

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



Ref.: TC/1097

25 April 2023

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

Application: 2023/0992/P & 2023/1423/L

Site: Ambassadors Theatre West Street London WC2H 9ND

Proposal: Various internal and external alterations comprising waterproofing and strengthening works at Stage and Sub-Stage level to Boiler Room, Prep Room and front West Street passage.

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'.

Comment:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on these applications for planning permission and listed building consent at Ambassadors Theatre. They are related to recent previous applications at the theatre on which the Trust has already commented, and seek to undertake structural remedial and waterproofing works along with removal of boilers within the Boiler Room to the sub-stage level.

A number of deficiencies had been identified whilst refurbishment works at the theatre were being undertaken. These were detailed in the previous application submitted in December 2022 and consent was granted for waterproofing and strengthening works around the stalls along with repairs to the roof. Further to those, this proposal will see similar waterproofing works carried out to the Boiler Room, Prep Room and West Street Passage due to the structure being compromised.

Within the Prop Room there has been corrosion to the steel beams arising from water ingress and lack of ventilation which has compromised structural integrity. Therefore remedial works will be carried out to install new steel beams below existing ones to take on the load and support. Similarly there has been corrosion to the beams along the West Street passage which runs along the theatre's front elevation underneath the pavement. Here there will also be new shallow steel beams installed below existing ones. To improve ventilation and reduce moisture new cast iron vent blocks will be installed to replace existing pavement glass blocks. There is a clear need for these works to proceed to ensure the ongoing conservation and safe operation of the theatre so these approaches are supported.

The overall refurbishment project for the theatre included improved sustainability through new heating and ventilation. This has left the existing gas boilers redundant. It is therefore proposed that they are removed. Currently there is no safe means of escape from the sub-stage level and accessing for adequate maintenance is challenging. Removal of the boiler will create additional usable space and allow for a new escape route through a new opening to an existing brick arch. This provides a public benefit through enhanced safety and working conditions. Removal of the gas boiler and mains also improves safety and reduces overall risk. We similarly support this intervention.

Overall we consider the applicant's approach to be appropriate and proportionate, and we recommend the granting of planning permission and listed building consent for these works.

Protecting theatres
for **everyone**



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 Adviser