

THEATRE IN OLDHAM

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE

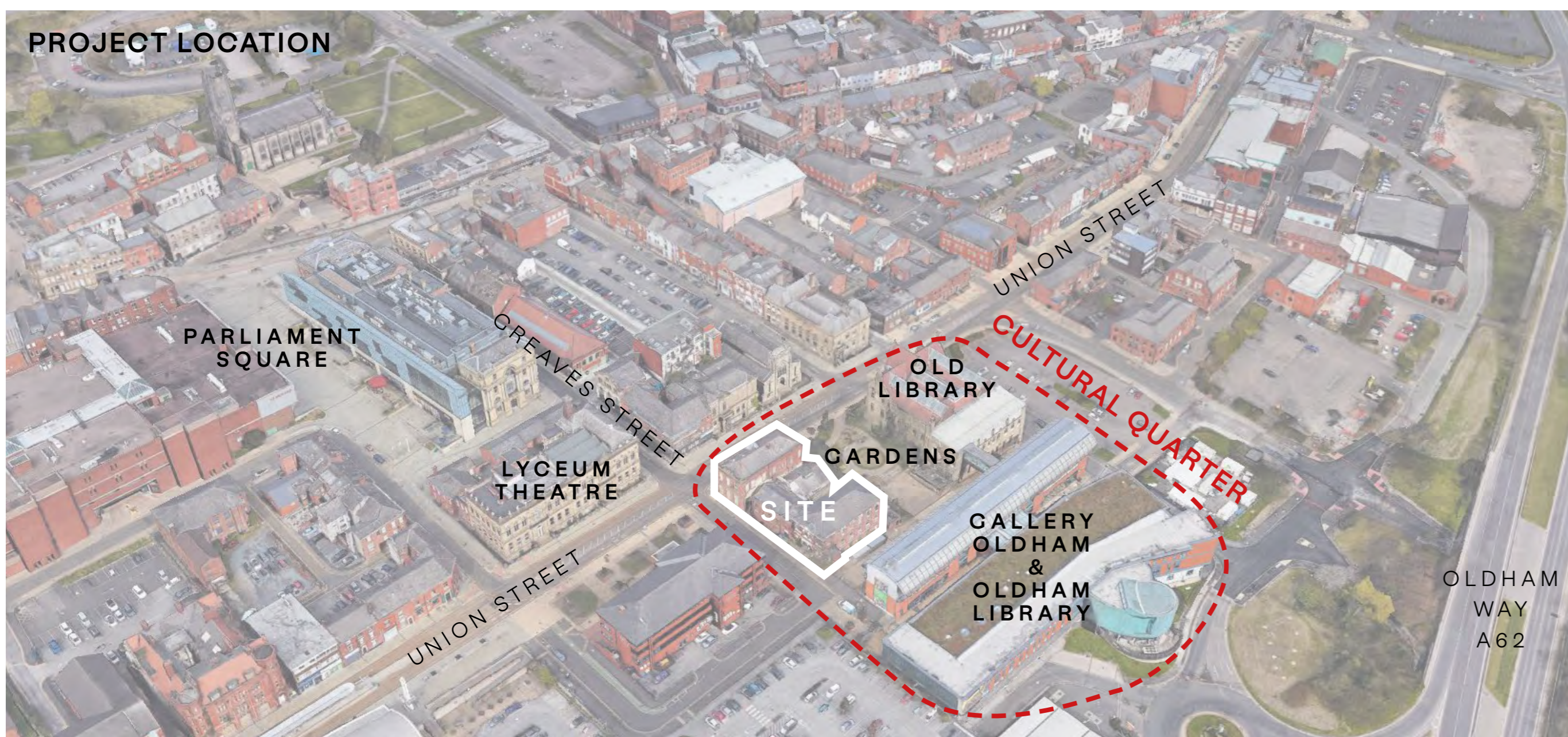
We would welcome any comments, please fill out a feedback form.



OLDHAM
Coliseum
THEATRE

Modern theatre and performance space for the future of theatre in Oldham.

A place that holds relevance, inclusion and service to its community at its core.



Oldham Council
Client



I'm really glad we can showcase more details on our proposals for the new theatre and get feedback input on them from our communities and theatre users. We asked what you wanted and you told us you want a modern and accessible venue where packed audiences can enjoy a variety of performances so take a look at how they're coming along and let us know what you think and what else it needs.

We are working hand-in-hand with the Oldham Coliseum, Arts Council England and other cultural partners to shape these plans and, together, provide a theatre to be proud of and one that can support the Coliseum's future as a thriving producing theatre company.

Arooj Shah - Oldham Council Leader

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Oldham Coliseum Theatre
Anchor Tenant

Oldham Coliseum Theatre's mission, as defined in its constitution, is "to promote, maintain, improve and advance education by encouraging the arts in general and the contemporary musical, fine arts and crafts in particular" and as the anchor tenant of Oldham Council's new purpose built-theatre, we are confident this space will allow us to continue to deliver on our mission.

As the current custodians of this much loved theatre company, we are charged by the people of Oldham to protect its rich history of producing and that we will. Once the new theatre opens on Creaves Street in 2026, we will continue this tradition and once again produce great drama, whether that is comedy, tragedy or romance; whilst nurturing new talent, new writing and telling stories that matter to all communities in Oldham and Greater Manchester.

Being a central part of the new Cultural Quarter means we can develop strategic partnerships and create new relationships that, combined with continued support from Oldham Council, Arts Council England and other stakeholders, will make Oldham once again a tour de force in the performing arts.

Duncan Craig OBE - Chair of Trustees



HISTORY & HERITAGE

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE



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A building that will be uniquely Oldham.

One that embodies the rich and diverse history and heritage of the town, its people, its streets and buildings.



Creative Reuse

Creaves Street



OLDHAM



UNION STREET



FRIENDS HOUSE



POSTAL BUILDING

Office, Oldham June 28/64 F. & G. Pollard Va



COLISEUM

As Oldham grew in wealth and importance so did Union Street, the project site location. The street became the site for many Victorian civic public buildings such as the town's first swimming baths, its first library and purpose built post office. Civic buildings are important to enhance sense of town identity and pride in place. The proposed Oldham Theatre will have a sense of civic identity that is undeniably Oldham.

The existing set of buildings on-site have an interesting history. A trio of buildings that once were the former Post Office, former Museum and former Quaker Friends House at various times in their past.

The proposals seek to retain and re-purpose the former Post Office and former Friends House as integrated parts of the Oldham Theatre. The former Museum is proposed to be removed to enable a new auditorium and associated spaces to be built.

The rich history of the existing buildings on-site and heritage of the Coliseum Theatre on Fairbottom Street will be celebrated and be integral to the design of the new building.



Former Postal Building (Grade II Listed)
Proposed Conserved & Re-used



Former Museum
Proposed Removed



Former Quaker Friends House
Proposed Retained & Re-purposed

CIVIC & SOCIAL

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE



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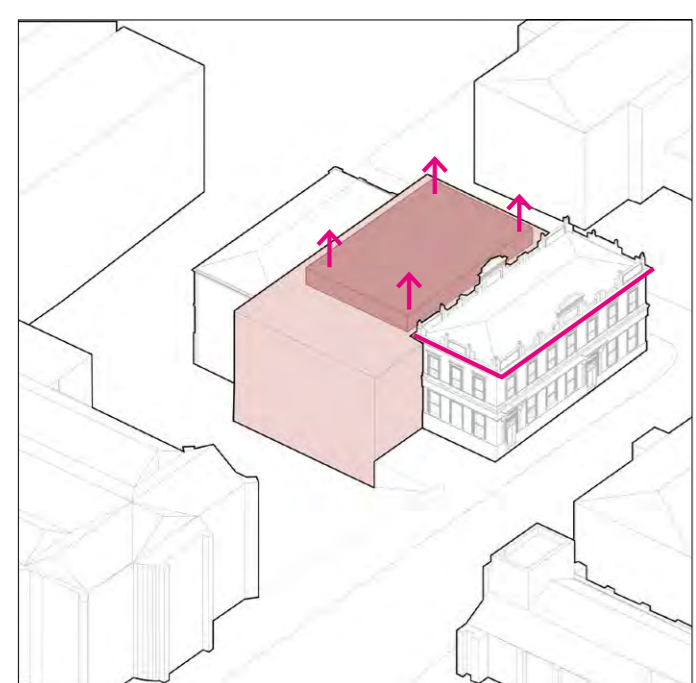
A design that is guided by the materials and colours of the architecture of Oldham and paired with contemporary theatre-inspired details and expression.



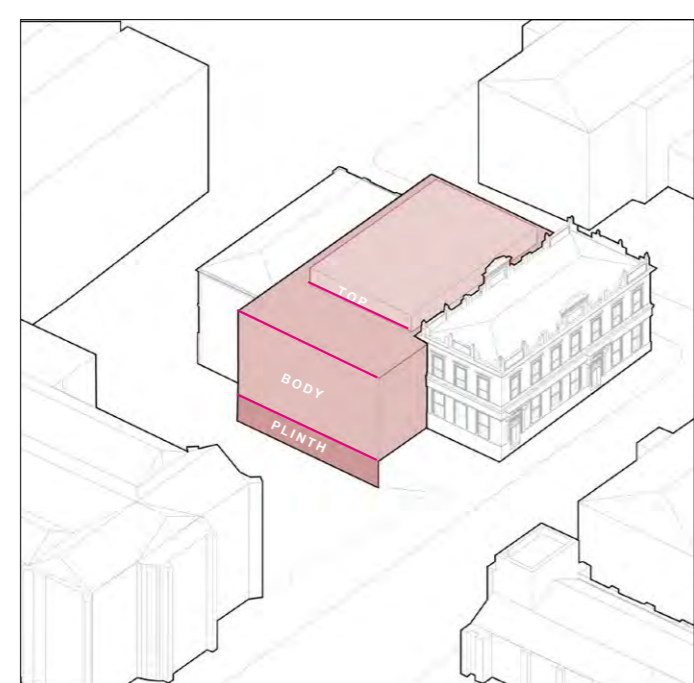
Visible to Passers-by

Union Street

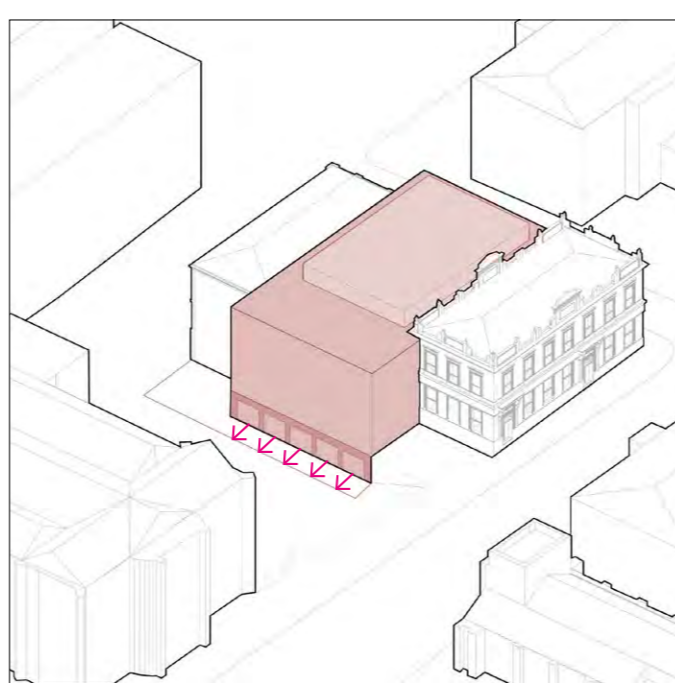
1
Appropriate Mass &
Auditorium Volume Expressed



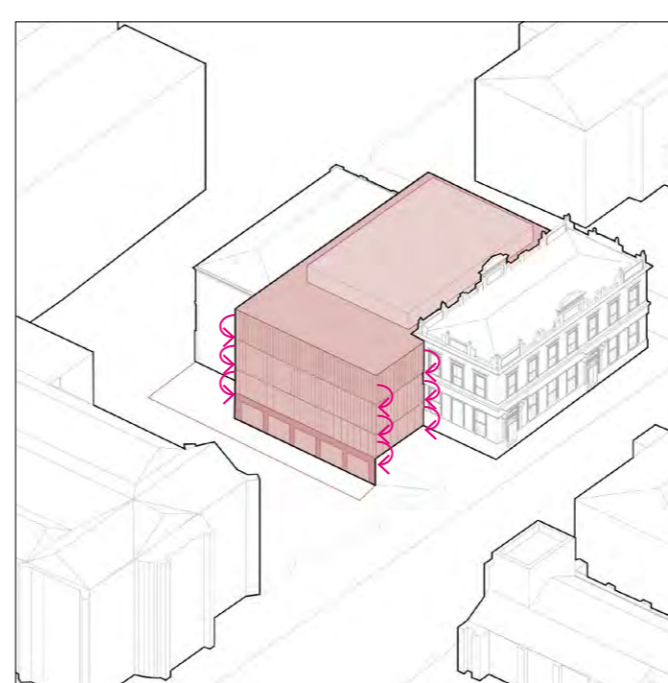
2
Contextual
Hierarchy



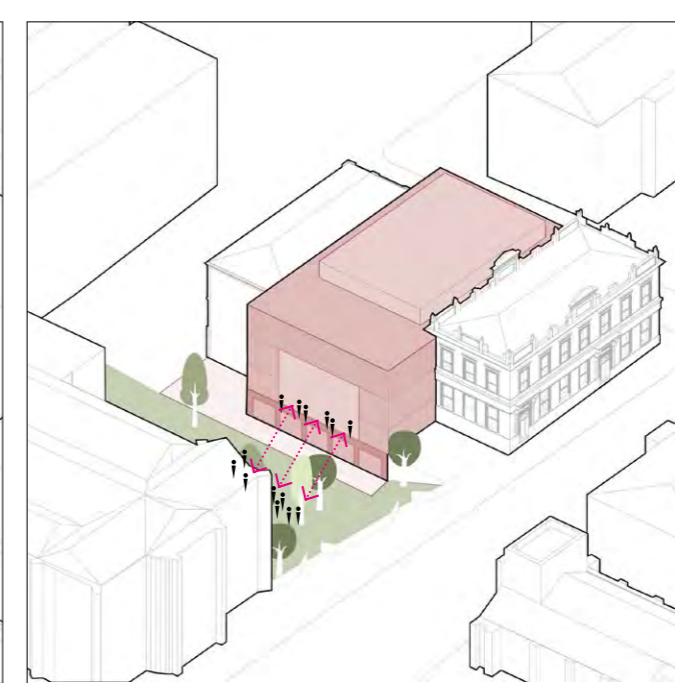
3
Garden
Permeability



4
Stage Curtain
Pleated Facade



5
Proscenium Arch
Feature Window



6
Theatre Canopy
Porch Entrance



OLDHAM CIVIC BUILDING EXAMPLES

OLDHAM SOCIAL BUILDING EXAMPLES

Oldham's Civic buildings including the former Town Hall, churches, banks, and others have predominantly stone façades with colours of creams, buffs and ivory types. Oldham's social buildings including social clubs, cinemas, public houses and others have predominant colours of reds, pinks and browns.

This proposal is an opportunity to link the new building to its context by taking the observed contextual patterns of building colour to inform the proposed building's facade. Using the proposed building's section and associated uses (civic theatre and social garden cafe bar) coupled with a contextual hierarchy strategy (plinth, body, top) a set of facade materiality decisions can be defined.

Inspired by theatre, the new building facade design re-interprets theatrical features (stage curtain pleats, proscenium arch) to create a bold, distinctive design that still sits comfortably in its heritage context.



CIVIC GARDENS ELEVATION

INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE



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A welcoming place for all.

Inclusive, equitable and accessible. A building where everyone has the opportunity to participate in high quality arts and cultural activity.

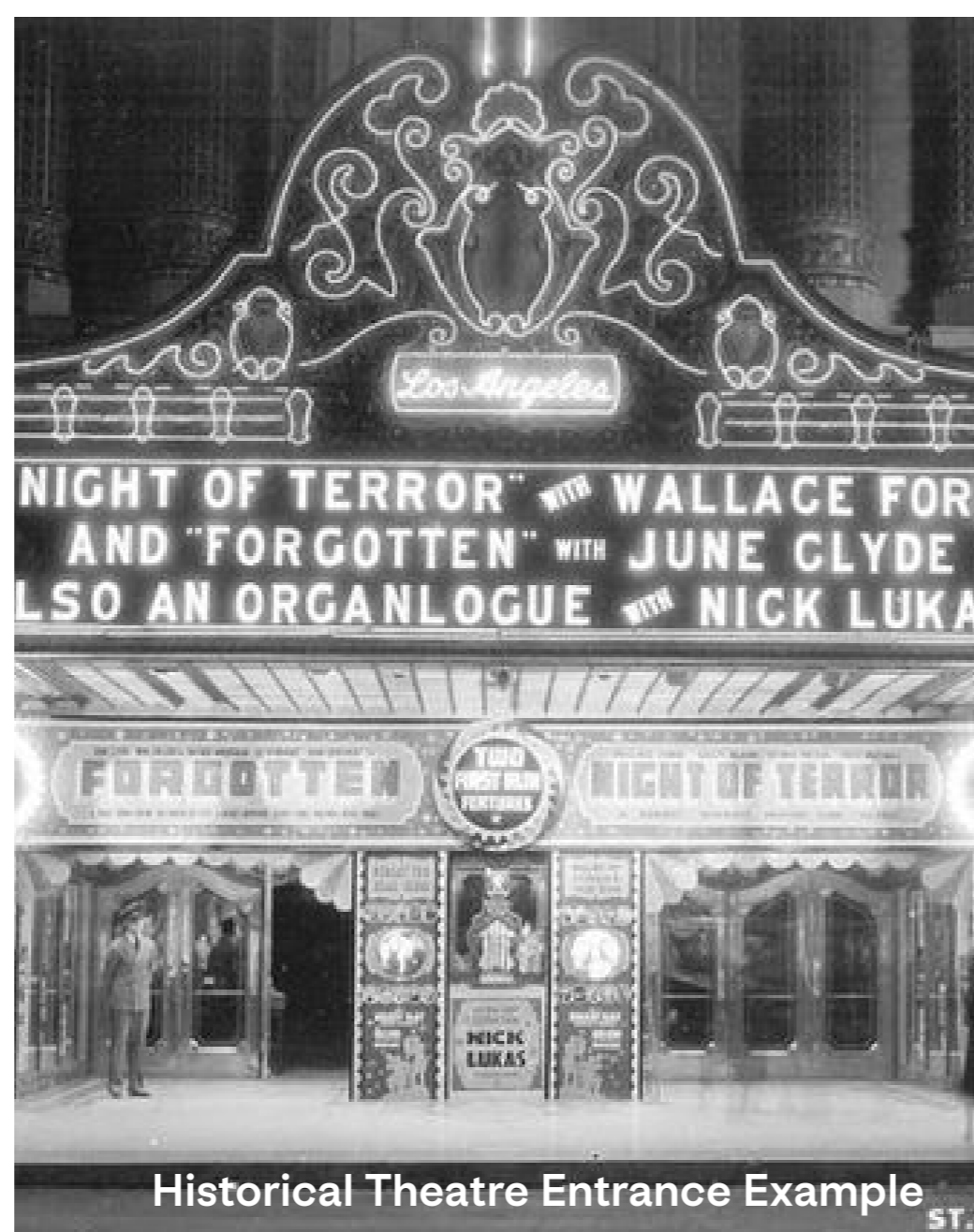


Sense of Arrival

Union Street Entrance



Coliseum Theatre Entrance



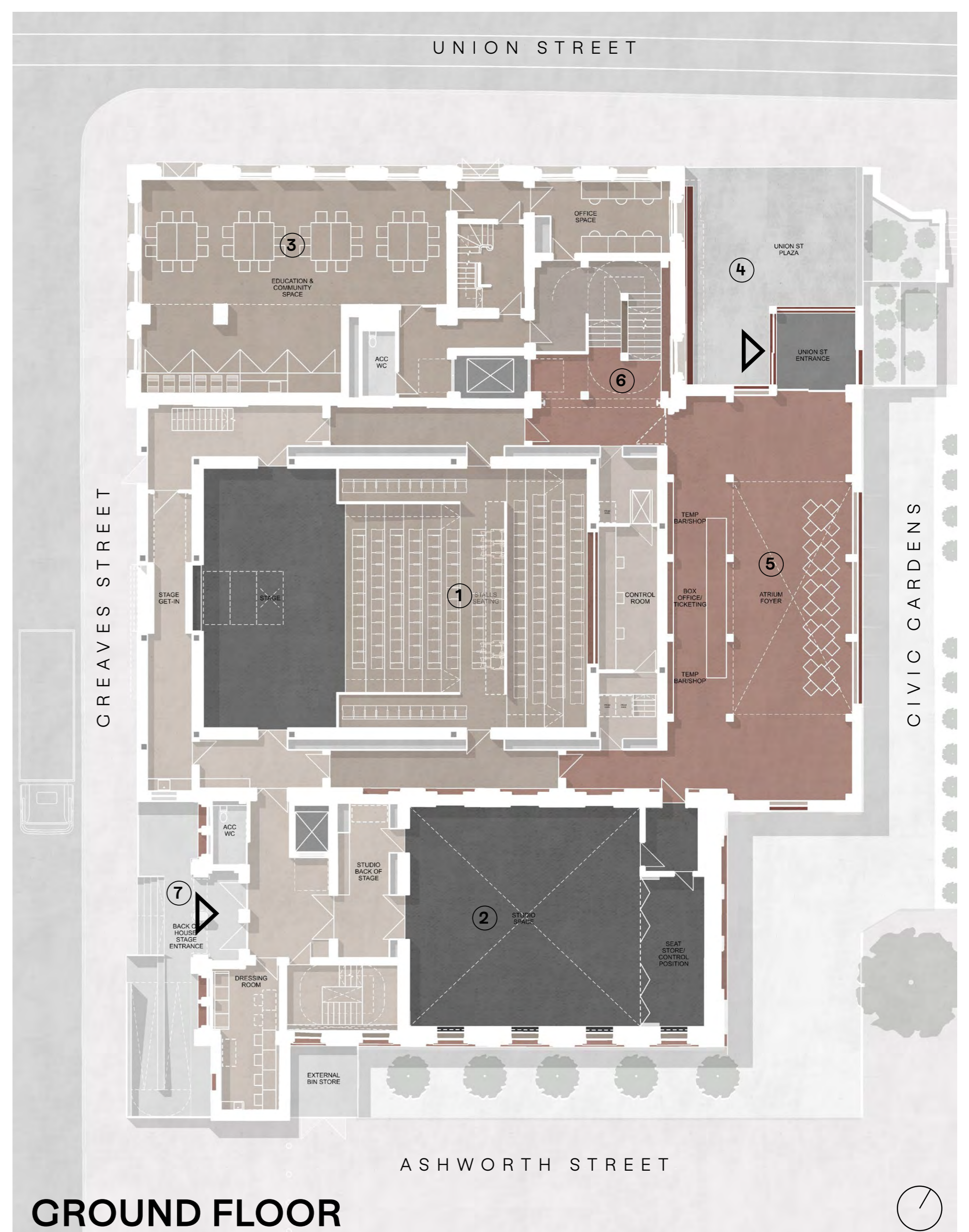
Historical Theatre Entrance Example

People will be met with a welcoming and fully accessible entrance experience to the building from Union Street. Influenced by theatre entrance canopies (including the Coliseum Theatre) of lights and drama the proposal seeks to create qualities to create a memorable sense of arrival. The space inside is owned by everyone, becoming a living room for the town with opportunities for the unexpected to happen. Envisaged as a creative hub for the town providing opportunity for collaboration and community. There may be theatrical performances that spill out of the auditorium and studio spaces with other creative activity visible throughout the day and into the night.

Life, animation and activity is planned to be spread throughout all areas and levels of the building providing the canvas for all types of creative practice and engagement to take place. Inclusive design is core to the design; as an example, toilet provision includes gender neutral, gender specific and accessible WCs. All parts of the building are accessible to all, including audiences, visitors, performers and technical staff; with even the main auditorium technical grid being wheelchair accessible (only a handful of theatres nationwide have this capability).

KEY

- 1 MAIN AUDITORIUM
- 2 STUDIO SPACE
- 3 EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SPACE
- 4 UNION STREET ENTRANCE PLAZA
- 5 ATRIUM FOYER
- 6 FEATURE STAIR
- 7 STAGE DOOR



GROUND FLOOR



SOCIAL

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE

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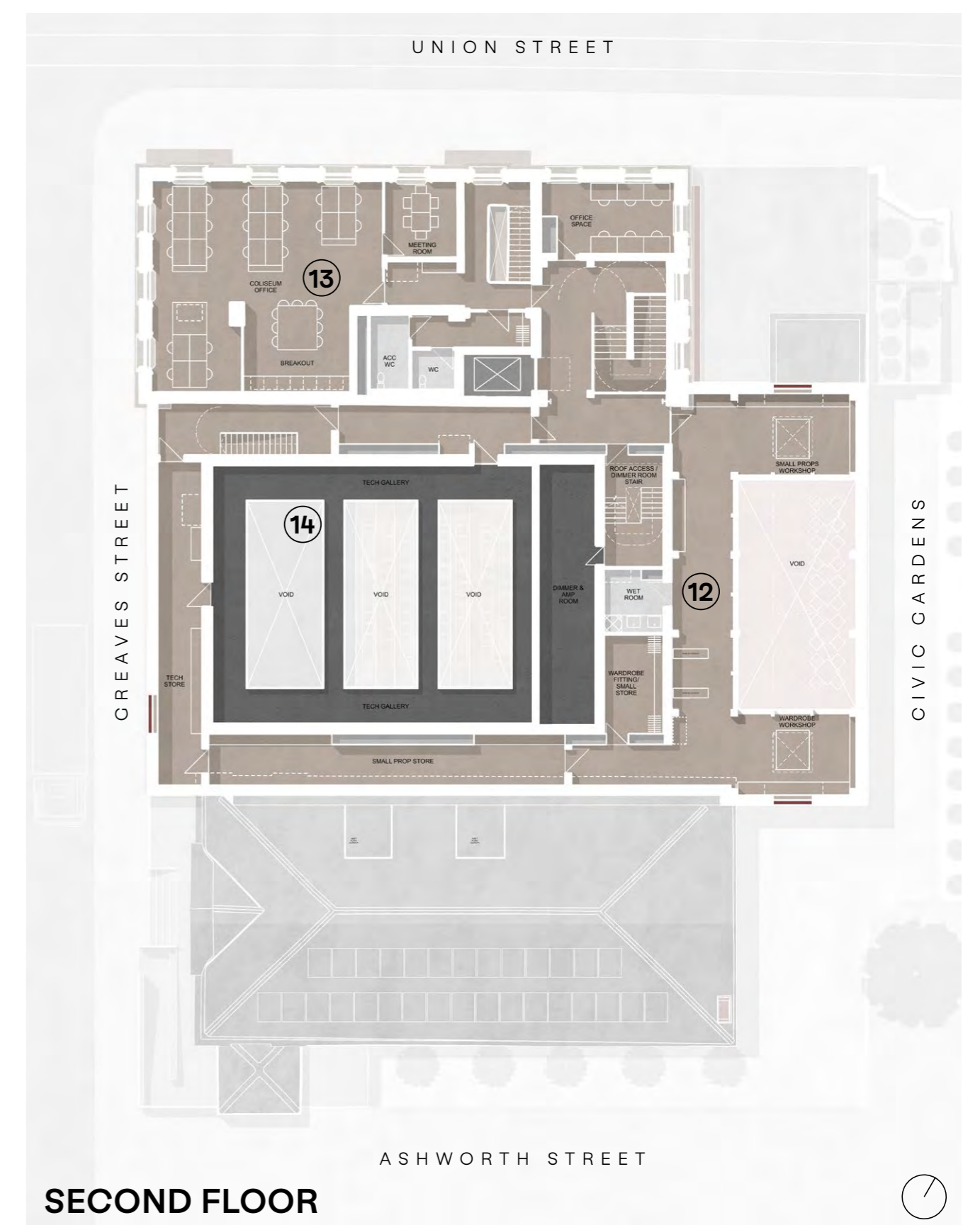


OLDHAM
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THEATRE

**Like a living room
for the town.**

**A place open
from morning
into the night. A
hang out spot.
Meet and make
friends.**

**To eat and drink
quality, local
produce. Enjoy
arts & culture.**



Entering into a triple-height atrium space that has a lively buzz, a creative vibe, a pulsating energy that is distinctly Oldham. The dramatic top lit space has an architectural drama that only enhances the exciting experience of visiting the building.

Inspired by the original Coliseum, Myer's Grand Circus wooden building (on Henshaw Street), the proposed building adopts a timber-framed structure to introduce a warmth to the foyer entrance space and is a low embodied carbon solution. The triple height space is a light-filled and uplifting with the uppermost floor acting as a workshop gallery with mannequins and props visible through internal glazed windows.

The gardens become central to that experience. Visible through the large proscenium feature window, the gardens and its verdant greenery become stage backdrop to the life and vibrancy inside.

KEY

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | MAIN AUDITORIUM | 5 | ATRIUM FOYER | 10 | DRESSING ROOMS |
| 2 | STUDIO SPACE | 6 | FEATURE STAIR | 11 | GREEN ROOM |
| 3 | EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SPACE | 7 | STAGE DOOR | 12 | THEATRE WORKSHOPS (PROPS / WARDROBE) |
| 4 | UNION STREET ENTRANCE PLAZA | 8 | GARDEN CAFE BAR | 13 | OFFICES |
| | | 9 | TOILET HUB | 14 | ACCESSIBLE TECHNICAL GRID |

SUSTAINABILITY

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE

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OLDHAM
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THEATRE

An exemplar theatre building of low energy, carbon conscious design with sustainability being placed at its heart.

Future-proof, durable, and responsible design.



Morning coffee

Garden Cafe Bar



Health + Happiness

Building is being designed to provide a happy and healthy place to visit and work with comfortable and accessible internal and external environments throughout.



Equity + Local Community

The whole building, including even the technical grid gallery in the auditorium, will be fully accessible. Inclusion of gender neutral WCs alongside gender specific WCs offers an equitable experience. A dedicated space for local people to use for education & community is provided.



Culture + Community

Specific dedicated education and community space will be provided in the former Postal Building for use by local groups and schools. Provision for flexible working spaces throughout the building for local creatives to make use of building.



Land + Nature

Interaction with Civic Garden space in front of building will offer opportunity for bio-diverse and local planting schemes with wildlife habitats to be integrated. External working areas may be planned into garden design.



Sustainable Water

Low water-use fittings to be used throughout the building. Rainwater attenuation and SUDs will be addressed with associated tank and strategies in garden design.

Local + Sustainable Food



The building food and beverage offer in the garden cafe bar and other servery spaces will prioritise local and regional produce with a celebration of health and seasonality being reflected and celebrated in the food offer.

Travel + Transport



The project location has excellent public transport links with a Metrolink tram and bus stops being a few hundred yards away. Shower rooms and other associated support will promote cycle use by building occupants.

Materials + Products



Where possible locally sourced, low embodied carbon, recycled or re-used materials are targeted for use throughout the scheme to support the low carbon agenda for the project. Low maintenance and durability will be a key part of material selection criteria.

Zero Waste



Re-use and recyclability will be important to the project throughout. From specification to construction and right through to in-use operations of recycling and food waste strategies.

Low Carbon Energy



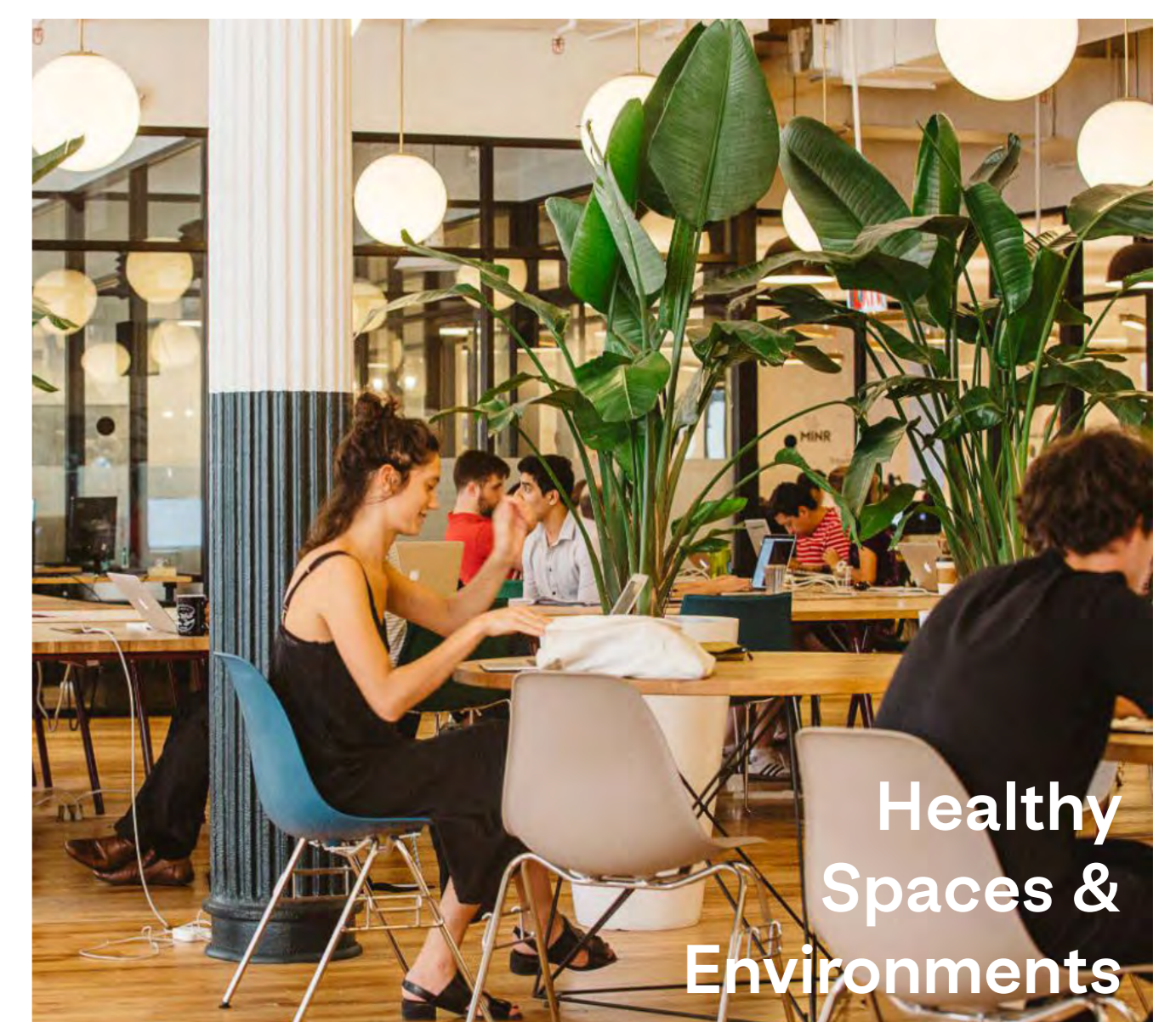
Operational energy target of Display Energy Certificate (DEC) rating of A. Supported by ambitious thermal and airtightness performance targets for both new build and retrofit elements of the project.

The Garden bar cafe is a welcoming location at garden level where life, animation and culture can spill out into the gardens. It will become a second Living Room space in the building with extended opening hours throughout the year.

A home for installations, small curated events, intimate gigs, community performance and conversation. With a great cafe it can become a destination beyond the arts crowd designed to be the type of venue where you can relax, work on your laptop with a cup of coffee, hold a meeting, meet a few friends and have a light lunch.

It can then be transformed into an indoor / outdoor vibrant bar of an evening into the night serving food with a range of affordable drinks including craft beers, wines and spirits, and classic cocktails.

The gardens are a key part of the experience of the space, with views of seasonality, weather and colour all adding to create a unique and dynamic internal space.



Healthy Spaces & Environments

THEATRE

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A beautiful, intimate and flexible theatre auditorium capable of accommodating 300+ guests. Echoes and influences of the Coliseum Theatre will be engrained throughout the space.

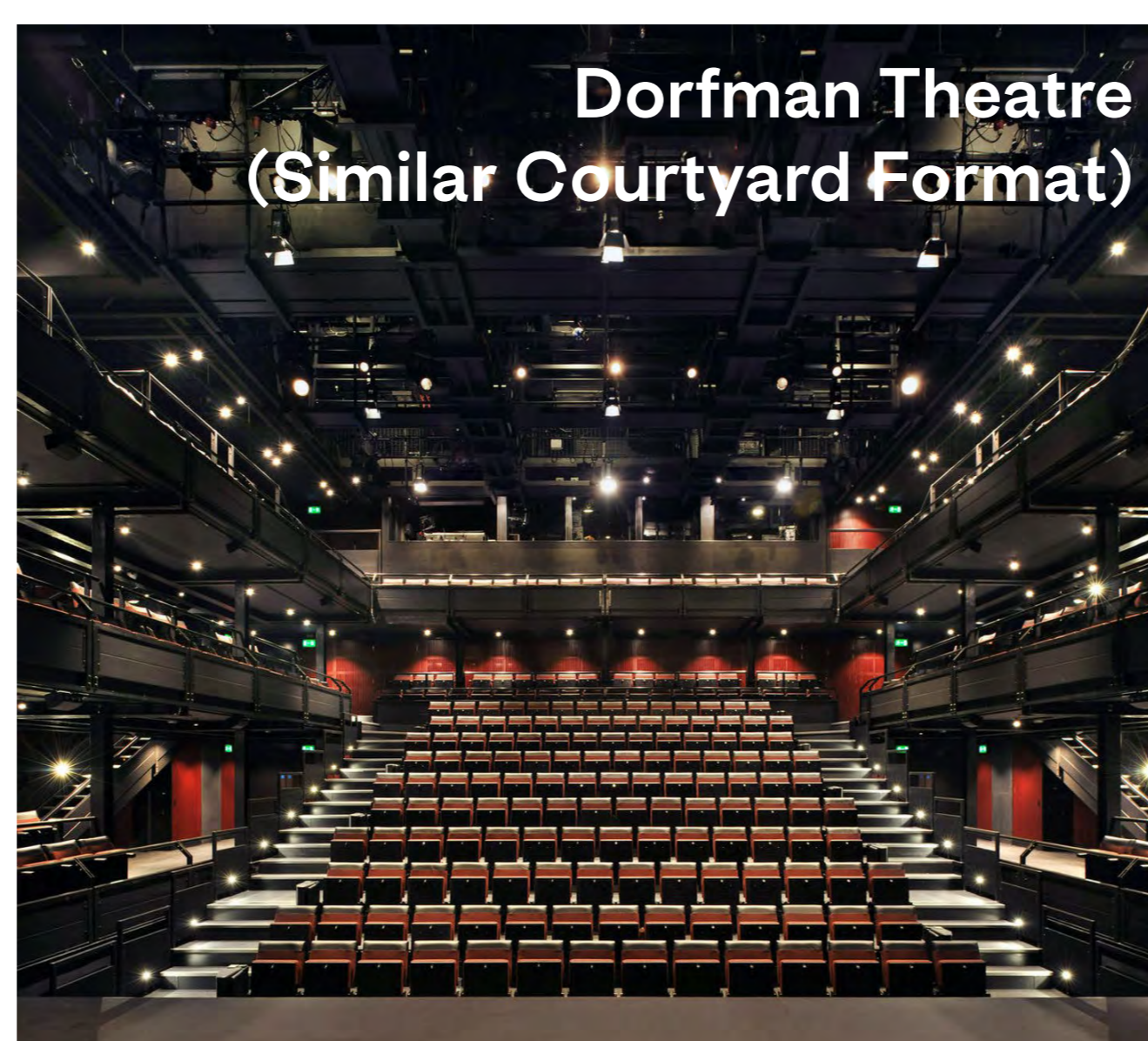


Arriving for a show

Main Auditorium



Coliseum Theatre



Dorfman Theatre
(Similar Courtyard Format)

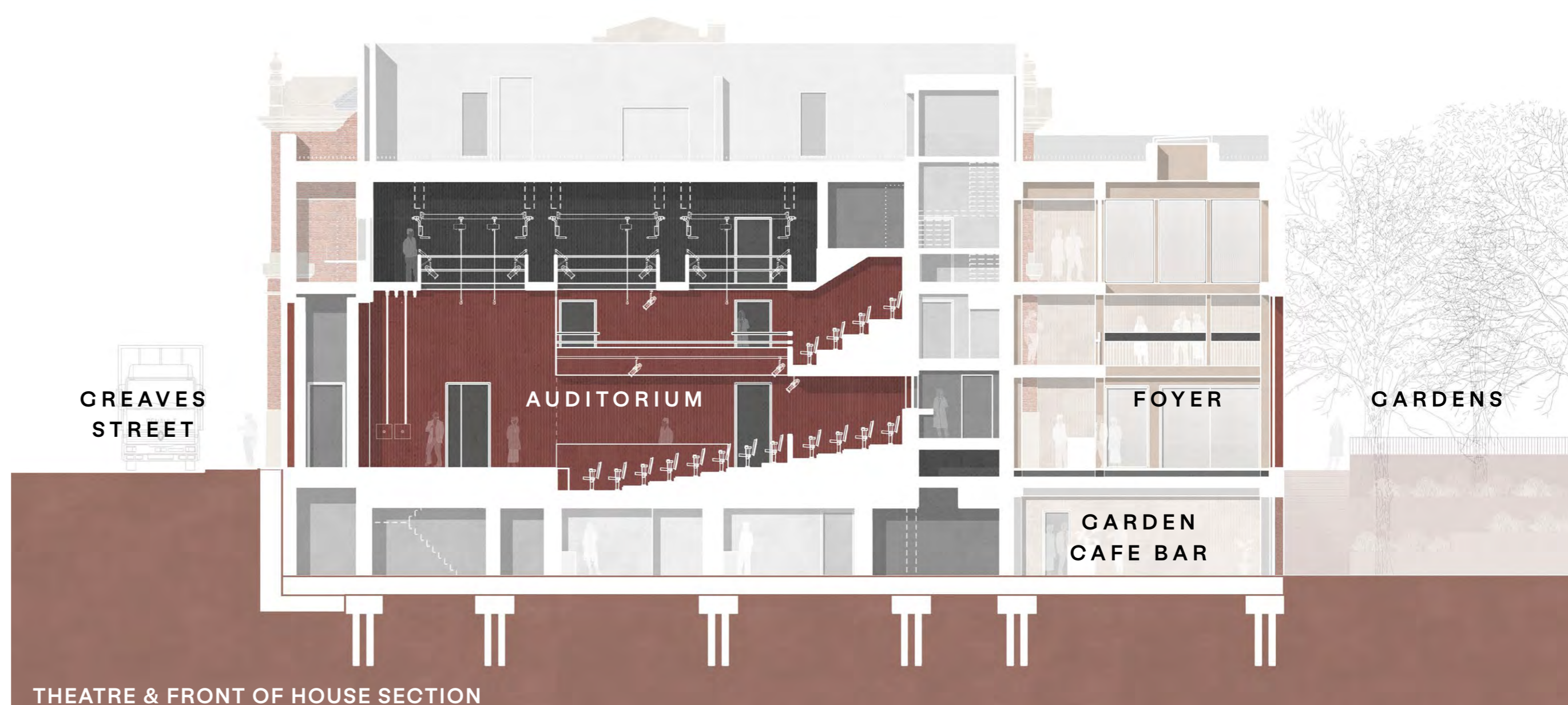


Kiln Theatre
(Similar Courtyard Format)

The 'Courtyard' theatre format has main stalls/ circle seats facing the stage with seating galleries running perpendicular along the sides. The primary format will be 'end-on' but the auditorium can offer flexibility in terms of audience and staging adaptability to create 'traverse', 'in-the-round' and 'promenade' style performances.

The space will have a feeling of specialness and create a quality experience for theatre-goers. This specialness will be accumulated in many aspects of the space including the look and feel of the seats, the atmosphere created by lighting, the wall finishes creating a backdrop; all will be carefully considered in the design.

The existing Coliseum theatre auditorium has a strong sense of place and character which is part of the core experience for returning audiences and flavours the spirit of the building. A re-interpretation and integration into the design of the new building will include some of the key ingredients (colours, motifs and spaces) from the Coliseum Theatre auditorium on Fairbottom Street, to ensure the culture, character, spirit and history is taken into the new building.



THEATRE & FRONT OF HOUSE SECTION

PERFORMANCE

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE

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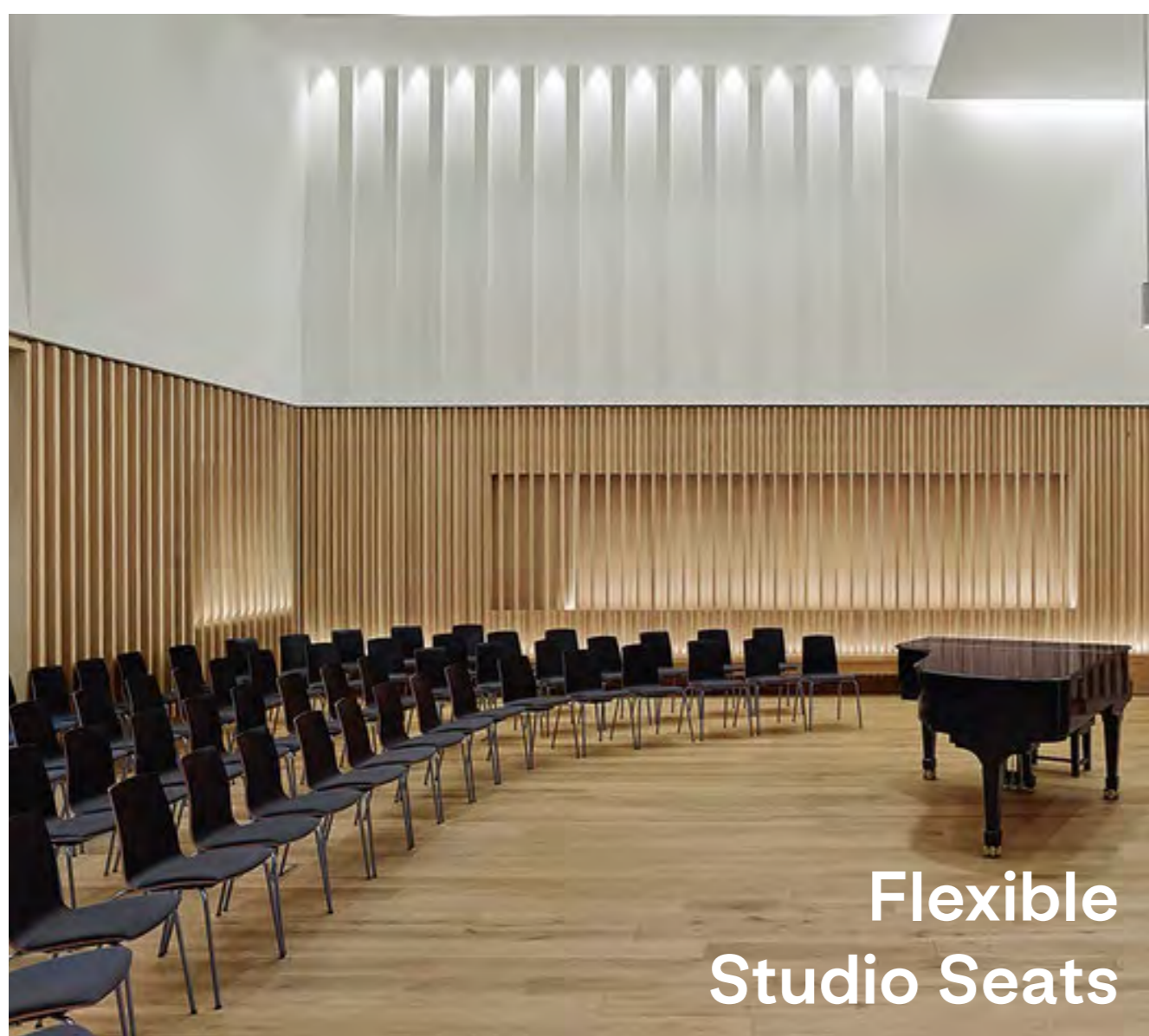
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Coliseum
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A unique 120+ seat second performance space will return a double-height public space to the former Friends House. Other spaces throughout the building will be enabled for performance.

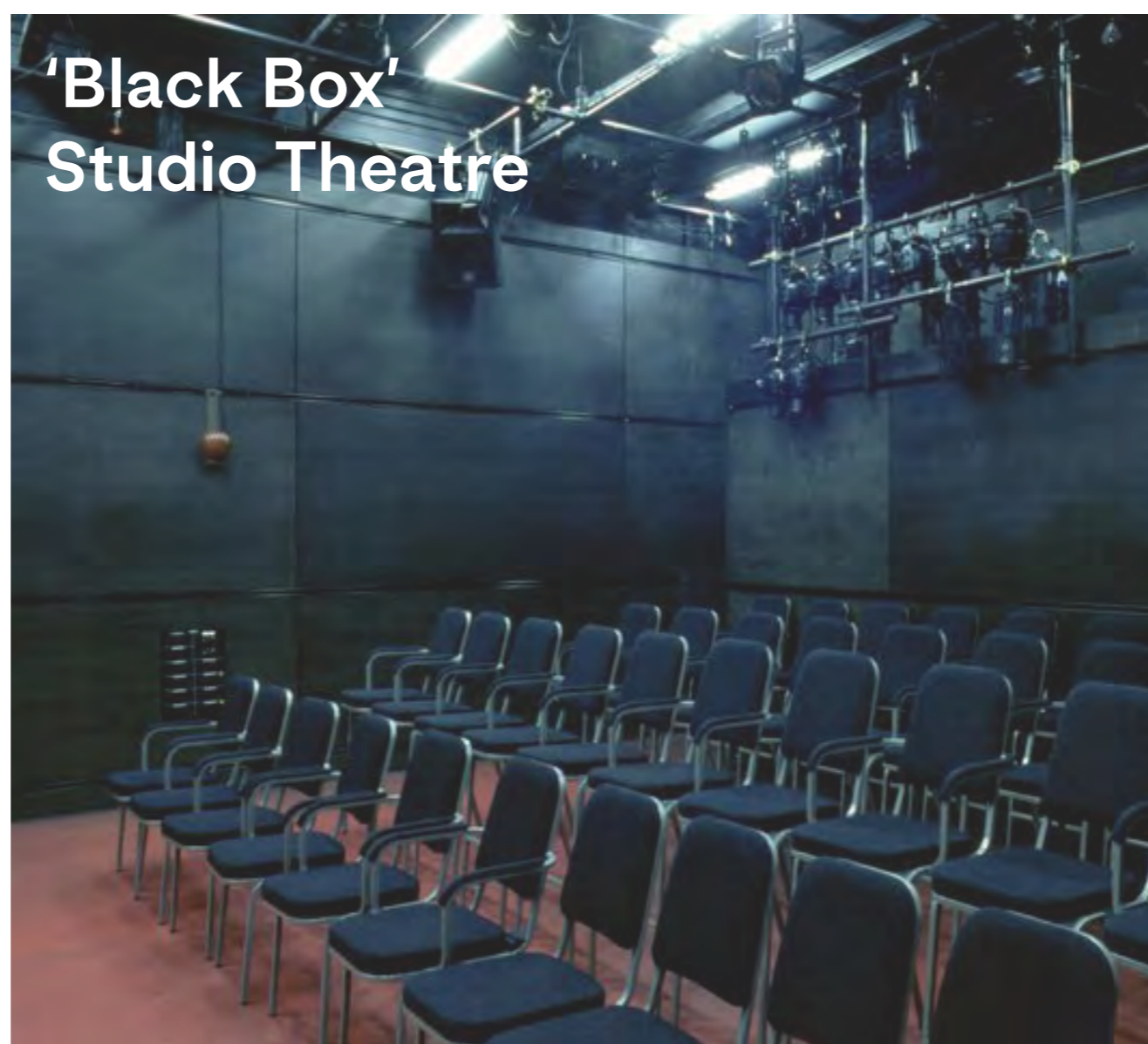


Rehearsals

Studio Space



Flexible Studio Seats



'Black Box' Studio Theatre

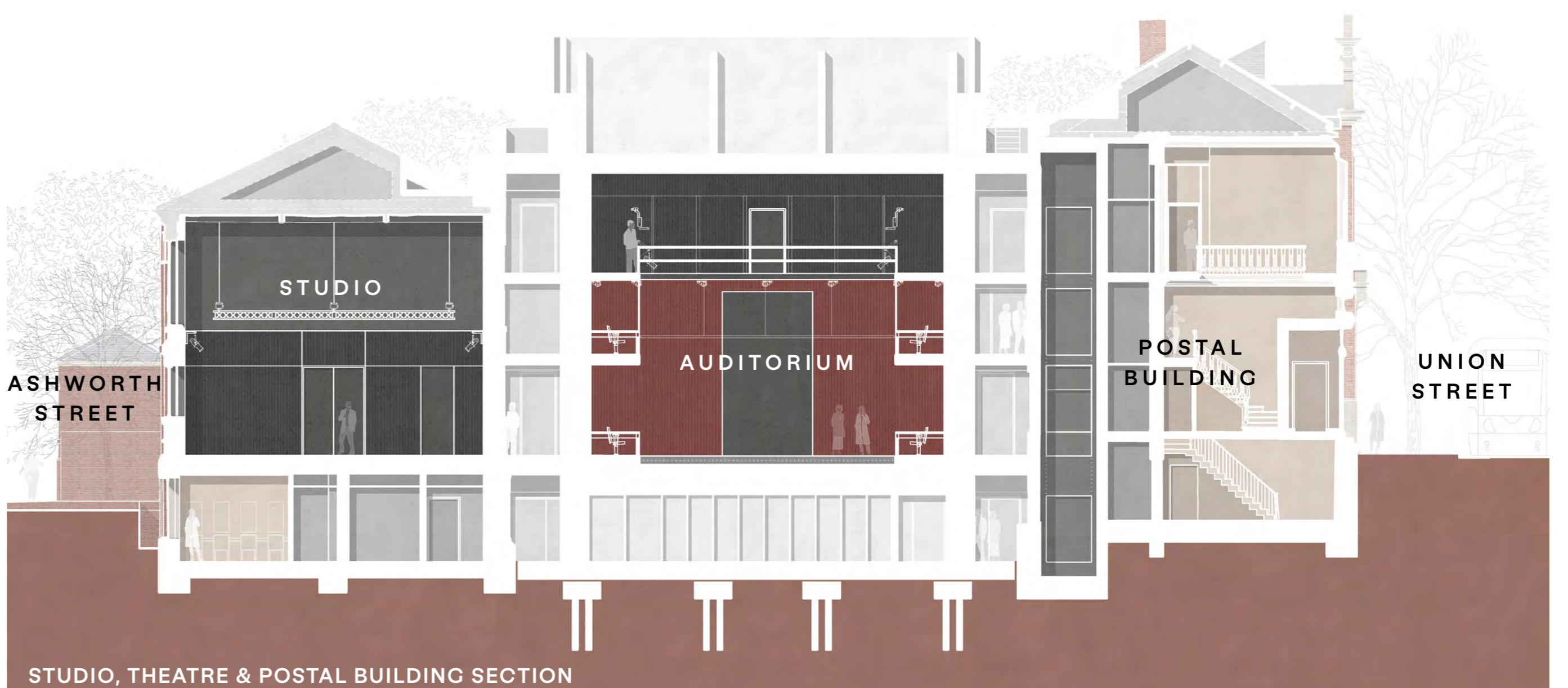


Quaker-Inspired Joinery

The Studio will become the home for small scale touring, a range of other art forms, artist development work, ticketed education events and work in progress events. The studio is proposed as flexible seating with a series of four sizes of stackable chairs. This would offer the option of end-on, traverse, in-the-round, corner and thrust format performances. The space also incorporates a small balcony to the space at first floor level that offers either a control area or additional seating opportunities (c.20 seats) depending on the performance format required.

This space will be programmed alongside The Garden Cafe Bar and Education & Community space that offers further opportunities for developing artists, comedians, musicians and community groups.

Influenced by the architecture of Quaker Meeting Spaces the Studio space will be purposefully simple with elegant timber panelling that will provide acoustic treatment to first floor level. The original decorative finials to the roof trusses will be visible and add to the character of the space.



STUDIO, THEATRE & POSTAL BUILDING SECTION

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY

PROPOSALS FOR A NEW OLDHAM THEATRE

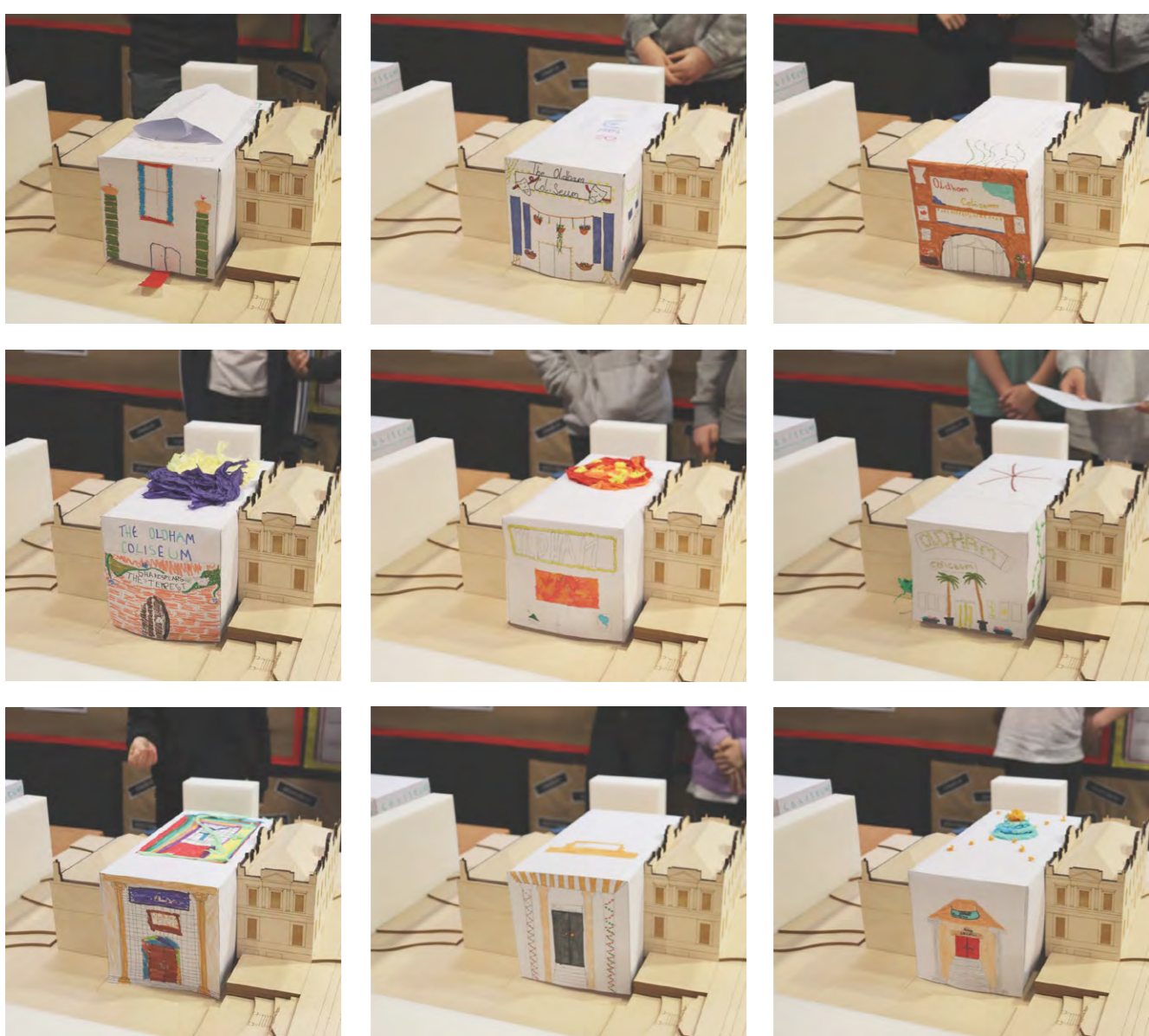


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**For the people
and community
of Oldham.**

**The building
will have a
dedicated
flexible space
for a range of
artist, education
and community
led programmes.**



Oldham Theatre Designs by local children



Design



Collaborate

The new theatre will have co-production at its heart; delivering inspiring artistic collaborations that stretch the imaginations and skills of children, young people and community groups in Oldham and across Greater Manchester. We want this to be a flagship centre of education and arts for the community.

During the design process, we have engaged with many of the future users, audiences and communities of the building. As part of the consultation and development of the design thus far, we have conducted several workshops with local school children, Oldham College students and community groups.

Over several sessions, we have engaged with over 100 local people with fun, interactive sessions that offered the opportunity to design and/or define what the future building could become from their own perspectives.

We hope that we can continue these conversations to create a truly special place together.



Conversation



Discussion