

Ref.: TC

31 March 2020

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By e-mail: [planning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordbc.gov.uk)

**Applications:** 19/31516/LBC

**Site:** The Picture House Bridge Street Stafford

**Proposals:** Due to extensive flooding in the building the site requires renovation throughout, new services will replace the existing affected systems, new kitchen, bar and washroom facilities will be put back in the previous locations, new carpets and decoration up to mid height level to replace where damaged and the existing balcony is to be brought into the public use with new stairs to either end for access

**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:**

Thank you for consulting the Trust regarding this application for listed building consent at The Picture House. The proposal seeks to carry out extensive renovations and refurbishment following severe flood damage after heavy rainfall in late 2019.

The Picture House opened in 1914 and is a significant heritage asset for Stafford, retaining many of its original features. It operated as a cinema until 1995; we cannot find any evidence this building was ever used as a theatre, and does not seem to contain any necessary facilities such as dressing rooms. Therefore it would seem to fall outside of our remit and we would recommend contacting Cinema Theatres Trust (CTA) for further comment. It was converted for pub use in the late 1990s.

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

T 020 7836 8591 E [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) W [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk)

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

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## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



We welcome the commitment to return this asset back to active use by replacing and refurbishing those areas which have been damaged. However we would caution against interventions which interrupt the symmetry of the auditorium and undermine the building's character, such as the opening of the former balcony for additional seating necessitating enclosing stairways.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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