

Ref.: TC/2907

2 December 2024

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**Application:** 2024/0502/TP

**Site:** Eastwood Park Rouken Glen Road Giffnock East Renfrewshire

**Proposal:** Demolition of existing building and erection of new building to house leisure centre, theatre, local event and learning space with landscaping, parking and associated works

**Remit:**

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1978 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in Scotland through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulation 2013, 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 planning permission which covers redevelopment of the Eastwood Park Leisure Centre including a

**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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replacement Eastwood Park Theatre. We have been engaged on these plans from an early stage and were also consulted on the previous planning application in 2021. Plans have been significantly revised within this submission.

In our previous comments we raised points relating to internal layout and function to help inform the scheme and ensure the theatre would be fit-for-purpose and sustainable into the future, and that it would meet the project brief. We accept the current theatre has limitations which are not uncommon amongst other theatres of its age. We were however supportive of planning permission being granted.

We also made clear our response related to the theatre specifically and any matters directly related to it, and that we made no comment on the wider scheme and its facilities as they sit outside of our remit and expertise. That remains the case.

We would reiterate our earlier comment regarding the general principle of demolition and reconstruction being one that we would discourage, favouring adaption and retrofit of the existing building as a first priority on sustainability grounds. That is due to the environmental impact of embodied carbon and the additional emissions created by construction and new materials. However, we do also acknowledge that in mitigation there are negative social and cultural impacts associated with losing provision for a prolonged period whilst development takes place.

Compared to previous scheme the orientation of the theatre has altered with public access from the opposite side. This has addressed one of our previous concerns regarding public access to the theatre by creating a more defined main entrance which can be operated independently of the wider leisure centre whilst bringing everyone in through the same shared lobby. Prominence and visibility of the theatre appears to have been improved. Similarly routes for the public and for servicing have been clearly delineated. An acoustic wall between the leisure centre and the theatre now appear on plans, it must be ensured that this is properly constructed for effectiveness and to avoid conflict and disturbances between uses.

Overall there has been a reduction in space for the theatre as a whole. The main auditorium is little altered in size (in fact a marginal gain of 4sqm) but the stage area is smaller and shallower (although there is now a separate scene dock and workshop which mitigates that). The studio no longer has storage provision and so this will also need to be considered further, in particular where seating and staging is stored if the studio is to be utilised in different formats. This should be reviewed to ensure operational needs are met and the anticipated programme for the respective spaces

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can be accommodated. It is also not clear from the plans as to what access is available to the grid of the main theatre and whether there is sufficient height.

We had previously commented on dressing rooms not meeting best practice standards for separation of genders and for children and young people. In this version the ground floor dressing rooms have a shared shower/WC between them which should be avoided. Also, access to/from the main dressing room from back of house is through the WC and adjacent accessible dressing room or through public areas around the studio which is not ideal. The upper level dressing rooms have similar issues again with them opening off each other, and having only one WC to serve around fourteen people or a need to pass through another dressing room to reach further WCs. This appears to have arisen due to a shrinking of space for the theatre. In terms of staff provision, there are no obvious specific WC or changing rooms unless general leisure centre facilities are used. Operationally this will need consideration.

For audience WCs, it should be clarified whether there are wash hand basins within the cubicles as these are not shown on the plans. There do however appear to be sufficient numbers of WCs to meet the standards set out in the Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment (the 'yellow book'). We welcome that a Changing Places facility is being provided but ideally this should be provided directly from a circulation space rather than through the general WC block.

It is not clear from the elevation diagrams what the signage strategy will be either for the theatre or the wider leisure centre as a whole, it will be important to ensure the theatre does have adequate visibility including space for show advertisements.

Many of the points we have raised relate to internal function and can be further considered and/or revised at the next stage of design. Overall, we welcome investment into this theatre and the future expansion of its capacity and facilities.

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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