

Ref.: TC/3828

2 August 2024

Melissa Tyler
PO Box 10613
NG6 6DW

By e-mail: planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk

Application: 24/01342/FP

Site: Broadway Cinema Eastcheap Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3DD

Proposal: Installation of No.2 information screens to replace existing card holders adjacent to entrance doors

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 install two digital information screens to replace existing poster boards.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

Facebook @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, Suba Das, Liam Evans-Ford, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Tracy Ann Oberman, Lucy Osborne, Saratha Rajeswaran, Truda Spruyt, Michèle Taylor MBE, Katie Town

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund supports the work of The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

The Broadway opened in 1936, designed by the same architectural firm as much of Letchworth Garden City's original housing. Its auditorium had a capacity of 1,420 across stalls and circle, with a café/restaurant to its first floor. In 1996 it was converted into a three-screen cinema. In 2008 a fourth screen was added within the former restaurant, and in 2016 a further major project delivered a theatre with dressing rooms and backstage facilities. The Broadway is therefore now able to provide a programme of theatre and live performance alongside its long-standing cinema offer. It is an important arts and cultural venue for the town and its wider catchment. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

There are currently static poster boxes either side of the Broadway's main entrance. These will be replaced by a digital screen each side. This is an alteration which has been carried out at several other theatres and other cultural and performance venues in recent years. It provides operational advantages because it has the ability for messages to be quickly altered and tailored to particular audiences. It also removes the need for manual printing and change.

Show signage and advertisements can be considered an integral and recognisable element of the design and character of performance venues. This change constitutes a modern interpretation of that principle, and the principle of signage at this location is already accepted. Digital screens have been implemented at a number of designated heritage assets, therefore we do not consider this proposal will cause harm to the significance of the Broadway as a non-designated heritage asset or its wider setting within a conservation area. It is also a reversible change.

We therefore support the granting of planning permission.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this representation in greater detail.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

Facebook @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

Director Jon Morgan

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, Suba Das, Liam Evans-Ford, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson, Tracy Ann Oberman, Lucy Osborne, Saratha Rajeswaran, Truda Spruyt, Michèle Taylor MBE, Katie Town

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund supports the work of The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697