

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



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26 October 2023

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Application: 23/AP/2350

Site: 53 Southwark Street London Southwark SE1 1RU

Proposal: Listed Building Consent: Demolition of existing internal stairs with new and adjustments to the stair core on the fourth floor. Replacement of lift with new to extend to the fourth floor. Modern partitions replaced with new to create meeting rooms, toilets, risers, and storage areas. New floors and ceiling finishes. Internal openings in communal areas to be enlarged to accommodate new doors. Replacement of the doors to the rear elevation and removal of existing modern window and wall section on first floor for new door to fire escape stair. Secondary glazing to rear elevation windows and external loading doors. The first floor glass roof to be removed and replaced with a solid roof. Changes to the approved rear fire escape stair and landings including extension to the First floor. Replacement of pavement lights. First-floor terrace plant enclosure extended to accommodate new plant. Adjustments to terraces on the first floor and roof. Replacement of the roof access dormer, new skylights and warm roof build-up with like for like finish. Making good of the existing external lighting and addition of external lighting to entrance, fire escape and terraces.

Remit:

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

Telephone 020 7836 8591 **Email** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **Website** theatrestrust.org.uk **Twitter** @TheatresTrust

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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

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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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 Theatres Trust because it is seeking various internal works across the Menier building as part of refurbishments to facilitate office spaces. The Heritage Statement suggests a corresponding planning application will be forthcoming.

The Menier Chocolate Factory building contains a highly regarded fringe theatre of the same name. It features a mixed programme of its own productions, new works and revivals. The theatre also operates a restaurant and rehearsal space. Along with 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 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.

We note the theatre is described as an 'event space' within the Heritage Statement and labelled as such on the existing and proposed plans. We would highlight this is a theatre and has been for some time, and is therefore Sui Generis.

Some of the proposed works are within the theatre. This includes secondary glazing to the external loading doors and the side windows to the terrace and metal stair. There will be changes to layout with the kitchen and WCs separated from each other. The footprint of the kitchen appears to be increased and this would seem to offer a more efficient layout. There will however be a net loss of one WC cubicle. In heritage terms these areas are later additions and therefore there would be no impact on historic significance. For the theatre this may have impacts on the audience experience as it could increase queueing and increase reliance on audiences needing to instead go to the WC block at basement level.

We make no overall comment on interventions elsewhere within the building which do not directly impact on the theatre.

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Overall we raise no objection in principle to the granting of listed building consent and are keen to see the building brought fully into active use. However, it must be ensured that the proposed alterations within the theatre are acceptable to its operator and that its activities are protected.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.

A handwritten signature in black 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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