



ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALL REFURBISHMENT

Design and Access Statement
Heritage Statement
Statement of Community Involvement

March 2021

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Location and Planning Overview	5
• Site and location	
• Planning consent	
• Planning history	
Building History	6
Howell Killick Partridge and Amis	8
List Entry	10
Heritage Assessment and Summary of Approach	12
• Overview	
• Assessment of Heritage Value and Significance	
• Significance	
The Need For Alterations	15
Current Condition- Overview	16
• Amphitheatre	
• Main Hall	
• Stage House	
• Corridor	
• Ancillary spaces	
Modifications to the building	26
The Existing Floor	27
Proposed Works	28
Overview of proposals	29
Existing and proposed plans	30
Existing and proposed sections	32
Description of the works	34
• Ventilation system	
• Flooring and staging	
• Improved Technical Infrastructure and Acoustics	
• Timber linings	
• Serverry	
• Extension (exterior)	
• Extension (interior)	
• WCs	
• Ancillary Accommodation And External Areas	
Access	56
Approach to Material and Product Selection	57
Response to Pre-Application Feedback	57
Statement of Community Involvement	58

Supporting Information included in planning application:

Standard Requirements	
• Location Plan	
• Existing Site Plans, Floor Plans, Roof Plans, Sections, Elevations	
• Existing Photographs	
• Proposed Site Plans, Floor Plans, Roof Plans, Sections, Elevations	
Specific Requirements	
• Demolition Plan	
• 1:20 details	
• Ventilation Details	
Listed Buildings	
• Heritage Statement (included in this document)	
• Existing photographs (included in this document and drawing set)	
• Schedule of Works (internal and external included in this document)	
• Structural Report	
Additional Reports	
• Acoustic Report	
• Tree Survey / Arboricultural Survey	
• Energy Statement	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This design and access statement provides an over view of the design approach for the refurbishment and extension of the Acland Burghley School Assembly Hall, Camden. This statement includes the heritage statement, and justifies proposals with regard to the building's heritage.

The hall, which represents the physical and cultural heart of the school, was designed by architects Howell Killick Partridge & Amis. It was completed in 1967 and listed in 2016 (see page 5 for more information).

“..It is when one arrives at the assembly hall that the sheer ingenuity of much of Acland Burghley strikes deepest. Hexagonal in shape, the halls is ‘doubled ended’ to serve any number of functions, from straight lectures to boxing matches to full length operatic performances. Great attention has been paid, therefore, to acoustic and lighting detail which must be some of the best in the country.”

The Architect & Building News, 5 June 1968

Following an initial feasibility study by Haworth Tompkins Architects, a design team led by Reed Watts was appointed in February 2020 to develop the brief, concept design and consultation strategy for the refurbishment project.

The design brief is to improve the functioning of the hall, primarily for use by the school, but also to support a wider range of external activities such as theatre performances, orchestral rehearsals and community events whilst restoring and enhancing key functional elements of the fabric. Proposals seek to respond not only to the building's physical heritage, but through a series of considered interventions, enhance the use of the building as resource for the creative life of the school and its wider community.

Responses to the school's initial public engagement programme, ‘A Theatre for All’ confirmed an appetite for the hall to be used for a wider range of activities, and the school is progressing partnerships with a number of local and national arts organisations. The project's briefing process has involved a wide range of stakeholders, including students and staff, and the wider school community made up of parents and carers, neighbours and local organisations, as well as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment who are resident at the school.

Proposed upgrades to the building are broadly grouped into four work areas; the refurbishment of the main hall, including new staging, ventilation and acoustic adjustments to suit a range of activities, performance configurations and audience sizes; improved WC provision for audiences and other building users and new changing facilities for performers; an adapted box office, and external works including improvements to the external amphitheatre and entrance approach. Alongside a sensitivity to the building's heritage, improved accessibility and sustainability are key drivers of the proposals.

The design team have worked with the school and its advisors to test various design options and develop a design approach that is robust and flexible enough for the day-to-day life of the school and rapid turn-around between activities, whilst keeping construction and ongoing maintenance costs to a minimum.



Archive photograph of the hall soon after its completion, taken from one side of the stage looking towards the entrance. As today, the main hall was designed as a multi-use space, shown here set up as an exam hall.

LOCATION AND PLANNING OVERVIEW

Site and Location

Acland Burghley School, in the London Borough of Camden, is located a few minutes walk from Tufnell Park Station, between Burghley Road and Dartmouth Park Hill. The Assembly Hall sits in the centre of the school grounds. The surrounding landscape includes a small amphitheatre which is used for occasional outdoor performances, and a number of attractive mature trees. The primary entrance to the school grounds is located on Burghley Road, a residential street adjoining Dartmouth Park Hill. The school, including the assembly Hall, is Grade II listed.

Planning Context

Local Planning Authority: LB Camden

Application Type: Minor development including changes to a listed building

The site is within the Kentish Town Neighbourhood planning area. Other than its listing, no specific area policies apply to the site. The school site borders the Dartmouth Park conservation area to the north, and is located next to a designated neighbourhood centre on Fortress Road. The school site is next to site 195 Gospel Oak Ingestre Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), though as the proposed development site does not border this site, and development is minor in nature with no impact on the site, it is assumed that no biodiversity survey or report is required.

Planning History

2018 Pre-app details: 2018/4147/PRE

Feedback based on feasibility stage proposals was provided by LB Camden. Proposals were understood to be supported, and additional feedback was sought at Stage 3

2020 Pre-app details: 2020/5141/PRE

Stage 2 information was shared with LB Camden prior site visit in December 2020 with Kristina Smith (Planning Officer) and Nick Baxter (Conservation Officer). Stage 3 drawings were submitted in February for feedback. Modifications were made to the proposals in response to officers comments as set out later in this report.



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Key | |
| 1. Tufnell Park Underground Station | ▲ Main entrance |
| 2. Assembly Hall | ▲ Secondary entrances |
| 3. Main School | |
| 4. Sports pitches | |
| 5. Amphitheatre | |
| | — Approximate Planning Boundary |
| | — Gospel Oak Ingestre SNCI |

BUILDING HISTORY

The school is a major work by postwar architects Howell, Killick, Partridge & Amis (HKPA), designed and built between 1963 and 1967. Recognised as one of many important contributions to post-war modern architecture, and in particular the assimilation of modernism by State funded education programmes. The school was listed Grade II in 2016.

The school’s emphasis on music and drama was crystallised in a separate hexagonal assembly hall built on the site of one of the C19 school buildings to the south-west of the administration core and linked to it by an external, covered walkway of exposed shuttered concrete with large side openings.

The single storey hexagonal assembly hall is double-ended to allow multi-functional use. A central, timber-clad lantern with a lower horizontal band of glazing is elevated above the concrete external wall; there are double-door entrances to the east and south. The internal walls to the hall are clad in timber, with an exposed concrete structure. It has a small fly tower at the western end. Although largely true to its original design, the building has seen a number of alterations over the years, most notably the ‘Super Classroom’ changes which caused significant harm to the interior of the hall (see page 7).

The archive photos shown opposite are contemporary with the opening of the school, taken in 1967-68. Source: RIBA Archive.

List Entry Summary

Name: Acland Burghley School
Summary of Building: Secondary school by Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis 1963-7.
List entry Number: 1431508
County: Greater London Authority
District: Camden
District Type: London Borough
Parish: Non Civil Parish
National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.
Grade: II
Date first listed: 14-Mar-2016



The exterior of building from the east



Exams in the hall



Covered walkway



Timber-clad lantern



The amphitheatre on completion



The admin block with original open sided covered play area on the first floor

HOWELL, KILLICK PARTRIDGE AND AMIS (HKPA)

HKPA are known for their education buildings. The four founding partners met while working on the Alton West Estate for the London County Council, and Acland Burghley School was one of the practice's early commissions.

As on the Alton West, the buildings and landscape at Acland Burghley School are carefully considered in relation to one another. Several trees have matured and contribute to the setting of the building the amphitheatre.

Many of the practice's education buildings, including the Assembly Hall at Acland Burghley, the Dining Hall at Darwin College, Cambridge and the Refectory at the University Centre, Cambridge, share an important sense of volume, and a clear tectonic approach communicated through a palate of simple exposed structure and timber linings.

As found at Acland Burghley, the top lighting of tall, large span spaces is another important characteristic of HKPA's work, with roof lights often set within highly articulated ceilings.

Their buildings are contemporary with the educational reform, and both shaped and responded to new ways of delivering education. At Acland Burghley, HKPA worked closely with the head teacher at the time to deliver opportunities in the arts to the school and broader community in the same place. Among their other buildings Darwin College was the first graduate college in the university and the first to have male and female students and fellows, while the their University Centre provided common facilities to a growing number of students not associated with historic colleges.

Acland Burghley was being completed as HKPA embarked on its design for the Young Vic theatre, a temporary theatre for young people located close to the Old Vic and National Theatre. Both projects combine an innovative plan form and a direct, and pragmatic use of materials as well as the re-use of old building material (the former Butcher's Shop at the Young Vic, and stones from the previous school in Acland Burghley's external amphitheatre.



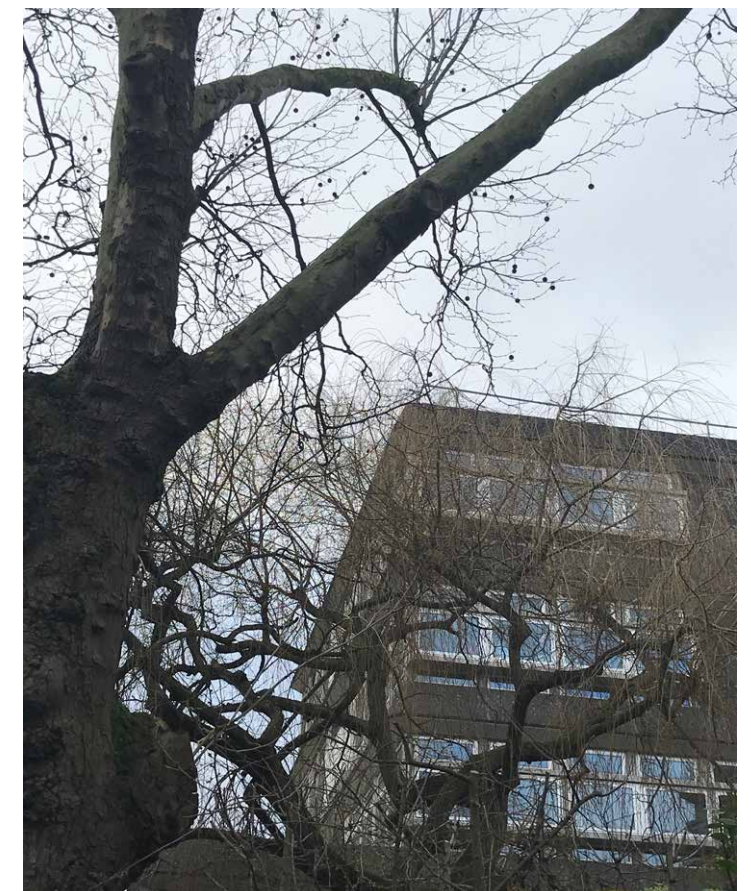
Alton West Estate



Alton West Estate



The amphitheatre at Acland Burghley



Mature trees at Acland Burghley



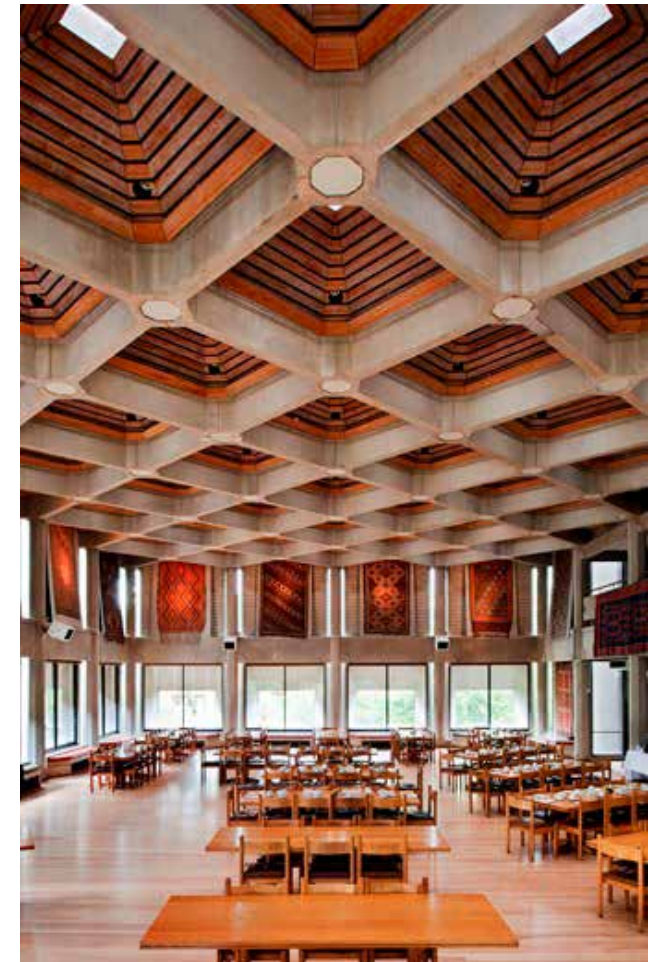
Use of concrete and timber



Board-marked concrete and timber boarded ceiling, Dining Hall, Darwin College Cambridge



Top lit, articulated ceiling and double height volume in the refectory. University Centre, Cambridge



Use of multiple types of timber and concrete



Chamfered concrete columns. Main Staircase. University Centre, Cambridge

LIST ENTRY

Descriptions relating to the Assembly Hall specifically are highlighted in bold text below.

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1431508

Date first listed: 14-Mar-2016

Statutory Address: Acland Burghley School, 93 Burghley Road, London, NW5 1UJ

Reasons for Designation

Acland Burghley School, Camden, 1963-7 by Howell, Killick, Partridge & Amis, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest; the design's bold elevational treatment and skilful handling of pre-cast concrete components and their finishes confer a strong aesthetic while respecting the wider Victorian townscape.

The jewel-like, top-lit assembly hall is a particularly notable feature where the use of timber and concrete gives a rich texture; * Plan-form: the innovative plan, comprising three towers radiating from a central administration core with the linked assembly hall, remains relevant and fit for purpose, affording permeability and appropriate levels of accessibility combined with practical and humane functioning spaces; *

Architects: Howell, Killick, Partridge and Amis were one of the country's foremost post-war architectural practices with a number of listed educational buildings to their name;

*** Historic Interest: the London County Council was at the forefront of innovative architectural approaches to the design of non-selective secondary schools.** Acland

Burghley favourably compares with the listed Lilian Baylis and Haggerston Schools, and is a good example of a school commissioned from well-regarded architects during this formative period.

History

The first school on the site opened in 1884 as the Burghley Road School, a mixed elementary school for 118 girls and 127 boys designed under E R Robson, architect to the School Board for London. It was joined in 1895 by a second building to the east for senior pupils. In 1905, the senior boys moved to a new school in Fortress Road named Acland School, the senior girls staying at the Burghley Road site until 1931 when they were moved to a school on Chesters Road (later known as Brookfield School). The junior boys and girls stayed at Burghley Road.

After the Second World War, the Labour-dominated London County Council (LCC) pioneered single-stream 'comprehensive' education. Acland and Burghley schools were amalgamated in 1959 in a new building to be built on the site of the Burghley Road school buildings. Like most authorities, peaks in the capital programme were flattened

by farming out work to private architects on an approved list. It was under Leslie Martin (Architect 1953-56) that the LCC became a major public patron, with commissions handed to the likes of Denys Lasdun, Erno Goldfinger, Chamberlin Powell and Bon, Powell and Moya, Architects' Co-Partnership and Stirling and Gowan. By 1960 Michael Powell was in charge of the LCC's Schools Division and it may have been through his offices that Howell Killick Partridge and Amis (HKPA) were offered a 1,320-place comprehensive school in Tufnell Park, the amalgamated Acland Burghley school. It was an early commission for the practice, whose partners met in the Housing Division of the LCC Architect's Department in the 1950s, designing the Alton West estate.

The plan had to be sufficiently flexible to permit educational reorganisation and allow for the retention of the old buildings until the new school was ready for occupation. Between 1963 and 1967 the new building was completed in phases, its layout stepping around the C19 buildings, allowing the school to continue on its site. The assembly hall was the last element to be completed, after the occupation of the teaching towers. As the new building was occasioned by the merger of two schools, the senior teaching staff was involved in briefing. Unusually, the educational structure was dictated not by the LCC's educational officers but by the ambitious headmaster, L A V Abley. There were to be no houses but a horizontal division into lower, middle and upper schools, with three pairs of year groups. The school was officially opened by Dr Tait, Vice Chancellor of the City University, on May 24th 1968.

There have been some alterations to the building. Most notably the original casement windows have been replaced with double-glazed aluminium alternatives. The front entrance at the south elevation has been set back and the door replaced. The gymnasium and games hall, a large-span, folded-plate structure designed by John Partridge, burnt down in 1979, to be replaced by a lightweight, large-span steel structure. In 2007 a new two storey music and dance centre was designed by Gollifer Langston Architects attached to the south of the west range. Grilles have been added to the ground floor of the south elevation of the library in the west range, and the recessed ground floor of the west elevation of the administration core has been built-out to be flush with the floors above. A new lift tower has been constructed to the right (east) of the main entrance and a glazed entrance has been added to the ground floor of the southernmost teaching tower.

Internally the student reception in the main vestibule is remodelled from the original medical room and store. The cloakrooms to each teaching tower are now offices. The ground floor of the west range has been remodelled to form a specialist learning centre for autistic pupils. New build in the covered space accommodates the computer suite.

LIST ENTRY (CONTINUED)

The dining room has been extended and reconfigured and the toilets and cloakrooms have renewed fittings. A Learning Disability Department has been formed in the central core and both this and the remodelling to form the new Sixth Form Centre has necessitated the removal of some of the ground floor. The internal acoustic walls to the assembly hall have been punctured and some of the original lights have been removed.

Details

Secondary school by Howell Killick Partridge and Amis (HKPA, lead partner: Stanley Amis), 1963-67, with additions of the late C20 and 2007.

STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS: the structure is a combination of pre-cast and in-situ concrete elements, clad with pre-cast panels with an exposed aggregate finish of Walley flints. Internal finishes are of painted, shuttered concrete and rendered blockwork.

PLAN: a drawbridge-like entrance ramp leads from the main entrance gate on Burghley Road to the principal entrance to the school at the south elevation of the administration core. From the main door, a north-south aligned central core of administration and staff rooms at ground floor and teaching rooms above are accessed by corridors at the ground and first floors. Specialist departments are grouped over the central core with top-lit arts studios fanning out at the second floor. Radiating out to the east of the central core are the three teaching towers with classrooms grouped around staircases and paired year rooms for assemblies and dining at the ground floor. Above them are three storeys of classrooms. A linear west range links to the administration core at its north end and adjoins the later sports hall to the north-west* and arts block of 2007 to the south (not assessed for listing). **The school's emphasis on music and drama was crystallised in a separate hexagonal assembly hall built on the site of one of the C19 school buildings to the south-west of the administration core and linked to it by an external, covered walkway of exposed concrete.** To the north, the site was sliced open by a railway cutting. This was decked over with pre-cast concrete beams to provide a playground*, car park* and a sports hall*.

EXTERIOR: three teaching towers of five storeys are attached to the three storey administration core, with the west range of three storeys. These different elements are united by a consistent architectural treatment of bands of aluminium fenestration (replacements for the boxed-out, double-sliding acoustic windows) and canted flint aggregate panels over octagonal columns with infill panels of grey brick and fair-faced in situ concrete. A new lift tower* has been constructed to the right (east) of the main entrance* and a glazed entrance* added to the ground floor of the southernmost teaching tower, both are excluded from the listing except for the curving canopy to the

main entrance which is included. The buildings have flat roofs with mostly renewed sky lights*. The windows are early C21 replacements*, but some of the external doors, apart from the main entrance doors*, are contemporary.

The teaching towers are recessed above the first floor level, while the second and first floors of the south elevation of the west range are jettied over the ground floor, supported on horizontal concrete beams. At the west elevation of the administration core the ground floor has been built out with concrete columns exposed between panels of aggregate. The west range is adjoined at the centre by a first floor glazed link* to the 2007 two-storey, steel-framed extension to the south (not assessed for listing).

The single storey hexagonal assembly hall is double-ended to allow multi-functional use. A central, timber-clad lantern with a lower horizontal band of glazes elevates from the concrete external wall; there are double-door entrances to the east and south. The angled external walkway linking the hall to the administration core is of exposed shuttered concrete with large side openings.

INTERIOR: as with the exterior, internal partitions are of fair-faced concrete panels, subtly chamfered in places, and the internal finishes are of shuttered concrete and rendered blockwork. The interior fixtures and fittings of the teaching spaces are generally renewed*, but the hollow-steel staircase handrails remain and a number of original doors and some timber cladding are present. Some areas of the interior have been remodelled: these are itemised below (annotated with an *) and excluded from the listing.

The assembly hall has a timber clad ceiling punctuated with side and top lights, rising from the lower concrete pitch of the roof supported on columns. It is equipped with stages at both ends, and has a fly tower and attached drama studios. The acoustic walling between the hall space and circulation corridor has been punctuated with openings and although many of the lights have been replaced, some of the original circular lighting is present.

In the main reception space is a timber wall memorial bought from Acland School with a central coat of arms flanked by the inscribed names of members of the school community killed in the First World War.

The following areas of the recently remodelled interior are excluded from the listing: the student reception offices to the left of the entrance hall*; interiors of the west wing*, including the new building infill of the covered space for the computer suite*

LIST ENTRY (CONTINUED)

and the Learning Disability Department Unit*; dining room*; the Sixth Form Centre*; **interior of all toilets* and cloakrooms*; renewed doors* and lighting* throughout the building.**

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: **outside there is a small amphitheatre for outdoor performances which has a terraced surface. Some of the dressed and carved stonework from the former Board Schools has been incorporated into the structure.**

* Pursuant to s.1(5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (‘the Act’) it is declared that these aforementioned feature are not of special architectural or historic interest.

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 31/05/2016

Sources

Books and journals

Cherry, B, Pevsner, N, The Buildings of England: London 4, North, (1998 revised 2001), 356-7

Franklin, Geraint, Howell, Killick, Partridge & Amis, (2017)

‘People v. Architect’ in The Architect, (January 1972), 44,45

‘Eleven Hundred individuals at Acland Burghley School’ in The Architect and Building News, (5th June 1968), 848-855

Websites

History of the school, accessed 10/11/15 from <http://www.aclandburghley.camden.sch.uk>

Other

Franklin, G et al. England’s Schools 1962-1988. English Heritage Research report 33/12

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT AND SUMMARY OF APPROACH

Overview

A primary ambition of the proposed design is to ensure that the building reaches its potential as a community theatre that is accessible to all and well used by the school and its broader community. This assessment provides an analysis of the current Assembly Hall in heritage terms, and explains proposals in this context. The proposals consist of a number of sensitively designed interventions that preserve and enhance key aspects of the building’s character whilst ensuring the legacy of the building as shared school and community theatre that is available and accessible to all.

The principle of works to historic buildings to secure their long term use is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework: ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’

The brief and design response have been developed through consultation with the school departments, students, key partners such as the Orchestra of the Age Enlightenment (OAE) and the wider community including current and future users of the space. This process has ensured that proposals are focused and bring real benefit to those groups and the communities they represent, and respond to specific identified needs. Consultation has been undertaken with the school to ensure that designs are practical and easily maintained. The process itself has already broadened engagement with the building’s heritage and involved future users in the process.

The following summary details the significance of the Assembly Hall in heritage terms, considering the key architectural elements, as well as the significance of the building as a shared school and community theatre built during a period of educational reform in the 1960s.

The Assembly Hall is included with the listing of the school as a whole, which was relatively recently listed in 2016. The school is described alongside Lilian Baylis and Haggerston Schools, ‘good example of a school commissioned from well-regarded architects during this formative period’.

The Assembly Hall, the last part of the school to be completed, played an important part in unifying the school. The head teacher at the time is quoted in contemporary articles: ‘it wasn’t until we got it [The Assembly Hall] that we had the feeling that at last the school was one community. Now it is.’ Beyond the school community, the Assembly Hall was intended as a shared facility, intended to be used by the local community as well as the school itself. It was regularly used by local organisations including the Camden Institute for adult education outside of school hours.

'The school's emphasis on music and drama was crystallised in a separate hexagonal assembly hall built on the site of one of the C19 school buildings to the south-west of the administration core and linked to it by an external, covered walkway of exposed concrete' - List Entry

As a shared space, the Assembly Hall was designed to meet the demands of wide-ranging uses at the time, including lectures, boxing matches, and operatic performances, as well as host day-to-day school activities such as exams. This varied brief was a key driver of the building's architecture and material choices, with the hall being conceived of as a double ended space, and lined in timber and wood wool lining in order to achieve a high-quality acoustic environment.

'Great attention has been paid to acoustic and lighting detail which must be some of the best in the country.' - *The Architect and Building News, June 1968*

A summary of significant aspects of the design and brief is provided below:

- Site Arrangement and masterplan. Though connected to the school via a covered walkway, the hall is located in the centre of the school grounds, accessible from the Burghley Road via its own access. Today, a lack of accessible facilities prohibits the use of the Assembly Hall independently of the school.
- Landscaping. Mature trees contribute to the setting of the school, and particularly the Assembly Hall. An outdoor amphitheatre re-uses stones from the school that formerly occupied the site.
- Form. The building's low profile and discreet entrances contrast with the volume and scale of the main hall, with the articulation and direction of timber contributing to the sense of verticality within the hall and horizontality externally.
- The hall is part of a body of work by HKPA Architects that demonstrate a similar material language in particular the use of timber and concrete; the use of articulated ceilings and plan forms; and the overall expression of structure and tectonic language.
- Social and historical context. The school was commissioned at a time of educational reform, both in terms of moving towards comprehensive education, and a new interest in arts education. The legacy of this focus continues to inform the school's educational programmes, with continued emphasis on arts alongside STEM subjects. The school's recently established partnership with the OAE is testament to the ambition of the school in this regard.

Assessment of Heritage Value and Significance

We have assessed the value of the building with reference to English Heritage's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment.

Evidential Value

Evidential value within the building is limited, but could be considered to be present with the timber linings and concealed construction. The use of Parana Pine (now a 'red list' timber for the wall lining is evidence of cultural and societal values and norms at the time.

Historic Value

For the most part, the design intention remains visible in the building with the original intention of the commissioners and architects still evident in the massing, form, materials, of the building. Reflecting a broadening of the curriculum Acland Burghley is an early example of changing teaching methods. This emphasis is reflected in the location of the building in the centre of the plan - the focal point of school and visibly independent of the main classroom blocks. The following extract from the list entry details the historic interest relating to the design of comprehensive schools of this period. Regarding the Assembly Hall in particular, it was, and remains unusual for a comprehensive school to have its own purpose-built arts facility.

'Historic Interest: the London County Council was at the forefront of innovative architectural approaches to the design of non-selective secondary schools. Acland Burghley favourably compares with the listed Lilian Baylis and Haggerston Schools, and is a good example of a school commissioned from well-regarded architects during this formative period.' - *List Entry*

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT AND SUMMARY OF APPROACH (CONTINUED)

English Heritage’s conservation principles contain the following guidance on historical significance: ‘Historical values are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated or concealed them, although completeness does tend to strengthen illustrative value’. On this basis, though proposals do not significantly harm the building’s historic value, the new extension and infill of the existing corridor does impact the building’s completeness. However this impact must be balanced against guidance on retaining historic value through continued use of a building for its original purpose:

- Para 44. ‘Authenticity of place lies in visible evidence of change as a result of people responding to changing circumstances.’
- Para 45. ‘The use and appropriate management of a place for its original purpose illustrates the relationship between design and function so may make a major contribution to its historic values. Cessation of that activity will diminish those values.’ This is evident in the case of the superclassroom works mentioned above, which reflected a belief that the theatre was redundant due to changes in teaching but also access to better facilities elsewhere. Lack of modern lighting and sound infrastructure, accessible WCs, and other audience facilities have all contributed to past decline in use which the proposals directly address.

Aesthetic Value

Key aspects of the building’s aesthetic value, and in particular its design value are listed below. Though proposals are not solely driven by aesthetic intention, they seek to ensure this is fully revealed and appreciated through stripping back of cluttered services and other interventions or areas of poor repair that obscure the original design intent.

- Landscape setting
- The building’s low profile and discreet entrances contrast with the volume and scale of the main hall
- Materiality
- Plan and section form
- Use of natural light
- Its relationship to the surrounding buildings with covered walkway connecting it to the teaching block

Communal Value

By virtue of the hall being part of a local comprehensive school, large numbers of local people have memories and experiences associated with the school. Though other theatres may share this, this may be more limited to groups of audiences, rather than among large numbers students in a specific local area.

Significance

High significance

(major contribution to special interest)

- Hexagonal form of the auditorium
- High, profiled timber ceiling in the auditorium
- Location within the school masterplan
- Top lighting by timber clad lantern and band of clerestory windows
- Use of timber and concrete, a notable feature of the architects work

Moderate significance

(contributes to overall special interest)

- Double ended to allow multifunctional use
- External form of the building
- Covered walkway to main school
- Acoustics in the assembly Hall and use of timber wall linings
- Plan arrangement
- Section including sunken floor in auditorium
- Surrounding landscaping and amphitheatre

Low significance

(contributes to overall interest)

The below items illustrate how the building was originally designed, but are not critical to the overall appreciation of the building, and no longer serve their intended purpose.

- Historic, redundant fittings
- Stage house gantry and fittings
- Existing control room in servery

Neutral significance

(makes no contribution to special interest)

- Recently converted drama studios (now food technology classroom). The food tech classroom installation is reversible and does not significantly detract from the building’s heritage value but not does it add to the interest of the building.
- Reduced depth of current floor compared to original. The overall design intent is retained despite previous adjustments to the floor levels.

Detracts

(negative feature that obscures or harms significance)

- Walls and linings to auditorium punctured with circular openings
- Non-original, redundant fixtures and fittings. Redundant fittings have generally not been removed, and the overall number of redundant fittings clutters the assembly hall's internal elevations and obscures the clarity of the hall's form and materiality, when compared to photographs taken at the time of completion.
- New services and lighting, some of which is overly harsh
- Striped studded rubber flooring in corridor
- Blackout blinds to clerestory in poor repair
- Timber tone of existing (non-original) floor
- Yellow pine ramps in auditorium
- Concrete painted externally
- Concrete painted internally
- Water damage to timber and local damage from services installation

Recent history

- 2010 - Conversion to a superclassroom
- 2016 - Listing
- 2019 - Fabric repairs and enhancements
- 2019 - Installation of food technology classroom

THE NEED FOR ALTERATIONS

The ambition for the school and for the proposed work is to ensure that the hall is used more widely by the school itself and its wider community. To achieve this it must meet the technical demands expected of a 300-seat performance venue and be suited to a range of performance types.

Maintaining the original use of the Assembly Hall is fundamental to its heritage value but its ability to perform this function is currently limited by a number of physical constraints and poor infrastructure.

The current space no longer meets the needs of its users. This is illustrated by the recent history of the building which underwent a series of interventions to convert the space (described as 'otherwise obsolete' in an Architect's Journal article at the time), into a superclassroom. Though some of the interventions have since been reversed there are several key ways in which the building does not currently achieve its full potential as a school and community theatre and multi-purpose hall;

- No accessible WCs for audience members and performers with mobility needs
- No dedicated back-of-house WC for performers
- Insufficient WC numbers compared to current standards
- Conflict between achieving blackout and ventilation
- No acoustic separation between hall, and surrounding corridor
- Ventilation not suitable for large audiences or year group assemblies
- Acoustic treatment not suitable for some orchestral works with larger audiences
- Level of infrastructure provision not suited to school dance performances
- Theatre lighting and sound infrastructure not suitable for performances
- Poor environmental control - not currently possible to achieve blackout or silence
- Challenging to safely lay temporary cabling for events
- Stage too shallow for larger performances
- No defined foyer area at the entrance
- No provision for serving front-of-house refreshments.

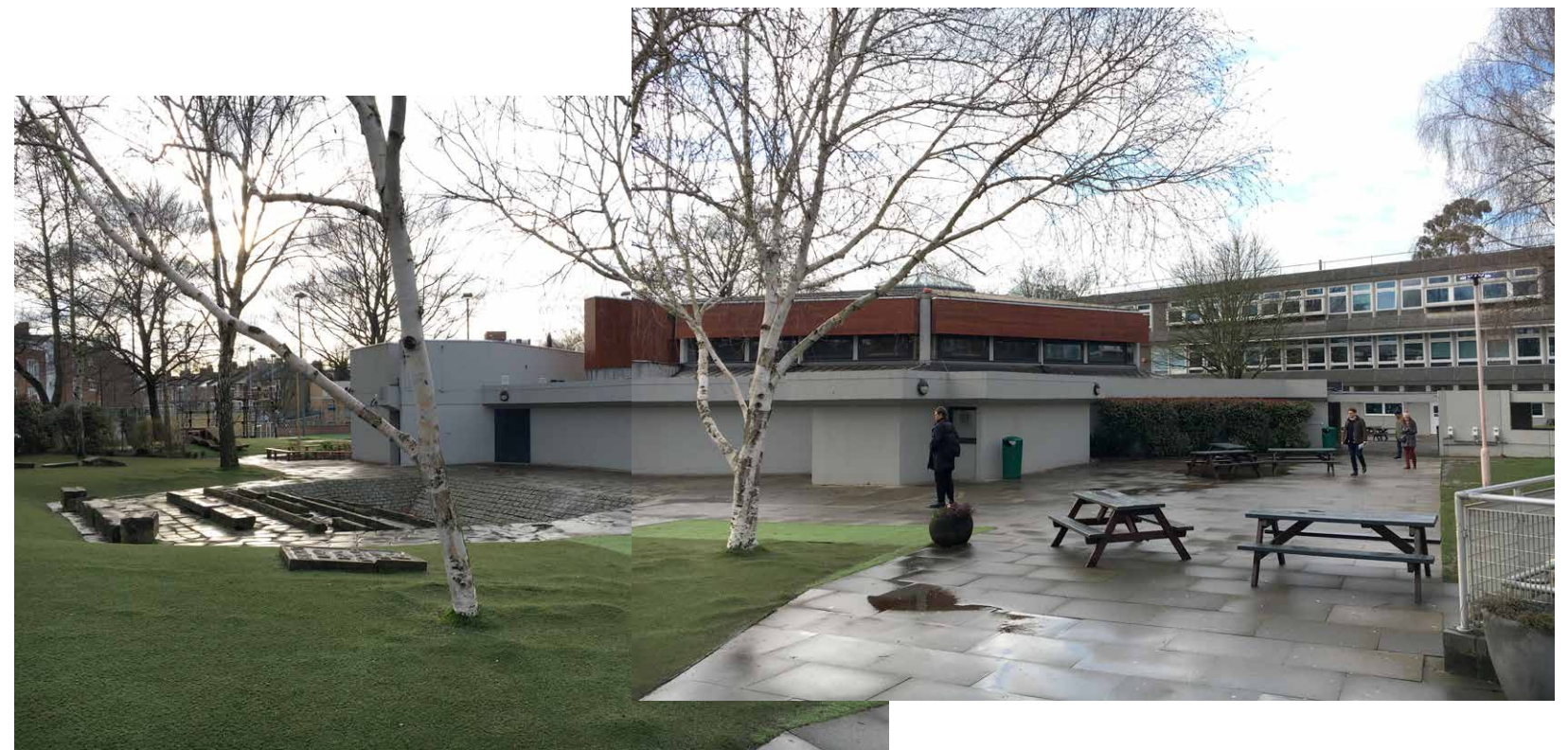
While the space is regularly used by the school during term time, it is seldom used outside of school hours and during the school holidays. The proposed works would allow the building to be used more intensively and by a wider range of people. This would dramatically increase engagement with the building and strengthen awareness of its special architectural qualities.

CURRENT CONDITION - OVERVIEW

The following existing photographs serve as useful comparison to the original design, and capture some of the recent modifications which are detailed on page 14-15.

Proposed interventions are sensitive to the original design intent and works are prioritised to enable the school and its wider community to use the building for a greater range of activities.

The photo opposite shows the approach to the building for visitors. Sitting independently of the rest of the school buildings, it is easily identified. Works were recently carried out to improve the external fabric of the building and, other than the amphitheatre (see opposite), this is therefore in good condition. Additional signage would help to identify the entrance to the building for visitors, but this should be relatively discreet.



The mature trees, particularly the silver birch pictured have enhanced the setting of the amphitheatre as a low-lying building embedded in the landscape of the school grounds, in contrast with the taller surrounding buildings of the main school and mature trees.

CURRENT CONDITION - AMPHITHEATRE

Externally, a number of the now mature trees contribute to the setting of the Assembly Hall within the school grounds. The originally fair faced concrete was painted externally prior to being listed, and has been repainted recently. Removing this paint is beyond the scope of the project, and carrying out this work is not critical to ensuring that the building can be widely used by the school can community alike.



A number of the stone sets and flagstones are missing, but the amphitheatre remains a key part of the school grounds, and is used by the school for context specific drama assignments, and outdoor summer events. There is no current provision for lighting and sound for outdoor performances.

CURRENT CONDITION - MAIN HALL

While the original design intent - robustly articulated through volume, form, lighting and materials - is still expressed for the most part, there are also aspects that have weakened the expression of design intent.

Over time, the wearing and damage of materials, and the layering of piecemeal services installed to meet the school’s changing needs since the buildings completion means that some of the building’s original clarity has been lost.

The conflict between ventilation and blackout, and the practicality of manually opening the blinds mean that the blinds are often drawn in the daytime and as a result the space is often artificially lit.

It is also important to note the school’s relatively recent listing in analysing the current condition of the building. Prior to its listing, several significant and damaging changes were carried out to the auditorium. Some of this damage has been reversed but there remain significant elements to address, such as the holes in the auditorium walls, selection and placement of light fittings, and the studded sheet flooring to the corridors.

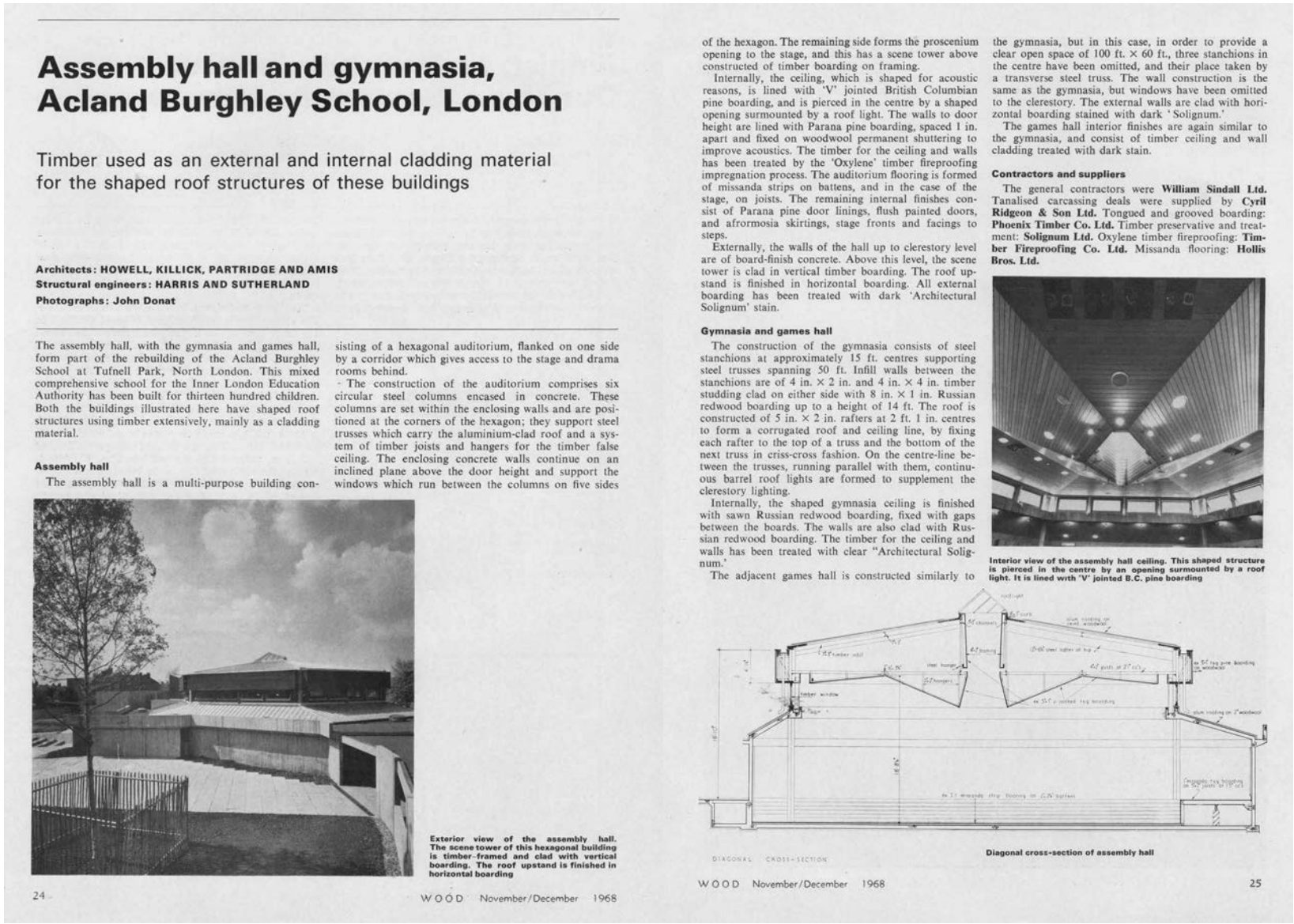
Materials

Original photographs of the auditorium show timber walls and ceiling that are similar in tone, with the floor in a darker timber. The reading of the volume of the space is somewhat more interrupted in current photographs, which show yellowed timber on the walls compared to that on the ceiling, while the floor, replaced in 2001 is substantially brighter and lighter in tone than the walls or ceiling.

From contemporary articles, we believe that four different timbers were used within the space. Parana Pine for the walls, British Columbian Pine on the ceiling, Missanda on the floor and Afrormosia on the stage fronts and steps and for skirtings. The Missanda and majority of Afrormosia is lost, but the other timbers remain.

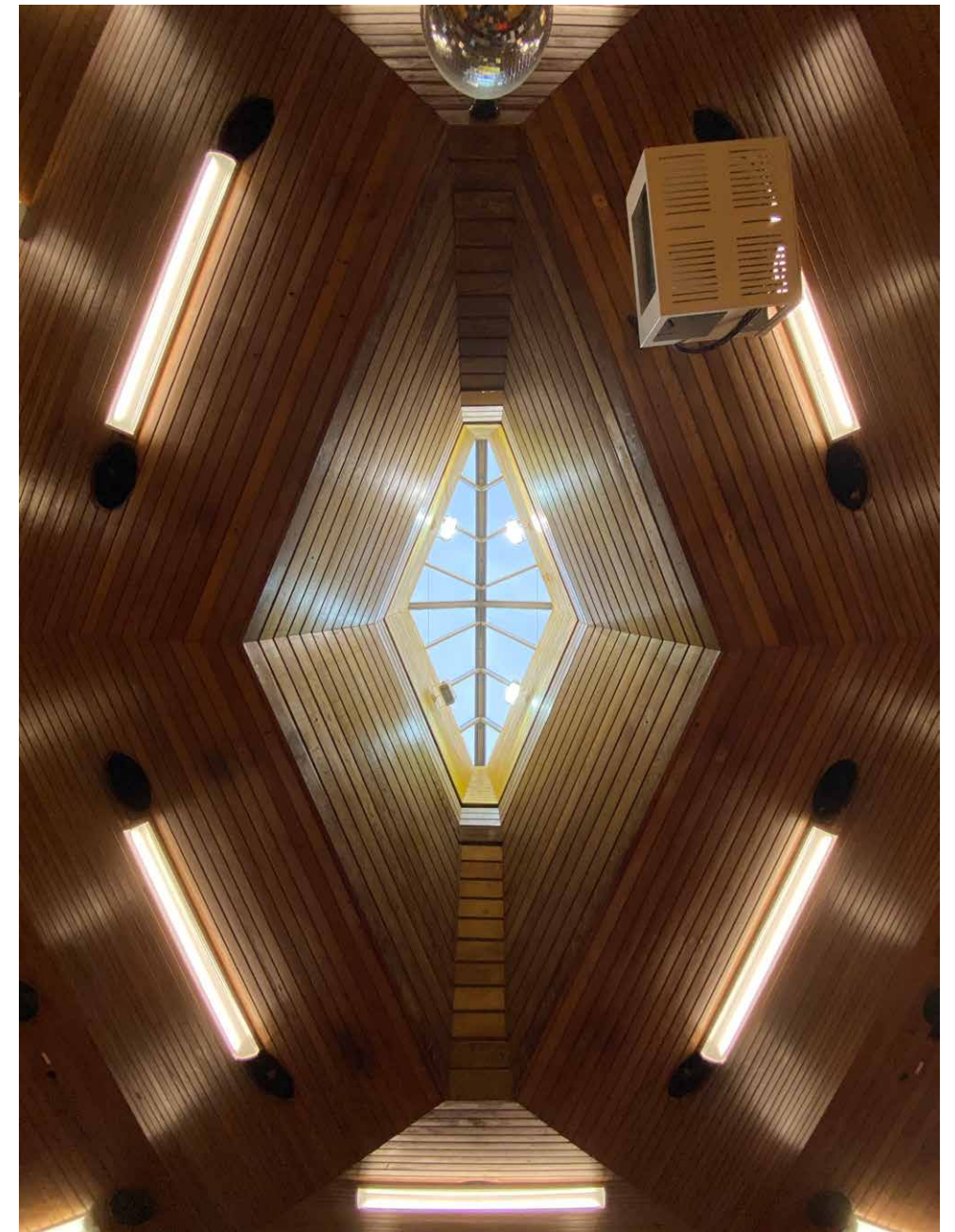
Fittings

Repairs and new lighting installations have been added to the auditorium over the years. This is intended to be stripped out, and circular luminaires as seen in original photographs used as house lighting in place of the current strip lights fixed to the concrete soffits and timber ceiling of the auditorium.



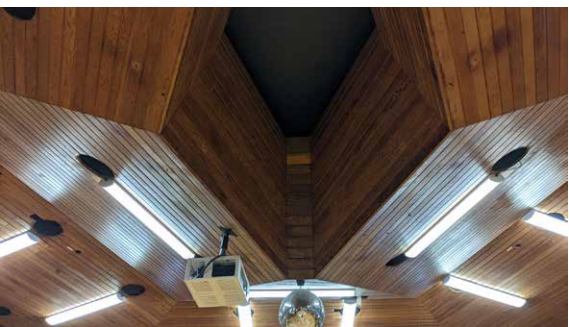
An article in 'Wood' Journal, December 1968 details timber species and treatments within the Assembly Hall.

CURRENT CONDITION - MAIN HALL



The form of the building is clearly read, and many of the original materials remain key features of the space. Several more recent additions, including yellow-toned floor pictured, painted columns, and strip lighting interfere with the original design intent. Newer, functionally important but poorly located equipment such as the projector detract from the simple expressed structure of the original building. Similarly, lagged pipework and pendant lights above the stage detract from the original building.

CURRENT CONDITION - MAIN HALL



The Assembly Hall's top-lighting via a ring of clerestory windows is fundamental to the original design intent, but is in practice not experienced as often as it could be, due to the time taken to manually open and close the blinds. This results in the hall often being artificially and over-lit in the day time, and the some of the qualities of the materials are under-appreciated as a result.

Since the only ventilation is via opening windows, it is not possible to simultaneously achieve black out and sufficiently ventilate the space.

There are missing blinds in the chamfered corners of the ring of clerestory windows, so full darkness is not achievable. The blind to the central roof light has been recently repaired.

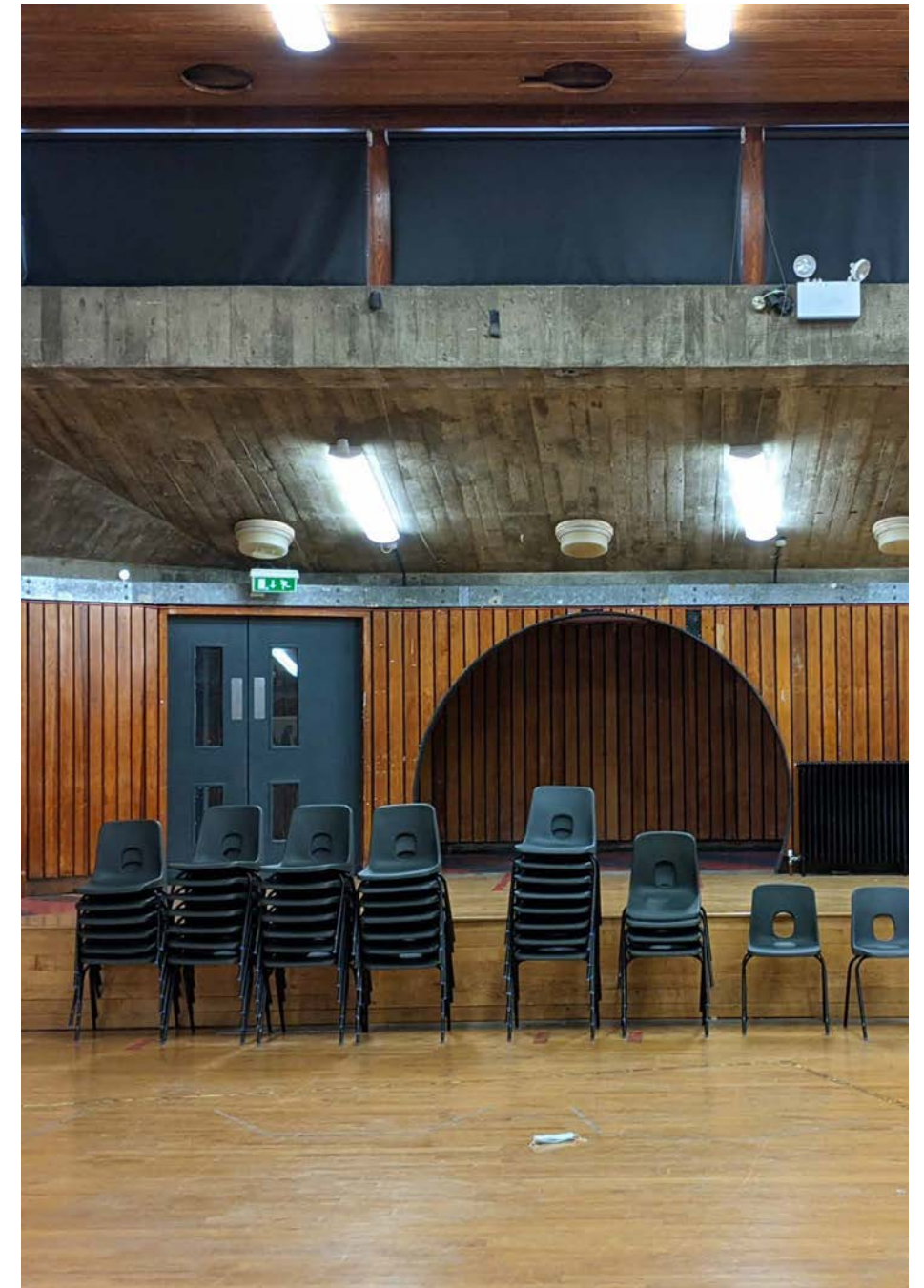
Light fittings are not in keeping with the architectural design and are poorly located.

CURRENT CONDITION - MAIN HALL



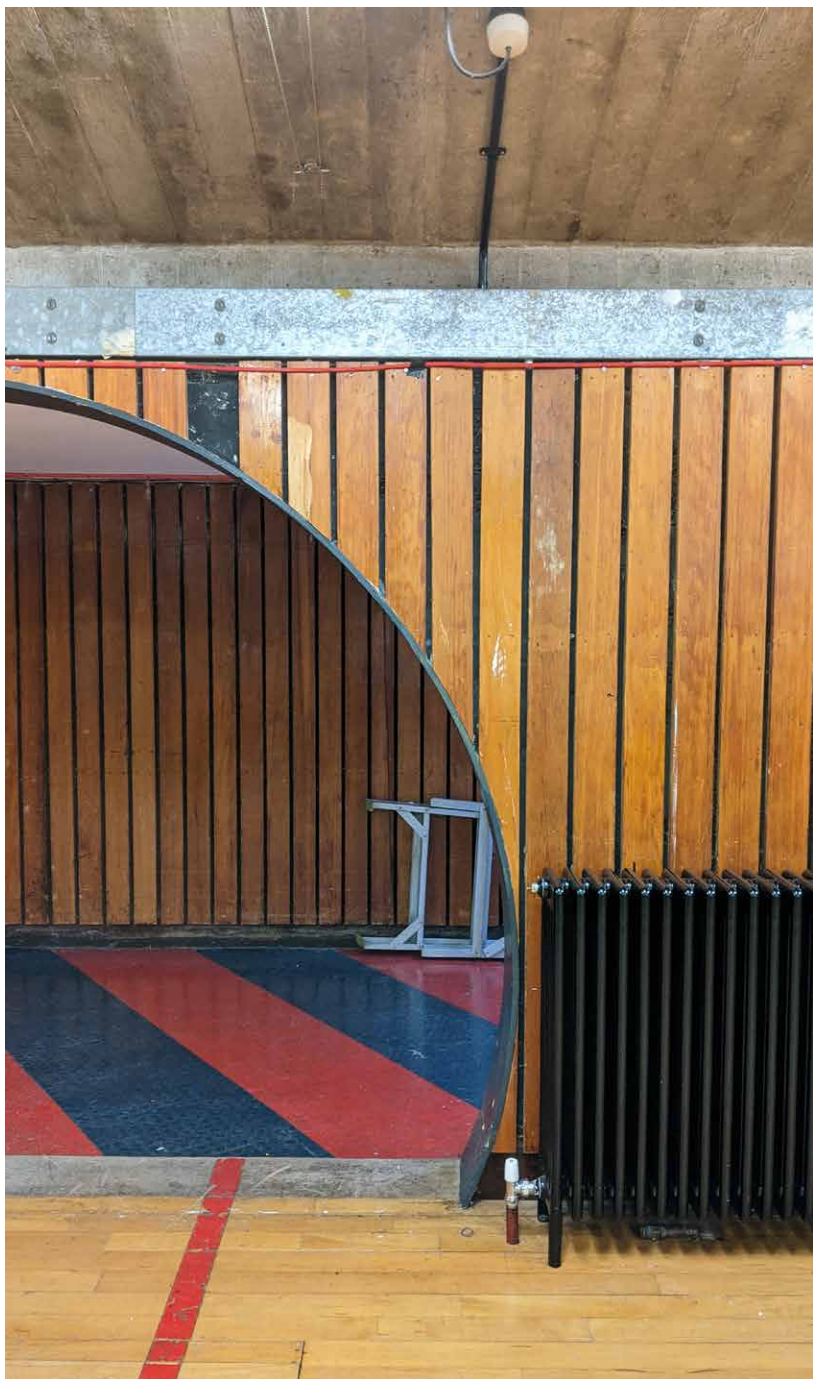
The circular holes pictured, cut into the existing walls prior to the building's listing and later in infilled, cause considerable harm to the building in heritage terms, damaging both the structure and the timber linings to the auditorium, and detracting from the building's material strategy. In functional terms, they detract from the acoustics of the building allowing sound bleed into the corridor, and removing absorbency provided by the original wood wool and timber strip wall linings.

Light fittings

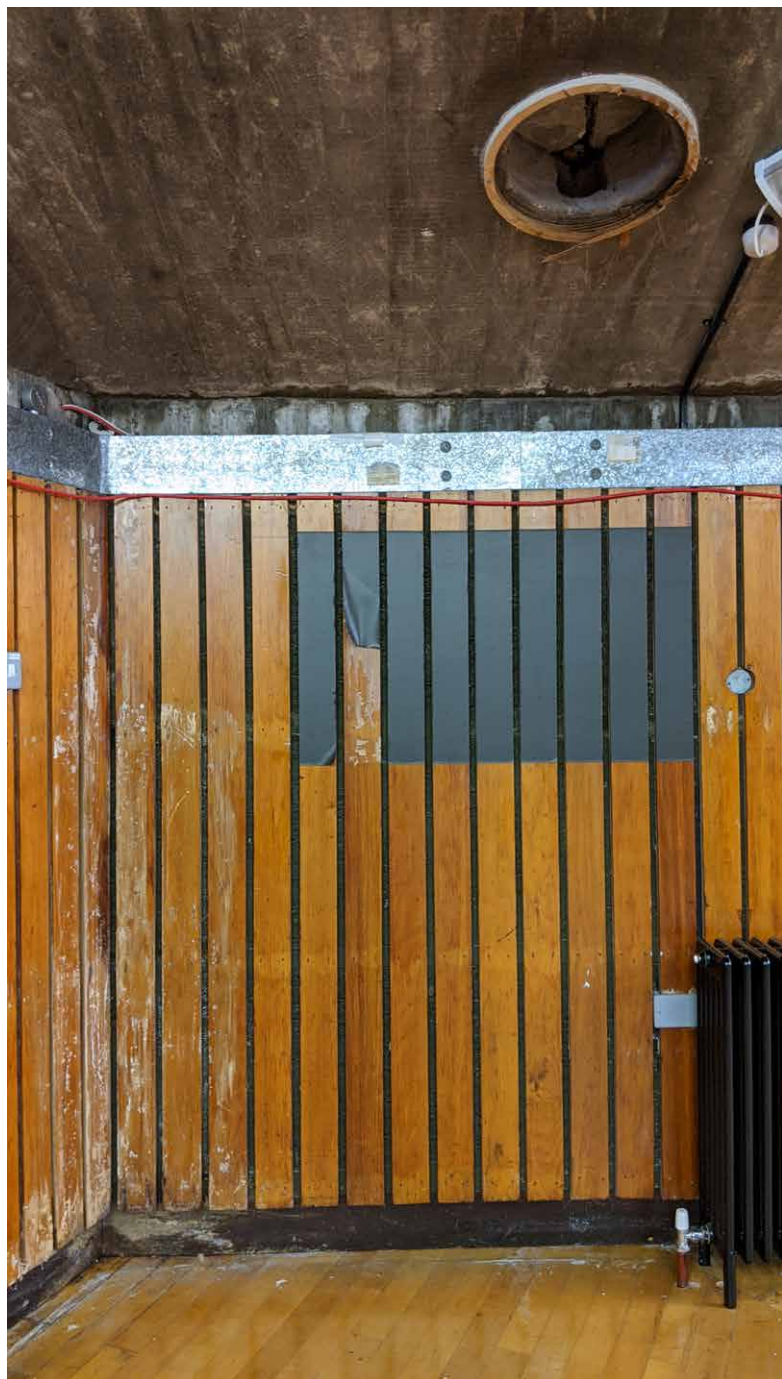


One large opening remains, making the door beside it redundant, and meaning that the hall cannot be separated from the corridor.

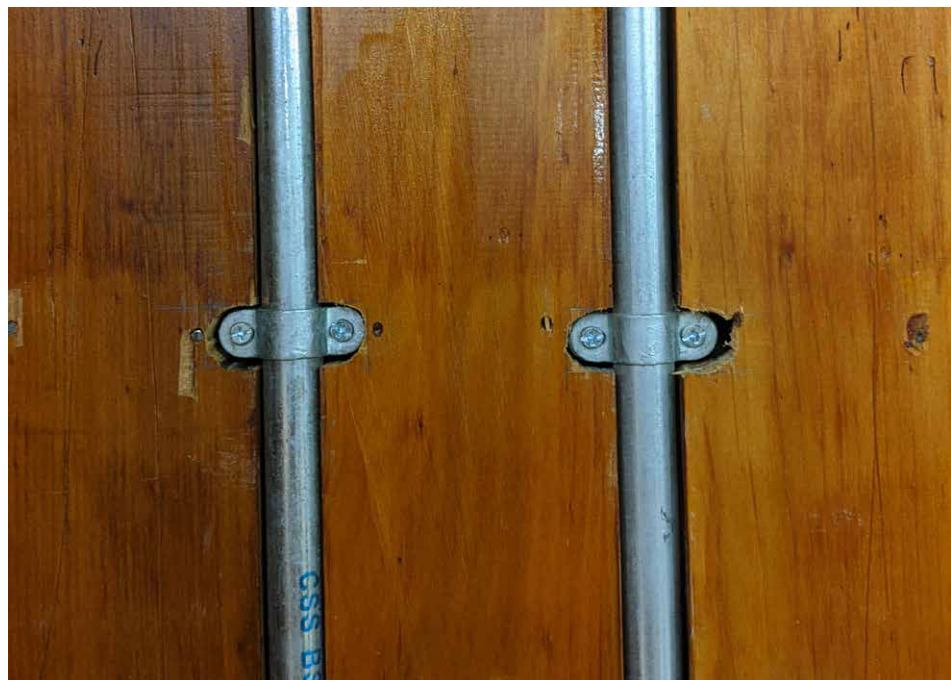
CURRENT CONDITION - MAIN HALL



The flooring to the corridor, visible through the opening above was laid prior to the building's listing. The perimeter galvanised trunking detracts from the otherwise simple palate timber against concrete.



Several areas of the timber lining are marked from water damage that is thought to be historical. Adhesive magnetic strips applied to the timber lining are thought to be easily removable. Original light fittings are missing, and original concealed conduit routes are generally blocked.



In general, redundant services installations remain in place, and have damaged small but numerous areas of the timber lining.

CURRENT CONDITION - STAGE HOUSE



The ceiling void is accessed via a gantry above the stage.



Four high-level windows in the building's south facade are partly covered in blackout paper. A series of pulleys are suspended from the existing structure.

CURRENT CONDITION - CORRIDOR



The original flooring to the corridor has been replaced, and the striped, studded rubber current flooring pictured above installed prior to the building's listing. The original concrete has been painted to one side of the corridor and ceiling, and new bulkhead light fittings installed. The outline of infilled circular holes is visible to the right hand side of the image.

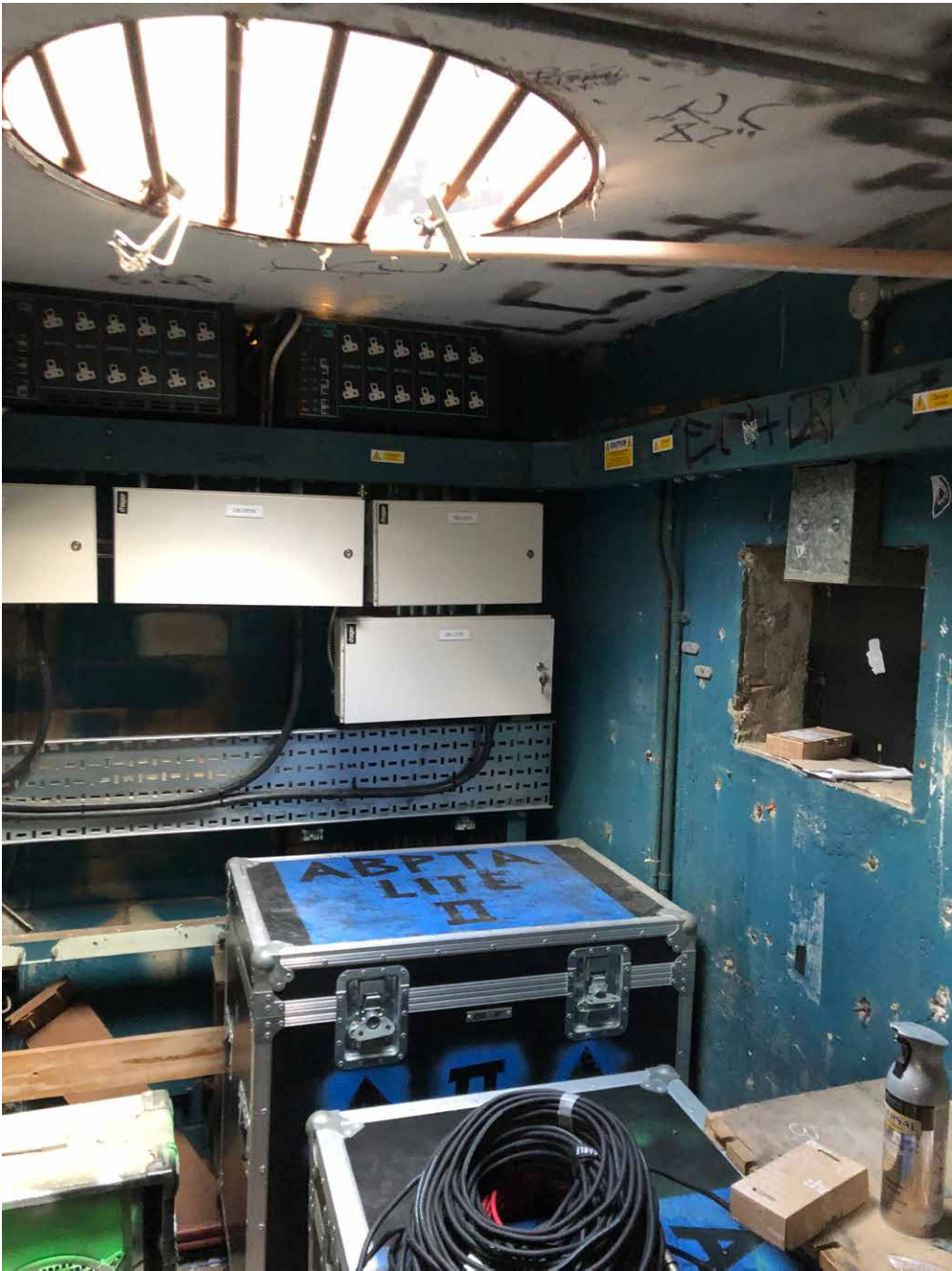


A single colour sheet flooring remains in part of the corridor. It is not known whether this is the existing floor. Radiators in the corridor are less appropriate for the building than those recently installed in the main hall. The foil lagging is also visually insensitive.



Original brown terracotta coloured quarry tiles remain in the WCs

CURRENT CONDITION - ANCILLARY SPACES



The existing store is in poor repair and is congested with services and electrical plant. The original roof light remains.



The food tech classroom has been recently refurbished and fitted out, and a new boiler installed. New hand wash basins have been installed at one end so that it may be used as a changing room.



MODIFICATIONS TO THE BUILDING

The building has been subject of a number of alterations over time, most of which were implemented prior to its listing in 2016. The frames to the clerestory glazing over the Assembly Hall have been refurbished (with new glazing installed) and the timber cladding to the exterior has recently been replaced. Many of the original concrete finishes, both internally and externally, have been over-painted in light grey, altering the appearance when compared to as built photographs from 1967.

Original paving around the school, particularly around the assembly hall, survives, and the special amphitheatre built for outdoor performances (incorporating ornamental stonework from the Victorian Board School on site, designed by EL Robson) remains.

In 2009-10 SCABAL Architects* transformed the assembly hall into a 'Superclass', as part of the Building Schools for the Future initiative. The team cut circular openings into the internal concrete walls and painted the fare faced concrete yellow to create a large classroom to accommodate up to 90 children. Although the colour and lighting have now gone, the holes remain and are noted in the heritage report as regrettable.

'The holes sawn in the concrete walls are a particularly regrettable, intrusive and irreversible, alteration to the fabric. In the same refurbishment, dazzling blue/red striped non slip floor coverings were laid in the circulation corridor.'

The Assembly hall was left relatively intact with only painted ply boards fixed to the existing internal timber cladding. A new timber floor was installed in 2001 in tandem with works to address water ingress (see page 7).

Most recently, in 2019, new heating was installed throughout the building, along with new electrical infrastructure. The majority of circular holes in the hall were filled and the food technology classroom was created.

These works were carried out with listed building consent. The introduction of a food-tech classroom into the former drama workshop reflects changes to the wider school. Drama classes are now held in purpose built classrooms but additional space was required for food tech which could be found elsewhere.

* See <https://scabal.net/project/acland-burghley-superclass/>



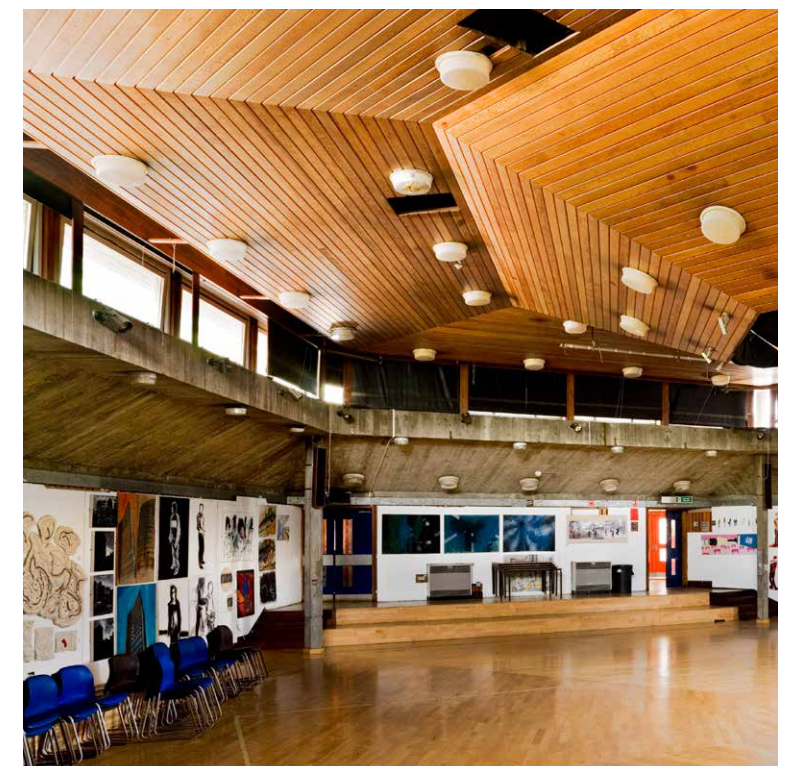
Grey painted concrete



Outdoor amphitheatre



Yellow corridor and holes in walls



Painted ply boards in hall

THE EXISTING FLOOR

Due to ground water penetration in the hall in 2001, the original floor was raised. The full extent of the works is unknown, but it is clear from site photographs and investigation into the early drawings that the original missanda strip flooring was removed to accommodate some waterproofing. The floor level was raised in the lower part of the space; the original drawings show a drop of 900mm/3ft into the well compared to the current height of 600mm/2ft.

Ventilation grilles have also been added into the face of the timber staging and in the newly raised flooring. These do not appear to be original and suggest that there is a void below providing a ventilation route. Some ventilation equipment can be seen under the raised area adjacent to the box office / projection booth. Originally three large steps separated the upper part of the hall from the lower here. This has since been made into two steps.

Although the replacement floor is timber, it does not appear to be the same species of timber originally specified. Archive photos (see below) show a much more varied colour to the timber (which is noted as missanda on the architect's drawings) than the current flooring.



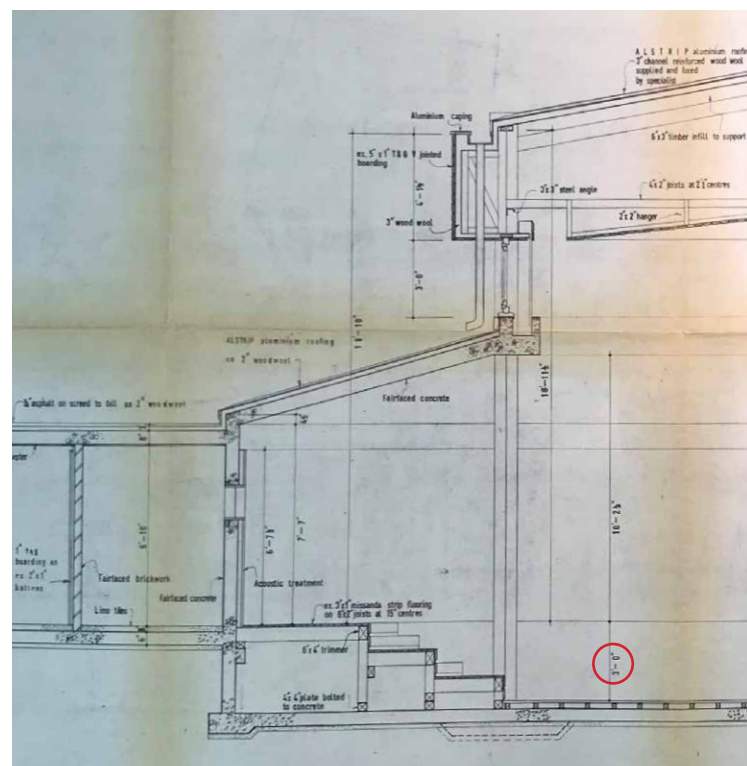
Archive photograph of the 2001 works



Archive photograph of the 2001 works



1967/68 photo showing exams in the hall



Original drawn sections from HKPA showing 3ft drop



Site dimension of current drop and ventilation grille

PROPOSED WORKS

Brief

Technical demands and expectations of performance spaces have changed since the building was completed. As a result, the building has become less and less used with time, and while it is still an attractive and important space, it's not currently able to fulfil its potential.

The core brief, therefore, is to refurbish the existing hall in order that it meet the needs of the school and its wider community. This includes the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment who are based at the school and who use the space for rehearsing and with improved facilities, would like to use the space for performances.

The proposals address these needs in a sensitive way to give the building a new lease of life, reinstating its core original function at the heart of the school and the wider community. Together, the interventions help to redefine and complement the original hall, while enhancing its function as a performance space.

Heritage Approach

Proposed interventions are sensitive to the original design intent, however budget constraints make it important to prioritise improvements that enable the school and its wider community to use the building for a greater range of activities, above other aesthetic improvements that return the building to its original condition. Where works are required to improve the functionality of the floor and walls for, there is also opportunity to adjust materials and fittings, informed by the original design and design intent.

Main Hall

Main Hall refurbished with new staging and technical infrastructure, a flexible staging system, new ventilation system, and improved access, and improved control of sound and natural light in the space.

Servery

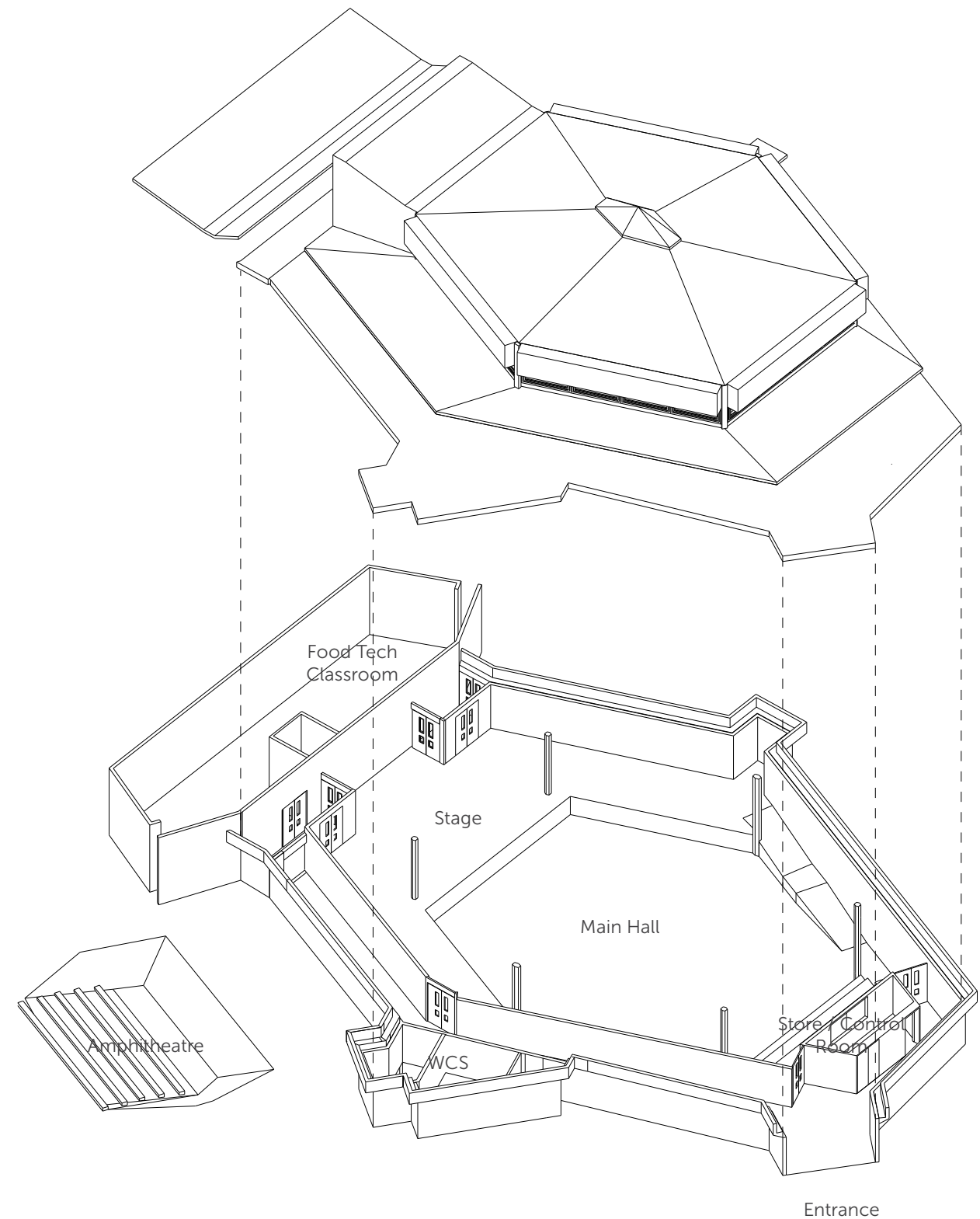
Control room re-modelled as servery to serve tickets and light refreshments to corridor and auditorium respectively.

New Accessible WCs and extension and changing areas

An additional WC is provided in the existing toilet block and two new accessible toilets are provided in the existing corridor, providing accessible facilities for audiences, as well as performers using the changing areas partitioned within the food tech classroom. A discreet new extension is proposed to provide access to the changing rooms, creates stage entrances to either side of the amphitheatre stage for outdoor performances.

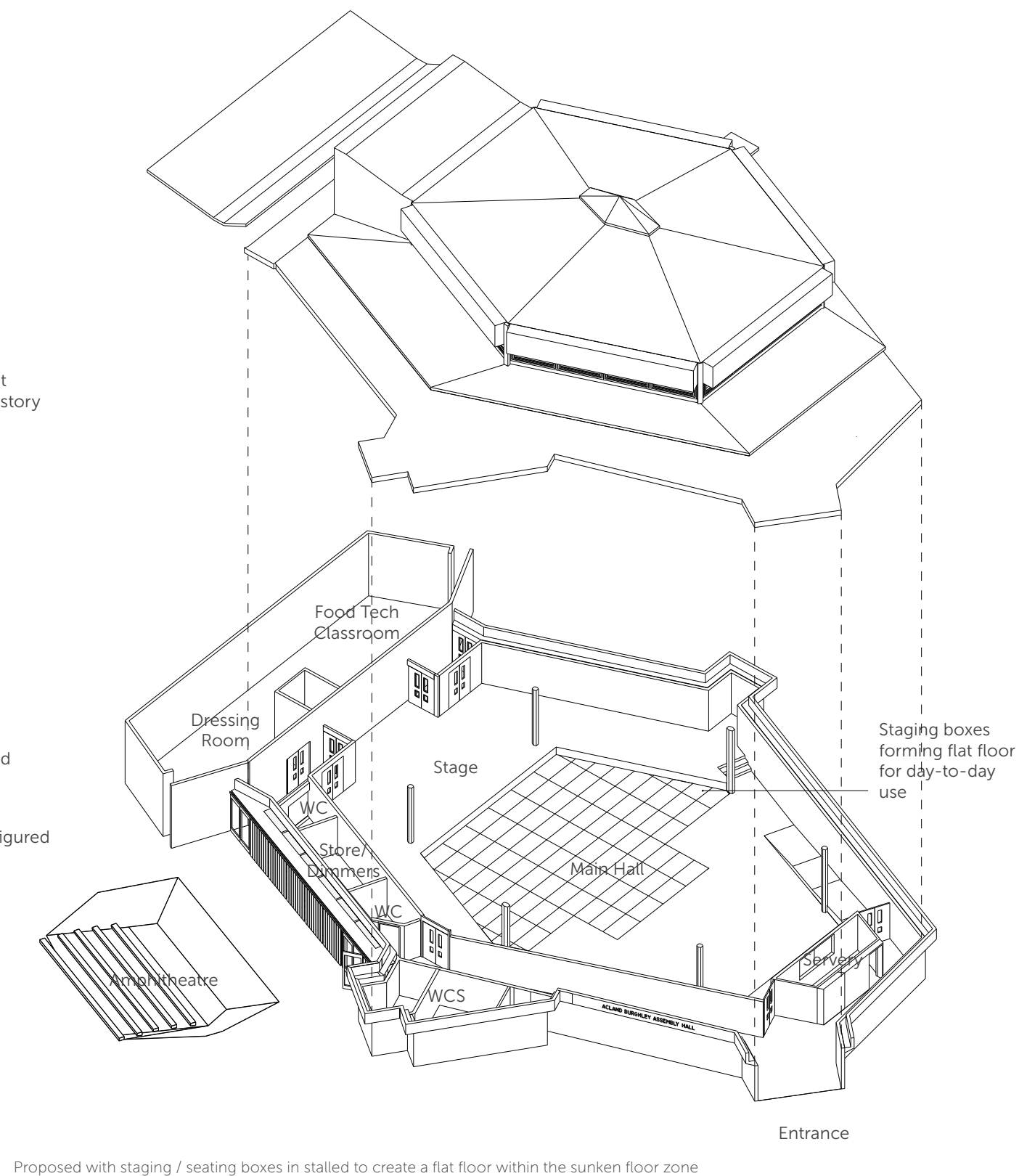
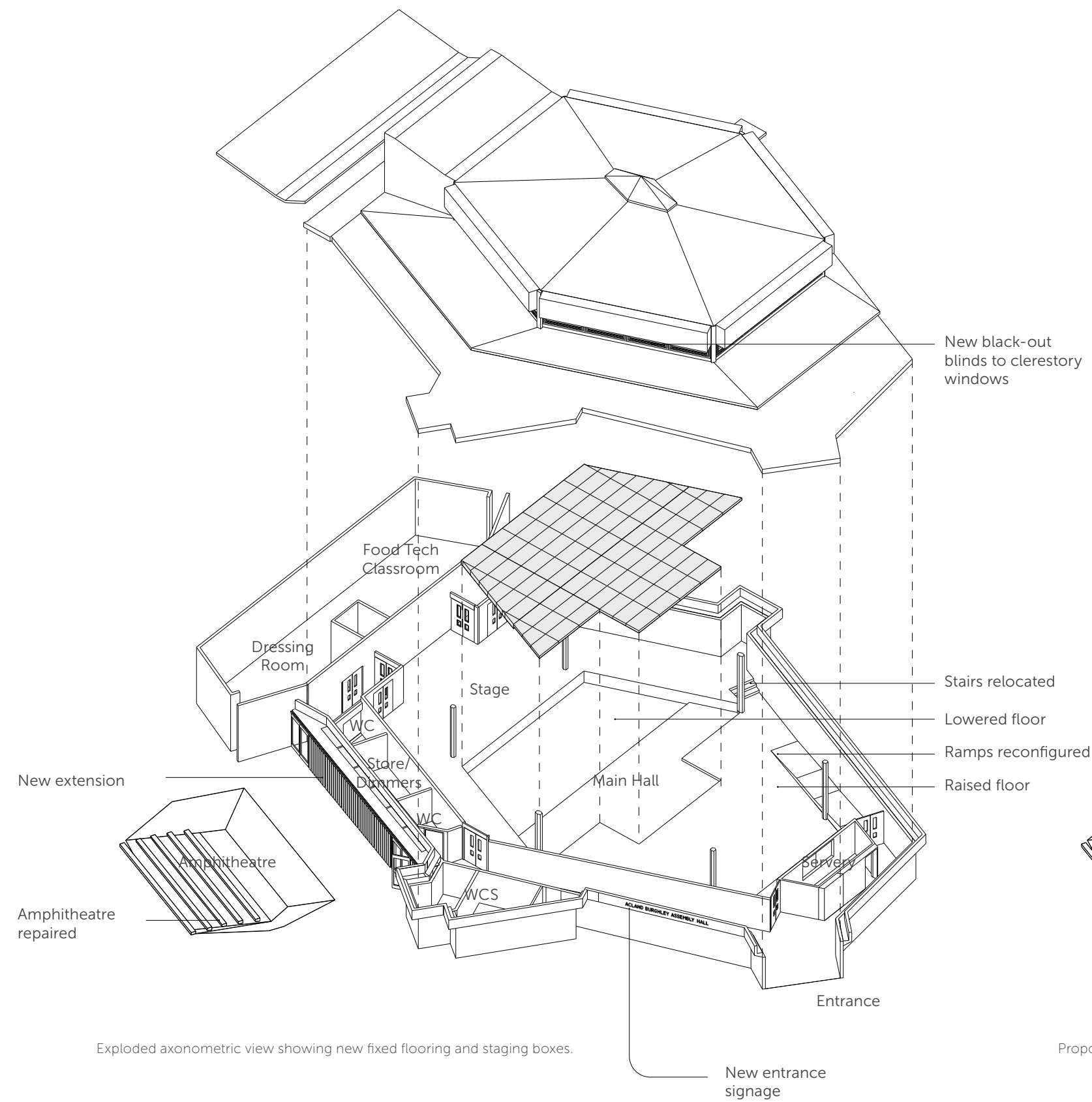
External Works

External works include replacement of a tree (to enable ventilation works), stabilising loose paving in the amphitheatre and external building mounted signage.



Existing

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSALS



EXISTING PLAN

The hall is entered from a covered walkway to the east. A circulating corridor runs around the edge of the main hall, which is an elongated hexagon shape. A lower section of the main hall, known as the 'Well', is accessed by stairs at the back of the space, or via ramps either side of the raised perimeter stage.

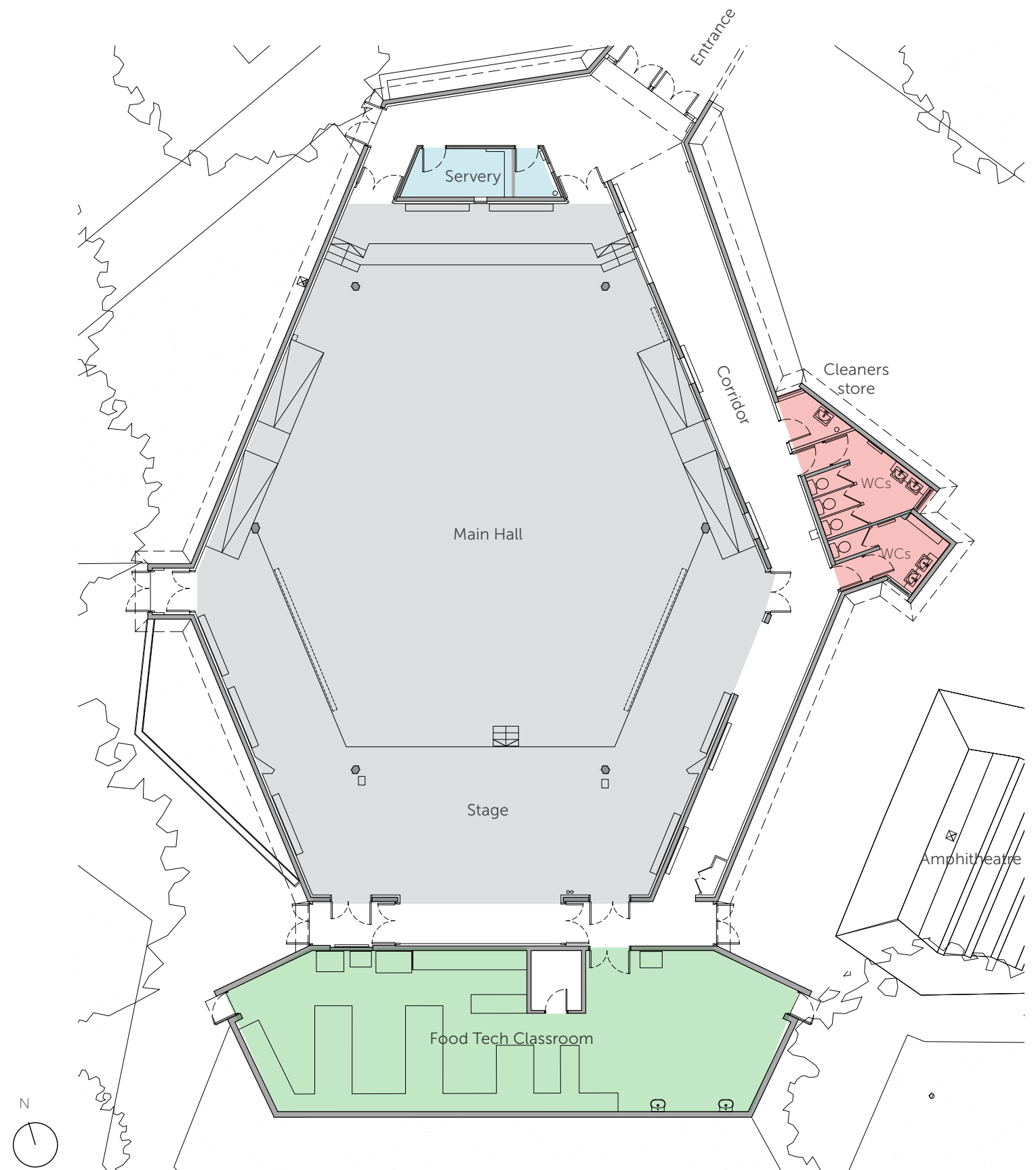
The primary stage is at the western end of the space, while a smaller stage with timber terracing is located at the east. Behind the western stage is a backstage area under a small fly tower with a high-level gantry which also provides access to the roof void and concealed lighting positions with the ceiling. Separately accessed, to the west, are two top lit secondary spaces originally built as a drama workshops but recently converted into a food technology classroom.

In 2010 a series of circular holes were cut into the wall separating the auditorium from the perimeter corridor. These have now been filled, with the exception of a large arch remaining in the centre of the plan, making the adjacent door redundant. The hole also breaks the acoustic and visual separation between the hall and circulation space around it, severely compromising its use as a performance space..

There are no designated changing or dressing rooms for performers. However, sinks have been provided in the food technology classroom in anticipation of future changing room use.



The main hall in its current condition, Spring 2020



PROPOSED PLAN

The proposed plan shown opposite is the product of a series of options investigated in order to test and develop the project brief, and is felt to effectively balance various demands of the brief, including:

- WC Provision
- Accessibility
- Impact on Heritage Asset
- Visual Impact
- Sustainability
- Cost
- Visitor Experience
- Flexibility
- Construction Risks
- Drainage Works
- Link to external amphitheatre

The proposed extension is the most significant addition to the building, A number of options were tested at concept stage, and the proposed option selected on the basis that the original form or the building is still clearly understood and experienced. Within a compact footprint it provides significant use benefit in the form of two accessible WCs, and a relocated store / dimmer room that enables the current store to be converted to a servery that benefits from being located next to the building’s main entrance. Through closing a simple dividing panel across the corridor, front of house and backstage facilities can be separated before and during performances.

As part of the refurbishment of the main hall, several minor reconfigurations are proposed to current floor, to meet the needs of a range of performances and improve accessibility to the central sunken area.

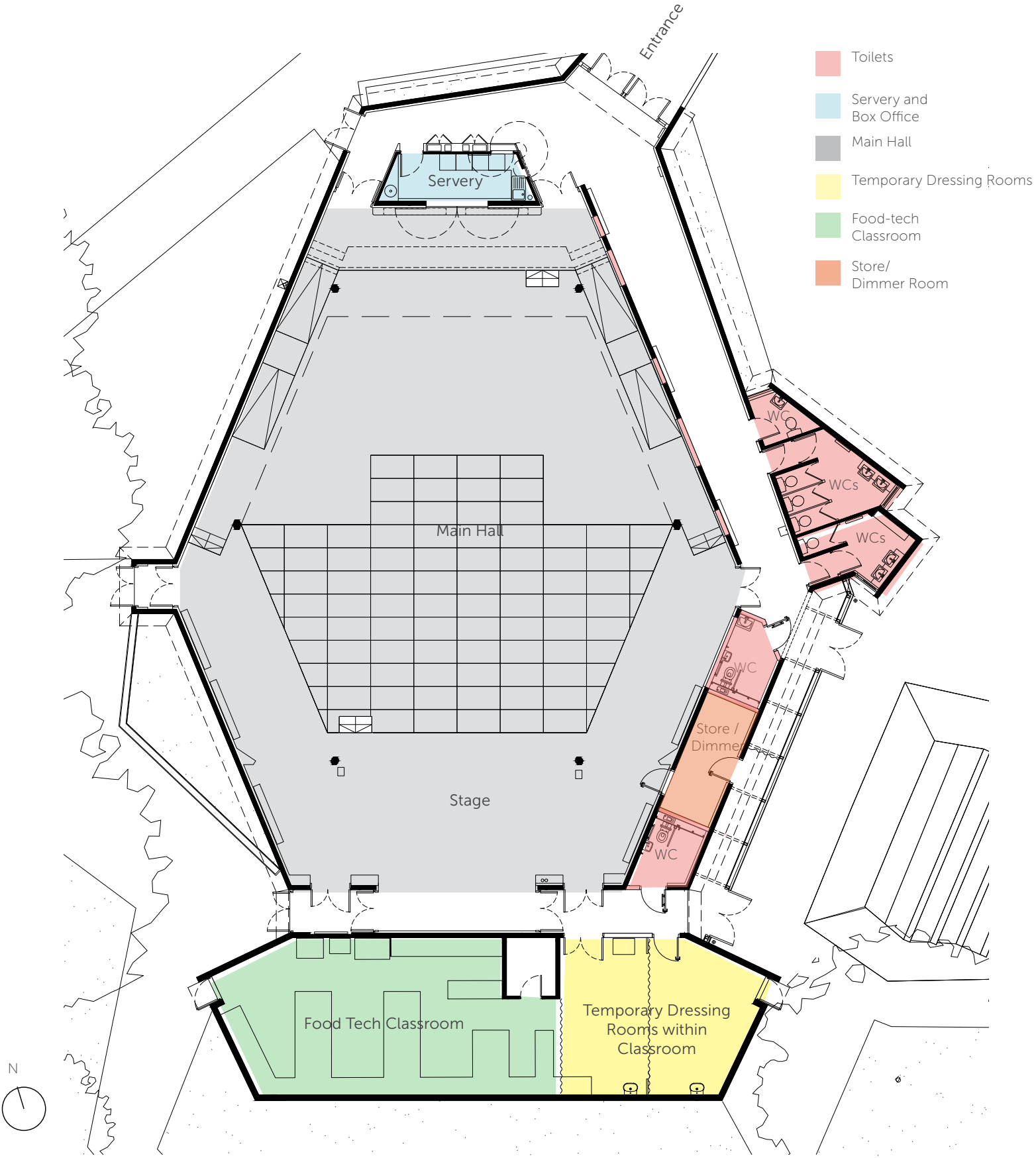
Area Schedule

GEA

Existing	661 m ²
Proposed Extension	18 m ²

Areas new rooms in existing footprint:

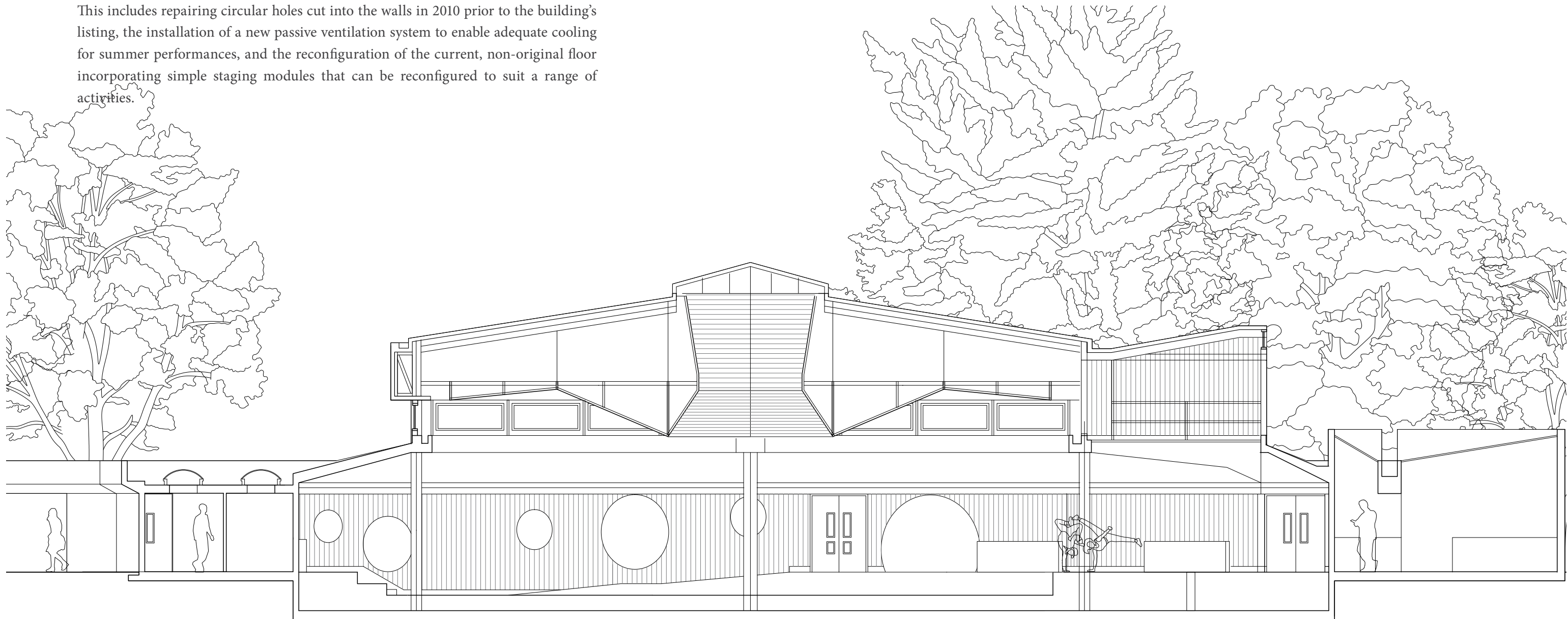
Proposed Store/Dimmer GIA	9.2 m ²
Proposed WCs GIA	4.5 m ² + 4.8 m ²



EXISTING SECTION

A number of changes are proposed to the internal fabric of the main hall.

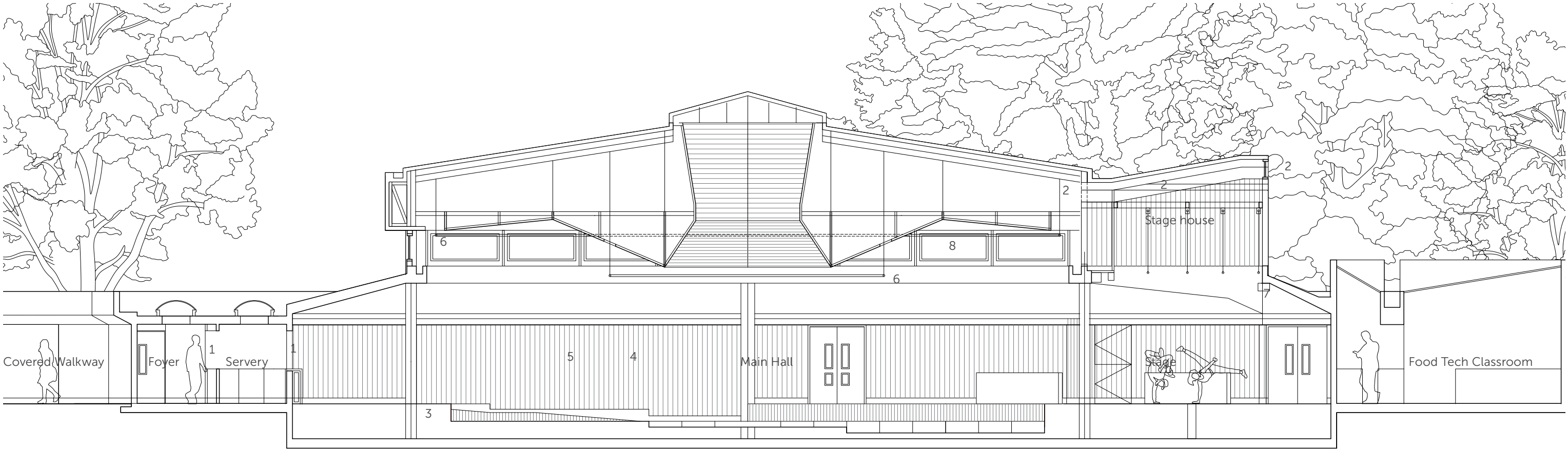
This includes repairing circular holes cut into the walls in 2010 prior to the building's listing, the installation of a new passive ventilation system to enable adequate cooling for summer performances, and the reconfiguration of the current, non-original floor incorporating simple staging modules that can be reconfigured to suit a range of activities.



PROPOSED SECTION

Key

- 1. New openings to servery to serve auditorium and foyer
- 2. New passive ventilation system installed
- 3. Floor reconfigured to incorporate flexible staging boxes
- 4. Circular holes infilled and timber linings repaired
- 5. Concealed acoustic panels within existing wall lining
- 6. New stage lighting bars, AV equipment and lighting
- 7. Projector relocated
- 8. Blackout blinds replaced



DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - VENTILATION SYSTEM

New Ventilation System

The upgrade of the ventilation strategy for the main hall forms a major part of the refurbishment. The hall is currently ventilated through its clerestory windows; creating a conflict between ventilation and the use of blackout blinds, and compromising acoustic separation between the hall, the school grounds and the neighbours beyond.

A new ventilation system is proposed for an occupancy of 300 people, in order that the hall can be used for performances through out the year including summer months. A passive, low-energy ventilation system is proposed. Fresh, outdoor air brought into the space via a buried duct in the grounds of the building. This tempers the air, warming it in winter and cooling it in summer. This fresh air is to be distributed via the floor void and then extracted via the ceiling and roof void.

Proposed works

- Intake vent situated in the landscape and formed of hexagonal concrete bench with metal louvres below.
- Buried earth duct
- Builder's work hole to connect duct to auditorium floor void
- Air supplied by timber baffles and metal grilles in auditorium floor
- High level plenum above stage and replacement of existing stage house windows with louvres.

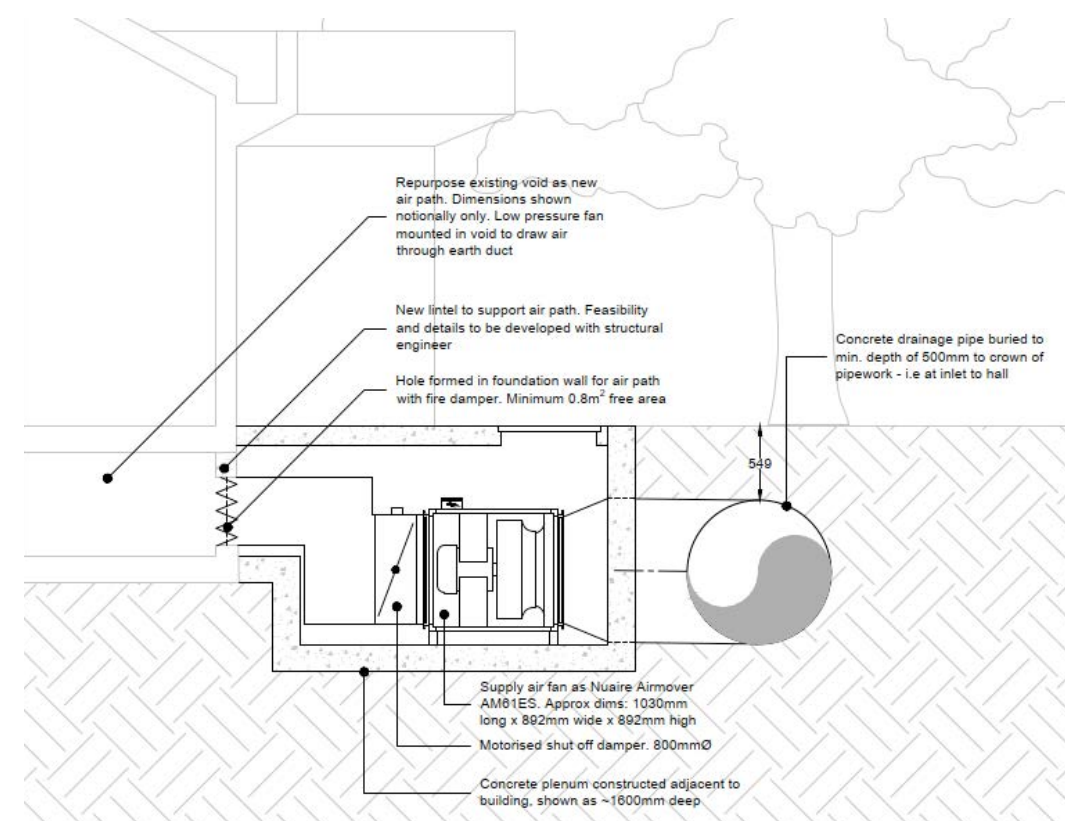
Assessment of impact on significance and value:

- Impact on landscape. The installation of the earth duct requires a category C tree to be removed, and replaced with a new tree. This was understood to be supported in pre-application meetings, and does not adversely affect the building or its landscape setting. An assessment of impact on the adjacent trees is provided in a separate arboricultural report.
- Connection to the hall is concealed below ground, and neither impacts the hall visually nor compromises the existing structure.
- Supply grilles are to be formed from spaced timber slats integrated within the upstands at the perimeter of the new floor. The timber will match that of the floor.
- The high-level extract plenum is concealed within the stage house and does not affect the building visually or in operational terms. The replacement of high level windows causes some harm, but these are located on the rear of the building and will not impact parts of the building that are of high heritage significance.

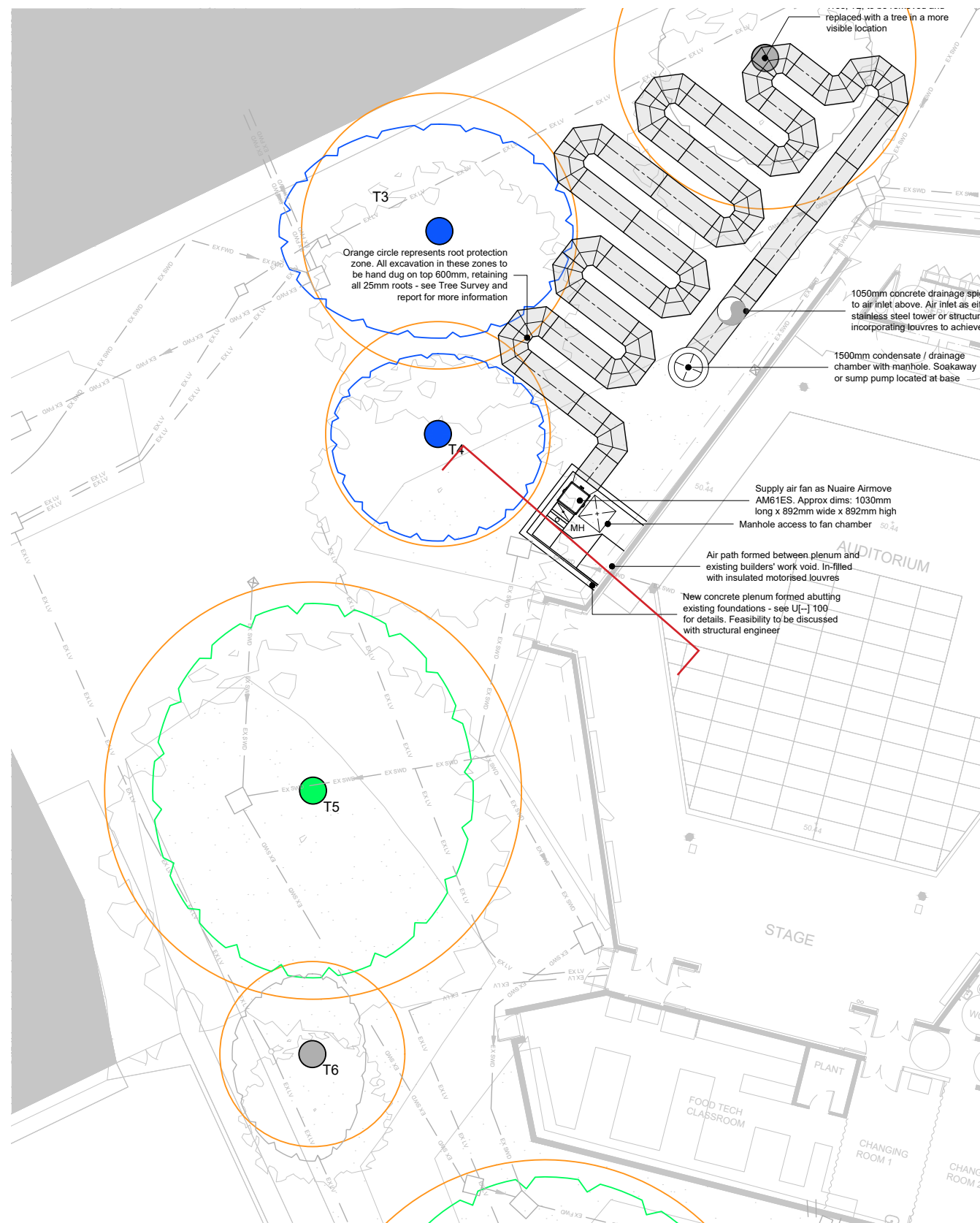
Given the nature of the works, there are no sustainability-specific planning policy requirements. However a key part of the brief for the school is the installation of a low-energy, sustainable ventilation system that enables use of the building for larger audiences throughout the year. This is achieved by a buried earth duct to deliver tempered air to the building. The concrete duct will be buried in the landscape with only an air inlet visible above ground. Associated external works are described on page 56.

Air is drawn into the duct via a louvres mounted in a new concrete bench and slowly pushed into a void beneath the floor in the hall. While travelling through the duct, the air is either cooled by the ground in summer, or warmed by it in winter.

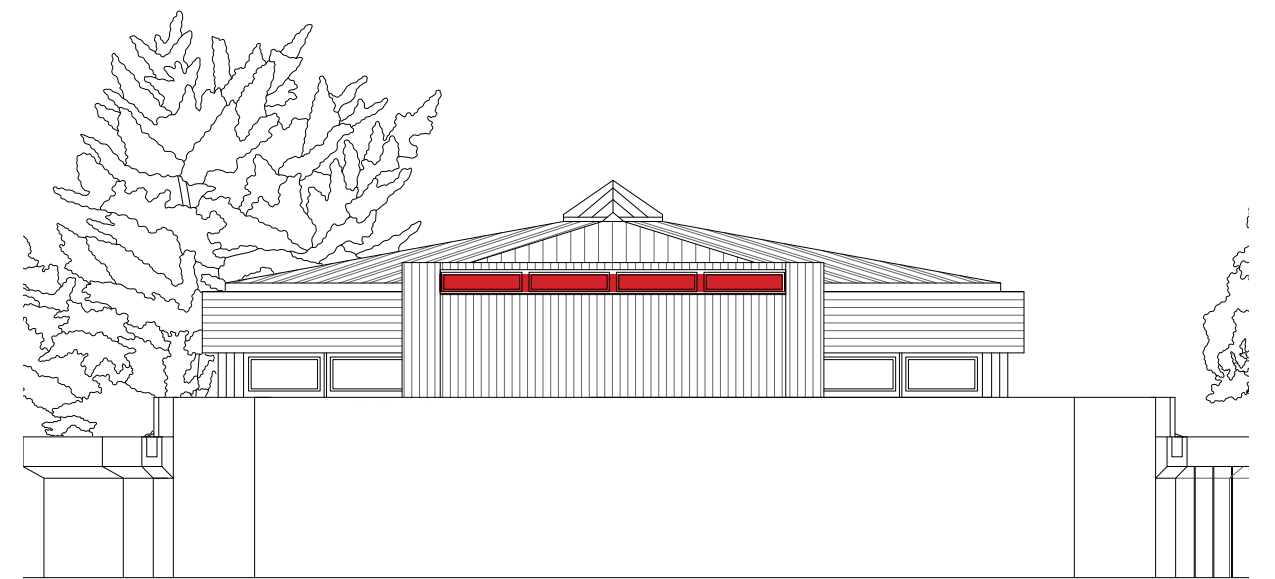
Extract is proposed via a new plenum constructed beneath the existing ceiling of the stage house. 4 no. existing high level windows are to be replaced with ventilation grilles.



Supply air is delivered via localised breaking out of the existing below ground structure.



Proposed ventilation route



High level windows marked in red on the building's south elevation are to be replaced with extract ventilation grilles.



4 no. extract grilles are to be fitted in place of the windows shown in the photograph below.



Existing blocked up windows within stage house to be reinstated with insulated opening vents



DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - FLOORING AND STAGING

Flooring and Staging

The space currently has no facility to adapt the floor to provide tiered seating or adaptive staging, so performances can only be viewed from seats at the lower level, or from around the perimeter looking into the lower section. Engagement with the school and other users identified a need for flexibility within the space with a requirement for the stage to be extended and adapted on occasion to support a variety of different performance types and activities.

The proposed design allows the hall to be arranged in multiple ways without compromising the nature of the space. The sunken central area is retained, but can be adjusted by moving integrated timber boxes to create a number of other raked layouts for performances and the option to create informal, in the round layouts for workshops and lessons. A number of configurations are illustrated on pages 38-41. This is to allow the hall to be set up for day to day use by the school, and quickly and affordably reconfigured for performances without the need for professional crew. As such, the staging boxes are designed to be moved by students at the school.

The upper area in front of the servery is extended to provide more space to congregate during intervals. The existing ramps which link the entrance level to the sunk floor are to be repositioned to improve useability for audience members and students who currently need to cross the corner of the stage to use the ramps.

Proposed works:

- New flooring throughout the auditorium incorporating timber staging boxes. Timber to be dark in colour to be more in keeping with original design intent.
- Extended upper level at the servery end
- Integrated flexible staging boxes
- Reconfigured ramps and steps

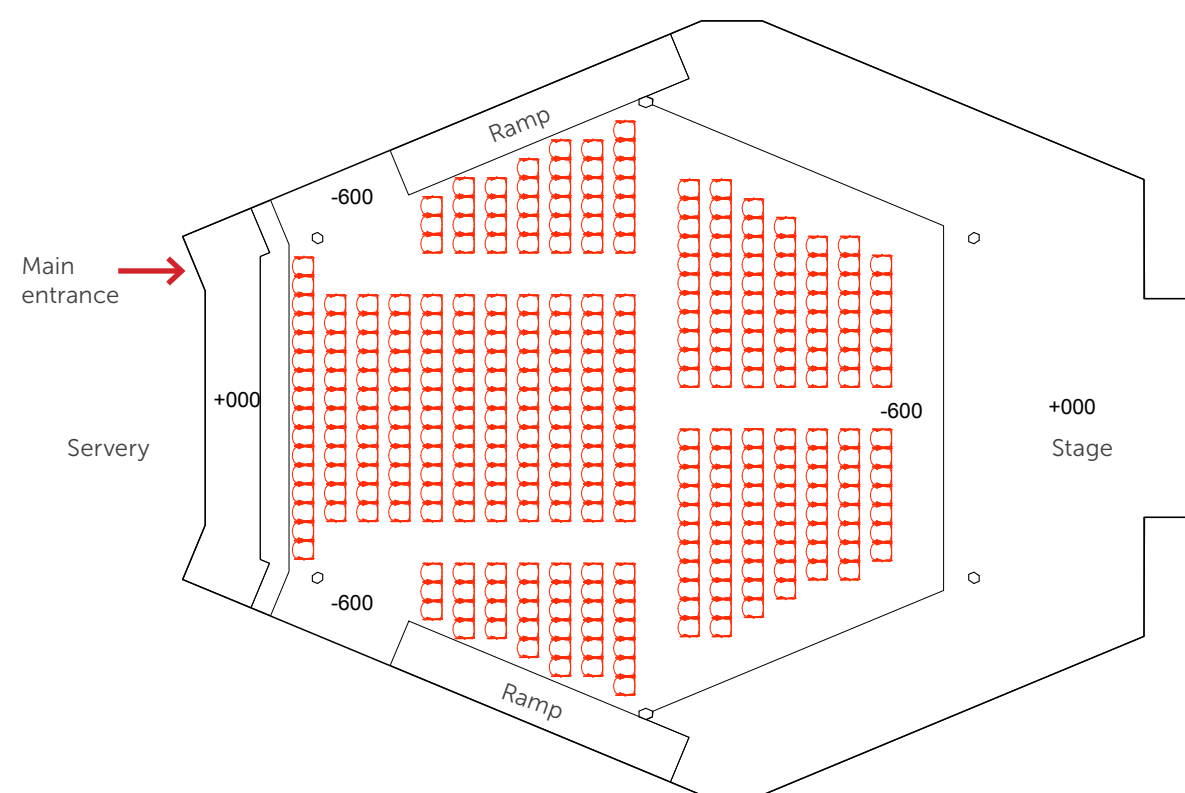
Assessment of impact on significance and value:

- The tone of the current floor detracts from the appearance of the space. Replacing this with a darker timber will be more in keeping with the original intent and will contribute positively to the overall aesthetic value of the building.
- The layout of ramps and steps varies slightly from the original design, but this is not considered to impact on its significance or value. Adjustments to the floor levels do not change the overall reading of the hall and its central sunken floor, but do contribute to the building's continued use as a multi-purpose, accessible space which is considered to be positive in heritage terms. The flexible staging strategy employing timber boxes is similar to that employed by HKPA at their Christ's Hospital theatre (completed 1975).

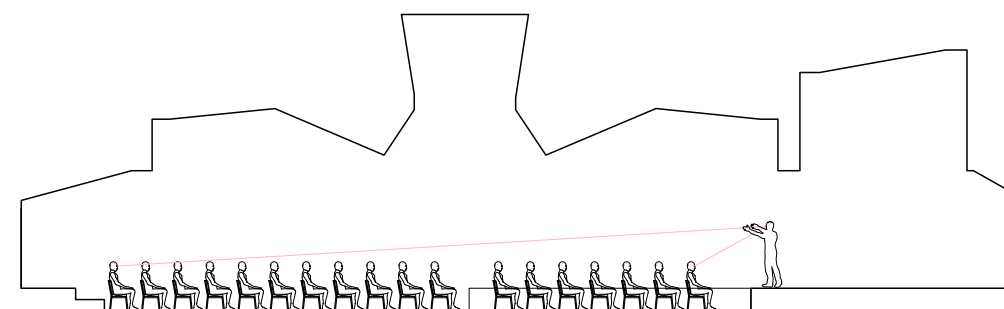
Current condition

The central sunken area is currently 600mm below the existing stage level, with steps down from entrance level and ramps returning back up to stage level at the centre of the plan. The hall was originally designed to have stages at both ends, with a view to the room being used in different configurations. Despite this, the second 'stage' at the servery end is fairly narrow in width, stepping down into the sunken central area.

Sight lines are workable for typical school performances, since the stage is raised above the current level, but there is scope for improvement. The relatively low proscenium (formed by the columns and concrete soffit above the stage, makes the stage feel constrained and makes lighting difficult.



The existing floor plan shown with 334 seats.



The existing section with central lowered section 600mm below stage level