

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/3787

14 February 2023

Shabbir Bhayat
Planning Services
Bedford Borough Council
4th Floor
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

By e-mail: planning@bedford.gov.uk

Application: 23/00270/ADV

Site: Sharnbrook Mill Theatre Mill Road Sharnbrook Bedford Bedfordshire MK44 1NP

Proposal: Installation of external illumination to existing free-standing entrance sign.

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 advertisement consent has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking the installation of lighting to the Sharnbrook Mill Theatre's signage on the junction between Mill Road and Hipwell Lane.

Sharnbrook Mill Theatre is within a converted water mill which was listed in the Domesday Book. Its lease was secured in 1974 by a local community Trust and the theatre opened five years later following conversion works, with surrounding buildings being used as a hotel, restaurant and small business park. The theatre's front of house has views over the Great Ouse River. Its auditorium has 190 seats and there is a separate studio and rehearsal room. The theatre is a valued cultural and social asset for local people, operated by volunteers and hosting its own productions and occasional external performances along with social events. It provides opportunities to participate and engage in culture and the arts. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for this type of facility.

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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There is existing signage directing to the theatre from Mill Lane. This is particularly important for wayfinding and raising awareness of the theatre to passing vehicles given its concealed location. This signage has recently been renewed, and new lighting is sought. This will further enhance prominence during hours of darkness.

We do not consider that this will negatively impact on highway safety, or harm the amenity of the adjacent property. Nonetheless brightness levels can be managed by condition, as could hours of operation.

We are therefore supportive of the granting of advertisement consent.

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

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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