

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2164

21 February 2022

Mark Kilby
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
3 Knowsley Place
Duke Street
Bury
BL9 0EJ

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

Application: 68004 & 68005

Site: Derby Hall, Market Street, Bury, BL9 0BW

Proposal: Listed building consent for installation of photovoltaic solar panels to the rear roof of the building; and

Installation of photovoltaic solar panels to the rear roof of the building

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:

These applications for listed building consent and planning permission have come to the attention of the Trust because they are seeking the installation of PV panels to the roof of Derby Hall, the main performance space at The Met. We do not appear to have been directly consulted despite this falling within our remit outlined above.

The Met is an arts and cultural complex with a range of spaces. Derby Hall is the main auditorium with a capacity of around 400 and there is a smaller studio theatre called The Box accommodating up to 100. Alongside these are a number of rehearsal and recording studios, meeting rooms and a bar which can be hired for functions and events. It is a Grade II listed heritage asset within the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area which was originally a civic/town hall and was opened as a theatre and concert venue in 1979. Live music forms the bulk of its programme but it also offers comedy, theatre and other performances. It is an important cultural asset for Bury and its surrounding catchment. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF seeks planning decisions to plan positively for buildings and facilities such as this.

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

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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We are highly supportive of theatres and performance venues, including historic theatres and venues operating within other heritage assets as is the case with The Met, investing in environmental sustainability initiatives. The cost savings from reduced energy bills are particularly beneficial to the longer-term financial sustainability and viability of cultural venues. Nonetheless we recognise such interventions within the historic environment can lead to conflict between sustainability and harm to architectural and historic significance. We therefore take such assessments on a case by case basis taking into account varying factors to weigh the environmental benefits against the level of heritage harm.

The proposed panels would be located to the south-facing roof pane above the Derby Hall, which would add a small amount of height. In terms of the principal front elevation it appears to be the case that the panels would not be visible from the street including from views to The Met from Bolton Street and Market Place. Neither would they be seen from the rear as this elevation is masked by adjacent buildings to the north, east and south-east. This mitigates the negative impact of their addition. Potentially the panels may be visible from upper levels of surrounding properties, but overall we consider the impact would be minimal and would not detract from the significance of the building. It must also be considered that panels are removable, thus constituting a reversible change. Therefore we consider the harm to be less than substantial.

Therefore, on weighing up the balance in terms of paragraph 202 of the NPPF, we consider the environmental and public benefits of this proposal along with the mitigating factors cited outweighs the less than substantial harm caused. As such we support the installation of PV panels and recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

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

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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