

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/2434

21 February 2019

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By e-mail: registration@southandvale.gov.uk

Applications: 17/S3579/FUL & 17/S3580/LB

Site: 4 Market Place Wallingford OX10 0EH

Proposal:

Demolition of 20C additions to a listed building and reduction of the A1/A2 retail space to accommodate 8 no. new-build residential units and 9 no. car parking spaces, all accessed from the rear, off Wood Street. (As amended by drawings accompanying e-mail from agent received 24 January 2018 and floor plan drawings received 29 January 2018 and amplified by Heritage Statement Appendix A and B Design Statement- Supplement 10 January 2018 and amplified by Arbtech Bat Survey- Emergence and Activity Surveys and Noise Impact Assessment Report No. 18-0025-1 R03 accompanying email from agent received 8 February 2019)

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 Theatres Trust regarding amendments to this proposal. In our previous response of 1st March 2018 we recommended refusal on the grounds of the development undermining the Corn Exchange as a valued cultural asset and for failing to provide satisfactory living conditions for occupants due to noise and vibrations. Having reviewed the amended plans we maintain significant concern about this proposal.

Since submission of our previous response, the NPPF has been revised and now affords greater weight to the need to protect existing uses from unreasonable restrictions and firmly

Theatres Trust

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Chair Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

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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

places the emphasis on new development to provide suitable mitigation (paragraph 182, NPPF 2019). The Noise Impact Assessment dated 8th February 2019 accompanying this application concludes that noise at maximum representative levels in the Corn Exchange is audible within the existing building particularly at first floor level. Therefore, should this application be permitted it is essential the mitigations set out in the report are enforced through condition.

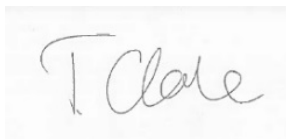
We would also highlight in particular the recommendation for windows on the south side to be permanently closed; as much as we are concerned about future noise complaints impacting the theatre there is also the potential for activity within the proposed housing to disturb performances at the Corn Exchange. Indeed, we would request conditions restricting activity on the open air walkway on the west side of the first floor to prevent potential disturbance from gatherings.

The current design leaves a small separation between the new building and the Corn Exchange; we suggest that thought is given to infilling the gap with acoustic resilient material. A problem with leaving a gap of the nature proposed is there is a risk that materials could fall between the walls which could aid transfer of noise and vibration. More generally, it will be important that both the parties are able to access their roof and guttering for cleaning and maintenance so particularly for the Corn Exchange this should be safeguarded.

Although NPPF policy references have altered since our previous submission, the principles underpinning our concerns and which support the Corn Exchange as a valued cultural asset remain valid.

In conclusion, we acknowledge there are potential mitigation measures which can minimise the impact of noise and vibrations on the proposed new residential units but our fundamental objections to this scheme remain. We therefore continue to recommend refusal. Should the application be permitted robust conditions must be set out which protect the interests of the Corn Exchange. We would also recommend that a legal agreement is signed which extinguishes the right of owners and occupants of the proposed new development submitting complaints against the Corn Exchange relating to noise and disturbance, and that such an agreement is made in advance of a decision on this application.

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

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser