

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/206

18 July 2019

Mathew Mason  
Pending Applications  
Development Planning  
City of Westminster  
PO Box 732  
Redhill,  
RH1 9FL

By e-mail: [southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk)

**Applications:** 19/04480/FULL & 19/04247/LBC

**Sites:** St Albans House 57-60 Haymarket London SW1Y 4QX & 62 - 65 Haymarket London SW1Y 4RL

**Proposal:** Complete demolition of St Albans House and Samuel House and demolition behind remodelled facades of Greener House and 13-16 Charles II Street to enable the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide a single new building comprising basements, ground and mezzanine floors and 7 upper floors, retained and remodelled facades at Greener House and 13-16 Charles II Street for use for Class A1 and/or A3 and/or A4, Class D2 and Class B1 office. Basement tunnel link to 11-12 Charles II Street, associated public realm and highway works and other associated works. Alterations to the facade of the Carlton Cinema. [Site includes 57-60 and 71 -99 Haymarket, 6 St Alban's Street and 13-16 Charles II Street]; &

Cleaning of the facade, removal of the advertising hoarding, removal of ground floor canopy and re-instatement of replica of original canopy, ground floor alterations, removal of existing roof level plant and installation of new plant and set back extension, taking down and rebuilding of the parapet, and other associated works (Linked to 19/04480/FULL)

## 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'.

## Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591 E [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) W [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://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

**Comment:**

This application has been brought to the attention of the Trust as it relates to a significant redevelopment programme of buildings around the Carlton Cinema marking Phase 2 of the St James's Market development, as well as alterations to the Carlton itself. In addition Greener House, which is to be demolished behind a remodelled façade, is adjacent to Her Majesty's Theatre. Our interest in the Carlton arises from its history as a theatre; although it later became a dedicated cinema there have more recently been occasional theatre productions such as Brief Encounter which ran in 2018. We consider there is potential to revert the Carlton back to more dedicated theatre use should its cinema function cease. We have been engaged by the applicant during the pre-application process.

Overall we are supportive of the principle of this project and the aspirations of the applicant to continue to make the area more of a destination with improved public realm and retail, leisure and commercial floorspace to meet the current and future needs of occupiers. Ultimately this will benefit not just the Carlton, but also other surrounding businesses and uses including Her Majesty's Theatre and Theatre Royal Haymarket. We also welcome that it explicitly states that it seeks to preserve the special interest of the Carlton as a statutorily Grade II listed heritage asset. We consider there might have been an opportunity to safeguard land in order to re-provide a stagehouse to the Carlton (lost to redevelopment in 1977) which would support larger-scale theatre use in future although we accept this would be a costly endeavour which may not be viable.

We make no comment on the general design, form and massing of the commercial developments as these matters are outside of our remit except where they impact on the setting or function of theatres or theatre buildings. On that basis we would note that while the replacement St Albans House does not necessarily compromise the character and setting of the Carlton in terms of its appearance and materials when compared to what is already in place we consider the additional height to that and Greener House makes it incongruous with the much lower Carlton in between. Therefore we do not consider it to, "Celebrate the Carlton Cinema facade as a central focal point on the Haymarket elevation" as stated within the Design & Access Statement. However we do appreciate that the design seeks to respect the three buildings as distinct façades.

The retention of the façade of Greener House helps respect and largely retain the current setting of the Grade I listed Theatre Royal Haymarket and Grade II\* listed Her Majesty's Theatre which sit adjacent to the east and south respectively, although again the additional height compromises the relative uniformity of the building line along Haymarket. We support the improvements to public realm indicated within the Proposed Public Realm plan, such as Pennine Stone paving which will encircle the development along with new trees, planters, lighting and outdoor seating. This will help make the area more welcoming as has been the case with the first phase of development at St James's Market.

We do however object to development above the Carlton as it will constrain the cinema or any future alternative cultural use within the current envelope thus removing scope for any future development of facilities or offer. Plans show plant equipment to serve the new development will be sited directly above the Carlton, above which will be three stories of office space and external terraces with increasing set-back at each level. We would suggest that opportunities should be

explored to house this plant equipment elsewhere within the development as it is likely prohibitively expensive to relocate retrospectively. We would also suggest that the office space and terraces to the fifth, sixth and seventh floors to the rear of the Carlton should be redesigned or removed altogether. Whilst we appreciate that that the overall redevelopment needs to be commercially viable, to fail to protect the future interests of the Carlton could be considered to conflict with emerging Policy HC6.B.6 of the emerging London Plan (2019) which protects and supports evening and night time cultural venues which includes cinemas and theatres.

Otherwise our other concerns centre on maintaining the operations of nearby and adjacent theatres which is predominantly Her Majesty's and Theatre Royal Haymarket. To that end we are appreciative of the positive manner by which the applicant has sought to plan their works and engage with stakeholders regarding managing the impacts of development. It is "noisy" works which would cause greatest risk to productions and the audience experience at those venues so we welcome the commitment within paragraph 3.8 of the Construction Logistics Plan which commits to making contact with neighbours and coming to agreement on works at specific times. We would suggest the need for such engagement and agreement to restrict certain works which create greatest noise and vibrations during normal performance times is formalised by condition should this application be permitted.

A further consideration during construction works will be maintaining visibility and awareness of Her Majesty's and Theatre Royal Haymarket, therefore we suggest the applicant should explore opportunities to utilise banners or other signage across construction sites to raise awareness that the theatres and other surrounding uses are open as usual. The stage door to Her Majesty's Theatre is along Charles II Street which may at times be impacted by works to Greener House, therefore sufficient wayfinding and access should be provided at all times. It will also be necessary to continue liaising with Her Majesty's regarding delivery timings to ensure there is no clash between construction deliveries and get in / normal servicing for the theatre.

In terms of refurbishment works to the Carlton covered by listed building consent reference 19/04247/LBC excluding roof extension works cited above, we are supportive of the principle of the proposal. This is because it seeks to help restore the Carlton to its original appearance by removing the current large advertising hoarding and modern entrance canopy and cleaning the facade. The canopy will be replaced by a new one to more closely resemble that originally in place (although the original canopy was actually added to the building shortly after construction). Within the building there will also be alterations including the re-routing of two escape corridors.

We would note that the submitted plans do not clearly show the location of the altered escape corridors; escapes can be seen on the proposed public realm and overall site plans either side of the Carlton but there are no plans within the Carlton itself. It also appears that the cores from the adjacent buildings exit into the same escape routes. It will be necessary to ensure that this does not impact the operational viability and capacity of the Carlton.

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591 E [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) W [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://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

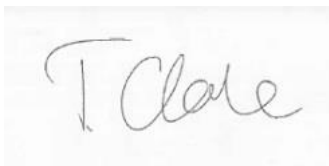
The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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

Although the new canopy is in our opinion an improvement on what is currently in place, historic images suggest it is not as close to the original as might ideally be the case. We understand that there has been discussion about careful removal of the existing canopy as the original may be beneath and we would welcome this as an approach. We recommend that design of the ground floor façade (the front entrance doors and side exit doors) of the Carlton be reviewed. The current proposal is not considered sympathetic to the original design and loses a degree of symmetry and consistency by virtue of the apparent installation of grilles above what is currently advertisement boards, and the exits sitting at different heights. The appearance of the Carlton would be further enhanced through reinstating a frontage at ground floor level that respects the original design.

In conclusion, whilst we remain supportive overall of the aspirations and principles of the project which will see improvements and enhancements to the area we cannot support approval of planning permission unless there is a reworking of the roof terraces and plant above the auditorium to ensure that the Carlton is not constrained through development above. Additionally we would recommend that the application be conditioned over the detail of the front façade of the Carlton and the acoustic criteria between the Carlton and the plant/terraces above. We would be keen to continue to work constructively with the applicant on the above revisions and conditions and also with regard to ongoing discussions with Her Majesty's and Theatre Royal Haymarket.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments further.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'C'.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser