

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/2198

10 April 2019

Alistair Day
Planning, Building Control & Licensing
Colchester Borough Council
Town Hall,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO1 1FR

By e-mail: planning.services@colchester.gov.uk

Application: 190683

Site: Abbey Field Circular Road East, Colchester

Proposal: Erection of a temporary Theatre performance tent and ancillary structures

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 is supportive of this proposal, which would allow the Mercury Theatre whilst undergoing refurbishment and extension to maintain a programme at an alternative site utilising a large marquee with ancillary structures. This will help support Colchester's cultural offer.

Whilst no internal detailed plans of the marquee have been provided, supporting information states that accessible places will be provided for wheelchair users and mitigation will limit acoustic breakout and disturbance to nearby properties. The site will have level access. Site plans show there to be six dressing rooms which will give flexibility and facilitate appropriate safeguarding where necessary.

The proposal is consistent with other uses for Abbey Field, such as fairs and military festivals. As such, it would not compromise important remains which might be on the site or the nearby Roman Circus scheduled ancient monument. As the theatre is temporary, it would not have a lasting impact on the setting of the area.

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

In conclusion, we **recommend the granting of temporary planning permission.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Clarke', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser