

Our Vision for a new Community Cinema

The Ladywell Playtower is a wonderful piece of Civic Victorian Architecture and our proposal seeks to enhance and preserve it by finding a new use which will enable it to play an active part in the community for many years to come. We propose to refurbish the main building and to use the theatrical pool hall space for one large cinema screen - the remainder of the existing building will provide ancillary spaces with a cafe, bar, event room, exhibition space and community rooms. To the rear of the site on the footprint of the demolished second pool hall - we will construct a further four cinema screens in a new extension. Alongside this will be a thorough landscaping proposal for the whole site including a new route which will link Ladywell Fields with Ladywell Road, placing the Playtower at the heart of what could become a new cultural quarter for Ladywell.

The revitalised building will incorporate the following spaces

- 5 screen cinema comprising up to approximately 620 seats.
- The main pool hall will be converted to create 1 large cinema screen whilst preserving the theatrical roof structure visibly within the screen volume.
- 4 additional screens in a new build extension on the footprint of the former second class pool hall, since demolished to the rear.
- All screens will be fully accessible and have wheelchair spaces.
- A café of around 100m² on the ground floor opening out to the courtyard
- A ground floor multi use room which can function for dining or events
- A bar to the front of the main pool hall allowing the front windows and doors long since closed to be reopened looking providing views out and in from Ladywell Road and bringing light into the space. The bar will have a private external terrace to the front of the site and a balcony on the first floor which will be open to the roof trusses where the rooflight lantern will bring light from 3 storeys above and views of the sky.
- The tower will have a new use with a spiral stair inserted within, creating a grand staircase to serve the first floor spaces, along with a new lift. It could also provide a second floor viewing platform.
- On the first floor there will be access to the 4 new screens to the rear of the site.
- Screen 5 – being the smallest – will be suitable for private hire and will be able to be used for children's parties, community screenings etc, and could be used in conjunction with the community rooms or independently.
- There will be 3 interconnecting flexible spaces on the first floor – which can be used together or as 1 large space and will be suitable to provide a variety of functions: meeting space; yoga classes; dance space; exhibitions; art groups; school groups, private hire, and any number of other activities.
- Supporting spaces including WC's, kitchen, staff room, managers room, projection rooms, buggy store and storage areas are all included and vital to ensuring the smooth operation of the building
- An extensive landscaping scheme will be implemented between the edge of the building and the perimeter of the site including outside seating areas for the bar and café, mature planting to provide a green barrier (as well as a barrier to noise) from the road. Plentiful cycle parking will be installed along with a lit path from Ladywell Road to Ladywell Fields.

As much of the historic fabric will be preserved as possible in order to allow for the viable redevelopment, and therefore preservation, of the building for future generations. The high significance spaces and walls of the historic structure are to be retained and refurbished and will be able to be appreciated within the new context of the cinema. Where possible, tiled finishes will also be preserved to reflect the buildings' past life as a pool. The new build extension will be masonry in its exterior finish, but subservient to the historic structure in scale and decoration. Planting will be grown up around it to integrate it into the natural environment. Future possible reuse of the Mortuary and Coroners Court can build on work to the Playtower and create a pedestrianised courtyard, perhaps to act as an outdoor meeting place for the community which could function as a market, outdoor performance space, play area or lunch destination and seating area. Making the most of the Playtower's strategic location will encourage the redevelopment of this suite of buildings into a new cultural destination.