

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/608

7 June 2019

Mr. S. Gould
Planning, Transport and Regulation
Town Hall Annexe,
St Stephen's Road
Bournemouth,
BH2 6EA

By e-mail: planning@bournemouth.gov.uk

Application: 7-2019-891-AB

Site: 37-41 Westover Road

Proposal: Outline submission for demolition of the part of the existing building and erection of an 8 storey building comprising of two levels of retail floor space, 67 flats, 68 car parking spaces, associated servicing facilities, refuse and cycle storage

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 relates to the former Odeon and Regent Theatre. The Trust submitted comments in objection to previous applications at this site (refused) and their subsequent appeals.

At this stage, we also **object** to this new proposal. While we acknowledge it represents an improvement in design and heritage terms compared to the previous refused iterations in that it is of reduced height and scale and retains some elements of the building's facade, fundamentally it still fails to demonstrate the site is surplus to requirements as a cultural facility.

By failing to evidence that the site cannot be retained in cultural use it is in conflict with Policy CS29 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012). This resists the loss of such sites unless it can be demonstrated the use is not viable, there is no prospect of it continuing and it

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591 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, Ann Skippers, Anna Stapleton

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

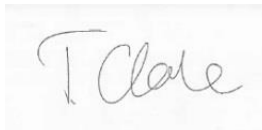
The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

has been actively marketed at an appropriate value for a period of twelve months. This is further supported by Policy U8 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Town Centre Area Action Plan (2013). Neither does it accord with paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) which seeks decisions to plan positively for the provision of community facilities including cultural buildings and to guard against unnecessary loss.

The applicant's attempts to justify loss are weak and don't meet the criteria of the policy. They have stated there is "no reasonable prospect of the use continuing" on the basis of the previous operator Odeon moving to another site with ten screens. This however ignores that there are a number of locations around the UK including in small towns which support more than one cinema especially where the two have very different offers. For example, there is a growing trend for cinemas with more premium offers and also smaller arthouse or independent operators. The fact a covenant was placed on the site by the previous operator preventing re-use as a cinema is not a planning concern. Furthermore there is also no evidence that the applicant has explored options for utilising the building or site for any other alternative cultural or community use.

Therefore, we are unable to support this application and **recommend the refusal of planning permission** on the basis of lack of evidence to justify the site's loss as a cultural facility.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in greater detail.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light grey rectangular box.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser