

Our Ref.: MP/130

01 March 2010

For the attention of Paul Quayle

Mr John Walker
Operational Director Development Planning
Westminster City Council
64 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QP

Dear Mr Walker,

Site bounded by 5-10 Denman Street, 35-36 Great Windmill Street, 14-18 Ham Yard and 1-7 Smith's Court. Application Ref.: 09/10477/CAC

Thank you for consulting The Theatres Trust on the above planning application for the demolition of 5-7 and 8-10 Denman Street, 14-18 Ham Yard, NCP car park, and structural elements on the site of 35-36 Great Windmill Street and clearance of site for a maximum of one year prior to commencement of its redevelopment. The Trust **objects to the application**. Please see our detailed advice below. The Trust's remit relates directly to the affect that development will have on the *Lyric* and *Piccadilly Theatres*.

Remit: The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. The Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, Article 10, Para (v) requires the Trust to be consulted on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre.' It was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. This applies to all theatre buildings. Our main objective is to safeguard theatre use or the potential for such use but we also provide expert advice on design, conservation, property and planning matters to theatre operators, local authorities and official bodies.

Advice/comment: The Trust objects to the above application because we would need to be satisfied that certain safeguards are in place to ensure that the *Lyric* and the *Piccadilly Theatres* are not adversely harmed by the redevelopment of the site bounded by Denman Street/Great Windmill Street/Ham Yard and Smith's Court both during and following construction.

We are aware that Nimax (the *Lyric Theatre's* owners) consider that insulation works are required for its theatre to prevent disturbance as a result of the development. There will be a similar affect on the *Piccadilly Theatre* which is closer to the development. There is also the issue of disruption to the practical functioning of the theatres while works are being undertaken. We therefore wish to be certain that mitigation measures are in place to protect both theatres during and after construction and request that the solution to these measures is referred to The Theatres Trust as part of the application. We would remind you that the upgrading, protection and promotion of West End theatres has been endorsed through the Theatreland Strategy and through Westminster City Council's UDP.

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Protecting theatres for everyone

Director Mhora Samuel **Chairman** Rob Dickins CBE
Trustees Jason Barnes, Phil Clark, Marilyn Cutts, Venu Dhupa, Tim Foster, Penelope Keith CBE DL,
Dr Pauleen Lane CBE, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Anne McReynolds, Matthew Rooke,
Chris Shepley CBE, Sam Shrouder, Ben Twist

Furthermore, we do not wish the mitigation measures to be a condition of the application. There could be significant impact for these two theatres that would be difficult for the local authority to monitor and control. These mitigation measures should have been negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties before the revised application was submitted.


Outside noise around any theatre will make live dramatic use impossible and is irritating to theatregoers. To put all this at its most basic, how can an actor perform a speech against the noise of construction? Working hours will need to be agreed, as these will be different to those in the standard Code of Construction Practice and construction plans carefully worded to ensure that construction noise and vibration avoids performance times.

As productions change, the show which is ending has a 'get out' and the new show a 'get in' which may involve a quick turnaround and the delivery, movement or taking away of large pieces of set and equipment. For these reasons, clear access at relevant times is extremely important. Get in access to the *Lyric Theatre* is in Great Windmill Street and the get in for the *Piccadilly Theatre* is on a road adjoining the redevelopment site.

In the circumstances we suggest that the **pre-construction report be approved in agreement with Nimax and Ambassador Theatre Group Ltd (the owners of the two theatres) and The Theatres Trust** to ensure that the affect is minimised.

The Theatres Trust is not opposed in principle to the redevelopment of the site. As part of our remit, to promote the better protection of theatres, the Trust is obviously keen to ensure that the safeguards above are considered by the Planning and Development Committee and included as part of the application as appropriate. We remain opposed to the application while these remain unresolved.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark J Price', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark J Price MRTPI, IHBC
Planning and Heritage Adviser

cc Ms Joan Moynihan, Executive Director, Nimax Theatres Limited
Mr David Blyth, Operations & Buildings Dev. Director, Ambassador Theatre Group