

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/424

05 October 2021

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**Application:** 21/06037/LBC & 21/06077/ADV

**Site:** Criterion Theatre Piccadilly London W1J 9HT

**Proposal:** Removal of existing show signage, including running globe lamps, and installation new show signage clamped to existing show sign framework; &

Display of internally illuminated fascia signs measuring 5.82 x 6.21. Display of non- illuminated fascia signs measuring 0.46 x 1.6, 0.56 x 1.68, and 1.37 x 0.95.

## **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 on these applications for listed building consent and advertisement consent at Criterion Theatre. The theatre is seeking to remove existing show signage and replace it with new signage.

The Criterion is a Grade II\* listed heritage asset and the first subterranean theatre in London. It is considered one of the best preserved of the West End's pre-1890s theatres and one of the most important surviving mid-Victorian theatres in Britain. It contributes to the West End's renowned theatre offer. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

Show signage can be considered an integral part of theatre character and design, and by nature this changes over time with varying degrees of frequency. Signage is especially critical for the

## **Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL  
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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

## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Criterion as it lacks significant street frontage and prominence. The existing signage relates to a production which commenced in March 2016 and ran until the theatre was closed in mid-March 2020. The theatre is scheduled to re-open in October 2021 with a production which is transferring to the West End having opened in Glasgow in 2018 and was scheduled to have toured across the UK before being curtailed by the pandemic.

The applicant's approach utilises existing support frames and panels with some minor insertions in places, alongside this will be some redecoration to the structure and metalwork. Largely new frames will be clamped to existing structure so there would be no harm to historic fabric. With signage already being in place at the Criterion, as well as there being several prominent examples in the wider setting of Piccadilly Circus, we do not consider there to be implications for highway safety or to the amenity of surrounding properties. Added to this is the need to support theatres as they seek to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss these comments in further 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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