

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

17 December 2019

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By e-mail: planning.handl@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Application: 19/02474/PP

Site: Victoria Halls 84 Sinclair Street Helensburgh Argyll And Bute G84 8TU

Proposal: Internal and external alterations and erection of single storey rear extension

Remit:

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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 and listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it involves development at the Category B listed Victoria Halls which is a multi-purpose venue including theatre use. It is used by the Helensburgh Savoy Musical Theatre Group for their annual play and Helensburgh Theatre Arts for their annual pantomime, alongside other visiting performances and rehearsals. Facilities such as Victoria Halls are important community and cultural facilities which should be supported through planning decisions.

There are two aspects to this proposal; the refurbishment of the facility and a rear extension to help facilitate improved storage and better stage access and replace existing temporary cabins.

We are supportive of this proposal. The proposed extension will help improve the flexibility of the Halls which will ensure it remains a sustainable venue into the future and better meets the needs of the groups and performers who use it. The proposal will also help improve the safety, and perception of safety, by users of the Halls as it will extinguish the need to exit the building to

Theatres Trust

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The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

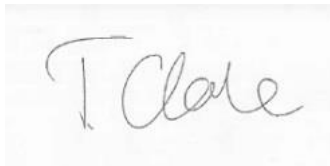
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access the current storage containers. We do not consider the proposal to detract from the character and significance of the Halls as a heritage asset.

The proposed refurbishment will significantly enhance the ability of the Halls to function as a theatre and performance venue, for example by connecting the new store directly to the stage. We concur with the applicant's assessment that it will make the venue more attractive to touring shows and artists which will further improve viability and access to culture for the local community.

In conclusion we are supportive of these proposals and **recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.**

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'T Clarke', is centered within a light gray rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser