

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3081

10 April 2018

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Application: 17/01424/FULM & 18/00066/FUL

Site: Snibston Discovery Park and Century Theatre, Ashby Road, Coalville LE67 3LN

Proposal: Residential development of up to 144 dwellings (Outline - all matters reserved) and erection of an extension to existing theatre to provide a cafe/visitor centre/rangers' office, installation of a play area, public realm works, landscaping and car parks (full)

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Change of use of a disused railway line into public highway as a route for pedestrians and cyclists

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:

Following our previous comments of 16th November 2017, the Trust supports the amendments proposed which would seem to further enhance the role and future viability of the Century Theatre as a cultural asset for Coalville with great historic significance, and better integrate the theatre into the overall development. The removal of vehicle access through the site towards the future housing development, which previously passed alongside the theatre, is welcomed given the limited acoustic insulation at the Century which had given rise to the potential for passing vehicle movements to disturb performances. We also support the change of use of the disused railway into a pedestrian and cycle route.

We do though have some further comments related to plans and the design of the scheme.

Theatres Trust

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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

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

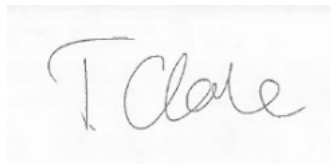
Plans suggest the café will form an extension of the theatre, and therefore we assume the two will be operated together and this is something we would support and recommend. There is inconsistent reference throughout the supporting documentation regarding the educational facility being operated by the theatre. We suggest this is clarified as separate operation (of the café in particular) may have an impact on the theatre's income and viability as well as negatively impact access and visibility to the theatre if the café is closed around performance times. This concern is furthered by the theatre also being set behind the education building. Regardless of ownership and operation of these facilities, it will be important to ensure that signage for the theatre is prominent and is an integral feature of signage for surrounding uses, as well as featuring on wayfinding signage across the site. Given its history we also recommend the theatre is incorporated into history boards alongside those detailing the site's colliery heritage.

With plans showing the colliery areas to be fenced off and with the theatre being located towards the site boundary with limited access to the rear, we recommend that an appropriate fire evacuation plan is in place which satisfies the Council's fire safety representative. This layout does also suggest the theatre can no longer be relocated as per its original design. We would suggest some flexibility in terms of site layout to allow for the theatre to be moved again should the need ever arise.

The proposed pedestrian and cycle route along the disused railway between Chiswell Drive and the town centre will run adjacent to the Century Theatre; the Trust is supportive of this as users of the theatre should benefit from improved (and potentially more attractive) accessibility to the theatre by sustainable means.

Overall we welcome these proposals and **recommend the granting of permission.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Tom Clarke
National Planning Adviser