

Ref.: TC

30 April 2024

Allan Fenwick  
County Hall  
Durham  
County Durham  
DH1 5UL

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

**Application:** DM/24/00447/FPA

**Site:** Durham Dramatic Society Theatre Fowlers Yard Durham DH1 3RA

**Proposal:** Replacement works of 10no existing timber sash windows to North and West elevations

**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:**

This application has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake alteration at the City Theatre, specifically to replace timber sash windows to its north and west elevations.

The City Theatre is run by the Durham Dramatic Society, a local amateur group. It

**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

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

**Chair** Dave Moutrey OBE

**Director** Jon Morgan

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

has a capacity of 71. The building was previously a warehouse and then a British Restaurant, a scheme set up by the Government during World War II and staffed by volunteers. It is within the City Centre Conservation Area and can partly be considered a non-designated heritage asset; its entry block is a later addition which is of less significance. From 1950 it became the Society's Club Rooms and was altered in 1986 to create the current theatre. The Society produces around five shows annually which are performed at the theatre. It provides local people with opportunities to participate in theatre and the arts, to come together and to learn and develop skills. Community venues such as this are particularly important for social and cultural wellbeing. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF seeks planning decisions to plan positively for venues such as this.

The windows subject to this application are within the older part of the building, to its upper levels. It is stated that these are in poor condition and require replacement, due to severe cracking and blistering which has resulted in moisture penetration into the timber. This is leading to issues of damp and water ingress into the building. Additionally there are missing frames with temporary covers and tape. Photographic evidence has been provided.

Whilst regretful that the existing windows and frames cannot be repaired, we welcome that the proposed replacement windows are of similar character and design. It is important for the ongoing conservation of the building and the activities of the Society that the building is efficient and insulated.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

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**

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

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

**Chair** Dave Moutrey OBE

**Director** Jon Morgan

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