

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/445

22 November 2018

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Regeneration & Planning
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By e-mail: planning@camden.gov.uk

Application: 2018/4592/L

Site: The Dominion Theatre 268-269 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 7AQ

Proposal: Alterations to the stage areas of the Dominion Theatre inducing the removal of the existing stage to install a palletised modern stage with associated alterations to off stage areas. The provision of improved Stage Door facilities to include disabled access to the stage and back of house areas. Conversion of the former cloakroom known as the Milburn Suite into a Stalls bar.

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 this application for Listed Building Consent at the Dominion. The Trust **supports** this proposal.

The Dominion is one of the largest theatres in London, with a seated capacity of over 2,000. However, as articulated in the applicant's accompanying heritage statement the current stage arrangement does not meet the requirements of many modern productions which require a space of the Dominion's size. It is currently raked which compromises its ability to handle modern machinery required for automation and to facilitate more advanced special effects which draw people to such performances. A raked stage is also inappropriate for dance productions.

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

Although the stage is original, we consider that its replacement is necessary and would not harm the overall character and significance of the building as a Grade II listed heritage asset. Should this proposal be refused, the longer-term future of the theatre would be compromised.

The draft London Plan (2017) recognises the “enormous contribution” of the West End theatres and cinemas to London’s cultural heritage, acting as “key visitor hubs for Londoners and domestic and international tourists” which should be “protected and promoted”. Draft Policy HC6.B.6 requires planning decisions to protect and support cultural venues such as theatres. Camden’s Local Plan (2017) also notes that theatres “contribute enormously to Camden’s attractiveness as a place to live, work or study”, reflected by Policy C3.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2018) states that, “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.” On that basis, we consider the replacement of the stage to be justified as it will help preserve the Dominion as a viable theatre by making it an attractive and viable proposition for producers.

We also welcome proposals by theatre owners and operators to improve accessibility, therefore support the proposed works to the Stage Door and back of house.

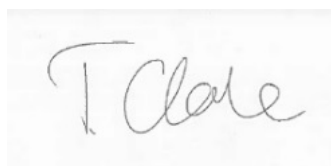
The conversion of the Milburn Suite into a Stalls bar will open up an area of the foyer which is currently inefficient as it lacks prominence, and echo the appearance of the ice cream kiosk opposite. We consider that it will enhance the character of the foyer rather than cause any harm and would not result in the loss of any historic fabric.

We would however recommend the insertion of a condition requiring the recording and reporting of any historic materials or features to be removed. We would encourage such items to be re-used or displayed where possible and practical.

In conclusion we recommend the granting of **listed building consent**.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is shown on a light-colored rectangular background.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser