

Ref.: TC/934

8 May 2025

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Pending Applications
Development Planning
City of Westminster
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By e-mail: southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk

Application: 25/02577/LBC

Site: Theatre Royal 8 Haymarket London SW1Y 4HT

Proposal: Provision of additional female WCs to the first floor of the Theatre by converting an existing office into new female WCs.

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. It seeks to convert an office at Theatre Royal Haymarket into additional WCs.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

Telephone 020 7836 8591 **Email** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **Website** theatrestrust.org.uk

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Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

CEO Joshua McTaggart

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, Liam Evans-Ford, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson OBE, 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

Theatre Royal Haymarket is of great historic and architectural significance, reflected by its Grade I listing. It is also an important theatre within London's West End 'Theatreland' cluster, receiving high-profile productions and occasional touring artists.

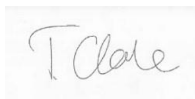
However, whilst many older theatres have challenges providing the facilities expected of modern audiences Theatre Royal has a particular shortage of WCs. For example, there are just three cubicles serving female audience members at Dress Circle level. This negatively impacts on the experience of audiences, due to long queues during intervals and other peak periods of demand. This has been witnessed by way of recent visit. To help address this, it is proposed that an office at Dress Circle level will be converted into an additional female WC block with seven cubicles. This is a substantial uplift.

An assessment with images has been provided of the existing office. There is a fireplace present with decorative tiling but the room is otherwise functional as an office with later refurbishments and alterations. We concur with the applicant that this room is of neutral significance with the exception of the fireplace.

As such, particularly given the room's location adjacent to routes used by audiences, this can be considered an appropriate location for alteration. The fireplace will be boarded which is regretful given its decorative and historic value, but it will remain in situ and could be reversed in future. Taking into account the overall planning balance, and with reference to paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024), the delivery of additional WCs constitutes a substantial public benefit. This is because it meets the needs of audiences and improves their experience. Ultimately this will help support the theatre's ongoing reputation and its future conservation.

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 these comments in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Adviser

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