

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

10 November 2021

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By e-mail: [devcontrol@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:devcontrol@wakefield.gov.uk)

**Application:** 21/02521/FUL & 21/02522/LBC

**Site:** The Court House Wood Street Wakefield WF1 2EL

**Proposal:** Conversion and renovation to enable flexible use as Use Class E (commercial, business and service uses), Use Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions), Use Class F2 (local community uses), public house, drinking establishments, cinema, theatre, dance hall, concert hall and/or live music venue with associated works and landscaping

## **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:**

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have come to the attention of the Trust because they are seeking conversion and change of use of the Grade II\* listed former Court House to a creative hub including theatre and live performance.

We are supportive of the principle of this proposal. The Court House is vacant with signs of deterioration across various parts of the building as demonstrated through images submitted with this application. We therefore welcome efforts to restore and return it to active use. The mix of uses associated with a creative hub would appear to be broadly a potentially viable and compatible use for the building's heritage and significance. The activity associated with a creative hub could also help revitalise this part of Wakefield's city centre.

## **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

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## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



The scale of the performance spaces are such that they would seem to complement Wakefield's existing theatre and live performance offer. There is insufficient detail within the submitted internal plans to provide detailed advice on their function, although with an apparent lack of backstage provision directly linked to this space there will be limitations on the type of shows they can handle. Nonetheless they are likely to be conducive for general function and event use as envisaged within the Design & Access Statement with some degree of live performance and this may be acceptable for the applicant's needs and their business plan. With openings into the performance spaces the applicant may wish to consider how these are controlled and sound-proofed to avoid any events and performances being disturbed by noise from other activities in the building.

The Vision for Wakefield within the Core Strategy (2009) supported by Spatial Objective 8 seeks investment into the city and provision of excellent leisure and cultural facilities. This proposal will contribute to that and we welcome further opportunities for theatre and live performance being introduced into the city. Therefore we are supportive of this change of use and of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Trust should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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