

Our Ref.: RA/ 9006043

19 June 2017

Ms Karen Shotton
Development Management
Newcastle City Council
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QH

Dear Ms Shotton,

Proposed Alphabetti Theatre, 41-51 Blandford Square, Newcastle

Application number: 2017/0769/01/DET

I write regarding the above planning application for the change of use of the basement and ground floor levels of the building at 41-51 Blandford Square from retail (Class A1) to a mixed use theatre space (Sui Generis) with ancillary bar/ café, retail and office accommodation. 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 Trust supports the application because it provides a new studio theatre and ancillary facilities for the Alphabetti Theatre, who have had to relocate due to the redevelopment of their former site on New Bridge Street West. The new basement theatre space is of a suitable size for small scale theatre and will provide additional facilities, such as rehearsal room, which will help expand the theatre's artistic work and provide an important additional income stream to support the theatre's viability. The Theatres Trust hopes the new venue will continue to be highly valued local arts venue, nurturing local talent and promoting new work.

We are also keen to support sustainable new uses for vacant premises particularly where they will increase the vitality and vibrancy of the surrounding area by actively engaging the local community in the work of theatre both through performance and the operation of a café/ bookshop. The main entrance to the basement theatre via the rear laneway addresses access issues and will help activate this otherwise void space.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes extensive directions and guidance on the importance of promoting cultural venues. Notably, culture is included as a core planning

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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

principle outlined in paragraph 17, and 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'.

Given Alphabetti Theatre has already established a reputation as a valued theatre and arts venue, the Trust would encourage you to grant planning permission. Please 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