

To George Groves



The Park Palace, 2014 Image courtesy ReptOn1x / Wikimedia Commons

George Groves
Hollywood, USA

Liverpool, UK
1 October 2014

Dear Mr Groves

I write to you from the future. It's well into the twenty-first century. I cannot begin to explain how much the technologies of movie-making have changed. Films no longer depict a performance (of acting, singing, dancing etc) mediated by technology, but consist of worlds wholly created by machines. 'Machines' isn't even the correct word anymore. I'm not from Liverpool, but I get the sense that people here are still proud of your role in the history of movies, creating sound where before there was none. They still remember the Quiet Little Englishman.

I thought to write to you because, the day before yesterday, I visited the ruins of your theatre, The Park Palace. I was in a group being introduced to some local histories. Our guide was a man named Joe MacFarrag — an artist and community activist, living and working in what's now known as L8. Joe told us about the early decades of the Park Palace, after its founding in 1903, and then the years when, he said (I guess it's true) that it was Julia Lennon's favourite night out.

During the years you worked there, I suppose there was still a chapel next door — there's just a gap of grass between buildings now, a gap disguised as a small public park. It's curious to me, the way in which religion is intertwined in the history of the place: how it sits on the boundary between Catholic and Protestant areas; the Orange lodge across the way. For a while, the profits from the cinema were secretly funnelled into the building of a Catholic hall in the Protestant area.

When the cinema closed in the late 1950s, the Park Palace became a pharmacy, then a squash court for taxi drivers. It functions as furniture storage right now, but it's been sold for housing — what quality of housing, I don't know.

There's a proposal to host a horse-riding school.

On the front door, there's graffiti that reads 'You're Marvin Gaye'.

Yours sincerely

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