

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/987

18 March 2022

Planning & Economic Growth
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AU

By e-mail: planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Application: 22/00232/LBC

Site: Kings Theatre Albert Road Southsea City Of Portsmouth PO5 2QJ

Proposal: External alterations and repairs of East elevation to include reconstruction of parapets, repairs to brickwork, windows and roof; Internal alterations to include provision of ventilation units and replacement of boilers.

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at King's Theatre.

King's Theatre is a Grade II* listed cultural and heritage asset which opened in 1907, designed by the renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham. It is an important and quite complete example of Edwardian theatre and a late example of Matcham's work. In its earlier years it hosted several major productions including a number of premieres of plays by the famous novelist and playwright Ian Hay, and other premieres of shows which transferred to the West End. In 1990 it came into the ownership of Hampshire County Council but around ten years later they sought to close it. After public pressure the theatre was purchased by the City Council who leased it to the King's Theatre Trust, a registered charity. Since taking on the building the Trust have undertaken a programme of restoration and refurbishment. We met them on site to discuss future plans and tour the building in 2018. The theatre's programme contains a number of plays and musicals along with comedy, live music and other events. As well as serving local

Theatres Trust

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Chair Dave Moutrey **Director** Jon Morgan

Trustees Paul Cartwright, James Dacre, Suba Das, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Lucy Osborne, 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

audiences it also draws people into the city from a wider catchment. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

These proposals seek to carry out repairs to the building's east elevation and to upgrade its heating and ventilation with mechanical ventilation to WCs, installation of a heat recovery unit to the Matcham Bar and replacement of the theatre's back of house boilers. In principle this is to be supported as we welcome efforts by theatre owners and operators to invest in and maintain their buildings to help conserve them, improve their sustainability and reduce costs.


In terms of the repair element of the application the rationale has been clearly set out. There is evident need for the works to ensure the building is safe, for example stabilisation of parapets, that it is protected and where there is need for repair that it arrests or avoids resultant harm to the building and its significant features and fabric from water ingress. The approach taken will utilise like-for-like or closely matching materials and replacements. For works to rainwater goods these are listed in the Heritage Statement as two separate items – alterations and replacement. Replacement (item 7) will switch from cast iron to cast aluminium which we consider a suitable high quality replacement. If alteration to configurations (item 6) is separate and requires replacement, this should also be either like-for-like or an appropriate replacement such as aluminium.

For ventilation again we support the works being undertaken. The repair schedule elevation drawings show the two new louvre locations. While location 2 is symmetrical, location 1 is shown as off-centre. The location may be necessary but if practical to do so we suggest this should also be centred above the sets of windows below.

With regards to the replacement boiler we do not object to its installation but with gas boilers being phased out over the next few years we would encourage the applicant to consider alternative options should any be practical and cost-effective, to optimise the theatre's environmental sustainability.

To conclude, subject to the minor clarification cited we support these proposals and recommend the granting of listed building consent.

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



Tom Clarke MRTPI
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