



The response of the Our Brighton Hippodrome campaign group to planning applications **BH2013/04348** and **BH2013/04351** concerning The Hippodrome & Hippodrome House, 51-58 Middle Street, 47 Middle Street, 10 & 11 Dukes Lane and land adjacent to 18-19 Ship Street Brighton

### Executive summary

- 1 The Hippodrome is Grade II\* listed, unique and of national importance, in particular for the scale of its auditorium, which will be lost if this application is approved.
- 2 The Brighton and Hove City Plan identifies the Hippodrome as part of the 'existing cultural infrastructure' that should be **protected and enhanced** . . . to contribute to the city's unique tourism offer'. (Para 2.5.1)
- 3 Without a lyric theatre to complement its range of other performance venues, major productions will continue to bypass the city.
- 4 This proposal offers **no net gain** to the city's entertainment and cultural infrastructure and its vital tourism offer. A new cinema in this location would not attract new or more visitors to the city. It would therefore **add nothing to the local economy**.
- 5 No due consideration of restoration as a theatre has been attempted, proposed use having gone from music venue (the principal obstacle to which was alcohol licensing) to cinema, bypassing live performance. (Para 2.3)
- 6 This proposal is not a 'restoration' of the Hippodrome, but a **conversion**.
- 7 The current proposals are **not compliant** with National and Local Planning Policy on protection of heritage assets. (Paras 2.1.1 - 2.1.4)
- 8 Both English Heritage and the Theatres Trust have said the conversion should be reversible. The current proposals are **not reversible**. (Paras 2.4.4 and 2.4.5)
- 9 The seriously flawed Report on Viability of Alternative Uses does not provide adequate evidence that cinema is the only viable option. (Appendix A)
- 10 The creation of another eight-screen cinema in the next street to an existing eight-screen multiplex will lead to over-concentration of cinema provision in a small area. There are better alternative sites, in one of which Vue has a declared interest. (Para 5.9)

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Our Brighton Hippodrome argues that the case for a cinema conversion as the only viable option for this major national asset has not been made.

1.2 We believe we can establish a workable prospectus and would appreciate the opportunity to present and discuss our proposals with Brighton & Hove City Council and English Heritage to find a viable solution that allows the Hippodrome to be saved from further deterioration and restored as a venue for live performance—which has yet to be properly considered—to the benefit of the city, the region and the nation.

## 2. The current proposal

### 2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

2.1.1 We refer to the following policies from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- Paragraph 126 underlines the need for local authorities to recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Paragraph 131 supports putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- Paragraph 132 stresses that heritage significance can be harmed or lost through alteration and that substantial harm to a Grade II listed building should be exceptional.
- Paragraph 133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent.

2.1.2 Paragraph 133 goes on to state that **any** substantial harm must be outweighed by public benefit, or **all** of the following should apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; **and**
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; **and**
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; **and**
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

2.1.3 We refer to the following saved policies from Brighton & Hove Local Plan (2005) considered compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework:

- HE1 protects listed buildings from development having an adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the interior or exterior of the building or its setting; and preserves its historic fabric;
- HE2 underlines the need for evidence to be provided that no viable alternative use can be found in support of the major alteration of a listed building.

At 8.7 this policy goes on to stress the importance of the preservation of listed buildings or any features of special architectural or historic interest they possess.

At 8.8 it notes that government guidance set out in PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' advises that once lost, listed buildings cannot be replaced; and **they can be robbed of their special interest as surely by unsuitable alteration as by outright demolition.** This is unquestionably just such a case.

- HE4 underlines the importance of the preservation and/or reinstatement of original features of special historical architectural interest, for the benefit of the wider community and to allow future generations to experience and learn from the building.

2.1.4 The HE4 policy emphasises that work that destroys important later phases of work should not be permitted. The Regency Society notes that the back-stage area 'was a late addition to the complex and has no architectural value in itself'.<sup>1</sup> This completely fails to understand, as argued elsewhere, that it is the whole building and its function that is significant. It is totally irrelevant to dismiss the stage housing on the grounds that it received an enlargement in 1955.

## 2.2 English Heritage

2.2.1 Letters from Indigo Planning to English Heritage (EH) and EH's response are included as part of IP's Planning Statement<sup>2</sup>. Indigo's letter is illegible in the copy on the planning website and so it is not possible to know how the enquiry was expressed.

2.2.2 EH emphasises that the heritage significance of the Hippodrome comprises much more than the decorative internal finishes and external façades; it is in the volume of its auditorium, its relationship with the stage, the fly-tower and backstage areas and in its illustration of changing patterns of cultural taste over the last 100 years.

2.2.3 EH also expresses a preference for the Hippodrome to be returned to its original use as requiring the least harmful intervention for its conservation, over the current scheme proposal: *'The degree of intervention within the auditorium would clearly be harmful to the significance of the building.'*

2.2.4 EH makes several references to the 'harm' that the cinema conversion would cause to the building. However, EH's understandable concern for ongoing deterioration of the building's structure and the urgent need for repairs are stated as weighing heavily in favour of the scheme.

2.2.5 If, as should have been the case, the ongoing condition of the fabric was being monitored by the Council, why, given their expressed concern, has the Council not insisted on it being properly maintained by the present owners? It has the powers, when no action is taken by the owners, to undertake repairs themselves and counter-

---

<sup>1</sup> Regency Society: 'Response to proposals by Alaska for the redevelopment of the Brighton Hippodrome as presented in a public exhibition on 18 October 2013'. Brighton: Regency Society, December 2013. In fact, the Regency Society is not entirely accurate: the northern part of the back-stage space is within the historic fabric of the original building.

<sup>2</sup> Planning and retail statement, Appendix 2.

charge the defaulters. This line of action, not having been taken, is now being used as a pretext for considering the possible approval of a totally unacceptable development.

2.2.6 It would seem, based on the information provided to date that EH is persuaded that returning the Hippodrome to live venue use is not an option likely to garner local or council support, and that a plan for such is unlikely to be forthcoming. We argue on the contrary that there is considerable local support and believe that English Heritage and Brighton & Hove City Council would welcome an alternative proposal for the restoration and conservation of this historic theatre as a live venue if it could be shown to be truly viable. We wish to provide that alternative proposal.

### **2.3 Theatre restoration has not been considered**

2.3.1 After six years of efforts by the leaseholder, Academy Music Group (AMG), to restore the Hippodrome as a venue for live music, the proposal from Indigo Planning to convert the building into an eight-screen cinema was unexpected when it became known in 2013. Until the current application was made public we were unaware that the live music proposals had been withdrawn. The last public announcement of progress was posted in *The Argus* only two years ago: 'BRINGING MUSIC BACK TO THE HIPPODROME . . . plans are moving forward.'<sup>3</sup> We understand the principal problem with the rock music venue proposal concerned alcohol licensing and not the viability of the building restoration *per se*. A proposition built around theatrical performance, including opera, ballet and other events, would not encounter such an obstacle.

2.3.2 Plans have gone, therefore, from use as a music venue straight to conversion into a cinema, *on the initiative of a cinema exhibitor*, bypassing restoration as a live performance space, which has not been given due consideration. **It has not been proved at all, let alone 'beyond reasonable doubt', that the cinema option is the 'last opportunity' to save the building.**

2.3.3 Whilst the current proposal undoubtedly offers the immediate appeal of intervention to prevent further structural decay, there are major concerns implicit in the application for the impact it would have on the historic fabric of the building. In the opinion of some who have seen inside the building recently, deterioration is by no means as extensive or rapid as the applicant claims.

2.3.4 Notwithstanding its stated policy, there has been no evidence or indication that the Council has taken any pro-active measures to secure the recovery of the Hippodrome for its designed use.

### **2.4 Demolition of essential theatre features**

2.4.1 The Hippodrome-as-cinema proposal involves the demolition of the stage and fly-tower, all backstage facilities (some of which are part of the 'historic fabric'), the stalls and orchestra pit. It is totally unrealistic and misleading to assert that the reversal of such a degree of intervention could ever be contemplated in the future.

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Argus*, 3 October 2011

2.4.2 The insertion of a new floor at balcony level will destroy the essential proportions of the building's main asset: the auditorium, the profile and volume of which gives the Hippodrome its fundamental 'listed' quality. It is more than just a ceiling.

2.4.3 Although there is much to be said for improving the streetscape near the junction of Ship Street and Prince Albert Street, the construction of the proposed retail/office building in Ship Street would limit vehicular access to the rear of the Hippodrome. This building would deny access to the rear of the theatre for the 40-foot trucks that routinely carry stage sets from site to site. Parking for at least two pantechincons, currently available, would be essential.

2.4.4 The extent of development proposed for the cinema conversion will make it impossible for the building ever to revert to use as a theatre, still less as a prime example of the work of Frank Matcham—the primary reason for its listed status.

2.4.5 The criterion required by both English Heritage and the Theatres Trust that the restoration will be reversible will therefore not be met.

## 2.5 Brighton and Hove City Council

2.5.1 In pursuit of the Council's aspiration to make the city a national cultural leader<sup>4</sup>, the City Plan states:

'It is important that the city's existing cultural infrastructure (arts, performance and creation space) is protected and enhanced and that new proposals complement and contribute to the city's unique tourism offer. Examples include the Old Market in Hove and the **Hippodrome** in Brighton.

2.5.2 The emphasis is clearly on protecting sites if at all possible:

'To maintain the potential for a wide variety of arts and cultural uses *existing venues* (including stand-alone venues, those that are part of other facilities, or are contained within educational or community buildings) **will be protected for their existing use or potential for such use**. Proposals for change of use would need supporting documentation to demonstrate availability of adequate provision, equally as accessible by the community, elsewhere in the city.<sup>5</sup>

2.5.3 The Council's letter of pre-application advice<sup>6</sup> comments on 'the degree of **harm** the proposed cinema use . . . would have on the historic character of the Grade II\* listed building, and whether any alternative viable uses would have a more benign impact. . . . Given the historical importance of the Hippodrome and the degree of

---

<sup>4</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council Cultural Strategy 2009

<sup>5</sup> Extract from Brighton & Hove City Council Local Development Framework Submission City Plan Part One: CP5 Culture and Tourism, para 4.54 (our emphases). Pending for unrelated reasons at the time of writing.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Adrian Smith to Simon Neate, dated 11 October 2013 (ref BH/2013/ENQ/00696). Statement of Community Engagement Appendix 2

internal **harm** required to facilitate a conversion to a cinema use, the LPA has a duty of care to ensure *beyond all doubt* that all possible alternative uses that would better preserve and restore the listed buildings are indeed unworkable' and 'particular focus should be had on the viability case against the retention of the building as a theatre'. These criteria have not been satisfied in accordance with NPPF 133 (see 2.1.1).

### 3 Report on Viability of Alternative Uses

3.1 This is arguably the core document in the whole planning application as it is designed to prove that the Hippodrome could not be restored as a theatre and therefore could only be a cinema.

3.2 We found the report commissioned from J Ashworth Associates so full of factual errors, misunderstandings, inconsistencies and distortions that it needs (regrettably extensive) separate analysis. We summarise our comments on the report and their implications for the application in the following sections. The full analysis is in Appendix A.

3.3 As the decision to convert to a cinema had already been made before this report was commissioned, it has been written to manipulate the evidence in favour of cinema as the only option. **This slapdash work has no credibility as a document in support of the current planning application and should be rejected.**

### 4 The current proposal: theatre aspects

4.1.1 The city needs a lyric receiving theatre of the size that the Hippodrome represents. There is no 'adequate provision . . . elsewhere in the city' (see 2.4.2). Not to give it adequate consideration for this purpose would squander an opportunity to make the most of the existing Hippodrome, in accordance with the City Plan principles.

4.1.2 Information given in the Report on the Viability of Alternative Uses about the seating capacity of other venues does not tally with the venues' own statements.

4.1.3 The Report confirms the need for 'a large-scale lyric theatre to take West End musicals on tour (1800-3000 capacity)' among other similar touring productions. In 6.2 *The Hippodrome: Constraints* it says the Hippodrome 'could accommodate seating capacity up to 1300 seats, but above that, say 1500 seats, the seating would be cramped and sight lines to the stage would be compromised'. Yet two pages on, it states that the national average touring theatre capacity is 1,100. This inconsistency undermines the argument that the Hippodrome would be too small.

4.1.4 The Report declares that 'a smaller theatre of 1100 seats would duplicate what Brighton already has'. This is not supported by the data given, still less by the more accurate figures. We would challenge the Report's figures in any case. There is no evidence that seating would be cramped at a higher capacity than 1,300.



4.1.5 Study has shown that a perfectly acceptable seated capacity of **1,535** is achievable and significantly without any of the customary vertical sightline obstruction. The Hippodrome, quite exceptionally, offers two production options:

1. proscenium mode seating 1535 and
2. in the round/ circus seating 1409.

And it is in the nature of a 'circus theatre' arrangement that sightlines are far from compromised, except marginally for productions using the proscenium stage.

## 5. Why another cinema?

5.1 As in the case of its theatre analysis. the Report on the Viability of Alternative Uses makes even more surprising mistakes.

5.2 One argument used in favour of converting the Hippodrome into a cinema is that the city is 'under-screened' compared with the national average. Brighton has 19 screens: eight each at the Cineworld and the Odeon, one at the Duke of Yorks and two at Dukes @ Komedia. Table 5 in the Viability Report calculates the population per screen at 19,158.

5.3 Making comparisons between population, catchment area and number of cinemas and screens is fraught with difficulties. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of unfulfilled demand for cinema seats.

5.4 We agree with the aforementioned letter of pre-application advice that inclusion of 'digital projections, a 3D offer, superior seats and extreme screens does not in itself demonstrate that there is sufficient demand for a further cinema complex'. These features are already available in other cinemas in the city.

5.5 It is not true that 'The non-multiplex sector continues to be in slow decline, with digital projection proving the last nail in the coffin of some of them.' The proportion of all UK screens in multiplexes has fallen slightly since 2010 as smaller cinema sites (fewer than five screens) have been increasing.<sup>7</sup> This growth in non-multiplex screens can be attributed directly to the availability of digital technology at lower prices.

5.6 It is important to make a distinction between cinema screens and sites. Although the number of screens may increase choice of film at a given site, in terms of accessibility to cinema there is a clear difference between 10 screens at one site and two screens at each of five sites or even five screens at each of two sites.

5.7 The Hippodrome and Odeon are less than 150 metres apart as the crow flies, approximately 300 metres walking distance—no more than four minutes' leisurely walking time. The idea that two eight-screen sites so close to each other offers audiences greater choice is entirely spurious. All mainstream cinemas, especially multiplexes, show the same films and cinemagoing is dependent on the quality and appeal of those films. The choice would be to see a given film at *either* the Hippodrome or the Odeon but obviously not both.

---

<sup>7</sup> *BFI Statistical Yearbook 2013*. London: British Film Institute, 2013.

5.8 A newer cinema might prove more attractive but it would not increase the overall audience size. The implication is that the market is unlikely to sustain two cinema in such close proximity. This proposal offers **no net gain** to the city's entertainment and cultural infrastructure.

5.8 There is no evidence that 'the proposed cinema . . . will offer wider cultural and educational benefits that are not currently provided for in the city'.<sup>8</sup> Live transmissions of ballet, opera, theatre and other events are already screened at the Duke of York's and Dukes @ Komedia and have helped to secure their success. The claim that 'it is not expected that the proposed cinema would have an adverse impact on existing facilities in the regional centre' cannot therefore be justified. Indeed, it could have a serious negative effect on the financial viability of these other cinemas.

5.9 Vue Entertainment has been reported to be planning a nine-screen cinema in the development near Hove Station<sup>9</sup>. As this would be a **much better site** than the Hippodrome, would Vue then seek to relinquish the Hippodrome? It could not be in its interests to maintain two sites of that size within the city. If Vue were to move its operations from Middle Street to Hove, the Hippodrome would once more be left without a use and incapable of being restored as a theatre. At that point it is quite possible that demolition would be the only option. Again, Vue's intentions and commitment need to be tested.

## 6 Hippodrome House and the public realm

6.1 Clearly the Hippodrome House space is suitable for restaurants, bars and other spaces, which could be important parts of a live performance configuration. We would like to see at least one art-house cinema auditorium within the restored complex, if space permits.

6.2 The improvements to the 1897 Karslake exterior are welcomed, as is the proposed access from Dukes Lane. Both of these would be of considerable benefit to a restoration of the Hippodrome as a place for live performance.

---

<sup>8</sup> Planning and Retail Statement, paras 8.30 and 8.31.

<sup>9</sup> *The Argus*, 3 July 2012. [http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/business/9794937.Architect\\_chosen\\_for\\_\\_100m\\_Hove\\_Station\\_revamp/](http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/business/9794937.Architect_chosen_for__100m_Hove_Station_revamp/)



## APPENDIX A

### Report on Viability of Alternative Uses

Our analysis of the report by J Ashworth Associates. Our comments are in italics.

#### 1. Background

'Subject to the satisfactory resolution of the concerns identified in the pre-application advice, the Council have indicated support in principle for the development and restoration of the site along the lines proposed.'

■ *This is not our reading of such phrases in the pre-application advice as the need to establish 'beyond reasonable doubt' that this is the only credible option. The report therefore begins by making a huge assumption that the Council needs little further evidence to approve the application, so credible evidence is hardly needed.*

'This report is supplementary to the report by Alaska Development Consultants dated September 2013 titled 'The Brighton Hippodrome Restoration & Dukes Lane Regeneration: Viability Report...'

■ *This earlier report has not been included in the planning application and has not been seen, so we cannot judge the nature of the brief to J Ashworth Associates.*

#### 2. Planning Context

■ *We have dealt with this in our objection.*

#### 3. The Building Costs

■ *The figure of £13.4m for fitting out as a cinema is inconsistent with other figures quoted by the developers. It is not clear whether this excludes the estimated £4.5m cost of fitting out the cinemas; if it does, the total cost is £17.9m, which is between the report's estimates of the cost of a theatre with 1,300-1,500 seats—and clearly not the cheapest option by a considerable margin.*

'The 1500 seat theatre ... is only possible with the use of a much smaller seat unit than the cinema type. The architects are doubtful that it would be acceptable under modern Building and Fire Regulations.'

■ *There is no evidence for this statement. Our studies suggest it is entirely practical to achieve a comfortable seating capacity of 1535, which is more than the top end of the scale quoted in the report.*

#### 4. Public Subsidy or Private Sponsorship

'Our research indicates that such public support is extremely unlikely in today's economic climate, which would make it unreasonable to defer a planning decision on the future of the Hippodrome in the hope of future changes in direction by the major funding bodies.'

■ *This does not accord with our own contacts with funding bodies, which suggests that money may well be available. Nor is there evidence that circumstances may not change in the short term. The statement is designed to apply pressure to the City Council to*

*decide quickly to accept the application on the assumption that the building is in imminent danger of collapse, which it isn't, and that restoration cannot wait.*

■ *We have no idea on what authority the BHCC Assistant Chief Executive asserts that no funds will be available from the Arts Council or Heritage Lottery Fund. Our own research does not confirm this.*

#### 4.2 Heritage Lottery Fund

■ *There are only statements unsupported by evidence that the Hippodrome would not qualify for HLF funding. The City Council's applications to HLF need not preclude an application for the Hippodrome, in which the council has no involvement.*

#### 4.5 Private patronage

'...no offers have been forthcoming to date of which we are aware, despite a well-publicised local campaign to find a development solution that preserves use of the building as a theatre.'

■ *This is a complete travesty. There has not been a well-publicised local campaign until the one now being conducted by Our Brighton Hippodrome. It cannot therefore be assumed that patronage or sponsorship will not emerge in the coming as our campaign gains momentum and our efforts to present a theatre-based proposition mature. Indeed, patronage or sponsorship is one of our objectives. This is a powerful argument for deferral of a planning decision.*

### 6 Viability of Theatre Use

#### 6.1 Theatres in Brighton

■ *The seating capacity of the Theatre Royal is officially 952 but 95 of these are in line with pillars and 105 have an otherwise restricted sightline, leaving a workable total of 752.*

■ *The seating capacity of the Dome is 1,700 (or 1,860 part-standing) and not 2,000.*

■ *The Pavilion Theatre has been called the Studio Theatre since 2012.*

■ *The seating capacity of the Brighton Centre is 4,450, not 5,000.*

'...the investigation into the future of the Apollo Theatre in Brighton.'

■ *We guess this means the Astoria Cinema and that this unreferenced research is that carried out by Bonnar Keenlyside for Yes No Productions, written no later than 2007. It is inappropriate to quote uncredited research conducted more than six years ago, in different circumstances about an unrelated property.*

'The following gaps in the market were identified: A large-scale lyric theatre to take West End musical on tour (1800-3000 capacity).'

■ *Two pages further on, the report quotes the average theatre capacity from the Touring Theatre Survey 2011/12 (no source given) as 1,100.*

'A smaller theatre of 1100 seats would duplicate what Brighton already has.'

■ *No it wouldn't. And this again incorrectly assumes that 1,100 is the maximum capacity of a restored Hippodrome. Our estimate of potential capacity in excess of 1,500 is a clear*

*gap in the market, suited to all but the very largest touring productions.*

## 6.2 The Hippodrome: Constraints

'The Ambassador Theatre Group ... confirmed that what is needed is a venue capable of taking the large West End musicals on tour, but the Hippodrome's stage is too small, the fly tower is not adequate and a maximum of 1500 seats is not enough. Ideally, Brighton needs a lyric theatre with 2000 seats; the Hippodrome cannot fill the gap in the existing venue mix.'

■ *We do not believe that this is ATG's current position. Even if 'ideally' a 2,000-seat theatre is desirable, this does not mean that one with more than 1,500 seats is unsustainable and fails to fill the gap in the market.*

## 6.3 Theatre Investment in the Hippodrome

'ATG would have no interest in operating the Hippodrome as a theatre, which could do little more than duplicate the Theatre Royal.'

■ *Again, this is not our understanding of ATG's position, which is much more positive than stated. The Hippodrome is seen as complementary to the Theatre Royal, which is a much smaller theatre.*

'There would be no realistic prospect of a theatre with such a profile generating sufficient surpluses to make a financial contribution to the restoration of the Brighton Hippodrome.'

■ *The cinema proposition is based on the symbiosis of cinema, catering, drinks and confectionary. Cinemas conventionally make more from sales of popcorn, confectionery and drinks than from the film screenings. Why would a theatre restoration be significantly different? Indeed, as theatre prices are higher than those for cinemas by a substantial order of magnitude, this cursory dismissal of the theatre option has no credibility.*

## 7. Viability of Cinema Use

### 7.1 Cinemas in Brighton

'Cineworld is an 8 screen cinema located on the seafront close to Brighton Pier.'

■ *No, it's in the Brighton Marina complex, nearly 2½ miles away. A fundamental error that suggests the writer of the report has not even visited Brighton.*

'Both multiplexes were built in the 1980s and appear dated by modern design standards.'

■ *Wrong again. Kingswest (then the Top Rank Suite) opened in 1966; the first Odeon cinemas opened in 1973. Cineworld opened as the MGM Cinemas in 1991.<sup>10</sup> It could be*

---

<sup>10</sup> David Fisher: *Cinema-by-Sea*. Brighton: Terra Media, 2012: 62, 47. David Fisher, one of the authors of this objection, was editor of *Screen Digest* for 39 years, a member of the government-appointed Interim Action Committee on the British Film Industry and its successor the British Screen Advisory Council, a leading authority and government advisor on cinema statistics, and has drawn on informal advice from former colleagues at Screen Digest Ltd (now IHS Screen Digest) about the current state of the cinema industry.

said that most buildings in the city look dated. That would only be a valid argument if the proposal were to replace either or both. (We could not possibly comment on the suggestion that Vue Entertainment is seeking to put the Odeon out of business!)

## 7.2 Industry Trends

‘The non-multiplex sector continues to be in slow decline, ...’

■ *Not so. Numbers fluctuate from year to year and the point at which data are sampled can change the interpretation. However, in 2012 the net gain in cinema sites was 18 screens and three sites for multiplexes, 32 screens and 21 sites for ‘traditional’ cinemas. In other words, almost twice as many ‘traditional’ screens as multiplex. These are not all run by ‘volunteer staff’. Between 2010 and 2012 the number of screens in multiplexes grew by 3.0 per cent, the number in non-multiplex grew by 6.9 per cent. This completely contradicts the assertions in the report. The proportion of all UK screens in multiplexes has fallen slightly over this period.<sup>11</sup>*

‘... with digital projection proving the last nail in the coffin of some of them.’

■ *The exact opposite is true. The growth in non-multiplex screens can be attributed directly to the availability of digital technology at lower prices.*

## 7.3 Demand for Cinemas in Brighton

■ *Data about travel time is arbitrary and ill-defined and 20 minutes’ drive-time even more so. (According to Google Maps, the drive time from Kingston Lane, Southwick to Cineworld at Brighton Marina is 20 minutes.) Consequently, the population data within a 20-minute drive-time of the Hippodrome is highly suspect.*

‘Brighton’s ratio is some 2,500 people per screen more than the national average, suggesting an undersupply of screens in the area.’

■ *Only on the questionable data given. If measured against actual population data for the City of Brighton & Hove (plus Shoreham, Southwick, Peacehaven—a total of 312,000), the average population per screen (16,420) is marginally below the national average (16,565). Even this is misleading, however, as the national population is not evenly distributed.*

■ *A more reliable alternative analysis, based on the population of comparable cities, suggests that Brighton & Hove is indeed under-screened. Cambridge, another university town, has 20 screens but only half the population of Brighton & Hove. Hull, with a similar-sized population, has 29 screens. However, Brighton has more cinema sites per thousand population than Hull.*

■ *We would contend that a new multiplex cinema in Hove—in the Hove station area development or in the neighbourhood of King Alfred (the latter first proposed in 1997<sup>12</sup>)—would have a more positive impact on the city’s entertainment provision.*

---

<sup>11</sup> *BFI Statistical Yearbook 2013*. London: British Film Institute, 2013

<sup>12</sup> Fisher: *op cit.*: 42