

Ref.: TC/2330

9 May 2024

Martin Mew
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
1 East Pallant
Chichester
PO19 1TY

By e-mail: dcplanning@chichester.gov.uk

Application: 24/00804/FUL

Site: Chichester Festival Theatre Broyle Road Chichester West Sussex PO19 6AP

Proposal: Erection of new temporary performance space to the south of Chichester Festival 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:

This application has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to construct a new performance space for a period of five years at Chichester Festival Theatre. The site is also adjacent to the Minerva Theatre which is similarly operated by the Festival Theatre.

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

There have been temporary installations at the theatre previously. Most recently we commented on an application in 2022 for an external bandstand for the summer season following the lapsing of a previous five-year permission. This supported a variety of events and workshops for local people with a particular focus on students and families, helping to expand the theatre's cultural and social role and encourage greater engagement and participation in the arts.

Chichester Festival Theatre is one of the most important post-war theatres in the United Kingdom. Its design influenced the construction of subsequent theatres elsewhere, including the National Theatre in London, and this is reflected in its Grade II* listing. It is a valued cultural asset for Chichester and its residents and offers community, educational and youth outreach programmes. It also plays a key economic role bringing in visitors from a wider catchment which in turn supports local jobs and businesses. It is a producing theatre which has exported several works both nationally and around the world. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

The Minerva Theatre is a studio theatre with an audience capacity of up to 310, located adjacent to the main building to the south-west. It does not form part of the Festival Theatre's listing, but can be considered a non-designated heritage asset and is on Chichester's register of locally important heritage assets.

In contrast to previous proposals, this scheme would see a structure remain in place year-round. This will provide a studio with an audience capacity of up to 120 people in a flexible format along with a small bar/foyer area and two WCs (one of which is accessible). The intention for this facility, named 'The Nest', is to provide space for education, rehearsals, outreach programmes and the development of new works. This would include some public performances.

We welcome the principle of this development, which will further expand and enhance the Festival Theatre's important social and cultural role within Chichester. Its current buildings are already operating close to capacity. We also support the approach to the sustainability of its construction, re-using an existing structure operated at the Pleasance Theatre in London which itself included the use of reclaimed materials.

The location of this new structure is sensitive, being within the setting of the main Festival Theatre building and the Minerva as designated and non-designated heritage assets respectively. It is also within an area of ecological value. Nonetheless, we consider the design and appearance of this structure to be sensitive

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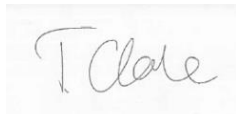
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to its location and impact on ecology and biodiversity will be mitigated through implementation of a green roof and commitment to wildflower planting upon removal. This can if required be secured through condition. With reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF, there is also public benefit in supporting the important work of the Festival Theatre.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments further.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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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