

Ref.: TC/3874

12 December 2025

Rory Hillman

By e-mail: developmentcontrol@derby.gov.uk

Application: 25/01723/LBA

Site: Guildhall Theatre Market Place Derby DE1 3AE

Proposal: Removal of all auditorium and balcony seats to storage, modern, raked flooring and trial paint works to floor void, internal modern stud work, stepped access to auditorium, bar furniture, partitions and external steel beams, investigation of wall construction and temporary removal of a window and temporary installation of a high-level, scaffold and crash deck in the auditorium, ceiling paint analysis and consolidation 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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent. It seeks to remove internal fixtures including seating, raked flooring and various modern installations in order to allow investigative works and paint analysis along with installation of associated scaffolding and crash-decks.

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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The Guildhall has been closed since 2019 following extensive damage and deterioration to the building and its fabric being uncovered during ceiling restoration works. The Guildhall is a Grade II listed designated heritage asset and an important theatre for Derby, therefore we are keen to see its return to use. We have engaged with the council since closure, and were engaged on options presented for the Guildhall earlier this year.

On that basis we are supportive of efforts to progress the Guildhall's restoration and repair. An element of this listed building consent relates to removals which will enable investigative works to commence. This includes the removal of a timber sash window to the north-east end of the front elevation to enable access. The window frame/sashes and glazing will be securely packed away, labelled and stored for which is there a written methodology within the Heritage Statement. We support this approach. We suggest inclusion of a condition to formally manage this.

Similarly the raked floor within the auditorium and seating at stalls and balcony levels will also be removed to enable access to the floor void. These will also be stored for future re-use, although these are more modern installations and so are of lesser sensitivity. Modern studwork and partitions along with bar furniture will be removed to enable investigation of floor construction. These features do not positively contribute to character and significance, therefore damage being made good through lime and traditional materials is a heritage benefit.

In order to undertake the core investigative work including paint analysis there will be scaffolding and crash-decks erected within the volume of the auditorium. This will provide safe and effective access. By nature this is a temporary and reversible intervention.

Further to these works, there will also be external cleaning of stonework and brickwork. Given the sensitivity of this building and its fabric it should be ensured that suitable qualified and specialist contractors are engaged, this might also be managed by condition.

In heritage terms these interventions largely generate neutral or some minor positive impact, although overall because they enable the inspections and analysis necessary for progression of full repair and restoration there is substantial public benefit. Ultimately the ongoing conservation of this asset and returning it to use must be prioritised.

We therefore support the granting of listed building consent.

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

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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