

Protecting theatres for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/3149

18 July 2023

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

Application: 23/01891/FUL & 23/01892/LB

Site: Royal National Theatre South Bank London Lambeth SE1 9PX

Proposal: Refurbishments and alterations to the Royal National Theatres fourth floor, fifth floor and roof, comprising of: refurbishment and reorientation of the fifth floor workshops; replacement and installation of new extract ventilation equipment and air handling units across all fifth floor workshops; partial removal of existing roof plant and installation of new plant, and installation of associated safety measures; replacement of existing outdated machinery; replacement of lighting systems across all fifth floor workshops; and minor modification and/or replacement of fourth floor suspended ceiling.

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'.

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

Comment:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on these applications for planning permission and listed building consent at the National Theatre. They seek to facilitate alterations and refurbishment to the theatre's back of house wig, make up and costume departments to its fourth and fifth floors along with new plant to the roof.

Much of the work internally will be at fifth floor level. The rationale and justification is outlined within the Design and Access Statement, namely that the area has been largely unaltered since the 1970s and in some cases does not meet the needs of modern shows or current health and safety standards. Furthermore, its extract ventilation equipment has reached the end of its life. It is therefore proposed that these facilities will be upgraded with improved equipment installed to provide a safer and fit-for-purpose working environment. This principle is supported.

The works will see the creation of a new doorway between the Costume Props studio and the spray room with new extract equipment, and the infilling of an existing doorway to the laundry corridor. In the Costume Props studio a partition to the current textile store room will be removed with a new partition inserted to create a textile breakdown and spray room, again with specialist extract. The existing dye vats will be removed to provide additional usable floorspace and greater operational flexibility. New dye vats with extract will be located within the dye room, again improving working conditions. There will be a general upgrading of equipment including more energy efficient lighting. These works will not impact on sensitive features or character, and are reversible. They in any case generate public benefit through ensuring current health and safety standards are met and that the theatre's facilities are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of its productions. Therefore we are supportive of this element.

Above the costume supervisor office and costume pattern room at fourth floor level is a suspended ceiling which part-covers the area. This will be replaced and extended across the whole area due to shield the installation of new drainage pipeworks supporting other works to the fifth floor above. The Design & Access Statement sets out that this will be on a like-for-like basis. It is to be assumed that this area is of low significance, nevertheless this is a reversible change and the servicing that is being concealed supports the wider function of the theatre. Again we support this part.

The third part of this proposal relates to new plant and ducts to service the equipment and ventilation upgrades cited above. This will necessitate some additional and replacement rooftop plant. However, the location of this will not be

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visible from street level and will have little overall impact on the building's setting. We also note the conclusions of the applicant's acoustic report which finds that the equipment would cumulatively run below background sound levels.

Therefore we are supportive of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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