

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1991

14 October 2021

Allison Borden  
Pending Applications  
Development Planning  
City of Westminster  
PO Box 732  
Redhill  
RH1 9FL

By e-mail: [southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk)

**Application:** 21/06055/LBC

**Site:** 403-404 Strand London WC2R 0NH

**Proposal:** Installation of two new technical trusses (1) within the proscenium arch and (2) across the auditorium; installation of two new lighting booms to either side of the stage and to the underside of the Circle and Gallery; and installation of 28 x speakers/brackets on the walls of the auditorium

**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 Theatres Trust regarding this application for listed building consent at Vaudeville Theatre.

It is seeking installation of two new trusses, lighting booms and speaker brackets within its auditorium on a temporary basis to facilitate a run of the show Six being held at the theatre. This is because the theatre currently does not meet the particular technical sound and lighting requirements for this show which make it a more immersive experience, therefore new insertions and fixings would be required to provide the sound quality and distribution needed. Existing positions are not appropriate as sightlines would be obscured from some seats.

This will however necessitate incisions and fixings to be made into historic plasterwork and brickwork to support the installed equipment, particularly for the trusses. As stated by the applicant although this will cause some harm this is mitigated by the works being carried out to

**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)

Interim Chair Paddy Dillon Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Richard Baldwin, Paul Cartwright, 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

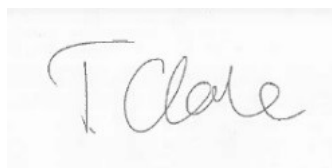
plain areas of plasterwork which will be easy to repair and restore with the most decorative elements not being affected. The trusses will be removed at the end of the run with reinstatement works will take place at that time. Two vertical booms will be installed either side of the stage, the lower fixing will be screwed into the floor which is formed of plyboard with non-original carpet and therefore will not impact on historic fabric or original features. The upper fixing will be into plain plastered masonry which again is less sensitive. Two horizontal booms will be bolted to the underside of the Circle and Gallery again into plain plastered masonry as is common elsewhere. The speaker fixings will be into a combination of plane plaster and moulded frames which have been previously altered.

We appreciate and recognise the need for this equipment particularly in the context of Six being a high-profile and acclaimed show. It is an important production to have secured which will support the theatre's recovery from the pandemic thus helping to ensure its longer term conservation as a cultural and heritage asset. This is a further mitigation justifying the harm that will be caused by some elements of the work. On that basis we would be supportive of the granting of listed building consent although we recommend this is made conditional on the trusses and vertical booms to the side of the boxes being removed upon completion of this run of shows.

We also suggest that a written strategy specifying the type of sound and lighting equipment to be utilised should be submitted due to the restrictive nature of the auditorium. We would not object to longer-term retention of the two horizontal lighting and speaker booms to the underside of the circle and gallery as these can be considered as necessary technical infrastructure for a West End theatre and would in any case be a reversible change.

In conclusion and summary we recommend the granting of listed building consent subject to the conditions outlined above.

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



Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

**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)

Interim Chair Paddy Dillon Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Richard Baldwin, Paul Cartwright, 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