

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref: TC

13 October 2022

Rachael Forbes
Planning
East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
CB7 4EE

By e-mail: plservices@eastcambs.gov.uk

Applications: 22/01095/FUL

Site: The Viva Theatre Spencer Drove Soham Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 6EE

Proposals: Proposed extensions to form office and unheated meeting room together with siting of mobile traditional Bowtop carriage for use as occasional office

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 has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking an extension to the Viva Theatre and siting of a mobile carriage. We have not been notified despite this falling within our statutory remit as outlined above.

The Viva Theatre is a new venue which opened in November 2021 following conversion of a disused mill. As well as its auditorium it also offers rehearsal and events space. Paragraph 91 of the NPPF seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community and cultural facilities.

These plans will see an extension to the theatre's eastern elevation to provide office and meeting space. Alongside this a mobile carriage will be sited opposite the building within the car park and it is also stated that this will provide occasional meeting space.

We welcome that the venue's owner and operator is already seeking to expand and develop its facilities. The image supplied suggests the mobile unit will not be accessible, we would strongly

Theatres Trust

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Chair Dave Moutrey **Director** Jon Morgan

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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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encourage the applicant to consider whether ramped entry could be made possible. This proposal otherwise enhances the venue's function by providing additional operational capacity and flexibility.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you wish to discuss these comments further.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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