

Protecting theatres
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Ref.: TC/621

01 August 2023

Richard Stevenson
Development Management
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
4 Ednam Road
Dudley
DY1 1HL

By e-mail: development.control@dudley.gov.uk

Application: P21/1505/C3

Site: Former Hippodrome and adjacent land and buildings, Castle Hill, Dudley

Proposal: Discharge of Condition 23 (archaeological recording)

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 to discharge Condition 23 of permission reference P21/1505 at the Hippodrome. This condition was in three parts; Part A (submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation) has already been discharged, and Part B has now been achieved by virtue of having related to

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Paul Cartwright, James Dacre, Suba Das, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Lucy Osborne, Jane Spiers, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

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implementation of Part A. Part C is for completion and submission of historic building recording, and the resulting report is what is being consulted on in this instance.

The consultant carrying out the report shared an original draft with us for comment prior to submission to the Council. This afforded an opportunity to address any shortcomings and ensure the final report was of the standard and detail that would be expected. We are grateful for this opportunity and that our feedback has been positively received resulting in revisions and additional detail and imagery within the document.

We consider that the final report is the best that can be expected under the circumstances and constraints the author had to work within. It is regrettable that the overall content has been compromised by the actions of the Council in stripping so much fabric and not affording an appropriate opportunity to go into the building between works. There could have been an interim stage whereby photographs were taken prior to stripping of the later bingo fit-out. We do not consider the Council to have acted within the spirit of its own planning condition and its approach is not one we have encountered before. We would expect the Council to take formal action to address and remedy what appears to be a breach of condition as it would take against any other applicant.

Nonetheless, within that context we consider the Historic Building Investigation and Recording report to be of sufficient standard to warrant full discharge of Condition 23.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss these comments further.

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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