

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

23 May 2019

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By e-mail: planningblue@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Application: DC/19/02137

Site: Regal Theatre Ipswich Street Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 1AY

Proposal: Planning Application - Erection of extensions to theatre/cinema to create two additional screens, a cafe, additional W.C. provision and improved wheelchair access including associated roof plant, services and landscaping

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 on the above proposal, which seeks to extend the Regal Theatre to provide additional cinema screens and ancillary provision.

The Trust is supportive of this proposal, which will significantly expand cultural provision in Stowmarket and help ensure the continued viability and sustainability of the Regal as a social and cultural facility for local people. Moreover, it will also help support the health of the wider town centre; cinemas and theatres help bring people into town centres which improves footfall and supports other businesses. They also help create activity throughout the day and evening.

Fundamentally these works will significantly improve the Regal's flexibility and enable it to expand its programme. Presently it can host just cinema or theatre, whereas with expansion to

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, Ann Skippers, Anna Stapleton

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

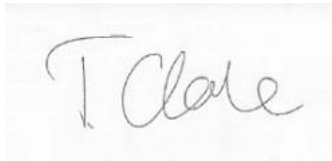
The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

create two separate cinema screens it can host both concurrently. This then creates further benefits – in terms of cinema the Regal will be able to show more films and at a range of times. This will improve its competitiveness and help bring in and retain custom within the town rather than it leaking to Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. Within the main auditorium/theatre space there will also be scope to expand the Regal's theatre programme but also to enable its use for rehearsals and other events when it might otherwise have been used for cinema.

In terms of design and layout, plans show that the building will better function as an all-day destination with a large café area and potentially better use of the outside terrace. This will assist with the overall viability of the Regal. There will be increased toilet provision including two accessible WCs. Backstage a cross-over will be provided along with an accessible WC for performers. We would encourage the applicant to engage with us should they seek to alter their plans subsequently.

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community facilities which includes cultural buildings such as this. We welcome this proposal, and **recommend the granting of planning permission.**

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 style with a large initial 'T'.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser