

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/2300

05 December 2023

Planning Applications Team
Thanet District Council
PO Box 9
Cecil Street
Margate
CT9 1XZ

By e-mail: planning.services@thanet.gov.uk

Application: L/TH/23/1411

Site: Theatre Royal Addington Street MARGATE Kent CT9 1PW

Proposal: Application for listed building consent for repairs to the roof, parapets and chimney, together with the creation of new access hatch above seating area into the loft space

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at Theatre Royal Margate. It seeks to undertake urgent repairs around the theatre's roof as well as to insert a new access hatch into the roof void above the auditorium.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

Telephone 020 7836 8591 **Email** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **Website** theatrestrust.org.uk **Twitter** @TheatresTrust

Facebook @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

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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Theatre Royal is a Grade II* listed heritage asset is the last remaining theatre with its design intact by noted architect J.T. Robinson, who was the employer and father-in-law of renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham and surveyor to the then Lord Chamberlain. It was originally built in 1787 and remodelled in 1874 with an auditorium compared to that of the same architect's 1871 Old Vic design but on a smaller scale. It has two horseshoe balconies supported by slender iron columns along the line of their fronts. Aside from brief periods Theatre Royal remained in theatre use until 1963; after a period of bingo use during which there were occasional plays it was taken on by the Margate Theatre Royal Trust reopening in 1988 as a 'members only' theatre club. In 1998 it returned to being a fully public theatre. It is the country's second oldest operational theatre but has been closed since April 2022 prior to refurbishments being undertaken. The building has been on Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk register since 2018 because it is in a fragile condition and requires capital investment along with essential maintenance and repair work.

We welcome these proposals because they will contribute towards the works necessary to facilitate efforts to see the theatre reopened, and will also help ensure the building's ongoing conservation.

With regards to the roof works, these are necessary to help protect the building and prevent future water ingress. Although there will be a change in materials due to the use of composite materials rather than lead the existing materials are not original so there will be limited harm in heritage terms. Protection of the building also constitutes a public benefit which mitigates harm.

The proposed addition of an access hatch within the ceiling void will generate some loss of original fabric, however again there are public benefits in mitigation because it will provide access for repairs and maintenance. On balance this will assist with the building's ongoing conservation and safe operation. We support the design approach which has been indicated as this will reduce visibility of the intervention through painting to match surrounding fabric. However, works to the ceiling are not shown within the proposed plans and so for clarity and completeness such plans should be provided.

On the assumption and condition that submission of a clear roof plan would confirm the stated design approach we would support the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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