

# Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/725

10 May 2018

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Pending Applications  
Development Planning  
City of Westminster  
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By e-mail: [southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk)

**Application:** 18/02568/LBC

**Site:** Noel Coward Theatre 85-89 St Martin's Lane London WC2N 4AU

**Proposal:** Refurbishment works within the auditorium ceiling void, including installation of latch failsafes, relocation of existing plant and services, upgrading of existing void lighting, refurbishment works to suspended fibrous plaster ceiling, removal of existing auditorium ceiling void crawl boards and installation of ceiling walkway, like for like redecoration of ceilings and general plasterwork repairs to boxes and proscenium arches as necessary.

**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:**

Thank you for consulting the Theatres Trust on the above application.

The Trust actively encourages theatre owners and operators to invest and upgrade their buildings to ensure they meet current building and safety standards. We therefore support this application for alterations within the theatre ceiling void, and the strengthening and redecoration of the ceiling, in accordance with the Association of British Theatre Technicians *Guidance Note 20 Advice to theatre owners and managers regarding suspended fibrous plaster ceilings; surveys, certification record keeping etc.*, which establishes best practice for the maintenance and inspection of suspended fibrous plaster ceilings.

We support the removal of the existing ceiling void crawl boards and other services that currently rest upon the ceiling and their replacement with a walkway and equipment that is

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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

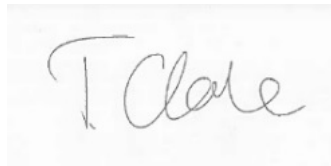
The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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

suspended from the structural roof frame of the building. This will greatly improve access for ceiling inspections and will reduce the load and pressure placed on the plaster ceiling and rafters. The outlined methodology for strengthening the existing hessian wads with galvanised wire is generally consistent with the approach taken to secure suspended plaster ceilings at other theatres and is therefore considered suitable at the Noel Coward. We also welcome the general repairs to plaster features throughout the theatre, and the redecoration of the ceiling to enhance the appearance of the auditorium as a whole.

Overall, we agree with the objectives of this proposal as the safety of the audience, performers and theatre staff is paramount and the Trust welcomes the precautionary approach taken to reinforce, refurbish, redecorate and extend the life of the Noel Coward Theatre's suspended plaster ceiling. We therefore **recommend the granting of listed building consent**.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Tom Clarke  
National Planning Adviser