

Ref.: TC/3432

29 January 2025

Planning Service  
Development Management  
Town Hall  
King William Street  
Blackburn  
BB1 7DY

By e-mail: [planning@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:planning@blackburn.gov.uk)

**Application:** 10/24/1137

**Site:** Darwen Library Theatre Knott Street Blackburn BB3 5BU

**Proposal:** Removal of single storey outbuilding and small brick outrigger, removal and replacement of fire escape staircase and any required remedial works

**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 seeks to undertake development at Darwen Library Theatre, specifically

**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

**Facebook** @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

**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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the removal of an outbuilding and the replacement of a fire escape staircase.

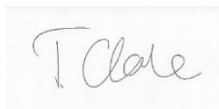
Darwen Library Theatre was built in 1908, and originally was both a library and a theatre. It is a Grade II listed heritage asset, on account of its architectural interest as a striking and well-designed civic building, for the high quality of its fixtures and fittings, for its layout as a library and for being a good example of a Carnegie library. For many decades the theatre element was utilised for a wide range of events and functions and was a valuable resource for local groups. In the late 1990s works were undertaken to convert the lower level to a separate dedicated theatre with a capacity of just over 200 seats. The theatre's programme is varied and includes professional touring shows along with some productions by local groups. It is an important community venue. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

This application covers an outbuilding to the south-west corner of the building and a fire escape that currently runs across the top of it. These structures are not of particular historic interest and are not included within its listing but are within the building's curtilage. The outbuilding was previously used by the theatre but this has not been the case for some time and has been a general facility local authority staff.

The Design & Access/Heritage Statement sets out the rationale for demolishing the outbuilding, namely that improvement is being sought in access and integration between the theatre and the rest of the town centre. This principle is supported. Removal of the outbuilding would not impact on the operation of the theatre and neither would it cause harm to significance and setting. We consider the replacement staircase to have neutral impact.

On that basis we support the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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