

Ref.: TC/1426

19 November 2024

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By e-mail: [planning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:planning@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Application:** 24/03585/ADE

**Site:** Alnwick Playhouse And Arts Centre Bondgate Without Alnwick  
Northumberland NE66 1PQ

**Proposal:** Advertisement consent for replacement of two current static advertising displays, one static to replace the existing signage adjacent to the main doors, one static digital sign to replace the signage on the North elevation. A further additional digital sign on the South facing elevation.

### **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'.

### **Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

**Telephone** 020 7836 8591 **Email** [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) **Website** [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk) **Twitter** @TheatresTrust

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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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## **Comment:**

This application for advertisement consent has been brought to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to install two digital screens and one static advertisement board at the Alnwick Playhouse.

The Playhouse was built in 1926 as a cinema but then converted to a theatre. After closure during the 1970s it was purchased by a local theatre company and used for their rehearsals. A separate local trust restored its circle in the 1980s and it was reopened as a theatre in 1990 as the New Playhouse Theatre. Its auditorium was sub-divided with a studio theatre within the original stalls and a main 262-seat venue within the former circle. After ownership transferred to the County Council it underwent further development to add a library, meeting space and refurbish its bar and auditorium. The Playhouse is an important social and cultural venue for the town. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities of this nature.

Of the three proposed signs, two will replace existing examples. One of those is a replacement static posterboard placed next to the entrance on the western elevation. The remaining two signs will be digital, one replacing the existing advertisement to the north elevation as well as a new location along the southern elevation.

Advertisements and show signage are recognisable features of theatres and other performance venues, and can be considered to contribute to their character. One of these signs is a relatively direct replacement for one that already exists, and another is also a replacement but in digital format which constitutes a more modern interpretation. As such the principle of signage in both of these locations has already been established. We have no objection to the addition of a further digital sign along the south elevation, which will further help activate this elevation and provide clearer advertising of forthcoming shows and events than the current arrangement.

We do not consider that these signs and screens will generate unacceptable impacts on highway safety or visual amenity. Levels of brightness and frequency of change can be managed by condition if necessary.

We therefore support the granting of advertisement consent.

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# Theatres fit for the **future**



Please contact us should you wish to discuss these comments further.

Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Adviser

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