

A06

L/TH/23/1411

PROPOSAL: Application for listed building consent for repairs to the roof, parapets and chimney, together with the creation of new access hatch above seating area into the loft space

LOCATION: Theatre Royal Addington Street MARGATE Kent CT9 1PW

WARD: Margate Central

AGENT: Mrs Charlotte Pryke

APPLICANT: H White

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1 The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

GROUND;

In pursuance of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

INFORMATIVES

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August inclusive. Trees and scrub are present on the application site and are to be assumed to contain nesting birds between the above dates, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site during this period and has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council has determined the application on the following documentation entitled Heritage Significance and Heritage Impact Statements, Design and Access Statement, and the Specification of Condition / Schedule of Works received on 25th October 2023, drawings entitled Location and Site Plans received on 25th October 2023, and drawings numbered 0100, 0101, 0102A and 050 received on 10th November 2023

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Theatre Royal is a Grade II* Listed Building dating back to 1786, which is located on the north eastern section of Hawley Square, but whose entrance faces out on to the corner of both Addington Street and Prince's Street, Margate. The Theatre Royal has been subject to many reconfigurations and uses throughout its long history in order to retain its viability, as well as enduring periods of closure such as during WW2.

It is listed as part of a group with No. 39 Addington Street and The London Tavern.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Although there is a long history of alterations and additions to the Theatre Royal, it has only had the following listed building consent and planning applications:

L/TH/07/1006 Granted 02.10.2007

Listed Building consent for internal alterations to provide a wheelchair platform in auditorium and alterations to provide disabled and female toilets

L/TH/04/0577 Granted 14.11.2005

Erection of three downlighters to illuminate the Addington Street elevation of the building

A/TH/04/0576 Granted 14.11.2005

Installation of three downlighters to illuminate Addington Street elevation of the building

L/TH/94/0546 Granted 03.10.1994

STRENGTHENING OF A TIMBER SUPPORT COLUMN.

L/TH/94/0117 Granted 12.05.1994

CONSTRUCTION OF A STAIRCASE AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development seeks Listed Building Consent for the repairs to the roof, parapets and chimney, together with the creation of new access hatch above seating area into the loft space

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

SP35 - Quality Development

SP36 - Conservation and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Environment

HE02 - Development in Conservation Areas

HE03 - Heritage Assets

QD01 - Sustainable Development

QD02 - General Design Principles

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to neighbouring property occupiers, a site notice was posted close to the site and an advert was posted in the local newspaper. No residential responses were received.

Theatre Trust -

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at Theatre Royal Margate. It seeks to undertake urgent repairs around the theatre's roof as well as to insert a new access hatch into the roof void above the auditorium.

Theatre Royal is a Grade II* listed heritage asset is the last remaining theatre with its design intact by noted architect J.T. Robinson, who was the employer and father-in-law of renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham and surveyor to the then Lord Chamberlain. It was originally built in 1787 and remodelled in 1874 with an auditorium compared to that of the same architect's 1871 Old Vic design but on a smaller scale. It has two horseshoe balconies supported by slender iron columns along the line of their fronts. Aside from brief periods Theatre Royal remained in theatre use until 1963; after a period of bingo use during which there were occasional plays it was taken on by the Margate Theatre Royal Trust reopening in 1988 as a 'members only' theatre club. In 1998 it returned to being a fully public theatre. It is the country's second oldest operational theatre but has been closed since April 2022 prior to refurbishments being undertaken. The building has been on Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk register since 2018 because it is in a fragile condition and requires capital investment along with essential maintenance and repair work.

We welcome these proposals because they will contribute towards the works necessary to facilitate efforts to see the theatre reopened, and will also help ensure the building's ongoing conservation.

With regards to the roof works, these are necessary to help protect the building and prevent future water ingress. Although there will be a change in materials due to the use of composite materials rather than lead the existing materials are not original so there will be limited harm in heritage terms. Protection of the building also constitutes a public benefit which mitigates harm.

The proposed addition of an access hatch within the ceiling void will generate some loss of original fabric, however again there are public benefits in mitigation because it will provide access for repairs and maintenance. On balance this will assist with the building's ongoing conservation and safe operation. We support the design approach which has been indicated as this will reduce visibility of the intervention through painting to match surrounding fabric. However, works to the ceiling are not shown within the proposed plans and so for clarity and completeness such plans should be provided.

On the assumption and condition that submission of a clear roof plan would confirm the stated design approach we would 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.

CONSULTATIONS

TDC Conservation Officer -

Following a review of the proposed application it would appear that the work to the roof facilitates large scale repair and minor replacement of fabric where required. Internally the moving of the loft hatch improves access for maintenance moving forward which will ultimately sustain the listed property. As such I do not object to the proposed application.

Historic England -

Thank you for your letter of 8 January 2024 regarding the above application for listed building consent.

Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as a comment on the merits of the application.

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/>

It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

COMMENTS

This application is brought before members as the applicant is Thanet District Council.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when 'considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority ... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'. Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets , and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The NPPF requires that where a development causes substantial harm, or less than substantial harm but where the harm is not outweighed by public benefit, permission should be refused.

Policy SP36 of the Thanet Local Plan states that "The Council will support, value and have regard to the historic or archaeological significance of Heritage Assets".

Policy HE03 of the Thanet Local Plan states that; "Proposals that affect both designated and non-designated heritage assets, will be assessed by reference to the scale of harm, both direct and indirect, or loss to, the significance of the heritage asset in accordance with the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework."

The proposed development seeks Listed Building Consent for the repairs to the roof, parapets and chimney, together with the creation of a new access hatch above the seating area into the loft space (involving the boarding out around the hatch in the roof void).

As the property is a Grade II* listed building the whole fabric of the building is protected as a designated heritage asset. The applicant has therefore supplied proposed and existing plans, Heritage Impact and Significance Statements, Design and Access Statement and a combined Schedule of Condition / Specification of Works to identify the necessary roof works and how they will be carried out, as well as the need for an internal loft hatch.

The proposed roof plan shows the different roof areas belonging to the Theatre, annotating which parapets and upstands will need either lead repair or a replacement (subject to investigation works on site) with Marley Flex Fast Lead Replacement Roll. Whilst the use of traditional lead would be preferred due to the Theatre Royal's Grade II* listed status, it is acknowledged that the building has been subjected to lead theft on several occasions which have resulted in water ingress and internal damage. More importantly it is also evident that the current roof material is unlikely to be original. Therefore, if it is necessary to use a lead replacement material which is very similar in appearance to ensure the Theatre remains watertight, the overall benefit is considered to outweigh any harm. The plans also identify the need for the repointing of a chimney breast and as long as this is undertaken to match the existing this will not affect the significance of the structure.

The submitted roof plan also identifies where debris and vegetation is in need of removal, particularly from valley gutters, downpipes and hoppers, and makes clear that if rainwater goods are not able to be cleaned in situ, they will be carefully removed and replaced once cleaned (and painted with black hammerite if needed). If not cleared, they will lead to continued water ingress and damp issues. Therefore, these works are considered to create minimal harm and would be expected to be undertaken in the future as part of regular maintenance.

The creation of a new internal hatch above the seating area in the main auditorium, will see the removal of a small section of the ceiling measuring 0.99m x 0.52m. As this will allow access for continued essential maintenance within the roof void, and the hatch door will be painted to match the surrounding ceiling, the loss of material in the is considered to be outweighed by the benefit that the improved maintenance access would provide to the building as a whole. Alongside the introduction of the hatch within the ceiling, it is proposed to install osb boarding around the proposed hatch opening for secure access, and this is considered to be a sensible proposal, with minimal damage to the existing structure.

The Conservation Officer has no objection to any of the proposed works.

Conclusion

The site is located within the Margate Conservation Area and in close proximity to many other listed structures within Addington Street and Hawley Square.

It is acknowledged that there would be some harm through the physical repair or necessary replacement of sections of the roofing materials, as well as the small section of ceiling removed to allow for the loft access hatch. However these works are modest in scale.

Nevertheless, where harm is identified the NPPF requires a balancing exercise with any public benefit that might outweigh the harm caused to a designated heritage asset.

In this case, the roof works seek to ensure that the listed structure is watertight, reducing the risk of further internal water damage and damp issues, whilst the access hatch would provide access for on-going maintenance from within the roof void. As such, the benefits to the Theatre as a whole are considered to far outweigh the removal or replacement of small elements of existing fabric.

Therefore, the proposed works are considered to have sufficient regard to the Listed Building in accordance with the requirements of Thanet Local Plan policies HE03, SP36 and the NPPF. Therefore members are recommended to approve the application.

Case Officer

Tanya Carr

TITLE:

L/TH/23/1411

Project

Theatre Royal Addington Street MARGATE Kent CT9 1PW

