

Our Ref.: RA/2858

31 May 2017

Planning and Building Control  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Nicholas Street  
Chester CH1 2NP

Dear Sir or Madam,

**The Little Theatre, Gloucester Street, Chester**

Application number: 17/02111/FUL

I write regarding the above planning application for the installation of a lift, escape stair and associated alterations to The Little Theatre, Chester. The Theatres Trust supports the application. *Please note we were not consulted by council, as per our statutory remit.*

**Remit:** The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, requiring the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre'.

**Comment:** The Trust actively encourages theatre owners and operators to invest in their buildings and ensure they are developed in a way that will support their long term viability as a live performance venue and meet the needs and expectations of audiences, performers, and staff. We therefore support this application to improve access at The Little Theatre.

The theatre has operated successfully on this site since 1962, however, we recognise that the existing facilities do not meet current building standards and this restricts the way the building is used and operated. We therefore agree with the rationale behind the proposal, and welcome the installation of a lift and the new escape stair and refuge space to address these building requirements. With the addition of the new first floor access corridor to link the lift and stair with the auditorium and upper foyer, we also support the widening of the stage, which will greatly improve staging arrangements and sight lines for the audience. Urgent roof repairs to the bar store roof will secure the building and ensure it is safe and watertight.

The extensions are relatively low key to minimise their physical and visual impact on the neighbouring properties, but the additional facilities and rearranged spaces will help ensure the

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**Chair** Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

**Trustees** Richard Baldwin, Paddy Dillon, Ruth Eastwood, Dame Penelope Keith DL, Dara Ó Briain, Peter Roberts, Ann Skippers, Anna Stapleton

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

theatre can continue to operate effectively into the future. The Trust would therefore recommend granting planning permission.

This advice reflect guidance in Paragraph 70 of the NPPF which states that in 'promoting healthy communities', planning decisions should 'plan positively for cultural buildings' and ensure that such facilities 'are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community'.

Please do contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Anthony', with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Ross Anthony  
Planning Adviser