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Ref.: TC/2306

15 December 2023

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

Application: 23/06556/LBC

Site: Kings Theatre 2 Leven Street Tollcross Edinburgh EH3 9LQ

Proposal: Alterations to layout and existing features of the Dress Circle Bar on first floor. Proposal includes removal of existing curved bar, a new bar and shelving in a new position to the south of room, and changes to opening between the Dress Circle Bar and Cruikshank Room associated with Listed Building Condition

Remit:

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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

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Comment:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at King's Theatre. It is seeking alterations to the theatre's Dress Circle Bar and opening to the Cruikshank Room.

The theatre is currently undergoing a major programme of development. We undertook a site visit in October 2023. We have been engaged on this proposal at pre-application stage and submitted written comments to the applicant. Those have been included within their submission.

Our position on this application is unchanged. We concur with the applicant in that the current general layout of this bar is inefficient and gives rise to congestion and a poorer audience experience. Whilst the bar counter itself is of historic significance the servery does not work commercially or practically being constrained by its shape and depth. It is not able to be worked by wheelchair users and in turn does not comply with current accessibility standards for audiences.

The re-location of the bar to the southern end of the room will address these shortcomings will improve usability, accessibility and the audience experience. It also provides an opportunity to re-establish the central larger opening into the bar from the Dress Circle foyer which will both improve visibility and audience flow. There were already plans to extend the Dress Circle bar into what was a WC block to the northern end, a proposed heritage benefit is to re-locate a spare historic door to the location of the opening. The location and sizing of the proposed new opening attempts to fit with the rhythm of panelling in both rooms.

Policy ENV4 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) permits alterations within a listed building where (a) there is justification, (b) there would be no unnecessary damage or diminution of interest and (c) where additions are in keeping with other parts of the building. We consider those tests to have been met. There is sufficient justification for alteration within this space because the bar area currently does not work operationally for the theatre and its staff, does not meet current accessibility standards, and diminishes the experience of audiences. Addressing those shortcomings constitutes a public benefit. We consider the replacement bar to be of sensitive design. On the assumption the current bar front and other significant features can be re-used or securely stored (there remains limited information on this but is a matter which can be conditioned), parts (b) and (c) of Policy ENV4 would be met.

We are therefore supportive of the granting of listed building consent, subject to

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further clarification or suitable planning condition on the re-use and/or storage of the current bar.

Please contact us if you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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