

Ref.: TC/2232

28 March 2024

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**Application:** 240288/DPP

**Site:** The Tivoli Theatre 34 - 48 Guild Street Aberdeen AB11 6NB

**Proposal:** Installation of external platform lift with associated works

**Remit:**

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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:**

This application for planning permission has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it seeks to install an external platform lift at the Tivoli Theatre. There is a

**Theatres Trust**

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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

corresponding application for listed building consent to which we have responded under separate cover.

The Tivoli Theatre is Category A listed. It opened in 1872 as Her Majesty's Theatre and was designed by local architect James Matthews with consultation from noted theatre architect Charles J. Phipps. Externally the 1872 scheme remains, but internally the auditorium was redesigned by esteemed theatre architect Frank Matcham in 1897. There was a further reconstruction again by Matcham in 1909. In the mid-1960s like many other theatres and cinemas around that time there was a conversion to bingo use which continued until 1998. A period of vacancy followed, during which time it was featured on Theatres Trust's 'Sleeping Beauties' list which was a predecessor of our current Theatres at Risk register. In 2009 it was sold, restored and reopened as a theatre in 2013. A programme of subsequent works to bring it up to appropriate standard followed.

Architecturally the Tivoli has an Italian Gothic facade to the street, the main building being of three storeys and seven bays with the windows in each storey united by a series of parti-coloured arches. The rear wall to Wapping Street is rendered with slightly recessed arcaded bays resembling to an older style of music hall. Internally the auditorium has two balconies with two superimposed boxes on each side, stepped down in level from the balcony fronts and flanked by tall Ionic columns. The upper boxes have canopies surmounted by cartouches set in front of characteristic shell hoods. The rectangular proscenium is framed by slender, garlanded colonnettes which carry scrolled brackets. On either side are female figures carrying lamps. Above is a tympanum with rounded corners framing a cartouche. Of particular decorative significance is the opulently decorated circular ceiling, incorporating four painted panels.

The Tivoli has a busy programme of theatre, live music, comedy and other events. It is an important part of Aberdeen's cultural offer.

This current project focuses on improving access to the building, as well as reinstating historic signage. In this case it covers both improved front of house accessibility for audiences, staff and other visitors into the auditorium as well as improved back of house service access to get props and other stage equipment into the venue. This application for planning permission covers the service lift, as this necessitates some external alteration.

The constrained nature of the theatre's current service access arrangements make it uncompetitive for receiving some shows. Therefore the installation of the proposed

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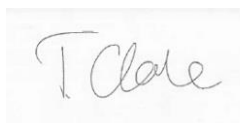
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platform lift will generate heritage and public benefits through enhancing and broadening the Tivoli's offer, which in turn will improve its financial sustainability. This will help conserve and safeguard the building into the future for its intended use. We consider the lift to have little impact on the theatre's architectural and historic significance.

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 these comments in further detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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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