

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/9006052

03 October 2019

Development Management
London Borough of Redbridge
Town Hall,
128-142 High Road,
Ilford,
IG1 1DD

By e-mail: planning.consultations@redbridge.gov.uk

Applications: 3516/19

Site: 1078 1082, High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, RM6 4BD

Proposal: Change of use from Bingo hall (D2) to Wedding and events venue (D2). Erection of metal railing / fencing to rear elevation.

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 application is in effect a re-submission following the refusal of application 1217/17 in September 2017. Subsequent to that enforcement action was taken by the Council due to the proposed use being carried out despite the refusal and the enforcement notice being found to be correct in June 2019 following appeal. The Trust submitted comments to the Council regarding the 2017 application for change of use and to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the appeal.

This proposal remains almost unchanged from the previous application, therefore in turn we maintain our objection. We consider that the proposed change of use would result in the loss of the facility as a community and cultural facility for use by the wider community without sufficient justification that it cannot be viable or that no need exists within the local community.

The supporting documentation states, "The proposal secures the long-term viable use of an

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

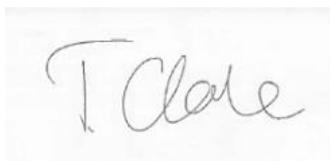
asset of community value” and “The proposal provides a beneficial local cultural venue meeting the needs of London’s diverse population”. While we would not argue that the proposal would be “viable” we would contend that the private hire nature of the proposed use is not compatible with its designation as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). We would contend that other community and cultural uses would also be viable, and the onus must be on the applicant to prove otherwise. While they state that cinema and bingo use are not viable this is not substantiated. By the same token a theatre or arts centre would also constitute alternative compatible uses for this building which are much more consistent with the function and spirit of the ACV designation than what is proposed.

There is a strong policy basis on which evidence should be required to justify this change of use. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for the provision of community facilities including cultural buildings, and to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities. This is reflected within regional (London) and local policy; Policy LP17.2 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015 - 2030 (2018) only supports loss where it is clearly demonstrated there is no longer a need within the community for the existing use or re-use for other community purposes. Policy HC5 of the Draft London Plan (2018) seeks boroughs to protect existing cultural venues and facilities. Need can be clearly demonstrated by virtue of the ACV designation, but more fundamentally the applicant continues to provide no justification to support the change of use. We are also aware of a community group with a potentially viable plan to revert the site back to community cinema and live arts use, so the proposal also conflicts with part b. of Policy LP17.2.

Furthermore, retention of the site for community and cultural use such as the cinema/arts centre proposal would better meet the placemaking objectives of Policy LP10.1.d which seeks to support the role and function of the designated Chadwell Heath district town centre. Use as a wedding and events venue does little to attract a significant number of shoppers and visitors to the centre and would not enhance the vitality and viability of the frontage or the centre more generally. In contrast a cinema/arts centre would be able to bring in visitors at different times of day and during the evening which would have a beneficial impact on footfall and surrounding businesses.

In conclusion it is vital that the potential loss of the facility as a community and cultural facility designated as an ACV is properly evidenced and justified. We consider that there is strong potential for the site to be maintained for the social and cultural well-being of local people, and **recommend that this application is refused.**

If you require any further information or wish to discuss these comments in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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for **everyone**



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