

# 11 Extracts

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## Extract 1: English Heritage, Culture and Entertainment Buildings Selection Guide, Heritage Protection Department, March 2007

### Cinemas

Although film was first exhibited in Britain in 1895, it remained the preserve of fairground booths, converted shops, or theatre 'turns'. Things changed following the 1909 Cinematograph Act, which was passed in response to a number of fires (film being highly flammable), and to control shows for children and on Sundays. Almost overnight a new and numerous building type emerged. Design was quickly standardised, and some 4,000 cinemas were built before 1914. Early cinemas are distinguished by a narrow, high frontage, often quite decorative and with an arched entrance way, which would lead via a small foyer to a long, narrow hall with a barrel-vaulted roof and decorated with pilasters, perhaps with a balcony. More elaborate versions might be combined with another entertainment such as live shows or roller-skating.

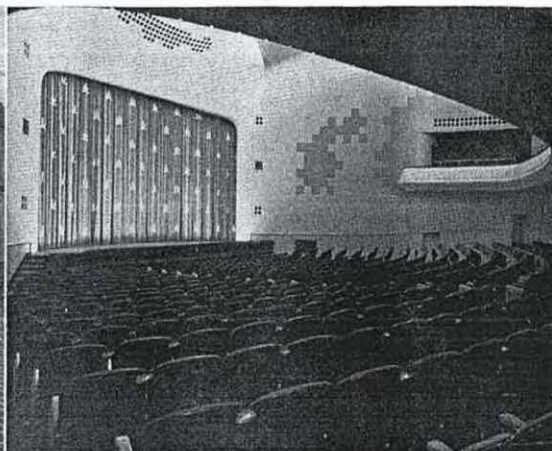
Another 4,000 were built in 1920-40, many replacing earlier cinemas that passed into other uses as shops and garages. Major change came in 1927 with the emergence of the large cinema chains, enhanced by the arrival of sound a year later: household names included Gaumont, ABC, and Odeon, the first Odeon being built by Oscar Deutsch in 1930. This was an age of mass entertainment and avid film-viewing, and the new cinemas displayed an architecture of glamour and escapism that was entirely appropriate. Margate's Dreamland (1935, by Leathart & Granger) fronted an entertainment complex with a modernist, continental-influenced cinema in brick, with an eye-catching fin tower. Internal decoration too could be very special, as in the Gothic fantasy of the Granada, Tooting, South London (1931, by Theodore Komisarjevsky). The most important cinemas, however, which looked to the entirely new form of cinema architecture in the United States with big balconies and bigger foyers, simply do not survive intact. Post-1945 cinemas are rarely of interest and few survive in any case. Most were built as part of office developments as non-flammable film made it possible to combine cinema with other uses, usually by building a cinema in the basement. Older cinemas underwent frequent sub-division as well.

Many of the same considerations for listing theatres apply to cinemas (see Select Bibliography, English Heritage 1999, below), but instead of stage equipment it is worth noting the survival of a cinema organ in situ. Completeness is important, although earlier fabric may survive hidden behind later alterations, such as screens. Exceptionally, once-common features such as an external pay box may survive. Given the numbers built, selection is required, but a surviving exterior with particularly good decoration and a fine canopy may well be enough to make a pre-1914 cinema listable on its own.

Architectural quality and extent of alteration will be key considerations for later cinemas. Reorganisation (precipitated by government to bolster the home film-making industry) in 1927-8 led to standardisation and a new generation of cinemas for sound films: large, sometimes with tearooms and organs, usually classical in style, but occasionally moderne. They need to be assessed in the context of their chain: each had distinctive styles and in-house architects and designers, to which the gazetteers by Allen Eyles are useful aids (see 'Select Bibliography'). Post-war cinemas are usually part of larger office developments and their inclusion depends on the architectural quality of the whole.



Stalls Bar



Auditorium

Acoustic Tiles—Newalls Insulation Co. Ltd.  
External Rendering—Clark & Fenn Ltd.  
Lighting—Troughton & Young Ltd.  
Main Contractor—Kirk & Kirk Ltd.

36/6  
Architecture  
Illustrated



ODEON  
CINEMA

ST. HELIER,  
JERSEY

Circuit  
Management  
Association Ltd.

JUNE, 1956

31

116/3057

466 The Architects' Journal for October 16, 1952

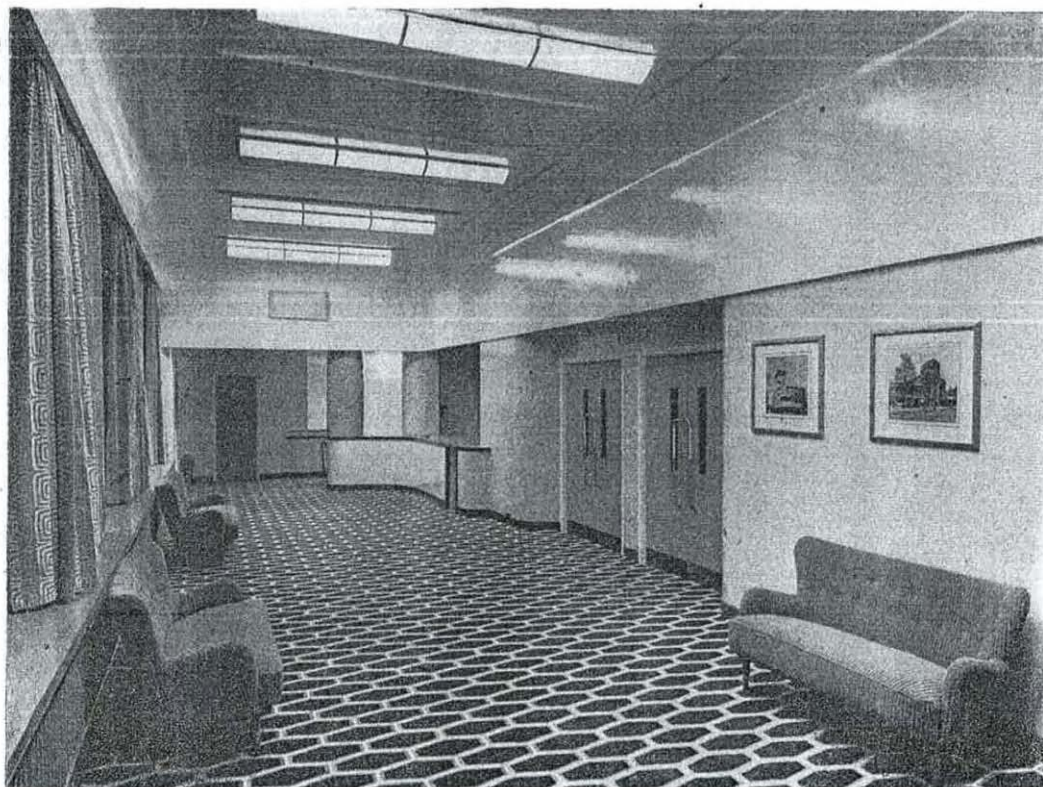


### CINEMA

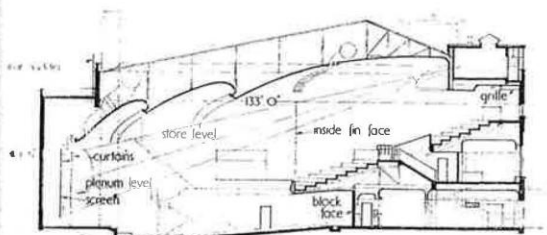
in ST. HELIER, JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS  
designed by T. P. BENNETT and SON

The Odeon, Jersey, is the first new cinema designed and built in the British Isles since 1939. As only a moderate seating capacity was required by the clients, the architect decided to put a high proportion of seats in the circle. Out of a total of 1,359 seats, 640 are in the stalls and 719 in the circle. This ensures an unobstructed view of the screen from all seats and also a clear view of the auditorium for the majority of the cinemagoers.

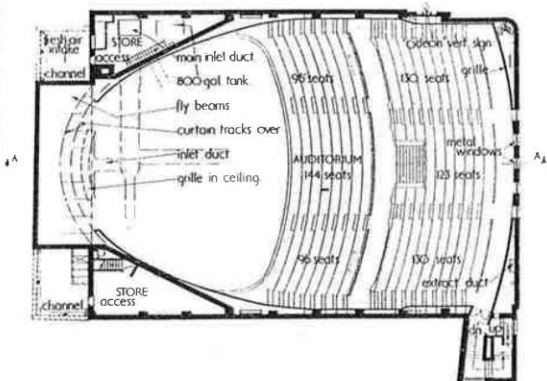
*The circle foyer.*



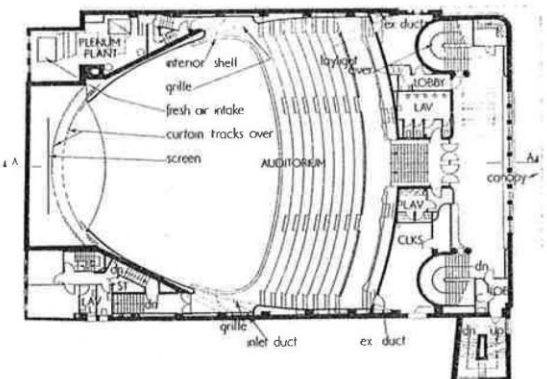
Right, the auditorium, looking towards the stage. Below, right, the bar, which leads off the entrance foyer. The main surfaces are coloured pale gold and the carpet is red.



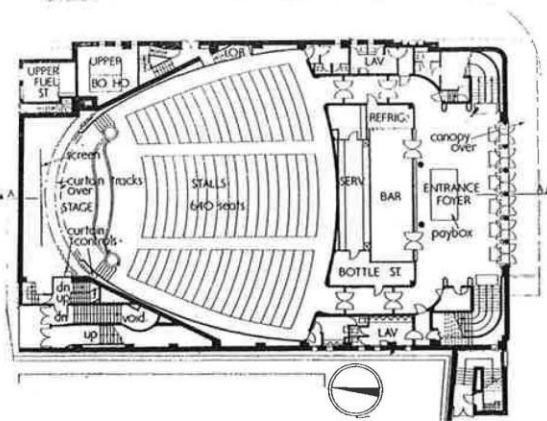
Section A-A



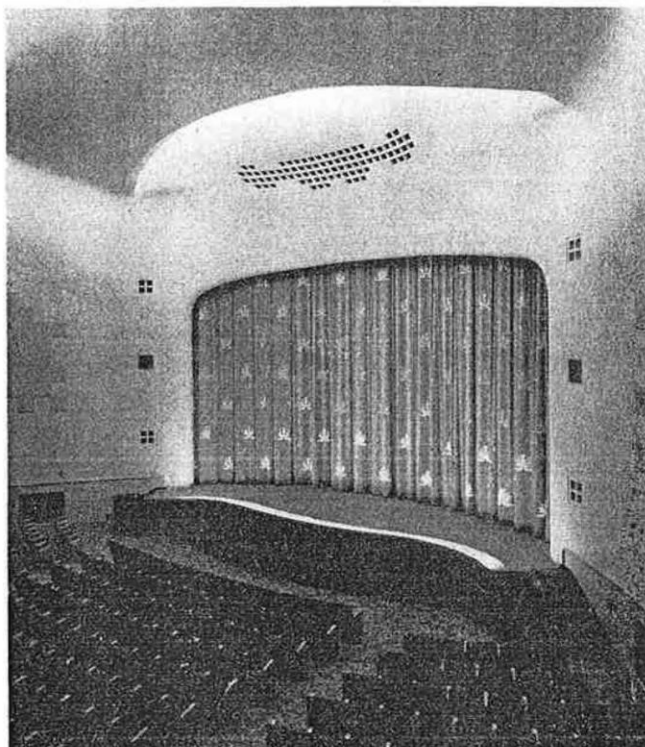
Circle plan



Circle foyer plan



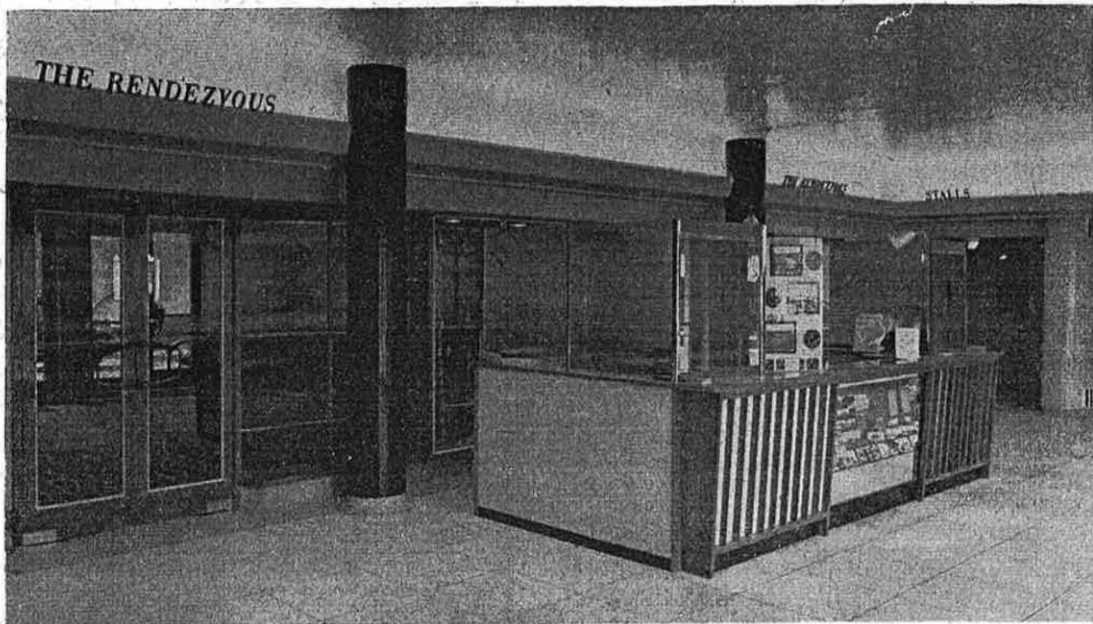
Ground floor plan [Scale: 1/8" = 1' 0"]



SITE.—The site was relatively restricted and the seating has been made to extend from the inside of the external wall on the south to the minimum distance from the opposite wall, compatible with good site lines and the screen.

PLAN.—Although intended at present to be used for showing films only, stage space and dressing-room accommodation is provided in case variety items are included in the programme later. The angle of throw from the projection room to the screen is  $17\frac{1}{2}$  deg. and the distance is 118 ft.

CONSTRUCTION.—Restrictions on the use of steel, the cost of shipping material to the island and the desire to use local labour and materials wherever



possible, were factors which influenced the construction. There is no large-scale manufacture of bricks in Jersey and for this reason load-bearing concrete blocks, made on the island, are used for the external walls. The concrete-block shell was erected before the steel, which is used to support the circle and roof.

FINISHES.—The chequer-board pattern on the south elevation of the cinema was formed by rubbing down alternate squares with carborundum stone. Flat oil paint on plaster and acoustic tiles are used on auditorium walls. Rear walls and soffits are coloured yellow with two shades of tan elsewhere. Carpets and seats are red.

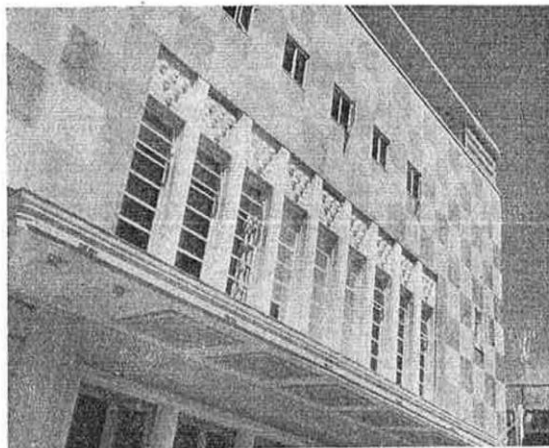
## CINEMA

in ST. HELIER, JERSEY, C. I.

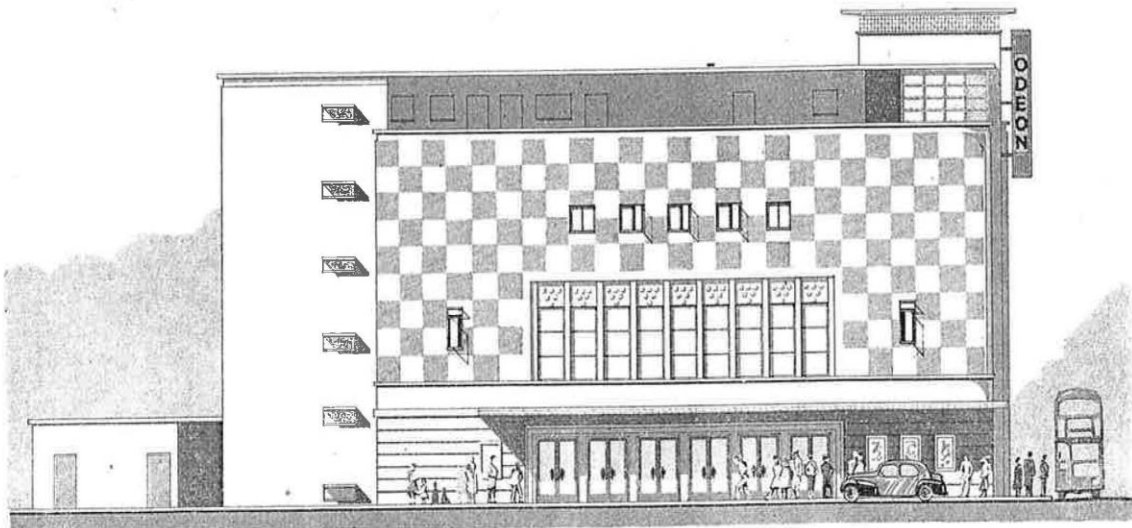
designed by T. P. BENNETT and SON

SERVICES.—Washed and warmed air from a central plant gives an air change every 12 minutes. The general contractors were Kirk & Kirk, Ltd. For sub-contractors, see page 480.

*Above, the entrance foyer, showing pay desk and doors leading to the bar. Below, part of the south facade.*



*Below, the south elevation, which faces a narrow street.*



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