

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1988

29 November 2021

Kirsty Minney
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Mount Pleasant Road
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 1RS

By e-mail: planning@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Application: 21/03160/LBC

Site: The Opera House 88 Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RT

Proposal: Listed Building Consent - Removal of existing glass Wetherspoon logos from side of canopy; Installation of new signage to bottom face of front balcony and above entry awning

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 because it is alterations at the Opera House in relation to the removal of existing external signage from the sides of the entrance canopy and addition of new halo signage to the front of the canopy.

The Opera House, although last having been in full-time performance use in the 1960s, remains an important theatrical building which is of great interest to the Trust. It has retained many original features including its stage, grid and fly floors and is seen as a building that could be reverted back to theatre use in the future. It maintains occasional operatic performances by a local society.

These proposals do not impact on the building's interior and would not therefore compromise future reversibility. Considering the scale of the building and its operation by a major national chain there is a surprising lack of branding to capture passing trade. Presently this consists of a glass sign with frosted lettering either side of the canopy and menus/offers within the poster boxes. This proposal would see these removed with halo-illuminated lettering to the front of the canopy.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL
T 020 7836 8591 E info@theatrestrust.org.uk W theatrestrust.org.uk

Interim Chair Paddy Dillon Director Jon Morgan

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

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

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Signage to this location on theatre buildings is not uncommon. We do not consider that its addition would harm the building's character or setting.

Therefore we would support the granting of listed building consent in principle, although it should be clarified how this signage will be affixed and serviced to ensure any harm to historic fabric can be understood and that it can be made good if removed.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in greater detail.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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