

Protecting theatres  
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC

10 May 2023

Adam Hussain  
Development Management  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Mulberry Place  
Clove Crescent  
E14 2BG

By e-mail: [development.control@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

**Application:** PA/23/00719/NC

**Site:** Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London, E1 6LA

**Proposal:** Provision of a new pedestrian entrance to the Rich Mix from Redchurch Street, with construction of a new single-storey entrance pavilion in the rear yard, provision of outdoor seating, parking bays and relocation of existing plant.

**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 was brought to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking external alterations including a new entrance, extension and related works at Rich Mix.

**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

## Protecting theatres for everyone



Rich Mix is an arts centre with a range of facilities and spaces, including theatre, cinema, live music, comedy, spoken word and other arts and creative provision. It opened in 2006 and has become an important cultural facility serving its local communities around East London as well as attracting people from further afield. It has educational and other outreach activities which help to develop the skills of young people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

The venue is currently accessed by audiences and other public users from Bethnal Green Road. To the rear is a service yard from Redchurch Street. There is currently no public access from that side, and there are existing planning conditions in place preventing public use. There is a separate application for the removal of those conditions to which we have also commented. This proposal would see removal of the existing boundary wall along Redchurch Street, construction of a modest extension providing a new public entrance and a small amount of additional internal space to the venue's foyer/café/restaurant and some landscaping and access works. Alongside this there will also be internal alterations such as reconfiguration of WCs, relocation of the box office and servery and a new Changing Places facility but these fall outside the direct scope of this application.

We welcome efforts by the operator to invest in its facilities and to improve accessibility and inclusion. They have for example recently been the recipient of a grant from Theatres Trust in relation to installing an infrared hearing system. This scheme would further contribute towards those aims by facilitating interventions such as the Changing Places facility and providing a more direct entrance for blue badge holders. The provision of a new means of public entry will further improve visibility and prominence of Rich Mix, and provide more of an active frontage along Redchurch Street. We consider the design and materials utilised to be sensitive to the prevailing character of Redchurch Street.

Although current planning conditions have prevented use of Rich Mix's rear yard, we consider that alongside better accessibility it provides potential for the venue to enhance its front of house offer the income from which can support its important cultural and social offer. We are similarly supportive of the variation of conditions managed through the corresponding application, and consider the protection of amenity can continue to be preserved through mitigations designed into this scheme and revised planning conditions.

Policy HC5.A of the London Plan (2021) supports the continued growth and evolution of London's diverse cultural facilities. Policy S.CF1 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan

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2031 (2020) supports development which enhances community facilities. This proposal contributes towards those policy objectives.

Therefore we are 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 "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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