

Our Ref.: MP/33

21 July 2010

For the attention of: Ms Rachel Hamilton

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



Dear Mr Walker,

Comedy Theatre, Panton Street, London SW1Y 4DN
Application Ref: 10/04413/LBC

Thank you for consulting the Theatres Trust on the above listed building application for the installation of a steel system, walkway and machinery gallery, removal of cross stage walkway and relocation of drums and shafts. The Trust **supports** the application in principle. Please see our detailed advice and **suggested conditions** 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 for the works to the stage grid at the *Comedy Theatre* because they will improve the technical back stage facilities providing better safety as well as a more practical functioning theatre. The scheme proposed aims to retain existing features of value and significance while adding crucial structural reinforcement. We support the removal of the cross-over as it is clearly necessary in order to improve flying. We also support the reconfiguration of two of the existing drums and shafts within the grid, the relocation of two above the new motor gallery and the removal and storage of the remaining two. You will of course need to condition the precise arrangement as this is currently not shown on the plans as well as amending the Design and Historic Building Statement by Theatreplan dated May 2010. We would also ask that you condition a full recording report of the current grid and drum arrangement (to English Heritage Level Three¹) along with offering the two drums and shafts to be removed to a suitable statutory body.

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¹ Understanding Historic Buildings, *A guide to good recording practice*, English Heritage, February 2006

Protecting theatres for everyone

Director Mhora Samuel **Chairman** Rob Dickins CBE
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The Theatres Trust has visited the theatre and endorses the works proposed in principle. In addition, I would point out that there are many such precedents for this type of alteration to grids throughout theatres in the UK that have received Listed Building Consent. In our opinion the works proposed will not adversely harm the special architectural value or significance of the listed building.

We would urge you **to grant Listed Building Consent** and expect you to attach the conditions we have suggested accordingly.

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 Shelia Stones, English Heritage
Jane Lemon, Group Head of Building Services, Ambassador Theatre Group
.....Roger Fox, Theatreplan