

Ref.: TC/70

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Jennie Humphrey  
Pending Applications  
Development Planning  
City of Westminster  
PO Box 732  
Redhill,  
RH1 9FL

By e-mail: [southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk)

**Applications:** 20/01821/LBC

**Site:** Royal Albert Hall Kensington Gore London SW7 2AP

**Proposal:** Internal alterations to the royal retiring room including replacement of the carpet, wallpaper and entrance door, repair to the ceiling plaster mouldings, portraits and chandelier and installation of a ceiling plaster rose and high-level LED strip lighting. Internal alterations to the royal lavatory including replacing the existing carpet and skirting boards with white and black mosaic floor tiling and ceramic tiles in the bottom part of the wall and wallpaper in the top part of the wall, lowering the ceiling and including a ventilation gap around the ceiling perimeter, installation of a new mechanical extractor fan and ducting, LED down-lighters and cistern, pipework and drainage, repair of the existing entrance door and replacement of internal flush lavatory door and sanitary facilities.

**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 Theatres Trust regarding this application for listed building consent at Royal Albert Hall. This proposal seeks to refurbish and alter the building's Royal Retiring Room and Royal Lavatory. This is part of a suite of works in association with a wider project for the Royal Albert Hall's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Royal Albert Hall is a statutory Grade 1 listed heritage asset, denoting that it is of exceptional interest. It is also a significant concert hall and multi-purpose venue which hosts a range of

**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

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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events; it is not just a key feature of London's cultural offer but is also recognised worldwide and is arguably the country's most famous venue.

Information submitted with the application states the Retiring Room was redecorated in 1971 and again in 1997. The latter redecoration utilised Victorian design principles. The previous 1971 scheme was designed by renowned architect and interior designer Hugh Casson and the later 1997 scheme by Ian Grant who worked on a number of notable interiors and was the first secretary of the Victorian Society.

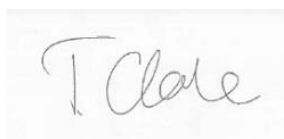
The overall objective of this particular proposal is to improve the function and appearance of these rooms to contribute towards the wider intention of improving the overall visitor experience and help bring more people into the building. The design approach seeks to create a connection between the original Royal Room and the current one. In particular, there is a need to furnish the Retiring Room to the highest standard given that it is utilised by Royalty and their guests when attending the Hall and to ensure it remains competitive for private hires and functions. Alongside this would be a general renewal to enable modern standards of accessibility and ensure accordance with safety and security requirements and needs. We are supportive of efforts to engage more people with the building as both a cultural and heritage asset, and generally welcome efforts by owners and operators of theatres and performance venues to invest in and maintain their facilities to help protect them for enjoyment by future generations.

Photographic information provided suggests the current decorative scheme, while having been implemented to accord with Victorian principles, is a little dated reflecting that it has been in place for twenty-three years. This is only a little less than the gap between the schemes by Casson and Grant. We consider the proposed scheme to be more contemporary in overall finish and appearance whilst reflecting the existing historic character and original design principles, offering more of a white/cream finish in place of the dominant yellow furnishing which has fallen out of favour. The door replacement, as well as meeting current regulations, reflects the original 1914 drawings.

We are similarly supportive of proposals for the Royal Lavatory.

Overall we concur with the applicant that this proposal will have negligible impact on the significance of the Royal Albert Hall as a heritage asset, and will help enhance the Retiring Room and Royal Lavatory as important spaces. Therefore **we are 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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