

Theatres fit for the **future**

Theatres
Trust

Ref.: TC/3798

14 January 2026

Michael Tucker
Directorate of Place
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove
BN3 3BQ

By e-mail: planning.consultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Application: BH2025/02901

Site: Brighton Hove And Sussex Sixth Form College 205 Dyke Road Hove BN3 6EG

Proposal: Installation of an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with associated works including lighting, access ramps, hard surfacing and a storage container.

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'.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

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Comment:

This application for planning permission has been brought to the attention of Theatres Trust. The proposed development seeks installation of an AGP and MUGA with related infrastructure at Brighton & Hove Sixth Form College. The reason for our comment is that the neighbouring site contains Brighton Open Air Theatre, which would be impacted by this development.

Brighton Open Air Theatre (BOAT) operates during summer months and has become an important part of Brighton's cultural offer. It supports the social and cultural wellbeing of local people, as well as bringing visitors into the area which boosts the local economy. It is run by a charitable trust and supports both local and national touring acts. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF (2024) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature, and to guard against unnecessary loss.

BOAT's programme runs from early May until mid-late September. Predominantly these its shows are at weekends, with some midweek evening performances as well as midweek daytime shows which occur largely during school holidays. As such, there is little conflict with existing activities on the sports field of the Sixth Form College.

We are keen to support healthy and active lives and have no objection to the expansion and enhancement of the Sixth Form College's sporting infrastructure. However, it is clear from the hours set out in the Community Use Agreement that use of the pitches is intended to extend outside of educational hours into the evening and during holidays. Much of the theatre's programme would be impacted to a greater or lesser extent; it appears that only Saturday evening and Sunday shows would be unaffected. Policy DM40.a of the Brighton & Hove City Plan Part 2 seeks demonstration that proposed uses will not compromise the current or future operation of existing uses. This corresponds with paragraph 200 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities, with an onus on applicants to provide suitable mitigation.

Paragraph 5.43 of the applicant's Planning Statement makes reference to concerns from BOAT and there being a desire by the applicant to avoid conflicts. We welcome that principle and are keen to help broker an outcome acceptable to all parties. Presently though, the information within the application including stated operating hours suggest conflict would occur. The proposed AGP and MUGA will be around 50m from the theatre. It is inevitable there will be disruption of shows by noise

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coming from the new sports facilities. However, the Noise Impact Assessment and Noise Management Plan are silent on impacts on the theatre.

If shows are disrupted the theatre will lose audiences and promoters will be unwilling to bring their shows to the venue.

Policy CP5 of Brighton & Hove City Plan Part 1 (2016) states the council will work with partners to maintain and enhance the cultural offer of the city to benefit residents and visitors. Further, it will support the role of the arts with a range of high quality facilities, spaces, events and experiences. This proposal in its current form would undermine that objective, and threaten the continuation of a valued cultural facility which has an offer distinct from those of other venues in the area. Part 4 of that policy protects existing arts and performance venues.

It appears from the existing and proposed site plans, as well as from a satellite image of the site, that there will be a general re-design of provision and layout on this sports field. We suggest there may be opportunity for an alternative site layout, whereby the proposed AGP and MUGA are relocated to the opposite side of the site which would provide more of a buffer. Alternatively, operating hours could be reduced from those currently stated to ensure there would be no conflict with performances. This would need to be managed by condition. Potentially there could be some additional flexibility in agreement with the theatre following release of their programme. Again, we can work with the council and respective parties in drafting an appropriate planning condition.

We object to the granting of planning permission in this application's current form, but we anticipate this position could be reversed with revisions or conditions as we have suggested.

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 Manager

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