

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2831

07 September 2021

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Stanley Lane
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By e-mail: planning.southern@shropshire.gov.uk

Application: 21/04030/FUL

Site: The Theatre On The Steps Stoneway Steps Bridgnorth WV16 4BD

Proposal: Erection of 1No rear entrance and an extended single storey changing room and associated 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 planning permission at Theatre On The Steps. We do not appear to have been directly notified despite this falling within our statutory remit.

Theatre On The Steps is a valued cultural venue for Bridgnorth and its surrounding communities. It was founded by a local amateur dramatics society in the 1960s when it purchased and converted an 1829 congregational chapel. A dressing room block was added to the rear and the balcony was restored and brought into use within the auditorium in 2002, with further refurbishments around ten years ago. The Trust's database describes it as being, "a charming intimate theatre". The theatre is operated by its members and volunteers making it an important social and community facility. It has a mixed programme of its own and other local productions and touring/professional shows. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL
T 020 7836 8591 E info@theatrestrust.org.uk W 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

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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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These proposals would see installation of a new glazed entrance lobby to Stoneway Steps and an extension to the rear to accommodate improved back of house facilities.

The entrance lobby will allow for improved flow in and out of the building at peak periods and would likely allow improved climate control within the foyer. It will also improve the prominence of the theatre. We consider the design of this modern extension to complement the character of the building as a non-designated heritage asset.

The rear of the building has already been altered and extended to facilitate the dressing room block. These plans will see this block extended further. We are supportive of these works because they will improve the theatre's facilities for performers.

In conclusion we welcome these extensions to the theatre and support the granting of planning permission.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke".

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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