

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/9006209

16 November 2018

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Applications: 2018/03100/FUL & 2018/03101/LBC

Site: Olympia Exhibition Centre Hammersmith Road London W14 8UX

Proposal: Redevelopment of Olympia comprising: a) Central Hall - demolition with retention of listed façade to Hammersmith Road, erection of new ground plus 12 storey building for (B1) office, (D1) exhibition, flexible (A1-A4) retail/financial and professional services /restaurant/bar, and flexible (B1/D1) office/conference uses; new site-wide logistics centre, car/cycle parking and plant within two new basement levels; b) G-gate site - erection of ground plus 9 upper storeys building with two levels of basement for use as a theatre, (D1) exhibition and flexible (A3/A4) restaurant/bar use at ground/level 2 and roof level; c) National Hall - internal and external alterations comprising three storey roof-level extension for use as (C1) hotel, part use of National Hall for (A1-A4/C1) hotel and ancillary use, two levels of internal decks for use as (D1) exhibition space and flexible (D1) exhibition/(A3/A4) restaurant/bar use, alterations to existing basement and associated internal and external works; d) West Hall - alterations and extension to provide two additional storeys for use as (D2) live music and performance space; e) Maclise Road Multi Storey Car Park - partial demolition, alterations and extension for use as (C1) hotel, (D2) cinema, and flexible (B1/D1) co-working/conference use; f) Grand and National Halls - demolition of existing accommodation and circulation spaces between halls and construction of new Level 2 public realm deck with glazed canopy comprising flexible use (A1-A4) retail/restaurant/bar/financial and professional services; g) Pillar Hall - Internal and external alterations for use of building for (A3/A4) restaurant/bar, ancillary live music; h) Grand Hall - internal and external alterations including creation of two levels of internal decks for use as (D1) exhibition space and flexible (D1), (A3/A4) exhibition/restaurant/bar use; i) Plant and energy centres; j) Pedestrian/vehicle/cycle/highway works; k) Public realm, landscaping and associated works.

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

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 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 with Theatres Trust regarding the above application and listed building consent. Our comments relate specifically to the theatre at G-Gate (part b) and the live music and performance space at West Hall (part d). We make no comment on the wider scheme or the appropriateness of its design, scale and bulk as this falls outside of our remit.

Notwithstanding that, we support the principle of introducing additional cultural and leisure uses at the site to help make Olympia more of a destination.

We welcome the proposed theatre and music/performance venue which are both of a scale which will draw people to the site from a wide area and further improve London's cultural offer. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2018) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community facilities which explicitly includes cultural venues, with both the London Plan (existing and proposed) and the Hammersmith & Fulham Local Plan (2018) being supportive of such uses.

With regards to the design of the theatre, although the space has been modelled around an identified operator for the most part it would seem to be adaptable should this change in the future which should help with making the building more sustainable. We are encouraged by the level of front-of-house provision, for example there is ample bar provision and a good number of WCs including disabled WCs.

We would query whether sightlines have been modelled, especially from seating at levels 6 and 7 and from the rear of the stalls on level 5 as sections indicate views might be obstructed by the proscenium arch or the balconies above. There is nothing on the plans to indicate fly-floors or loading and the applicant may wish to consider suspension bridges from the auditorium seating. On level 7 there is a large space to the rear of the seating with no indication as to how it might be used.

We have no particular comments regarding the design of the music/performance venue, although sightlines from some of the level 3 balcony closest to the stage may be poor.

We would encourage the applicant to engage with us further when it comes to the final detailed planning of the theatre space and its internal arrangements. We can provide advice and guidance on an informal basis, although they may benefit from a full Advisory Review. We can also help to direct them towards specialist theatre consultants.

To conclude, on the basis of the submitted plans for the theatre and performance venue **we recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent** for that element of the scheme.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

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Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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