

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

19 January 2022

Eirini Dimerouki  
Planning, Building Control & Licensing  
Colchester Borough Council  
Town Hall,  
Colchester,  
Essex,  
CO1 1FR

By e-mail: [planning.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@colchester.gov.uk)

**Application:** 213490

**Site:** Colchester Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF

**Proposals:** Installation of support for loudspeakers

## **Remit:**

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 for listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it seeks installation of new support for loudspeakers at Colchester Arts Centre. They are part of a set of applications to which we have also provided comment under separate cover.

The Arts Centre is a Grade II listed heritage asset within the former St. Mary at the Walls church. After church use ceased the building was converted for performance use with the Arts Centre opening in 1980. It is a valued arts and cultural asset for the town and its wider catchment, offering a varied programme of live music, comedy and theatre along with other events such as beer festivals. It is run on a not-for-profit basis. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2022) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

The new plate to mount loudspeakers would be inserted to the southern side of the performance area within the nave. This will require an insertion into the fabric, and whilst there is little discussion of this and any impact within the Heritage Statement we concur with the applicant's general sentiment that harm would be negligible. Investment into the Arts Centre and the upgrading of its facilities and infrastructure is welcomed and provides a public benefit.

## **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** Katie Town      **Director** Jon Morgan

**Trustees** Paul Cartwright, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt

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**



We would therefore be 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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