

Ref.: TC/2291

7 August 2024

Alice Walker
North Norfolk District Council
Holt Road
Cromer
NR27 9EN

By e-mail: planning@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Application: LA/24/1408

Site: Pavilion Theatre Promenade Cromer Norfolk NR27 9HE

Proposal: Internal and external alterations including re-modelling of changing facilities, installation of accessible access, repositioning of external walls/new wall to increase floor area, replacement of windows, re-location of doors & re-rendering of walls

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:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at the Pier Pavilion, Cromer. It seeks to undertake a range of internal and external

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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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

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alterations to revise its back of house layout and function, provide better back of house accessibility and to improve the building's thermal performance. There is a corresponding application for planning permission to which we have responded under separate cover.

The Pavilion is a designated heritage asset as an integral part of the Grade II listed pier it sits on. It was built in 1901 initially as a bandstand with seating. In 1905 it was roofed over and in 1912 the bandstand was replaced with a stage and proscenium. Front of house provision was added in 1969 through screening at the rear of the auditorium and further alterations followed in 1978. In 2004 capacity was increased and a restaurant, shop and extended bar were added. Architecturally the Pavilion consists of iron framework in three bays with lower perimeter stanchions and four taller columns. The main roof is formed by flat lattice trusses between the main columns. It has a single-storey extension beyond the framework which enlarged the auditorium and provided ancillary facilities and foyer space. The auditorium is decorated in red terracotta, described as being "warm and intimate" within our database entry.

The Pavilion is one of the few remaining pier theatres which adds to its historic and cultural interest and significance. It maintains a programme of annual 'end-of-pier' summer variety and Christmas shows along with a year-round programme of theatrical productions, comedy and live music. It is an attractor of visitors into the area as well as catering for the social and cultural needs of local people. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

As noted in our corresponding planning application comments, we are supportive of proposed external alterations. These consist of the wall to the north-east corner being built out slightly with a new door opening to serve a scene dock. There will also be a relocated and widened fire exit from the auditorium to the east elevation. Windows along the northern elevation will be rearranged and those along with remaining back of house windows will be double glazed. There will be refurbishment of external wall fabric to provide greater insulation. The rendering finish will replicate the existing so there will be minimal impact on character and appearance. Furthermore with reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF the improvement of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability constitute public benefits.

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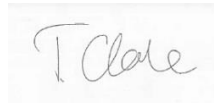
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Internally there is rearrangement of the theatre's back of house facilities. This area is likely to be of less historic significance, although the Heritage Statement is limited in detail to confirm this. Dressing rooms to the western side will be made more flexible with dividing screens so they can be opened into one. The office will be removed which helps enable provision of an accessible dressing room and an accessible WC and shower. The steps up to the stage adjacent to this will be replaced with a new combination step and stairlift making the stage accessible. With such a level change and the theatre's constrained space this would appear to be a sensible solution. We would suggest consideration of an acoustic barrier between the stairlift and the stage so it could be used throughout performances without disturbance, although we acknowledge this would also compromise wing space. Nonetheless greater accessibility is welcomed, and will make the venue more inclusive. This is a considerable public benefit.

The office lost from back of house is being relocated into the corner of the auditorium where there was previously a small store. On plan this looks a bit odd but we acknowledge there is an existing room to the opposite side (although they lack symmetry), and is a reversible change.

Overall these plans will improve the theatre's accessibility and back of house function as well as improve its energy efficiency, with limited heritage impact. We therefore support the granting of listed building consent.

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

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