

Ref.: TC

12 February 2021

C/o Planning Department of the Derry City and Strabane District Council,
98 Strand Road,
Derry
BT48 7NN

planning@derrystrabane.com

Applications: LA11/2020/0844/F

Site: 20-22 Hawkin Street and vacant site to the immediate South West fronting on to Kennedy Place Derry

Proposals: Extension to and reconfiguration of building to accommodate arts & culture centre comprising performance space, multi use space, art & tuition rooms, dance studio, offices, cafe & ancillary spaces and associated site works

Remit:

The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Public Body for Theatres, established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 *'to promote the better protection of theatres'*. We provide an authoritative and knowledgeable source of expert advice and information on theatre buildings. We are a statutory consultee in England, Wales and Scotland and we deliver statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use through an agreement with the Northern Ireland Planning Service that Divisional Offices and Development Control Sections will consult The Theatres Trust on *'any proposals affecting theatres'*.

Comment:

This application has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking to provide a new performance space as part of an extension to the New Gate Arts & Culture Centre. The New Gate is a cultural asset for the city providing a mixed programme of arts and community activities, opening in 2016. Having purchased the neighbouring plot of land and received funding, a capital project for expansion is being taken forward facilitated through this application.

The Trust welcomes this investment into the city's cultural provision and supports the addition of a venue capable of providing theatre and live performance. Plans show the performance space to offer good volume of space with sound lobby separating it from the café, and seating for around 140 people depending on format. Sufficient acoustic protection will be important not just for guarding against disturbance of performances or events by other users of New Gate but also preventing breakout of sound which could harm the amenity of nearby properties. We note the report of the applicant's noise and acoustic consultants which outlines design measures being taken to appropriately manage noise.

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, Paul Cartwright, Paddy Dillon, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, 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 plans show the only changing room/dressing room to be to the top floor requiring performers to come down the two flights of stairs. This isn't generally a problem and isn't uncommon but the needs of wheelchair users and others requiring level access will need to be considered. The green room to the performance space could function as an additional dressing room as could the area marked for a store. Aside from accessibility issues, more than one changing space would be beneficial for reasons of safeguarding particularly should there be performances involving children and young people.

We are supportive of the granting of planning permission and look forward to seeing expansion of the New Gate progress.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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