

Ref.: TC/2344

23 March 2022

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By e-mail: development.central@fife.gov.uk

Application: 22/00469/LBC

Site: 9 Esplanade Kirkcaldy Fife KY1 1HR

Proposal: Listed building consent for internal and external restoration of theatre

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 seeks alterations at King's Theatre. King's is a priority case for the Trust as it is on our UK-wide Theatres at Risk register. We have been providing support to the community group who own it, King's Theatre Kirkcaldy Ltd, in their efforts to restore and re-open the building to the public.

King's Theatre is Category B listed. It was originally built in 1904 with a capacity of 2,400 across pit, stalls, circle, gallery and ten boxes and was lavishly decorated, although following major refurbishment in an Art Deco style in 1937 only its Italian marble stairways survive along with its façade and some areas of original plasterwork in the foyer which are masked by later additions. It underwent a number of changes in ownership and names in its earlier years. Cinema was first introduced in 1909 and later it became the first provincial venue in Scotland to install sound equipment. In 1937 it underwent major refurbishment in an Art Deco style. It was renamed to the ABC in 1963 and was sub-divided in the late 1970s to create three separate screens. After another series of name-changes due to takeovers it became an Odeon in the late 1990s, but was closed in 2000 after the company consolidated their operations at a new multiplex in

Theatres Trust

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Chair Dave Moutrey **Director** Jon Morgan

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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

Dunfermline. It has been vacant since that time, although a community group called King's Theatre Kirkcaldy Ltd have undertaken some renovations since they took it on around 2016 including making it weathertight.

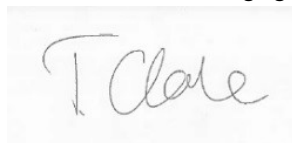
More recent asbestos and conditions surveys have found the building to be in very poor condition with a need to remove asbestos before fuller restoration works can take place. The ambition of the group is to reinstate the original single volume of the auditorium and create the largest arts venue in the area. They have taken on the unit to the rear of the building where they run a bar/café and a small events space which hosts a programme of live music and comedy plus a pantomime in 2021. This venture is helping support the wider project. The original ambition was for the main theatre space to have been reopened in 2022 but progress was severely curtailed by the pandemic. This remains a major transformational project not just for the building itself but for Kirkcaldy and the wider area.

This specific application seeks to undertake temporary works to enable safe public access into the foyer and to reveal some of its original plasterwork, stained-glass window and terrazzo floor. This will help to open up the building and further raise awareness of the wider project, contributing to its longer-term conservation.

The images supplied with this application demonstrate the foyer's poor condition. The proposed interventions are relatively minor such as providing barriers to ensure public safety, but have significant public benefits in supporting the wider restoration of the building and enabling some degree of public access into this significant heritage asset.

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

Please contact us should you wish to discuss this representation in further detail, and ensure Theatres Trust is engaged in further applications at King's.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser