

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/0118

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**Application:** 19/01245/OUT

**Site:** 'Becketwell' Land Off Victoria Street, Green Lane, Macklin Street, Becket Street, Colyear Street And Becketwell Lane, Derby

**Proposal:** Hybrid application for: Outline planning Permission - Phased demolition of buildings (with the exception of those fronting Green Lane and the former stable block to the rear of Green Lane) and structures, and the erection of a phased mixed-use development (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C3, D1, D2 and sui generis), with all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of access. Full Planning Permission - Demolition of buildings (former Debenhams building, United Reform Church, and associated ground floor units) and the erection of two buildings for residential use (Class C3), including 342 apartments with flexible commercial space (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1(a), D1, D2) at ground floor level, with access, car parking, servicing and the creation of a new public square with 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 has come to the attention of the Trust as the application site is directly adjacent to the Grade II listed Derby Hippodrome. Our comments are therefore related to the impact of

### **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

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the proposed redevelopment on the theatre.

The Grade II listed Derby Hippodrome is on the Trust's Theatres at Risk register which highlights those theatre under threat and considered at most risk throughout the UK. The building is in poor condition as a result of substantial damage caused by works undertaken in 2008 leaving it without a roof to the auditorium. The building is vacant and there have been several incidents of arson and vandalism over the years. Local charity Derby Hippodrome Trust was formed in 2010 with the ambition to secure and restore the building. They have since been successful in getting the building designated as an Asset of Community Value in 2013. Derby is currently without large scale theatre, with the Assembly Rooms also closed.

The Heritage Statement accompanying this application recognises the Hippodrome as one of thirty Grade II listed heritage assets affected by the development. Moreover, it has been assessed as being within 'Group A' which refers to nearby heritage assets to the south and southeast of the application site. Paragraph 4.18 discusses the "unsightly appearance of the southern part of the application site" causing harm to the Green Lane and St Peter's Conservation Area and the dereliction of the Hippodrome, and that it discourages investment in the wider area. Paragraph 5.66 argues the current state of the application site is in turn a disincentive for the repair and restoration of the Hippodrome. Overall it is concluded that this development would enhance the current setting of the Hippodrome along with other assets in the area.

The Design and Access statement recognises the junction of Green Lane and Macklin Street, the location of the Hippodrome, as an important node and the enhancement of this (alongside other highlighted nodes within the city) as an important strategy. It also recognises both Macklin Street and Green Lane as important routes – the former as a key East-West link connecting priority projects across the city, and the latter as part of an events / processional route connecting Normanton to the City Centre. The Hippodrome is therefore intrinsically linked to key steps and benefits offered by this redevelopment.

Overall, Theatres Trust does not object to the principle of redevelopment at this site or to the mix of uses proposed. We particularly welcome that the indicative landuse for the area closest to the Hippodrome is for office and higher education led development with food and beverage offer (assumed A3/A4). We consider these to be compatible neighbouring uses should the Hippodrome become restored to live performance and/or theatre use. It is noted that these comments are based on the outline application submitted for sites 2 – 6 and further assessment will need to be undertaken once detailed proposals come forward, particularly in relation to the landuse and treatment of edge / boundary strip between site 2 and Macklin Street and the Hippodrome opposite, and the siting of pedestrian routes and nodes / public space within the new development.

In addition we would urge the applicant to give thought to integrating the Hippodrome into this development and to work with the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust to utilise this opportunity to bring about mutually beneficial restoration and a more holistic approach to regenerating the area. We are aware of an alternative proposal put forward by Derby Civic Society which may better meet this objective and suggest this is further explored. We also suggest there may be an opportunity to utilise Section 106 receipts from this development to undertake some degree of

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restoration of the Hippodrome which could act as a catalyst for further investment and funding; this approach would be consistent with the findings of the applicant's own Heritage Statement which notes the dereliction of the Hippodrome "discourages investment". Facilitating a positive future for the Hippodrome would result in an uplift in desirability and value of the applicant's own development.

We would welcome engagement with the applicant, the Council and other stakeholders such as the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust, Derby Civic Society and Historic England to help maximise the benefits of the proposed development for Derby and to help restore the Hippodrome as a Grade II listed heritage asset.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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