

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2305

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Andrea Orellano  
Planning & Strategy  
City Development  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
Business Centre G2  
Waverley Court  
4 East Market Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 8BG

By e-mail: [planning@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:planning@edinburgh.gov.uk)

**Application:** 23/00245/LBC & 23/00415/CLP

**Site:** Playhouse Theatre 18 - 20 Greenside Place Edinburgh EH1 3AA

**Proposal:** Creation of two new roof access windows.

## Remit:

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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 listed building consent and a Certificate of Lawfulness have come to the attention of the Trust because they are seeking alterations at the Playhouse to install two new roof access windows. They have been submitted alongside further applications for erection of an external flue and stone cleaning and repairs to which we have commented under separate cover.

The Playhouse is a Category A heritage asset reflecting its national importance and architectural significance as what was the largest cinema in Scotland and the fourth largest in the UK. It was designed by specialist and renowned architect John Fairweather. Few cinemas or theatres either in Scotland or across the wider United Kingdom are designated at the highest level of grading. It is located within the New Town Conservation Area and Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage site. The Playhouse is the current largest theatre in the UK and therefore a major cultural asset for Edinburgh, attracting major international touring shows which helps draw people into the city.

## Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL  
T 020 7836 8591 E [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) W [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://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

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## Protecting theatres for **everyone**



We support the applicant's approach which locates these windows symmetrically. They will be located to the building's north-west elevation on a slate-tiled pitched roof above the building's third floor. This is set back from the visible element of the principal elevation directly around the building and further shielded by the parapet, although they may be visible from more distant views and upper levels around the Leith Street/Leith Walk junction. However, we consider the sensitive design and scale of these windows will result in minimal harm to significance.

This limited harm must also be considered alongside the mitigation and public benefits of the proposals, namely that their purpose is to enable safer access and working conditions for persons maintaining and servicing the roof. In turn this facilitates the ongoing conservation and operation of this significant cultural and heritage asset.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of listed building consent and the issuing of a Certificate of Lawfulness for these works.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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