

Ref.: TC/917

8 October 2026

Matthew Sheahan
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
Town Hall
Castlefield Road
Reigate
Surrey
RH2 0SH

By e-mail: planning.applications@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

Application: 26/01476/F

Site: Harlequin Theatre 16 London Road Redhill Surrey RH1 1NN

Proposal: Refurbishment and upgrading of Harlequin theatre including removal and replacement of roof covering, new MEP plant to the upper & lower roof, replacement of mansafe system with safety handrails, removal of penthouse to main roof, replacement of glazing over triangular stair bay window to dormer roof detail and associated works. As amended on 15/09/2026.

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 has been brought to the attention of Theatres Trust because it seeks development at the Harlequin Theatre. We have not been formally notified despite this falling within our statutory remit outlined above.

The Harlequin is a multi-purpose theatre and arts venue. Designed as a cultural hub, the venue comprises a theatre, cinema, meeting rooms, a café and exhibition space. The theatre auditorium is flat floored with retractable tiered seating, providing flexibility for the venue to host a wide range of live performance events. It also has an orchestra pit that can accommodate 30 musicians, and backstage accommodation for up to 40 performers. It has undergone several refurbishments since opening in 1986. It is an important and highly valued facility which positively contributes to the social and cultural well-being of local people.

The venue has been closed since 2023 following the discovery of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). Without significant remediation or removal of the RAAC panelling, the Harlequin must remain closed. It was on that basis that the venue was added to our national Theatres at Risk Register. We have met with the council and engaged since the time of closure. We are keen to see the Harlequin safely brought back to active use at the earliest opportunity, and welcome that efforts are progressing through this application to facilitate that.

Whilst there will be full removal of the existing problematic RAAC and associated structures and coverings and for these to be replaced, much of this is internal and sits outside of the direct scope of this application. This proposal facilitates that essential project to take place and therefore is welcomed and supported in principle. A planning consent is needed because alongside a new roof covering and some additional build-up there will additionally be replacement and installation of new plant, upgrading of the mansafe system to meet modern standards, removal of a 'penthouse' structure to the roof and the replacement of glazing to the existing stair bay window.

These interventions are considered low impact in terms of effect on wider character and setting. They are necessary to be able to bring the venue back to use, which constitutes a substantial public benefit. Similarly, replacement plant will be more efficient which will reduce operating costs and ensuring safe working conditions for maintenance and inspections is to be supported.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

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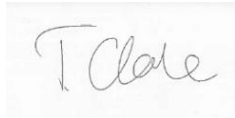
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Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Manager

Theatres Trust

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