

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/3142

04 June 2021

Cheyenne Kirby
West Berkshire Council
Development and Planning
West Berkshire Council
Market Street
Newbury
RG14 5LD

By e-mail: planapps@westberks.gov.uk

Applications: 21/01140/FUL

Site: Watermill Theatre Unnamed Road To The Watermill Theatre Bagnor Newbury West Berkshire RG20 8AE

Proposal: Installation of a temporary single storey portakabin building to be used as additional office space for a period of 2 years

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:

This application has come to the attention of the Trust because it is proposing development at the Watermill Theatre.

The Watermill is a Grade II listed heritage asset which was converted into a repertory theatre in 1967. It is a valued cultural venue which also draws visitors into the area. Planning decisions should plan positively for these types of facilities.

This proposal seeks installation of a portacabin for a temporary period in order to provide office space which meets social distancing requirements, due to constraints within the main building. Although there would be very minor impact on the setting of the theatre as a heritage asset, achieved through locating the portacabin in a less sensitive location, this is mitigated by both its temporary nature and the public benefits generated by supporting the ongoing operation of the theatre at a critical time. The latter must be prioritised.

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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It is to be hoped that restrictions will not persist so long as to make a future application for extension of temporary permission necessary. Nonetheless, to safeguard the longer term conservation of the theatre's setting a permission can be conditioned so as to require removal of the cabin either at the end of the two year period or within a period beyond the permanent ending of restrictions if this occurs later.

In conclusion we support the granting of temporary planning permission.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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