

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/3836

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**Application:** 20/01008/FUL & 20/01009/LBC

**Site:** 79-83 Westgate Wakefield WF1 1EP

**Proposal:** Change of use of part of all floors of Unity House from Sui Generis/A3/A4/B1a to temporary educational use (use class D1)

## 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 planning permission and listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it involves development at Unity Works which was formerly known as Unity Hall.

Originally constructed in 1867 the building was extended twice with the later 1904 development creating Unity Hall. It is a statutorily Grade II listed heritage asset. Our records suggest the hall was a multi-purpose venue which hosted some theatre alongside cinema, dances and live music. It became Wakefield's primary venue for theatre between the closure of Theatre Royal Wakefield in 1954 and its reopening in 1981. Following that it was primarily a music venue and later a nightclub which closed around 2004. After ten years of vacancy it reopened following restoration in 2014 although closed again in 2017. It is now operated as an events space and business centre.

## 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, David Ian, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Simon Ricketts, Truda Spruyt

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



This proposal seeks change of use of parts of the building along with some minor internal alterations to facilitate educational use by CAPA College.

Having reviewed the plans the proposed alterations do not appear to impact the main hall, thus maintaining its function and potential to be utilised for performance. Furthermore the proposed use of the converted spaces is associated with the development of skills in the performing arts which we welcome and consider complementary and compatible with Unity Hall's historic function and of the adjacent Theatre Royal Wakefield.

Therefore we are supportive of this change of use and of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Trust should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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