

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC

06 February 2023

Laura Neale
Development Control
Communities and Place
Derby City Council
The Council House
Corporation Street
Derby
DE1 2FS

By e-mail: developmentcontrol@derby.gov.uk

Application: 23/00086/OUT

Site: Eagle Market, Derby Theatre, Castle And Falcon Public House Morledge, Theatre Walk, East Street Derby DE1 2NF

Proposal: Demolition or part demolition of existing Eagle Market building, public house and theatre. Erection of a phased mixed-use development, including residential and commercial floorspace (Use Classes C3 and E); new public square; servicing; car and cycle parking provision; hard and soft landscaping works; provision of new pedestrian routes, and other associated works.

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:

This application has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking outline planning permission which would include the demolition of Derby Theatre. We have not been directly notified despite this falling within our statutory remit outlined above. Please ensure the Trust is consulted on future applications relating to theatres in Derby.

This scheme encompasses not just Derby Theatre but a wider area. Our comments are in relation to the theatre specifically, we make no comment on the acceptability or appropriateness of loss of other buildings and uses or on the proposed design, scale or mix of replacement development.

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

Derby Theatre opened in 1975 as the Derby Playhouse, located as part of the Derbion Shopping Centre. It was designed by noted architect Roderick Ham who's other theatre work included the Thorndike in Leatherhead and Ipswich's New Wolsey. It has two performance spaces, a main auditorium with 531 seats and a smaller 110 seat studio. After a brief period of closure following its operator going into administration it was taken on by the University of Derby initially in partnership with the City Council and it was renamed. Its programme includes university productions and professional touring along with learning and community activities. Since 2012 it has been run entirely by the university.

In terms of design and layout it has a single rake which reflect's Ham's earlier work at Leatherhead, although the walls are rendered rather than brick. Its stage is well-equipped with an orchestra pit in front on an elevator. Our database describes it as being one of the best single-tier theatres in the UK but one which is lacking in interior decoration. We are aware of plans for the theatre to relocate, potentially to the site of the former Assembly Rooms.

Indicative future floorspace information shows that there would be complete loss of theatre provision from the wider site.

Paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the Planning Statement deal with the theatre. This reflects our understanding that there is interest in relocation of the theatre elsewhere. Derby Theatre is an important arts and cultural facility for the city, particularly as Derby is currently without dedicated large-scale theatre provision. This is compounded by the ongoing closure of the Guildhall Theatre. It is therefore critical that it is supported and protected. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) guards against the unnecessary loss of such facilities. Similarly Policy CP21 of the Core Strategy also supports the retention of existing facilities. In principle we have no objection to loss of this theatre, although this is conditional upon a replacement facility being delivered elsewhere and becoming operational in advance of closure of the existing theatre. This must be made a condition of any planning permission, for which we can provide advice to the Council on appropriate wording based upon experience elsewhere. Whilst the existing theatre does not appear to be of any particular decorative significance, it is evidently of high quality in terms of audience and technical standards so a replacement theatre must be of at least equal standard. We would strongly encourage inclusion of a condition requiring the undertaking of a written and photographic recording report prior to demolition.

We note from paragraph 6.19 of the Planning Statement that there is scope for retention of the existing theatre if a new site does not come forward. We welcome this flexibility within the Masterplan.

We are keen to engage further with the Council regarding their plans for theatre provision within Derby, and similarly we would welcome future consultation with the applicant regarding their plans for Derby Theatre.

In summary, we have no objection to this scheme but this is conditional on the safeguards and planning conditions outlined.

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

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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