

Ref.: TC/807

17 June 2025

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

Application: 25/03154/LBC

Site: Novello Theatre 5 Aldwych WC2B 4LD

Proposal: Refurbishment of existing stage lantern (smoke vent) set on the roof of the theatre fly tower.

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 the Novello Theatre. It seeks to undertake refurbishment of the theatre's stage lantern.

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

The lantern is located to the top of the fly tower. It is a common feature of historic theatres which serves a functional safety purpose as a smoke vent to direct smoke upwards in the event of a fire on the stage which allows for clearer and safer evacuation of the auditorium with less risk of smoke inhalation. It consists of a glazed structure which automatically opens in the event of fire or rising heat and smoke.

The rationale for refurbishment is that the lantern has reached the end of its life and needs replacing in order to remain functional and to meet safety standards. Photographs have been provided showing deterioration of the frames, but there is also damage from previous water ingress and sealing to prevent this has affected function.

Whilst a historic feature, we concur with the applicant that the lantern itself is of low significance. The works to repair and replacement works will replicate the existing design, therefore impact in heritage terms will be neutral. However, there is public benefit in ensuring the safe operation of the theatre and its ongoing 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

Theatres Trust

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