

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

11 February 2022

Wilf Foster  
Planning and Building Control  
2 Bristol Avenue  
Colindale  
London  
NW9 4EW

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

**Application:** 22/0313/FUL

**Site:** King Alfred School King Alfred Phoenix Theatre 149 North End Road London NW11 7HY

**Proposal:** Single storey rear and side extensions to The King Alfred Phoenix Theatre.  
Relocation of existing air handling plant and associated ductwork

## **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 development at the King Alfred Phoenix Theatre. We have not been formally notified despite this falling within our statutory remit outlined above.

The King Alfred Phoenix is a 108-seat theatre providing an important cultural venue in a part of London with relatively little provision, offering space for amateur and community groups and small-scale productions alongside its educational role as part of the King Alfred School. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature. Policy CS10 of Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) DPD (2012) supports the enhancement of community facilities which includes arts and cultural facilities, as well as promoting the role of schools to serve the wider community.

This proposal seeks extensions to the theatre to expand and improve its facilities predominantly within back of house areas but also for audiences.

The south/south-west extension whilst being relatively modest in scale will provide significantly

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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**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

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enhanced facilities for performers, with three changing/dressing rooms, an accessible WC (which it is to be assumed will also be available for use by audience members), a WC with shower and wing space. The number of dressing rooms is beneficial as it will better enable appropriate separation and safeguarding where productions include children and young people.

To the west/north-west elevation the plant will be given over to an extended backstage with a new service door and lobby. We would suggest that consideration is given to separating 'changing room 1' from the corridor between the lobby and wings to allow for better privacy. The other side of backstage will see installation of further WCs one of which will have baby change facilities. This is welcomed as it will provide additional audience facilities and significantly decrease pressure and queuing for the existing WC. As the WC containing the baby change backs directly onto the theatre space great care will need to be taken with acoustics and services to ensure performances are not disrupted by the sound of flushing and pipes.

The east/south-east will also see a small extension which will extend the box and provide means of escape and further external access.

We consider this proposal to be sensitively designed of a modest scale but will significantly enhance and expand the theatre's facilities for the benefit of users. Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Clarke".

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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