

Ref.: TC

9 September 2025

Alison Dean  
Flintshire County Council  
County Hall  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 6NF

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

**Application:** FUL/000652/25

**Site:** Hawkesbury Little Theatre, Mill Lane, Buckley, CH7 3HB

**Proposal:** Temporary structure; for the dressing/changing rooms for theatre temporary toilets

## **Remit:**

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)

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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

## **Comment:**

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for planning permission at Hawkesbury Little Theatre. It seeks to install a marquee on a temporary basis between 21<sup>st</sup> November and 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to provide dressing room facilities and toilets.

Hawkesbury Little Theatre is a small community theatre run by the Buckley Theatre Club, a local amateur dramatics society. It opened in 1984 with improvements being made to the building following a long-term lease being signed in 2001. The theatre hosts the club's annual productions including a pantomime, along with rehearsals and other social activities. It is a valuable cultural and social asset for the town, providing opportunities for local people to come together and volunteer and participate in theatre and the arts. This is beneficial for the social and cultural wellbeing, helping to reduce isolation and allowing people to develop new skills.

The small nature of this theatre means that its facilities are constrained. For a number of years it has utilised a portable structure as dressing rooms under a series of temporary permissions. There is a longer-term ambition to provide permanent dressing rooms and a larger stage to meet the club's needs; there was an application for planning permission on that basis in 2024 which was subsequently withdrawn. Sufficient dressing rooms are essential in keeping the theatre functioning, moreover there is additional need where children and young people are performing for reasons of safeguarding.

This proposal is for a marquee on a very short-term basis. Whilst this will generate some impact on the setting of Grade II listed Hawkesbury Hall, this is a fully reversible intervention. That harm must also be balanced against the wider public benefits for the town of supporting the theatre's activities which enhance social and cultural well-being of those associated with it. We consider that to provide sufficient mitigation in heritage terms, not least that the principle of structures at this location has been long accepted.

We note there is an objection to this proposal on the basis of harm to amenity and living conditions at the neighbouring property. As noted above, this theatre opened in 1984 and structures to provide additional dressing rooms have been in place for over twenty years going back to 2004. We believe the property was not occupied until 2015 or later, therefore the theatre as a source of noise, light and impact on visual amenity should have been recognised prior to occupancy. The letter of 26 May 2017 from the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs titled 'Supporting the

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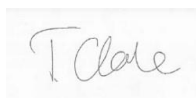
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Night Time Economy and the Agent of Change Principle' made clear that local planning authorities should apply the 'agent of change' principle in decision making with immediate effect at that point. Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (2024) states the agent of change principle will be a guiding principle for supporting the evening economy. Unless a materially new function was being introduced, which is not the case, impact on amenity and living conditions must be disregarded as a reason to refuse temporary permission.

This is a necessary temporary installation to support the theatre's activities and offer for local people, therefore we support the granting of temporary planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this further.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

Planning Advice Manager

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