

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2004

24 November 2021

Sebastian Knox
Pending Applications
Development Planning
City of Westminster
PO Box 732
Redhill
RH1 9FL

By e-mail: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Applications: 21/07344/LBC

Site: Playhouse Theatre Northumberland Avenue London WC2N 5DE

Proposal: Installation of signage into the existing poster boxes located around the Craven Street and south side elevations, to install black timber frame boards to the Craven Street elevation, and black boarding over the main entrance doors.

Remit:

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, requiring the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre'.

Comment:

This application for listed building consent has come to the attention of the Trust and has been submitted alongside two further applications for which we are also provided comment. This proposal seeks installation of signage, black timber-framed boards and black boarding in association with the colour scheme for a forthcoming run of shows and the theatre's temporary re-branding as the Kit Kat Club.

The black boards to the Craven Street elevation mask external features and detailing which contribute to the theatre's significance, and are not of the quality that would be expected. This gives rise to less than substantial harm. However, the negative impact of this harm must be considered within the context of the intended purpose of supporting the run of 'Cabaret'. The theatre is acting as a secretive 'underground' Berlin cabaret club with the masking intentional to create intrigue. The proposal is temporary for the duration of the run. On the basis of this being a temporary reversible change consistent with the show's theme we do not object to this element. This is also a high-profile run of shows which will support the theatre's recovery from

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Interim Chair Paddy Dillon Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Richard Baldwin, Paul Cartwright, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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Covid-19, therefore constituting a public benefit. It must though be ensured through condition that existing stonework will be repaired upon removal as indicated by the applicant within the Design & Access Statement.

The boarding of the main entrance doors is for identical purpose, therefore again we raise no objection.

The remaining element of this consent relates to show signage including a banner below the entrance canopy. Show signage by its nature changes upon start and completion of runs of shows and contributes to the character of theatre buildings.

As with our comments for the corresponding application for re-painting of doors, we would note the Heritage Statement with accompanying Design & Access Statement provides limited appraisal or justification of the impact of this proposal. This is more pertinent in this case as some aspects of the proposal cause harm to significance, even if on a temporary basis. We have knowledge of this show and understand the context in which these proposals are being undertaken. Nonetheless the submission should reflect the requirements of paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021) and paragraph 9 of planning practice guidance on the Historic environment (2019).

We would however support the granting of listed building consent, conditional on being time-limited to this run of shows and with repairs to fabric being implemented upon removal.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T Clarke".

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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