



# CHAFFEY THEATRE MASTER PLAN

COUNTRY ARTS SA

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**In 2018, Country Arts SA commissioned Grieve Gillett Andersen to undertake a master plan for the Chaffey Theatre. The aim of this master plan is to assist and influence strategic decision making and to ensure that any new investment in the Theatre meets the shared vision of all its stakeholders, patrons and users. It has been developed following a thorough and inclusive consultation process with key stakeholders and considers a staged delivery with the full development occurring over the next 5 - 15 years.**

Country Arts SA is a dynamic arts organisation bringing the arts to life in regional South Australia.

Country Arts SA manages five professional proscenium arch theatres across South Australia including the Middleback Arts Centre, Whyalla, Northern Festival Centre, Port Pirie, Chaffey Theatre, Renmark, Hopgood Theatre, Noarlunga and Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre, Mt Gambier. These local theatres have provided access to world class arts and entertainment for their local communities for more than 35 years. However, the facilities are dated and do not provide full opportunities for the realisation of contemporary arts practises.

Some upgrades and improvements have been made over the last few years to all the theatres, however, much work is required to bring the centres up to code compliance.

This master plan report is the second in a larger series of reports intended to provide strategic plans for all of the arts centres managed by Country Arts SA.

## Country Arts SA's Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Country Arts SA's unique state-wide, multi-artform remit and 25+ years' experience puts us in a singular position to make art and tell stories that can't be made anywhere else in the world, and to contribute to a national cultural identity that embraces the regional communities at its heart.

### Our Vision

We want the artists and communities of regional South Australia to thrive through engagement with the arts, and be recognised as valued contributors to the nation's cultural voice.

We want Country Arts SA to transform the way the arts are made and engaged with in regional South Australia.

### Our Priorities

Country Arts SA's work will focus on the following four goals:

Art and artists: We will support and empower artists, arts workers and organisations in regional South Australia to develop their practice, produce extraordinary arts experiences, and share their unique stories.

Communities: We will listen and respond to the diverse communities of regional South Australia and create opportunities for engagement in the arts at every level, recognising the intrinsic value of arts and creativity in community health and wellbeing.

Art Centres and spaces: We will continue to develop our Arts Centres as fit-for purpose cultural hubs and activate a range of other spaces to produce or present work in regional South Australia.

Our organisation: We will work together to create a strong, viable and values-driven organisation that is committed to continual improvement and that supports and inspires its team to strive and thrive.

### Chaffey Theatre

Chaffey Theatre was a state of the art facility when it was developed in the 1980's. It is still a fantastic facility that many other regional communities would be envious of and provides an invaluable service to the Riverland, Murray and Mallee communities. It is, however, 35 years old and is in need of a refresh to reflect the different ways that art is made in the 21st century and also meet the expectations of today's audiences and users of the facility.

Contemporary performances are created for smaller intimate spaces and interactive participation by the audience. These performances can often be lost in a 500 seat auditorium. Many users require cutting edge technology that the Theatre does not have. Chaffey Theatre is also becoming increasingly expensive to operate and this cost has been passed down to end users making the theatre increasingly unaffordable for community hire.

Chaffey Theatre recently received funding to upgrade fire safety systems which were completed in 2020. However, in the absence of a master plan, Country Arts SA were only able to replace like with like with the work undertaken.

For Country Arts SA, Chaffey Theatre needs to be more than a hall for hire, or a space with limited opening hours. Country Arts SA's vision is for it to be a thriving, welcoming, creative hub where a diverse range of users frequently visit the Theatre for an equally diverse range of artistic, recreational, social and entertainment activities throughout the day and night. It should challenge the perception of what a traditional theatre can offer.

It is noted that at the time of undertaking this master plan, no funding has been secured for any development. However due to the age of the Theatre and a real sense that the Riverland has forward momentum, Country Art SA wants to ensure that Chaffey Theatre is able to service a growing region well into the future and is ready to act when funding resources do become available.

### The brief for this project is to:

- Undertake stakeholder consultation and engagement through site visits, workshops and presentations to identify issues, opportunities, constraints and key drivers for the development of the site.
- Identify critical design and functionality requirements.
- Undertake preliminary condition survey of the existing building fabric and compliance with Building Code of Australia (BCA).
- Undertake a functionality assessment, site evaluation, and assessment of the occupancy, usage and programming of the site.
- Undertake an assessment of the social and cultural values and community usage in relation to the internal and external spaces, links and connections to adjacent Institutions, access, local context and cultural history.
- Prepare a master plan for future development of Chaffey Theatre, taking into consideration the requirements of all stakeholders, community aspiration, site opportunities and constraints, time-frame for development and cost associated with works.
- Identify opportunity for staged development of proposed works.
- Assist Country Arts SA in reviewing the Opinion of Probable Cost for delivery of works.



# COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AT CHAFFEY THEATRE





## 2.0 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

Community and stakeholder engagement in the design process results in developing projects with strong civic and community ownership. Our people have the skills and can assist in designing community engagement processes utilising of a variety of techniques that are innovative, fun and interactive and are tailored to the target audience, so that the right information is gathered and to design places that reflect both the objectives of the project, as well as what we learn through the engagement process.

Effective engagement enables all project stakeholders to have a good understanding of problems, alternative solutions, associated costs, risks and benefits. The result is a project that benefits from the broader communal input, an enhanced stakeholder understanding, a collaborative project culture and an enriched project outcome.

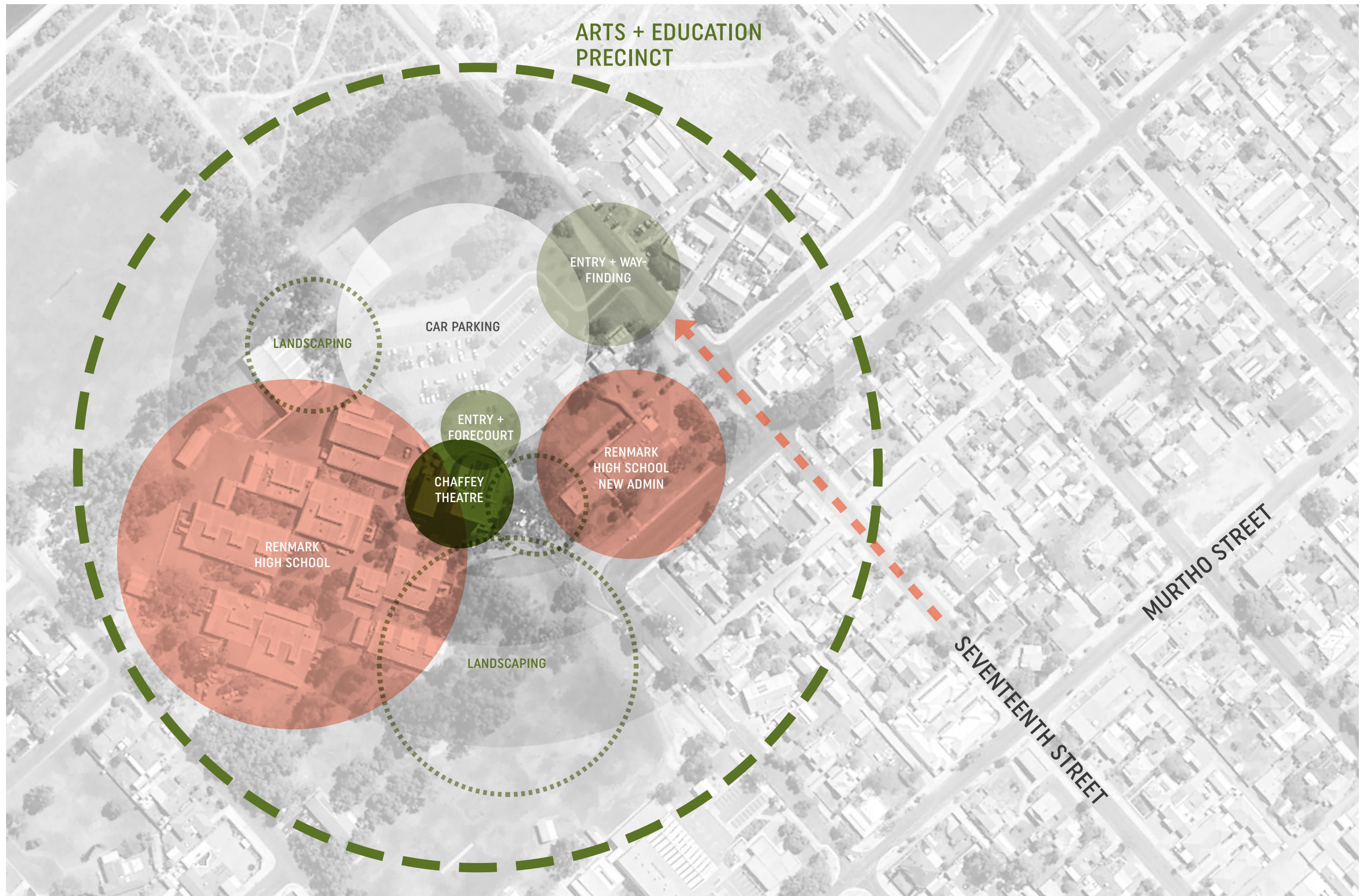
The approach for community consultation and engagement for the Chaffey Theatre Master Plan aligns with the principles of the Community Engagement Charter:

- genuine
- inclusive and respectful
- fit for purpose
- informed and transparent
- reviewed and improved.

We work Country Arts SA to map out key stakeholders and to understand their interest in the project. We designed engagement strategies including both traditional engagement tools and new technologies to align with key interests, and to facilitate a safe forum for open discussions. We also ensured that we close the loop in all consultations and ensured consistent communication with all stakeholders throughout the process.







ARTS + EDUCATION  
PRECINCT

ENTRY + WAY-  
FINDING

CAR PARKING

LANDSCAPING

ENTRY +  
FORECOURT

CHAFFEY  
THEATRE

REMARK  
HIGH SCHOOL  
NEW ADMIN

REMARK  
HIGH SCHOOL

LANDSCAPING

SEVENTEENTH STREET

MURTHO STREET



# 3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

## LANDSCAPE, OUTDOOR SPACES + CAR PARKING

The external landscape should create a sense of arrival, provide shelter and exploit opportunities for night time activation. Clever integration of art within the landscape, buildings and infrastructure will enhance the visitor experience.

ELEMENT	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Car Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easy maintenance</li><li>• High visibility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared with Renmark High School</li><li>• Parking can be far for disabled and elderly patrons</li><li>• Main arrival space to theatre</li><li>• Lack of signage and planting</li><li>• Insufficient lighting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase lighting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New perimeter fencing recently installed by Renmark High School</li><li>• Negotiating upgrades as land ownership is with Council</li><li>• Funding of any upgrades</li></ul>
Surrounding Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generous areas surrounding theatre</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Areas of landscapes around TAFE building site is barren with a lack greenery or planting</li><li>• Areas connecting to Renmark High School are hard paved and lacking in green areas</li><li>• Hard to differentiate between front and back of house landscapes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create hierarchy or outdoor spaces</li><li>• Increase planting and native landscapes</li><li>• Use landscaping to screen areas as required</li><li>• Soften hard paved areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New perimeter fencing recently installed by Renmark High School</li><li>• Funding</li><li>• Lack of integration with Renmark High School</li><li>• On-going maintenance</li></ul>
External Forecourt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generous flat paved areas used when weather permits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of shelter</li><li>• Lack of 'sense of arrival'</li><li>• Existing sculpture not connected with Foyer space</li><li>• Lack of definition and separation from Renmark High School</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide shelter</li><li>• Provide opportunities for outdoor gathering spaces that are surrounded by art work and greenery</li><li>• Connect better with entry</li><li>• Connect better with car parking</li><li>• Integrate lighting and sculpture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public use during the day may conflict with Renmark High School's priorities</li></ul>
Paved areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connects school buildings with Chaffey Theatre</li><li>• Flat and at grade</li><li>• Provide access for emergency vehicles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of definition of pedestrian or vehicular areas</li><li>• Lack of lighting</li><li>• No visual interest</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities for integration of sculpture and artwork</li><li>• Inject colour to create visual interest</li><li>• Opportunities for school and community involvement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Funding</li><li>• May be difficult to reach agreement with school with regards to paving treatment</li><li>• Land ownership</li></ul>



Car Park from Seventeenth Street



Forecourt and theatre entry



Access road to loading dock and school beyond



RHS access to Drama Studio



View from Eighteenth Street and RHS entry



External landscape areas



# 3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

## BUILDING FABRIC, SIGNAGE + WAY FINDING

We see the opportunity to reinvigorate Chaffey Theatre by considering adaptive re-use of the existing building structure to transform the building into a contemporary destination that is contextual, striking, and reflective of the deep narrative of the place.

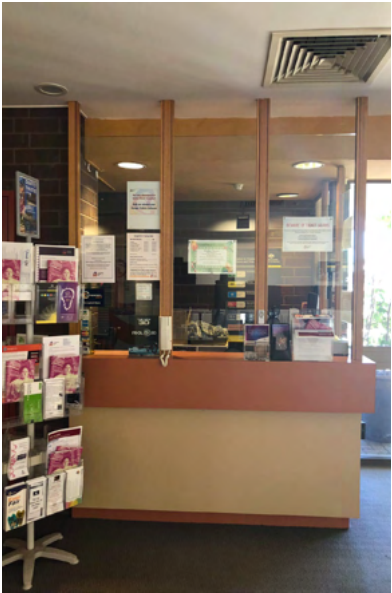
ELEMENT	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Built Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bold and visually prominent</li><li>Brickwork is a strong and robust material</li><li>Large expanses of brickwork provide a blank canvas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visually dated</li><li>Colour of brickwork lacks visual interest</li><li>Does not sing as a arts centre</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clean brickwork</li><li>Integrate artwork</li><li>Night time projection</li><li>Better integration with the landscape</li><li>Play with scale, mass and fenestrations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of re-work</li><li>Ongoing maintenance</li></ul>
Stained Glass Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visually striking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Difficult to see as they are closed in</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Open up for light to spill through</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost</li><li>Fragile material to rebuild</li></ul>
Entry Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contemporary design</li><li>Opportunity to display current shows remotely</li><li>High visibility from Nicolson Avenue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Screen display is potentially too small</li><li>Display material is generally governed by suppliers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Integrate within the wider master plan</li><li>Integrate with pedestrian foot traffic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of relocating</li></ul>
External Signage from Car Park Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Blank canvas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Non existent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Integrate within a broader way finding framework</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost</li></ul>
Internal Way finding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Blank canvas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Small scale signage</li><li>Blends into the building form, does not stand out</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Make bolder - more striking way finding</li><li>Integrate within a broader way finding framework</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost</li></ul>



Car park signage



Large brick facades



Internal ticket booth



Stained glass windows



Entry doors



Internal signage and wayfinding



Administrative offices



3.0 SITE ANALYSIS

PERFORMING ARTS SPACES, GALLERIES + CINEMAS

We see the opportunity to provide multi purpose performance and community spaces that allows for myriad opportunities: hosting large scale conferences to intimate and immersive performances, touring exhibitions as well as local artwork; and a community gathering space that promotes lifelong learning and engagement.

ELEMENT	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Main Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Large footprint</li><li>Can accommodate 492 occupants</li><li>Historic stage and auditorium</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Technology outdated</li><li>Sometimes too large + too expensive to hire out for smaller groups</li><li>No adequate DDA access</li><li>Interior fit-out outdated</li><li>Has to perform as cinema and theatre</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Upgrade infrastructure to allow a more contemporary experience</li><li>Upgrade to automatic bridge mechanism</li><li>Upgrade to meet DDA standards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost prohibitive to retrofit</li></ul>
Foyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Used by the community as a place to socialise and catch-up with friends prior to shows</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No dedicated gallery space, Foyer acts as an informal gallery space</li><li>Current display lighting is manual and replacement lights are no longer available</li><li>Often cramped and hard to access ticket booth and bar</li><li>No cafe/restaurant to eat before or after performances</li><li>No undercover space in-front of foyer to facilitate breakout</li><li>Outdated wet areas that are not functional</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dedicated Gallery space</li><li>Upgrade lighting to allow for a multi use space</li><li>Expand foyer to provide better circulation and access to amenities</li><li>Hospitality space</li><li>Upgrade wet areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of maintenance</li><li>Cost of expanding and upgrading</li></ul>
Drama Studio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing lighting track</li><li>Serves as rehearsal space sometimes</li><li>Main way that Renmark High interacts with Chaffey Theatre</li><li>Potential as second performance space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Usually reserved for Renmark High School use which means it cannot be utilised by performers as rehearsal space</li><li>No designated rehearsal space for performers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand and upgrade to serve as black box theatre</li><li>Country Arts SA and Renmark High to negotiate shared use more efficiently</li><li>Provide designated rehearsal space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of expanding and upgrading</li></ul>
Cinema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Popular with the community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The main theatre currently doubles as the 'cinema'</li><li>No designated cinema space</li><li>Issues around cleaning up in-between movies and theatre performances</li><li>Restricts availability of theatre for performances and vice versa (lose - lose situation)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide dedicated cinema space</li><li>Country Arts SA to tap into high speed internet to display movies, interact with live events taking place elsewhere and share local events digitally</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of upgrade</li><li>TAFE building interface</li></ul>
Dressing Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Close proximity to stage and BOH areas (drop off, scene dock etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Outdated - in need of facelift to attract international artists</li><li>Wet areas outdated</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refurbish and re-work existing areas to modernise and provide a "facelift"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of building work</li><li>May be more critical areas to address as a priority</li></ul>
Green Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Located in close proximity to shared areas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Outdated - in need of facelift to attract international artists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Refurbish and re-work existing areas to modernise and provide a "facelift"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cost of building work</li><li>May be more critical areas to address as a priority</li></ul>



Proscenium arch theatre



Drama Studio



Green room



Bar and foyer areas



Kitchen facility



Wet Areas



Dressing rooms



## 5.0 VISION & OPPORTUNITIES

"Places to display and experiment with digital art"

**"Available out of hours to create relationships within the community"**

**"A 'go to' arts hub"**

**"Reinvigorate the magic of going to the theatre"**

"Having art in a theatre space to give exposure to those who might not necessarily walk into a gallery"

**"Blend the inside and outside"**

**"A facility that can be used by everyone"**

"Lighting for night time safety"

"Give school kids a chance to display work and take ownership of the space"

**The vision for Chaffey Theatre involves increased activation. It is seen as a place that could be active all the time and utilised far more than was traditionally intended. It has the potential to be a building that does a lot more for the Riverland community than just opening up at night time for movies and shows. It should be a place to make, share and see art.**

Country Arts SA's vision for Chaffey Theatre

**"Ability to expand and retract"**

**"Colour to catch people's attention"**

**"A community hub for arts and culture that is going to be innovative and support expression and new thinking"**

**"Interventions that say 'Hey! Here's what's on at the Theatre!'"**

**"The arts need to be weaved into the precinct"**

**"A place to hear and tell indigenous stories so they aren't lost"**

**"Integrated within the Riverland and its communities"**

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# 5.0 VISION & OPPORTUNITIES\_RETURN BRIEF

Based on the community stakeholder consultations undertaken as part of the Chaffey Theatre Master Plan process the desires and visions for the theatre can be split into three distinct categories:

- Physical
- Functional
- Technological

The physical category incorporates desires for spaces and amenities that currently do not exist at Chaffey Theatre. The functional aspect refers to all of the necessary 'upgrades' that the Theatre should undergo in order to present itself as a contemporary and inclusive venue - in other words the 'necessities'. Finally, the technology category incorporates all of the theatre specific upgrades that should be undertaken in order to modernise the Chaffey Theatre as a top class performance venue.

The purpose of this diagram is to allow Country Arts SA to identify a scope that is within their function as an organisation when it comes time to commence any works on the Chaffey Theatre.

Categorising the desires and visions for the Chaffey Theatre in such a way also provides a clear understanding of what improvements need to be made to the venue so that clear and relevant design principles and strategies can be established.

## Physical

- Smaller alternative performance venue
- Designated cinema/multi-purpose digital arena space
- Designated rehearsal space
- Art exhibition space
- Visual / digital / performance art workshop space(s)
- Hospitality outlet (cafe / restaurant)
- Foyer space
- Sheltered forecourt / indoor+outdoor space

## Functional

- Lift
- Hand rails in theatre space
- Upgrade wet areas
- DDA car parking
- External lighting for wayfinding
- Signage and wayfinding

## Technology

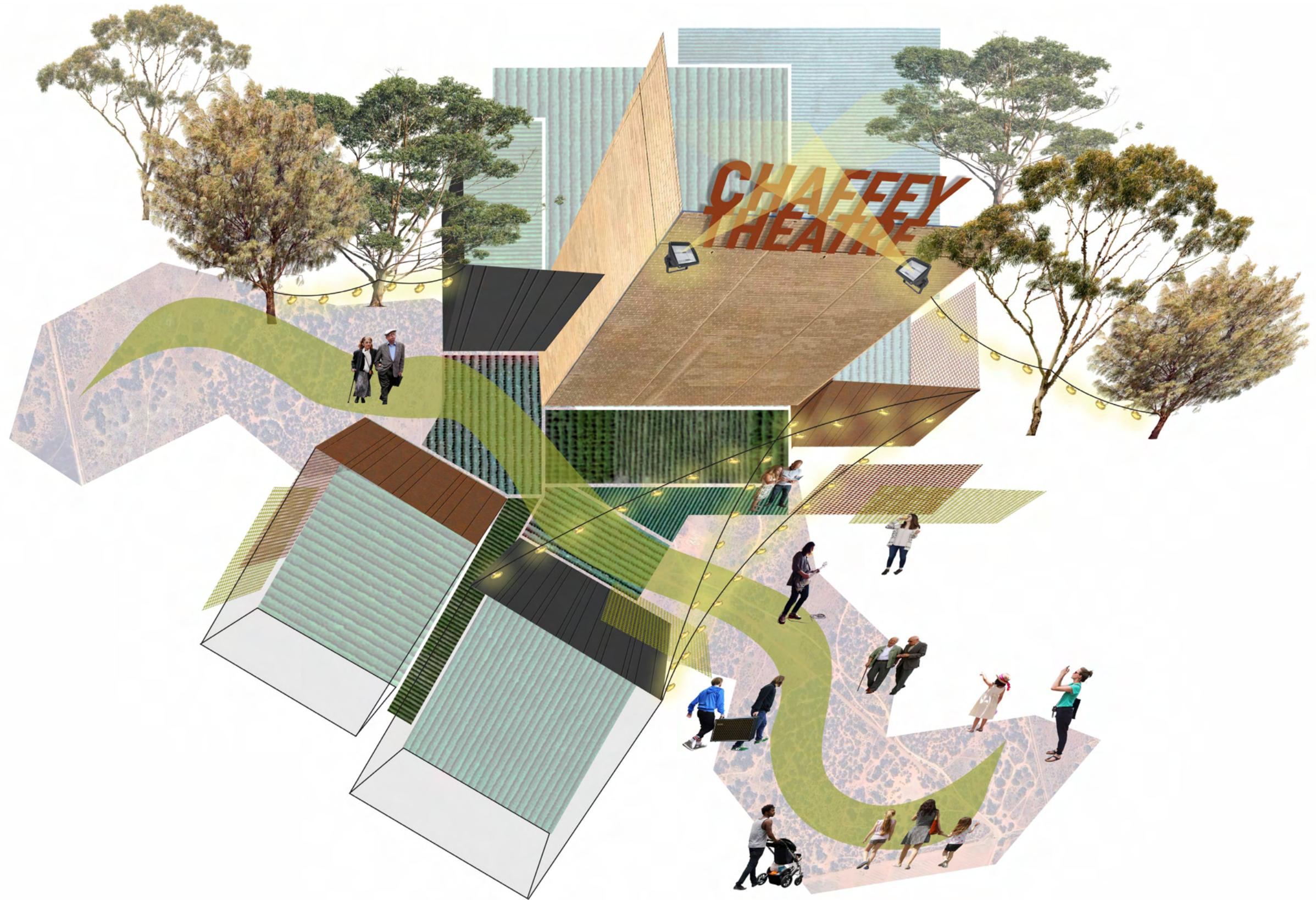
- Lighting
- Sound
- Stage
- General interior theatre upgrades

## Other Art Spaces in the Riverland

- Bonney Theatre
- Rainmoth Gallery
- Riverland Youth Theatre
- McCormick Centre for the Enviroment

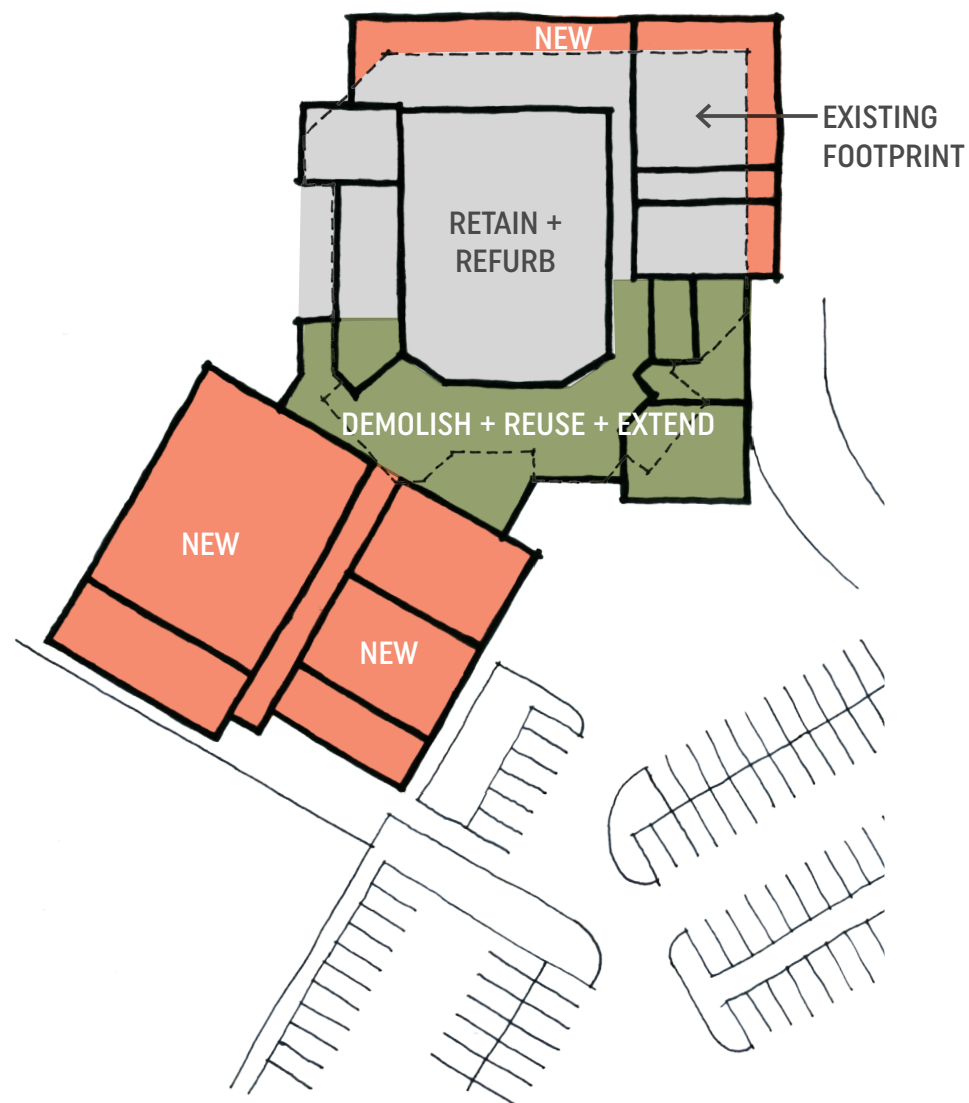


## 5.0 VISION & OPPORTUNITIES\_VISUALISATION





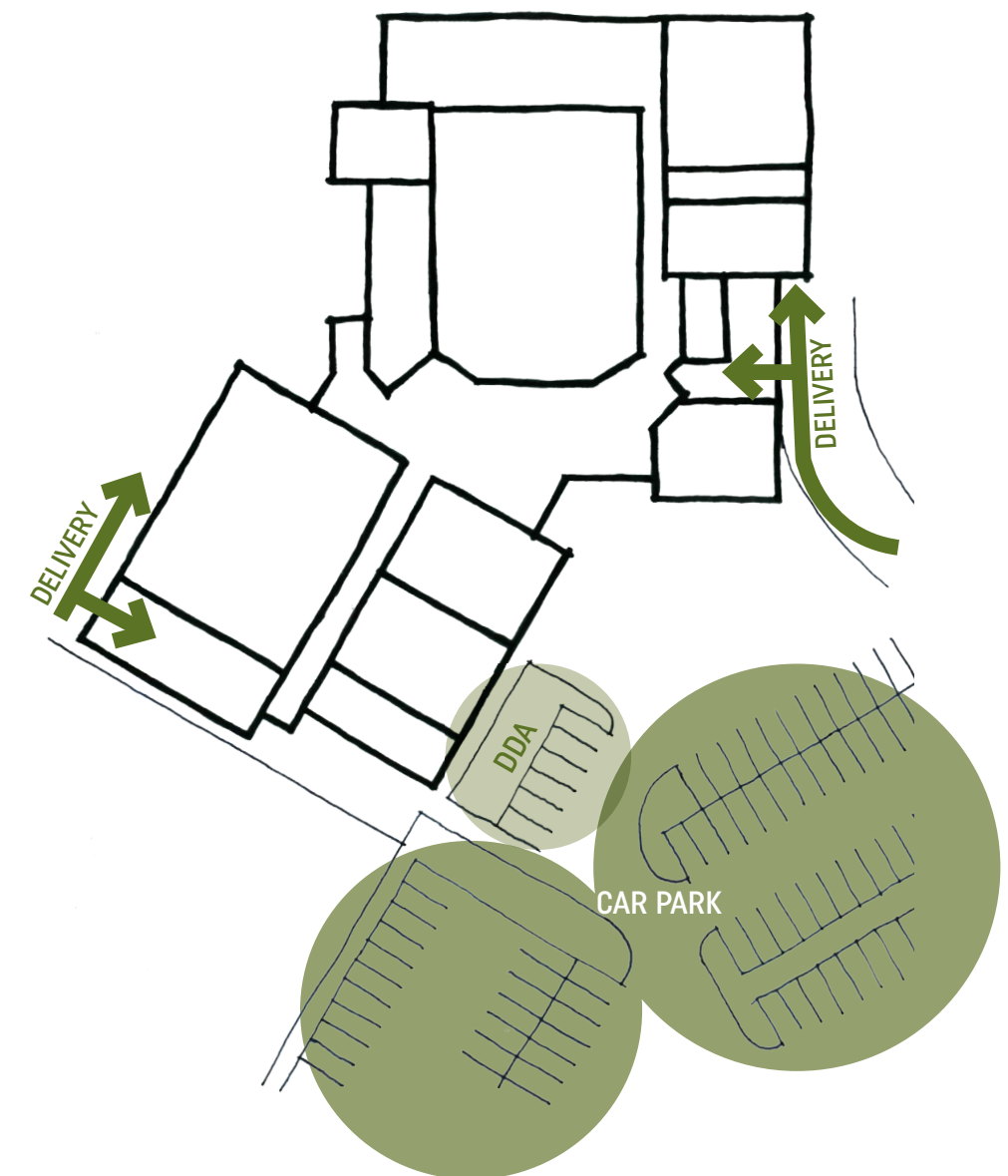
- Extend and open up existing foyer and establish a new and active entry forecourt.
- Extend existing staff facilities and provide a large kitchen.
- Create new 'Digital Precinct Wing' to house two new cinemas/digital hubs and a black box theatre/event/gallery space.
- Extend the rear of the theatre to create new rear entry and larger drama space. Larger drama space to also serve as rehearsal space and flexible community/black box space.



Identify key precincts within the Chaffey Theatre that can accommodate varying levels of user groups and facilitate activation at different times of the day and night. There are opportunities to create "micro precincts" within Chaffey.



Reconfigure car park and ensure DDA compliant car access is located close to the entry. Provide two delivery points for theatre and kitchen by utilising existing access pathways shared with Renmark High School and creating new ones.

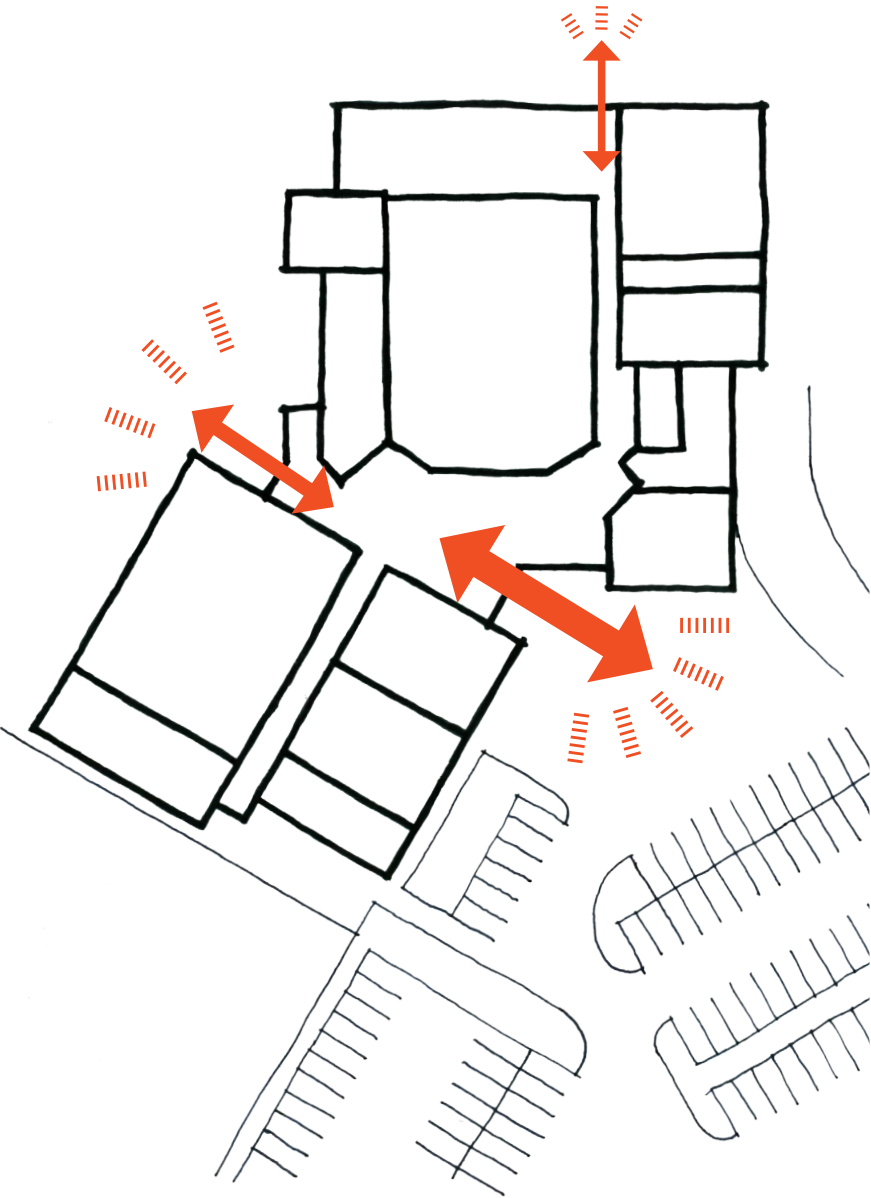




# 6.0 DESIGN STRATEGIES

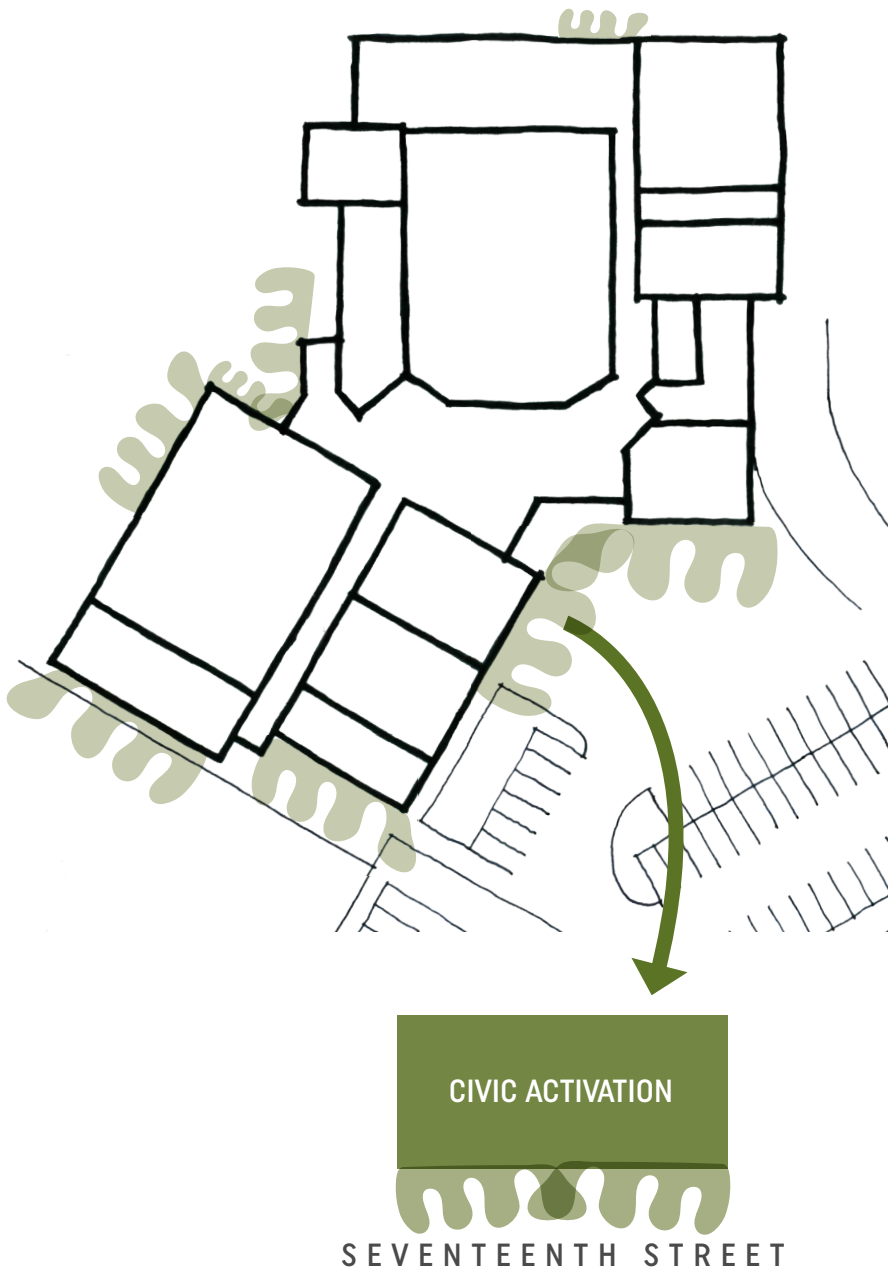
## DEFINING ENTRIES

Extend main entry foyer out and open it up to create a more inviting and active space. Establish a secondary entry facing towards Eighteenth Street that creates a visual and physical link through the foyer. Reinforce the existing rear entry to strengthen connection to Renmark High School, and to provide a 'back of house' entry that can also be utilised by the community for events and workshops.



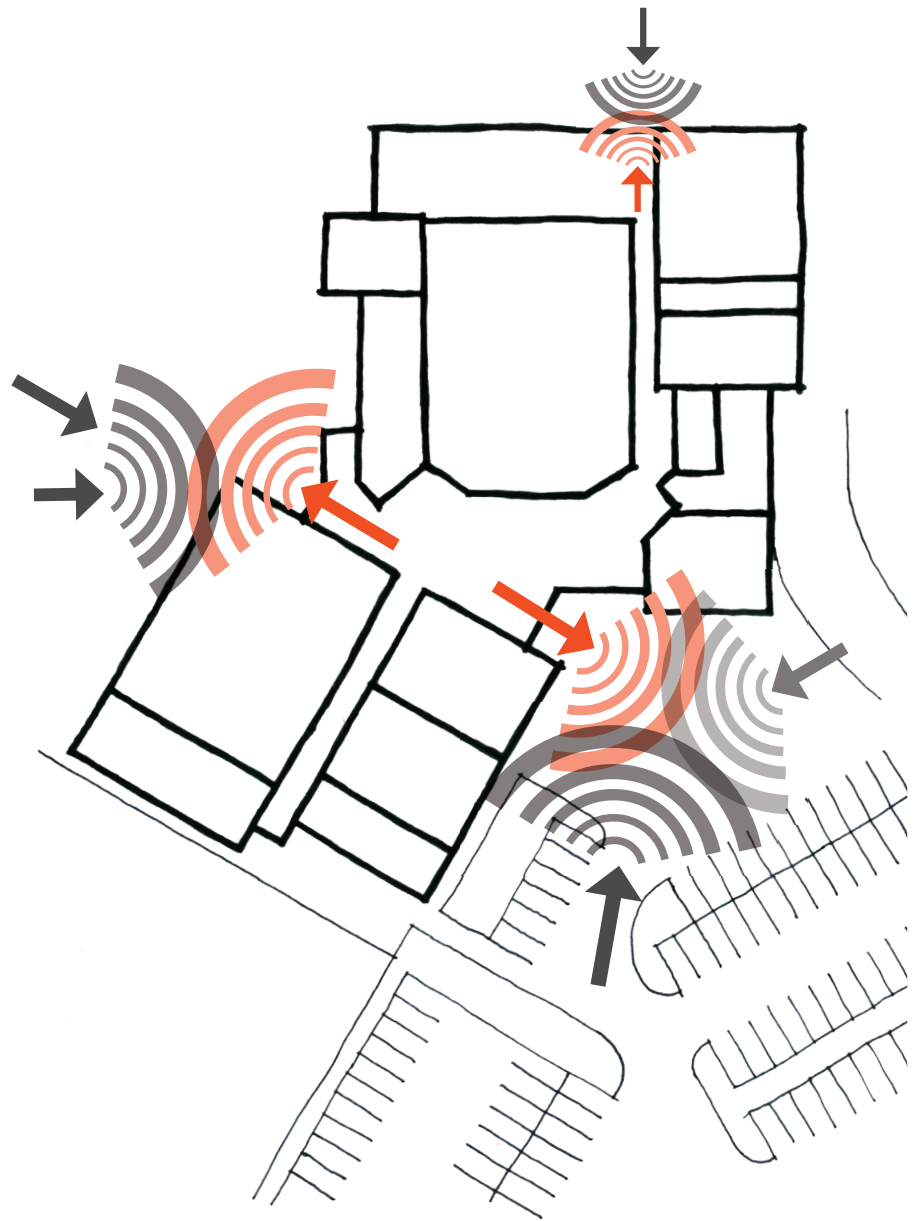
## ENHANCE IDENTITY AND STREET PRESENCE

Allocate civic and community functions along Seventeenth Street frontage that will enhance and activate the Chaffey Theatre precinct, while also serving as wayfinding devices. Revitalise external facade to become more inviting and to establish a clear identity for the Chaffey Theatre.



## ENHANCE SITE RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivate multiple entry points and facilitate multiple functions within the space to engage the surrounding communities, in particular Renmark High School as the closest neighbour.

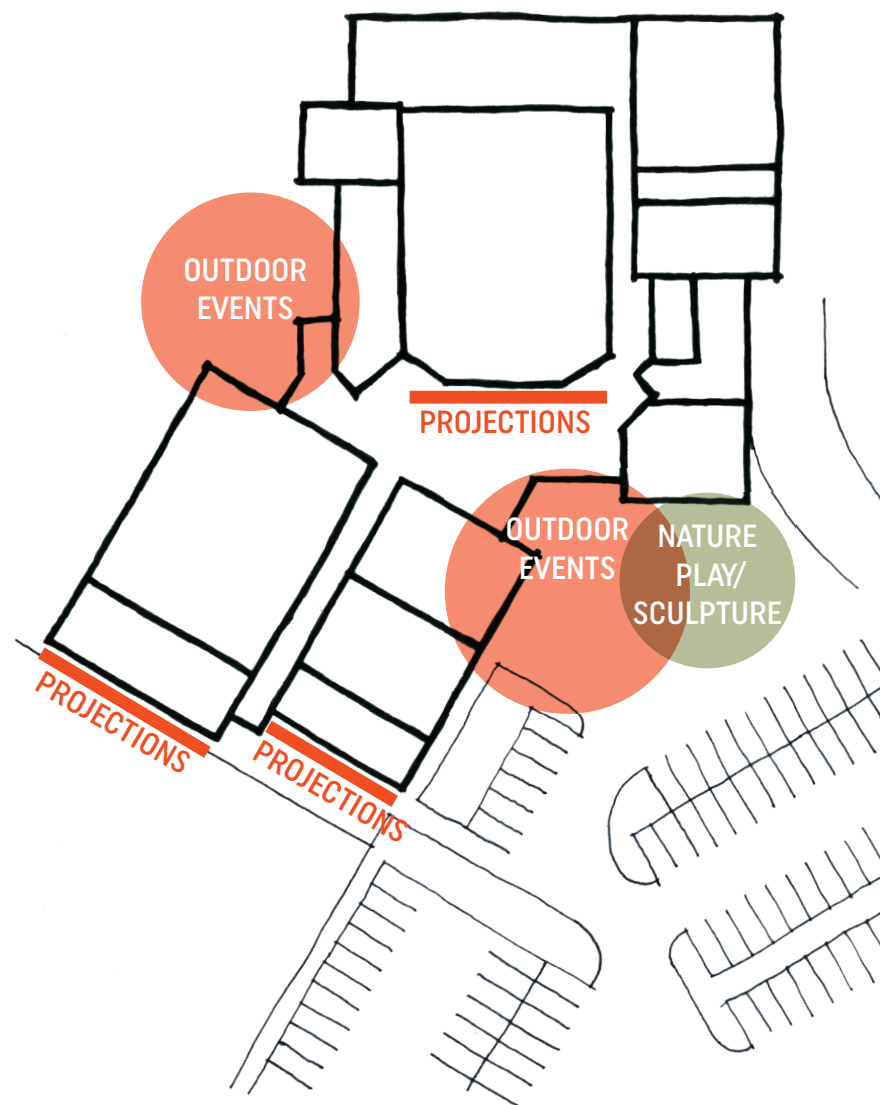




## 6.0 DESIGN STRATEGIES

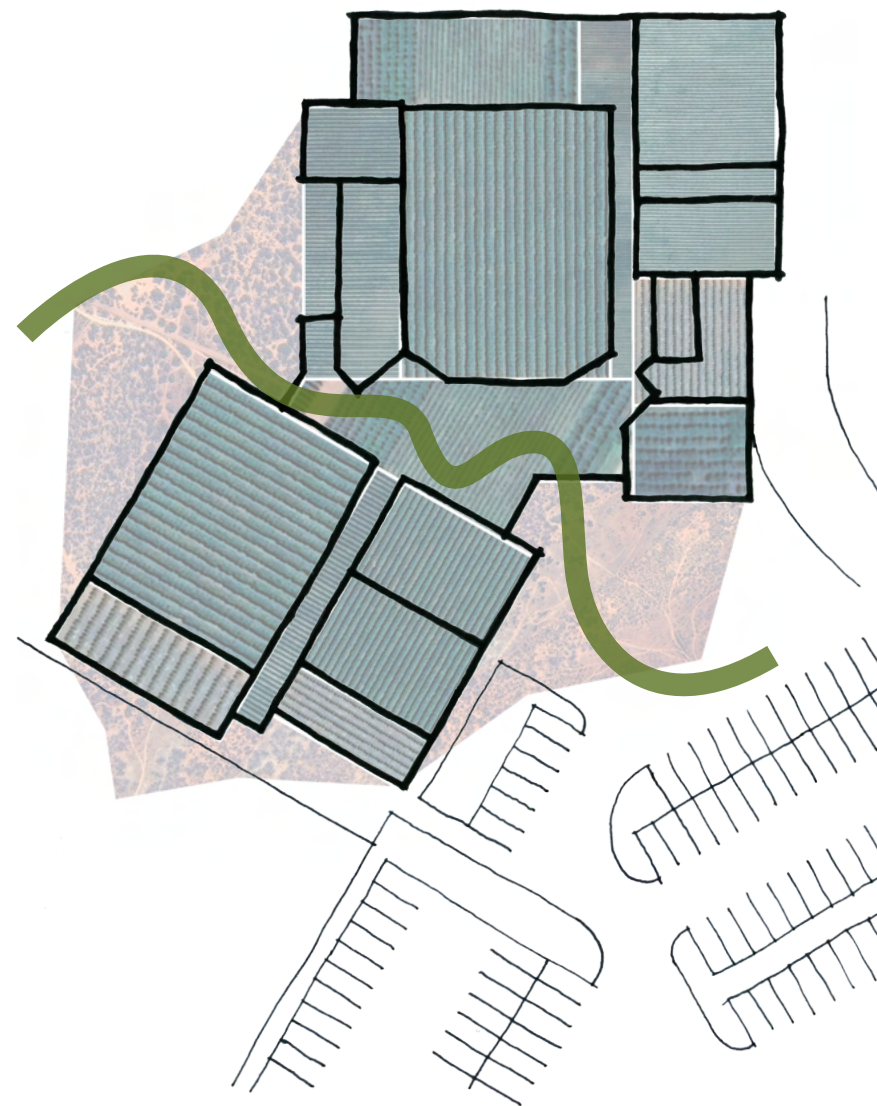
### EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES

Explore opportunities for incidental experiences including art everywhere, external projection walls, courtyards etc.



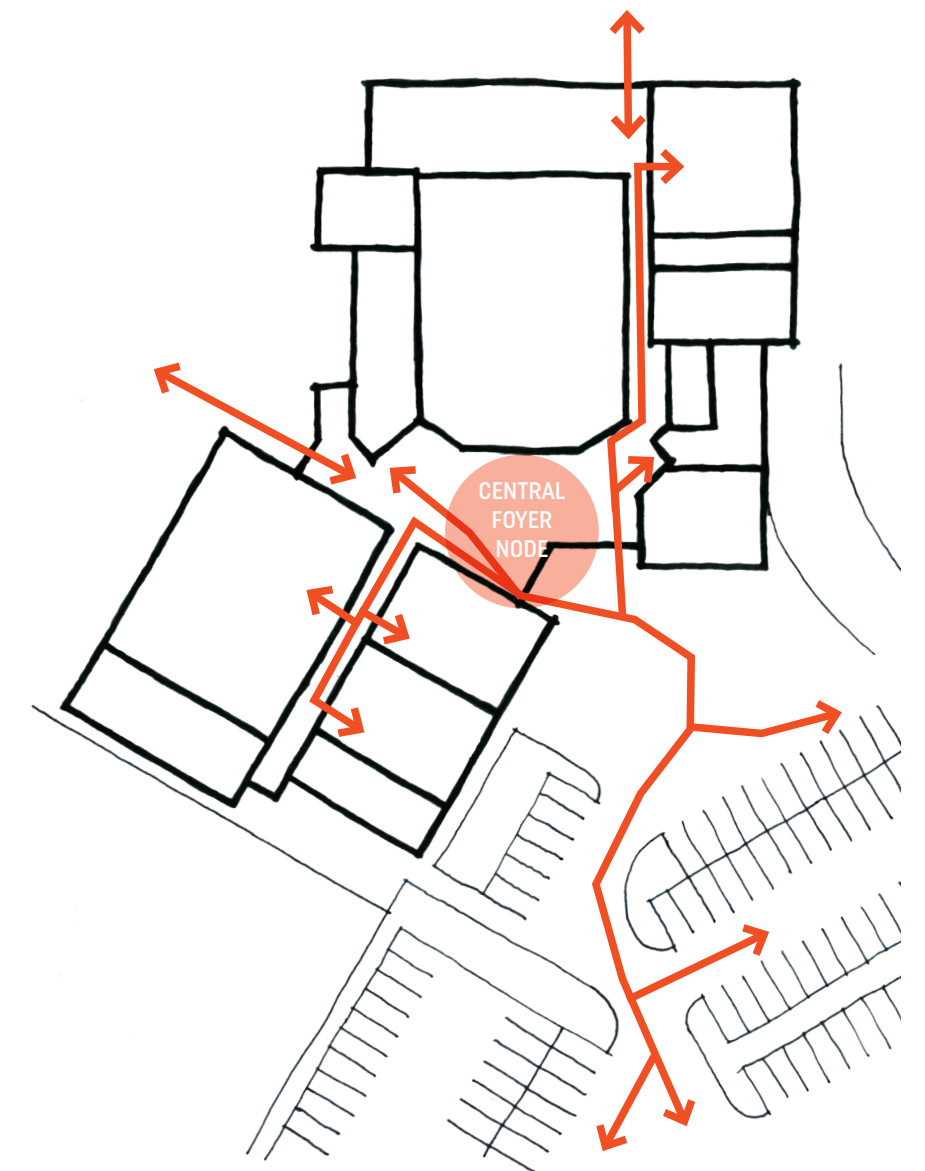
### REFERENCING RURAL LANDSCAPE

Make reference to elements of the rural landscape such as 'patchwork' farm land and the River Murray to weave a sense of place into the Chaffey Theatre Precinct.



### INTUITIVE WAYFINDING

Utilise interventions such as external signage, lighting, art and ground treatment to allow for easy navigation through the building.





7.0 SPATIAL MASTER PLAN\_SITE



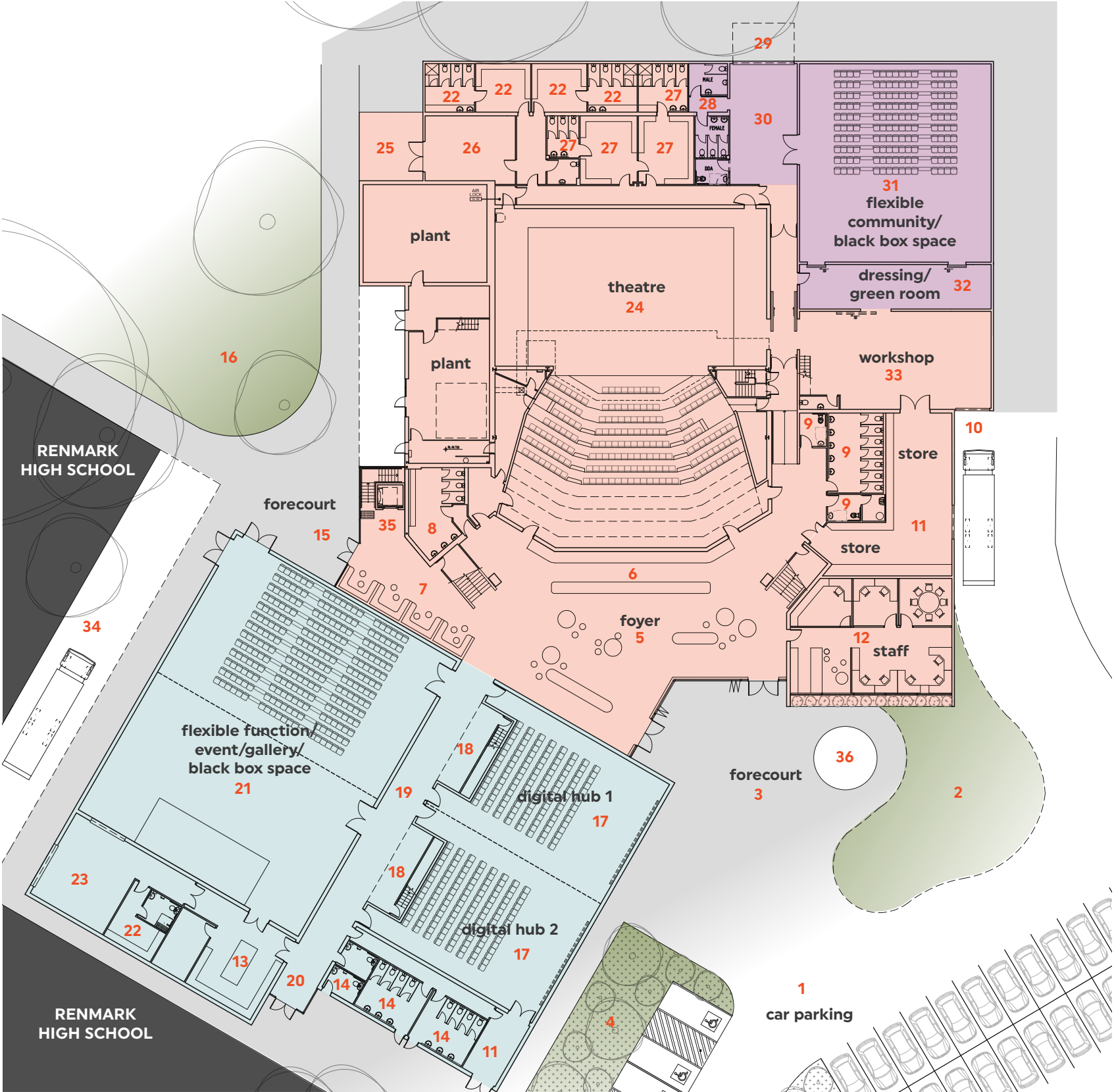


7.0 SPATIAL MASTER PLAN\_PRECINCTS





# 7.0 SPATIAL MASTER PLAN\_FLOOR PLAN



1. Reconfigure existing car park and provide DDA parking close to entry
2. New nature play/sculpture park
3. New forecourt
4. New landscaping
5. Refurbish and extend theatre foyer
6. New box office, bar and kiosk
7. Community hub space
8. Refurbish existing wet area
9. Reconfigure existing wet areas + additional new DDA toilet
10. Move and reconfigure existing theatre delivery point
11. Store
12. Reconfigure and extend existing admin area (including kitchenette, breakout, meeting room, offices and open plan office space)
13. Commercial kitchen
14. New public amenities with external access to service outdoor events
15. New secondary forecourt
16. Refurbish and reconfigure existing external landscaping areas
17. New digital hub with retractable seating (120 seats)
18. Gallery nook
19. Gallery hallway
20. Event entry to multi-media and digital hub precinct
21. New flexible function/event/gallery/black box space with retractable seating
22. New dressing room and amenities
23. New green room/workshop/store
24. Retain and protect existing theatre
25. New artist courtyard
26. Reconfigured and refurbish green room
27. Reconfigure and refurbish existing dressing rooms and amenities
28. New public amenities
29. Re-establish existing rear entry
30. New small foyer
31. Reconfigure and extend existing school drama space into flexible community/black box space (150 retractable seats)
32. New dressing/green room
33. Retain and extend existing workshop
34. New delivery point for black box theatre and kitchen (utilising existing school delivery access road)
35. New lift and egress stair
36. Reinstate existing indigenous seating installation





## 8.0 3D VISUALISATION





## 8.0 3D VISUALISATION





## 8.0 3D VISUALISATION





## 8.0 3D VISUALISATION





## 8.0 3D VISUALISATION





## Key Deliverables

- 1 Lift and stair upgrade
- 2 New digital precinct: black box & cinemas
- 3 Foyer, staff areas, external works
- 4 Flexible community space, theatre upgrade



PROJECT  
INVESTMENT  
\$30M



