

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC

02 November 2023

Rachael Forbes
Planning
East Cambridgeshire District Council
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
CB7 4EE

By e-mail: plservices@eastcambs.gov.uk

Application: 23/01035/FUL

Site: The Viva Theatre Spencer Drove Soham Ely Cambridgeshire CB7 6EE

Proposal: Proposed single storey extension

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 Viva Theatre. It seeks to construct a single storey extension to the building to provide a meeting room.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

Facebook @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

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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We commented on a previous (permitted) application in 2022 which also sought to construct a meeting room in the same location and of similar scale. It appears this was not built out, and this fresh application introduces an alternative design approach with a greater overhang, reduced glazing and different materials.

The Viva Theatre opened in November 2021 following conversion of a disused mill. It has a mixed programme including theatre, a number of comedy shows and workshops. It also offers rehearsal and events space, providing a space for local people to engage and participate in culture and the arts. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for community and cultural facilities.

We welcome continued investment and development of the theatre. The additional facility will enhance the theatre's role and function. We are therefore we are supportive of 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.

Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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