

= Cine City , Withington =

Cine City was a cinema in Withington , Manchester , England located at 494 Wilmslow Road , Withington , Manchester , M20 3BG . It opened in 1912 as The Scala , and was the third cinema to open in Britain . During the 1930s , cinemas became increasingly popular ; The Scala was one of 109 cinemas in Manchester at its peak .

The road outside was hit by a small bomb during the Second World War , but the cinema (which was showing several films at the time) survived with only minor damage . After the war , television led to a decline in cinema attendances , and by 1965 , only 40 cinemas remained in Manchester . Cine City closed in July 2001 , making it the third @-@ longest running cinema in England .

By 2005 the building was in a bad state of repair , and was threatened with demolition . Although heritage groups won a stay of execution , the cinema was demolished in spring 2008 . A replacement building is planned for the site .

= = History = =

The cinema opened in 1912 as " The Scala " . It was the third cinema to open in Britain , and by the time of its closure in 2001 it was the third longest @-@ running cinema in the country . As Cine City its original single @-@ screen auditorium had been fitted with 675 seats in three cinema screens . Before the advent of " talkies " , the Scala had a resident female cinema pianist , and the conductor Sir John Barbirolli once played the piano to accompany the silent films . Violet Carson , who went on to play Ena Sharples in Coronation Street , was also a resident pianist . During the 1930s the popularity of the new " picture houses " grew rapidly , with 109 in Manchester at its peak . Many people visited The Scala three or four times a week . The craze for cinema @-@ going was seen by some as a social ill of its time ; school teachers complained that pupils were not doing their homework because they were spending too much time at the cinema . One regular movie @-@ goer at the cinema in the 1920s was Robert Donat , a local boy who went on to become an Oscar @-@ winning actor .

During the Manchester Blitz of World War II , a small bomb fell onto Wilmslow Road in front of the cinema on the night of 1 October 1940 . The cinema (which at the time was screening The Housekeeper 's Daughter and 5th Ave Girl) survived with minor damage , although it had to close for a few weeks while repairs were completed .

After the war , the popularity of cinemas waned as more people acquired televisions , and by 1965 there were only 40 cinemas left in Manchester . Cine City was threatened with closure in 1997 when Geoff Henshaw , the owner at the time , died . It was purchased by David Babsky , who kept the cinema open until July 2001 , when it closed due to competition from a new multiplex cinema in nearby East Didsbury .

= = Closure and redevelopment = =

After the cinema closed , it was purchased by Develop UK , and several attempts were made to turn the building into a Wetherspoons pub . However these were rejected by the council twice , once in the initial planning application , and also in a subsequent appeal . The application was denied due to the moratorium on new food and drink licences in Withington , part of the town 's unitary development plan . In 2002 the building was purchased by Arrows International . They applied for planning permission in December 2002 to demolish part of the cinema , reconstructing it as five ground floor shops , with 21 flats on the upper floors . These plans were withdrawn as they were seen as overdeveloping the site .

In 2003 the site was purchased by property developer Mohammad Jamil , who runs the Britannia Property Group . When they purchased the site , Cine City was regarded as " too far gone " , so it was decided that it should be demolished and a new building constructed in its place . A campaign to save the building was started in 2002 by the actor and comedian John Thomson , but it ended in failure six years later , when it was realised that refurbishing the existing building would cost around

£ 6 million .

As of 2005 , the building still retained a number of original features , including its gold brocade seats , wall friezes , cornices , and ceiling roses . However , the fabric of the building remained in a poor state of repair , and in January 2008 it was announced once again that the building was to be demolished , and scaffolding was erected at the front in preparation . The building , once considered amongst the most iconic in Manchester , was not regarded as architecturally interesting , and was demolished in the spring of 2008 . The pair of stone piers in the forecourt of the building , which were Grade II listed in 1998 , remain .

= = Replacement building = =

Plans for a new building on the site have gone through several generations . The first design consisted of a six @-@ storey building (including basement) , which had a large shop on the ground floor , as well as an underground car park and four floors of residential apartments , with a top level to hold the building 's mechanics . Each floor would have 4 @,@ 000 square feet (372 m2) , and there would have been a leaning tower to the side of the building . The design was given planning permission in 2005 .

A revised design turned the mezzanine floor into an area that could be used as an arts venue , cinema , music auditorium or conference room for 120 to 150 people . New plans cost £ 60 @,@ 000 . However this new design was deemed to be unworkable . A second design consisted of another six @-@ storey building with a large ground @-@ floor shop , a first @-@ storey car park , and four floors of flats . This would have been half a metre less in height than the previous design , and did not include the tower . The plan was initially rejected by the council , but was subsequently approved in April 2008 , before being rejected by the Planning Inspectorate . Several later applications for the site were also rejected , particularly due to concerns over parking , and the site was vacant as of June 2015 .