

Our Ref.:2746

2 November 2017

Miss Sarah McMahon
Planning Services
Leeds City Council
Leeds LS2 8HD

Dear Miss McMahon,

West Yorkshire Playhouse, St Peters Street, Leeds LS2 7UP

Application Ref: 17/05349/LA

I write regarding the above planning application for alterations and extensions to the West Yorkshire Playhouse. 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 actively encourages the owners and operators of theatres and cultural venues to invest in their buildings to ensure they meet current building, access and safety standards, and the needs and expectations of modern audiences, performers, producers and the local community. The Trust therefore supports the proposed works to modernise and refurbish the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

The redevelopment of the Playhouse provides the opportunity to reorganise the theatres main public spaces to make it a more inclusive and accessible cultural hub. The creation of a new entrance on St Peters Street and the opening-up of the Priestley Room onto Gateway Court will increase the visibility and presence of the theatre within the streetscape, and connect it with the main city centre area.

The new entrance extension provides a clearer and more open and welcoming entry point to the theatre and flows through to the new central spine which connects the different levels and performance spaces with the secondary entrance (a rearrangement of existing entry) facing Playhouse Square. While the plant and service area does present limitations on the design, the entry and new spine, together with the expanded lift capacity and the connections to mid-level of

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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

the Quarry Theatre, greatly improves circulation and the flow of the audience around the building between the various front of house facilities and spaces. We particularly support the introduction of the vomitoria into the main auditorium, which will provide a greater range of wheelchair spaces and reduce the stairs that ambulant audience members need to use, improving the overall audience experience.

We support the creation of a new performance space in the otherwise unused rock voids, as this will allow the West Yorkshire Playhouse to produce work on all scales and provide a space to support the development of new work. While the capacity of this new venue is small and unlikely to have a large impact on the organisation's finances, the variety of spaces available could allow it to reach a wider segment of audiences and make it a more attractive prospect for external funders.

Finally, the Trust supports the rearrangement of the Courtyard Theatre to increase seating capacity, along with the overall improvements to the M&E services and technical systems across the Playhouse and the additional of hospitality and function spaces.

Overall, the proposal greatly improves the centre's operational capabilities, access, and facilities which will help ensure the Playhouse has a viable and sustainable future. 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 through the middle of the signature.

Ross Anthony
Planning Consultant