

Protecting theatres  
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/2198

30 October 2023

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By e-mail: [planning.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@colchester.gov.uk)

**Application:** 232316

**Site:** Mercury Theatre, Balcerne Passage, Colchester Essex CO1 1PT

**Proposal:** vertical infill extension to existing theatre

**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 planning permission at the Mercury Theatre. It seeks to construct a rooftop extension to infill a void at the second floor level within the theatre's recent extension in order to provide additional office/meeting/rehearsal space.

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

**Telephone** 020 7836 8591 **Email** [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) **Website** [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://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

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This level of the building has existing lift access but currently is used only for some cupboard/storage space with an open-air route to the large plant room. A need and opportunity has been identified to provide additional facilities, enhancing the Mercury's operational flexibility and its ability to generate additional income to support its activities. Therefore this proposal would meet that objective whilst optimising the use of space available. A further benefit is that one of the storage areas would be converted to an accessible WC, both ensuring that best standards of accessibility are met as well as improving the theatre's overall provision in this regard.

The design and treatment of the infill extension corresponds with that of the existing building and therefore can be considered to sensitive to its wider setting.

The Mercury is an important cultural facility for Colchester and its wider surrounding catchment. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

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".

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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