

Context

Former Empire nightclub (formerly Crown Cinema, Paris Cinema and Riley's American Pool & Snooker Club), located at 151 Far Gosford St, Coventry CV1 5DU.



Figure 1. The Paris Luxury Continental Cinema in 1958



Figure 2. Current situation

Assessment – Discussion

The Empire Nightclub on Far Gosford Street was formerly the Crown Theatre/Cinema, and then the Paris Cinema.

The Crown Theatre opened on August Bank Holiday Monday 1912 and the architect was J.H. Gilbert. It had a decorative façade, which was topped by a centrally placed crown. It was licenced to screen pictures and had at first only had a temporary licence for accompanying music. Seating was provided for 558, but the cinema was so successful, that in April 1913, it was extended to seat 771.

On 1st June 1925 it was taken over by Oscar Deutsch (his first cinema) who later built up the Odeon chain. It only remained under Deutsch's control for a while as it was sold as a going concern in 1928. It was temporarily closed in October 1940 by air raid damage.

In October 1957 it was closed again for modernisation and re-opened on 1st March 1958 with Eva Bartok in "Her Crime Was Love" with the film's star appearing 'in person'. It was now known as the Paris Luxury Continental Cinema, later shortened to Paris Cinema.

After several operators and openings and closures over the years, it finally closed on 21st November 1981. The building lay derelict and suffered damage by fire in 1991. However, by mid-1999 it had re-opened as a Laser Quest centre, then Riley's American Pool & Snooker Club. More recently it became the Empire Nightclub. Recent relocation plans for the Empire to move into Hertford Street, have left the building vacant.

Assessment – Criteria

