

Theatres fit for the **future**



Ref.: TC/1098

18 June 2026

Catherine Bond
Regeneration & Planning
Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
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WC1H 9JE

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

Application: 2026/2018/L

Site: St Martin's Theatre 10-18 West Street London WC2H 9NZ

Proposal: Internal refurbishment and upgrading of internal bars and front-of-house areas.

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 listed building consent at St Martin's Theatre. It seeks to undertake internal alteration and refurbishment within front of house areas.

St Martin's Theatre is a Grade II listed heritage asset within the West End's 'Theatreland' cluster. It opened in 1916; it was originally designed by renowned theatre architect W. G. R Sprague as a companion building and intended to have opened with the adjacent Ambassador's Theatre but this was affected by World War I. Our database describes this theatre as being of more 'Georgian' plainer interior style than the exuberant plasterwork typified by other theatres of the era. Since 1974 it has been the home of 'Mousetrap', the world's longest running play.

There are changes proposed within the bars serving the stalls, dress circle and upper circle, and the addition of a bar within the foyer along with associated services. As is common within West End theatres and those elsewhere, the existing bars have been previously altered to varying degrees and contain elements such as bar tops which are non-original and of no significance.

The foyer bar as a new installation will cause a degree of less than substantial harm in heritage terms because it will change the layout of the entry foyer and the way it is experienced, and requires insertions into historic fabric to provide the servicing (utilities) it needs. However, with reference to paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024) we consider this is mitigated by the public benefits of improving the audience experience and relieving pressure on existing bars. The bar is reversible, and a heritage-led approach has been taken in retaining and integrating the existing radiator cover to the side wall and re-purposing the wooden cabinet above for drinks storage and display. The design of the bar front and counter is sensitive to the materials and palette of the wider foyer.

Within the stalls bar the existing back bar will be retained and a non-original mirror will be replaced. New lighting will be installed, which can be considered a heritage benefit because this will help highlight features of significance. The bar counters are non-original as is the case for flooring and the decorative scheme. This affords scope for renewal; we consider the proposed design to enhance the experience of audiences. This is similarly the case for the Dress Circle bar, where the scheme is inspired by a historic railway carriage which links to the theatre's long-standing production.

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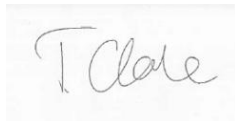
The upper circle bar is currently of little significance, this will also be renewed to reflect the Mousetrap production.

Within the Royal Box there will be a change of palette through an alternative wallpaper and new carpets, plus additional lighting sconces and lighting pendant. These interventions are reversible and do not impact on significance.

Alongside those works, this application seeks to undertake general refurbishments to make good deterioration and areas of damage arising from the venue's continuous use. This is understandable given it has been some time since the previous scheme of maintenance. These do not negatively impact historic fabric, and in fact contributes towards the building's ongoing conservation, and are therefore supported.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

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

Theatres Trust

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