

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2264

05 October 2018

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Applications: 18/00832/FUL & 18/00852/LB

Site: Grand Theatre, St Leonards Gate, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 1NL

Proposals: Demolition of part of building and erection of a two storey extension to the North East elevation.

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 Trust regarding the above applications.

This is the third set of proposals to be submitted of a similar nature which seek to enhance and expand the Grand's front of house provision, and to improve access and circulation to and through the building. The Trust wrote in support of previous applications in 2008 (permission now lapsed) and in 2015 (withdrawn) and similarly we welcome and **support** this proposal.

The design of the extension has again been amended and refined compared to previous submissions. The scale of the extension would seem to be appropriate for the size of the theatre. It is clear that the current layout and space available is very tight, so the audience experience will be significantly enhanced. We are satisfied with the overall design and layout, although we would suggest that thought is given to switching access to the disabled toilet from the upper ground floor to the lower ground if practicable. This would result in level access from the bar area and into the rear of the stalls. We would also encourage the theatre to consider the

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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

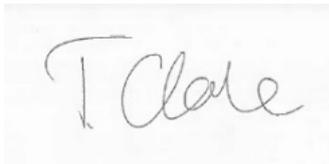
feasibility of disabled seating on the balcony in order to broaden disabled seating options.

The introduction of a studio/rehearsal space will provide the theatre with greater flexibility and opportunities to maximise its income, assisting with its future viability and sustainability as a valued cultural asset for Lancaster and the surrounding area.

In terms of impact on the building's historic and architectural significance and character, we concur with the applicant's supporting statement this is to be minimal. The proposal will result in the removal of some later additions to the north-east elevation, and has been designed in such a way so as to utilise the existing façade as a feature within the extension which is visible through the new glazing. By virtue of the extension's location, which is currently a gravel car park, the setting of the theatre will be enhanced. We would comment though that there appear to be some decorative features such as the timberwork and screening around the door to the existing box office for which it is not clear whether the intention is to retain or remove, we would encourage that such features are re-used where possible and recorded. This is consistent with our previous advice.

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2018) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community buildings and local services which includes cultural buildings such as theatres, and to support delivery of improved cultural well-being. This proposal is well-designed and in general sympathetic to the historic character and significance of the building, therefore **we recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you would like 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