

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2305

07 September 2021

Kirsty Hope
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Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
EH54 6FF

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

Application: 0873/FUL/21 & 0874/LBC/21

Site: Regal Community Theatre 24-34 North Bridge Street Bathgate West Lothian EH48 4PS

Proposal: Single storey corridor extension on east elevation, 3 windows to west elevation and internal alterations; &

Listed building consent for single storey corridor extension on east elevation, 3 windows to west elevation and internal alterations

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 internal and external alterations with a minor extension to the Regal Community Theatre. The Trust has recently commented in support of applications relating to signage, lighting and redecoration.

The Regal is a Category B heritage asset on account of being a good example of provincial cinema retaining its Art Deco interior and exterior with decorative plasterwork and rare modelled plaster panels by John Alexander. It is a valued theatre and cultural venue serving Bathgate and its surrounding catchment.

The following works are proposed:

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

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

Bar area (Ground Floor)

The bar area would be opened up further with the existing enclosed ramp and corridor removed. This will provide a larger bar area with a platform lift installed to address accessibility with there being a level change. Three new openings to the west elevation will provide windows to the bar allowing in natural light giving a more welcoming atmosphere which will draw in custom. The bar will be utilised as an all-day venue and could be used for private hire and functions; we are supportive of this approach as it provides the theatre with an additional source of income and will bring more people into the venue allowing greater engagement. This will enhance the Regal's role as a community and social facility.

With regards to the insertion of windows, these are located to a less sensitive elevation in an area where there are already openings. They will match the appearance of the existing windows. This is also a reversible change as they could at a later date be bricked over. Therefore we have no objections to their addition.

Rehearsal area and administrative functions (First Floor)

The theatre currently has a rehearsal area to its first floor alongside offices and a lighting room. Partitions within the administrative area will be removed creating a second rehearsal room. This will expand the theatre's provision and improve its flexibility, again offering additional income potential. Significantly these rooms can provide additional dressing room space as currently the theatre has very little provision. New openings will be provided into an improved upper foyer. Again, these areas are less historically sensitive. Therefore we are similarly supportive of these alterations.

Extension to east elevation

In order to provide access between back of house and the improved/additional rehearsal rooms to the first floor a modest extension will be constructed. This is effectively a new corridor to link to the stairs to the upper levels. Given that it facilitates much-needed additional back of house provision and is of appropriate design along a less sensitive elevation we are supportive of its construction.

Back of house refurbishments/improvements (Second Floor)

With the first floor office spaces giving way to improved and additional rehearsal space, the second floor area will be refurbished and remodelled for which we are supportive.

To conclude, we welcome this project which will enhance the theatre and its function. The works would not harm the most historically sensitive areas of the theatre, either internally or externally. Neither would they compromise any future aspirations for the theatre's development. Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

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for **everyone**



Please contact us 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, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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