

Ref.: TC/775

23 February 2024

Chris Gent
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead House
Guildford
GU2 4BB

By e-mail: planningenquiries@guildford.gov.uk

Application: 24/P/00085

Site: Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Millbrook, Guildford, GU1 3UX

Proposal: Application under section 19 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 Act (as amended) for a variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) to allow for amendments to include cladding materials at front entrance changed to retain existing material pallet, new window in existing opening at third floor, larger lift, reduced height of overrun and change to material of lift overrun, new side entry gate to replace existing, revised position of new ground floor bar, revised third floor lobby layout, new 2nd floor mezzanine fully enclosed, removal of enclosure to dumb waiter at ground floor and increased accessible sanitary provision at ground and third floor in relation to planning permission 20/P/01902 approved 23/06/2021 for proposed changes to the entrance of the theatre including new entrance screen, signage, new cladding at ground floor level only, Demolition of an existing external lift, construction of a new internal access lift, layout changes to the front of house, layout changes to back of house areas, refurbishment of public areas, replacement of roof finishes and provision of insulation, and replacement of obsolete services systems.

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

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

Director Jon Morgan

Trustees James Dacre, Suba Das, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Lucy Osborne, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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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 following submission of revised plans it seeks to vary the listed building consent granted to Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in relation to their plans for refurbishment and alteration granted in 2021. This application is marked as being a listed building consent but refers to varying condition 2 of permission reference 20/P/01902, although the correct listed building consent reference is 20/P/01903.

There will be a number of amendments to the original scheme both internal and external.

Internally, there will be a relocation of the ground floor serving counter originally to be positioned along the auditorium wall. This will now be located to the southwestern wall. We were fully supportive of the original internal plans and because this change will retain greater original plan form of the café and make the curved form of the auditorium more legible this constitutes a better outcome in heritage terms.

There will be a new lift arrangement so that there is a practical way of operating within the theatre's height and layout constraints. This necessitates a revised lobby arrangement to the third floor. Clearly there is a public benefit in making the theatre more accessible, which continues to mitigate harm in heritage terms. We would note however that at first and second floor levels the geometry of the lift jars with the circular geometry of the theatre whereas at ground and third floors this is softened by the addition of stores and cloak rooms. Whilst we note the cover letter refers to providing greater legibility on the other hand we suggest there may be an opportunity to re-visit the treatment of the lift and consider stores or other treatment at first and second floor levels to reduce harm.

To the second floor the mezzanine will be enclosed, which provides an accessibility and fire safety benefit as this area can be used as a refuge. Again, this can be considered a public benefit. Similarly the removal of the dumb waiter at ground floor level is a heritage benefit as this will improve legibility.

There will be an increase in WC provision, which is welcomed. There does not

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appear to be a Changing Places facility, if there is an opportunity for one to be incorporated this would be supported as it would further enhance the venue's inclusivity and accessibility.

Externally there will be alterations to cladding. At third floor level there will be a new window within the stairwell which whilst not in the original position of one previously removed, will return this area closer to its original appearance. In conjunction with the lift alterations referenced above, the lift is of larger footprint but with an overrun of reduced height. Whilst the lift generates harm in heritage terms, we consider that improved accessibility provides sufficient public benefit to mitigate impact. There will also be new louvres beneath third floor windows and a new open mesh gate to the west of the main entrance in place of the existing solid timber fence. We have no objections to either of those amendments.

In conclusion, we consider that the proposed revisions to the scheme will result in operational improvements with enhanced levels of accessibility and a number of heritage benefits. We have raised points for further consideration which could further enhance this scheme, but these do not impact our support for these proposals.

We therefore support the variation of condition 2 of permission reference 20/P/01903.

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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