

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/439

01 April 2022

Miss Felicia Onabanjo
Lambeth Planning
PO Box 734
Winchester
SO23 5DG

By e-mail: planning@lambeth.gov.uk

Application: 22/00932/FUL & 22/00610/LB

Site: Brixton Academy 211 Stockwell Road London Lambeth SW9 9SL

Proposal: Replacement of the existing fire escape and the erection a temporary escape made from scaffold to be installed whilst works are being carried out.

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:

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have come to the attention of the Trust because they are seeking alterations at Brixton Academy.

The Academy is a Grade II* listed heritage and cultural asset. It was built in 1929 as an 'atmospheric' super cinema and is considered one of the most impressive of the UK's few theatres of that style, designed in the manner of John Eberson who was the most renowned and originator of the type. The proscenium is framed by octagonal towers linked by an arcade bridge with central broken-pedimented bay. Either side is modelling of a Mediterranean townscape with tiled and domed roofs, balconies, statues, garden walls and vegetation. It was extremely well equipped technically with large stage, extensive counterweight system, easy get-in and generous front and back of house provision including very large foyer. It was also one of the largest offering a capacity of around 3,000 which with stalls seats removed is currently closer to 5,000. After a brief period as a nightclub it was threatened with demolition and then used for storage but was reopened as a concert venue in 1982. Restoration work was undertaken in 2006.

Aside from the Academy's architectural significance it also has great cultural and social

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL
T 020 7836 8591 E info@theatrestrust.org.uk W theatrestrust.org.uk

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

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significance arising from its use as a music venue over recent decades, with a number of iconic performances and events. It forms an important part of London's renowned live music and cultural offer.

This proposal will see replacement of an existing shared means of escape due to its poor condition, requiring repairs to ensure it is safe. In order for the venue to continue to function without restriction or limitation whilst this is undertaken a temporary scaffold structure will be constructed to act as an interim means of escape, removed upon completion. Neither the permanent works nor the temporary replacement will compromise the Academy's sensitive fabric, and neither is the area of works of particular significance.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

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

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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