

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: RA/9006066

19 September 2017

Ms Catherine Slade
Planning and Regulatory Services
Hackney Council
2 Hillman Street
London E8 1FB

Dear Ms Slade,

Sunstone House, 16 Northwold Road, London N16 7HR

Application Ref.: 2017/3175

I write regarding the above planning application for the change of use and associated alterations to Sunstone House to form a 120 seat theatre (sui generis) with ancillary café and rehearsal facilities. The Theatres Trust supports the application. Please see our advice below.

Remit: The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We champion the past, present and future of live theatre, by protecting the buildings and what goes on inside. 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 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'.

Advice: The Trust supports this application to convert Sunstone House into a new studio theatre with ancillary café and rehearsal space. With a capacity of 120 people, the new theatre is of a suitable size to support fringe and small scale theatre and the Trust hopes the venue will become a highly valued arts centre which will expand the cultural provision within the Stoke Newington area, nurturing professional local talent, promoting new work, and engaging the local community.

Originally constructed as a church, and most recently used as a gym, this building easily lends itself to a theatre use, particularly the existing studio space on the ground level and the large polygonal shop with pitched roof on the upper level, which will provide a large flexible space to present theatre in a variety of formats. The proposal requires relatively few alterations to the building, and we agree that those proposed are necessary for the theatre use and to upgrade the building to meet building and accessibility standards. In this regard we welcome the installation of the front ramp and lift to make all levels and facilities accessible, the removal of the non-original upper level mezzanine, the refurbishment of the café, and the new and

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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

additional WC facilities which meet the ABTT's guidelines for a theatre of this size.

As a locally listed building, we appreciate the efforts to retain and reuse the external elements being altered, and the replacement of the rear canopy and fascia to improve the appearance of this elevation. In terms of design and operation, the Trust's only concern is how the rear service corridor will be secured and safeguarded to ensure it is kept free and unimpeded by parked cars, etc. until the car park is redeveloped, though recognise this is a management rather than planning issue.

Overall, we support the application and as the proposal will introduce new sustainable use to reactivate this long vacant building and add to the local cultural offer in Stoke Newington. The Trust would therefore recommend granting planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Anthony', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Ross Anthony
Planning Adviser