

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3104

27 March 2018

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Housing, Planning & Regulatory Services
Chief Executive's Directorate
London Borough of Hounslow
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By e-mail: planningcomments@hounslow.gov.uk

F.A.O: Eamon Cassidy

Application: P/2018/0648

Site: 14 THE ARTS EDUCATIONAL LONDON SCHOOLS BATH ROAD CHISWICK LONDON W4 1LY

Proposal: Demolish rear buildings, remove pitched roof of building fronting Bath Road and its side-attached toilet block. Erection of new classrooms and performing arts studios to rear of site. New studio theatre to rear/east end of site. New dance and acting rooftop studios on Bath Road building. New entrance canopy and car park street frontage to Bath Road including relocated access and new recreation space on rooftop of new dance studios. Re-location of sub-station to Bath Road frontage.

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:

This application will result in the improvement and enhancement of ArtsEd's teaching and training facilities not just for the benefit of students but also for the wider community that use them. In terms of our remit, we particularly welcome that it will provide a new state-of-the-art studio theatre which will expand Chiswick's cultural provision. We therefore **support** the principle of this development.

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

The proposal for a new studio theatre represents a significant improvement and expansion to current provision at the site, with the existing smaller studio theatre also being maintained. The existing studio theatre is around one and a half stories in height, whereas the new one will be around three stories and will offer approximately 148 seats. This will add greater flexibility and adaptability to facilitate different types of performances and audience layouts. It will help to nurture and develop talent and allow the testing of new concepts and shows, contributing towards the ongoing innovation and vibrancy of London's arts and theatrical offer. It will also provide the opportunity to support increased fringe and small-scale theatre performances in Chiswick, and provide an additional venue for local groups.

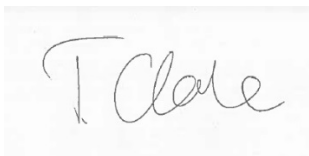
Plans show there to be some separation between the new studio theatre and surrounding residential properties and it has been designed as a 'box within a box' to enhance sound insulation. Therefore there should be no detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

We would advise that the internal get-in to the new studio theatre within the building appears adequate but external access to the area appears to be tight. This may be adequate for the types of sets required by ArtsEd and other groups using the theatre, nonetheless the applicant may wish to give this aspect further consideration. We would also encourage the applicant to ensure compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations for both front and backstage; while plans appear to show disabled places and a disabled toilet within the auditorium, there appears to be no disabled toilet or changing facilities backstage.

With the public entrance to both theatres and the box office appearing to be towards the rear of the building from the main entrance, we would recommend that the applicant ensures adequate internal signage to assist with wayfinding.

An inevitable result of expanding provision at the site is that a higher density of development will be required along with alterations that may impact the setting of the surrounding conservation area. Any detrimental impacts must though be considered in the context of the significant community benefits that would arise from the proposal and improved learning outcomes for ArtsEd's students. Overall we **recommend the approval of this application**.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'T Clarke', on a light-colored rectangular background.

Tom Clarke
National Planning Adviser