

Ref.: TC/2164

10 April 2019

Mrs N Osler
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Kings Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn
PE30 1EX

By e-mail: planning.econsultation@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Application: 19/00885/F & 19/00887/LB

Site: Corn Exchange 20 Tuesday Market Place King's Lynn Norfolk PE30 1JW

Proposal: Internal alterations - Infill floor voids in upper foyer, form two cinema auditoria, foyer, toilet, access stair and lift. Alterations and refurbishment of ground floor foyer and toilets. External alterations - new digital display screens to front elevation, infilling first floor windows and new satellite dish in rear plant area

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 the above proposal, which seeks to create two cinema screens along with ancillary facilities within the Corn Exchange's Upper Foyer. The Corn Exchange is a Grade II listed heritage asset which was constructed in 1854 and significantly renovated in 1996. It currently provides a theatre space which is adaptable to enable the hosting of other events such as exhibitions and weddings.

The Trust is supportive of this proposal. These works will preserve the theatre function of the Corn Exchange while expanding cultural provision in King's Lynn through adding additional cinema screens. This will optimise use of the Corn Exchange as a social and cultural facility for local people, in turn bringing more people into the building at different times of day and night

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

which should aid its sustainability and viability and help preserve this important cultural and heritage asset. Furthermore it will help attract people to this part of the town which will have a positive impact on surrounding businesses.

Policy DM10 of the Site Allocations & Development Management Plan (2016) gives high priority to the need to support King's Lynn as a major retail centre and supports proposals to invest in the town centre. Policy E1.1 encourages the development of leisure uses. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community facilities which includes cultural buildings such as the Corn Exchange. As town centres face ever greater challenge cultural facilities such as cinemas and theatres have an important role in supporting and maintaining vibrancy and the health of town centres. This proposal therefore supports those policy objectives.

In terms of design and layout, the disadvantage of this proposal is that there will be a loss of bar capacity arising from the loss of the first floor bar and foyer area. This could result in additional pressure on the remaining ground floor bar particularly when the theatre is at or near full capacity. Operationally it will need to be ensured that audiences can continue to be served efficiently. Long queues and general congestion in the main foyer may compromise pre-show and interval takings and give a poor experience for audiences which could undermine the overall viability of the Corn Exchange. Similarly, the prep/kitchen space will be halved compared to existing so it should be ensured that functions can continue to be catered as they are at present as these will likely be an important source of income for the Corn Exchange. Benefits of these works, aside from the increase in cultural provision already discussed, are that there will be additional toilets as well as a new lift giving wheelchair access to the first floor. The main theatre auditorium and backstage facilities appear unchanged. We would encourage the Council and their design team to engage with us should these plans be subsequently altered, particularly if they affect the theatre or its function.

Externally, digital display boards of the nature proposed are displayed at a number of theatres including those which are statutorily listed. They will help promote upcoming events at the Corn Exchange and will afford greater flexibility as they can display a broader series of adverts more frequently. This will be more important than might otherwise be the case as the Corn Exchange would in future be hosting up to three different shows and films at the same time. Advertisements and show signage are in any case an integral aspect of the character and appearance of theatre buildings.

We have no objections to the infilling of first floor windows, which we do not consider would undermine the historic and architectural significance of the building as a Grade II listed heritage asset.

In conclusion we welcome this proposal and **recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in more detail.

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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