

Ref.: TC/116

12 June 2026

Laura Neale
Development Control
Communities and Place
The Council House
Corporation Street
Derby
DE1 2FS

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

Application: 26/00646/FUL

Site: Derby Theatre 15 Theatre Walk Derby DE1 2NF

Proposal: Extension to theatre comprising studio theatre and associated ancillary and support space, including rehearsal room for use as a teaching performance and events space, back of house spaces, additional dressing rooms, office space and stage door. Minor amendments to the existing Derby Theatre.

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@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

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Comment:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for planning permission at Derby Theatre. It seeks to construct an extension to the theatre along with some alteration to the existing building.

Derby Theatre opened in 1975 as the Derby Playhouse, built as part of the Derbion Shopping Centre. It was designed by noted architect Roderick Ham; his other theatre work included the Thorndike in Leatherhead and Ipswich's New Wolsey. Derby Theatre has two performance spaces, a main auditorium with 531 seats and a smaller 110 seat studio. Our database describes it as being one of the best single-tier theatres in the UK. After a brief period of closure following its operator going into administration it was taken on by the University of Derby initially in partnership with the City Council. At that point it was renamed. Its programme includes university productions and professional touring along with learning and community activities. Since 2012 it has been run entirely by the university. It is an important theatre and cultural venue for the city. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF (2024) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

We welcome plans to invest in this theatre and expand its facilities.

Other than new openings to link to the proposed extension, the alterations to the existing theatre are relatively modest. At ground floor there is minor alteration to the lobby/staircase with the existing opening/exit blocked up and an internal doorway slightly relocated. Two dressing rooms will be sub-divided and shrunk in order to provide access to/from the extension. On the first floor what is currently three dressing rooms and an office will instead become front of house space with two WCs (one of which will be accessible) and an opening to the foyer of the new block. These seem to be sensible changes which will support and enhance the overall operation of the expanded facility. There is no overall loss of facilities because what is being removed from the existing building is being re-provided within the extension.

Within the new-build block, at ground floor there is a replacement office (which appears to be of improved layout) with two re-provided dressing rooms both of which are en-suite and one is accessible. This means that the facilities and flexibility for performers are enhanced, and better inclusivity and accessibility is a welcome benefit. Whilst there was a stated ambition of increasing numbers of dressing rooms, other than the addition of a quick-change facility for the new studio this has not been achieved although facilities are better than existed previously. There is both a

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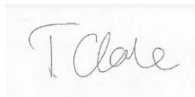
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general lift and a get-in lift located towards the stage door, making this block accessible with efficient means of handling shows and equipment coming in and out.

At first floor level is the new studio theatre (approximately 100 seats depending on format) with a linear foyer linking from the original building. There is further back of house provision. At third floor is a rehearsal room with an accessible WC. This will further enhance Derby Theatre's offer and flexibility, which in turn supports the city's offer. Policy CP14 of the Derby City Local Plan - Part 1 Core Strategy (January 2017) commits to elevating Derby's identity and reputation as a cultural and leisure destination including encouraging new development that will enhance the quality of the City's offer and visitor experience, increase visitor numbers and increase participation in cultural and leisure activities by Derby's residents. This proposal contributes to that objective.

We are supportive of the external design approach to the new extension.

On that basis we support the granting of planning permission. We look forward to this scheme progressing. Please continue to engage with us should plans be subsequently revised, and contact us if we may be of further assistance.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Manager

Theatres Trust

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