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# barbican

## Barbican unveils ambitious renewal plans as public consultation launches

- World-famous arts centre seeks public feedback on proposed plans, revealed for the first time today, for the Foyers, Lakeside and Conservatory
  - Barbican Renewal will ensure every part of the Barbican Centre is restored, revitalised and relevant for future generations



Proposals revealed today will transform the Foyers, Lakeside and Conservatory. Photos: Dion Barret (1/2), Max Colson (3)

Today, the Barbican Centre, an internationally renowned multi-arts centre which welcomes up to two million visitors annually, shares ambitious initial plans to revitalise some of its most iconic spaces as it launches the first stage of its 2025 public consultation.

Proposed plans to restore and enhance the Lakeside, Foyers and Conservatory are available to view online until Monday 17 February, with an in-person exhibition opening in the Centre's Level G Studio, on Saturday 1 February.

With an extraordinary year ahead, featuring world-class performances, landmark exhibitions, and major events including the EFG London Jazz Festival and World Design Conference, the Barbican continues to deliver unparalleled cultural programming on a global stage.

However, the Grade-II listed building, constructed on London's biggest post-war bombsite and hailed by Queen Elizabeth II at its 1982 opening, as 'one of the wonders of the modern world', has deteriorated significantly after 43 years of hosting thousands of events.

Barbican Renewal aims to restore and revitalise the site, by unlocking underused spaces for greater public, civic and creative use, upgrading outdated building systems and ageing materials to meet net zero targets and secure the centre for future generations.

The proposed designs, which focus on inclusive, sustainable design principles and celebrate the centre's unique architectural heritage, include;

- **Foyers:** Celebrating the iconic concrete columns and layered design, plans will restore this unique architectural heritage and transform underused areas to create flexible, inclusive spaces that bring art and performance out into the heart of the

Barbican Centre. Improvements to lighting, major decluttering, new facilities and upgrades to doors and lifts will make sure everyone can enjoy all the site has to offer.

- **Lakeside:** One of London's most unique public spaces will be repaved to address leaking, while the famous fountains will be upgraded to provide passive cooling to help mitigate growing summer temperatures. New planting will boost biodiversity, while lighting and glazing improvements will reduce energy use and bring the building back to its best.
- **Conservatory:** Plans to revitalise London's second biggest conservatory will ensure the plants remain the stars of the show. Lush, multi-layered foliage will delight and immerse visitors and dramatic, architectural planting will provide a sense of theatre. Proposals will make the space fully accessible and able to remain open much more of the time, providing further opportunities for events.

Philippa Simpson, Director of Buildings and Renewal at the Barbican, said: "The Barbican has always been about Renewal, a beacon of an optimistic future in the wake of the Second World War. This project is rooted in the vision and ambition of its founders, to reimagine what an arts centre can be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a vital, creative space for everyone.

"This consultation is crucial to ensuring the plans reflect the needs of audiences, while celebrating the history and heritage of this special site.

The design team delivering the programme is led by architects Allies and Morrison and Asif Khan Studio, and engineers Buro Happold. Landscape designers Harris Bugg Studio have been appointed to reimagine the Conservatory planting scheme.

Oliver Heywood, Director at Allies and Morrison, said: "The Barbican is one of London's most iconic spaces. Our goal is to honour the Centre's original bold architectural legacy, while making it more inclusive, sustainable, and fit for the future."

Feedback from this consultation will inform the next stage of plans, set to be unveiled in May 2025. The process has already engaged public and key stakeholders through extensive co-design and consultation.

Subject to planning permission, construction will begin in 2027 with this first phase complete in time for the Barbican's 50th anniversary in 2032. Further phases will focus on renovating and modernising other parts of the site, unlocking underused spaces and improving accessibility.

The Renewal programme is supported by a £191 million contribution from the City of London Corporation which represents 80% of what's needed for the first five-year phase of works. A major fundraising campaign will be launched later this year to fully secure the centre's future.

For more information about the Barbican Renewal programme and how to participate in the consultation, visit [www.barbican.org.uk/renewal](http://www.barbican.org.uk/renewal).

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**Notes to Editors**

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### About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Theatre Productions](#).

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