

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/206

13 November 2019

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**Applications:** 19/07938/LBC

**Site:** Queens Theatre Ltd Shaftesbury Avenue London W1D 6BA

**Proposal:** Refurbishment of public foyer/bar and circulation areas, decorative works to Upper Circle Bar, Stalls Bar and circulation areas, and associated works.

## **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 for listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it seeks refurbishment and alterations within the Grade II listed Sondheim Theatre, known until recently as Queen's Theatre. We were not directly notified, although we did provide advice to the applicant prior to submission and visited the site in September 2019.

Documents in support of this application concern four areas of work – the Stalls Bar; Upper Circle Bar; The Queen's Bar; and works to circulation areas. However, The Queen's Bar falls outside of the application description and is contained within a separate application submitted alongside this one (reference 19/07939/LBC). The Trust will provide comments in relation to that part of the proposal under separate cover, and indeed we have also commented on other proposals relating to the wider programme of works at this theatre.

## **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

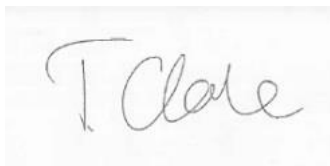
The Stalls bar retains its original character and fabric, although it should be noted this originates from its build in the 1950s following war damage to the theatre. We would concur with the applicant that this space is relatively dark and therefore have no objection to the introduction of new lighting facilitated through new fibrous plaster coving details, although we would suggest that the detailing might better reflect the style used in the 1950s rather than what is shown in these plans.

The Upper Circle bar was remodelled in the 1950s and has been further altered since that time. Notwithstanding retention of its original geometry this area does not contribute towards the historic character or significance of the building (both its original and 1950s character has been lost), and therefore the proposed replacement of banquette seating, new timber bar and redecoration in Edwardian style will significantly enhance its appearance and improve the experience of audiences at the Upper Circle level. Therefore we support this part of the proposal

The remaining element of this proposal is for general alterations to circulation areas such as the enclosure of pipework and the replacement of handrails from vinyl to polished hardwood. This will help freshen and improve the overall appearance of the building which again we would support.

Therefore in conclusion overall we are supportive of these works and **recommend the granting of listed building consent.**

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

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