

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/3708

28 June 2018

Cameron Kirk
Council Headquarters,
Newtown St Boswells,
Melrose,
Scottish Borders,
TD6 0SA

By e-mail: dcconsultees@scotborders.gov.uk

Application: 18/01512/FUL

Site: Polwarth Church Greenlaw Duns Scottish Borders TD10 6YR

Proposal: Alterations and change of use of church (Class 10) to church, music hall and theatre (Sui Generis) and erection of outbuilding.

Remit: The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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 supports this proposal which would see the vacant category A listed Polwarth Kirk, described as one of the most significant buildings in Scotland, return to use as a church, music hall and theatre.

We consider theatre, music and arts centre use to be compatible with church buildings, and indeed there are several examples of such conversions around the UK. Generally, as is the case with this application, they maintain the existing character, appearance and fabric of the building while providing a use that is beneficial to the social and cultural well-being of local communities.

The proposed new outbuilding, which will provide toilets, changing room space and a ticket office, is modest in scale and will in any case be constructed outside of the church yard wall. We would just note that we recommend the applicant should partition and enclose the changing areas, as our assumption is the theatre will facilitate local and amateur groups. As such, it is likely to be used by children and young people so there should be separation and appropriate safeguarding measures in place.

Theatres Trust

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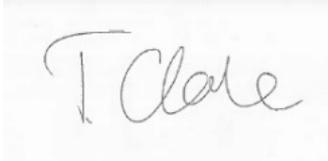
The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

The storage area will replace an existing lean-to which is in a poor state of repair.

With its rural location serving relatively isolated small communities, this proposal offers a means of bringing a building of historic significance back into use whilst providing a facility which will bring people together, reduce isolation and enhance social and cultural well-being. We therefore **recommend the granting of planning permission.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'T' and 'C'.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser