

Theatres fit for
the **future**



Ref.: TC

22 May 2024

David Fowler
Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

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

Application: 2024/1444/P

Site: 125 Shaftesbury Avenue London WC2H 8AD

Proposal: Use of the existing ground floor entrance, first to fourth floors and ninth floor of 125 Shaftesbury Avenue as immersive theatre space, and ancillary events space (sui generis) for a temporary period between 1 September 2024 to 30 September 2025.

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@theatrust.org.uk **Website** theatrust.org.uk **Twitter** @TheatresTrust

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Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

Director Jon Morgan

Trustees James Dacre, Suba Das, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Lucy Osborne, Truda Spruyt, Katie Town

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with the Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

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Comment:

This application for temporary planning permission has been brought to our attention by the applicant. It seeks change of use to an immersive theatre and events space to facilitate You Me Bum Bum Train (YMBBT) between September 2024 and September 2025.

YMBBT is an interactive and immersive show which first performed in 2004. It returned to London in 2010 when, similar to this proposal, it utilised a vacant office building. In 2011 it was held in a former Post Office depot and in 2012 it utilised another office building in Stratford which was built on the site of a former theatre. The most recent run in London was in a former bookshop a short distance from this site on Charing Cross Road. The show has previously been very popular with high critical acclaim.

Policy C3 of the Camden Local Plan (2017) supports the temporary use of vacant buildings for cultural and leisure activities. Policy SD7.7 of the London Plan (2021) supports flexibility for temporary/meanwhile uses of vacant properties, with Policy HC5 also encouraging meanwhile uses for cultural and creative activities. This site is a highly-accessible location within the Central Activities Zone and sits within the renowned 'Theatreland' cluster. As such, it is appropriate for such use and will further contribute to the strength and diversity of the theatre and cultural offer in this part of London which attracts many visitors to the city.

This proposal will utilise only part of the building, on upper levels. There appears to be provision of lifts which will ensure the production and other facilities are accessible. By its nature this production is transient, therefore any longer-term aspirations and policy considerations for the site would be unaffected. There is great merit in providing occupancy of this building in the interim.

We are therefore supportive of 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 Adviser

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