

Ref.: TC/308

24 July 2024

East Lindsey District Council
Tedder Hall
Manby Park
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 8UP

Application: S/153/00936/24

Site: THE EMBASSY THEATRE, GRAND PARADE, SKEGNESS, PE25 2UG

Proposal: Planning Permission - Extensions and alterations 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:

This application for planning permission has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it relates to development at the Embassy Theatre. We have not been formally notified despite this development falling within our statutory remit as outlined above.

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 Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, Suba Das, Liam Evans-Ford, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Tracy Ann Oberman, Lucy Osborne, Saratha Rajeswaran, Truda Spruyt, Michèle Taylor MBE, Katie Town

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There is an existing permission for development at this theatre, for which we provided comments and met with the project team in 2022. This constitutes revised proposals.

The current plans are substantially reduced in scale and ambition compared to the 2022 consent, which was to bring forward a Scandinavian 'Culture House' concept offering a range of additional social and cultural facilities alongside a refurbished theatre and substantially extended front of house. This is regretful. Nonetheless, we welcome that improvement and refurbishment of the theatre remains a priority, and these proposals would not prevent further development in future if funding were to become available.

A positive aspect of this proposal is that it now includes back of house refurbishments to dressing rooms, performer WCs and the studio/rehearsal area to the first floor above, along with an extension to the stage store. There appears to be improved loading and stage access for sets and equipment. Previously this area was largely out of scope. Improvements to facilities for performers and more efficient handling of shows will improve the reputation of the theatre which in turn will help encourage additional acts to tour to the venue.

Similarly, previously there was to be alteration within the auditorium to provide a new floor finish to the front to facilitate a dance area but existing seating was to be retained. There will now be a general refurbishment including "upgraded" seating. Details of this are to be confirmed, but in principle this is to be supported as improving the experience and comfort of audiences will be important in ensuring the venue's ongoing sustainability and value as a cultural and visitor asset for the town.

Within the front of house foyer and circulation areas the scale of extension has been reduced, just providing a new entrance area and refurbished WCs. There is revised external landscaping with some outdoor seating. It is regretful the proposed Changing Places facility has been removed, and we would encourage consideration of this being reinstated to enhance the theatre's inclusivity.

At upper levels there will continue to be refurbishment of the entrance and foyer from Grand Parade but at second floor level only the refurbishment of WCs is carried forward.

There remains upgrading of the theatre's external signage, which will help improve its prominence.

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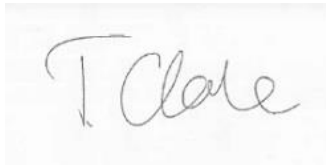
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Theatres fit for the **future**

In conclusion, whilst the overall scale and ambition of this project has been reduced it continues to provide an improved theatre which will better meet the expectations of its users. We therefore continue to support the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail, and please continue to engage with us should plans be further refined or further opportunities for development arise.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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