

add the new stage and fly tower, in the case of the Princes the stalls area has given way to Bar and Foyer space, workshops etc, the stage being elevated to first floor level. The former entrance to the Playhouse (off Smith Street) is to become a Grand Foyer for productions and exhibitions, the restaurant to function as originally on the upper floor, the double volume linking both spaces. The shops under the Princes have been removed allowing for a Porte-cochère and

main entrance to the whole complex. The foyers which stretch from Acutt Street to Albany Grove give access to both auditoria.

In addition to the Opera and Drama Theatres and the Grand Foyer, there is a basement Rehearsal/Recital Room for music seating 300 and an attic Studio Theatre seating 150-200, and in addition to the restaurant there is a large Reception Room on the first floor of the old Princes over the Porte-cochère.

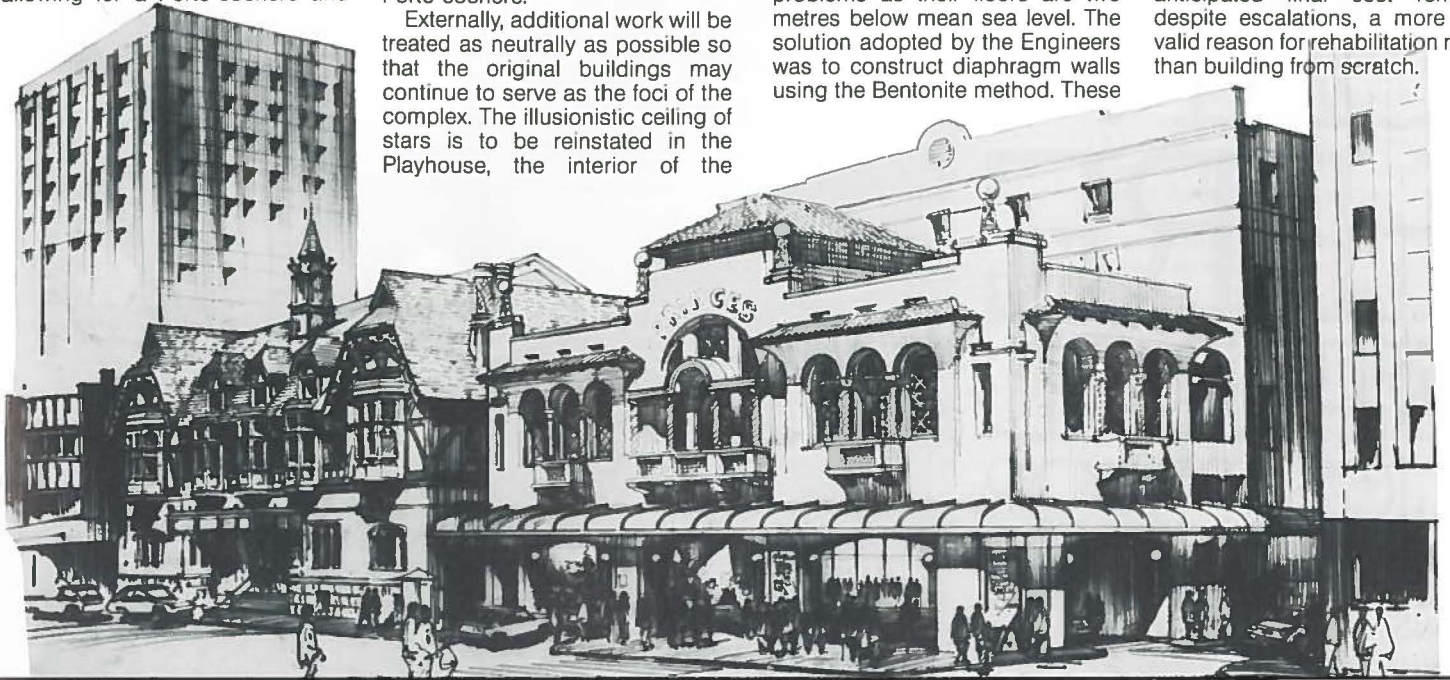
Externally, additional work will be treated as neutrally as possible so that the original buildings may continue to serve as the foci of the complex. The illusionistic ceiling of stars is to be reinstated in the Playhouse, the interior of the

Princes, being infill, is to be furnished in a contemporary idiom.

Structurally there were few problems regarding the existing buildings although the roof trusses had to be strengthened due to additional loads being imposed. However, the deep basements which had to be provided to accommodate the stage machinery and the rehearsal room under the Playhouse Auditorium posed greater structural and waterproofing problems as their floors are two metres below mean sea level. The solution adopted by the Engineers was to construct diaphragm walls using the Bentonite method. These

walls are some 14 metres deep and provide an impervious "dam" around the basements and to a considerable depth below them. The floors of the basement are very thick monolithic slabs restrained against upward pressure by tension piles.

The complex is to have a phased opening - the Restaurant and Grand Foyer in October 1984, the Drama Theatre in October 1985 and the Opera in December 1985. The anticipated final cost remains, despite escalations, a more than valid reason for rehabilitation rather than building from scratch. ■



Evening, a one man show, "Beau Brummell" and Music Hall from the Players Theatre.

The audience, of up to one hundred, having had their mental food from eight pm, are probably ready by ten for a little inner sustenance.

Charcoal spit roasted beef, goose or pheasant - salads, baked potatoes and garlic bread and "teat weaned pork" - the mind boggles as the stomach rumbles.



For the technical, the Malthouse has 10 Prelude PC's, 5 16/30 Preludes controlled by an 18 way Tempus desk - so far fitted with 12 dimmers. The desk, incidentally, is on a miniature fly gallery, actors left, from where the operator follows the action through a kind of leppers squint.

Oh yes - the bassoon player! Because for Britten's "Albert Herring" there was an orchestra of twenty, space decreed that the bassoonist should be accommodated in a kind of lean-to extension. One night a tempest blew to such effect that the lean-to blew completely away. I hereby eschew all obvious jokes. ■

*Journey the second, in which the Editor discovers that Swedish life is not quite as serious as a Strindberg play, that shrimps fresh from the Kattegat, or even the Skagerrat, go well with ice cold Schnapps, and that Swedish football is different.*

**T**HE occasion of the visit was to attend Elfak '83, the very prestigious Scandinavian international electrical exhibition.

Strand were there, showing their new ENVIRON 2 range of tungsten and fluorescent architectural dimmers on the stand of their agent for architectural dimming, Stig Fergin AB of Motala.

My colleague, Jack Watling, the Export Sales Manager of Strand's architectural dimming department, who was representing us on our agent's stand, was at the airport to meet me. He had come by ferry in a car loaded with dimmers to set up as part of the stand, thus Jack had been in Gothenburg over the previous weekend.

"Well" - I enquired - "how did you spend Saturday afternoon?". Here I should explain that Jack Watling likes to play the role of a gritty, down to earth, no nonsense Lancastrian who pretends to live on tripe, faggots and pease pudding, all washed down with copious pints of bitter. "How did I spend Saturday afternoon? Why I went to the match of course". Could he have meant he flew back to his spiritual home, Maine Road, where Manchester City are based? The answer was far simpler. "I went to see Gothenburg play Stockholm. But it wasn't like football at home, the players only kicked the ball".

Now I always like visiting Sweden. It is a beautiful and efficient country, but Swedes are just a touch too rule abiding for your Editor. When I checked into my hotel I was told that I had a "no smoking" room. The temptation to light up, even though I hadn't smoked since I left school, was strong.

After a day on duty on the stand Lars and Magnus Fergin, their staff, Jack and I all sallied forth for shrimps and Schnapps to an amusing restaurant where the tables are set round the edge of a large pool. Orders are put as deck cargo on radio controlled model boats, the waitress hands you a black box with an ariel and various buttons and levers and it is up to you to steer the vessel to your table. As the inevitable delays of a busy restaurant mean that there is plenty of time for drinks before your ship even sails, readers will understand that navigation becomes complex.

In spite of all this jollity we spent each day demonstrating Strand's ENVIRON system to apprentices, contractors and consultant engineers - all of whom rather shamed me by speaking English, varying from good to excellent. I was considering the world-wide spread of our language over the past twenty or so years during my journey home. We always say it has happened because English is simple to learn. I once advanced this theory to a young lady who worked for Pani our Viennese agents. "Easy you think" she challenged, "What about this sentence - 'Eating steak breaks my heart'!" ■



Jack Watling in Gothenburg