

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/1984

28 August 2018

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FY8 1LW

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

Application: 18/0302

Site: LOWTHER PAVILION, LOWTHER GARDENS SITE, WEST BEACH, LYTHAM ST ANNES, FY8 5QQ

Proposal: ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION OF EXISTING PAVILION BUILDING, INCLUDING A TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO THE EAST TO FORM A FIRST FLOOR RESTAURANT WITH EXTERNAL ROOF TERRACE, AN EXTENSIONS TO THE WEST OF THE BUILDING TO FORM AN EDUCATION CENTRE AND STUDIO THEATRE, TIMBER CLADDING AND GLAZING TO EXISTING ELEVATIONS, RECONFIGURATION OF EXISTING CAR PARK TO PROVIDE 70 SPACES, NEW PEDESTRIAN ACCESS, ASSOCIATED SOFT AND HARD LANDSCAPING WORKS AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING PUBLIC TOILETS, STORAGE BUILDING AND AVIARY STRUCTURE.

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 Theatres Trust on this proposal, which seeks to extend the existing Lowther Pavilion along with a number of associated works to the building and its surrounds.

In terms of works to the Pavilion specifically, the Trust supports proposals by theatre owners and operators to modernise and invest in their buildings to help meet the expectations of their audiences and performers and ensure continued sustainability and viability. We welcome the proposed extensions to the Lowther Pavilion and the internal alterations this will facilitate, which

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

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will significantly improve cultural provision in Lytham St Annes and contribute towards improved social and cultural well-being in accordance with paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2018). It will also enhance the overall accessibility and functionality of the theatre for all sections of the community. Policy CF1 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan (2005) supports the extension or improvement of community services; this policy can be considered to include theatres as paragraph 20 of the NPPF (2018) defines community facilities as including cultural infrastructure.

In terms of design and layout, there are no alterations proposed to the main auditorium. Plans show there to be enhanced backstage facilities with new showers (including an accessible shower), more dressing rooms, a lift, increased wing area and a new rehearsal room. The extension also provides an increase in toilet provision for both performers and audiences including a disabled toilet on each level. Audiences will further benefit from a much extended café and bar area with an upstairs restaurant area. With an external roof terrace and covered external seating to the ground floor, this will make the theatre much more attractive as a destination outside of performance times. In turn, this will improve the theatre's sustainability and viability and potentially also attract more people to the theatre and help activate the surrounding Lowther Gardens. We would contend that the social, community and cultural value arising from expansion of the Pavilion building gives rise to appropriate public benefit that offsets any encroachment into existing designated open space, and the improved café and external terraces help improve the quality, character and setting of the park thus according with Policy EP6 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan (2005).

Significantly, a second theatre space will be provided in the form of an approximately 150 seat studio theatre. A studio theatre of this scale will help the Pavilion expand its offer, as well as help provide more of a community benefit by being conducive to the needs of smaller productions and amateur groups. Further toilets are provided within this space including disabled provision, and a small bar. A new education centre is also a positive addition in terms of the Pavilion's social value.

We would concur with the applicant's assessment that the external design of the extended Pavilion will improve its appearance and help enhance the setting of the Lowther Gardens.

We would question the need and justification for extending car parking provision at the site given that there are a number of on-street spaces and alternative car parks in the surrounding area. The value of car parking doesn't necessarily correspond with the value of the Pavilion as a community and cultural asset, and while we consider some level of on-site car parking to be important any conflict with Policy TREC 13 which safeguards public open space from development should be minimised. Nevertheless, we appreciate this aspect of the development is effectively an outline proposal and the supporting documentation states that further detail will be added with full public consultation as part of an overall masterplan for the gardens to follow. We suggest that approval of details for the car parking and general landscaping strategy is conditioned as part of an approval.

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In conclusion, we consider expansion of the theatre and the enhancement of its facilities and offer to be a positive development for Lytham St Annes. We **support** this application and **recommend the granting of planning permission** subject to the condition outlined above.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss this representation further.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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