

Building Surveying Notes on Mothballing the Building November 2017

Exterior Decorations & Roofs –

Robust hoarding up of all windows, doors, roof lights and other access points will be required, and this will need to be monitored and maintained to prevent unauthorised access, arson, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour. A very secure point or points of access would need to be maintained for visiting maintenance contractors. The cost would be subject to contractor's quotation, there are specialist firms for this type of work used by housing associations. It may be useful to decorate the hoarding to mitigate the visual effect of the theatre's closure.

The building's interior and roof areas would have to be inspected regularly to detect /prevent unauthorised access and water ingress. The White Rock Baths was visited twice per week by a Booker and Best electrician familiar with the building that checked all areas and ensured that the electrical power, temporary lighting and sump pumps were all working safely. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour can rapidly overtake a building when left empty. A major break-in to the mothballed theatre could create enough damage to put the maintained services required to keep it insured beyond use. For example, damage to the live water services would jeopardise the live electrical services. Any mothballing plan would have to be discussed with the Council's insurers at an early stage.

The regular inspection of the underpass link from the theatre to the Pier UG car park by the Council's car park team would have to be maintained to ensure that the discharge from the theatre's sump pumps continued to get to the car park's own sumps.

The continuation of the Council's maintenance of the planting along the west of the theatre would have to be reviewed.

Internal Decorations –

The annual ceiling safety inspections to monitor the condition of the fibrous plaster in the auditorium and other areas may have to be maintained, unless the site can be risk assessed and managed as a hazardous 'hard hat' area. The ceiling plaster is very likely to deteriorate more rapidly once the building is vacated, and even with annual inspections may still become hazardous. All other decorative works would cease.

Space and Water Heating –

Cut off mains gas supply and have meter removed. Isolate power and drain down the boilers, hot water calorifier and associated circulation pumps, valves, pipework, radiators and controls, etc. Once drained and exposed to the air, the systems would seize and deteriorate rapidly and could not be resurrected without major investment.

Mechanical Ventilation –

Of the major systems only the main auditorium extractor fan remains serviceable. This would be isolated and taken out of service.

Lifts & Automatic Doors –

It would be advisable to have lift engineers take all four lifts out of service so they are not left in a dangerous position. The automatic doors would be isolated and hoarded over.

Cold Water Storage & Distribution –

The mains water service may have to be maintained to supply the stage sprinkler and drencher fire suppression systems. A legionella management regime may have to be maintained as a safeguard if these services have to be maintained. This would need to be discussed with the Council's insurers. All non-essential service pipe runs could be drained down and left out of service. Corrosion of ferrous pipes is likely to accelerate once they are exposed to the air and become unusable. Major investment would be required to put the service back into operation.

Sanitary Appliances & Drainage –

The 3 no. basement level underfloor sump pumps would have to be kept in service and maintained to prevent serious flooding of the basement level and threaten the electricity intake gear which is located at this level. All sanitary appliances could be isolated and put out of service.

Electrical Lighting & Power Installation –

The mains electricity service would have to be kept in service and maintained to power the basement sump pumps, intruder alarm, fire detection and alarm systems, and both the main and emergency lights to keep the building secure and allow maintenance engineers to access specific areas.

The building's lightning protection system may, subject to insurer's advice, have to be kept in service to maintain buildings insurance cover.

All other non-essential lighting and power circuits could be isolated and put out of service.

Fire Safety Precautions –

The Council's insurers usually require the fire detection and alarm system to be kept in operation to maintain a building's insurance cover. Subject to detailed discussion with insurers, the over stage smoke escape lanterns, under and over stage sprinkler systems, stage safety curtain and associated drencher systems may also have to be maintained.

Due to the continuing need for access by engineers to maintain services and equipment both the Fire Risk Assessment and the Asbestos Management Plan would have to be revised to suit the new circumstances and annually reviewed thereafter.

Stage Equipment –

The stage flying system and chain motors would have to be safely put out of service.

Energy Management –

Annual DEC certificates would no longer be required.

Other Equipment, Installations & Services –

Subject to further investigation the telephone system may have to remain in service to maintain links out for the fire and intruder detection systems. The existing pest control contract may also have to be maintained to avoid bad neighbour issues. All other installations and services can be taken out of service.