

PD13871:PJB/JH

email: [tim.miles@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:tim.miles@montagu-evans.co.uk)  
[james.huish@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:james.huish@montagu-evans.co.uk)

4 April 2023

Camden Council  
Planning – Development Control  
Camden Town Hall  
London  
WC1H 8ND**FAO Catherine Bond****PLANNING PORTAL REF. PP-11406273****AMBASSADORS THEATRE, WEST STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9ND  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED); PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND  
CONSERVATION AREAS ACT) 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT**

Dear Sir / Madam,

On behalf of our client, Ambassador Theatre Group (“the Applicant” or “ATG”), please find enclosed an application (“the / this Application”) for full planning permission and listed building consent at the Ambassadors Theatre, West Street, London, WC2H (“the Site” / “the Building”).

The description of development for these proposals (“the Proposed Development”) is as follows:

*“Alterations to existing entrance door on Tower Court elevation with new matching marble central infill sloped to accessible gradient.”*

This Application is linked to the wider works for the refurbishment and restoration of the listed building to improve accessibility and functionality of the theatre. The purpose of this Application is to provide a revised design for the marble step to enable disabled access. The proposals have been discussed in detail with planning officers at the London Borough of Camden (LBC) prior to submission.

**BACKGROUND TO THE SITE AND PROPOSALS**

The Site is located within the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Camden (“LBC”), on its southern extremity, adjacent to the boundary with Westminster.

The Site comprises The Ambassadors Theatre, which is a Grade II listed building built in 1913 and located within the Seven Dials Conservation Area. The Site is located within Central London, on the corner of West Street and Tower Court.

The lawful use of the property is as a theatre (sui generis). A full description of both the external and internal parts of the building is set out in more detail within the Design and Access Statement and the previous Heritage Statement provided with the October 2022 schemes, which secured various works of refurbishment (refs. 2022/3105/P & 2022/3599/L).

As noted above, the existing theatre suffers from considerable issues with inaccessibility and the venue needs to improve access into the building from the street. Currently, there is no formal disabled access for wheelchair users, without the use of a temporary ramp. The existing marble step (see **Appendix 1** for photographs) is cracked and broken.

[Adaptation of the Marble Strip](#)

The listed building consent was subject to a condition requiring:

*“The marble threshold strip outside the wheelchair accessible entrance doors fronting onto West Street shall be repaired and adapted.”*

The Applicant has been working with a marble specialist (Zanetti & Company Ltd) to understand how the existing threshold strip can be adapted in accordance with the above condition.

However, the marble specialist has confirmed that a gradient cannot be introduced to the existing marble by physical adaptation as this will reduce its thickness and integrity to a point that it will simply break apart.

The marble threshold sits on a solid footing and such a solution would effectively require grinding the threshold so it is a few millimeters thick at the interface with the pavement which is not feasible. It is also not possible to reangle all three pieces by setting them into the ground.

The door pivot hinge plates are recessed in the marble cill - tilting the cill to an angle will require re-working the cill further to allow for the plates to sit vertically in line with the door leaves, which will be challenging given that the existing cill is cracked in these exact locations.

We have also explored an alternative temporary ramp, but this is not feasible as this would project onto the pavement/highway.

## **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development involves the adaptation of the existing marble cill to provide a suitable disabled access.

For the above reasons, an alternative approach is required, which involves the adaptation of the threshold strip such that it retains the two side edges and replaces the central section with a piece at the correct gradient for wheelchair access. This is required to be flush with the pavement - to a width that is at least equivalent to that of a wheelchair.

This is the only feasible way of providing wheelchair access on the basis of expert advice on working with marble, and the only practical way of providing disabled access without the complete replacement of the threshold.

The proposed works are set out in the drawing, ref. 700\_D. This identifies that:

- New matching marble central infill, sloped to accessible gradient, replacing existing cracked section;
- Parts of the existing marble cill are to be retained and repaired;
- Existing ironmongery to be retained;
- Existing timber doors unaffected;
- Reinstatement of matching marble cill to front left to replace existing broken cill.

A letter from the marble experts is also submitted with this Application, setting out that adaptation is not a viable option.

## **PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with policies of the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise and Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The statutory Development Plan comprises:

- The London Plan (March 2021); and
- Camden Local Plan (July 2017).

As noted above, the Site is situated within the Seven Dials Conservation Area and is also a Grade II listed building. The Policies Map also notes that the Site is within an Archaeological Priority Area and the Central Activities Zone (CAZ).

The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (2021) sets the Government’s policy approach to town planning, together with the National Planning Practice Guidance, both of which are material considerations in the assessment of these proposals, together with the various Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents prepared by LBC and the Mayor of London.

There is currently no emerging planning policy of relevance.

## ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

Local Plan Policy C3 (Cultural and Leisure Facilities) seeks to protect such uses and manage their impacts. The existing building provides a theatre within Central London, an important use contributing to Seven Dials and wider ‘theatreland’.

The proposed works seeks to alter the existing threshold to provide accessibility for disabled patrons, staff and other visitors to the building. This further increases accessibility and ensuring that the theatre is available to all, removing barriers of access. The principle of the works, should therefore be supported, in relation to Policy C3 and all other development plan policies relating to the aims and objectives of ensuring a successful theatre in Central London.

### Design and Heritage

The principal significance of the listed building comes from its evidential interest in that the building conveys the historic and present use as a theatre on the site, plus the historic interest as a building which was designed as a theatre and continues in its original use.

The benefits of the proposed works are entwined with those already consented under the October 2022 permissions through the creation of enhanced access (and circulation) into and through the theatre, for all visitors/users.

These works were previously proposed under the October 2022, but officers raised concern over the loss of historic fabric, instead requiring the works to be limited to repair and adaptation. Since this time, the Applicant has been exploring the options for retention but not been able to find a viable alternative. It is therefore proposed to remove part of the historic fabric and replace with a matching marble piece, whilst seeking to retain as much of the remainder of the step as possible.

Although the works would involve the loss of some historic fabric, this is relatively minimal and would enable the building to become fully accessible to wheelchair users. This is the minimum level of alteration is considered proportionate to enable access to the theatre and remove a current barrier to people enjoying this space.

Should the local authority find harm in these proposals, this would be at the very lowest level of less than substantial harm. Under paragraph 202 of the NPPF, this is decisively outweighed by the accessibility benefits of the scheme.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

We would be grateful if LBC could confirm that our Applications are complete and will be validated shortly.

This Application is formed of the following documents:

1. Completed Application Form (with Ownership Certificates);
2. This Cover Letter prepared by Montagu Evans;
3. Site Location Plan (1:1250);
4. Site Plan;
5. Drawing identifying existing location of step;
6. 2201-5-690 - Existing Front Door Cill Drawing, prepared by Citizen Design Bureau (“CDB”)
7. 2201-5-700\_D - Proposed Front Door Cill Drawing;
8. Letter from Zanetti & Co Ltd, re: marble, dated 31 January 2023.

There is no application fee associated with an application for listed building consent.



This Application is submitted alongside a separate application to remove the relevant condition on listed building consent, ref. 2022/3599/L, pursuant to pre-application advice from the LBC.

In the meantime, should any further clarification, information or assistance be required, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Miles ([tim.miles@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:tim.miles@montagu-evans.co.uk) / 07818 012 444) or James Huish ([james.huish@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:james.huish@montagu-evans.co.uk) / 020 7312 7484) at this office in the first instance.

Yours faithfully,

MONTAGU EVANS LLP

**MONTAGU EVANS LLP**

Enc.

APPENDIX 1 – PHOTO OF EXISTING ENTRANCE AND MARBLE STEP





