

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2305

07 January 2022

Planning & Strategy  
City Development  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
Business Centre G2  
Waverley Court  
4 East Market Street  
Edinburgh  
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By e-mail: [planning@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:planning@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Application:** 21/06770/LBC

**Site:** Playhouse Theatre 18 - 20 Greenside Place Edinburgh EH1 3AA

**Proposal:** Installation of replacement digital poster display board at the Playhouse Theatre, 18-22 Greenside Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3AA.

## **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:**

This application for listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking alteration at the Playhouse Theatre, specifically replacement of a large poster board above the theatre's main entrance with a digital display.

The Playhouse is Category A listed reflecting its national importance as what was the largest cinema in Scotland and the fourth largest in the UK, designed by specialist architect John Fairweather. Few theatres across the United Kingdom are designated at the highest level of heritage grading. It is a major cultural asset for Edinburgh which attracts major international touring shows drawing visitors into the city, benefitting the local economy. Therefore interventions at this theatre must be sensitive to its architectural, historic and cultural significance.

Show signage is an important feature of theatres and cinemas, playing a functional role in promoting current and upcoming shows as well as contributing to visual interest and character.

## **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

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**



There has been a growing movement towards replacing poster boards with digital displays including at other historically important theatres and other venues. We have commented on previous proposals of this nature at the Playhouse, and remain of the position that we do not generally consider display screens to detract from significance where replacing existing posters and would note it constitutes reversible change.

Digital displays provide a number of operational benefits for theatres, being more cost effective as they remove need for manual change and printing and enable content to be better tailored with greater frequency. It is also better in terms of health and safety, with images provided by the applicant demonstrating current need to block surrounding pavement to pedestrians with staff having to work at height.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or 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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