

# Protecting theatres for everyone



Ref.: TC/2029

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**Application:** 2018/0575/P & 2017/7073/L

**Site:** The Shaftesbury Theatre, 210 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8DP

**Proposal:** Various alterations to theatre building (Sui Generis) including basement extensions, creation of new entrance fronting Princes Circus, installation of LED screens, alterations to canopy, external lighting to façade, replacement of plant at roof level, installation of pavement lights and delivery hatch as well as minor alterations to façade and doors.

## 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** this proposal for a basement extension and internal and external alterations at the Shaftesbury Theatre along with associated minor development.

The Trust actively encourages theatre owners and operators to invest in their buildings to maximise their potential, ensure they meet the needs and expectations of audiences and improve their future viability. This proposal addresses those objectives by enhancing the internal layout including additional toilets and improved bar areas, providing flexible meeting/function space for private hire and activating the new adjacent public realm to be created by forthcoming alterations and pedestrianisation of High Holborn. The latter two elements in particular will help diversify the theatre's sources of income and extend the building's public utilisation outside of performances.

## 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

The plans suggest the new basement extension will provide good height and volume of space and could generally withstand some reduction if a larger road build-up was required above, although in that scenario some thought may need to be given to the toilet space which appears to be tighter. We welcome the flexibility of the new meeting/function space as it can be sub-divided as required.

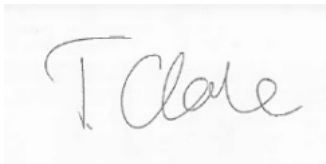
We welcome the increase in disabled seating capacity, but caution that a detailed fire strategy should be provided to ensure there would be an adequate means of evacuating disabled persons (especially from the basement level) as this is not obvious from the plans submitted.

Within the auditorium the central access within the stalls is not the optimal layout in terms of audience sight-lines or the preference of performers on stage, but we acknowledge it works in terms of retaining seating at a similar level to the present. Due to the separation of toilets and bars we would suggest that good internal signage is required to assist with wayfinding and ensure that bar income is not undermined.

We would recommend that flexibility for the space at ground floor level adjacent to the foyer is maintained to allow for the potential to convert this to an internal cafe space at a later time if required, especially during colder months when the proposed mobile provision outside may not be so attractive.

Overall we welcome these proposals and **recommend the granting of permission and listed building consent.**

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Tom Clarke  
National Planning Adviser