

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC

1 August 2022

Grace Hewett
Development Management
Sustainable Communities
Regeneration and Economic Recovery Department
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon CR0 1EA

By e-mail: dmcomments@croydon.gov.uk

Application: 22/02363/FUL & 22/02364/LBC

Site: Stanley Hall South Norwood Hill South Norwood London

Proposal: Alterations, improvement works to South Norwood Hill frontage including provision of external lighting, reinstatement of railings, gates, post lighting, staggered brick dwarf walls and tiled surfaces, removal of section of boundary wall and introduction of low-level planters, bench seating and cycle parking and installation of digital display board and illuminated signage.

Remit:

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 through press reports. They are seeking alterations at Stanley Arts, formerly Stanley Hall. We have not been directly notified despite this falling within our statutory remit outlined above. Neither have we been consulted by the Council on other recent applications for internal works and alterations.

Stanley Arts is a mixed arts venue providing theatre, live music, exhibitions and a number of other community events and functions. Originally it was a technical trade school, public hall and art gallery which was completed at the start of the twentieth century and is Grade II listed. It was the first of its type in the UK. Throughout its earlier years it hosted speeches and debates featuring notable politicians and was well used for community events such as weddings, parties and jumble sales. Theatre became more prominent later and it was used by both professionals

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

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and amateurs. More recently it was taken into community ownership and there has been renewed focus on the arts and cultural offer, indicated by the rebranding in 2021. Stanley Arts is an important cultural and social facility for the community and its ongoing development is to be welcomed. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

These applications relate to external works focussing on parts of the building and its curtilage which require maintenance and restoration having deteriorated over time. The wider project at Stanley Arts also affords an opportunity to review external landscaping and wayfinding and this element is also included within these plans.

The applicant has provided photographic evidence of deficiencies, for example brickwork which requires repointing and mortar repairs, broken and damaged floor tiling and concrete, damaged external decorative features and discolouration to stonework. External landscaping and planting is untidy in places.

It is therefore proposed that there will be resurfacing which will include retention and restoration of historic tiling, decorative tiling reinstated to entry thresholds, the relaying of uneven ground and new brick and slate pavers laid. As well as restoring and improving the general environment outside of Stanley Arts, this will improve general accessibility. There will be new external benched seating and planters, cycle parking will be installed and the area will be enclosed by Edwardian-style decorative gates and railings which is a reinstatement of what used to be in place. We are supportive of the venue's approach, and consider that facilitating and encouraging use of the venue's external space will enhance its value as a facility for the community.

There will also be addition of new external lighting and signage reflecting the venue's new branding. Plans and images show this to be sensitive to the building's significance as a heritage asset, and will help improve its visibility and prominence. The design is such that we do not consider this will cause harm to the amenity of nearby properties.

We welcome the investments that are being made into Stanley Arts, to which this element will contribute towards the wider masterplan for the venue. We consider these plans will help enhance the building and its setting. 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, and engage with us should further applications be submitted.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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