

Ref.: TC/1763

20 May 2026

Harry Coleman
Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1DN

By e-mail: planning@dacorum.gov.uk

Application: 26/00934/LBC

Site: Arts Centre Old Town Hall High Street Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP1 3AE

Proposal: Loft insulation

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:

This application for listed building consent has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking alteration at The Old Town Hall, specifically for the installation of insulation within the building's loft space.

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, Louisa Harris, Mark Johnston, Adam Knight, Tracy Ann Oberman MBE, Lucy Osborne, Saratha Rajeswaran, 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

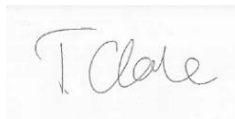
The Old Town Hall was originally built in 1852 and formed a corn exchange following later extension. In common with various other former corn exchanges it was fully converted to performance use in 1978, although in this instance there has been a theatre at the site since the 1850s within what was a ballroom fitted with tiered seating. Restored original playbills are displayed. The Old Town Hall functions as an arts centre and is a popular and valued cultural facility serving Hemel Hempstead and its wider catchment. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF (2024) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this. It is also a designated heritage asset located within the Hemel Hempstead Old Town Conservation Area.

As is common with older buildings this venue has issues with heat loss. It is therefore proposed that insulation will be laid across almost the entirety of the loft space using mineral wool at a thickness of 350mm. Decking providing an access walkway will be lifted and re-laid. There will also be some very minor alteration for draught sealing of access hatches, and removal of a ventilation dome and flue (the dome and flue being packaged and retained).

The proposed alterations/removals to deliver this are quite minor, constituting a low degree of less than substantial harm. However, with reference to paragraph 215 of the NPPF we consider this to be outweighed by the public benefits of improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of the venue. Paragraph 161 of the NPPF seeks the planning system to support the transition to net zero by 2050. Paragraph 167 gives significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency.

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 this representation in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI
National Planning Manager

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