

Our Ref.: RA/2858

19 June 2017

Mr Ceri Thomas
Conwy County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Colwyn Bay, Wales, LL29 8AR

Dear Mr Thomas,

The Victoria Pier and Pavilion, Colwyn Bay

Application Ref.: 0/43979 and 0/43978

I write regarding the above planning and listed building applications to dismantle Colwyn Bay's Victoria Pier and Pavilion and reconstruct a truncated replacement pier. The Pavilion is currently listed on the Trust's Theatre Buildings at Risk Register to highlight its dilapidated condition. Please see our comments below.

Remit: The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. Established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976, the Trust delivers statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Wales through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, requiring the Trust to be consulted on planning applications 'involving any land on which there is a theatre'.

Advice/comment: The Theatres Trust would normally object to an application that involves the complete demolition of a cultural venue without clear plans for the provision of a replacement venue. However, in this instance we recognise that both the pier sub structure and the pavilion super structure have deteriorated to a point in which they are now in an extremely unsafe and unstable state, particularly after recent storm and fire damage. Much of the bandstand and the seaward end of the pier that collapsed has already been recorded and demolished and retrospective approval is being sought for this work.

Following the Welsh Government's rejection of the 2015 application for substantial demolition, and then the termination of the second HLF bid, we understand Council and the Colwyn Victoria Pier Trust have been working together to develop this scheme. From our understanding of the plans, the scheme involves the recording and dismantling the remaining structure, storage of the salvageable structural elements, and reconstruction of a truncated pier four bays long. The scheme makes provision for the reconstruction of the rest of the pier at a later date reusing the salvaged elements, when funding is obtained.

While we reluctantly accept this is a necessary course of action at this point of time, we do have concerns about the long term storage of the salvaged parts and about the loss of the Pavilion. In

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591

F 020 7836 3302

E info@theatrestrust.org.uk

W theatrestrust.org.uk

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

this regard, the application focuses on the recreational value of the pier, but doesn't really acknowledge the cultural, economic and tourism value of the Pavilion and or fully consider the potential benefits of a restored and reopened pier with a new Pavilion and other attractions. There are only five pier theatres still in operation across the UK, meaning this building type is now very rare, and we would expect the scheme to give greater consideration to its value and to its eventual replacement.

Regarding storage, the Trust warns that this needs to be carefully considered and appropriately secured in any approval. When structural works on Brighton's Palace Pier (now known as Brighton Pier) became necessary in 1986, the Council (then Brighton Borough Council) gave permission for the dismantling of the listed Palace Pier Theatre with a view to its being reinstated on completion of the works. However the permission for the approved development was never properly implemented and by the time it had expired the salvaged parts of the theatre had all disappeared. Given the form in which the consents had been drafted there was no way in which reinstatement could be enforced or the legal ability to prosecute and seek restoration.

The application documentation for this scheme simply states that future storage is to be secured via conditions, but there is no detail on the responsibilities, costs, time frames, etc. and the Trust is therefore concerned, as was the case with the Palace Pier Theatre, that safe storage may not happen and the opportunity to reinstate the pier and pavilion will be lost.

Recommendation: The Conwy Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales (chapter 6) and Circular 61/96 considers demolition of a listed structure as exceptional and appropriate mitigation must be provided. Given the circumstances, the Trust agrees with the mitigation proposals outlined in section 10.36 and 10.37 of the Heritage Impact Statement and would expect these to be secured by a condition of consent. In particular the Trust requires a full recording of the Pavilion and of the Ravilious murals and paintings by Mary Adshead, and all efforts made to dismantle, conserve, and store or reuse what remains of the murals/ paintings, as appropriate.

In addition, the Trust strongly recommends a condition, or other binding agreement, to secure the safe storage of salvaged elements of the pier, though given storage cannot be a permanent solution, there should also be a requirement for the Council to continue working with the Colwyn Victoria Pier Trust to fundraise and develop a viable scheme to reinstate or reuse the pier and pavilion.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Regards,



Ross Anthony
Planning Adviser