

Ref.: TC/3912

25 March 2025

Planning Enquiries
Development Management
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

By e-mail: planning@darlington.gov.uk

Application: 25/00148/CU

Site: Majestic Theatre 78 - 80 Bondgate Darlington DARLINGTON DL3 7JT

Proposal: Conversion of ground floor from soft play area to 24-hour convenience store (Use Class E) including replacement of window with door to rear

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 has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking change of use of part of the Majestic Theatre.

The Majestic opened in 1932 and was built for both theatre and cinema, with a capacity of over 1,500 across stalls and balcony. It closed in 1981 after which it was

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 Joshua McTaggart

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, Suba Das, Liam Evans-Ford, Stephanie Hall, Annie Hampson OBE, Tracy Ann Oberman, Lucy Osborne, Saratha Rajeswaran, Truda Spruyt, Michèle Taylor MBE, Katie Town

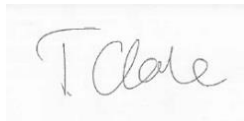
The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund supports the work of The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

vacant for a few years before being converted to a snooker club. That lasted until 2008 after which its original façade was restored and reinstated having been concealed in poor condition behind metal cladding. Theatre use returned within the upper level using the former circle with the stalls level used as the soft play centre which has more recently vacated. This building can be considered as a non-designated heritage asset which positively contributes to local townscape and character.

The change of use to a supermarket does not directly impact on the theatre, and the ground floor level had not in any case been within theatre use for many years. Therefore we raise no objection to this application. However, that is conditional on the theatre's ongoing operations being unaffected.

The two uses currently share a main entrance so it will need to be ensured that suitable access is maintained. Similarly, the theatre currently benefits from prominent visibility and signage through the fascia sign along the canopy and posterboards along the front elevation. This is a common feature of theatres and other cultural and performance venues, and is important for promoting events and supporting ongoing viability. It is vital that these are retained.

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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