

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2527

07 July 2021

Nigel Brabyn
Planning and Sustainable Development
Cornwall Council
Pydar House
Pydar Street
Truro
TR1 1XU

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

Application: PA21/04064

Site: Falmouth Arts Centre 24 Church Street Falmouth TR11 3EG

Proposal: Listed Building consent for external repairs and associated works, and proposed disabled toilet

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 for listed building consent has come to the Trust's attention because it is seeking repairs and alterations to Falmouth Arts Centre, known as 'The Poly'.

The Poly is a Grade II* listed heritage and cultural asset. Originally a polytechnic hall it is now a theatre and arts centre with a varied programme. It also offers practical and workshops. It is a charitable organisation run by its members and is an important facility for the town and its wider catchment. Paragraph 92 of the NPPF (2019) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

This proposal would see a number of refurbishment and repair works carried out both externally and internally, as well as the installation of an accessible WC. We welcome these plans as we are supportive of efforts by owners and operators to invest in and maintain their buildings and to make sure they maximise their social and community functions by providing for all sections of the

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

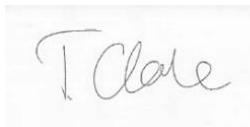
community.

Given the building's historic significance as the world's first polytechnic, and its ongoing function as a theatre and arts centre, it is essential it is conserved. On that basis, in light of damage and deficiencies having been identified, the proposed repairs will ensure its ongoing conservation for future generations. Details of pointing work have been provided, it will be important to ensure such work is carried out by professionals with experience of historic buildings. We note that trials of the pointing mix are to be carried out and there may be merit in agreement being made by the Council's conservation officer. More generally any replacement materials should match those of the originals as has been set out within the submitted plans.

These plans also seek to replace an existing store off of the gallery with accessible WC and the insertion of a wall to shield the WC from the gallery. Although this necessitates some loss of fabric we consider this is justified by the public benefit of improving accessible facilities for the building's users.

We therefore support these proposals and the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you wish to discuss these comments further.



Tom Clarke
National Planning Adviser

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