

Ref.: TC/2026

22 January 2025

Elliott Brown
Development Management
Hammersmith Town Hall Extension
King Street
London
W6 9JU

By e-mail: planning@lbhf.gov.uk

Application: 2024/03253/LBC

Site: Shepherd's Bush Empire Shepherd's Bush Green London W12 8TT

Proposal: Internal alterations to include: replacement of all seating, carpet floor finishes, and stair nosings to the level 1 auditorium

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at Shepherd's Bush Empire. It seeks to undertake internal alteration within the auditorium.

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

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

Shepherd's Bush Empire opened in 1903 and was designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham for Oswald Stoll, who was a prominent owner of theatres, founded the Royal Variety Performance and was an important early film director in the silent era. It became a theatre for the BBC in the early 1950s which was used for the filming of prominent shows such as *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, *This Is Your Life*, *The Generation Game* and *Wogan*. After the BBC vacated it became a music venue from 1994 which continues today, and is an important part of London's live music and cultural offer. It is Grade II listed, significant for being a departure from the usual style of Frank Matcham theatres due to its Arts and Crafts influence.

This application contains three elements.

The first is the replacement of seating to the lower balcony level. Photographic evidence has been provided, this seating is demonstrably in poor condition and as shown on the existing plan is also in a variety of styles. In replacing the seating the style will be standardised, and we consider the proposed solution to be sensitive to the venue's character and significance. It should also improve the comfort of audiences and enhance their experience. As the existing seats are likely not original their better standard and consistency can be considered a heritage benefit.

The second part is the replacement of carpets. As with the seating, current installations are of varied design and state of repair. These are also not of original design. The carpet will similarly be installed in a standardised design which again we consider to be sensitive and of similar design to much of the existing.

The final change is the replacement of stair nosings, which also are currently of different designs, are non-original and of little decorative value. Their replacements will be standardised and will provide the appropriate level of safety standards.

This project will enhance the audience experience and consistency of the decorative scheme in a manner which is sensitive to the significance of the Empire. 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

Theatres Trust

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