

Ref.: TC/994

21 May 2024

Development & Environment
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

By e-mail: planningsupport@n-somerset.gov.uk

Application: 24/P/0841/FUL

Site: The Playhouse 126 High Street Weston-super-Mare BS23 1HP

Proposal: Replacement of timber framed windows to aluminium framed double glazed windows at first and second floor level (front)

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:

This application for planning permission has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake alterations at the Playhouse Theatre, specifically replacement of the glazed windows to the theatre's front elevation.

The Playhouse first opened in 1946 when a former market building was converted to a theatre. That building was destroyed by fire in 1964 and demolished, after which a

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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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

new replacement theatre was built on the same site and this opened in 1969. It has a capacity of 664 seats and has a mixed programme mostly comprising theatre, comedy and live music. It is an important cultural venue serving the town and its wider catchment. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this. The theatre is within the Great Weston Conservation Area.

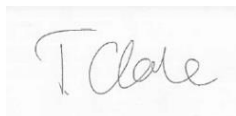
The reason for replacing the theatre's windows to the upper levels of its front (western) elevation are that they have been deemed to have deteriorated beyond repair. It is stated frames have become rotten and loose and due to their age are inefficient.

Whilst we encourage re-use and refurbishment as a first priority, this is not always practical or the optimum option for overall efficiency. Therefore we can support replacement, particularly as the existing windows are of limited historic interest. The proposed frames are of powder-coated aluminium to replicate the profile of the existing timber frames. The windows will be of existing pattern but with some alteration to switch from casement openings in place of louvres.

We welcome that the theatre is investing in its maintenance and upkeep, and there is benefit in enhancing its energy efficiency as this will also reduce operating costs.

We therefore support 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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