

Ref.: TC/987

24 September 2024

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By e-mail: [planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

**Application:** 24/01035/LBC

**Site:** Kings Theatre Albert Road Southsea PO5 2QJ

**Proposal:** Interior alterations to include installation of 4no. double acoustic doors to interior side of existing doors on Exmouth Road

**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'.

**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

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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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## Comment:

This application for listed building consent has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake alterations at King's Theatre, specifically the installation of steel acoustic doors behind original doors along the Exmouth Road elevation.

King's Theatre is a Grade II\* listed heritage asset designed by the renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham. It is an important and quite complete example of Edwardian theatre and a late example of Matcham's work. It opened in 1907. In its earlier years it hosted several major productions including premieres of shows which transferred to London's West End. In 1990 it came into the ownership of Hampshire County Council but around ten years later they sought to close it. After public pressure it was purchased by the City Council who leased it to the King's Theatre Trust, a registered charity. Since taking on the building the Trust have undertaken a programme of restoration and refurbishment. The theatre's programme contains a number of plays and musicals along with comedy, live music and other events. It serves local audiences whilst also drawing people into the city from a wider catchment. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

As site visit to King's was undertaken by Theatres Trust in August 2024.

The four doors are original and so contribute towards the theatre's significance as a designated heritage asset. Due to their age they do not meet modern standards of acoustic insulation and consequently break-out has resulted in a Noise Abatement Notice being issued. Without this being addressed the ability of the theatre to operate would be compromised.

The applicant has put forward three options for rectifying this through replacement or adaption to the doors. Given the significance of the doors their loss would be harmful in heritage terms, therefore we agree that the proposed intervention represents a necessary compromise. Whilst this generates less than substantial harm, with reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF this is mitigated by the necessity of the works and the public benefits in maintaining the theatre's operation whilst providing acceptable amenity to nearby properties.

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

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# Theatres fit for the **future**



these comments in further detail.

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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