

Our Ref: VS/44

16 July 2010

Planning Services
Swale Borough Council
Swale House, East Street
Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 3HT

Dear Claire Dethier,

Sheppey Little Theatre, 32 Meyrick Road, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2NX
Application Ref: SW/10/0772 CLD

Thank you for consulting The Theatres Trust on the above planning application for the demolition of an existing ground floor extension and construction of a proposed two storey rear extension to the *Sheppey Little Theatre*. 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 Trust supports the application in principle because it will provide much needed extra accommodation for the *Sheppey Little Theatre*. Theatres need ongoing development if they are to keep pace with the needs of performers and audience and we are keen to help theatre owners do more to improve, adapt and sustain their building stock. The new extension will provide a valuable 'off stage' area at first floor level to allow for more flexible staging and will also supply storage space for scenery. On the ground floor it will provide improved toilet provision for staff and performers. Furthermore, it will be constructed in materials to match the existing building and its overall external impact will be minimal.

Performing arts venues such as this are required elements of a sustainable community, providing social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits as well as regeneration. They make an important contribution to the vitality of town centres and are a significant element of a borough's cultural infrastructure. The *Sheppey Little Theatre* is a flourishing local theatre which is used by a wide variety of different theatre and community groups. We therefore support the proposed works which will improve the theatre's facilities and ensure that it continues to be an asset to the community.

Yours sincerely,



Mark J Price MRTPI, IHBC
Planning and Heritage Adviser

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,
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