

Protecting theatres  
for **everyone**



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**Application:** 23/1238/10 & 23/1239/12

**Site:** PARC AND DARE THEATRE, STATION ROAD, TREORCHY, CF42 6NL

**Proposal:** Alterations to Dyfodwg Street building elevation to include new main entrance, storage, and private access, refurbishment and reconfiguration of the entrance foyer and box office.

### **Remit:**

Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Body for Theatres and was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system and local planning authorities in Wales are required to consult the Trust on planning applications for '*development involving any land on which there is a theatre*', '*residential development within 50 metres of a theatre*' as well as for proposed theatres. The definition of theatres within the Act defines a theatre as 'any building or part of a building constructed wholly or mainly for the public performance of plays', and therefore applies to theatres, playhouses, arts centres, ciné-varieties or buildings converted for theatre use, old and new, in other uses or disused.

### **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

**Comment:**

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have come to the attention of Theatres Trust because they are seeking alterations at the Park and Dare Theatre. We have not been directly notified despite this falling within our statutory remit outlined above.

The Park & Dare Theatre is a Grade II\* listed heritage asset, listed for its outstanding façade and being an early theatre which retains much of its original character and is largely unaltered. Its external architectural style was influenced by the design of Welsh chapels. It is in effect two separate buildings which are connected; the Parc and Dare Hall and the former Parc and Dare Institute. The Hall and Institute were built in 1892, funded by donations from the wages of miners at the nearby Dare and Parc (Park) collieries. They were to provide welfare facilities for workers and a place to meet and socialise. Further development was undertaken which created the theatre and this opened in 1913. Cinema facilities were added in 1920. By 1975 the facility was at risk of closure and in need of repair and modernisation. The Council took it on and it continues to be a valued arts and cultural facility for the town and its surrounding communities, with a programme consisting of theatre, cinema, live music and comedy.

These proposals focus on external access to the building along its southern (Dyfodwg Street) elevation and alterations within the foyer area. Internally, the most significant change will be sub-division of the box office which will form a direct route into Stiwidio 1 thus improving accessibility and circulation. The foyer will be redecorated with new flooring, replacement of fixtures and fittings where required and repairs to ceilings and joinery. Currently the foyer has been previously altered and looks dated with late twentieth century municipal appearance. The redesign will give it a more contemporary character with improved lighting and wayfinding. This element is supported as it will improve function and the experience of audiences without harming historic features and character.

Externally there will be a new canopy and signage above the main entrance, which will also see a new central entrance where there is currently a window between the existing two doorways. Currently we consider this entrance to be understated so this proposal will provide a greater sense of arrival and improve prominence, making the building more obvious as a theatre. It will also enhance audience flow. Whilst this will result in the loss of some fabric and a change to the building's appearance, the design of the new doorway reflects and responds to the architectural language. On balance we consider the benefits arising from improved access and egress mitigate

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the impact of this change and do not detract from the building's significance as a heritage asset.

It is stated on the proposed plan that there will be widening of the pavement, new paving and a raised pedestrian crossing although no details are shown. This is something we would support, on the assumption that materials would be complementary to the significance of the building.

To the western end of the southern elevation there will be enclosure of the refuse and recycling store with cast metal gates and a roof over the top; currently bins appear to sit outside behind a more open cast metal gate and this detracts from the building's setting. Therefore this can be considered an enhancement.

To the right of the main public entrance is a recess with a gate within a rubblestone wall to provide access for staff. Above is a mesh cage at upper levels. The wall will be removed and the gate will be extended with replacement decorative cast metal panels and detailing above to replace the cage. Again we consider this is a more sensitive design approach; whilst the wall may potentially date to the time of the Hall and Institute being linked it jars with the architectural language of the two elements. On balance we consider the proposed design will enhance setting and significance.

We welcome this investment into the theatre and its facilities and support 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 these comments in further detail.

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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