

Ref.: TC/2233

29 August 2025

Claire Booth
Development Management
Town Hall
Knowsley Street
Bury
BL9 0SW

By e-mail: claire.booth@bury.gov.uk

Application: 72117

Site: The Art Picture House, Haymarket Street, Bury, BL9 0AY

Proposal: Alterations to internal layout including the removal of a central bar and reforming a new bar underneath the proscenium arch, and new toilets formed. Alterations to HVAC system, and kitchen works. General refurbishment and decoration.

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

X @TheatresTrust **Facebook** [@theatres.trust](https://www.facebook.com/theatres.trust) **Instagram** [@TheatresTrust](https://www.instagram.com/TheatresTrust)

Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

CEO Joshua McTaggart

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, 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

Comment:

Thank you for consulting Theatres Trust on this application for listed building consent at the Art Picture House. It seeks to undertake internal alterations within the auditorium and to install condensers to the building's rear elevation. We have also been consulted on a separate application for planning permission covering the external element to which we have responded under separate cover.

Art Picture House is currently in use as a pub. It was built in 1923 to replace the Art Picture Hall, which was a theatre within a converted Baptist chapel. Our database describes the current building as, "An elaborate and complete example of an early 1920s cinema, exceptionally theatrical in its plan and decoration". It was built with stalls, a pit and a circle with two boxes either side of the proscenium. At first floor level was a cafe known as the Oriental or Indian Lounge. It had a large stage and full-height fly tower.

Architecturally the front elevation is symmetrical in five bays with the centre crowned by stepped pedimental parapets in white faience. The outer bays were crowned by elaborate arches but these have been replaced with stepped parapets. The ground floor has also been altered with modern tiling. There is a round-arched central window with 'Art Pictures' written to the left and 'Art Cafe' to the right. Internally the foyer was small with marble stairs and gilded metal balustrade with 1920s Roman style decoration. Art Picture House is unusual in that the projection box is to the rear of the stalls. The auditorium is richly decorated in an Edwardian-Baroque style with a barrel vault ceiling and a raised and domed ceiling over the rear of the balcony. The Art Picture House is a Grade II listed heritage asset. The building is currently in use as a pub.

As set out in our other comments, we are able to support the external alterations to the rear (Back Knowsley Street) elevation. That side of the building is typically utilitarian and lacks the decorative detailing of the front elevation, therefore it is of lesser sensitivity. It contains existing servicing and mechanical installations. Five further condensers are being located along the rear elevation along with the insertion of two grilles through existing boarded windows and a new kitchen extract at higher level. This generates a degree of less than substantial harm but with reference to paragraph 215 of the NPPF there is public benefit in meeting current standards and ensuring the continued occupation of this important asset.

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

X @TheatresTrust **Facebook** @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

CEO Joshua McTaggart

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

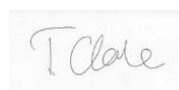
The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund supports the work of The Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

The internal alterations will change the layout and function of the customer-facing and serving areas within the auditorium, stage house and related areas. Currently there are two bars, with a main one within the auditorium and a secondary one in the location of the stage within the proscenium. The central bar is being removed which will provide some additional seating. The stage bar becomes the single point of service and will be enlarged. The female WCs which are currently located stage left will be relocated to the rear of the auditorium into what is currently storage and staff areas, along with an accessible WC. These elements are more modern interventions associated with conversion to pub use, overall however there is some heritage benefit because the new layout is more reflective original plan form with more of the stalls level within the auditorium being open and accessible.

There will also be general refurbishment of this area and restoration and reinstatement of historic light fittings, with installation of more sensitive lighting replacing modern fittings.

We can therefore 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 further.



Tom Clarke MRTPI

National Planning Adviser

Theatres Trust

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

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

X @TheatresTrust **Facebook** @theatres.trust **Instagram** @TheatresTrust

Chair Dave Moutrey OBE

CEO Joshua McTaggart

Trustees Vicky Browning OBE, Anna Collins, James Dacre, 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