

Ref.: TC/2129

14 April 2020

Ms Jenny Davies
Planning
Regeneration
Education and Enterprise
Wolverhampton City Council
Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RP

By e-mail: planning@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Applications: 20/00316/LBC

Site: Tettenhall Towers Wood Road Wolverhampton West Midlands WV6 8QX

Proposal: Refurbishment of theatre reception and ancillary toilets

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 as it involves alterations to the reception and toilet facilities at The Towers Theatre.

The theatre, within Tettenhall Towers which is now part of Tettenhall College, is a statutory Grade II* listed heritage asset. It is the home of the Secga Theatre Company which is a local amateur theatre group. It is also used by other local groups such as Tettenhall Operatic Company as well as for public performances of student shows. As such alongside its educational function within the college it provides an important role as a community and cultural facility for local people; paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for venues of this nature.

The theatre has unique architectural and historic interest, having been designed around 1860 as the 'Great Music Room' of Tettenhall Towers which was the home of Col Thomas Thorneycroft who was a scientist, engineer, ironmaster and 'public-spirited' capitalist. It was intended for

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

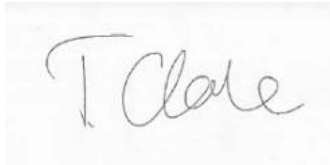
The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

public use and purpose-built for concerts, readings, theatre, lectures and public meetings in the absence of such a facility within the nearby village. Originally it was flat-floored with a stage fitted up for more 'ambitious' theatricals'. It was further adapted around the 1880s for use as a permanent theatre, with a proscenium and generously-sized stage with lighting effects. The Trust's database notes this theatre is "a fragile" survivor of this kind of theatre and any works would "need to be undertaken with considerable skill and understanding".

This proposal does not impact on the auditorium which is the area of greatest sensitivity from our perspective. It seeks to enhance the toilet and reception facilities which require some upgrading. We are generally supportive of such works where they help enhance the experience of audiences and those who use theatre buildings. There would also be demonstrable enhancement of the external appearance of the building as currently blocked up bottom sashes to windows currently covered with plywood would be exposed. There would also be associated repairs.

Therefore we welcome these works and would be supportive of the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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