

Ref.: RA/3000

21 August 2017

Mrs K Lawton  
Planning Services  
Scarborough Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Scarborough YO11 2HG

Dear Mrs Lawton,

**Stephen Joseph Theatre, Westborough, Scarborough, YO11 1JW**

Application Ref.: 17/01583/LB and 17/01584/RG4

I write regarding the above planning and listed building applications for alterations to the foyer and surrounding areas of the Stephen Joseph Theatre. Please see our advice 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 use through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, that requires the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre.' This applies to all theatre buildings, including those adapted for theatre use, that are out of use, or are now in another use. Our main objective is to safeguard theatre and cultural uses, or the potential for such uses.

**Advice:** The Trust actively encourages theatre operators to invest in their buildings to ensure they meet current building standards and the expectations of their audiences, staff, performers and the local community. In this regard, we support overall concept of opening up the foyer area at the Stephen Joseph Theatre to encourage greater public use throughout the day, but recommend further consideration as to whether all the proposed changes are needed.

The Trust has no objections to the creation of the three windows in the upper foyer area or the removal of the glazed shop divider. While early pictures of the cinema provided by the Cinema Theatre Association suggest it is unlikely there were actually windows in this location when first constructed, there are a number of cinema buildings constructed in a very similar style that do, and provided the right proportions and materials are used to reflect the windows on the level above, this would be considered an acceptable alteration to the historic fabric of the building. There are also obvious benefits to the sustainability and usability of the foyer space by allowing natural light into the theatre and by creating views into and out of the building overlooking the foot path. We also support upgrading the platform lift to ensure the upper foyer and WCs are accessible.

In regards to the theatre's Grade II heritage significance, while we understand the rationale for

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**Chair** Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

**Trustees** Richard Baldwin, David Blyth, Pam Bone, Paul Cartwright, Paddy Dillon, Ruth Eastwood, David Ian, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Dara Ó Briain, Simon Ricketts, Peter Roberts, Ann Skippers, Anna Stapleton

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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opening the foyer to the shop, etc., it is unclear from the documentation how significant the historic fabric in the lower foyer is, and whether features such as the walls and doors are part of the original building, or altered during the cinema to theatre conversion. For example, the doors to the adjacent shop behind the box office appear to be the original Odeon design, but it is unclear how their loss would affect the significance of this building, or if they could be reused elsewhere in the theatre, or if a more modest opening that retains one door would be more appropriate. In addition, operationally, theatres would generally retain the second set of doors that form the draught lobby in the lower foyer area, as this would maintain a comfortable environment in the upper foyer for the audience, particularly during winter, but can be propped open at other times of the year, and we suggest this should be given further consideration.

While we support the alterations to the upper foyer, we recommend that a statement of significance is prepared to assess the importance of the features to be altered and removed in the lower foyer, and that this is then used to determine the level of alterations that are appropriate, keeping in mind the wider operational needs of the theatre.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ross Anthony', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ross Anthony  
Planning Adviser