

Ref.: TC

31 March 2026

Emma Sprowell  
Pembrokeshire County Council  
County Hall  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1TP

**Application:** 25/0829/PA

**Site:** Shire Hall, High Street, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 2BN

**Proposal:** Material change of use of part of the building from a former court room to a theatre (SuiGeneris Use Class)

**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'. Theatres Trust is a statutory consultee in the planning system and local planning authorities in Wales are required to consult Theatres 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. It seeks change of use to a theatre within the former court room at Shire Hall in Haverfordwest.

Shire Hall is a Grade II\* listed heritage asset. This part of the building has been vacant since 2002. The principle of returning it to use is supported, and we consider that a theatre could constitute a sensitive and compatible re-use. There are other examples of theatres utilising former court rooms, for example Spilsby Theatre in Lincolnshire. This is a sustainable town centre location, and theatre use would support the function and vitality of the centre.

This application covers the principle of use rather than heritage impact which would need to be managed through a corresponding application for listed building consent.

There is an existing theatre in Haverfordwest – the Merlin – at Pembrokeshire College. The supporting documents for this application provide no indication of the intended function, programme or capacity for this venue; it should be ensured that this complements rather than competes with the existing theatre to ensure Haverfordwest's cultural offer is strengthened rather than undermined. It should also be ensured this venue has sufficient supporting infrastructure, for example front and back of house facilities and appropriate means of get-in for sets and equipment. We would encourage engagement with us at an early stage as Theatres Trust is a source of objective advice on theatre use.

We support the granting of planning permission for change of use.

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



Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Manager

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