

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1173

14 June 2022

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By e-mail: development@iow.gov.uk

Application: 22/00786/LBC

Site: Shanklin Theatre Steephill Road Shanklin Isle Of Wight PO37 6AJ

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for renovation of disused public toilets in basement to include creation of two new openings to access existing passageway adjacent to bar, install lintels above openings, block up old external door, repair all walls and floor and new stud walls to form cubicles

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:

This application for listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking refurbishment and alteration at the Shanklin Theatre.

The Shanklin Theatre opened in 1934 having been rebuilt on the site of The Institute, which also incorporated the Town Hall, following a serious fire. Parts of the theatre retain original fabric and elevations of the Institute. It is Grade II listed with its auditorium adapting the original hall with a fly tower added in the 1933/34 works. The theatre is an important and valued cultural and community facility, run by a charitable trust with support from members and volunteers. It has a mixed programme of theatre, comedy, live music and other events. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

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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Within the theatre's basement level is an externally-accessed public toilet reached by a stairway next to the main entrance. This has been disused for some time. Like many theatres the Shanklin would benefit from additional WCs, therefore this redundant facility provides an opportunity to be refurbished and brought into the theatre to improve its facilities for audiences. This will be achieved through creating new openings from these toilets to an area adjacent to a bar.

We are supportive of this project because it will enhance the audience experience through providing additional facilities which will reduce queueing at peak periods such as intervals. It is to be assumed that the new openings will not harm any sensitive internal fabric or features although this is not stated. There also appears only to be an existing plan rather than a proposed plan so the layout and impact of these works cannot be ascertained, as such we cannot provide specific comment on functionality and whether there might be opportunities for refinement. A proposed plan should be submitted and made public.

The external door will be blocked up. From the images provided this does not appear to be of any architectural or historic significance, and can be justified by the public benefits of providing appropriate facilities for the theatre. The application form does not state the materials that will be utilised to block this opening but we would suggest this should be done sensitively; we note other blocked openings around the building appear to have been carried out with a combination of large bricks/blocks, steel and wood with only the former being broadly similar in appearance to surrounding fabric. With the door being blocked off the applicant may also wish to consider whether access to the redundant area outside of the toilet block should be blocked or controlled to maintain safety and deter anti-social behaviour.

In conclusion we welcome this project and are supportive of the granting of listed building consent in principle but suggest that proposed plans and some further detail should be submitted to support and justify such a decision.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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