

The Theatres Trust
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Our ref.: BP/43
Please contact: Ms Bridget Pereira

27 July 2010

Mr Andrew Trigger
Case Officer
Planning & Strategy City Development
The City of Edinburgh Council
Business Centre G2, Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG



Dear Mr Trigger,

Edinburgh Festival Theatre, 18-22 Potterow, Edinburgh, EH8 9BL.
Application Ref: 10/01478/FUL

Thank you for consulting the Theatres Trust on the above planning application to provide a rehearsal room/160-seat performance space (Class 11), a commercial/office development (Class 2) and student accommodation (and services) on land adjoining the *Edinburgh Festival Theatre*. The Trust **supports** the application. Please see our detailed advice below.

Remit: The Theatres Trust is The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. It was established by The Theatres Trust (Scotland) Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. Regulation 25 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008, Schedule 5, paragraph 11, sets out the requirement of all planning authorities, before determining an application for planning permission for development that they must consult The Theatres Trust 'where the development involves any land on which there is a theatre as defined in the Theatres Trust 1976.' 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 to extend the *Edinburgh Festival Theatre* to provide a new rehearsal and 160-seat performance space as well as a commercial/office development and student accommodation because the proposed works will provide essential new facilities which are vital to the continued success of the theatre. 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, adapt and sustain their building stock to attract new audiences, as well as the best artists. At present the theatre suffers from a lack of onsite rehearsal facilities. The creation of a new rehearsal space is long overdue and will enable the theatre to provide world class standard facilities for visiting performers, as well as attracting world class acts. The proposed building will also be set apart from the existing theatre and capable of operating independently. Therefore, when not in use by the theatre, it could also potentially be used by the nearby University, the annual Fringe Festival and wider community for rehearsals, education workshops and performances.

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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

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



The plans are accompanied by a sensible and realistic Design and Access Report which points out that there have been extensive consultations with stakeholders and the general public. Certainly, in our opinion, the design of the new rehearsal building is sympathetic in terms of height, bulk and materials and will not adversely harm the special architectural or historic interest of the Category B- Listed *Festival Theatre*. However, the Trust is keen to ensure that the proposed new building will be fit for purpose. Theatre venues are technically complex buildings and need to be carefully planned both inside and out. In terms of integral internal design we are pleased that experienced theatre architects LDN have prepared the scheme and have incorporated natural ventilation using a 'solar chimney' method into the scheme.


Our only minor reservation is about the size of the proposed get-in which is currently via a small lift or up a single door fire escape route and would query if the proposed access will be sufficient for a major touring theatre of this size. However, we understand that the Festival Theatre is happy with the design and that it could be modified at later date should this become a major issue in the future.

We have no comment to make on the design of the student accommodation as this is not part of our specific remit but we would expect the necessary conditions and development agreements in place to ensure the new accommodation for the theatre is constructed and not hampered in any way by the subsequent construction of the student accommodation.

To summarise, The Theatres Trust is happy to support the proposals in principle which will support the work of the Festival City Theatre Trust by providing a flexible space capable of complimenting activities within the Festival Theatre or by the local community. We would therefore **urge you to grant planning permission and attach relevant conditions accordingly.**

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Mark James Price MRTPI, IHBC
Planning and Heritage Adviser

cc Festival Theatre
Mark Sidgwick, LDN Architects
Steven Robb, Historic Scotland