

Protecting theatres  
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3637

4 April 2023

Emma Shaw  
Municipal Buildings  
Albany Street  
Oban  
PA34 4AW

By e-mail: [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

**Application:** 23/00427/PP

**Site:** Mull Theatre Druimfin Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA75 6QB

**Proposal:** Erection of extensions to form foyer and workshops to theatre building

**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:**

This application for planning permission has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking extension to the Mull Theatre in Druimfin. We have not been directly notified despite this falling within our statutory remit as outlined above.

Mull Theatre is a valued arts and cultural facility. This building is one of two sites run by its operator, which is a charitable organisation, and opened in 2008. It offers a flexible capacity of around 100 in its main auditorium, and there is a further rehearsal

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

**Telephone** 020 7836 8591 **Email** [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) **Website** [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk) **Twitter** @TheatresTrust

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**Chair** Dave Moutrey OBE

**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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space. Its programme includes in-house productions along with external and touring shows and artists. Youth and community outreach programmes are offered which provide opportunities for learning and development. The principle of further developing the theatre's facilities is therefore supported, and we welcome the investment being made into this building by its operator.

Currently the theatre suffers from a lack of foyer and front of house space. When audiences enter the building it appears they would mostly go straight through into the auditorium. Aside from the WCs which are to the rear of the auditorium much of the rest of the internal space is associated with back of house functions. Therefore the pre-show and interval offer for audiences is likely to be constrained; we understand that some outdoor provision is offered.

This proposed extension will substantially increase the theatre's footprint, but this would provide additional and more flexible function as well as opportunity to expand the theatre's offer and generate additional income. It would bring audiences and other visitors into a more sizeable foyer which will give a greater sense of arrival and provide an indoor café/bar and small front desk/box office. This will be a double-height space with glazing offering attractive views over surrounding grounds. Its orientation towards the north-east should prevent excessive glare and overheating when sunny. It would offer potential for the theatre to become more of an all-day destination which could generate additional income and bring additional people into the building, further enhancing its social value. It may also make it more attractive for other income-generating activities such as functions and hires. A series of small workshops will also be provided.

Policy LDP 8 of the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (2015) supports new sustainable development proposals which seek to strengthen the communities of Argyll and Bute. This proposal would contribute towards that objective. Policy 29 of National Planning Framework 4 (2023) similarly supports proposals which contribute to the viability, sustainability and diversity of rural communities. With reference to part b. of that policy we consider this extension to be suitably scaled and designed and is sensitive to its setting.

We are therefore supportive of the granting of planning permission.

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

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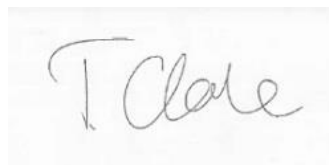
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Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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