

Ref.: TC

09 January 2025

Hartlepool Development Corporation
Teesside Airport Business Suite
Teesside International Airport
Darlington
DL2 1NJ

By e-mail: HDCplanning@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk

Application: HMDC/2024/0056

Site: Town Hall Theatre, Raby Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AH

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for replacement lighting gantry and associated supporting steelwork

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 listed building consent has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake internal alteration at the Town Hall Theatre, to install a replacement lighting gantry.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

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

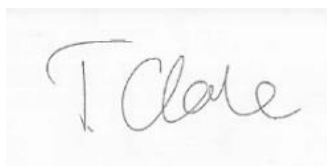
The Town Hall Theatre is within Hartlepool's former Town Hall, which was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century in a gothic style with red brick and sandstone ashlar dressings. It was completed in 1897. It is a Grade II listed heritage asset. It was converted to a theatre in 1977. Its main auditorium has a capacity of around 400 and it also offers a small secondary performance space and dance/rehearsal studios. It is an important arts and cultural facility for the town and its surrounding catchment. Its programme includes local and touring productions, live music, comedy and other events and private hires. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF (2024) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

The purpose of this intervention is to provide a more modern lighting gantry which can provide the load capacity needed for necessary lighting units and to meet current standards. Alterations of a similar nature have come forward at other theatres.

It is important that the theatre is able to meet the expectations of the shows and producers who use it, which in turn supports its ongoing operation and conservation. Whilst the gantry and the lighting units are modern insertions which are to some extent intrusive, and there is some additional harm generated by this replacement, they are necessary to support the building's theatre and live performance use. Such use is compatible with the form and volume of this building, constituting a viable use which keeps the building in active operation and maintains public access. With reference to paragraph 215 of the NPPF this is a substantial public benefit which we consider mitigates less than substantial harm. Again, this is a common intervention within similar conversions.

We 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

Theatres Trust

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