

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Our Ref.: RA/3134

26 September 2017

Stephen Hissett
Planning Department
London Borough of Hounslow
Civic Centre
Hounslow TW3 4DN

Dear Mr Hissett,

Watermans Arts Centre, 40 and 40A High Street, Brentford, TW8 0DS

Former Police Station, Half Acre, Brentford, TW8 8DH

Application Ref: P/2017/3371 and P2017/3372

I write regarding the above applications for demolition and redevelopment of the Watermans Arts Centre; and the demolition and redevelopment of the former police station on Half Acre to provide a new replacement arts centre (D2) within a part 6/7 storey residential building. *Please note the Theatres Trust was not consulted, as per our statutory remit.*

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'.

Advice: The Theatres Trust supports these applications as they will deliver new cultural and more accessible cultural hub in the heart of Brentford, including the provision of a new a publically accessible theatre that will allow the Watermans Arts Centre to expand and develop their work with the local community.

While the fit out plans are not provided as part of this application, the Trust has spoken with the management of the existing Arts Centre and are satisfied the ground floor and basement area designated for the new arts centre will be able to accommodate the necessary facilities to guarantee a satisfactory replacement venue is provided and that has been designed to meet their specific needs. The replacement venue is expected to include exhibition space, studios, a theatre, cinema and a range of back of house, office and support facilities. The proposed building also provides the new arts centre with good street frontage and public visibility, adequate floor to ceiling heights for fixtures and fittings needed for performance venue, and a suitable loading area to the rear. However, having a performance venue under a residential building will require a very high level of sound insulation between the two uses, and this should be conditioned.

From experience with similar projects, The Theatres Trust advises Council that it must be satisfied that there are enough safeguards in place (including financial support) to secure the full replacement

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, 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

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

facility and meet the requirements within your Local Plan and the NPPF. Set out below are a number of Section 106 requirements and draft conditions that we suggest should be imposed. It is very important that the agreement clearly stipulates what level of works are to be completed by the developer and what level of fit out is to be provided by the other parties, details of the lease arrangements, and what other contributions the developer is to provide.

The Section 106 should include:

- a) a signed lease for the theatre be appended to the S106 Agreement, including details of the peppercorn rental agreement, reasonable service charges, and length of lease;
- b) a clear plan demarcating the arts centre demise;
- c) the funding contribution by the developer for the arts centre fit-out, which should be placed within an Escrow Agreement; and require all funding for the arts centre to be transferred to the Watermans Arts Centre prior to the existing arts centre land being transferred to the developer;
- f) detail who is responsible for providing and paying for the base build and the later fit out works, and this should be agreed to by all parties; and
- f) a detailed schedule of works and specification for the arts centre (including back and front-of-house facilities as well as an ancillary areas) together with technical and electrical installations, fixtures, fittings and seating shall be provided. Though this could also be included as a planning condition to be completed prior to the commencement of any building works.

Recent examples of similar mixed use residential/ cultural developments with s106 agreements include Riverside Studios (Hammersmith and Fulham, 2013/03797), Streatham Hill community and studio theatre space (Lambeth, 14/06765/VOC), Theatre Peckham (Southwark, 13/AP/2979); Collins Theatre (Islington, P2015/4636), and the recently opened Twickenham Cultural and Community Centre (Richmond, 12/3650/FUL).

Many of the above agreements include additional measures to ensure the new venues are delivered properly. For example, the Streatham studio agreement includes an additional cash payment of £408,000 towards fit out costs, and the Collins Theatre s106 includes a restriction on the occupation of the related retail units until the theatre is fitted out and operational. The Trust is happy to provide further details on the above applications.

Most importantly, to ensure there is a continuity of cultural provision in the area and to retain the local audience and local uses, any approval should be conditioned to ensure the new building and venue is constructed and open before the demolition of the existing arts centre.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Regards,



Ross Anthony
Planning Adviser