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Our Ref: VS/34 & 35
Please contact: Ms Vicky Simon

14 July 2010

Mr Chris Ridland
Development Control Division
Liverpool City Council
Municipal Buildings
Dale Street
Liverpool, L2 2DH

Dear Mr Ridland,

Liverpool Everyman Theatre, nos.3-11 Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BJ
Application Ref: 10F/1218 and 10C/1220

Thank you for consulting The Theatres Trust on the above planning application to demolish the existing *Everyman Theatre* and construct a new three-storey theatre building and associated office and rehearsal space. The Theatres Trust **supports** the application. Please see our detailed advice below.

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 Theatres Trust supports the application for the demolition of the existing *Everyman* theatre and the construction of a new purpose-built theatre on the site. The Trust is aware of the deficiencies of the current facilities which are increasingly hampering the theatre's ability to produce work of the range it desires and the urgent need to upgrade the building's fabric. Theatres need substantial development if they are to keep pace with the public's expectations and the needs of performers and producers and we are keen to help theatre owners do more to improve and adapt their building stock to attract new audiences. We therefore commend Liverpool City Council's commitment to the project and are pleased to see these proposals for a replacement to the *Everyman*.

The *Everyman* building was constructed as a Christian chapel in 1836 and used subsequently as a concert and cinema venue before being converted for stage use in 1964, the current Hope Street facade added in 1977. The proposed works include comprehensive redevelopment of the site to deliver an improved auditorium and ancillary spaces. The *Everyman* is a well-loved local venue and we are pleased to see that the brief has been developed in conjunction with extensive consultation with the local community and other interested parties to ensure that the special character of the theatre is not diminished, retaining the intimate configuration of the auditorium and the successful basement bistro which has gained a reputation of its own.

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Chris Shepley CBE, Sam Shrouder, Ben Twist

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres
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Specifically, we understand that the new theatre will include a more flexible auditorium seating between 400 to 450 people depending on the configuration with an additional gallery to increase the capacity and intimacy of the space. The technical infrastructure of the auditorium will be considerably improved with a more flexible and better equipped rigging and flying capacity to accommodate touring productions. An expanded bistro at basement and ground floor level will be supported by enhanced ancillary accommodation. In addition, the redevelopment will enable substantial improvements to be made to back of house facilities, which are currently substandard and deficient. Dressing room provision will be increased and enhanced, dedicated rehearsal space will be provided and workshop and wardrobe room will be accommodated on-site, while a studio for theatre and community uses will enable a greater range of work to be explored and developed. New meeting rooms and offices will provide much-needed administration space.

The design of the new building has been designed to be in keeping with the surrounding area and, in the Trust's view, will make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area. The concrete massing of the current *Everyman* front elevation sits uneasily with the primarily domestic Georgian frontages onto Hope Street. The main body of the new theatre offers a far more welcoming and accessible frontage than the current building while retaining the characteristic illuminated *Everyman* sign. The foyer entrance has been designed to fit into the streetscape by mirroring the domestic scale of the adjoining Georgian buildings, while the rear elevation onto Arrad Street references the prevailing Victorian warehouse aesthetic and blends in unobtrusively with its surroundings. The brick ventilation chimneys will not be visible from Hope Street but will be apparent in views from the Metropolitan Cathedral. However, materials and massing have been designed so that they will not unduly dominate the skyline. The new building will contribute to the economic vitality of the area by enabling the theatre to attract new audiences with an expanded range of work and the ability to cater for community groups within the new studio space. The new design will also make the theatre and bistro more accessible to passing footfall.

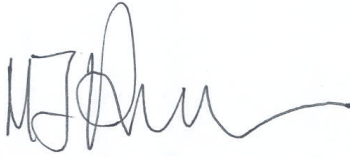
The Trust is pleased to see that the building has been designed to include appropriate energy efficiency measures such as natural ventilation systems which will allow the theatre to function for much of the year without the need for mechanical ventilation assistance. We also note the inclusion of CHP plant, a rainwater harvesting system and air source heat pumps to ensure that the building's energy usage is not excessive. The Theatres Trust's conference '*Building Sustainable Theatres*' in June 2008 highlighted the need to reduce energy consumption by paying regular attention to the building fabric, plant and equipment and we are pleased to see that considerable thought has gone into this for the new theatre.

The Theatres Trust is always keen to ensure that any new work and extensions proposed for a theatre are fit for purpose. Theatre venues are technically complex buildings and do need to be carefully planned both inside and out. We note that the architects Haworth Tompkins have prepared the design and are certainly capable of managing and designing such a scheme. In terms of integral internal design, we are pleased that experienced theatre consultants Charcoalblue have been involved with the plans. The designs are sensitive and rational and should ensure that the special character of the *Everyman* theatre is retained while its technical and ancillary facilities are substantially improved. However, with reference to the CABE comments on the scheme, the Trust would always strongly recommend that the Council undertake an **independent theatre peer review** exercise regarding the technical design and spatial configuration of the theatre scheme. This would ensure that the proposed scheme for the integral theatre design is adaptable and as future proofed as possible given the budget and time constraints. It would also allow theatre professionals to give further advice on practical configuration, sightlines and usability of the proposed scheme. We would be happy to suggest ways in which you might take this forward, bearing in mind your need for client confidentiality. I have therefore copied this letter to Steve Tompkins of Haworth Tompkins Limited to make them aware of this suggestion.

Finally, the Trust would also urge that there should be a **condition** imposed to record the current *Everyman* building before the commencement of works. Theatrical buildings are an unusual subject matter and often researched by the general public. The Theatres Trust has a substantial collection of material (photographs, slides and plans) relating to theatre buildings, and we are currently developing our theatre database to enable public access via our website. We would be happy to advise on the content of a recording report and would like to receive a copy for our archives.

I hope you find these comments useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mark J Price MRTPI, IHBC
Planning and Heritage Adviser

cc Steve Tompkins, Haworth Tompkins Limited