

Ref.: TC/3178

28 November 2018

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Applications: 18/05006/FUL & 18/05007/LBC

Site: The Assembly Rooms Mill Street Ludlow SY8 1AZ

Proposals: Alterations to Castle Square frontage to provide re-positioned door access, replacement shopfronts; change of use of (part) ground floor to form cafe/bar, additional shop unit; formation of toilet facilities; change of use of (part) first floor form screening room; formation of function rooms; provision of roof mounted solar panels and acoustic screening; external improvement works, including refurbishment of windows, stucco and render repairs and new feature lighting; &

Alterations to Castle Square frontage to provide door access within new shopfronts to Box Office/Visitor's Information Centre and Cafe/Restaurant. Change of use of first floor Kitchen to Second Screening Room. Provision of Photovoltaic panels to upper and pitched roof, and acoustic plant screening to lower roof. External improvement works, including refurbishment of windows, stucco and render repairs and new feature lighting. Some minor alterations to the internal layout.

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:

The Trust recently commented on application 18/03817/LBC, which we broadly supported. However, we were not directly contacted regarding this application despite our statutory remit described above. Please ensure the Trust is consulted on any further proposals related to the Assembly Rooms or any other theatre site within the Council's boundary.

This application and listed building consent appears to relate predominantly to parts of the building outside of the auditorium, with some variations compared to the previous application. Generally, we are supportive of the works proposed and of the objectives of the applicant in improving the layout and functionality of the building including better disabled access, making it

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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

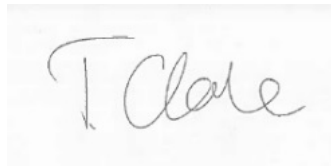
more efficient, and most fundamentally ensuring its future viability as a community and cultural asset for Ludlow through making its operation more sustainable.

The re-positioning of the main entrance from Mill Street to Castle Square will give the Assembly Rooms greater prominence and also help it benefit from greater footfall. This is especially important given the conversion of the museum space to a café/bar, which will enhance the income potential of the Assembly Rooms by drawing people in and helping to activate the building outside of performance times. We consider the external alterations which will provide new shopfronts either side of the new main entrance to be of positive benefit to the character and appearance of the building, with the alterations for the café/bar shopfront better corresponding with the existing appearance of the future box office shopfront.

Although overall WC provision will remain level with current numbers, this is in the context of theatre capacity reducing through the removal of the balcony. We welcome that there will be an additional accessible WC. Operationally, we would advise the applicant to consider the impact on their business plan of leakage of sales should the ground floor cafe/bar be operated independently of the theatre as the location of most WCs requires the audience to go down to the ground floor and away from the auditorium bar. The applicant might also consider how to manage audience flow to avoid too many people attempting to access the much smaller WC block on floor 2 which could result in unnecessary queues and therefore compromise interval bar income.

Overall the proposed works would seem to meet the stated objective of improving the building's layout and sustainability. The external alterations will help enhance the appearance of the building. In line with our previous comments, we continue to **recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you wish to discuss these comments.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is shown within a light grey rectangular box.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser