

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3291

1 May 2018

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East Pallant House
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1TY

By e-mail: dcplanning@chichester.gov.uk

Application: 18/00833/FUL

Site: 103A High Street Selsey Chichester West Sussex PO20 0QL

Proposal: Internal alterations and two storey side and rear extensions to facilitate the restoration of the theatre as a public venue that replaces the existing factory/storage use together with improvements to the coffee shop and provision for a licensed bar and take away food.

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 welcomes efforts to bring the Pavillion back to use as a theatre/performance venue in line with the 'Vision for Places – Manhood Peninsula' articulated in the adopted Chichester Local Plan which supports commercial and social activities which meet the needs of local people and visitors. Policy 23 of the plan also supports community facilities within Selsey. While we support the principle of this development, the format of the drawings make it hard to properly assess. We have some concerns regarding the apparent design and massing of this proposal as well as its overall viability.

The roof plan does not appear to fit with the volume of space beneath. We would query how the roof can be supported without structural posts within the auditorium space as this is not clear from the diagrams. Our concern is that this element of the proposal may be over-complicated

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

and expensive given the size and community nature of the theatre and could result in the theatre becoming overly-dominant within the streetscene.

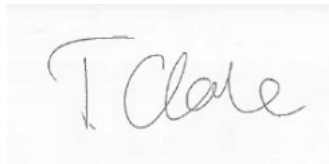
It is also not clear from the plans whether the stage is at an appropriate height, although there does not appear to be any level access for performers with disabilities. We would encourage the applicant to address this, particularly as the plans suggest there may be considerable backstage space in excess of what would normally be expected from a theatre of this scale. For example, backstage/changing is split across two levels with five backstage toilets being provided which is greater than at some much larger theatres. On the other hand, it appears best practice is not being achieved for the number of public toilets although public disabled toilet facilities are adequate. We would recommend a 60/40 split for female/male toilets.

In terms of viability, we would question the overall build and ongoing maintenance costs and whether they are achievable against the theatre's start-up/development funding and projected income. We also have concerns about the role of the existing café, especially if it remains in independent operation to the theatre. It appears as though the café may need to remain open during performances in order to provide a means of escape, though to do so would also compromise the ability of the theatre to maximise its own bar takings as audience members may gravitate towards the café as it has greater visibility. The applicant's business plan should take this into account. It appears the exit from the café may need to be larger than is shown, though again we cannot definitively ascertain this from the drawings provided.

We support the bleacher seating proposed and the flexibility this will offer.

In conclusion, we support the principle of this development and the positive impact it would bring to Selsey's High Street and local businesses and the cultural wellbeing of local people. However, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the theatre we would encourage the applicant and their representatives along with other stakeholders to enter into a peer design review facilitated by the Trust. This would be with a view to ensuring final designs and layouts are appropriate and cost-effective, and enable us to recommend the granting of planning 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