Theatres fit for the **future**

Theatres Trust

Ref.: TC/2061

4 October 2024

Louise Prew
Adur & Worthing Councils
Development Management
Economy Directorate
Portland House
44 Richmond Road
Worthing
BN11 1HS

By e-mail: planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Application: AWDM/1173/24
Site: Pavilion Theatre Worthing Pier The Promenade Worthing West Sussex BN11 3PX
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed installation of a wheelchair-accessible ramp to the stalls within Worthing Pavilion Theatre.

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 **Website** theatrestrust.org.uk **Twitter** @TheatresTrust
Facebook @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

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 listed building consent has come to the attention of Theatres Trust because it is seeking to undertake alteration within the stalls at the Pavilion Theatre, specifically to install a ramp to provide wheelchair accessibility.

The Pavilion Theatre is part of the Grade II listing of the pier and is historically and culturally significant as one the very few remaining pier theatres. The pier was completed in 1862 and the Pavilion was built in 1926. It is designed in a European Kursaal style with an oval domed entrance block with engaged columns with vases above the entablature. The auditorium is oval shaped with a semi-circular proscenium on the long side. It has a mixed programme of theatre, live music, comedy, cinema and other events. It is an important cultural facility for the town. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF (2023) seeks planning decisions to plan positively for facilities such as this.

Currently wheelchair accessibility within the stalls is inadequate, which diminishes the theatre's value as a community asset because it lacks inclusivity. We therefore welcome that the venue is seeking to address this. It will be achieved through inserting a ramp to the front right-hand corner of the auditorium (stage left). The design approach minimises harm to historic fabric and plan form, nonetheless with reference to paragraph 208 of the NPPF we consider that the less than substantial harm generated is mitigated by the significant public benefit of improving accessibility.

We therefore support the granting of listed building consent.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss these comments in further detail.

[redacted]

Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

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