

# Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/2256

19 December 2019

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Chorley  
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PR7 1AL

By e-mail:

**Application:** 19/01084/FUL

**Site:** Chorley Theatre 1 Dole Lane Chorley PR7 2RL

**Proposal:** Change of use from a restaurant (Use Class A3) to a theatre (Use Class D2)

## **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 because it involves development at Chorley Little Theatre. The proposal seeks to change the lawful use of the neighbouring unit, which was most recently an Indian restaurant (A3), in order to provide an extension to Chorley Little Theatre. The theatre is a valued community and cultural facility which is run by its volunteer members. It provides a home for local adult and youth theatre groups as well as a community cinema. Venues of this nature help bring people together and improve the well-being of local people and should therefore be supported.

We welcome efforts by theatre owners and operators to improve their facilities. The site sits outside of the designated Chorley town centre, therefore there is no policy within the Chorley Local Plan which restricts change of use of units of this type. In any case paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for cultural buildings. Notwithstanding the existing presence of the theatre, this application relates purely to change of use and we consider theatre to be a compatible use for this site which would otherwise meet the

## **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, Truda Spruyt, 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

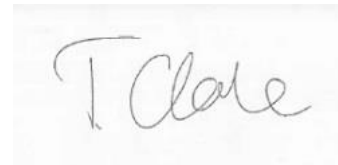
requirements of out-of-town centre development articulated within Policy EP9 of the Chorley Local Plan.

We note that the application is seeking change of use to D2, whereas theatres do not fall within a defined use class and are therefore Sui Generis. We recommend that this is corrected and clarified within any decision notice.

The plans made available do not clearly show the existing and proposed layouts of the space subject to this application. Therefore we are unable to offer any guidance or feedback on the internal layout and how it will function. However, as far as we can ascertain from information on the theatre's website the former restaurant will be partly utilised for additional toilets including an accessible toilet. This is to be welcomed, and should enhance the experience of audiences and reduce queuing at peak periods.

In conclusion we support the theatre's continued development and success as a community asset for Chorley and its surrounding communities, and **recommend the granting of planning permission** for this change of use.

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



Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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