

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/960

12 April 2023

Matthew Gee
Planning Team
4 Canning Road
Lowestoft
NR33 0EQ

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

Application: DC/23/1188/FUL

Site: Replacement doors to front elevation.

Proposal: The Seagull Morton Road Lowestoft Suffolk NR33 0JH

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 for planning permission has come to the attention of the Trust because it is seeking alterations at The Seagull in order to replace a set of timber doors to its front elevation with aluminium doors and windows with level access. We have not been notified despite this falling within our remit outlined above. Please ensure Theatres Trust is notified of relevant future applications within East Suffolk.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

Telephone 020 7836 8591 **Email** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **Website** 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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The Seagull is a not-for-profit venue within the Pakefield area of the town. It is owned and operated by a local Community Interest Company, set up to save the venue from closure after it had its funding withdrawn. It is located within a former Victorian school building which can be considered a non-designated heritage asset. Its auditorium has a capacity of around 112 and there are further studios and rehearsal spaces. It is a theatre which is valued by local people, providing opportunities for volunteering and participation in culture and the arts as well as programmes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional needs. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

We are aware the theatre has been undertaking a programme of works for which a planning application was permitted in 2020, although again we were not consulted by the Council on those plans. Part of that involved converting a workshop to the front of the building into a studio space. We also note there is an indicative position for a future lift location in this area. It remains with a large service entrance, so the rationale of this intervention appears to be to provide a new accessible public entrance directly into the studio with glazing above and to the side.

We welcome the investment which has been made into the Seagull to expand and enhance its facilities. It makes operational sense for the studio to be accessed directly, particularly as it appears it can be operated independently without needing to open and utilise the wider building. In terms of design we have no objections on heritage grounds.

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.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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