

Our Ref.: RA/699

15 June 2017

Ms Trisha Jean-Marie  
Planning Services  
Bristol City Council

Dear Ms Jean-Marie,

**Hippodrome Theatre, St Augustine's Parade, Bristol, BS1 4UZ**

Application ref: 17/01493/LA

I write regarding the above listed building application for the installation of an automated pit lift within the orchestra pit, and associated alterations. The Trust supports the application. Please see our 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 actively encourages theatres owners and operators to invest and upgrade their venues to ensure they meet current building and safety standards, and to keep pace with the expectations and needs of modern audiences, staff, performers and producers to remain competitive and viable. The Trust therefore supports this proposal to alter the orchestra pit and install an automated pit lift. Such facilities are installed at many listed theatres, and enable the safe and efficient movement of equipment between the sub-stage, auditorium and stage levels. The orchestra pit is of little architectural interest, and therefore will not cause any harm to the historic significance of the building, and the lift will greatly benefit the way the theatre operates and help sustain this important heritage asset.

Our only reservation is the proposal to replace the entire pit rail with a modern replica. Its unclear from the documentation provided why the entire rail will be replaced, rather than just the damaged sections and we would recommend further consideration be given to retaining more of the undamaged sections.

This advice reflects 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*'.

**Theatres Trust**

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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

Overall, the Trust agrees this is a beneficial alteration that will not harm the significance of the building. We therefore recommend granting listed building consent. Please do contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Anthony', written over a horizontal line.

Ross Anthony  
Planning Adviser