

**TWENTIETH  
CENTURY  
SOCIETY**



Gideon Whittingham  
Regeneration & Planning  
Development Management  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Sent by email: [Gideon.Whittingham@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Gideon.Whittingham@camden.gov.uk)

Friday 26 October 2018

Our ref: 18 10 05

Dear Gideon Whittingham,

**2017/7051/P & 2018/0037/L, Former Saville Theatre, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue LONDON WC2H 8AH**

The Twentieth Century Society has been notified of the above application. The application seeks permission and listed building consent for alterations and extensions for the former Saville Theatre to convert the building from a cinema to hotel and commercial premises. The Society's comments are set out below.

The Saville Theatre was built between 1930-1 to the designs of TP Bennett and Son. The Theatre was converted to an ABC Cinema in 1970, and last substantially altered in the early 2000s after ownership had transferred to the Odeon cinema chain. All substantial elements of the original Saville Theatre interior have been removed. The building's architectural and historic interest lies in the detailing to the external facades, predominantly the West façade. This West façade facing Shaftesbury Avenue and the return ends on St Giles Passage and Stacey Street feature a large frieze by Gilbert Bayes depicting Drama through the Ages. The former Saville Theatre is listed at Grade II.

The Society welcomes the retention of the Shaftesbury Avenue façade, but considers that a more sensitive approach be taken to ensure that new insertions into the original facades are sympathetic to the listed building. Our main concerns are the style of the proposed glazing for the entrance arched window, and the design of the entrance canopy. We consider the current phase of refurbishment to be a key opportunity to reinstate a window resembling the original glazing pattern, for which photographic evidence is available. The proposed large pane glass with metal mesh would be an inappropriate insertion, and would be harmful to the building's historic interest. We similarly consider the proposed metal canopy to the front entrance to be ill-fitting for a listed building with a high level of original decorative detail to its exterior.

We rarely call for the reinstatement of facsimile details to a historic building, however in this case we consider it appropriate for the original canopy, glazing to the entrance arch window and lamps to the main entrance to be replicated, as this will help to clearly distinguish the 1930-1 listed building from the proposed roof extension, and will enhance the building's historic interest without compromising the proposed internal plan. The Society considers the proposed roof extension to cause some harm to the listed building's historic interest, however

The Twentieth Century Society

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there is potential for this harm to be mitigated if the historic fabric of the building's exterior facades are treated carefully and sympathetically. Restoration where necessary to exterior features, particularly the Gilbert Bayes frieze, coupled with a sensitive approach to new additions, will enhance the historic interest of the Grade II listed former Saville Theatre, and will help to provide a clear distinction between the listed building and later phases of development.

We hope these suggestions can be implemented through conditions to listed building consent.

I trust that these comments are of use to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Twentieth Century Society

**Remit:** The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.

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