

Ref.: TC/1488

27 March 2024

Development & Environment
Post point 15
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

By e-mail: planningsupport@n-somerset.gov.uk

Application: 24/P/0458/LBC

Site: Curzon Cinema Old Church Road Clevedon BS21 6NN

Proposal: Listed building consent for the proposed replacement of the lighting and sound infrastructure for live events at Curzon Cinema and Arts. Works to include:- Installation of sound, light and data facility panels and provision of connections between projection room, rear of auditorium, stage left and right, and on the balcony. Install a new 9ft lighting bar, suspended from structural beams of balcony and removal of existing lighting bar. Install a new mains distribution board in the projection room and 3 phase Cform power supply for 35mm projector and installation of 1no. new projection window in non-structural projection room wall.

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'.

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

Comment:

Thank you consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at the Curzon. It seeks to undertake works to replace and upgrade the venue's sound and lighting infrastructure.

The Curzon opened in 1922 as a cine-variety theatre incorporating an earlier cinema which was constructed in 1912. Unusually for British theatres or cinemas it was decorated by pressed metal plates as was common in North America. This is a key factor in the building's significance as noted within Historic England's listing description. The original auditorium is believed to be intact aside from box fronts and the organ; the false ceiling removed under a recent application had concealed original features such as the balcony. Although originally predominantly operated as a cinema it had stage facilities, dressing rooms, a fly gallery and grid, the latter still survives. It currently holds some live events including comedy, live music and theatre.

The Curzon remains a valued community, cultural and historic asset for Clevedon, operated by a charitable trust. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for venues such as this.

The need and rationale for the proposed interventions has been clearly set within the applicant's Design and Access and Heritage Statements. Upgraded infrastructure will better enable the venue to meet the modern needs of live shows, which will in turn help it to remain competitive which supports its cultural offer, financial sustainability and ongoing conservation of the building. Similarly there is a specific need for an additional 35mm projector to support dual projection of 35mm films from the British Film Institute (BFI). Being able to hire a wider range of BFI films will also enhance the Curzon's cinema offer. Together these will enable the venue to reach and attract additional audiences.

The additional projector will require a new insertion within the projection room wall. We consider this to constitute less than substantial harm, and with reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF this can be justified through the public benefits cited above. Otherwise, cable runs are utilising existing or concealed routes. The addition of a new lighting bar requires no additional insertion as it is using existing infrastructure but again in terms of harm this is limited and there is a necessity to support the venue's operation.

Furthermore, replacement lighting will be more energy efficient. Paragraph 164 of the NPPF gives significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency. This will also

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reduce costs for the Curzon, which is particularly important as a venue run by a local charitable trust.

We are therefore supportive of 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.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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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