

TQ 3385

KINGSLAND HIGH STREET  
(West side)

735/18/10079

Rio Cinema

II

Alternatively known as: Kingsland Empire, KINGSLAND HIGH STREET, Hackney Cinema. 1937 by F E Broniige, within the shell of an earlier cinema of 1913 -15 by George Coles of Adam and Coles. Rendered brick and concrete, nearly flat roof behind high parapets. Circular foyer on corner of site with manager's office over and cafe to side; behind these a single auditorium in Art Deco style with screen and single circle reached via stair to circle foyer. Above this, accessed from the roof, the ceiling and upper walls survive of Coles's earlier auditorium, in strikingly theatrical still Edwardian idiom. Plan rendered facade with ribbed moulding in concave front behind drum of foyer, arch on Kingsland Road front formerly held name CLASSIC' cinema. Parapet was reduced in 1944. The chief interest of this building lies in its complete auditorium of 1937 behind remodelled and extended foyer. Simple, curved mouldings to walls and ceiling, which sweeps down like a cash register to unmoulded proscenium opening. Vertical grilles over screen and at sides over emergency exits. Cut-back pyramidal moulding, originally perhaps a laylight, under circle. Some original light fillings survive at sides and in upper foyer. F E Bromige achieved a remarkable sense of rhythm and movement through simple means in his few cinemas, all in North London, and he has emerged as a specialist cinema architect of rare originality. But there is the added interest also of the remains of the earlier cinema above. In the void over the auditorium, the rafters of Coles's circular auditorium ceiling and moulded plaster decoration with panels, pilasters, swags and timber cornices. This is an exceptionally rare survival, suggesting that the original Kingsland Empire was more theatrical in planning and decoration than most cinemas of that date. Many cinemas were remodelled with the arrival of sound films in the 1930s; nowhere else are two very different auditoria found one within the other.

Sources

GLRO Modem Records File AP,/BP, 07/0187 and AP,/BP,/19/0187  
Ideal Kinema 10 February 1938