

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/725

13 February 2023

Nikki Mitchell
Pending Applications
Development Planning
City of Westminster
PO Box 732
Redhill, RH1 9FL

By e-mail: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Application: 23/00111/LBC

Site: Noel Coward Theatre 85-89 St Martin's Lane London WC2N 4AU

Proposal: Alteration to audience seating-box entrance doorway.

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at Noel Coward Theatre. It seeks to make alterations to one of the theatre's boxes to the Royal Circle through repositioning and widening its entrance in order to improve accessibility.

Currently the box (Box M) is accessed through a doorway immediately onto the corridor, directly next to a stairway. Aside from the width of the doorway being sub-optimal for wheelchair users, there is also an issue with the door obstructing the adjacent staircase when open. This proposal would see the position of the doorway moved backwards into the box, creating a new recess from the corridor. This will in turn allow for the door's width to increase from 750mm to 900mm.

Therefore accessibility would be improved and removing a potential obstruction from the stairway will also improve the general safety of audiences. The new recessed access to the box is sensitively designed and detailed. The existing door will be retained for future use, and we encourage for this to be properly wrapped, labelled and stored within the building to reduce risk of it becoming mislaid. We consider the harm arising from this proposal to be limited, nonetheless this is mitigated by the public benefit of improving accessibility.

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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for **everyone**



Therefore we are supportive of the granting of listed building consent.

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

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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