

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/1849

30 March 2023

Mrs Jan Cresswell
Planning department,
PO Box 17,
Corporation Street,
Blackpool
FY1 1LZ

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

Application: 23/0095

Site: WINTER GARDENS, CHURCH STREET, BLACKPOOL, FY1 1HW

Proposal: Alterations to the Circle Bar Annex in the Opera House including re-covering of fixed banquette seating, installation of free-standing period bar and drink cabinet and coat wardrobe, replacement of carpet with solid wooded floor, and conversion of banquette seating to the west of the room into a counter housing fridges.

Remit:

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at the Winter Gardens, in relation to alterations to the Circle Bar within the Opera House. We have also been consulted on two further applications for works elsewhere in the building to which we have responded under separate cover.

This area was previously an annex to the Circle Bar but has been out of public use and utilised for storage for some time. These proposed alterations and refurbishments would see it brought back to active front of house use as a private bar to serve the Winter Gardens' premium hospitality offer for events and functions.

The room has historic and decorative significance with art deco character featuring perimeter wood panelling and bench seating. Deficiencies and need for refurbishment have been identified due to age and past lack of use and investment in this space. To facilitate its return to use the

Theatres Trust

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Chair Dave Moutrey **Director** Jon Morgan

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bench seating will be refurbished and resprung, the carpet will be replaced with wooden flooring and the electrics will be upgraded to meet modern standards. As this was an annex it lacks a servery, therefore a new bar will be installed which will mean the loss of one area of bench seating and some reconfiguration.

We consider that the harm from the loss of part of the bench seating can be justified because the installation of a new bar will facilitate a heritage benefit of bringing this space back to active use. Overall the decorative scheme is sensitive to the significance of this area. We welcome the investment being made into this part of the building.

Therefore we support the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or 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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