

# 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)

**Applications:** 213495

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

**Proposals:** Removal of existing free standing entrance portal and installation of new entrance portal

## **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 has come to the attention of the Trust because it seeks alteration at Colchester Arts Centre.

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.

This proposal has been submitted as part of a set of applications seeking various alterations, with some refurbishment already having been carried out during enforced Covid-related closures. It seeks to remove the semi-circular entrance portal which separates the performance area from the main audience entrance. This would be replaced by a new straight portal.

## **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 concur with the applicant this proposal would have negligible impact on the historic significance of the building whilst supporting better accessibility. Therefore we would 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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