



The restored interior of the cinema



The new neon signage outside the cinema

LEISURE PROJECT

PHOENIX CINEMA

East Finchley, London

CLIENT:

THE PHOENIX CINEMA TRUST

ARCHITECT:

HMDW ARCHITECTS

COST:

£1,100,000

The Cinema

Built in 1910, the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley is the oldest continuously running cinema in the country. In the 1930s the exterior of the cinema was rebuilt to give the building a "more modern", art deco look and much of the interior was decorated to reflect this period. Art deco relief panels were added to the walls of the auditorium but the original 1910 vaulted ceiling was retained.

Regeneration

In 2009 The Phoenix was in urgent need of repair, so a Conservation Management Plan was put together sponsored by the Heritage Lottery fund to set about raising the £1.1 million needed to restore the Phoenix to its former 1930s glory. EngDesign assisted HMDW Architects in developing the refurbishment design which eventually went ahead in 2010.

Restoration

A major part of the M&E brief was to provide full air conditioning to the historic auditorium. This was done using a new heat-reclaim ventilation system which utilised existing gas boilers with new rooftop condensers to provide efficient heating and cooling

throughout the year. A new lighting installation was also designed in the auditorium to make it a multipurpose space for both cinema and conference use, whilst still sympathetically illuminating the existing art deco features.

Above the main entrance to the building, existing first floor offices and storage space were converted into a café with full catering facilities. The entire electrical infrastructure of the building was also refurbished to modern standards.

Externally the aim was to reinvigorate the exterior by dramatically illuminating it with new neon lighting to ensure the cinema retained its place as the main feature of the local high street.

Press Coverage

The re-opening of the cinema was covered widely by the local and national press, including the BBC and Film London. The film critic Mark Kermode also made a short film about the restoration of his favourite cinema.