

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1020

17 December 2018

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Regeneration
Education and Enterprise
Wolverhampton City Council
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Wolverhampton
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By e-mail: planning@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Application: 18/01423/FUL & 18/01433/CPLL

Site: Primeco Limited 66 - 70 Lichfield Street City Centre Wolverhampton West Midlands WV1 1DB

Proposal: Demolition of former post office and sorting office building (66-70 Lichfield St) and erection of a new public courtyard theatre including stage, foyer, cafe/bar and related theatre facilities: &

A new entrance into the Grand Theatre flank wall linking to the adjacent site at 66-70 Lichfield Street.

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:

This proposal seeks to create a new courtyard theatre as an additional performance space for the Grand Theatre along with an opening into the existing building.

We are supportive of the theatre's need to expand onto this site. As set out within the accompanying Design & Access Statement, the existing theatre is constrained. The ability for the Grand to expand their offer, for example to support and facilitate new work and youth theatre, is important to maximise its role as a cultural and social asset for Wolverhampton and surrounding areas. Equally, by providing enhanced ancillary space such as more of an all-day

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

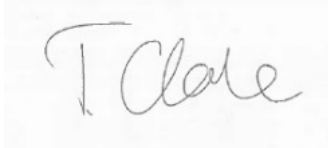
café/bar offer its sustainability and viability will be enhanced. The existing former post office building has been vacant some time, so this proposal would help activate Lichfield Street.

We understand this proposal will be a temporary solution pending a longer-term extension of the Grand. In isolation, the toilet provision within this site is one male and one female cubicle short of what is set out within the 'yellow book' (Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment 2015, revised 2018). This may be acceptable in the context of the opening into the main Grand building, but a suitable management plan should be in place to ensure this does not exacerbate any existing queues at busy times if indeed it is possible to share facilities. We would also highlight the lack of acoustic separation between the bar and the performance area, although again this may be acceptable to the applicant given the flexible and temporary nature of the space and their intended use for it. We suggest the applicant should satisfy themselves these issues are manageable in the longer term should a more permanent solution not come forward as envisaged.

We have not been consulted as part of the pre-application discussions for this scheme, we would encourage the applicant and Council to engage the Trust as further plans for this site are developed.

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 will help expand cultural provision within Wolverhampton. While we have some reservations as to overall design and functionality, on the basis of this being an interim solution **we recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

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, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser