

Bridport Electric Palace – Cinema/theatre, Shops and Apartments

35 South Street, Bridport

**Bridport Electric Palace –
Cinema/theatre, Shops and
Apartments
35 South Street
Bridport
DT6 3NY**

An extraordinary Grade II Listed art deco cinema/theatre with 2 street facing retail units and 2 residential apartments above, available for sale as a going concern.

- 410 seat cinema/theatre with three bars and large foyer
 - Original art-deco interior, fully restored, Grade II listed
 - Fully operational, as a going concern
 - 2 retail units, fully refurbished and let, providing an annual income
 - 2 beautiful residential apartments, fully refurbished with large roof terrace
 - Central Bridport, prime high street location
 - Freehold interest
- Dorchester 15 miles (London Waterloo 2hrs 30 min), Exeter 39 miles, Bournemouth 45 miles
 - Available as a whole or in 3 lots

Offers above £1,740,000

For the Whole, Freehold

Dorchester Commercial

01305 261008 ext 5

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INTRODUCTION

Built in 1926, the Bridport Electric Palace has been described as "one of the most breath-taking cinemas in the world...an art-deco fantasia of 1930's lamps, comfortable velvet seats and pre-war murals reminiscent of Diego Rivera..." (Financial Times, 19 March 2026)

After opening its doors almost 100 years ago, the Palace has operated almost continuously ever since. In recent years it has benefited from a comprehensive and sympathetic programme of refurbishment and the property is now offered to the market in outstanding condition. The Palace presents an exceptional opportunity to steward one of the South West's most atmospheric and culturally significant venues into the next century.

The property is available for sale as a whole or in three separate lots by private treaty:

LOT 1: Electric Palace cinema/theatre (freehold), including all trade assets and goodwill, as a going concern - offers above £1.1million

LOT 2: Two retail units (long leasehold) - offered together (and not separately) - offers above £190,000

LOT 3: Two residential apartments above retail units (freehold) - offered together (and not separately) - offers above £450,000

SITUATION

The Bridport Electric Palace provides a unique opportunity to purchase a fully restored and fully operational art-deco theatre and cinema. With its beautiful original interior, it is one of only a handful of 1920s theatres that are still operating in the UK (outside London) and was recently listed by the Financial Times as one of the "Top 24 most breath-taking cinemas in the world" ¹.

Standing proudly in the heart of Bridport, the Palace is one of Dorset's most treasured cultural landmarks which is now offered for sale as a thriving going concern, with established goodwill and a full future programme of events, including film, comedy, live music, the spoken word and theatre. The Palace is arranged behind a two-storey street-facing frontage and, at street level, the entrance and foyer are



accessed via a wide arcade walkway leading to the cinema/theatre complex beyond. Either side of the Palace entrance are two street facing retail units, with two beautifully restored residential flats above (each with their own separate street facing access), that are also offered for sale either as a whole with the Palace, or as separate lots.

The properties sit in the heart of the picturesque West Dorset town of Bridport within the Dorset National Landscape (formerly known as the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) close to Dorset's Jurassic Coast, Lyme Bay and the Chesil Beach, only 5 miles away. Positioned prominently on South Street, within the town centre, the properties occupy a highly desirable and accessible location surrounded by retail, leisure and hospitality amenities.

Bridport is a bustling and vibrant market town, with its famous street market, arts-scene and antiques quarter, located approximately 15 miles to the west of the county-town of Dorchester with its regular rail connections to London. Bridport has a history of rope making and is now a gateway to the Jurassic World Heritage coastline at nearby West Bay. The town hosts an excellent selection of independent shops, as well as supermarkets, hotels, pubs, restaurants and cafes, and numerous arts and music events throughout the year, including the acclaimed Bridport Literary Festival and "From Page to Screen" film festival (both mainly hosted at the Palace), as well as Dorset Arts Week. There is also a thriving twice-weekly street market offering locally sourced vegetables, cheese, meats and other artisan foods, clothes, hardware and antiques.

Note: 1. Published by the Financial Times on 19 March 2026

LOT 1 - BRIDPORT ELECTRIC PALACE

"One of the most breath-taking cinemas in the world"¹

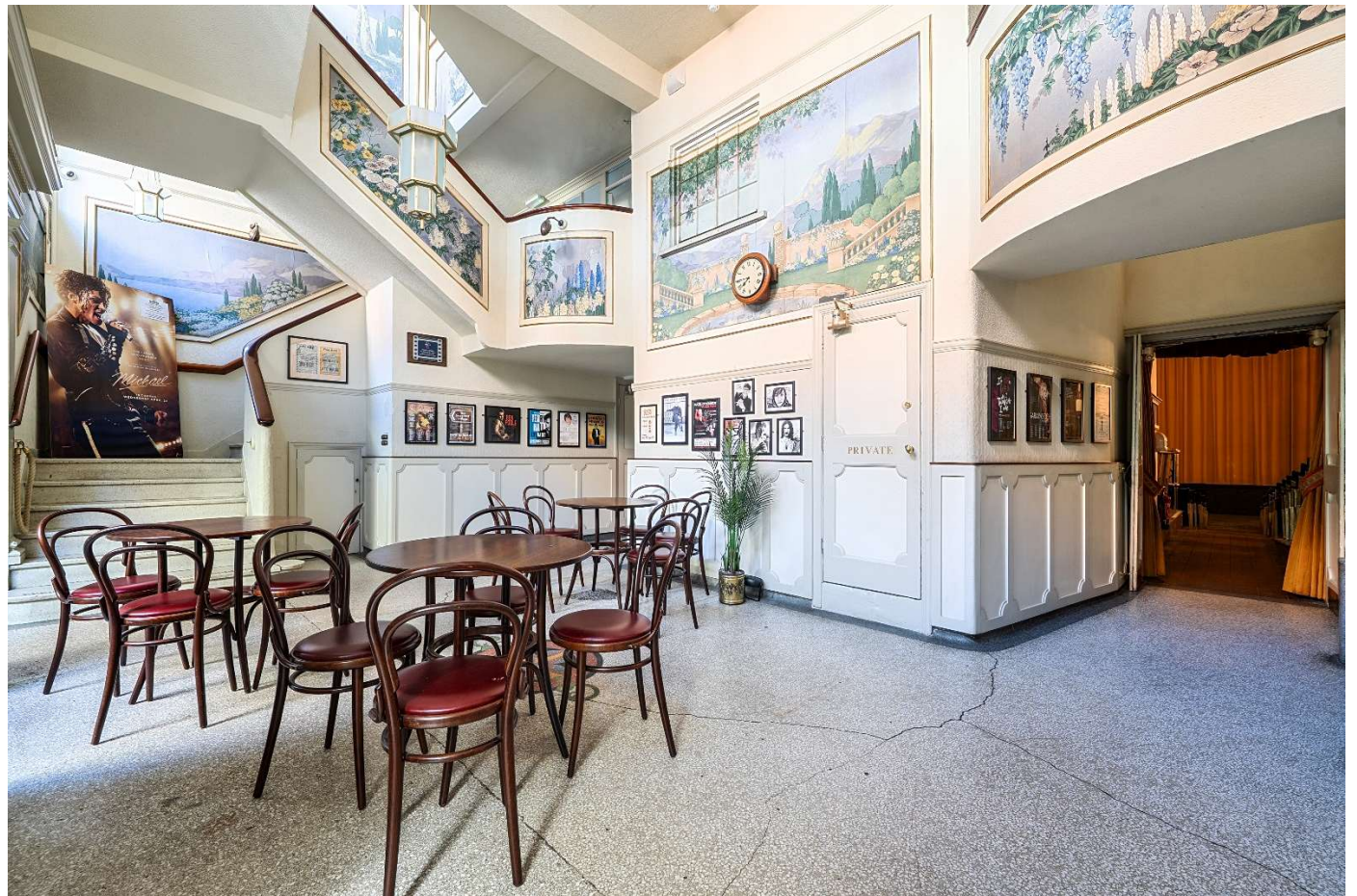
HISTORY

In 1926 a local brewing family took the courageous and enterprising step to build an opera house in Bridport. A new venture in every way, but particularly because it was powered by electricity, a rare commodity for many at the time. Because electricity didn't arrive in the town until 1929, the building needed to generate power from its own "engine room", allowing the people of Bridport to experience the "new age of cinema", as well as opera and other stage and music shows.

The doors first opened almost 100 years ago, on 14 June 1926, to a packed audience of over 500 people and the building was appropriately named the "New Electric Palace". It has been operating almost continuously ever since, originally showing only silent movies until "talkies" arrived in Bridport in 1931 (only three years after they'd arrived in London). Whilst other regional theatres and cinemas have floundered, the Palace has not only survived but flourished, sitting at the heart of the community ever since.

For the last century, the Palace has been a cornerstone of West Dorset's cultural life, evolving into a vibrant multi- arts venue that draws audiences from far beyond the town. Today, it hosts a broad programme of film, comedy, live music, the spoken word and theatre, as well as special events including festivals, weddings and private parties.

The Palace is the largest theatre for almost 20 miles and has, for some years, played host to film and literary festivals, and glittering premieres, developing a reputation for bringing the all-time greats in film, comedy and music to West Dorset. It also sits at the heart of local performing arts activities and local performing arts groups, serving as both a creative hub and a beloved community destination. In recent years, the Palace has benefited from a comprehensive and sensitive programme of refurbishment, ensuring that its historic charm is perfectly complemented by modern comfort and high-quality presentation. The property is now offered to the market in outstanding condition.





The Palace presents an exceptional opportunity to steward one of the South West's most atmospheric and culturally significant venues into its next century.

"one of the most breath-taking cinemas in the world ... an art deco fantasia of 1930s lamps, comfortable velvet seats and pre-war murals reminiscent of Diego Rivera ..."

Financial Times ¹

THE BUILDING

Bridport is fortunate to have not only a cultural gem, but an architectural one too.

This Grade II listed masterpiece is a rare surviving example of 1920s entertainment architecture at its most evocative.

The building retains most of its original art-deco features, including the hanging lamps in the foyer and auditorium, the plush red velvet tipping seats and the moulded swags, and the torch lights which enhance the sweep of the balcony. But the centrepiece of the building is the collection of stunning murals painted in the art-deco style that lend the building a unique sense of character, history and theatrical flourish. These decorate the foyer, stairs and landing and were designed and painted in 1936 by George Biles, the local brewery sign writer.

The auditorium is decorated with eight massive murals by contemporary artists. Laurence Anholt's depicts King Kong reaching a mighty hand out of a film screen to grab at the terrified audience, while Peter Sheridan's pair, designed to look like extra seating in the circle, is filled with portraits of local people. David Brooke, Ant Belmont, Hugh Dunford-Wood, Claudio Munos and Paul Blow are the other mural artists.

The current owners bought the Palace in 2014 and since have spent more than £2 million carefully renovation and restoring the building to modern standards while preserving its 1920s charm, retaining and enhancing its original features and ensuring that it will be with us for another 100 years.



The structural integrity of the building has been improved (with a new roof, electrical system, plumbing and heating system) and the cinema technology, stage, sound equipment and other facilities have all been fully updated. The venue now boasts a "state-of-the-art" Barco SP2K digital projector and a 22-speaker JBL surround sound system with Dolby CP950 sound processor, together with Dorset's largest cinema screen to support its film offering, and a digital multichannel Digico SD9 sound desk, Chamsys MagiQ50 lighting desk, a stage quality PA speaker system and a multi-layered stage lighting array to support its broad offering of live music and theatre.

The building has step-free access for the foyer and auditorium (ground floor) and a "hearing loop" in the

auditorium for visitors with hearing aids. An accessible toilet is located on the ground floor in the entrance area (shared with the two retail units), with separate ladies and gents toilets located adjacent to the ground floor foyer and on the foyer balcony. Public car parking is provided in the nearby South Street Car Park (a 2-minute walk away) and offers parking for over 100 cars and easy level access to the Palace.

THE BUSINESS

The Palace represents a rare opportunity to acquire a long-established cultural venue with significant heritage. The sale of the Palace includes the operational venue, staff and the benefit of the business goodwill (as a going concern) and all associated trade fixtures and operating

equipment. The Palace offers purchasers the opportunity to continue an established trading business and to further develop one of Dorset's best-known independent entertainment venues.

The Palace auditorium provides flexible accommodation for live performances, film and private events, with a capacity of around 480 guests for standing events (including live music) and seating for up to 410 guests (300 in the stalls and 110 in the balcony) for comedy, film, the spoken word and theatre.

The foyer areas and ancillary spaces are suitable for hospitality, receptions and private functions – including weddings, conferences and funerals.

The venue has a wedding licence and can provide formal dining for up to 100 guests, with external caterers using a “pop-up” kitchen located in the “engine room” to the rear. The premises are licenced to serve alcohol and provide two bars in the entrance foyer on the ground floor, a third bar inside the auditorium (at the back of the stalls) and a temporary bar that can be opened on the foyer balcony. The chilled cellar (located adjacent to the main foyer bar) allows the sale of draft ales, lager and cider, as well as bottled beers, wines and spirits.

The Palace books a wide array of shows and events every year. Included amongst the amazing comedy acts who have played at the Palace are Bill Bailey, Ruby Wax, Chris McCausland, Milton Jones, Henning Wehn, Benjamin Zephaniah, James Acaster, Kerry Godliman, Rich Hall, Sara Pascoe and Lou Sanders.

From the world of music, recent acts include The Cavern Beatles, All Floyd and Fleetwood Bac – considered to be three of the best cover bands in the world – as well as Clodbusting (Kate Bush) and Oas-is. Past appearances include PJ Harvey, Billy Bragg, Toyah Wilcox, Johnny Marr (formerly of The Smiths), Steve Knightly (from Show of Hands), The Manfreds (formerly Manfred Mann), Rankin' Roger (from The Beat), The South (formerly The Beautiful South, including Alison Wheeler), with more regular performances by historic chart-toppers like The Pretenders, Fairport Convention and The Wurzels.

The Palace hosts many prestigious film events, including the renowned “From Page to Screen” film festival (every year in April), featuring special gala screenings with high profile film industry guests, and the “Purbeck Film Festival” (in October), showcasing independent and prestige cinema releases. The venue is renowned for hosting Q&As with filmmakers and directors, and this year includes a 20th Anniversary Gala of Casino Royale with Bond screenwriters, Neal Purvis and Robert Wade, and its composer David Arnold. Previous film festivals have included the Mike Leigh Film Festival at which this acclaimed director presented and hosted Q&A for 7 of his films over three days.

The Palace has also hosted many notable film premieres and special screenings over the years, often with a strong Dorset

connection, including the premiere of From Time to Time (filmed in Dorset) attended by writer and producer Julian Fellowes, a gala screening of Tamara Drewe (filmed in Dorset) with writer Posy Simmonds and director Stephen Frears gracing the red carpet, and the premier of Far from the Madding Crowd (filmed in Dorset) with producer Andrew MacDonald. In July 2022, the Palace hosted BBC Radio 4’s “Any Questions?” and, given the cultural and heritage significance of the Palace, this is an area that can be developed further by the purchaser.

The Palace started its centenary year with two awards: “My Favourite Business” and “Business of the Year” at the 2026 Bridport Business Awards. The venue was also previously named Best Theatre/Arts Venue in the Muddy Stiletto Awards for Dorset, Somerset & Bristol. With its eclectic mixture of film, live screenings (of ballet, theatre and opera), live comedy, live music and theatre, there is something for everybody, ensuring that the Palace will continue to enthrall for many years to come.

PATRONS

The Palace is regularly supported by its patrons, which include a glittering list of famous directors, actors, writers and musicians:

- Lord Julian Fellowes - actor, novelist, and film and TV writer, producer and director, most famous for Downton Abbey and Gosford Park. Oscar winner (Best Original Screenplay), 2x Emmy winner, 4x BAFTA nominee.
- Sir Stephen Frears – Film and TV producer and director, best known for Dangerous Liaisons and The Queen, 3x BAFTA winner, 2x Oscar nominee.
- Mike Leigh, OBE – Film, TV and theatre screenwriter, producer and director, best known for Secrets & Lies, Vera Drake, Abigail’s Party, Topsy-Turvy and Peterloo 3x BAFTA winner, 7x Oscar nominee.
- Lady Susan Birtwistle – TV drama and film writer and producer, most famous for Pride and Prejudice and Emma, BAFTA nominee.
- Chris Chibnall - TV drama writer and producer, most famous for Broadchurch and Doctor Who.
- Andrew Dickson – music composer for film and TV drama, most famous for the musical score for High Hopes.

- Sir Richard Eyre, CBE – of the National Theatre, film, theatre, TV and opera director and winner of three Lawrence Olivier Awards, 6x BAFTA nominee.
- Sylvester McCoy – actor and comedian, most famous for The Hobbit film series and Doctor Who.
- Caroline Montague – author and novelist.

EQUIPMENT AND TEAM

The Palace (Lot 1) will be sold with all trade fixtures, operating equipment and 5 employees as a going concern, including an experienced general manager, programming manager and technical manager (monthly paid), and an experienced team of duty staff (hourly paid) and volunteer stewards.

Further details are available following first inspection for those parties putting forward an acceptable offer for Lot 1 or the whole from the vendors agents, Symonds & Sampson.

SERVICES

Palace: mains electricity, gas, water and drainage. Gas central heating. 2 x telephone lines. Ultrafast Broadband.

MATERIAL INFORMATION

The property is Grade II listed.

The Palace (Lot 1) has the use of an accessible WC located within common parts, shared with Lot 2 (the two retail units).

The Palace is available for sale standalone or as a whole with the two retail units and two residential flats (located above the retail units) as part of a separated negotiation, by private treaty.

The sale of the Palace (Lot 1) includes the operational venue (together with staff, as a going concern), associated trade fixtures and equipment, and the benefit of the business goodwill.

The Palace (Lot 1) has been nominated by Bridport Town Council as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Dorset Council has until 27 May 2026 to decide whether to list the Palace as an ACV.

TENURE

The Palace (Lot 1) will be sold freehold or as a long leasehold (at least 900 years). Terms to be agreed.

LOT 2 - TWO RETAIL UNITS

Situated at 35 and 35a South Street are two impressive and recently refurbished retail units that blend contemporary styling with the original art-deco design features to add character and distinction. Positioned on the high street, within the town centre, the properties occupy a highly desirable and accessible location surrounded by retail, leisure and hospitality amenities, either side of the entrance to the Palace.

Both retail units have recently been refurbished to an exceptional standard and now provide high quality retail accommodation, with large street-facing glazed shop fronts and return frontages. Both units are currently let under standard internal repairing commercial leases with existing occupiers trading as a café and bar, and as an interior decorations shop.

Goose & Badger Café & Bar, at 35 South Street, is a successful coffee roastery, café and bar that has traded at the premises under a commercial lease since August 2024. This unit measures a total of approximately 60.6 m² (653 ft²), with the café measuring approximately 48.9 m² (526 ft²) and a well-equipped kitchen and storage area to the rear of approximately 11.7 m² (126 ft²).

Fitzgerald Green Interiors, at 35a South Street, is a curated home interiors retail shop selling homeware goods, fabrics and interior design services, showcasing products with timeless style and providing its customers with home interior and decorating advice. The business has traded at the premises under a commercial lease since June 2025.

Both retail units benefit from their own individual entrances from the street, and both units have the use of an accessible WC located within common parts (shared with the Palace).

FLOOR AREAS

35 South Street (Goose & Badger, café & bar)
Ground floor retail area 48.9 m² (526 ft²)
Ground floor kitchen & storage area 11.7 m² (126 ft²)
Total 60.6 m² (653 ft²)

35a South Street (Fitzgerald Green, interior decorations)
Ground floor retail area 42.5 m² (457 ft²)
Ground floor storage area 7.5 m² (81 ft²)
Total 50.0 m² (538 ft²)

COMMERCIAL TENANCIES

35 South Street is let by way of a standard internal repairing commercial lease from 1 August 2024, for an initial term of 3 years at an annual rent of £12,000, exclusive of VAT. The lease is contracted out of the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954. There are provisions within the lease for the tenant to contribute to shared maintenance and repair costs.

35a South Street is let by way of a standard internal repairing commercial lease from 5 June 2025, for an initial term of 3 years at an annual rent of £10,000, exclusive of VAT. The lease is contracted out of the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954. There are provisions within the lease for the tenant to contribute to shared maintenance and repair costs.

SERVICES

35 South Street: Mains gas, electricity, water and drainage. Gas central heating.

35a South Street: Mains electricity and drainage. Electrical heating. The existing water supply to 35a has been capped off at the meter and whilst this can be re-instated there is currently no separate water supply.
Broadband: Ultrafast speed available.

TENURE

The property will be sold as a long leasehold (999 years). Terms to be agreed.

MATERIAL INFORMATION

The property is Grade II listed.

The retail units (Lot 2) have the use of an accessible WC located within common parts and shared with the Palace (Lot 1).

The kitchen at 35 South Street can be used for baking and cooking light meals but cannot be used for deep frying for insurance reasons.

LOT 3 - TWO RESIDENTIAL FLATS

35b and 35c South Street are two impressive and recently refurbished apartments that blend contemporary styling with the original art-deco design features that add character and distinction. Both apartments are located above the retail units, but have separate entrances to the street.

Apartment 35c has been beautifully finished to an exceptional standard, using high quality materials to combine contemporary styling with original art-deco design to create a large, stylish and versatile living area. The main living space in 35c is a striking open plan kitchen, sitting and dining area. Designed to maximise both light and space, it provides a generous and flexible area for both everyday living and entertaining. Large front facing picture windows, together with a large lantern roof light, flood the apartment with natural light and create a bright and uplifting environment throughout the day. The kitchen is new and well equipped, with granite worktops, Belfast sink and a full range of Miele and Bosch appliances. The double bedroom is well proportioned and benefits from a stylish ensuite shower room. A separate utility room with WC provides additional convenience and practicality.

The refurbishment of apartment 35b is almost complete, and (like apartment 35c) it will be finished to an exceptional standard throughout, combining contemporary styling with original art-deco design to create a refined living environment. There is also an opportunity for the purchaser to influence the final aspects of the design and finish.

The principal living space for apartment 35b is also a large open plan area for everyday living and entertaining, which also benefits from front facing large picture windows and a large lantern roof light above which flood the apartment with natural light. The kitchen in 35b is brand-new and provides oak worktops, Belfast sink and a choice of appliances. The large principal bedroom benefits from an ensuite shower room (and the choice of a bath). A separate utility room with WC, accessed from the main living space, enhances practicality.

A particular feature of apartment 35b is a large private roof terrace with stunning views, including the iconic Colmers Hill to the west, which offers an ideal space for outdoor seating and entertaining.

Both apartments are located on the first floor, and benefit from their own individual entrances from the street. There is an interconnecting door providing access between apartments 35c and 35b, meaning the properties can be used as one larger property or as two separate units.

TENURE

The property will be sold as a freehold (and will include the freehold interest of the two leasehold retail units below). Terms to be agreed.

MATERIAL INFORMATION

The property is Grade II listed.

Apartment 35c will be sold including curtains, kitchen and utility appliances (integrated fridge, freezer, oven, hob, microwave and wine fridge, and free-standing washing machine and tumble drier), TV, and all wall and ceiling lights. Apartment 35b will be sold excluding curtains, kitchen and utility appliances and TV.

Each apartment has its own entrance from the street. There is an interconnecting door providing access between apartments 35c and 35b, meaning the properties can be used as one larger property or two separate units.

DIRECTIONS

What3words:

Palace (from South Street): /// plotting.broached.notched
35 South Street (to Goose & Badger café): ///
driveway.curvy.indicates

35a South Street (to Fitzgerald Green interiors): ///
areas.mistaking.renders

Flat 35b (from South Street): /// driveway.curvy.indicates

Flat 35c (from South Street): /// areas.mistaking.renders

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Dorset Council Tel: 01305 221000

Business Rates:

Palace: RV £6,600

Retail Unit 1: 35 South Street: RV £10,750

Retail Unit 2: 35a South Street: RV £10,500

Council Tax: Apartments 35b & 35c: Band A

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

N/A (Grade II Listed Property)

VIEWINGS

Strictly by appointment only, to be arranged via Symonds & Sampson, Dorchester Commercial Sales on 01305 261008 (Option 5) or Bridport Sales on 01308 422092.

GENERAL

VAT:

Any guide price quoted or discussed is exclusive of VAT. If a sale of the property, or any part of it, or any right attached to it, becomes a chargeable supply for the purposes of VAT, such tax will be payable in addition.

Health and safety:

Given the potential hazards of a working cinema/theatre we ask you to be as vigilant as possible when making your inspection for your own personal safety, particularly around the stage and back-stage areas. All visitors to Bridport Electric Palace must be accompanied by a representative of the vendors agents, Symonds & Sampson, and by a member of the Electric Palace staff at all times.

Solicitors:

Pengillys LLP, Weymouth.

Bridport Electric Palace, South Street, Bridport

Approximate Area = 10325 sq ft / 959.2 sq m

For identification only - Not to scale

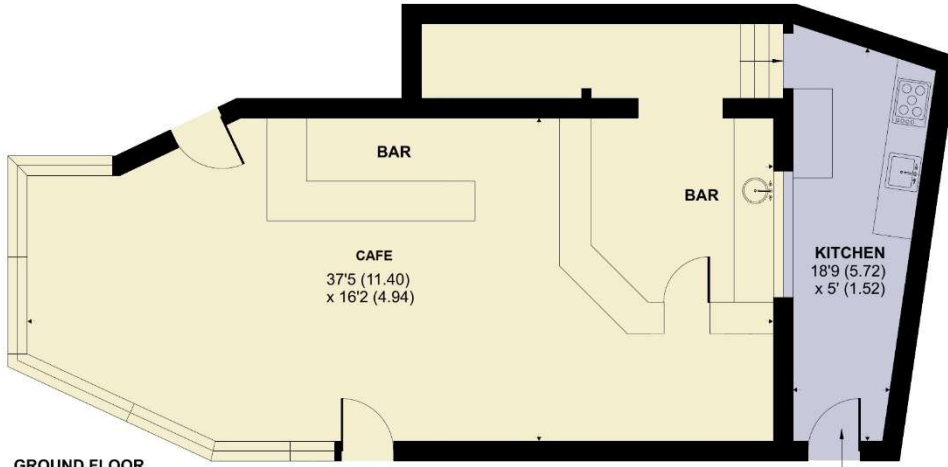


Floor plan produced in accordance with RICS Property Measurement 2nd Edition, Incorporating International Property Measurement Standards (IPMS2 Residential). © nichecom 2026. Produced for Symonds & Sampson. REF: 1435493



Retail Unit 1: 35 South Street, Bridport

Approximate Area = 784 sq ft / 72.8 sq m
For identification only - Not to scale



GROUND FLOOR

 Floor plan produced in accordance with RICS Property Measurement 2nd Edition, incorporating International Property Measurement Standards (IPMS2 Residential). © richicom 2020. Produced for Symonds & Sampson. REF: 1435428



Retail Unit 2: 35a South Street, Bridport

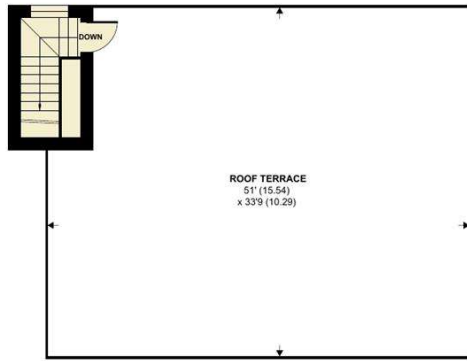
Approximate Area = 538 sq ft / 50 sq m
For identification only - Not to scale



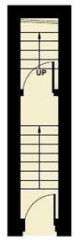
Apartments 35c and 35b, South Street, Bridport

Approximate Area = 2070 sq ft / 192.2 sq m

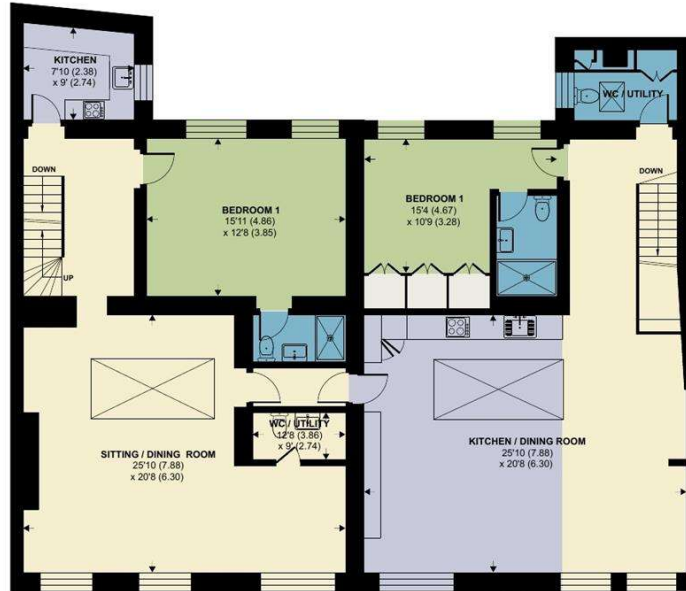
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FLAT 35b
SECOND FLOOR

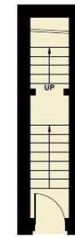


FLAT 35b
GROUND FLOOR



FLAT 35b
FIRST FLOOR

FLAT 35c
FIRST FLOOR



FLAT 35c
GROUND FLOOR

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DorCom/RH/01.05.26



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All measurements and distances are approximate. Text, photographs, and plans are for guidance only and may not be comprehensive. It should not be assumed that the property has all necessary planning or regulatory consents, and no services, equipment, or facilities have been tested. No investigations have been made into pollution or contamination; purchasers must make their own enquiries. The property is sold subject to all existing wayleaves, easements, and rights of way (public or private), whether mentioned or not. Vendors are not required to define such