

Our Ref.: RA/9006041

13 June 2017

Ms Julie Mitchell
Planning and Enterprise Service
Cornwall Council
Truro
Cornwall TR1 1EB

Dear Ms Mitchell,

Bodmin Public Rooms, Mount Folly, Bodmin, PL31 2DB

Application number: PS17/0392 and PA17/03896

I write regarding the above planning and listed building applications for the conversion of the Bodmin Public Rooms into a multi-screen cinema and associated alterations to the building. The Trust's statutory remit and advice are outlined below.

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 Theatres Trust has concerns with this proposal, as it will result in the loss of an important local cultural asset for Bodmin at a time where there is considerable community support to retain the building in an active community oriented use.

Where a new use is proposed on the site of a community or cultural facility, Council must be satisfied the site is surplus to the cultural needs and requirements of the local community before granting that new use. This is because community and cultural buildings often occupy accessible and central sites within town centres and are virtually impossible to replace once they are lost.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes extensive directions and guidance on the importance of safeguarding cultural assets. Notably, paragraph 70 states that in 'promoting healthy communities', planning decisions should 'plan positively for cultural buildings' and 'guard against the loss of cultural facilities and services'.

Further, Policy 4.4 Cornwall's Local Plan (Adopted 2016) states that the loss of community facilities will be resisted unless it is clearly demonstrated there is 'no need for the facility or Service'

Theatres Trust

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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

The Trust would therefore expect the submission of a community and cultural needs assessment to justify the full loss of community and cultural facility of this nature.

The Trust recommends that these applications only be granted permission if Council is satisfied that the building is surplus to the cultural and community requirements for the local community and that they are not contrary to the advice given within the NPPF or the Cornwall Local Plan.

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