

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/3640

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Application: 21/AP/4618

Site: The Menier Chocolate Factory 51-53 Southwark Street London Southwark SE1 1RU

Proposal: Minor improvement works and redecoration to the facade and facade detail, replacement of all non original windows with new safety single glazed units in new timber frames with detail to match the existing. Installation of a new entrance door for the Menier Restaurant providing direct access from Southwark Street. New roof insulation in conjunction with temporary plasterboard ceilings to the 4th floor. Addition of a new fire stair to the rear of the building providing a secondary means of escape for the upper floors.

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 seeking works at Menier Chocolate Factory, specifically repairs and alterations relating to windows, insulation, a new fire stair and additional entrance from Southwark Street.

The Menier building contains the Menier Chocolate Factory, a highly regarded fringe theatre with a mixed programme of its own productions, new works and revivals. The theatre also operates a restaurant and features rehearsal space. As well as being an important theatre and cultural asset with Southwark it also contributes to London's renowned cultural offer which is a significant draw for visitors and is a major contributor to the city's economy. In line with Local Plan, London Plan and NPPF policy it is vital that planning decisions support such facilities. The host building is a Grade II listed heritage asset. The theatre has been located there since 2004 following restoration after a prolonged period of dereliction.

Theatres Trust

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

Interim Chair Katie Town **Director** Jon Morgan

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

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres
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Much of this proposal appears to be related to repairs, maintenance and improved energy efficiency of the building which is to be supported. The applicant has provided photographic evidence of deterioration and water ingress which has damaged window frames; these will be replaced and detailed to match those that are existing. In turn they will improve insulation which will reduce the building's running costs.

At ground floor level the corner window will be removed and replaced with a new doorway. Whilst this will alter the building's appearance, we do not consider this will undermine its significance and will help enhance visibility and prominence of the restaurant. In turn this will enhance the financial sustainability and viability of the theatre assuming it remains in single operation, as the income from ancillary front of house activities is important in supporting the wider arts and theatrical programme as well as bringing in audiences and generating activity throughout the day.

Neither do we have any objections to providing additional means of escape.

In conclusion we are supportive of the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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