

The Odeon Building, Beckenham High Street

Welcome to our public consultation event on proposals to secure the future of a wonderful building.

As you may be aware, the Odeon Cinema in Beckenham has decided to cease operations and will be closing in December 2026. Citygate Church are making an application to Bromley council to change the use of the building to a place of worship. These proposals will retain the building as an important community facility, whilst securing its long-term future.

About the building

The building has played an important part in Beckenham's cultural and community life for almost a century.

During the early 1920s the site was used for Beckenham Fair before it was acquired by County Cinemas. In 1927 Robert Cromie, one of the leading cinema and theatre architects of the period, was commissioned to design the new building. The cinema was officially opened in 1930 as the Regal Cinema, Beckenham.

The building was designed as much more than a cinema and originally included a café, dance hall and parking for around 200 cars. The interior of the building featured elaborate decoration in the fashionable Art Deco style.

At the end of the 1970s the original auditorium was altered to create three separate screens, with new screens beneath the balcony. Following further ownership changes the Odeon carried out additional alterations, dividing the building into six screens.

In January 1998, the building was listed at Grade II as the "Odeon Cinema and Regal Ballroom". The listing recognises its architectural and historic significance, including a number of surviving internal features.



Image left: the building shortly after it opened



Image left: the building now

About us

Citygate Church began in February 1997 with just 13 people meeting in the drama studio of a local school and a clear vision: to make a meaningful difference through a relevant demonstration of faith and love.

In 2002, with a congregation of around 60 partners, Citygate purchased and renovated the former town-centre Post Office depot on Rectory Road, opposite the Odeon. The building has remained the church's main home ever since. From its Rectory Road home, Citygate holds regular church services, youth activities, conferences and other community events. It also hosts Food+, which distributes surplus fresh and non-perishable food to people in need.

The church has grown considerably and has now outgrown its existing building. Some activities, including its playgroup, already have to take place at a separate location.



Sundays and events

A highlight of Citygate Church are our Sunday services.

Citygate is a contemporary church for people of all ages and nationalities. Our worship style is loud, vibrant and celebratory.

From time to time, we also hold events for different groups within the church, including men's, women's and youth events.

Our seasonal Christmas and Easter services are always popular.

Church life

Like all community churches, Citygate has an abundance of groups and activities for people of all ages.

We host Friday-night youth activities to equip young people for success in their life and a popular Razzle Dazzle toddler group for smaller children.

Citygate also runs courses intended to help and strengthen people in areas including marriage, finances and personal wellbeing.

Alongside Sunday services, members meet in homes across the Borough every two weeks.

Community Impact

Citygate Church has always sought to make a positive contribution to the local community. It has received two Safer Neighbourhood Awards for helping to make Bromley Safer, as well as the Mayor of Bromley Award in 2018 for many years of voluntary service across the Borough.

We aim to play our part in making Beckenham a great place to live and work.

The Auditorium

The planned works will restore the Grade II Listed Art Deco building; return the interior to a single large auditorium, and reveal original decorative features that are currently hidden or no longer seen in their original setting.

The historic auditorium

Reinstating a single auditorium will allow the building to be experienced much more as it was when it first opened. Later subdivisions within the auditorium, balcony and stage will be removed, restoring the scale and volume originally intended by the architect.

Removing partitions and wall coverings introduced during the 1970s and 2000s will also reveal architectural and decorative features that are currently obscured.

These works will help people better understand and appreciate the building as a single auditorium, enhancing its special interest as a Grade II Listed building and delivering clear public heritage benefits.

Creating a more flexible space

The existing auditorium cinema seating will be removed, and be replaced with new and more appropriate seating for a venue of this kind. The main auditorium floor will then be largely levelled, creating level access to a significant proportion of the seating area.

This will provide an accessible, multi-functional ground-floor space that could support church services, community activities, performances and other events.

Historic features, including decorative grilles, will be retained. Although the removal of the raked modern seating will be noticeable, seating will still be arranged facing the stage, retaining a clear connection with the original cinema layout.



Above: Computer Generated sketches of what the auditorium could look like

Other improvements...

Restoring the exterior - we will undertake a major programme of external cleaning, repair and restoration. This work will restore the landmark to something much closer to its original appearance.

Improved facilities - we will upgrade the toilets (rather than move them) to reduce the impact on the character of the building. Additional toilets are proposed within an enlarged former projection room on the ground floor; this room was created during the 1978-79 alterations and does not form part of the original historic layout.

The ballroom - we will restore the Ballroom area, currently used as Screen 2 and bring back many of the original decorative details including the original Art Deco decoration and stained-glass windows which are currently covered over.

Better access to the upper floors - we will install a new lift from the entrance to provide easier access to the first floor; this has been positioned to avoid significant decorative features and ensure movement through the building continues to focus on the principal entrance.

Creating a welcoming entrance into the building - we will improve the lobby area and remove the newer additions, recreating the welcoming introduction to the building. This will complement the cleaning and restoration of the exterior of the building.

New staircase access - we will install new staircases within the side corridors, linking with existing circulation spaces whilst avoiding the main auditorium and significant architectural or decorative features.



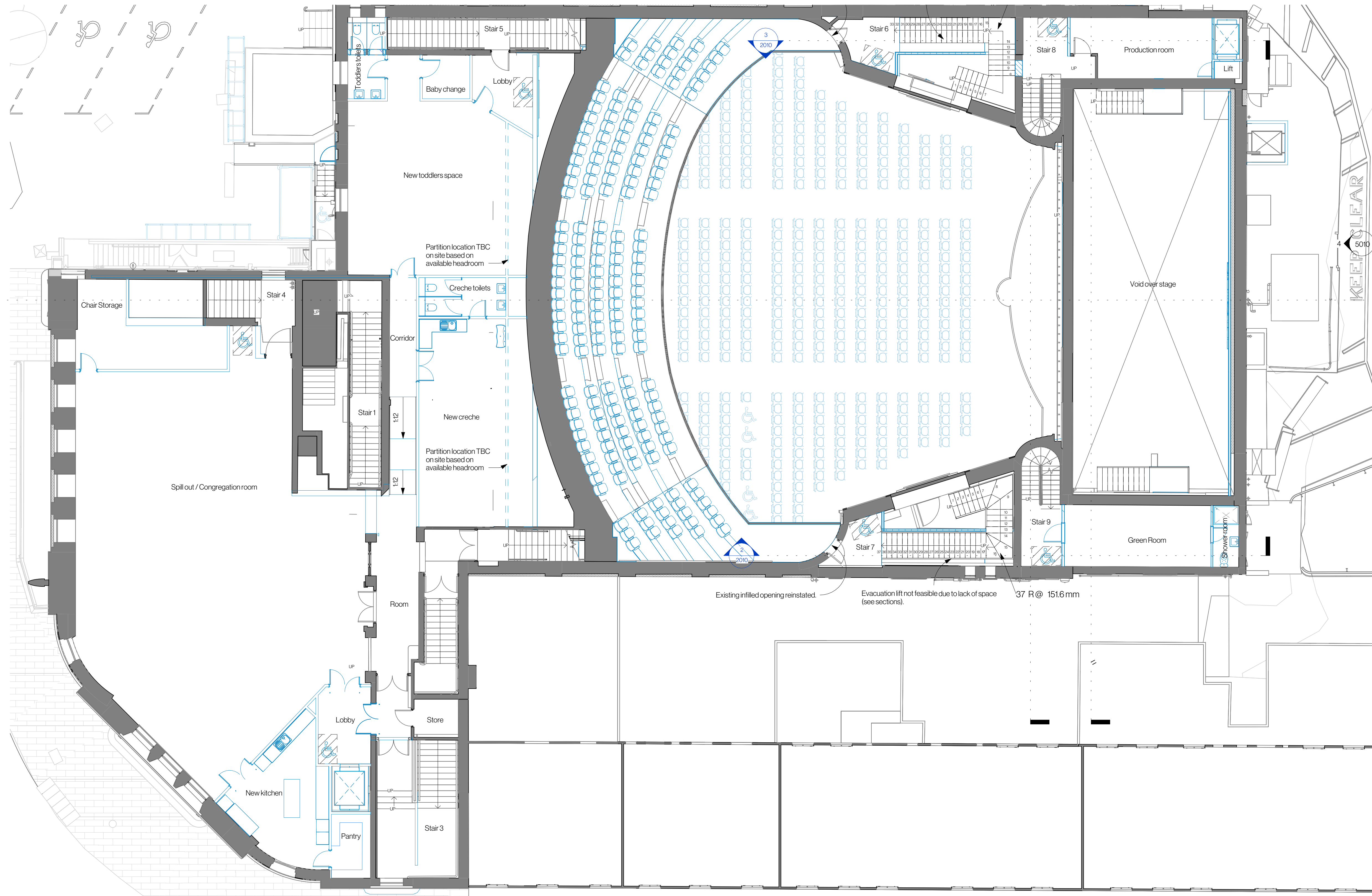
Top image: Computer Generated sketch of what the ballroom could look like
Bottom image: Computer Generate sketch of what the exterior could look like

Architectural floor plan of a building, likely a school or community center, showing various rooms, seating areas, and structural details. The plan includes a large central hall with rows of blue seats, a kitchen area with a plant and staff toilets, a male and female toilet block, a new baby room, a workshop, a locker/cloakroom, a multipurpose room/congregation 'spillout', a store room, a security CCTV room, and an entrance lobby. The plan also shows a large outdoor area with a curved upper circle and a new baby room. Structural details include dimensions for various rooms and openings, and a note about an existing infilled opening being reinstated. The plan is oriented with a north arrow pointing towards the top right.

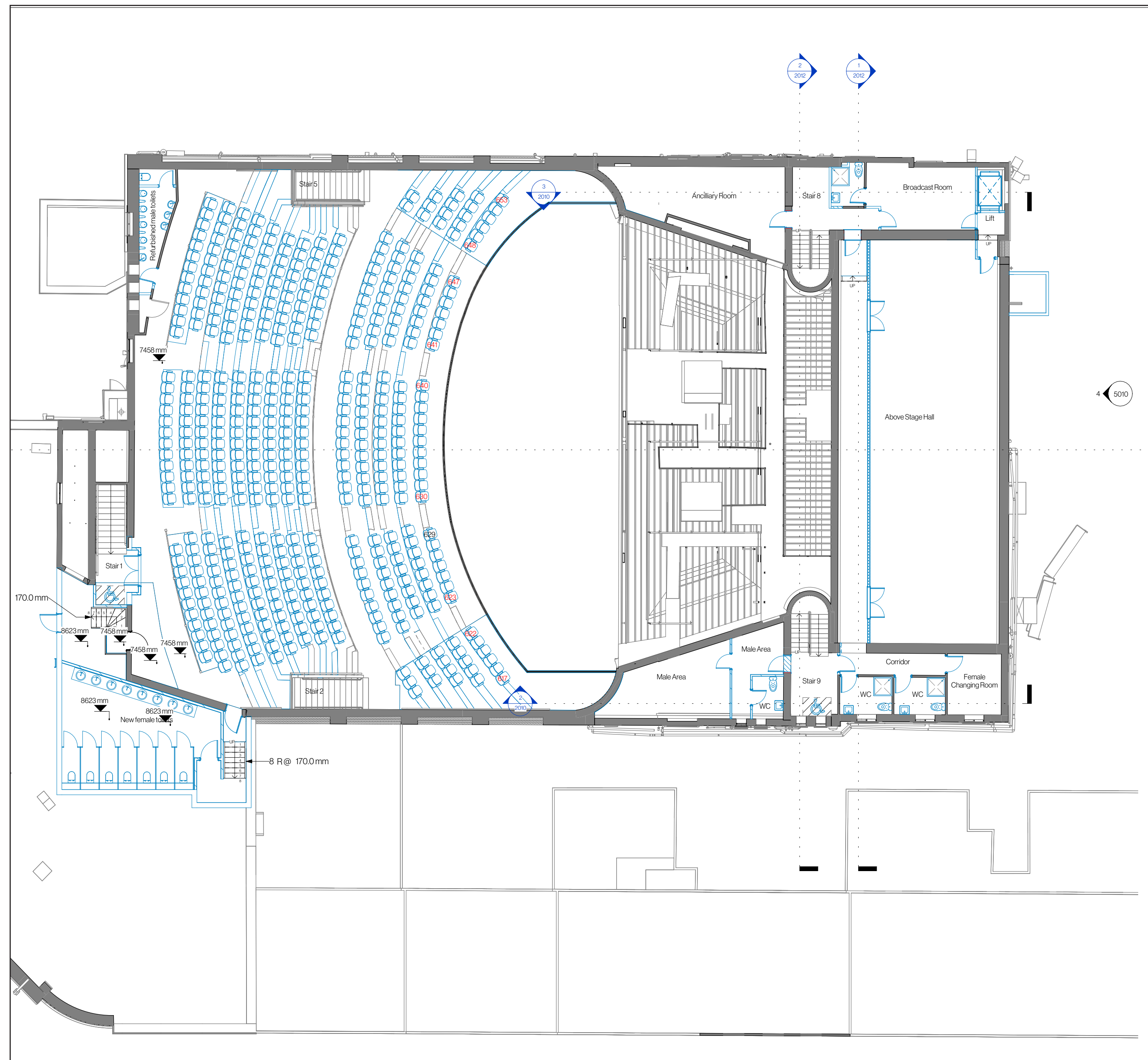
Key features and dimensions:

- Central Hall:** 615 seats in the stalls. Existing infilled opening reinstated.
- Kitchen Area:** Plant, Staff toilets, Accessible WC, New baby room. Dimensions: -627 mm, -147 mm.
- Toilet Blocks:** Male toilet block, Female toilet block. Dimensions: -627 mm, -2427 mm.
- Workshop:** Two workshops located near the toilet blocks.
- Locker / Cloakroom:** Located near the male toilet block.
- Multipurpose room / Congregation 'spillout':** Dimensions: 11.8, -327 mm.
- Store Room:** Located near the entrance lobby.
- Security CCTV Room:** Located near the entrance lobby.
- Entrance Lobby:** Dimensions: 868 mm, -658 mm.
- Staircases:** Multiple staircases throughout the plan, including a large one in the central hall.
- Structural Details:** Dimensions for various rooms and openings, including 33 R@ 170.0 mm, 15 R@ 160.1 mm, 10 R@ 163.5 mm, 11 R@ 156.2 mm, 37 R@ 151.6 mm, and 18 R@ 168.9 mm.

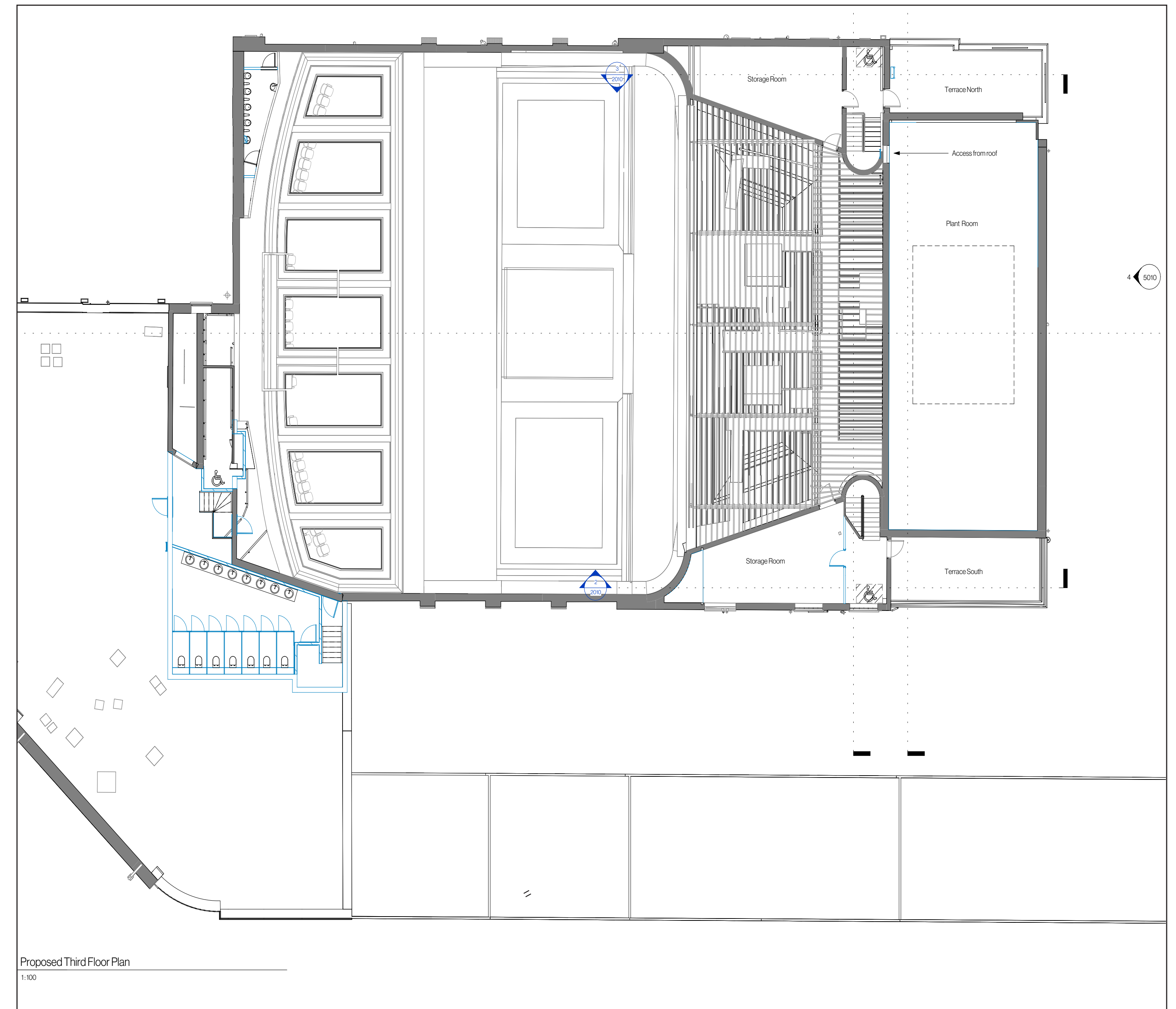
Floor plans - first floor



Floor plans - second and third floor



Above: proposed second floor plan



Above: proposed third floor plan

Sustainable transport

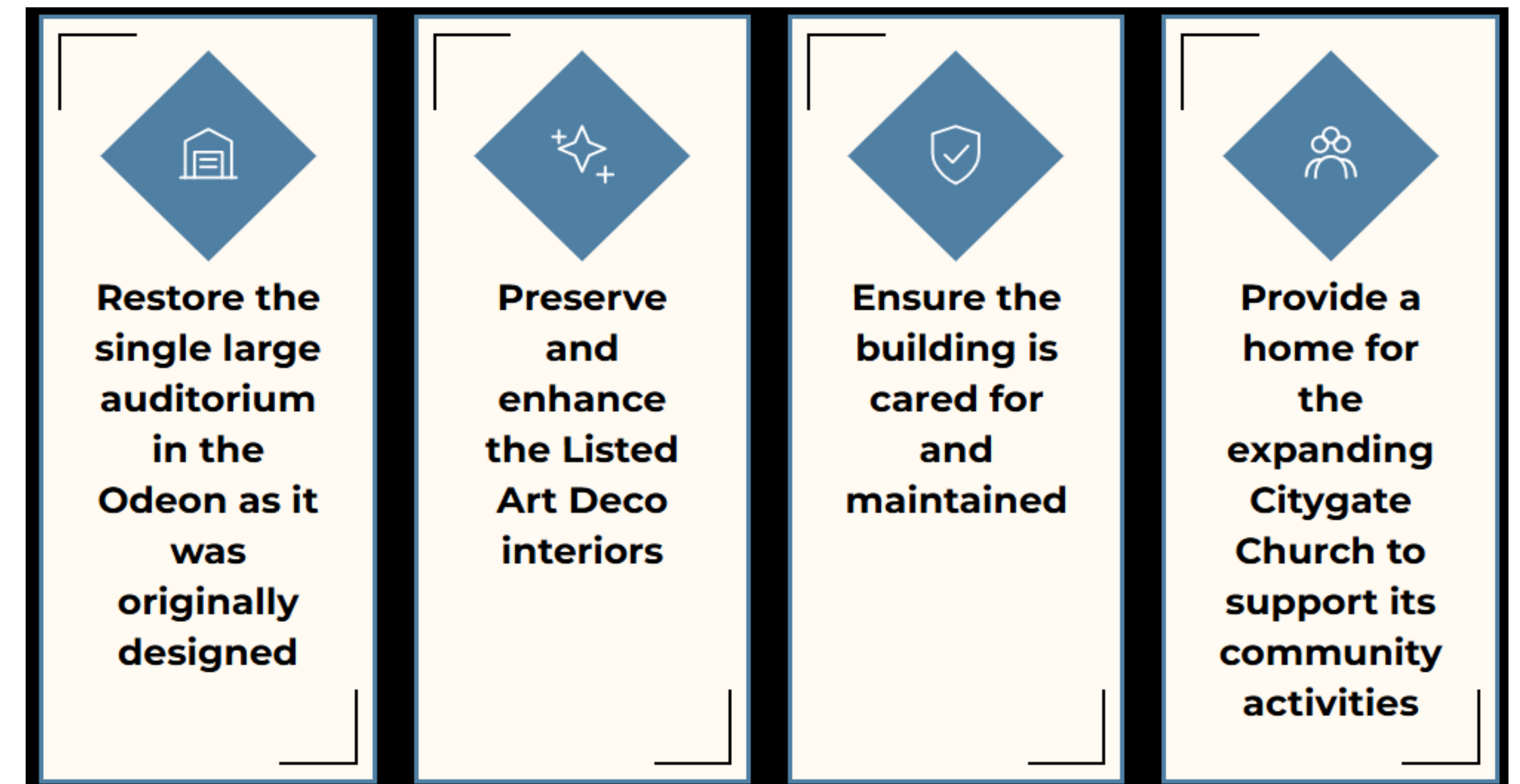
Citygate have been working with experienced Transport Consultants, Motion, to prepare a detailed Transport Assessment and draft Travel Plan as part of the planning application process. Our proposals for travel and transport have been informed by research into how people currently travel to Citygate Church and how visitors are expected to travel to the new venue.

The initial report shows that if managed using the proposed management strategy, parking will be more than adequate for the proposals - especially given the existing parking situation facilitates the cinema use.

We propose to manage traffic and encourage sustainable travel in the following ways:

1. Attendees will be encouraged to use public transport. This will be made easier by providing travel information on the Church website, shared with worshippers before attending services, and made available in printed form at the Church.
2. A car sharing scheme will be established for worshippers and volunteers, supported by information about the financial and environmental benefits of car sharing. We will also direct attendees towards this initiative.
3. Citygate will operate a parking steward service, tailored around the anticipated patterns of use.
4. Cycle and motorcycle parking will be provided on site.

Benefits and thank you



Thank you for taking the time to come to our drop-in event, we welcome your views on our proposals and any questions that you may have. You can submit your feedback using the paper feedback form available today, or by visiting our project website Beckenham.site and submitting the online form.

If you have any questions, or would like to provide further feedback, please contact us on the details below:

- Email hello@yourshout.com
- Tel 0800 955 1042

The building today



The pictures above provide an example of how many parts of the building are in need of repair.

The building today



The pictures above show images of the art-deco design that will be thoughtfully bought back into view.