

# Theatres fit for the **future**



Ref.: TC/1303

19 November 2024

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**Application:** P/23/0277

**Site:** Theatre Royal And Thespian House Park Place Penydarren Road Merthyr Tydfil CF47 0LJ

**Proposal:** Change of use to Cafe/Yoga Studio (Listed Building Consent)

## **Remit:**

The Theatres Trust is the National Advisory Body for Theatres and was established by The Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres'. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system and local planning authorities in Wales are required to consult the Trust on planning applications for '*development involving any land on which there is a theatre*', '*residential development within 50 metres of a theatre*' as well as for proposed theatres. The definition of theatres within the Act defines a theatre as 'any building or part of a building constructed wholly or mainly for the public performance of plays', and therefore applies to theatres, playhouses, arts centres, ciné-varieties or buildings converted for theatre use, old and new, in other uses or disused.

## **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

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund supports the work of The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

## Comment:

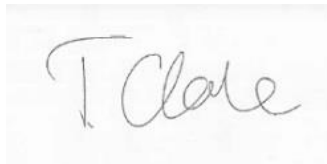
This application has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to restore and return to use Thespian House, which forms a part of Theatre Royal. The building would be used as a yoga studio and cafe.

Theatre Royal opened in 1894, designed in a neo-classical style with imposing rendered brick frontage with a prominent 'Theatre Royal' inscription. It was well-equipped and capable of receiving the largest of touring shows. Thespian House was a later addition constructed in the 1920s, possibly to provide accommodation for touring artists, and probably completed to coincide with significant internal alterations within the theatre. Originally Thespian House featured a crenellated parapet but alterations over time have reduced its decorative significance. Theatre Royal is considered an excellent example of its type, but after a significant period of vacancy following its closure as a bingo hall in 2006 it is in a poor and deteriorating condition.

On that basis we are supportive of these plans to bring Thespian House back to positive use. Potentially this could be a catalyst for restoration or re-use of the main theatre building which we are keen to see, and these plans would not compromise such efforts. The refurbishment of Thespian House is itself a heritage benefit and will help conserve this building as a reminder of Theatre Royal's theatrical past.

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 this representation in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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