

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/544

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**Application:** 19/03621/LBA

**Site:** Theatre Royal Sawclose City Centre Bath Bath And North East Somerset BA1 1ET

**Proposal:** Internal alterations to expand the ladies toilet provision at the 4 floor levels within the main house

## **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 provide additional toilets throughout Theatre Royal. The theatre is a Grade II\* listed heritage and cultural asset for Bath described by the Trust as, "One of the most important surviving examples of Georgian theatre architecture".

The theatre saw improvement works and redecoration nearly ten years ago, for which the Trust supported as set out in our comments to the Council in August 2009. It is important that in order for theatres to remain viable and sustainable they meet the needs of their audiences; provision of toilet facilities within historic theatres is often insufficient by modern standards and opportunities for increase constrained. Therefore we are generally supportive in principle of efforts to improve toilet provision.

### **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

This proposal would significantly increase and expand female toilet provision at the theatre. This would be achieved through a combination of rationalisation of existing spaces and utilisation of additional space created through alteration and conversion of back-of-house spaces.

To the Stalls level there would be an increase of four WCs (one of which is ambulant) achieved by extending the current toilet block into what is currently archive/storage and an accessible WC. Although the archive would have a reduced footprint it would appear to be within an improved layout. This would not result in the loss or alteration to any historic fabric. A replacement accessible WC will be provided within what is currently a void. Although this would result in some loss of historic fabric we would concur with the applicant in that this is mitigated by the clear public benefits arising from this development.

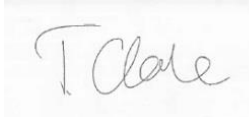
Within the Royal Circle the current use of space is not labelled on the submitted plans but the Heritage Statement describes it as a private room. This will be converted to six WCs (including one ambulant) along with a further independent ambulant WC.

On the Dress Circle level there are also currently three WCs along with an independent WC which appears to serve back of house. This provision will increase to six WCs (including one ambulant); the existing back of house WC will join the main block by creating a new doorway with existing corridor space converted to a replacement back-of-house WC. The Heritage Statement states this will cause significant harm to historic fabric due to its loss, however this area has already been much-altered and has low significance.

At Grand Circle level the existing three WCs will be increased to six by extending the toilet block into an existing office, shrinking the office in future. This will not harm any historic fabric or features.

In conclusion, these works would provide significant benefits to Theatre Royal because the experience of audiences would be vastly improved. Lack of toilet provision results in long waiting times and queues which affect movement through the building. It also compromises vital bar income particularly during intervals where time is more limited. Although there would in some areas be loss or harm to historic fabric we consider the public benefits and need to ensure the theatre remains viable to mitigate this. Therefore **we recommend the granting of listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser