

Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/233222

28 June 2018

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Application: 2018/2628/P

Site: Building P2 King's Cross Central York Way London N1C 4UZ

Proposal: Reserved matters relating to Plot P2 within Development Zone P for the erection of a 12 storey building for office use (Class B1) with flexible retail (A1-A5) and theatre (Sui Generis) uses at ground floor, and public realm works to Handyside Street, Wollstonecraft Street and between the proposed building and the Gasholder Triplets. As required by conditions 6, 9, 10, 14, 16-22, 27, 28, 31, 33- 36, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50A, 51, 56, 60 and 64-67 of outline planning permission reference 2004/2307/P granted 22/12/06 (subject to S106 agreement) for a comprehensive, phased, mixed-use development of former railway lands within the King's Cross Opportunity Area..

Remit:

The 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:

The Trust **supports** the element of this application for approval of reserved matters relating to the provision of a new theatre within Building P2 as part of the wider Kings Cross redevelopment. We consider a theatre of this scale and flexibility to positively contribute to the overall mix of uses within the Kings Cross Opportunity Area, further improving its attractiveness and vitality as a place in which to live, visit and work. It will create a flexible space capable of hosting productions unsuitable for many of London's commercial theatres on this scale.

Theatres Trust

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Chair Tim Eyles **Director** Jon Morgan

Trustees Richard Baldwin, David Blyth, Pam Bone, Paul Cartwright, Paddy Dillon, Ruth Eastwood, David Ian, Richard Johnston, Gary Kemp, Dara Ó Briain, Simon Ricketts, Peter Roberts, Ann Skippers, Anna Stapleton

The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

In terms of internal layouts and operations, we are generally supportive of what has been proposed. We particularly welcome the space and accessibility afforded to the get-in and that it is enclosed and contained from public areas and the offices above. We also support the large foyer area and ground floor bar, which is conducive for utilisation outside of performances thus boosting the theatre's viability, as well as the flexible nature of the stage which provides scope for different show formats. Images within the supporting documentation suggest there will be some front entrance signage for the theatre, though we would recommend it is ensured that it is more prominent and visible from all angles.

We would advise though that the applicant may wish to consider additional toilets at Gallery level in order to avoid the need for patrons to descend two levels to the main toilet bank at Lower Ground/Upper Basement level. We would also suggest that the audience lift is made as large as possible to assist with circulation and flow, and for it to also serve as an evacuation lift in order to avoid the need for evacuation chairs if practical.

The back of house space looks to be restricted in terms of space, and we would encourage the applicant to ensure that at least one stage-level dressing room is wheelchair accessible and that an accessible shower and toilet is in place as this is not clearly shown on the plans. It has been stated that there will be disabled places at every level within the auditorium as well as full lift access for visitors, performers and staff; although this application lacks specific detail, with an "experienced theatre operator" in place we assume this will meet with best practice guidance as set out within Building Regulations and the Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment.

We would also recommend that it is ensured there is adequate acoustic isolation between the theatre and the offices above and beside (and vice versa). It is currently unclear from the drawings how this is to be achieved.

The sectional drawings of the theatre indicate a tight floor to ceiling height and it is recommended that this is thoroughly tested to ensure that there is sufficient height to deliver all necessary mechanical and electrical services, including adequate allowance for sprinkler heads if applicable.

We make no comment on the appropriateness of the office and retail element of this proposal as it is outside of the Trust's expertise, but on the basis of the proposed theatre we **recommend the approval of reserved matters** and will support under separate cover the amendments of Conditions 35(g) and 44 of permission 2004/2307/P to facilitate theatre use (Sui Generis).

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

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National Planning Adviser



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