

# Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/1311

10 August 2018

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

By e-mail: [planning@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:planning@leeds.gov.uk)

**Applications:** 18/02735/FU & 18/02736/LI

**Site:** Grand Theatre, Opera North 46 New Briggate Leeds LS1 6NU

**Proposal:** Change of use of 4 retail units to a single A3 restaurant unit (incl. substantial facade restoration), the creation of a new circulation atrium to serve Opera North's Howard Assembly Room and supplementary internal alterations. Refurbishment of the existing Premier House office building, including facade re-modelling and the introduction of a new Education Suite at ground floor level. An associated linkage to, and two-storey extension of, the adjacent Linacre / Harewood studios; &

Listed Building Application for alterations to 4 retail units to form a single A3 restaurant unit (incl. substantial facade restoration), the creation of a new circulation atrium to serve Opera North's Howard Assembly Room and supplementary internal alterations. Refurbishment of the existing Premier House office building, including facade re-modelling and the introduction of a new Education Suite at ground floor level. An associated linkage to, and two-storey extension of, the adjacent Linacre / Harewood studios.

## **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:**

Further to comments submitted by the Trust yesterday on application references 17/05406/FU and 18/03155/FU, the Trust was also not notified by the Council of this application. Again, this proposal relates to land on which there is a theatre so therefore the Council has failed in its statutory duty to notify us. We will be writing to the Council's Head of Planning under separate cover to seek assurance that this issue is being rectified.

## **Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

**T** 020 7836 8591

**F** 020 7836 3302

**E** [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk)

**W** [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk)

**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

We support this proposal which seeks a number of alterations which will have a beneficial impact on the Grand Theatre and Opera North's operations and viability, enhances the overall character and appearance of the theatre and the adjacent Premier House as well as restores and activates the theatre's New Briggate elevation.

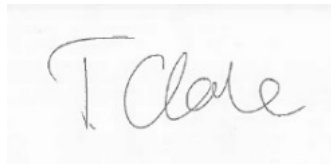
Fundamentally, we support efforts by theatre owners and operators to invest in their buildings and improve their sustainability and viability. By bringing the vacant units along New Briggate in-house, the theatre is maximising its income potential by creating a more inviting food and beverage offer for patrons that has the benefit of a street-frontage thus encouraging in non-theatre goers. This will also help to increase activity and income for the theatre throughout the day rather than predominantly around performance times. This also has benefits for the vitality of New Briggate in line with the New Briggate Vision, also contributing towards the reduction in vacant units across the city centre. Plans show this conversion to be sensitive to the character and architectural significance of the building, installing replacement red brickwork in place of the existing timber shopfront to replicate its original appearance and that of the rest of the façade. This will be supplemented with stone plinths to correspond with those already in place.

There are also clear benefits for the sustainability and viability of the theatre by providing separate public accesses to the Grand Theatre and Howard Assembly Room thus allowing them to programme concurrent performances. We do not consider the works to facilitate this, or other minor works being undertaken alongside, as being unduly detrimental to the character and appearance to the theatre as a statutorily listed heritage asset of significant interest. Plans show internal works to utilise appropriate materials which match their surroundings. On balance, we consider the benefits for the ongoing viability of the theatre to outweigh any minor negative impacts arising from these works.

We have no objections to the works to Premier House.

In conclusion, **we recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you wish to discuss these comments further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser