

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

20 May 2022

Planning Service
Council Offices
Ffordd y Cob
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 5AA

By e-mail: cynllunio@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Application Reference: C22/0393/13/LL

Site: Neuadd Ogwen High Street, Bethesda, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 3AN

Proposal: Demolition of existing outbuilding to be replaced with new function rooms.

Remit:

The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Body for Theatres and was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. Our trustees are appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system and local planning authorities in Wales are required to consult the Trust on planning applications for *'development involving any land on which there is a theatre'*. The Act defines a theatre as 'any building or part of a building constructed wholly or mainly for the public performance of plays', and therefore applies to theatres, playhouses, arts centres, ciné-varieties or buildings converted for theatre use, old and new, in other uses or disused.

Comment:

This application has come to the attention of the Trust through press reports because it is seeking development at Neuadd Ogwen. We have not been directly notified. This proposal seeks to replace redundant outbuildings with additional function space.

Neuadd Ogwen is an arts centre which opened in 2014 featuring a mixed programme of cinema, live music, theatre and other live events along with facilities for hire and use by the community. Its theatre space has a capacity of up to 400 people. It is a facility valued by local people and an important anchor use within Bethesda's designated Local Service Centre which attracts people in from its wider catchment. It helps support social and cultural wellbeing, providing opportunities to access and participate in the arts and for people to meet and come together. Therefore opportunities to enhance Neuadd Ogwen and its facilities are to be welcomed.

Images show the outbuildings to be in poor condition and have been assessed as being unsafe. These are to be replaced with new structures which will provide dedicated function rooms with

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

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associated openings provided into the existing building. This will help support the financial sustainability and viability of the arts centre by providing opportunities to generate additional income, as well as expand its flexibility and facilities for local people. It appears that demolition may already have taken place, however if this is not the case we would encourage re-use of materials where practical to reduce the environmental impact of these works.

Strategic Policy PS14 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 (2017) supports cultural and arts development in its centres including appropriate local service centres with Policy TWR1 encouraging improvement and extension of existing facilities. This proposal is clearly of an appropriate scale, and through expanding its provision it can also be considered to enhance the vitality of Bethesda's centre in line with the aspirations of Strategic Policy PS15. The development can be considered to be in accordance with relevant policy.

Therefore we are supportive of these plans and of the granting of planning permission.

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

A handwritten signature in blue 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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