

Ref.: TC

22 May 2020

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Glasgow City Council
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Glasgow
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By e-mail: planning.representations@drs.glasgow.gov.uk

Applications: 20/00075/FUL & 20/00299/LBA

Site: 908 Govan Road Glasgow G51 3AF

Proposals: Use of vacant building as cinema, concert hall and restaurant and external alterations; &

Internal and external alterations to listed building

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust regarding these applications for planning permission and listed building consent associated with the restoration of the Category B listed Lyceum for use as a cinema, concert hall and restaurant.

The Lyceum, designed by David Barclay, originally opened as a theatre in 1899. It had a capacity of almost 3,000 within an Italian Renaissance-inspired auditorium and the basement contained a large billiards room with nineteen tables. By the 1920s it was a cine-variety theatre and became a full-time cinema in the 1930s. Following a major fire in 1937 it was rebuilt in an Art Deco style with a striking curved frontage and canopy and a circular foyer with a slightly reduced capacity of 2,600. Notably the auditorium was some distance from the entrance requiring a relatively long walk and disguised 90-degree turn. In 1974 it was sub-divided with the stalls adapted for bingo and cinema being retained in the balcony; the cinema closed in 1981. Bingo use ceased in 2006 with the building being vacant since that time.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

We understand much of the Lyceum's interior and features of significance survive as does the character of its exterior although clearly after such a period of inactivity its condition will be deteriorating. It is on Historic Environment Scotland's Buildings at Risk register and the Cinema Theatre Association's list of Cinemas at Risk. The Lyceum is a significant contributor to local townscape and has the potential to once again serve as an important community, cultural and heritage asset not just for the immediate community in Govan but its wider catchment of Glasgow and beyond. The site is in an accessible location in close proximity to Govan Underground station. Its return to use could act as a catalyst for further improvement within the surrounding area, supporting surrounding businesses and encouraging others to locate. We therefore welcome efforts to bring the Lyceum back to active use and are supportive of the principle of this application.

However, there is a general lack of information submitted with the application. Paragraph 137 of Scottish Planning Policy states the planning system should promote the care and protection of the designated historic environment and enable positive change which is informed by a clear understanding of the importance of heritage assets affected. It also seeks change to be sensitively managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on fabric and ensure special characteristics are protected. Paragraph 141 states listed buildings should be protected from work that would adversely affect it. There is no Heritage Statement or other such analysis which would help ascertain and justify the interventions taking place and the impact either positive or negative this would have on the Lyceum's features of significance. Some of the floorplans submitted are duplicated and aren't always clear. For example, the ground floor plan states some of the access doors are to be blocked by a masonry wall but the entrance and circular foyer are an important feature of the building. It appears this may prevent level access to the cinema; although a future lift is indicated it seems only accessible via an initial set of stairs. The lift itself may require some level of internal alteration and harm to historic fabric. Similarly it is stated that new doors will be installed which will lose the current external recess. On one plan it is stated the restaurant layout is to be determined but on another it is shown. The proposed concert hall layout is to be determined.

Externally the section plan states the external wall surface is to be smoothed for preparation of a new coat of paint and repaired where necessary using similar materials to existing. Again this would require further substantiation and justification because at present the façade consists of tiling at lower levels and brickwork above. Alteration could fundamentally change and undermine the building's character.

Along with general explanation and justification for these plans and the impact on the building as a heritage asset, we suggest there needs to be further review of the individual use elements of this proposal and how they work together. At present the concert hall and its layout is undetermined and this in particular could present challenges at a later stage. The applicant may benefit from engaging the Trust in developing these proposals further; our assistance ranges from informal advice and feedback on plans to a full Advisory Review.

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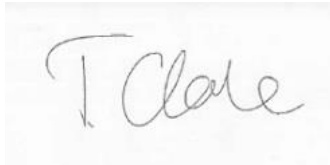
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In conclusion although we are supportive of the principle of this proposal and are keen to see the Lyceum returned to active use currently we would be able to recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent. Further information would need to be submitted as set out above; we would suggest there is insufficient detail to enable the determination of these applications.

A solution in the meantime if the applicant is seeking certainty before progressing further might be for the amendment of the planning application description to establish the acceptability of change of use only, which we would support. Alternatively full details should be provided to allow for the proper assessment of the impact of alterations to the building as a heritage asset and ensure the Lyceum's special character and features of significance are protected from unnecessary harm or loss. If the Council is minded to determine the applications on the basis of existing information we urge conditions requiring submission of further details to be in place for approval.

We would welcome further engagement on this proposal as plans are developed.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss this representation in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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