

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1957

30 April 2021

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By e-mail: [planningconsultation@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:planningconsultation@harrogate.gov.uk)

**Application:** 21/01302/FUL

**Site:** The Playhouse Church Street Pateley Bridge HG3 5LB

**Proposal:** Alterations to existing fenestration and installation of a new fire escape platform.

**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 planning permission at The Playhouse in Pateley Bridge which seeks to alter its means of escape.

The Playhouse is an important community and cultural asset for Pateley Bridge. It is operated by the Pateley Bridge Dramatic Society and opened in 1968 within a former Methodist chapel. Small community and voluntary venues such as this provide access to culture and the arts for local people and provide opportunities to participate and volunteer, which helps improve well-being, reduces isolation and develops skills. Therefore efforts to enhance the Playhouse and improve its accessibility to the wider community are to be welcomed; paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for these types of facilities.

The redirection of escape through a lobby rather than a kitchen which is a more likely source of fire is a sensible approach. It appears the existing dressing room through which exit currently takes place will move into the existing kitchen. In turn this will provide an additional backstage

**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, 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

## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



WC so will likely be an improvement, but the wider plans for the theatre aren't shown so the overall layout cannot be understood and if exit is still to be through a kitchen this would be discouraged. There are clearly steps required through the revised exit route so it is to be assumed wheelchair escape is elsewhere and we note the installation of a safe refuge is to be provided. Nonetheless we acknowledge internal alterations do not require planning permission and are outside the scope of this application; Theatres Trust is a source of free advice for theatres so we would encourage the applicant to engage with the Trust and share their plans for wider improvements to make sure they work for the theatre and meet relevant standards.

The Playhouse is an undesignated heritage asset within the Pateley Bridge Conservation Area. Whilst the wider development plans and layout for the theatre aren't shown, the only matters for consideration are the external alterations to facilitate the swapping of escape positions. On that basis, the works are within a less sensitive part of the building which has already been heavily altered. Therefore we would be supportive of the granting of planning permission.

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

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