

Protecting theatres for everyone



Our Ref.: RA/9006052

4 July 2017

Development Management
London Borough of Redbridge
Room A2, Town Hall,
128-142 High Road,
Ilford, IG1 1DD

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Former Embassy Cinema/ Mecca Bingo, 1078-1080 High Road, Chadwell Heath

Application Ref: 1217/17

I write regarding the above application for the change of use of the former Embassy Cinema (currently known as the Mayfair Venue) from Class D2 to Class D1 for use as a banqueting hall and conference centre. 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 a potential cultural asset for Chadwell Heath and for the Borough.

Where a new use is proposed on the site of an existing 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, Strategic Policy 9: Culture and Recreation in the Redbridge Core Strategy (Adopted 2008) aims to promote culture by safeguarding community and cultural facilities. We note Policy LP17 in the Draft Local Plan currently being examined is also consistent with the NPPF requirements.

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

The Trust would therefore expect the submission of a community and cultural needs assessment to justify the loss of community and cultural facility of this nature, or a viability assessment to show that it would not be viable to retain the building in a Class D2 use.

The Trust recommends that the application is only 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 Redbridge Core Strategy.

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 underneath it.

Ross Anthony
Planning Adviser