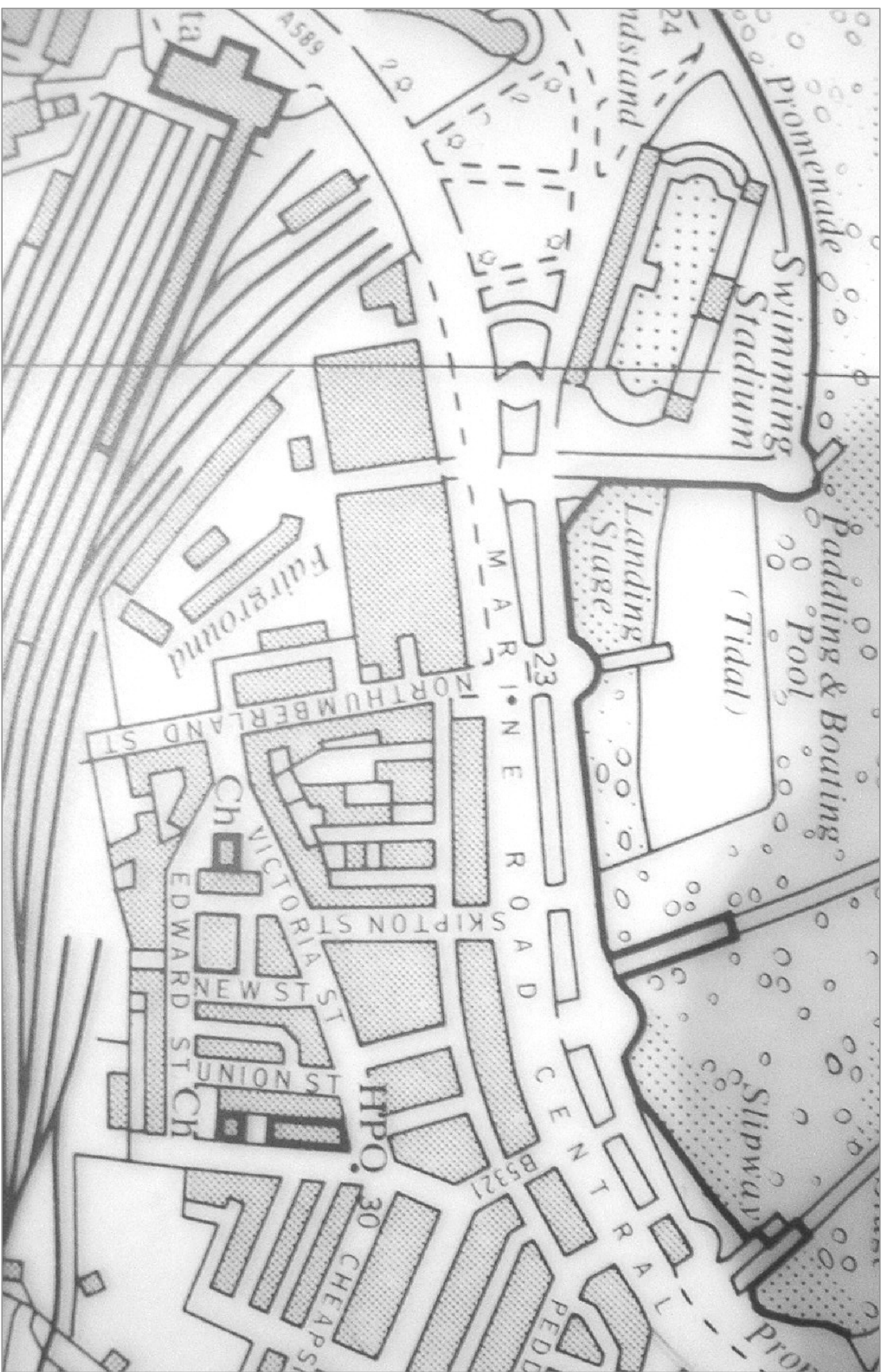


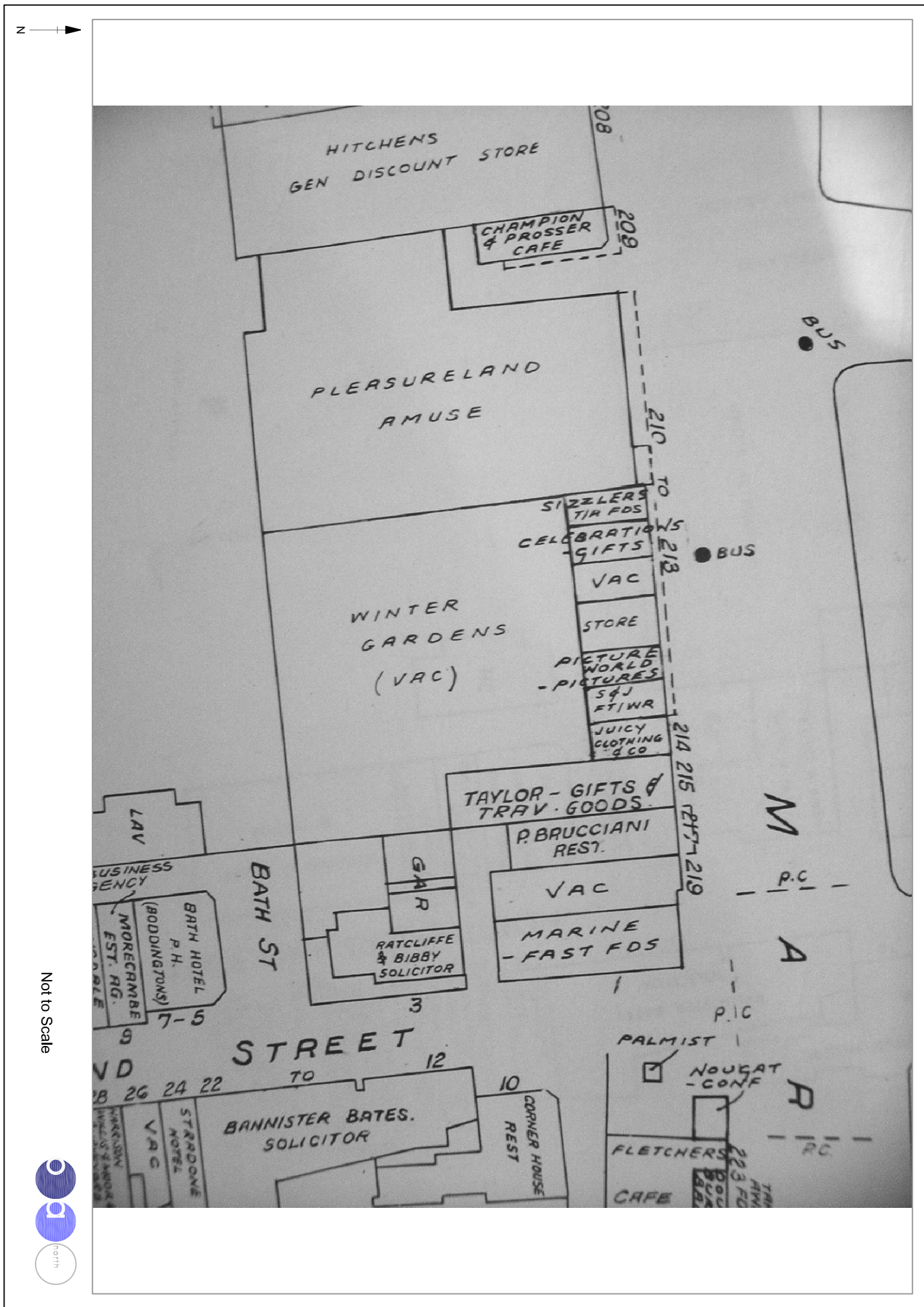
Figure 8: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1967, 1:10000

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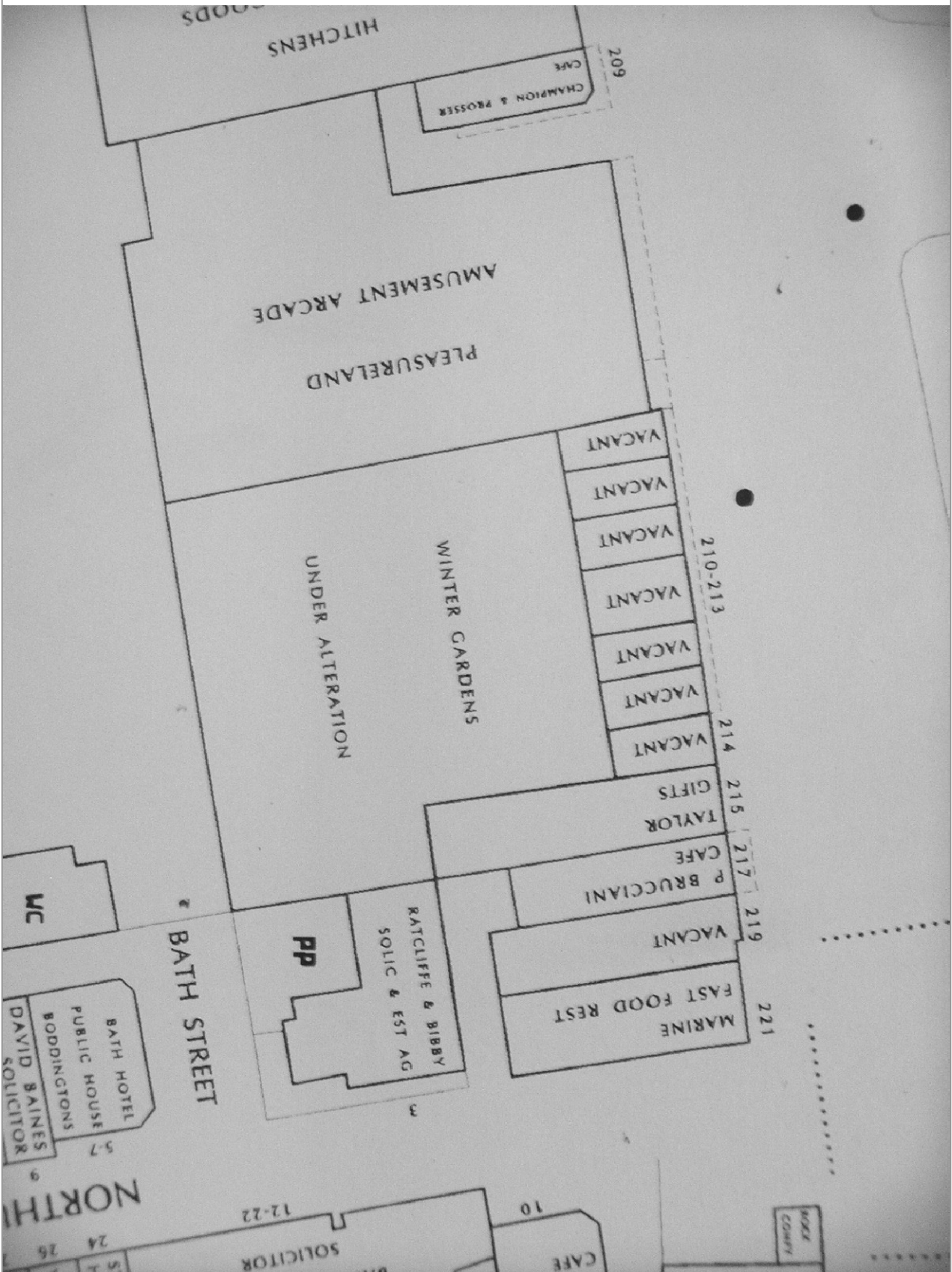




Figure 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1997, 1:1056







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Figure 10: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1997, 1:1056



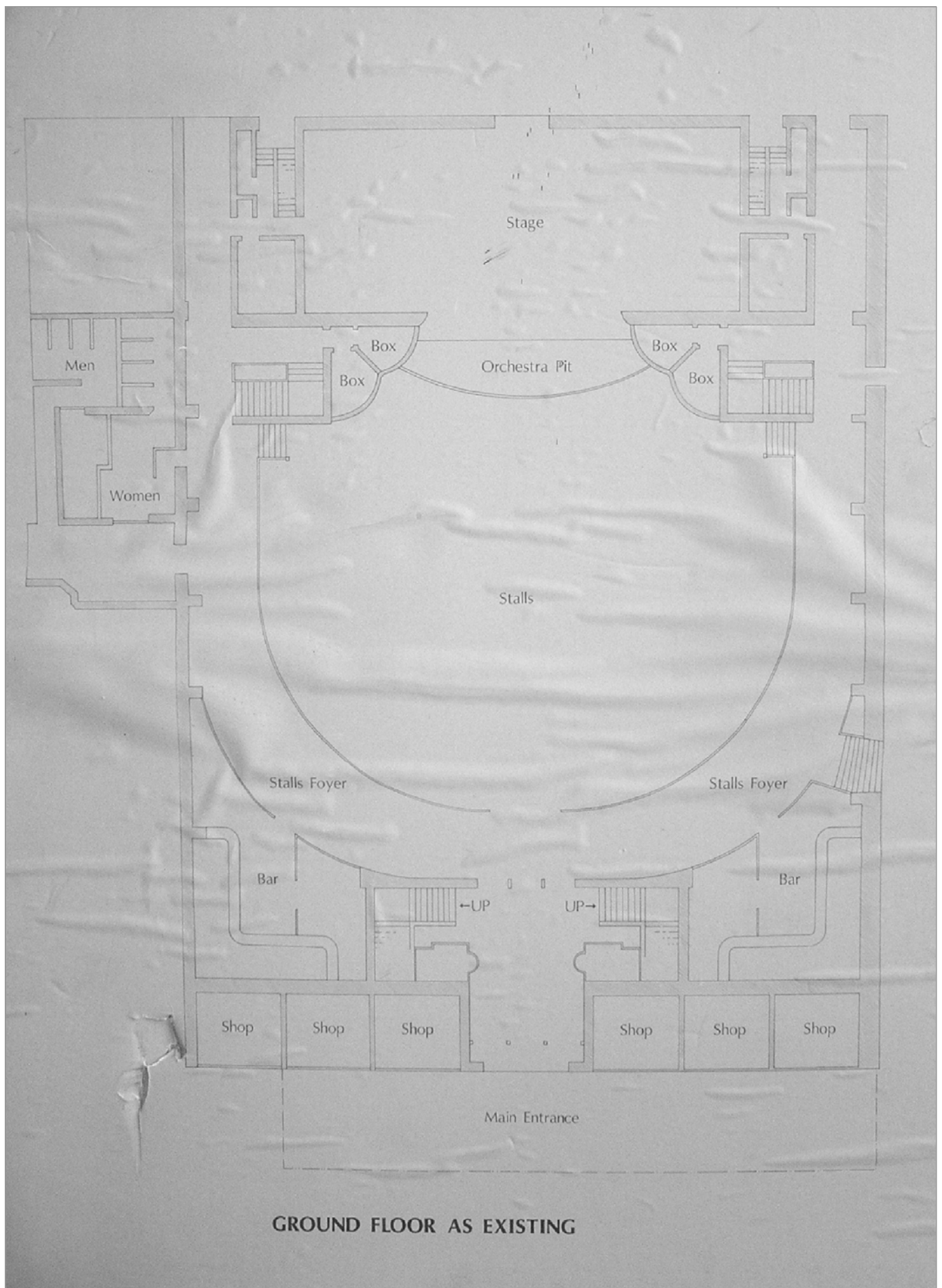


Figure 11: Victoria Pavilion, existing ground plan

# MORECAMBE BATHS, PALACE, AND AQUARIUM.

## PURE FILTERED SEA WATER BATHS.

### GENTLEMEN'S BATHS.

#### FIRST CLASS TEPID PLUNGE,

50 feet by 28 feet. Temperature is maintained many degrees higher than temperature of Sea Water. Dressing Boxes well Furnished and Warmed. Fresh Water Cold Shower attached.

#### SECOND CLASS TEPID PLUNGE,

73 feet by 28 feet. Dressing Boxes Warmed. A splendid Bath. Fresh Cold Shower attached.

#### FIRST CLASS PRIVATE,

Any Temperature. SALT, COLD, FRESH SHOWER, VAPOUR, and HOT-AIR BATHS, &c., &c. Dressing Boxes well furnished, Comfortable, and scrupulously clean. Sheet, Towels, and Attendant.

**SECOND CLASS PRIVATE, Light, Roomy, well Ventilated, and Warmed.**

### LADIES' BATHS.

#### FIRST CLASS TEPID PLUNGE, 60 feet by 28 feet.

Pronounced by all to be a beautiful Bath Room, and comfortable Dressing Boxes. Bathing Costumes provided. Dressing Boxes amply furnished and Warmed. Fresh Cold Shower attached.

#### FIRST CLASS PRIVATE,

Any Temperature. Salt, Cold, Fresh, and Shower. Dressing Rooms scrupulously Clean, Lighted, well Ventilated, Warmed, and Furnished. VAPOUR and HOT AIR BATHS, &c. Sheet, Towels, and Attendant.

**SECOND CLASS PRIVATE, Light, Roomy, well Ventilated, and Warmed.**

Open Week Days, 7 a.m. to 6-30 p.m.; Mondays & Thursdays, 6-30 a.m. to 8-30 p.m.; Sundays, 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

### PRICES:

Resident Season Tickets to all Baths (not Transferable)	.. .. .	£2 2s. per Annum.										
Resident Season Tickets to Large and Plunge (not Transferable)	.. .. .	£1 1s. "										
<b>First Class Tepid Plunge, Single Ticket</b>	.. .. .	1s.										
For Families	<table><tr><td>Twelve Tickets</td><td>.. .. .</td><td>10s.</td></tr><tr><td>Twenty-five Tickets</td><td>.. .. .</td><td>25s.</td></tr></table>	Twelve Tickets	.. .. .	10s.	Twenty-five Tickets	.. .. .	25s.	} Two Towels, Costumes or Drawers provided.				
Twelve Tickets	.. .. .	10s.										
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<b>Second Class Plunge, Single Ticket</b>	.. .. .	6d.										
For Families	<table><tr><td>Twelve Tickets</td><td>.. .. .</td><td>5s.</td></tr><tr><td>Twenty-five Tickets</td><td>.. .. .</td><td>10s.</td></tr></table>	Twelve Tickets	.. .. .	5s.	Twenty-five Tickets	.. .. .	10s.	} One Towel, Costume or Drawers provided.				
Twelve Tickets	.. .. .	5s.										
Twenty-five Tickets	.. .. .	10s.										
<b>First Class Private, Single Ticket</b>	.. 2s.	<b>Medicated Bath, Single Ticket</b> .. 2s. 6d.										
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Twenty-five Tickets	.. 50s.											
<b>Second Class Private Baths, Single Ticket, 1s.; Twelve Tickets, 10s.; Twenty-five Tickets, 20s.</b>												

Special Arrangements made with Schools.

Mr. J. L. SHORROCK, General Manager.

Plate 1: Back of the Programme for Morecambe Baths, Palace and Aquarium for the week of 8th September 1879



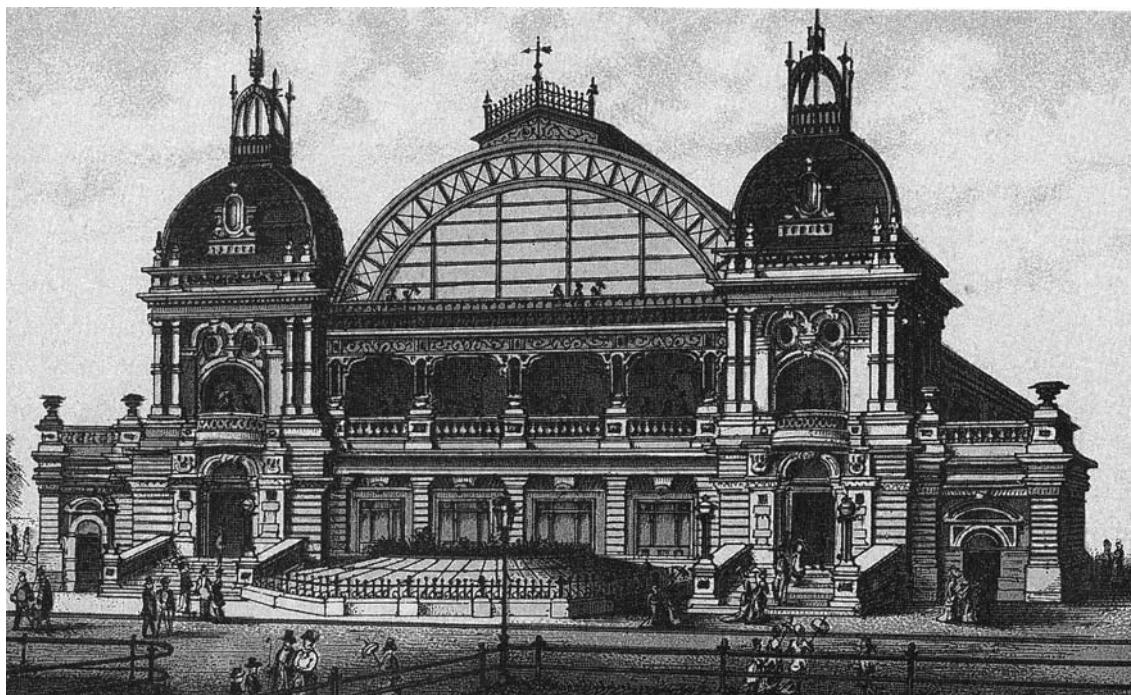


Plate 2: A drawing of the People's Palace, soon after opening in 1878



Plate 3: Drawing showing the interior of the People's Palace, soon after opening in 1878



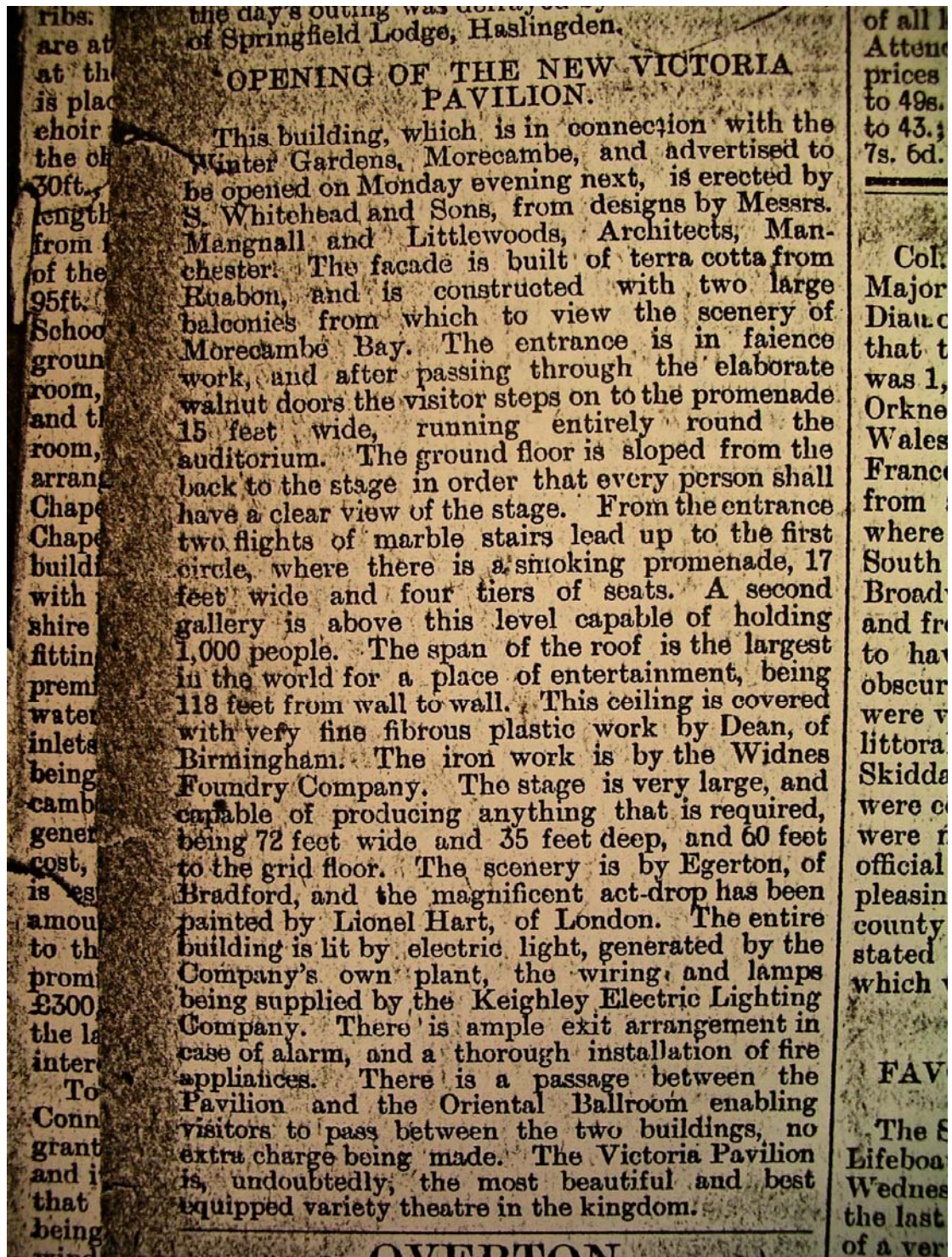


Plate 4: A contemporary newspaper article describes the new Victoria Pavilion in 1897



**Waddington's**

YOU'LL BE OUT OF POCKET.

IF YOU DON'T GO TO

Because THERE you may obtain almost ANYTHING and EVERYTHING at LOWEST STORE PRICES.

NOTE 2 ADDRESSES:—

**WADDINGTON'S CASH DRUG STORES,**

**7, EUSTON ROAD, and 30a, REGENT ROAD, MORECAMBE.**

And don't forget that WADDINGTON'S XL MORECAMBE ROCK XL's all others. THE MOST POPULAR PRESENT.

**Quality Always Reliable.**

**BUTTER! BUTTER!!**

Every Pound of the Strictest  
Choicest Quality.

**WILTS. BACON!**

Ice Cured, from the Best  
Wilts' Houses

**HOME-FED**

**HAMS and BACON,**

A SPECIALITY.

**S. WALTON,**

Chicago Buildings,  
WEST END,  
MORECAMBE.

**Victoria Pavillion.**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 16th, 1897.**

Afternoon and Evening.  
**AND DURING THE WEEK.**

**PART II.**

(For Programme of M. Riviere's Orchestral Concert see centre pages.)

No	Afternoon.	Evening.
1 to 9.	2-0 to 2-45.	7-30 to 8-30.
		—Riviere's Grand Orchestra of 50. (For programme see centre pages).
10.	2-55	8-30
		— <b>SISTERS DeVAN,</b> Acrobats and Equilibrists on the High Ladder.
11.	3-10	8-45
		— <b>ST. JOHN &amp; DWIGHT,</b> Comedians, Singers, and Dancers.
12.	3-25	9-0
		— <b>SANDOW,</b> The Monarch of Muscle.
13.	3-45	9-25
		— <b>THE McCONNEL FAMILY</b> Musical Sketch Artists.
14.	4-0	9-40
		— <b>THE ZANNETTOS,</b> Japanese Variety Jugglers.
15.	4-15	9-55
		— <b>GEORGE MOZART,</b> Eccentric Comedian.
16.	4-25	10-5
		— <b>The LEVITE TROUPE,</b> In a New Pantomimical Sketch, entitled "THE CANNIBALS."
17.	4-45	10-30
		—God Save the Queen.

For Programme of the Oriental Ballroom (to which admission is free) see last page.

**Messrs. Fletcher, Wilsdon, and Copeland,**  
 Agricultural and General Auctioneers and Valuers.  
 Offices: VICTORIA STREET, MORECAMBE. Branch Sale Rooms: ALBERT ROAD, WEST END.  
 Open Daily for Private or Auction Sales. Branch Office: MARKET STREET, LANCASTER.

The Oldest Established, Largest and most Commodious Sale Rooms and Warehouses in Morecambe or Lancaster.  
**The MORECAMBE PANTHEONICON, Edward Street and Union Street.**  
 Established 1868.

**IT IS A FACT!**

THAT YOU CAN BE SUPPLIED WITH ALL THE

**LATEST NOVELTIES**

In Millinery, Lace Ware, Aprons, Hosiery, and Noted Kid Gloves. Also

**GENT'S OUTFITTING, at the Correct Figure.**

NOTE THE ADDRESS—

**R. GERRARD, The White and Gold Shop, 7, CRESCENT.**

Branch ... 2, MARKET STREET, for Gent's Hats.

Plate 5: Extract from the Winter Gardens programme for 1897





Plate 6: Front cover of the Winter Gardens programme for 1897



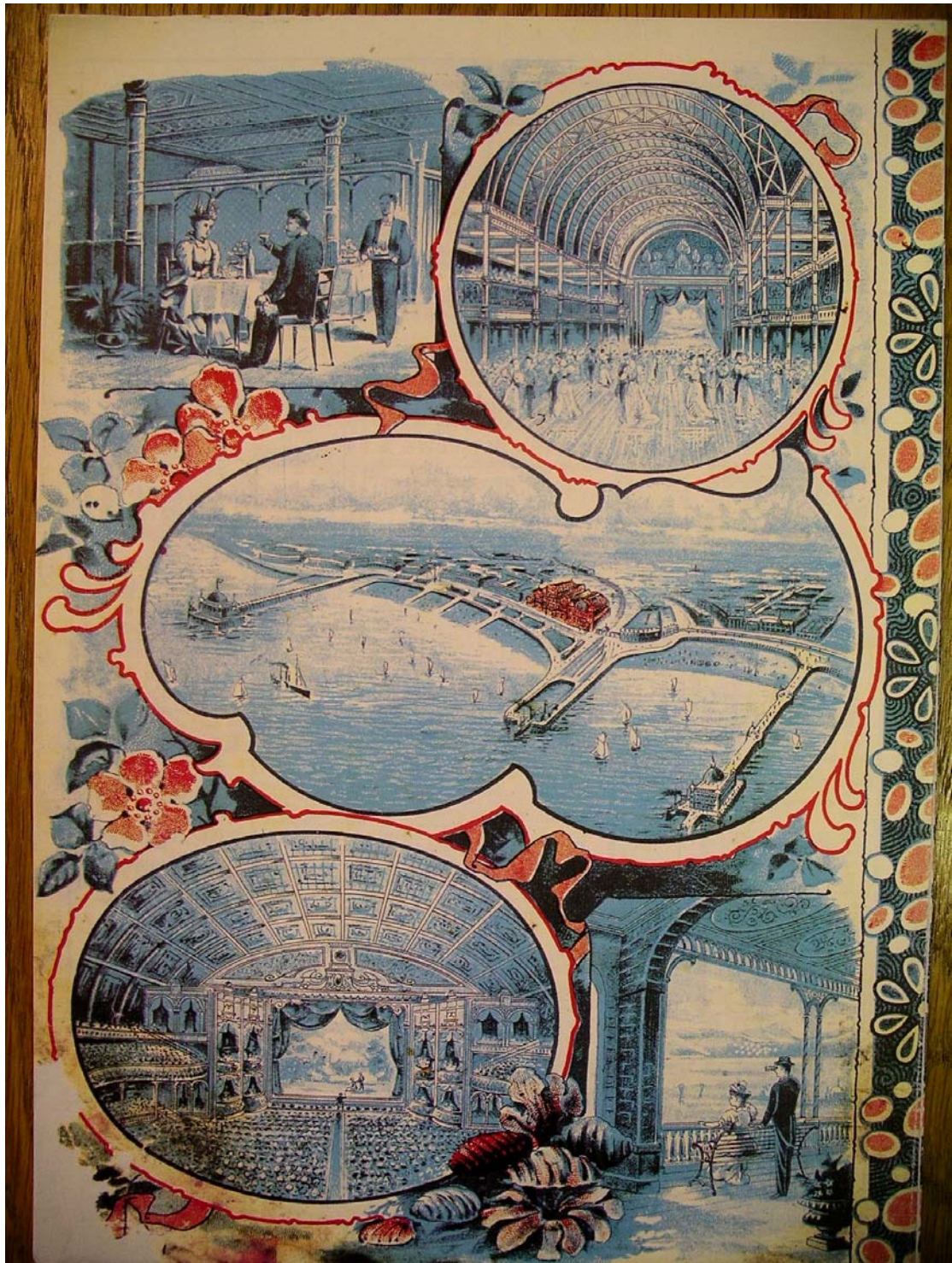


Plate 7: Back cover of the Winter Gardens programme for 1897. Note the drawings showing the interior of the Oriental Ballroom (top), and Victoria Pavilion (bottom)





Plate 8: Postcard of the Winter Gardens c 1909



Plate 9: c 1920s photograph of the Winter Gardens. Note the advertisements for the performers and the six shops fronting the Victoria Pavilion

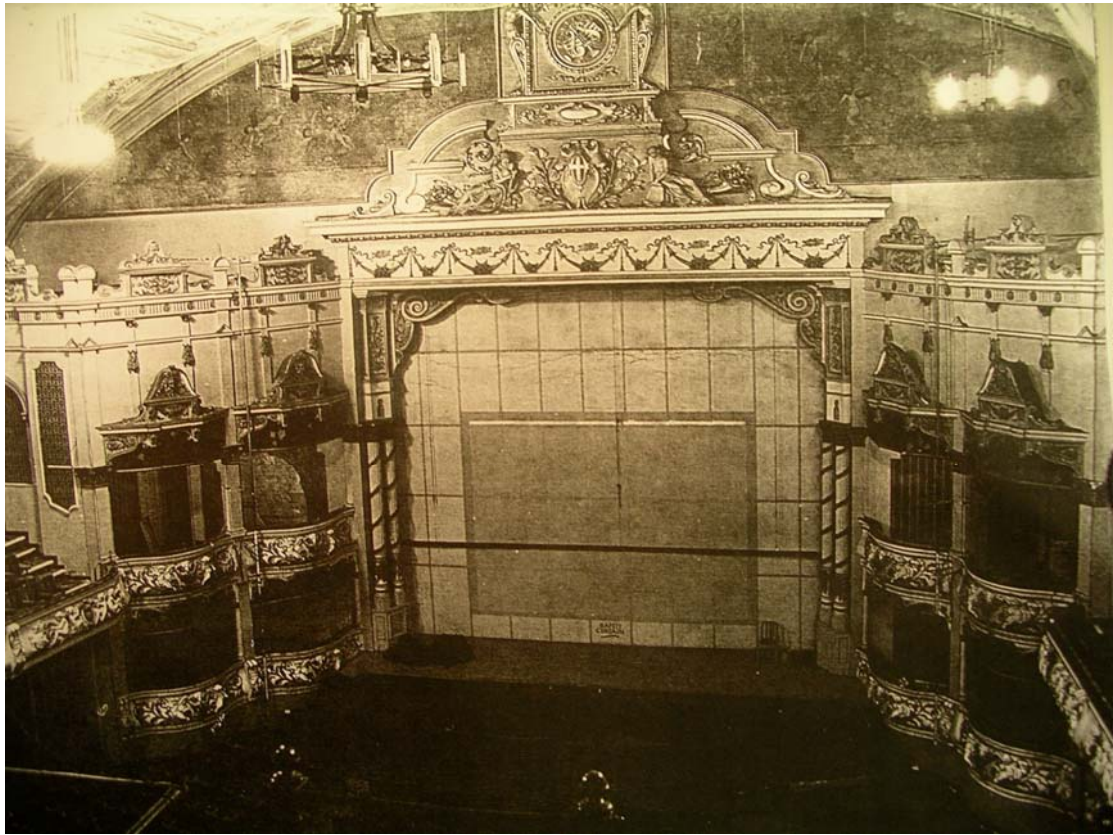


Plate 10: Interior view of the theatre, c 1930s. The art deco style lights seen at the top of the picture were installed during the renovations of 1933-34



Morecambe  
Local Collection

STAN LAUREL, President  
OLIVER HARDY, Vice President  
BENJ. W. SHIPMAN, Secretary



311 PACIFIC MUTUAL BUILDING  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
Michigan 4047

CABLE ADDRESS  
"LAHAS"

# LAUREL AND HARDY

## FEATURE PRODUCTIONS

Harry Smirk Esq.,  
Winter Gardens,  
Morecambe.  
LANCS.

Hippodrome Theatre,  
COVENTRY.

27th August 1947

Dear Harry Smirk,

We have pleasure in enclosing your ticket  
for the Dinner on September 21st.

Your ticket requests your attendance at  
6-30 p.m., but we invite you to call at our suite in  
the Savoy Hotel at 5 p.m. We feel that this will  
enable us to have a little get-together before the  
Dinner.

Every good wish, and looking forward to  
seeing you.

Yours very sincerely,

*Stan Laurel*  
*Oliver Hardy*

LAUREL and HARDY

Dress - Evening Dress.

AIR MAIL

Plate 11: Laurel and Hardy's invitation to the owner of the Winter Garden's, Mr Harry Smirk, dated 1947



Plate 12: c 1950s photograph showing the north-east corner of the Victoria Pavilion.  
Note the former house (with bay window) adjoining the Pavilion, occupied by the  
theatre Stage Manager

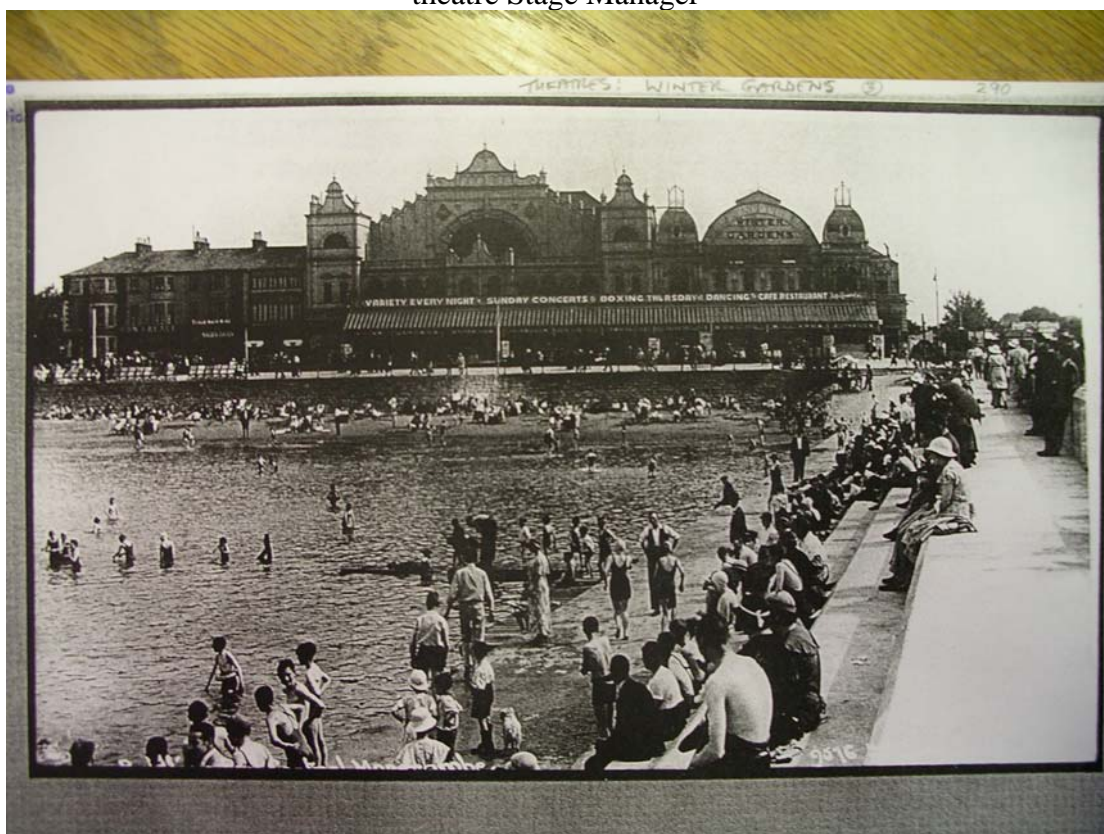


Plate 13: c 1960 postcard of the Winter Gardens



6.10

TWICE  
NIGHTLY  
(ex Sung)

8.40

ROBERT LUFF

Holdings Ltd

in association with  
(GEORGE MITCHELL)

present

WINTER GARDENS

MORECAMBE

Box Office Tel. 410008

COMMENCING SATURDAY, 22nd JUNE, 1974

For the Summer Season

Prices of Admission overleaf

THE FABULOUS LONDON PRODUCTION OF THE

BLACK & WHITE

MINSTREL SHOW

FROM THE VICTORIA PALACE

THE

MAGIC OF THE

MINSTRELS

MITCHELL  
MINSTRELS

and  
FULL SUPPORTING  
COMPANY

TELEVISION  
TOPPERS

Based on the popular BBC TV Series originated by GEORGE INNS

Plate 14: Poster advertising the popular Black and White Minstrel Show of 1974





Plate 15: The Victoria Pavilion in February 2006

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## APPENDIX 1: SALE PARTICULARS FOR THE AUCTION OF THE WINTER GARDENS IN 1908

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*Copy Original in Cabinet*

In the County Palatine of Lancaster.

THE . . .

MORECAMBE

Winter .. Gardens

. . . AND . . .

Victoria Pavilion.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION

At the Midland Hotel, Morecambe

August 25th, 1908.

AT 3 P.M.

J. G. WRIGHT,  
Solicitor,  
Lancaster.

DAVIES & CRANE,  
Chartered Accountants,  
5, Winckley Street, Preston.

G. H. PETTY,  
Auctioneer,  
62, Market Street, Lancaster.

WATERS & ATKINSON,  
Incorporated Accountants,  
Euston Road, Morecambe.



THE CHANCERY OF THE COUNTY PALATINE OF LANCASTER  
MANCHESTER DISTRICT.

The Lancaster Banking Company Limited  
on behalf of themselves and all other the Debenture Holders of the Defendant Company, Plaintiffs  
... AND ...  
The Morecambe Winter Gardens Company Limited, Defendants.

PARTICULARS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE  
of the Extensive and  
**Valuable Block of Freehold Property**  
KNOWN AS THE  
**Morecambe Winter Gardens**  
AND THE THEATRE OR CONCERT HALL  
KNOWN AS THE  
**= VICTORIA PAVILION =**  
with the  
**FULL SIX DAYS EXCISE LICENSE**  
attached thereto and the  
**Six Lock Up Shops, Large Billiard Saloon**  
and other premises, situate in Marine Road, Morecambe, in the County  
of Lancaster together with the whole of the  
**Valuable Furnishings, Fittings, Scenery and Stage Property,**  
**Trade Effects, Steam and Electric Lighting Plant,**  
which will be **Sold by Auction** (pursuant to an order in the above Action) by

— Mr. G. H. PETTY —

AT THE MIDLAND HOTEL, MORECAMBE,  
**On Tuesday, the 25th day of August, 1908,**  
at **Three** o'clock in the afternoon, subject to the conditions of sale attached hereto.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale may be obtained at the Offices of the AUCTIONEER, 62 Market Street, Lancaster; Messrs. DAVIES & CRANE, Chartered Accountants, 5 Winckley Street, Preston; Messrs. WATERS & ATKINSON, Incorporated Accountants, Euston Road, Morecambe; or from  
J. G. WRIGHT, Solicitor,  
Church Street, LANCASTER.





On the right and left of the Entrance Hall beyond the Barrier are TWO GRAND STAIRCASES leading to the Galleries, past these and through the vestibule doors is the

## LARGE HALL OR AUDITORIUM

A ROOM OF MAGNIFICENT PROPORTIONS with a Proscenium 34ft. in width and in keeping with the imposing size of the Hall.

THE STAGE is 72 feet wide 37 feet deep and about 60 feet to the grid floor.

To the right and left of the Auditorium Entrance are the SALOON BARS and Transfer Boxes and a Promenade 14 feet wide extending round three sides of the Hall from which there are two ways of communication with the Winter Gardens which can be shut off by Fireproof Doors.

In front of the Proscenium is the Orchestra, eight rows of Orchestral Stalls and Twenty one rows of Pit Seats and at each side of the Stage two tiers of Private boxes.

## ON THE FIRST FLOOR

is the GRAND CIRCLE which is approached from the Entrance Hall by two Handsome Marble Staircases, Faience Ware Balusters and also by secondary Staircases on each side of the stage. On both sides of the Grand Circle there are six tiers of seats and fronting the Proscenium eight tiers of seats and two Private Boxes, and a Promenade 12 feet wide extending round three sides of the Hall.

To right and left of the Entrance to the Grand Circle there are REFRESHMENT BARS and behind these is placed the LOGGIA or OUTSIDE PROMENADE facing the Sea and extending the whole width of the Building.

There is ample Lavatory accommodation on this floor.

## ON THE SECOND FLOOR

OR UPPER GALLERY, approached by four staircases, there are on each side of the Gallery two tiers of seats and Promenade 6 feet wide and fronting the Proscenium eighteen tiers of seats running the full width of the Hall, under these is placed a commodious REFRESHMENT BAR behind which there is an Outside Promenade.

There is also ample Lavatory accommodation on this floor.

## THE SPAN ROOF

of the Building (said to be ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD for a place of Entertainment) is 118 feet from wall to wall and 65 feet from the floor of the Auditorium to the ceiling.

The whole of this immense dome is panelled in with fibrous plastic work in geometrical and sculptured relief from designs by Bardell. On each side of the Stage there are seven commodious Dressing Rooms and in the Basement two suites of Lavatories and Property Store Room.

THE PAVILION gives accommodation for about 5,000 people, and is provided with ample exits to Marine Road and Bath Street.



## THE WINTER GARDENS or ORIENTAL BALLROOM

is a handsome and commodious building the facade of which is of Yorkshire Stone relieved by ornamental carvings and constructed with two Balconies overlooking the Sea.

The frontage of the Winter Gardens is about 90 feet in width.

On the GROUND FLOOR which is approached by two handsome stone staircases there are on the West Side a Good Entrance Hall and two Pay Offices with Turnstiles which give access to the Oriental Ballroom, a room of lofty dimensions and measuring 117 feet by 72 feet. At the south end of the room there is a Stage 42 feet wide and 20 feet deep with imposing Proscenium of Oriental Design in fibrous plastic work, and at the North end a COMMODIOUS REFRESHMENT BAR fronting to Marine Road and on the West side AMPLE CLOAK ROOMS, LAVATORY ACCOMMODATION, STORE ROOMS, &c.

ON THE FIRST FLOOR there is a Promenade 15 feet wide extending round three sides of the Building and on the West side five rooms occupied as Offices, Store Rooms etc., and in front of the premises there is an outside Promenade or Loggia overlooking the Sea and extending the full width of the Building. On the West side of the Stage there are Five good Dressing Rooms, with Lavatory accommodation.

On the East Side of the Building and fronting to Bath Street is the Caretaker's residence containing Living Room or Kitchen and Scullery, two Bedrooms and Store Room.

## THE BASEMENT OF THE WINTER GARDENS

which is approached by a separate Entrance from Marine Road and also from Bath Street is divided into FIRST AND SECOND CLASS REFRESHMENT BARS, COMMODIOUS BILLIARD SALOON with SIX BILLIARD TABLES, LARGE STORE ROOM fronting to Bath Street which during the busy season can be used as an additional Refreshment Bar, Ladies' and Gentlemen's Lavatories, Store Rooms for Cigars, Wines, Spirits, and Beer, Bottle washing and store cellars, Gas Meter Room, two Work Shops, Private Sitting Room and Offices also with separate Entrance from Bath Street is the BOILER HOUSE, ENGINE and DYNAMO ROOM, ENGINEERS' OFFICE and STORE ROOMS.

The whole of the Pavilion, Ballroom, Billiard Saloon, etc., are LIGHTED BY ELECTRICITY generated on the Premises.

In front and extending the full width of the Property there is a valuable open space of an average depth of 31 feet which can be utilised or let off for Stallage, Automatic Machines, etc., and produces considerable revenue.

THE PROPERTY WILL BE OFFERED IN ONE LOT together with the whole of the valuable Furnishings, Fittings, fast and loose Trade Effects, Billiard Saloon Furnishings including Six capital Billiard Tables and Accessories, THE WHOLE OF THE COSTLY SCENERY STAGE PROPERTY and EFFECTS and the VALUABLE ELECTRIC LIGHTING PLANT including LANCASHIRE



**BOILER 30 FEET BY 8 FEET**, by Yates and Thom of Blackburn with Procter's Patent Automatic Stoker and Hopkinson's Fittings, Double Action Steam Pump for Boiler, Exhaust Steam Heater, Steam connections from Boiler to Engines, **FOUR DIRECT COUPLED HIGH SPEED ENGINES** and **DYNAMOS**, Main Switch Board with three Dynamo panels and ten distributing Switches and all the accessories loose materials and tools.

The Property is substantially built and in good condition.

It is well and efficiently furnished, fitted and equipped for the business of Entertainment Caterers and to Capitalists and others interested in the entertainment business.

The sale presents a rarely occurring opportunity for acquiring one of the finest and most up-to-date properties of its kind to be found in the provinces.

The Stock of Wines, Spirits, Beer, Liquors and Mineral Waters of every description, Cigars, Cigarettes, Tobacco and all other consumable articles and things are not included in this sale but must be taken over by the purchaser as mentioned in the Special Conditions.

The Property is sold subject to an agreement dated 1st May, 1897, as to certain privileges in favour of the owner of property on the North Easterly side of the said plot of land hereby offered for sale.

Certain agreements have been entered into with the Midland Railway Company with reference to the tenancy of the land on the South West side of the property as to lettering the gable of the property, as to a contemplated balcony and flight of steps into Bath Street for an emergency exit, as to a fence and as to certain rights with reference to certain tanks and collecting boxes under that Company's wooden pier and a pipe therefrom to the benefit of which the purchaser on obtaining that Company's consent will be entitled and the burden of which the purchaser will in any case assume and indemnify the Vendor therefrom.

All the agreements referred to in these Particulars are open to the inspection of any person desirous of seeing the same either at the time of sale or prior thereto at the offices of the Vendor's Solicitor and every purchaser whether he inspects the same and the property (which has been open for inspection) or not shall be deemed to buy with full knowledge of the contents of each of such agreements and of the actual state, nature and condition of the property.

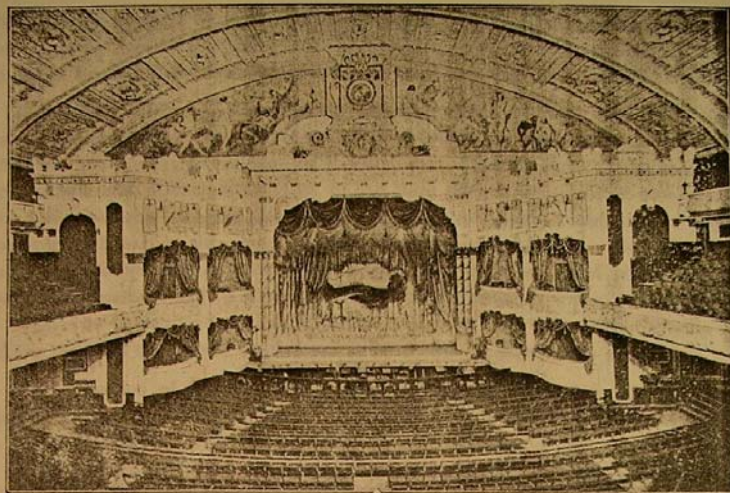
## MORECAMBE

is one of the chief watering places on the Lancashire Coast and is easily accessible from the large commercial centres of Lancashire and Yorkshire. The Midland and the London and North Western Railway Companies both have stations there, and give excellent communication with all parts of England and offer to Visitors special facilities for reaching the town.

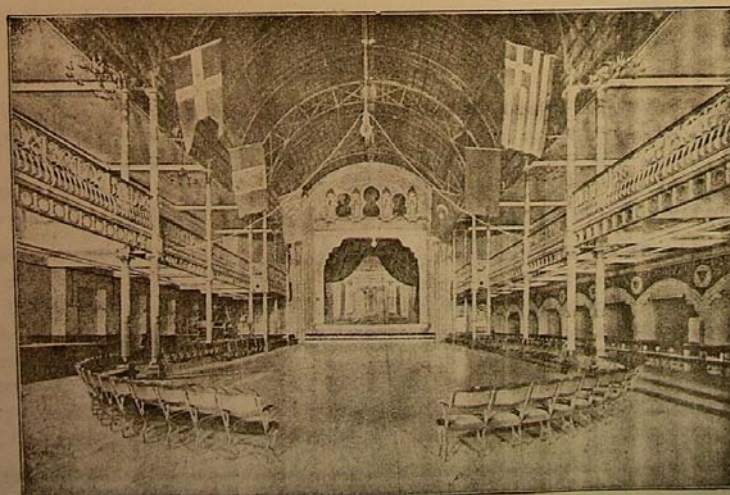
Morecambe possesses many and varied attractions. It is advantageously placed on the shores of its picturesque Bay and possesses a fine promenade about 2½ miles in length. It is unrivalled for its splendid climate and the exquisite beauty of the surrounding scenery. As a tourist's centre it offers exceptional advantages by reason of its close proximity to the Lake district and the numerous places of interest that are easily accessible from the town and in consequence of its advantageous position Morecambe becomes increasingly more popular as a holiday resort and tourist centre to visitors who are likely to take advantage of the entertainments that are provided there.

It is estimated that for several years past considerably over one million people have visited the town during the season and to a large number of these Visitors the Winter Gardens and Victoria Pavilion have been a great source of attraction.





View of Interior of Victoria Pavilion.



View of Interior of Oriental Ballroom.

# AGREEMENT FOR COMPLETION OF THE PURCHASE.

**Memorandum of Agreement** made the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1908.

Between WALTER DAVIES, of Preston, in the County of Lancaster, Chartered Accountant, as the Receiver appointed in the action referred to in the Particulars and Special Conditions of Sale and on behalf of the owners of the property hereinafter mentioned, hereinafter called the Vendor, of the one part and

hereinafter called the Purchaser of the other part.

WHEREBY IT IS WITNESSED that the said

is the purchaser of the property described in the foregoing Particulars at the price of

subject to the Special and General Conditions of Sale within contained or referred to and the Vendor and Purchaser do hereby respectively agree to complete the sale and purchase according to the said conditions.

AS WITNESS the hands of the parties.

Purchase Money	....	£	:	:
Deposit....	....	£	:	:
Balance to Pay	....	£	:	:

WITNESS.....

RECEIVED the sum of  
the deposit on the said purchase.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1908.

Abstract of the title to be sent to



## SPECIAL CONDITIONS - OF SALE. -

1. The property is offered subject to the General Sale Conditions of the Lancaster Law Society so far as the same are not inconsistent with the following special conditions. If there be any variance or inconsistency between such General Sale Conditions and these Special Conditions, the provisions of the Special Conditions shall prevail.
2. The abstract of title shall be delivered to the purchaser or his solicitor within 14 days from the sale, and the title to the said plot of land shall commence with an Indenture of Conveyance on sale dated the 5th day of April, 1877, and made between the Midland Railway Company of the first part, Thomas Firth of the second part, and the Morecambe Baths Winter Gardens and Aquarium Co. Ltd. of the third part, which shall be accepted as an absolutely good root of title, and no purchaser shall require the production of or make any requisition or objection in reference to the earlier title however such earlier title may have been ascertained by him. No title shall be required to be shewn to the furnishings, fittings, scenery and stage property, trade effects and plant included in the sale. Objections and requisitions shall be delivered in writing to the Vendor's Solicitor within 10 days from the delivery of the abstract, and any objections or requisitions arising out of replies to objections or requisitions within 4 days after such replies, and in these presents time shall be deemed to be of the essence of the contract.
3. No purchaser shall require the production of the Memorandum or Articles of Association of any Company or of a copy thereof, or of the rules or a copy of the rules of any Building Society, which Company or Society may appear from the abstract to have had any dealings with the property or any evidence of the registration, incorporation, constitution, powers or proceedings of any such Company, Building Society, but shall assume that all such dealings were duly authorised and regular in all respects.
4. The purchaser shall take and pay for the stock of wines, spirits, beer, liquors and mineral waters of every description, cigars, cigarettes, tobacco and all other consumable articles and things upon the premises as at the date fixed for completion, at a valuation to be made at the joint expense of the Vendor and the Purchaser by two gaugers to be appointed by them respectively, or in case of difference between such gaugers, by an umpire to be appointed by them before commencing the valuation, or in case the purchaser shall not have appointed a gauger, and notified such appointment in writing to the Vendor or his Solicitor within seven days after the sale, or in case the Purchaser's gauger shall have refused to concur in the appointment of an umpire, then by the Vendor's gauger alone. In case any umpire or gauger appointed under this condition shall die before completing the valuation, or shall neglect or refuse to act, the gaugers shall forthwith appoint another umpire, or as the case may be, the party who appointed such gauger shall notify the appointment of some other person as gauger within seven days after such death, neglect, or refusal, failing which, the remaining gauger shall alone make the valuation. If no valuation is made of such stock, the purchaser shall pay for the same at its fair value.
5. The deposit shall be at the rate of £10 per centum of the purchase money, and the purchase shall be completed at the office of Mr. J. G. Wright, the Vendor's Solicitor, situate at Bank Buildings, Lancaster, on the 15th day of October, 1908.
6. The present sale being pursuant to an Order of the Court of Chancery of the County Palatine of Lancaster, no objection shall be taken or requisition made on the ground of any defect of parties, or otherwise concerning the constitution of the action or the jurisdiction of the Court to make the Order, and no person only beneficially and not legally interested shall be required to join in the conveyance to the purchaser. All reports and certificates of the Registrar made previously to the day of sale shall be conclusive evidence of the matters thereby certified.
7. The purchaser shall, under an authority to be obtained by him for that purpose from the Registrar at the cost of the purchaser, or in case of his neglect, under an order to be obtained by the Plaintiffs in the said action at the cost of the purchaser with the privity of the Registrar, pay the balance of his purchase money, and also the amount of the valuation under the last preceding condition into the Branch Bank of England at Manchester, into the joint names of the Registrar and Comptroller to the credit of this action on or before the 15th day of October, 1908, and if from any cause whatever the same is not so paid, then the purchaser is to pay interest on the sum so to be paid by him at the rate of £5 per cent. per annum from that day until the day when the same shall be actually paid into the Bank, and General Condition 12 shall not apply to this sale.
8. The statements made in the Particulars, and the Plans attached thereto, are believed to be correct, but the accuracy thereof respectively is not guaranteed, nor shall any compensation be allowed or given for any error, inaccuracy, or mistake therein respectively.
9. Upon the completion of the purchase the purchaser shall pay to the Vendor, in respect of subsisting insurances and licences upon or appertaining to the premises and rates and taxes, a sum proportionate to the unexpired portion of the period covered thereby respectively, and the Vendor will, at the purchaser's cost in all respects, apply for and take all usual and necessary steps for procuring the transfer of such subsisting insurances and licences, but the completion of the purchase shall not be postponed by reason of any such transfer being delayed or refused.