

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/699

21 December 2023

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By e-mail: development.management@bristol.gov.uk

Application: 23/04540/LA

Site: 10 St Augustines Parade Bristol BS1 4UZ

Proposal: Repairs to the facade of the listed building, including replacement of coping stone, conservation plastic masonry repair, window repair and decoration, render repair, and a new lead detail to the front canopy.

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 for listed building consent has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake works at the Bristol Hippodrome.

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

The Hippodrome is a Grade II listed heritage asset, designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham for Sir Oswald Stoll. Stoll, who owned a number of venues and a film production company during the silent era and is noted for founding the Royal Variety Performance, considered the Hippodrome to be second to his flagship venue the London Coliseum (also designed by Matcham). It has a capacity of 1,951 seats and was built with a large water tank at the front of the stage, however this was lost in works to convert the Hippodrome to a cinema in the 1930s. Following a fire in 1948 which destroyed the stage the flytower was rebuilt and the theatre reopened within a year, as the auditorium had survived with little damage. Internally the theatre shares some design features with the Coliseum. Its ceiling is in the form of a large saucer dome which is capable of being slid open for ventilation. The auditorium is Baroque in style and is more sparsely decorated than Matcham's earlier works. Externally the Hippodrome has been altered over the years including losing a tower during the 1950s. Its canopy and entrance doors are more modern installations. The Hippodrome is an important cultural venue for Bristol, attracting touring West End shows and notable comedians, musicians and similar events.

This proposal seeks to undertake repair works to the Hippodrome's front elevation to St Augustine's Parade. Although the building has been assessed as being in reasonable condition a survey has identified elements that require intervention to ensure the ongoing conservation of this important cultural and heritage asset and maintain public safety. We welcome this investment in the Hippodrome's upkeep.

Highlighted areas include original stone copings and decorative mouldings where cracks are allowing water ingress which is in turn resulting in further damage and deterioration. The stones will be replaced to match existing and this approach is supported. Similarly we support the repair of mouldings and panels with matching lime mortar. The timber panels between window frames may require replacement due to condition, whilst retention and repair would be the optimum solution we have no objection if replacement is found to be necessary. We also have no objection to re-rendering the 1960s render panels if further investigation requires it.

We are supportive of the applicant's approach. These works are being carried out in a sensitive manner with repairs or replacement on a like-for-like basis therefore maintaining the significance of this important heritage asset. We urge the appointment of specialist contractors as has been indicated within the Heritage Statement.

We are supportive of the granting of listed building consent.

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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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