

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3708

05 December 2018

Julie Hayward
Council Headquarters,
Newtown St Boswells,
MELROSE,
Scottish Borders,
TD6 0SA

By e-mail: JHayward2@scotborders.gov.uk

Application: 18/00712/FUL

Site: 6 The Wynd Buccleuch Street Melrose Scottish Borders TD6 9LD

Proposal: Proposed change of use to provide additional dining space to adjoining restaurant.

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:

Thank you for consulting the Trust on the above application, which would result in the loss of the vacant Wynd Theatre to provide additional dining space to the neighbouring restaurant. The Trust **objects** to this proposal as currently submitted.

The Wynd Theatre ceased operation in 2014 with an application for change of use to an art gallery following in 2015. The Trust objected to that proposal, noting that local groups had indicated a need for a venue of that scale within the local community with some interest in taking the building on. Nevertheless the application was permitted, although we welcomed the inclusion of Condition 1 which made provision for the building to revert to a performing arts theatre as its last lawful use should the gallery cease. This was to safeguard the future of the building as a theatre and to ensure any subsequent proposals were assessed as being appropriate for the town centre.

Policy PMD1.d of the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan Volume 1: Policies (2016) includes the protection of built and cultural resources as a sustainability principle underpinning the Plan's policies. Policy IS1 encourages the retention of local services, only supporting their loss if it can be adequately demonstrated the existing facility or local service is

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591

F 020 7836 3302

E info@theatrestrust.org.uk

W theatrestrust.org.uk

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

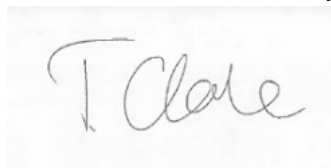
The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

financially unviable, that all reasonable attempts have been made to sell it as a “viable concern”, and that loss will not have an adverse impact on the settlement and the proposal will offer wider and significant benefits.

We believe there remains interest in re-opening the building as a theatre and that there is a need for a theatre space within the local community. There is currently no other theatre within Melrose. The main aims of the Local Development Plan’s Vision recognises the attractiveness of town centres as a vital component of economic and social activity and that their continued vitality and viability is essential to the area’s competitiveness and wellbeing. Key Outcome 4 is “The protection and enhancement of town centres”. Policy ED3 seeks to develop and enhance the role of town centres. An active theatre within Melrose would accord with and help meet the Plan’s objectives by providing diversity to the town centre’s mix of uses, and help attract people into the centre.

Fundamentally, the applicant has failed to submit any supporting information to support either the merits of this change of use or to demonstrate the theatre is surplus to requirements. There is no information as to marketing effort submitted with the application, or any indication that attempt has been made to offer the building for its existing use. We therefore **recommend the refusal of this application**.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T Clarke", on a light-colored rectangular background.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser