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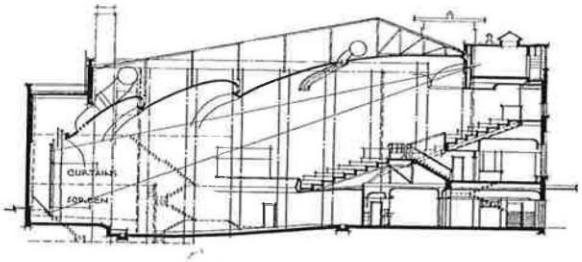
CINEMA IN JERSEY

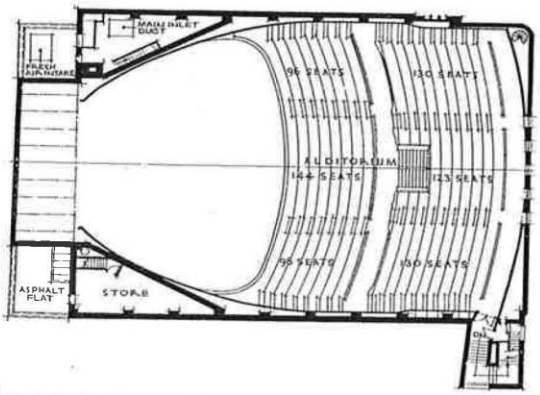
ARCHITECTS:
T. P. BENNETT & SON

THE Odeon Cinema in St. Helier, Jersey, is the first new cinema designed and built in the British Isles since 1939.

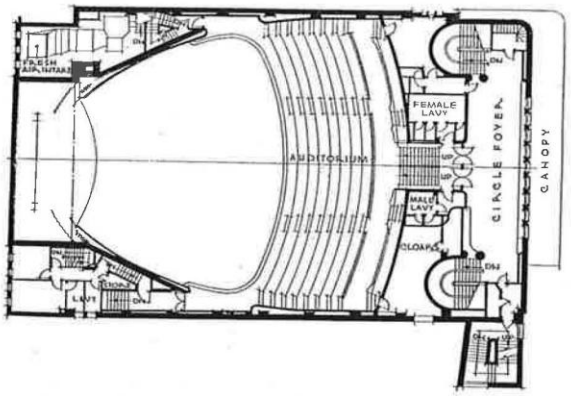
It has other points of interest: in the manner in which its design and construction has been influenced by contemporary conditions, and particularly in the designers' attempt to avoid the banalities of the conventional proscenium. The restrictions on the use of steel and the cost of shipping heavy materials to the island, together with the desire to use local labour and materials wherever possible, were factors which influenced the construction. An attempt has been made to break away from the conventional proscenium in order to achieve intimate relationship between the screen and the audience. The main tabs continue the unbroken sweep of the auditorium when the house lights are illuminated. In order to give acoustic correction to the high volume per seat ratio large areas of acoustic absorbent were required on the walls and ceiling of the auditorium. The architects were thereby presented with a difficult problem of interior decoration, which was solved by using the acoustic tiles themselves to provide an irregular pattern over the interior surfaces, contrasting both in colour and texture with the plain plaster of the untreated walls. The projection suite is planned to cater spaciously for the operation and maintenance of modern projection equipment and to provide amenities for the operating staff. The distance from the projectors to the screen is 118 ft. The angle of throw is 17½°.



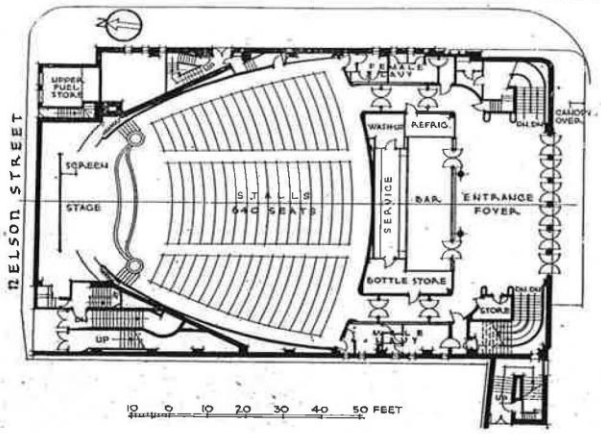
LONGITUDINAL SECTION

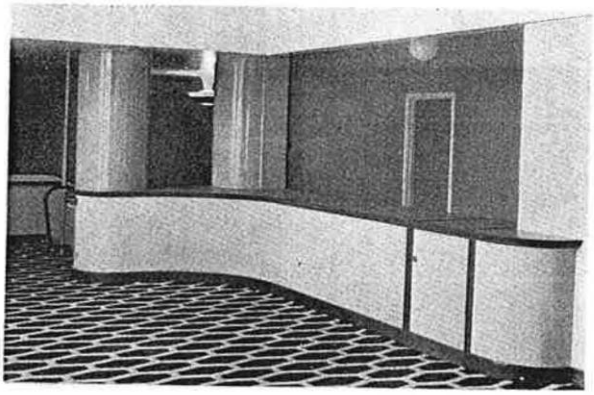


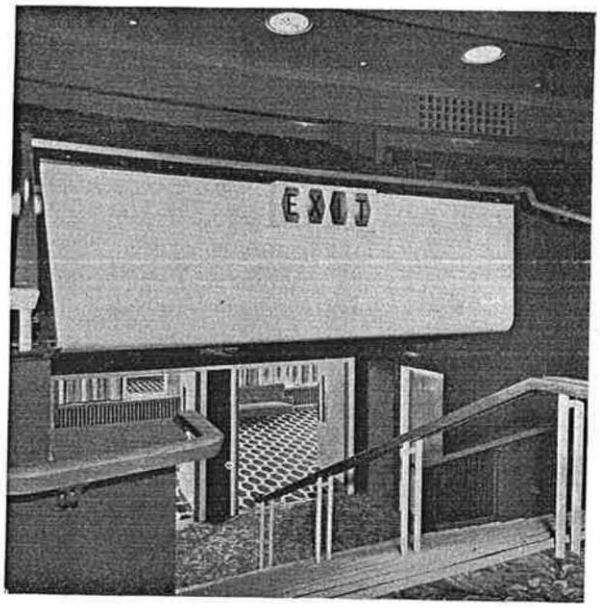
UPPER CIRCLE

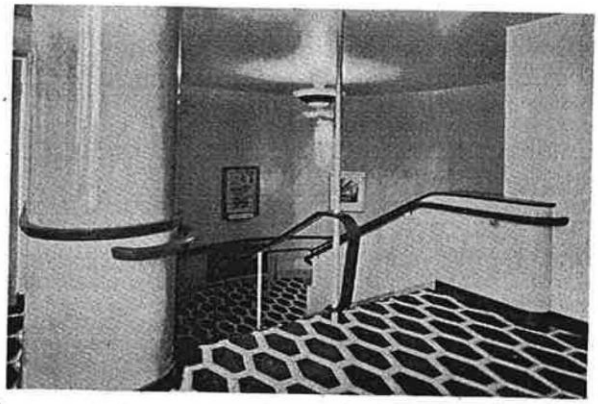


STALLS & (ABOVE) GRAND CIRCLE

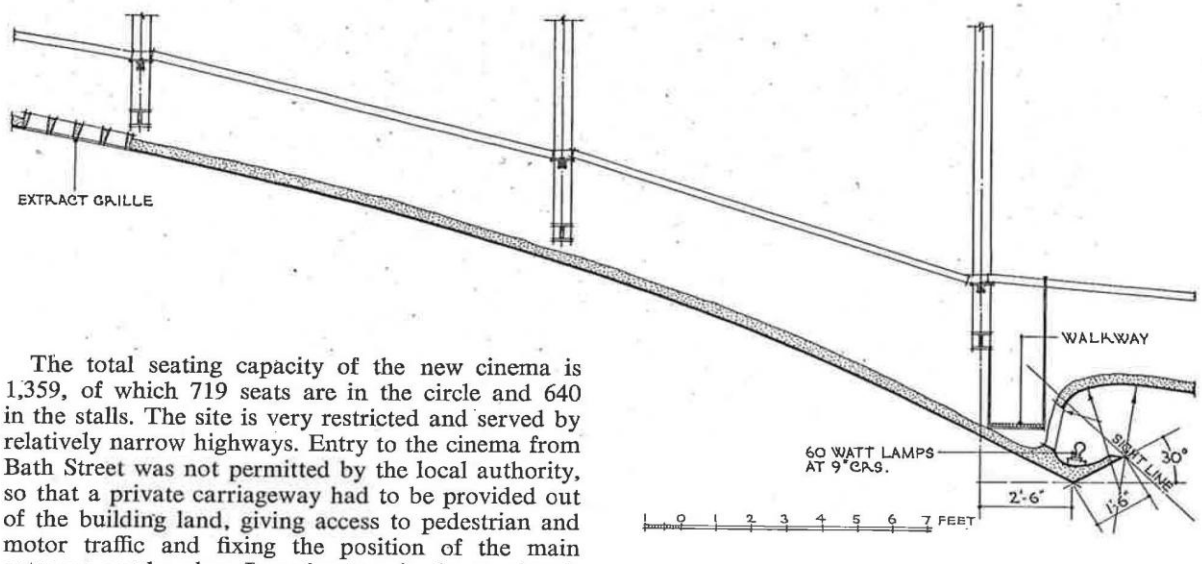






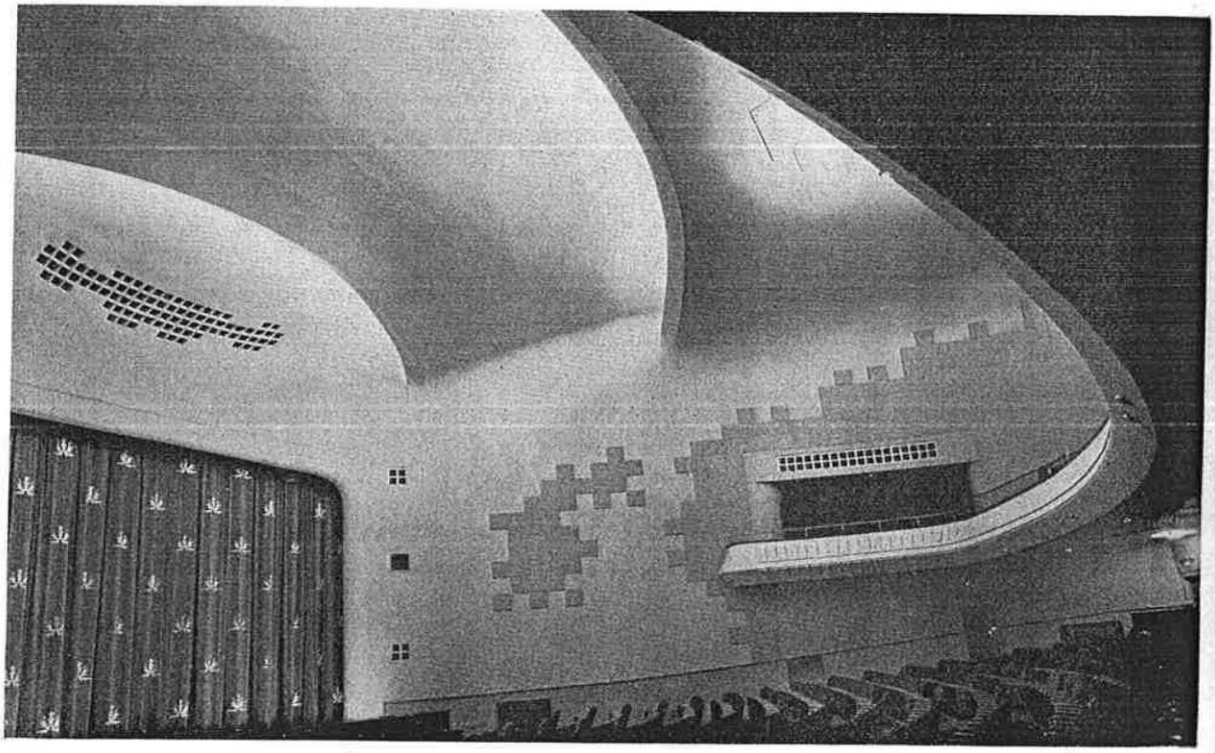


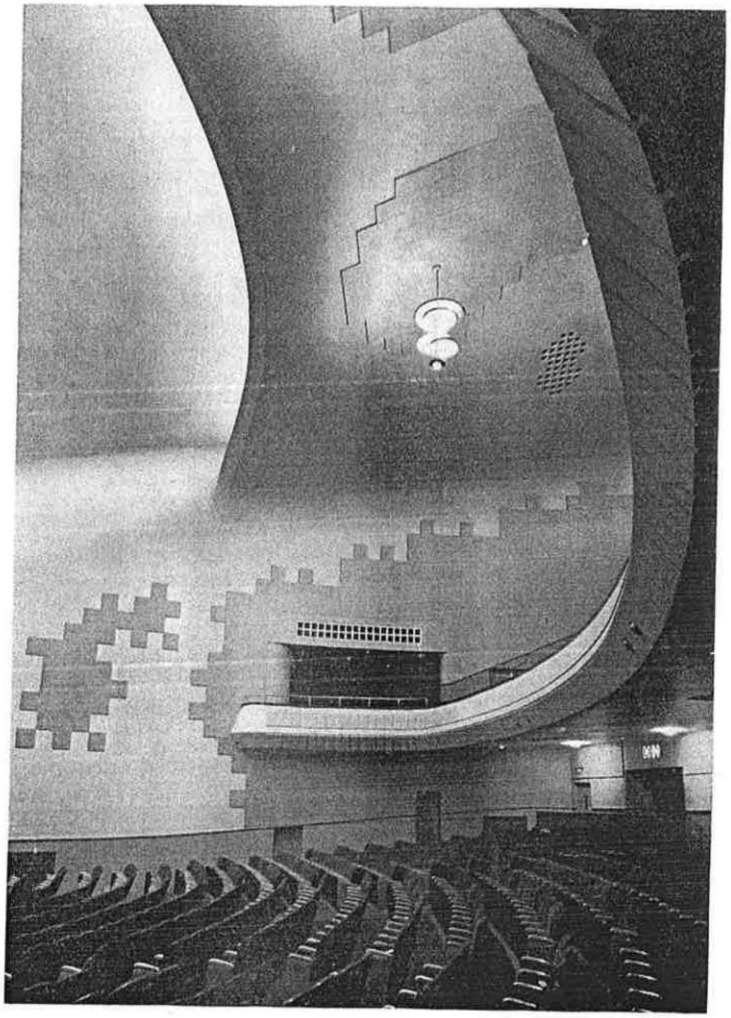
On the facing page, views of the exterior and the auditorium of the new cinema in St. Helier. Above, views of the cloakroom in the circle foyer, at the top; an exit from the grand circle, below it; and a staircase, above. Total seating capacity is 1,359, with 719 seats in the circle and 640 in the stalls



The total seating capacity of the new cinema is 1,359, of which 719 seats are in the circle and 640 in the stalls. The site is very restricted and served by relatively narrow highways. Entry to the cinema from Bath Street was not permitted by the local authority, so that a private carriageway had to be provided out of the building land, giving access to pedestrian and motor traffic and fixing the position of the main entrance on the plan. In order to gain the maximum seating capacity the auditorium extends over the whole rectangle of the plan, less the minimum portion required for sound unit, screen and apron stage. In order to achieve this the projection suite was suspended above the rear circle and while achieving the object, with regard to maximum seating, it increased the acoustic problem by raising the height of the auditorium and consequently the volume per seat to a figure of 186.5 cu. ft. The inclusion of a licensed bar, at stalls level, in an area normally occupied by seating, tended to add to the cubic capacity relative to the number of seats. The balcony over-hang is very small and therefore the house has all the merits of a stadium type cinema. The sight lines from the seats, both to

THE AUDITORIUM CEILING: SECTION (ABOVE) & GENERAL VIEW





ACOUSTIC TILES AS DECORATION

the screen and the stage apron, are quite exceptional. There is no large scale manufacture of bricks in Jersey and for this reason concrete blocks made on the island were used for walls, the concrete block shell being load-bearing wherever possible. The construction of the relatively small overhang of the cantilever balcony saved considerable weight of steel as compared with the more normal girder construction. Warmed and washed air is introduced over the proscenium opening and at each side of the circle at the rate of 24,000 cu. ft. per minute, and extracted through grilles at the rear of the circle and the stalls. This gives an air change in 12 minutes. Local heating is provided by radiators in the auditorium and in the foyers.

The cinema was furnished and equipped under the supervision of Mr. S. B. Swingler, the Engineering Controller of Circuits Management Association Limited.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCREEN AND AUDIENCE