

Ref.: TC/426

27 March 2024

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Pending Applications
Development Planning
City of Westminster
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By e-mail: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Application: 24/00957/LBC

Site: Fortune Theatre Russell Street London WC2B 5HH

Proposal: Re-decoration of Russell Street and Crown Court elevations of the Fortune Theatre, including changes to the existing colour schemes.

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 consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at the Fortune Theatre. It seeks to undertake redecoration of the theatre's Russell Street (north-east) and Crown Court (north-west) elevations.

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 James Dacre, Suba Das, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Lucy Osborne, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

The Fortune is a Grade II listed heritage asset. It was built in 1922 and is culturally significant as the first theatre in Britain built after World War I and architecturally significant due to its construction using concrete as an exposed and decorative façade; it was only the second building, following the original Wembley Stadium, constructed in this way. Its interior features extensive marble and metalwork. It has a small capacity by West End standards and for a theatre which has three tiers, seating around 400 people. Since 1989 it was the long-term home of *The Woman in Black* but this came to an end in February 2023. Since that time some refurbishment and upgrading of the theatre's facilities has occurred.

This proposal will see the front and side elevations repainted, largely retaining the current off-white palette but with elements of dark grey and silver to the windows and surrounds, cast lead and rainwater goods. A historic image has been provided which shows that there has been greater contrast between the building's main panelling and its cast lead areas previously.

We welcome that the theatre's operator is investing in the building's maintenance and upkeep. Although the current appearance of the theatre will be altered, we consider the proposed palette to be sensitive to the building's character and to some degree a reinstatement of historic appearance.

We therefore 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 in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

Theatres Trust

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