

Ref.: TC

11 June 2021

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City Offices  
Colebrook Street  
Winchester  
SO23 9LJ

By e-mail: [planning@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning@winchester.gov.uk)

**Application:** 21/01235/FULL

**Site:** The Grange Grange Park Northington SO24 9TG

**Proposal:** Proposed alterations and extension to The Grange and theatre to provide new access point and turning head, scenery dock and atrium, studio space, backstage area, toilet and shower facilities and associated development including landscape and ancillary works

**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:**

This application has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking an extension and alterations to the theatre at The Grange.

The theatre is largely used for The Grange Festival which takes place across the summer, but can also be used at other times. It is attached to the Grade I listed mansion and Grade II listed conservatory within Grade II\* listed registered garden and park. It is within the house's former orangery and won several design awards upon completion approaching twenty years ago. The nature of its offer means not only is it an important arts and cultural facility for the area but also an economic draw which brings in visitors from further afield. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for cultural buildings, and paragraph 83 supports rural tourism and leisure developments and the development of facilities for culture.

These proposals would expand and enhance the theatre's facilities which would both enhance the audience experience and support the theatre operationally. The theatre would be expanded

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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**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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predominantly beyond its existing footprint to the north and west. Within both of these areas would be new scenery docks as the existing dock is insufficient to meet the needs of shows hosted at the theatre. Clearly this is of great benefit as it will allow the theatre to continue to thrive, which in turn supports the sustainability of the wider estate as a significant heritage asset and visitor attraction. Alongside this would be additional WCs for performers and supporting infrastructure such as a scenery/pit lift.

Within the west extension will be enhanced front of house facilities, with a new atrium leading to new permanent WC facilities. This will improve audience comfort and improve their experience considerably particularly in inclement weather, as currently toilet facilities are provided within portable structures brought into the site. This should also reduce the theatre's costs. There will also be new meeting rooms which we assume would be available to hire, along with a dedicated educational space and studio and WCs to serve these areas (including lift access and accessible WCs). This will help bring more users into the building at different times of year, supporting the social and community role of the theatre and wider estate.

In conclusion we are supportive of these proposals for development and improvement of the theatre. Whilst new development within the setting of a heritage asset will inevitably lead to some degree of harm, we do not consider this development to be detrimental to the overall significance of either the house or gardens. In further mitigation there are clear public benefits from this proposal through enhancement of a cultural facility, opportunity to broaden access, and fundamentally to support the ongoing preservation of the estate.

Therefore we are 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".

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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