

Protecting theatres  
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC

15 August 2023

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

**Application:** ZE23/01681/FUL

**Site:** Kirk Theatre Hungate Pickering North Yorkshire YO18 7DL

**Proposal:** Alteration to existing staircase and first floor area to create additional entertainment space and the formation of new external entrance door to accommodate a new passenger lift

**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 has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake works at the Kirk Theatre. We have not been directly notified despite this

**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

falling within our statutory remit outlined above.

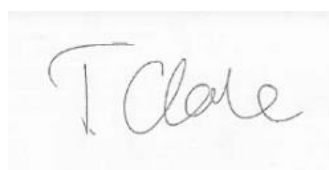
The Kirk Theatre is a valued cultural and social asset for Pickering and its surrounding communities. It opened in 1982 within a former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which is a non-designated heritage asset within the Pickering Conservation Area. It is run by local group the Pickering Musical Society and is staffed by volunteers. Its programme consists of the society's own productions which run three times annually along with some live music, cinema and events such as charity nights and craft fairs. Venues such as this are particularly important for enhancing the social and cultural well-being of local people, providing opportunities for participation and engagement in theatre and the arts and to learn and develop skills. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2021) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

These proposals will see a new opening to the east side of the building to provide a door into a new lift serving the foyer and first floor. There will be internal alterations to the staircase on the opposite side of the front of house area and at first floor area which is currently utilised for storage the space will be opened out to provide a secondary performance/studio area.

We welcome these plans, as they will improve the theatre's flexibility and accessibility. Whilst best practice is for there to be an accessible WC at all levels, we recognise the constraints and space limitations which appear to prevent this. In terms of design there is interruption to original fabric but with reference to paragraph 203 of the NPPF we consider that harm is mitigated through the public benefits of improving the theatre's facilities and making them accessible.

We therefore recommend 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.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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