

Ref.: TC/1066

26 April 2024

Planning Service
Development Management
Town Hall
King William Street
Blackburn
BB1 7DY

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

Application: 10/24/0341 & 10/24/0343

Site: King Georges Hall Northgate Blackburn BB2 1AA

Proposal: Works on King Georges Hall, consisting of repair and replacement of slanted and flat roof, rooflights, roof access system, and rainwater goods

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'.

Comment:

These applications for planning permission and listed building consent have come to the attention of Theatres Trust because they seek to undertake repairs and external works at King George's Hall.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

Telephone 020 7836 8591 **Email** info@theatrestrust.org.uk **Website** theatrestrust.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

King George's Hall opened in 1921, following construction being delayed by World War I. It contains a main auditorium with a capacity of around 2,000 in standing format (reduced for all-seated), a smaller hall called the Windsor Street with a capacity of around 750 and a further hall called the Blakey's Café Bar with a capacity of around 500. The main hall has a flat floor with raked balcony and retractable choir stalls. The building is also home to Blackburn's registry office. As a performance venue it hosts a range of shows, and is an important cultural facility for the town which also draws in visitors from a wider catchment. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature. It is a Grade II listed heritage asset located within the Northgate Conservation Area.

The applicant's Heritage Statement notes that this constitutes the first phase of a wider plan for repairs and renovations. We welcome their investment in the building and its upkeep and ongoing conservation. This element consists of roof repairs, repair and replacement of water and drainage goods, repair and replacement of rooflights, and improved access for future inspection and maintenance.

The Conditions Report demonstrates the need for this work to be undertaken, and provides photographic evidence of areas of deterioration. There are also areas of water ingress, which if not arrested will lead to further deterioration and damage within the building affecting its sensitive historic fabric.

We support the applicant's approach to these works, and that as far as possible existing materials will be re-used and there will be like-for-like replacements where necessary. This will minimise harm from a heritage perspective. Nonetheless, we consider these works to be necessary and where there will be minor alteration we contend it constitutes less than substantial harm. With reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF there is clear public benefit in ensuring St George's Hall is in a good state of repair and conserved into the future.

We are therefore supportive of the granting of planning permission and listed building consent.

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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