

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1703

26 April 2022

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By e-mail: [dmconsultations@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:dmconsultations@walthamforest.gov.uk)

**Applications:** 220967

**Site:** Canon Cinema, 186 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London, E17 4QH

**Proposal:** Submission of details pursuant to condition 8 (details of repairs) attached to planning permission reference 201008, granted 16/06/2020.

## **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 the Trust regarding this application for approval of details in relation to part J. of condition 8, permission reference 201008 for the restoration and reopening of the former Granada/Canon/EMD. This part of the condition requires submission of details of works to organs and associated fixtures and fittings.

The Granada contains a Christie pipe organ which was installed for its opening in 1930. It was used extensively until the mid-1960s and then occasionally thereafter until closure of the cinema in 2003. Unusually this organ had two consoles which is a significant historic feature of the building, included within Historic England's list description and contributing to its Grade II\* designation. One console was on a movable platform that could be brought onto the stage, the other was within the orchestra pit. The former is potentially in a condition whereby it could be played but has suffered damage whereas unfortunately the latter is believed to be in extremely poor condition having been subjected to flood damage. For the salvageable console compatible replacement parts have been identified. There likewise have been salvageable parts identified to replace pipework which has been lost or stolen from the pipe chamber.

## **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)

**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

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The organ forms part of the significance of the Granada and in working order would be an asset to the venue; there would be potential for occasional specific concerts and possibly for some performers to utilise it within their act. The Cinema Organ Society have provided an indicative restoration plan as outlined within the appraisal report submitted with this application. Due to the specialist nature of the works, irrespective of funding being identified or desire for the organ to be included within the scope of the main restoration works, it is highly likely there would be a lag between building completion and the start of organ restoration. Therefore the priority has to be for sensitive removal and storage with safeguarding of space and infrastructure for subsequent reinstatement.

A methodology for removal of the two consoles has also been submitted. However this is only for removal and as yet there is no commitment for restoration and reinstatement as indicatively set out within the Cinema Organ Society report. Therefore it could be considered that this submission fails to address the requirements of condition 8, part J. It will become more costly and disruptive if preparation work is not undertaken now to facilitate reinstatement later, and the reversibility of removal would be compromised. This would in turn result in harm to the significance of the asset which should require justification.

We recommend that that to give confidence in the appropriateness of discharging this condition and to ensure reversibility, as a minimum the appropriate infrastructure as per the Cinema Organ Society's report such cabling and service routes to support the organ should be installed. We recommend further discussion with the Cinema Organ Society on site to agree this work and to ensure that ducting etc is adequately sized and appropriately routed. Similarly it must be ensured that grilles around the proscenium and any other sound outlets are not blocked and that the pipe chambers, blower and relay rooms are retained for future organ use. Furthermore while compatible replacement equipment as cited in the report is available these should be acquired as soon as possible for appropriate storage with the consoles.

It will also be essential that all parts of the organ that are to be repaired and restored are properly labelled and responsibly and securely stored, with regular checks undertaken to ensure stability of environmental conditions and to ensure that there is no further deterioration of the component parts. Details of this should be provided prior to discharge.

We suggest there is great merit in a joint meeting between the Council, Soho Theatre as the future operator, the Cinema Organ Society, Cinema Theatre Association, Historic England and ourselves to agree a way forward and to ensure reinstatement remains within future plans.

On that basis as present we consider further information and written reassurance is required before we can support the discharge of this part of condition 8.

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## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Please continue to engage with the Trust and to consult us on further applications of relevance and do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments further.

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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