

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

26 October 2021

Bron Curtis
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

By e-mail: planningblue@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Application: DC/21/03407

Site: Stonham Barns Park Pettaugh Road Stonham Aspal Suffolk IP14 6AT

Proposal: Full Planning Application - Erection of extension to theatre and events building (retention of).

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 retrospective planning permission for an extension to the theatre compared to the plans approved in 2018.

The Aspal Theatre is a new theatre located within the Stonham Barns complex. It opened in 2019. It had a mixed programme scheduled for its first year including local amateur productions, a summer variety show, tribute bands and shows for children. Stonham Barns is an established centre for retail, leisure, tourism and small businesses. This theatre further contributes to its diverse offer and attractiveness to visitors, as well as providing a new venue to serve the social and cultural needs of surrounding communities.

We were not consulted on original plans for this theatre in 2018, although the submitted plan is vague on detail particularly in relation to internal layout and function. Originally the theatre area was to have extended beyond the building line of the adjoining museum and storage space being formed as part of the same development.

Theatres Trust

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Interim Chair Paddy Dillon Director Jon Morgan

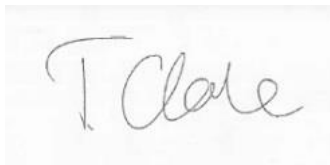
Trustees Richard Baldwin, Paul Cartwright, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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

The building actually appears to have been completed with the other sections of equal depth to the theatre. Within these floorplans some of the theatre layout is shown. The extended area contains the toilet facilities for the theatre, which would appear to make sense operationally. We would note however that provision appears to be slightly below that of the recommended minimum set out in the Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment 'yellow book'.

Nonetheless, this sits outside of the scope of this application. The extended footprint of this building compared to previously approved plans would seem to enhance the function of this new facility and does not materially impact its wider setting. Therefore we would be supportive of the granting of retrospective planning permission.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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