

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

06 November 2020

Mrs Janice Crook
South Ribble Borough Council
Civic Centre
West Paddock
Leyland
Lancashire
PR25 1DH

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

Application: 07/2020/00853/COU

Site: Penwortham Arts Centre The Venue Liverpool Road Penwortham Preston Lancashire PR1 9XE

Proposal: Retrospective Change of Use from Library to an Arts and Community Use Centre (Sui Generis)

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:

We are supportive of this retrospective proposal which would formalise the change of use of the former library (formerly D1, now F1(d)) to a multi-use community arts centre (Sui Generis). The building had been vacant since the previous use ceased in 2016; it was taken on by Penwortham Town Council and re-opened in 2019.

Policy H1 of the South Ribble Local Plan (2015) manages change of use of community facilities and seeks demonstration and evidence the existing use no longer serves the needs of the community or that it is demonstrably no longer viable. With respect to the library use although evidently there was opposition to its loss, a replacement facility has subsequently been provided. In any case the arts centre is itself a community facility which provides a broad range of functions, therefore it can be considered there is a net gain in local community provision. Furthermore Policy 12(d) of the the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) encourages cultural

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

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The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

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and leisure facilities of which an arts centre would be included. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

Community and cultural facilities, particularly of this nature, help bring people together and provide opportunities for engagement and participation in the arts. This in turn helps reduce isolation and improves cultural well-being. We would concur with the applicant's statement that an arts centre would bring people into the area to the benefit of other businesses. Maintaining active use of this building is also to be welcomed.

In conclusion we welcome this proposal and **recommend the granting of retrospective planning permission.**

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

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

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