

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2305

10 December 2020

Declan Semple
Planning & Strategy
City Development
The City of Edinburgh Council
Business Centre G2
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh
EH8 8BG

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

Application: 20/05360/FUL & 20/05361/LBC

Site: Playhouse Theatre 18 - 20 Greenside Place Edinburgh EH1 3AA

Proposal: Demolition of the existing scene dock structure at the Playhouse Theatre

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:

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have been brought to the attention of the Trust by the applicant, who engaged with us prior to submission. They are seeking to remove and replace the theatre's scene dock structure, although these applications are just for removal specifically as such works are covered by Article 4 direction removing permitted development rights.

The Playhouse is a Category A heritage asset reflecting its national importance as what was the largest cinema in Scotland and the fourth largest in the UK, designed by specialist architect John Fairweather. Few theatres either in Scotland or across the United Kingdom as a whole are designated at the highest level of grading. It is the current largest theatre in the UK and therefore also a major cultural asset for Edinburgh, attracting major international touring shows which helps draw people into the city.

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

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The theatre's scene dock was intended as a temporary solution but has not been in place over thirty years. It is in effect a scaffolding structure, although it is an important part of the theatre's backstage infrastructure. We understand from our discussion with the theatre's operator that future replacement options are being scoped.

Such is the nature of the current scene dock and its deterioration over time, quite aside from it not being a permanent structure, it cannot be considered as contributing to the theatre's significance. Therefore we raise no objection to its removal, and encourage the applicant to continue to engage with us as future plans are developed.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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