Proposed Configurations

A single level, lowered section is maintained, but raised 150mm above the existing level. This allows us to incorporate a number of staging boxes within the depth of the floor that can be removed by staff and students to create new layouts. The floor is accessed via re-configured ramps leading directly from the entrance to the centre of the plan.

The configuration illustrated below with a flat sunken floor, which closely resembles the original, will be the standard arrangement for day-to-day activities including school assemblies.



Diagram of proposed floor with staging modules in place to create a flat floor.



Diagram of proposed floor with staging modules removed.



Sections indicating sight lines for floor with a flat floor in the central lowered section. Sight lines are acceptable from most seats as the speaker on a raised stage.

Кеу



DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - FLOORING AND STAGING

The diagrams below illustrate how an extended stage can be created in addition to tiers at the back of the hall to improve sight lines from the back rows. Several permutations of this can be achieved by reconfiguring the staging boxes, including steeper tiering for audience seating, and different levels of staging as suited to larger orchestral or choral performances.



Staging configured to create extended stage and tiered floor for audience seating





450

Sections indicating sight lines for floor with a tiered floor in the central lowered section. Sight lines are improved due to the extended stage, and tiered seating.

-750





The diagrams below illustrate how a central lowered and adjacent bench seating can be achieved for informal workshops and performances by moving a limited number of boxes.



Staging configured to create a central lowered stage for workshops or informal performances.









Central boxes removed to create a sunken area for informal workshops and performances



Image showing the hall in daytime mode. New perimeter services are to be concealed with a timber board. Acoustic panels, faced externally in slatted timber to match the existing walls, are not visible when closed. The lowered section of the floor is arranged to a single level to suit a range of uses. Staging boxes are faced in timber strip to match the floor, so that the central well reads as a continuous surface. The lowered section is proposed as a darker finish to emphasise the geometry of the room and the relationship to the ceiling and skylight above.



Image showing the hall in evening performance mode, with the stage extended into the room, and audience seating arranged on a tiered floor. Stage lighting is connected to new lighting bars suspended from the ceiling. Acoustic panels are opened to reveal existing concrete, and coloured cement board to the inner side of the panel. New blackout blinds are closed across the clerestory windows.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - IMPROVED TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACOUSTICS

A relocated store/dimmer room is proposed in the existing corridor between the two accessible WCs. For most performances on the existing stage, a temporary control desk will be set up in front of the box office / servery at the back of the Hall. However, some performances require this to be located out of the main room so a concealed stable door between the stage and the new store/dimmer room will allow a control desk to be located off-stage when required. On occasion control desks are required to be located in the corridor, and a number of cable passes are proposed to enable temporary cables to laid safely for this purpose.

Other works include a combination of new and modified servicing is proposed, including:

- New store/control room for dimmer racks
- Replacement of final circuit wiring for power and lighting to assembly spaces and corridors
- New lighting throughout the hall and corridors, replacing missing light fittings to match the originals as closely as possible;
- Two new lighting and rigging bars are proposed, one around the central roof lantern, and a second around the perimeter of the space
- New theatre tech/stage facilities for lighting and sound as well as audio visual equipment (e.g. staging bars, projectors and screens).
- New motorised blackout blinds to clerestory windows.

Works required:

- Strip out of existing equipment and installation of new lighting and blinds
- New structural opening between existing hall and proposed store / dimmer room. Concealed stable door to be faced in timber slats to match existing timber linings.
- New structural opening in existing internal wall to new corridor
- Two 200mm diameter penetrations to RC walls for cable passes to enable safe distribution of temporary cables (maintaining fire and acoustic separation between the spaces). Holes to be concealed by timber-clad access panels within the auditorium.
- New penetration to roof for ventilation of dimmer room
- Installation of strong points within ceiling
- Installation of new steels in stage house to support stage equipment

Assessment of impact on significance and value:

- House lighting. The current lighting fittings and brightness detracts from aesthetic value of the space in general, particularly the articulated ceiling and the materials. Replacement with dimmable fittings in original locations and of a similar design to the original lights is an important heritage gain. It is proposed that the final fitting be agreed with officers at the time of installation.
- Stage lighting. Proposed bars complement the form of the building and are installed using existing apertures to avoid damage to materials. Though this does impact the ceiling visually, the ability to safely mount stage lighting is important to ensuring the continued use of the building as a school and community theatre. The installation of lighting bars and containment will be reversible should needs change in the future.
- Motorised blinds are to be concealed in the concrete ring beam so that the blinds are hidden when not in use.
- The new opening to dimmer room is discreetly located within the timber panelling. The stable door would be faced in timber to match the existing, constructed where possible from timber salvaged from elsewhere in the hall. This is will have limited impact on aesthetic value.
- Roof top ventilation cowl serving the control room will not exceed parapet heights so will not be visible from street level.
- New steels in the stage house and ceiling void to accommodate new ventilation and staging equipment are not visible besides from directly beneath. This work is reversible and could be removed in the future.

Works proposed to the fabric of the main hall are captured on the following images. A full set of internal elevational photographs is provided in drawings 2001(0)040-048.





DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - IMPROVED TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACOUSTICS

Improved Acoustics

Works are required to acoustically separate the corridor from the hall, and limit noise breakout to adjacent properties. This is a key part of ensuring the building is suitable for performance use.

The acoustics of the existing hall works well for some uses, acoustic testing has indicated that some performances, including larger orchestral performances with large audiences, additional areas of reflective surfaces are required.

It is proposed that a discrete, perimeter hanging rail is integrated at frieze level that would allow the school to hang to solid acoustic panels for performances and pinboards for the display of artwork. This would greatly reduce the risk of damage to the timber lining through the use of drawing pins and tape.

Works required:

- Fit acoustic seals and new ironmongery to refurbished doors
- Infill circular holes with sound separating construction and repairing cut timber linings
- Install continuous black steel hanging rail around the perimeter of the space for temporary acoustic panels

Assessment of impact on significance and value:

- The doors are not considered to be of high significance, and have been repainted • and ironmongery replaced over time. Refurbishment is considered to be an improvement to their current condition.
- Protecting the timber lining from damage through the installation of a new hanging • rail is considered to be a benefit in heritage terms. The rail itself will have minimal impact on the appearance of the walls.

Other Improvements

A number of other improvements are proposed for the hall to address damage and undo harm that has been done to the building through piecemeal repairs and maintenance work - especially to services. The majority of work was carried out prior to listing. Proposed work is as follows:

- Stripping out redundant services and installing new services in a more sensitive and considered way using concealed conduits wherever possible
- Repairing damaged timber linings (due to water ingress and installation of services).
- Removing paint from internal concrete;
- Lightly cleaning exposed concrete;

Assessment of impact on significance and value:

- Repairing cut and damaged timber linings will undo much of the harm that occurred to the space over the years. This is an important heritage gain since it reinstates the much of the original design intent.
- Stripping back services and repairing damage will enable significant elements of the building such as its form and material language to be read with greater clarity.

Refer to drawings 2001(0)040-048 for a description of works, and to images on the next page.



Section through the hall and amphitheatre. The ventilation earth duct is shown on the right of the image.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - TIMBER LININGS

The following diagrams detail a number of discreet improvement proposed to the main hall, that aim to enhance the technical performance of the hall, whilst acknowledging and responding to the original design intent. The diagram below shows hall in its default arrangement, with staging modules arranged to create a single level, sunken floor. The image shows the new timber fascia to conceal the perimeter cable routes. A continuous hanging rail is located at the top of the existing timber slats.



The diagram below illustrates the walls in use for art exhibitions which are hosted annually by the school. A metal angle is fitted above the existing timber lining for use as a hanging rail for artworks or boards for smaller pieces. This runs the full perimeter of the hall. Proprietary hooks will be used to suspend the boards and artwork, limiting the risk of future damage caused by ad-hoc fixing to the timber linings.





Detail at top of wall lining

24	
	Space on top of trunking for temporary cable route
	Timber fascia on split batten
	Metal trunking in same location as existing
	Continuous pressed steel hanging rail
	Timber slats on woodwool to match existing
	Acoustic infill to circular opening

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - SERVERY

The current control room is to be refurbished and the connecting wall to the old box office (now store room) removed. The sound and lighting controls are to be relocated to a new store to the left of the stage. The proposed works present an opportunity to consider the visitor's sense of arrival to the refurbished hall. It will act not only as a box office but also a servery facing both the hall and lobby enabling service both before and during events in the space. The existing door to the store room will be converted to function as a serving hatch while the existing opening to the hall will be enlarged. Both counters will be concealed behind timber panelling when not in use.

Works will include:

- Change from fixed control room to portable / moveable control desk.
- Sound / lighting equipment moved to new dimmer / store room
- Removal of internal partition and formation of new hatches •
- Relocation of distribution boards to new cupboard in corridor •
- Installation of new water / drainage connections for sink •
- Installation of new serving counters / worktops / shutters shelving •
- Enlargement of existing opening to hall to create serving hatch •
- New timber shelf above radiators in hall to form extended • counter.

Impact on significance and heritage value

The works will cause some harm to the fabric of the building, but this will be partially offset by tidying of control panels within the entrance area. The use of building as a performance venue will be greatly enhanced by the creation of a the servery which will help the building to support activities such as markets, dances etc as well as formal performances where visitors would expect refreshments.



The current intake room





Proposed plan of servery with serving hatches to both sides.



Image showing the servery with hatches closed. New sheet flooring is proposed, and existing doors are to be refurbished. Hinged panels are faced externally in timber to match existing timber linings.



Image showing the servery in event mode with hatches open. One of the existing doorways is repurposed to create the serving counter facing the lobby. When open, the internal face of the panel can be used to display event posters, menus, price lists etc.. which would otherwise be fixed to the timber or concrete walls.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - EXTENSION (EXTERIOR)

As noted above, proposals include a linear extension to enable the creation of new WCs and a dimmer room within the building. The extension references elements of the original building whilst being subservient to it.

The linear form and low profile of the extension allows the original building to be clearly read, with the perimeter upstand of the existing building extending above the new roof line. The doors to either side of the stage provide a visual link to the between the building and amphitheatre and help to support outdoor performances by linking back of house performance facilities with either side of the stage. This new connection will allow events to use both the auditorium and the amphitheatre simultaneously e.g. for end of year shows.

The silver/grey cladding references the scale, colour and texture of the board marked concrete of the original building, and provides a solid backdrop to the stage of the external amphitheatre. A glass-reinforce concrete (GRC) product is proposed for the cladding in order to provide a durable surface that knits with the existing concrete.

Detailing of the extension would be simple and direct like the existing building.







Existing South East Elevation

Proposed South East Elevation

Key Plan

Image of the proposed GRC cladding. Colour to be agreed with officers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - EXTENSION (INTERIOR)

The proposed architectural language of the extension's interior borrows from the existing building while clearly reading as a new addition.

The sloping soffit of the existing concrete parapet is exposed within the space and mirrored by the angled, timber lined soffit to the new extension. A slender line of glazing in the centre of roof separates the old and new, and provides daylight to the space.

Glazed doors at either end of the corridor allow views out to its external amphitheatre and landscaping, while solid elements between timber frames provide an opaque backdrop to the amphitheatre's stage and incorporate concealed ventilation panels.

The relationship between timber slats and board marked concrete is a key design feature of the original building. Paint is to be remove from the external concrete where this is enclosed by the new extension, revealing the building's original board-marked finish. This rhythm is echoed in the new internal timber lining, with door frame and skirting details also referencing the original building. A single colour sheet flooring is proposed for the extension to match the main entrance.

Section through the extension

Key Plan

Internal view of new extension

Assessment of impact on significance and value:

It is acknowledged that the new extension does have an impact on the heritage value of the building with regard to its completeness. However, the additional floor space for WCs and technical infrastructure created by the extension, is felt to be essential to ensuring the fullest possible use of the building in the future.

Alternative locations and forms were reviewed but were not felt to be appropriate as shown opposite. The proposed location achieves all of the requirements of the brief while minimising impact on the operation of the school and on the building itself.

Some of the harm caused to the building is offset by the public benefit that will be achieved by introducing accessible WCs to the building–allowing it to be used by a wider range of local organisations. As set out above, a number of other measures are proposed that will also mitigate the harm caused by the work:

- Undoing of harm done to the building on a gradual basis through piecemeal repairs and maintenance work – especially to services. Stripping out redundant services and installing services in a more sensitive and considered way;
- Replacing missing light fittings to match the originals as closely as possible;
- Reinstating the intact auditorium by infilling holes in the walls to the hall;
- Removing paint from internal concrete in the hall and corridors;
- Replacing studded rubber flooring with more appropriate finish.

Plan showing alternative locations for the additional accommodation.

For the purposes of this exercise a space equivalent to approximate 2no. accessible WCs plus a small lobby is shown.

A: This location was proposed in pre-application submission in 2018. LBC response at the time noted that:

"This is probably the most controversial part of the proposal given its potential impact on the form and original layout of the hall. However there is a need to upgrade the WC provision to allow for the long term future of the hall to be used for its originally intended purpose. This is a persuasive and clearly justifiable reason to carry out the works." However, the additional space only allowed for one accessible WC and did not provide space for technical upgrades or a WC for performers using the dressing room.

B: The recent installation of the Food Technology Classroom in the back stage area reflects the need for the school to accommodate these facilities on the site which is listed in its entirety. Creating WCs in this area would displace teaching space that would need to be re-provided elsewhere.

C: Infilling part of the lobby would compromise the reading of the original plan form while blocking a fire escape route and entrance to the auditorium. Accessible WC's would be located some distance from the rest of the WCs which goes against good practice.

D: Although discretely located on the rear of the building, this location would, like C, position the WCs some distance from the rest.

E: Like D, this location would be discrete, but is only accessible via the Food Tech classroom or the auditorium itself.

F: This allows the new WCs to be located close to existing WCs and dressing rooms while also maintaining existing escape / access routes and the 'get-round' corridor. The location is felt to be preferable to A in terms of impact of development and resulting functionality.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - WCs

Current WC provision (three female toilets and one male cubicle with two urinals) is insufficient for the types of events the school would like to hold and the audiences they wish to accommodate (ca. 300 people).

There is currently no accessible WC within the building. The table below shows the provision recommended as a minimum in BS6465-1:2006A1:2209 for Assembly buildings (where most toilet use is during intervals).

Total Occupancy	Split		Male Provision		Female Toilets	Accessible WC
	Male	Female	Toilets	Urinals		
140	70	70	1	1	3	0
200	100	100	1	1	4	1
250	125	125	1	2	5	1
300	150	150	1	2	5	1
350	175	175	1	2	6	1
400	200	200	1	2	6	1
450	225	225	1	3	7	1
500	250	250	1	3	7	1

Occupancy met by current provision

The proposed design provides four female WCs instead of the five set out in the standard, but includes two accessible WCs where only one is required. One of these is located adjacent to the existing provision, while the second is adjacent to the dressing rooms. This gives performers better access to a toilet during a performance as they would otherwise be forced to use one in the front-of-house area.

The new extension maintains the circulation route leading to the backstage area. A screen or curtain would be used during events to temporarily separate back and front-of-house areas.

As part of the work, the existing cleaner's store would be converted to a single WC cubicle. The window serving this room would be reinstated with frosted glass (currently this window is boarded).

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS - ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION AND EXTERNAL AREAS

A number of improvements are proposed for the corridor running along the south side of the hall:

- new, dimmable lighting throughout, •
- new flooring throughout,
- removal of paint from concrete walls
- painting of radiators and adjustments to radiators pipework to improve appearance
- removal of redundant services and tidying of remaining cabling.

A curtain and track and new doorway is proposed to allow division of the food tech classroom into two on a temporary basis for use as dressing rooms.

External works

Works to external areas are very limited. As well as ventilation works described above, the following alterations are proposed:

- Installation of new signage on the concrete parapet as illustrated opposite. This would be formed from laser-cut metal letters, fixed so that they sit forward of the concrete surface. They would be lit from below by new luminaires concealed in the planting below.
- Repairs to the amphitheatre (to reinstate loose stones and to make good lost mortar • etc.
- Introduction of a buried service duct to allow connection of theatre equipment to • serve amphitheatre.
- New buried power supply for temporary lighting of trees on approach to the hall • from the main entrance.

Assessment of impact on significance and value:

Improvements in corridor spaces will help offset harm caused by work carried out elsewhere and would help improve the appearance of the spaces, bringing them closer to their original condition. This will have a positive impact on the significance of the building - improving the sense of arrival appreciation of the building.

Works to the exterior are very minor in nature. Signage on the building will cause some minor physical harm, but this is felt to be justified in terms of improving visibility and access to the building.

Electrical provision for temporary festoon lights are included as part of proposals, so that trees between the event entrance on Burghley Road and the main entrance can be lit for events.

ACCESS

Accessibility

The building is arranged with entrance, box office, WCs, dressing rooms and stage on the same level. This means that it is already well suited to audiences and performers with physical disabilities.

However, as set out above, two key changes are proposed to improve accessibility of the building. Firstly, two new wheelchair accessible WCs are proposed. These are located to separately serve audiences and performers requiring accessible facilities. These will enable the building to be used independently without the need to use facilities in the main school building.

Secondly, ramps are to be reconfigured in the hall to allow visitors requiring ramp access to enter and leave the main auditorium to the rear of the space. Currently, visitors much use a side door into the hall which connects to the stage making it impossible for wheelchair users, or people with pushchairs for instance, to enter or leave the space discretely.

The change will also mean that wheelchair users enter the space through the same doors as other guests and arrive at the lower level in an ideal location - centrally in the space.

A portable induction loop is to be used to assist visitors with hearing impairments.

Other access arrangements

Provision for the following items are as per current arrangements, with no changes is proposed.

- Site Security
- Access for visitors to events (during school time, visitors will be stewarded between the event entrance on Burghley Road and the Assembly Hall as per current arrangements)
- Access for emergency services
- Visitor Parking and accessible visitor parking
- Loading and unloading of deliveries
- Cycle Storage
- Access for waste collection or storage

Proposed site plan

APPROACH TO MATERIAL AND PRODUCT SELECTION

Original materials have been identified through a review of record drawings and historic journals - as illustrated on page 18.

Four different timbers were used within the building. 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.

Wherever possible original timbers will be retained in-situ, however where they need to be removed to enable works to be carried out, this will be done carefully, the materials safely stored and then reinstated.

It will not be possible to source new Parana Pine (an endanger species) to match that used on the walls. Therefore, where 'new' timber is required (e.g. to infill holes and repair existing damage), the following hierarchy will be followed:

- Re-use redundant timber from elsewhere in the building (e.g. from the former corridor where converted to WCs and Dimmer Room),
- Source reclaimed / salvaged timber to match, •
- Source new, sustainably grown timber where a visual match can be found,
- Source other new, sustainably grown timber and stain to match.

New materials e.g sheet flooring to corridors will be selected to enhance the appearance of the building, with the original design intent in mind.

Samples of new timber, other finishes and light fittings will be agreed with the planning and conservation officer through an appropriate planning condition.

RESPONSE TO PRE-APPLICATION FEEDBACK

Two pre-application submissions have been made to LBC planners. Response to the first, in November 2018 (ref: 2018/4147/PRE), was supportive of the principles of extension to the building and refurbishment of the hall itself. At that time, an extension was proposed adjacent to the existing toilets, but this has since been discounted for the reasons set out above. It concluded that:

"Reuse and extension...would enhance the architectural value of the hall. For this reasons *I* am supportive of the works, which *I* believe to be broadly acceptable from an heritage perspective because of the potential benefit it would offer in securing the long term future of the hall and amphitheatre in a use for which they were originally intended."

As part of second submission in December 2020 and February 2021 (2020/5141/PRE), proposals were set out in more detail, including changes to timber finishes and creation of built-in acoustic panels within the hall. Following feedback from officers, these elements of the work have been omitted from the proposals.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In July 2019, Acland Burghley School commissioned a community audit in order to gauge support for the project from the school and local community and any potential external users of the hall (local residents, arts groups, businesses, etc.). This involved focus groups, additional meetings with residents and partners to discuss in more detail, and a survey of school students.

We had 130 responses from the community with a clear majority of people wanting to attend arts (88%) or charity (61%) events, indicating demand for an accessible community arts venue. Over a quarter of students responded to the survey, giving a total of 416 responses. 34% of students wanted to see the hall used for community or social events. Students are extremely keen to see other people benefit from the hall, in particular charities (52%) and other young people (66%). Young people are passionate about the arts with over 59% agreeing that this should be a primary use of the hall. It is clear that the students see the redeveloped hall as a community asset. Over 70 of the 130 respondents to the community audit wanted to be kept updated with the project's development.

A dozen theatre, music and arts organisations participated at this stage and are keen to continue to be involved in the project. Partnerships have developed with a number of them, most notably the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, who are now resident in the school and using the hall as their main rehearsal base, as well as The Upsetters Theatre Company, Complicité Theatre Company, and the Almeida Theatre.

We have over 20 letters of support from organisations including the above, as well as the Leader of the Council, our local MP (Keir Starmer), local residents' associations and primary schools, and a range of other organisations who are keen to use the hall for a range of provisions for the local community. We also have letters of support related to our focus on the heritage of the building from the 20th Century Society and Geraint Franklin (author of Howell Killick Partridge & Amis about the building's architects).

We subsequently undertook a further survey which received nearly 600 responses and gave us more granular information about what people in the local community would like to use the space for (orchestral performances in the heart of the local community were a big draw, despite the vast majority of respondents saying they had never attended one previously). This survey also improved our understanding of the potential impact of the project on the local community, with 98% believing it will improve social integration and 97% believing Londoners who face disadvantage will benefit from the project. 6% of respondents were disabled, indicating a need to improve facilities in the building. We presented at Open House London and the Neighbourhood Makers Group, and have continued to send our supporters newsletters on the development of the project.

The Design Team produced a Consultation and Engagement Strategy that has been employed during Stages 2 and 3. This has seen them engage throughout these processes with:

- Professional Theatre and Music Organisations
- Arts Groups and Charities
- Neighbours and Businesses
- Conservation/Heritage Groups
- Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
- Parents
- Students (as a whole as well as the student working group on the project)
- Staff (as a whole as well as specific groups such as the Site Team, the Creative Arts Team, and the Senior Leadership Team)
- Governors (as a whole as well as the Resources Committee)
- Acland Burghley School Trust

This engagement has included focus groups where draft designs were presented and feedback was received from the various different stakeholder groups, as well as additional meetings, surveys, assemblies with students, and details circulated in newsletters, online, and other communications. Despite a lockdown hitting as physical sessions were planned, the strategy was adjusted and moved online so that we could continue to engage with stakeholders. Feedback received was then incorporated into the developed designs, which has ensured that we have confidence that the proposals will work for all of the stakeholder groups listed above.

Most notably, the stakeholder engagement has shown a majority support for the plans to prioritise ventilation within the scheme, and - importantly - for that ventilation to be environmentally sound. Students are particularly enthusiastic about this requirement. This has led to the proposal for an earth duct, and for the budget to be adjusted to accommodate that. Specific feedback from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has informed the detail of the acoustic and lighting plans. Input from parents, arts and theatre groups, and other users of the hall has informed the proposals relating to accessibility and ease and comfort of use. It has also reinforced the importance of its multi-use nature and helped us to understand the demand for this facility in the local community, especially in the aftermath of Covid-19, when communities will be particularly keen for opportunities to come together to heal and grow through engaging in the arts and enjoying the heritage of the building.

The next step is to set up a Community-Led Management Board to using representatives from each of the stakeholder groups we have engaged so far. This organisation will lead the delivery of the refurbished hall as a community space, ensuring it is run in line with the needs of the local community and the various arts, music and theatre organisations, as well as enriching the experiences of our students, both now and for generations to come.

Above: images from online consultation events.

Right images of online survey and results.

Reed Watts Architects 21C Clerkenwell Road London EC1M 5RD

www.reedwatts.com

studio@reedwatts.com