

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1311

09 August 2018

Mr Mike Howitt
Planning Services
Leeds City Council
Leeds
LS2 8HD

By e-mail: planning@leeds.gov.uk

Application: 17/05406/FU

Site: New Pavilion Buildings High Street Morley Leeds LS27 9AJ

Proposal: Change of use and alterations of first to fourth floor of former theatre/restaurant to form 14 flats, alterations to restaurant/function room at ground and lower ground level

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:

The Trust was not notified by the Council of this application as per our statutory remit. Please ensure that for any future applications relating to this site or any other theatre or theatre building within the Council's boundary the Trust is contacted for comment. We would also encourage the Council to engage with us as part of pre-application discussions and on applications for listed building consent and new theatre buildings, as many other authorities do. We submitted comments on the previous application (13/05468/FU) in 2014.

This application seeks conversion of the former New Pavilion Theatre to residential use along with a restaurant and function room. The building ceased theatre and cinema use in 1968, after which it was utilised as a bingo hall and later a nightclub. It was most recently in use as a restaurant (A3) but has been vacant for around thirteen years.

Many of the comments made by the Trust for the original application still stand; the documents accompanying this application seem to replicate those originally submitted with little deviation therefore our original concerns not been addressed.

Theatres Trust

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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

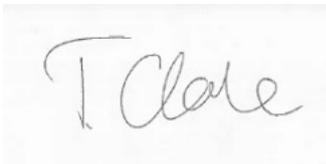
With regard to the potential need for the building as a theatre or other cultural facility, we note the comments made within the Delegation Report for application 13/05468/FU outlining that the proposed uses are acceptable in principle. We would however welcome a more robust assessment provided by the applicant, perhaps outlining their marketing efforts over the period of the building's closure and setting out more conclusively why a cultural facility could not be viable. While the Delegation Report is almost correct in that the building has not been in theatre use since 1929 (it was actually two years later in 1931), it should be noted that cinemas, bingo halls and nightclubs are also cultural uses and these uses continued until around 2003. Paragraph 8b of the NPPF (2018), while seeking a sufficient range and number of homes to be provided, also supports accessible services which support communities' social and cultural needs both current and future. Paragraph 92 requires planning decisions to provide the social and cultural facilities the community needs, planning positively for the provision of cultural buildings and guarding against unnecessary loss. Objective 11 of the Leeds Spatial Vision (Core Strategy 2014) supports the provision of community infrastructure that is tailored to meet the needs of the community including high quality cultural and community facilities and spaces. As we set out in our original representation, it is very difficult and expensive to provide new facilities of this scale.

Otherwise, and on the basis of lack of need for a cultural facility being satisfactorily demonstrated, we support the principle of this development. We welcome retention of external decorative architectural features and the 'New Pavilion' lettering. We also welcome that some historic and decorative internal features that remain will be incorporated into the development. Although not statutorily listed, we consider the New Pavilion to have great value as a locally distinct heritage asset which greatly contributes to Morley's townscape. Maintaining an active ground floor frontage will help enhance the vitality of the town centre.

Please note that the previous Delegation Report listed the Trust as a general consultee, whereas we are actually a statutory consultee on sites such as this.

In conclusion, we recommend that more robust evidence to support the loss of the New Pavilion as a cultural facility is provided which would allow us to support this development.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser