

Ref.: TC/160

15 September 2026

Ashleigh Gade
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 0FR

By e-mail: planning@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Application: 26/00700/FUL

Site: Concordia Theatre Stockwell Head Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1RE

Proposal: Planning and conservation area consent sought for the refurbishment and remodelling of the Hinckley Concordia Theatre building complex including 254m² nett new floor area. Upward extension and rearward expansion of stagehouse, new external ambulatories and fire escapes, main building roof (with pv) replacement, remodelled gable end facade, removal of render to expose brickwork and replacement of windows to Stockwell Head building. Enhanced public realm including new public forecourt space and site wide accessibility improvements.

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:

This application for planning permission came to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking refurbishment, alterations and extension of the Concordia Theatre. We met with the applicant and their team at an earlier stage of design, at which time we provided advice and feedback on the proposed development as well as other matters.

The Concordia Theatre opened in 1969, repurposing a former hosiery factory which had been vacant since the end of World War II around twenty-five years earlier. It was converted following fundraising by local amateur groups and a large donation by a local benefactor. Works included extension to provide a fly tower. It is owned and operated by a local trust and staffed by volunteers. The theatre is well-equipped with a main auditorium of around 400 seats along with separate bar and café, a studio, rehearsal rooms and a workshop. It hosts a variety of productions by local groups and some touring shows. It is a valued community, social and cultural asset for Hinckley and its surrounding areas.

Despite its value and popularity, the Concordia has some challenges which are the primary drivers behind this project. The building is in need of maintenance and refurbishment, something that was already noted back in 2011 within the adopted Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan. That document stated the theatre was “in need of modernisation and improvements to public facilities, including the public realm around the theatre area”. Additionally, front of house accessibility is sub-optimal and it is not accessible back of house. There is an opportunity to enhance the venue’s prominence and to make it more of a destination throughout the day.

Whilst this scheme includes extensions to the building and other external alterations which necessitates a planning consent, much of the change also consists of internal alterations. We have provided commentary on both elements.

There is relatively little change at basement level. Internally there will be some sub-division to create a new enclosure for an additional air handling unit with an associated new opening for air intake. This is entirely a back of house servicing area and will therefore have little impact on theatre operation or the way the building is experienced, but additional air handling will enhance the comfort of audiences, performers and staff. To the eastern end of the basement will be a modest extension which facilitates a back of house lift, making those areas at upper levels (including the stage) accessible for the first time. This is a significant public benefit, enhancing the Concordia’s inclusivity.

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Externally at ground floor level there will be landscaping works which will enhance the public realm around the theatre and create an enhanced and more welcoming sense of arrival by removing the current fencing and inserting new planting and shared surface paving. There will be a new refuse enclosure outside of the workshop building, which we consider to be of low impact in terms of visual amenity.

There will be modest extensions to the back of house, both along the eastern end (currently functioning as a corridor) and to the south (beyond existing WCs). The rear (east) extension allows for a new dressing room, wider circulation and the back of house lift referenced above. The southern extension will have re-located replacement WCs, enabling internal rearrangement to provide a back of house accessible WC and shower and the sub-division of an existing large dressing room each of which will also have a shower. This means the number of dressing rooms will increase from three to five meaning there is greater flexibility. There is also benefit in improving the theatre's reputation amongst performers which in turn will help it to retain and attract new shows. This area will function much better operationally with additional space and wider corridors.

To the front of house will be a small extension which will host a box office and draught lobby. Some thought should be given to the longevity of that function given increasing digital ticketing, and whether this space would be adaptable in future for a general reception/welcome desk or other front or back of house function.

To the first floor the eastern extension provides a better backstage cross-over and gathering space. As already mentioned, the stage becoming accessible is a significant benefit. There will be internal changes to front of house areas. The side extension above the flat roof area next to existing WCs facilitates a new ramped entry into the auditorium, which then allows for additional wheelchair spaces. As well as extra numbers they will be in a mix of positions which closer reflects best practice than is currently the case. There is a new accessible WC.

The existing female WC block is relocated up a level to where there is currently an office, with a gain of an extra cubicle which is beneficial. As these are located directly along the wall of the auditorium it will need to be ensured there is appropriate acoustic insulation and service routes to ensure performances are not disturbed by flushing and drainage, so this element may require additional consideration.

The auditorium will be refurbished with new seating arrangement, which again we welcome as it will help enhance the experience of audiences.

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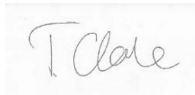
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The fly tower will be extended upwards with re-cladding to that and surrounding areas. We are supportive of this design approach which we consider will enhance the theatre's prominence whilst not being detrimental to the character and setting of the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area. We welcome the roof will include integrated PV cells, which along with greater thermal efficiency of the building will improve efficiency and reduce operating costs. Policy CC2.2 of the NPPF (2026) gives substantial weight to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings including through the use of solar panels.

Policy HC4 of the NPPF also affords substantial weight where improved public service infrastructure or community facilities would be provided, and where development proposals would make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting supporting social interaction in the local community. Policy 2 of the Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan (2011) seeks continued improvement to the facilities at the Concordia Theatre. We consider that this scheme is consistent with those policies and will deliver on the overall project brief. The extensions to the theatre are relatively modest, but facilitate significant operational, audience and accessibility benefits.

We welcome investment into the Concordia and support the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or if you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Manager

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