

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2305

21 May 2020

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Planning Services
Norwich City Council
City Hall
Norwich
NR2 1NH

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

Applications: 20/00488/L

Site: Norwich Arts Centre St Swithins Church Hall St Benedicts Street Norwich NR2 4PG

Proposals: Removal of existing plasterboard infill from 7No. windows and installation of hardwood frames with glazing.

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:

The Trust commented on and supported the previous application for listed building consent in May 2019 (19/00507/L) which was subsequently approved in July 2019, although the applicant has indicated they will not be progressing with the window element of that scheme because it will not provide the level of soundproofing required. Therefore this application seeks listed building consent for an alternative proposal.

This site is a statutorily listed building (Grade I), reflecting its exceptional interest as the former Church of St Swithin partially dating back to the 14th and 15th Century. It has been operating as Norwich Arts Centre since 1980, and is an important and valued small venue for live music, theatre, comedy and other arts.

The Arts Centre wishes to remove plasterboard which has been in place internally within seven windows to block light into the auditorium. This is to enable broader use of the facility which will help support the function of the Arts Centre, reduce costs and improve its flexibility. We are supportive of this principle which will help ensure the Arts Centre's ongoing role as an asset for

Theatres Trust

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T 020 7836 8591 **E** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **W** theatrestrust.org.uk

Chair Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

Trustees Richard Baldwin, David Blyth, Pam Bone, Paul Cartwright, Paddy Dillon, David Ian, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Simon Ricketts, Truda Spruyt

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

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Norwich. However it is also important such works maintain levels of existing acoustic insulation so as to preserve the amenity of nearby properties and protect the Arts Centre from potential costs and restrictions which could undermine its ongoing operation. As such, this proposal which provides sound absorbing cavity with secondary glazing meets that brief.

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks decisions to plan positively for community facilities which includes cultural buildings. By opening up the windows this proposal will help support the function and sustainability of the Arts Centre whilst also reinstating natural light and appreciation of the windows internally. We support this proposal and **recommend the granting of listed building consent.**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke".

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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