

Ref.: TC/3798

4 October 2024

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Application: 2024/01942/COMB

Site: Land Bounded By North End Road, Beaumont Avenue, West Cromwell Road, West London Railway Line, Lillie Road, Land Comprising The Empress State Building, Aisgill Avenue, The Former Gibbs Green School And Properties Fronting Dieppe Close.

Proposal: Hybrid planning application, involving both outline and detailed proposals, for demolition and alteration of existing buildings and structures and phased redevelopment to include landscaping, car and cycle parking, means of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access and routes and mixed-use development above and below ground level and all associated and ancillary works and structures including temporary development, highway and infrastructure works and structures, comprising: Outline proposals for up to 373,000sqm GEA (gross external area) of mix use floorspace for residential use (Use Class C3) (up to 2,038 homes) and non-residential uses comprising hotel (Use Class C1), older persons housing (Use Class C2), office and/or research and development (Use Class E(g)), education (Use Class E(f)/F1), retail, food and beverage and other commercial uses (Use Class E(a)/(b)/(c)), leisure facilities (Use Class E(d)), cultural facilities (Use Class F1), storage and distribution (Use Class B8), community and social facilities (Use Class E(e)/(f)/F2) and sui generis uses (student accommodation and co-living, theatre,

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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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nightclub, car show room, drinking establishment (with or without expanded food provision), hot food takeaway, live music performance venue, cinema, concert hall, bingo hall and dance hall uses). Detailed proposals for four buildings (to comprise 92,517sqm GEA), ranging between 13 and 42 storeys in height (up to +112.4m AOD) for a mix of uses including: residential use (Use Class C3) to provide 462 homes (Use Class C3), student accommodation, delivering up to 696 rooms and non residential floorspace comprising: up to 3,072sqm GEA of retail, food & beverage or flexible commercial floorspace (Use Classes E(a)/(b)/(c)/sui generis); 2,045 sqm GEA leisure floorspace (Use Classes E(d) / sui generis) and 502 sqm GEA of community floorspace (Use Classes E(e)/(f)/(g) / F), together with ancillary floorspace.

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 hybrid application for development at the site of the former Earls Court arena and surrounding land. We have been notified because the proposal includes provision of a new theatre (and other live performance facilities), and the site has been utilised for theatre in the recent past with the Lost Estate currently in place and Underbelly having had temporary installations in the summers of 2021 and 2022.

This is a major development which includes a broad mix of uses including significant provision of new residential, commercial, educational, cultural and community floorspace along with associated access and landscaping. We make no comment on the overall scale, height and design of development or on the tenure/unit mix. Our

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comments are solely related to the proposed theatre use and matters which directly affect it.

On the illustrative masterplan there are various sites labelled as containing cultural use – EC04, WB06 and WB07/08. These are broadly located towards the centre and south-east of the site which is welcomed as these are more accessible locations closest to the Earls Court and West Brompton railway and underground stations, and to bus routes.

We welcome that the applicant has produced a cultural strategy. Theatres Trust has not been engaged as a cultural stakeholder which is regretful, nonetheless the strategy references several other operators, producers and representative bodies who have contributed to the document. The document recognises the wider cultural context including that the nearby Olympia site is delivering a new large-scale theatre and a 4,000 capacity music venue both of which are approaching completion. It will be important to ensure that the cultural offer addresses gaps in provision and complements Olympia and other local venues such as Finborough Theatre and Barons Court Theatre, as stated on page 24 of the document.

There are three venues proposed. The first (EC04) is part of the first phase of development and this will be a music venue with a capacity of around 750 (or 400 seated) with illustrations showing how this could also be utilised for trade and launch events such as fashion shows. This does not appear to facilitate theatre use and so we make no comment.

The second (WB07/08) contains a cluster of venues. The first could potentially be utilised as a theatre but appears to be more aimed at lectures, conferences and product launches. The space has much natural light through its glazing so if theatre and live performance were to be considered there would need to be consideration of blacking out the space. The second image below this appears to show a concert hall with a capacity of 600, this could be utilised for theatre. The more 'industrial' looking space to the right on page 55 does look like it could support theatre use but again consideration would need to be made to blocking natural light.

The third space appears to be a space for food and other events rather than one for specific live performance.

At this stage there are no formal plans for a theatre other than it being within the proposed use classes, only indicative illustrations. As a general principle we would strongly encourage that the applicant engages with stakeholders such as Theatres

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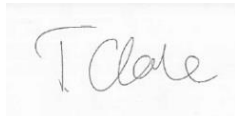
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Trust and utilises the services of a specialist theatre consultant to develop their plans. It would be beneficial for an end-user to be identified so that any plans meet their needs and that the space is capable of being adapted in future. Consideration will need to be given to providing appropriate front of house space, height and volume of space, and access for get-ins and get-outs (delivery and removal of sets and equipment). Any residential uses envisaged for the areas around the performance spaces more generally will need to be carefully located and soundproofed to avoid conflict. This would also include protecting against structural vibrational transfer.

We support and welcome the provision of new cultural uses at this site. We would be keen to be consulted further as plans for any theatre use develop further.

This support is entirely for the principle of cultural use, the nature and scale of this overall development is not something on which we are able to comment.

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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