

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1993

05 October 2020

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

By e-mail: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Application: 20/05735/LBC

Site: Her Majesty's Theatre 72-78 Haymarket London SW1Y 4QL

Proposal: Installation of replacement fire curtain

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 the Theatres Trust on the above application for Listed Building Consent at Her Majesty's Theatre. The proposal seeks to replace the theatre's fire curtain.

Her Majesty's Theatre is a statutory Grade II* listed heritage asset. It was built in 1897 by notable theatre architect C.J. Phipps as part of a redevelopment of a block including a previous theatre which at the time was considered out-dated; the Royal Arcade to the rear of the theatre was spared. The theatre is of French Renaissance design internally with a grand exterior. Since 1986 the theatre has been the home of Phantom of the Opera.

The existing safety curtain in place at Her Majesty's is of late 1800s patent; the Heritage Statement provides evidence of the curtain's great similarity with one of an earlier 1883 catalogue. However the curtain, whilst of significant age, presents a health and safety risk particularly from its asbestos and slag wool infill. It is therefore proposed that it is replaced with a modern equivalent which would also meet current fire safety standards.

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, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Simon Ricketts, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Due to the health and safety implications of retaining the existing curtain, and that the curtain is not as decorative as some other examples, the Trust is supportive of its replacement. We welcome the applicant's commitment to undertake photographic recording prior to removal and during the removal process, along with retention of the curtain's manual pump. We would suggest these measures are safeguarded by condition.

Therefore we recommend the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments further.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Simon Ricketts, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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