

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2934

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Daniel Farmer
Planning
Economy, Planning and Employability Services
Kingdom House
Kingdom Avenue
Glenrothes
KY7 5LY

By e-mail: development.central@fife.gov.uk

Application: 21/01526/LBC & 21/01527/FULL

Site: Adam Smith Theatre St Brycedale Avenue Kirkcaldy Fife KY1 1ET

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations to form community hub (Class 10) including, formation of ramp, stairs and hardstanding, repairing of windows and doors and installation of inverted dormers and ventilation (removal of existing ventilation system) ; and

Change of use from theatre (Class 11) to community hub (Class 10), internal and external alterations including, formation of ramp, stairs and hardstanding, repairing of windows and doors and installation of inverted dormers and ventilation (removal of existing ventilation system)

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:

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have come to the attention of the Trust because they are seeking alterations and change of use at the Adam Smith Theatre.

The Adam Smith Theatre is a mixed arts centre which alongside its theatre also offers cinema, function and exhibition space and an all-day café. It is an important and valued community and cultural facility for the town and its wider catchment. It hosts both professional and amateur/community productions. It opened in 1899 as a concert and assembly hall becoming

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

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more of a dedicated theatre as decades went by. In the early 1970s it was renovated to become more of a wider cultural centre. The building is Category C listed.

The intention of this project is to expand the wider community function of the facility by providing a 'Creative Digital Hub', enhancing the café/bar and function suites, adding a Changing Places facility and carrying out general refurbishments. This is something we would welcome and support; bringing more people into the building and increasing engagement with it will have a positive impact on the arts and theatre provision at the Adam Smith. There are two core elements within these applications to facilitate this – the internal and external alterations covered by both the planning permission and listed building consent, and the change of use from theatre to community hub within the planning permission.

In terms of the proposed alterations we have no objections. Overall there is a slight decline in general WC provision with a net loss of one urinal, although whilst the loss of three female cubicles is offset by three additional unisex/gender neutral facilities these are spread throughout the building. The number of WCs and urinals provided exceeds standards for males but is only met for females when unisex facilities are included. However these are spread across different locations which will work well for general use of the building but could give rise to operational challenges for theatre use towards full capacity. We welcome that there will be a new accessible WC to the first floor/theatre level and we similarly welcome the Changing Places facility. The box office/reception looks to have greater openness and prominence and the café/bar being opened up will create a better environment. The upper foyer appears to be more inviting for theatre audiences and provides better facilities to dwell before performances and during intervals. We assume the bar/servery within the Beveridge Suite can be used for theatre audiences removing need to go to the ground floor bar.

However, we have concern with regard to the formal change of use from theatre use as this may undermine the status of the theatre and have unintended negative consequences in future with regards to safeguarding theatre and performance use for the benefit of the community. The application states theatre use as Class 11 whereas it is actually Sui Generis. Neither does the proposed Class 10 use appear consistent with the building's function. Given the mixed-use nature of the facility we would suggest that a revised Sui Generis description would be more appropriate. We object to this element of the planning application and urge revision.

In conclusion we welcome the overall project and are supportive of the granting of listed building consent. We can also support the alteration element of the corresponding planning permission. However as set out above we object to the change of use and urge that aspect to be revised.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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