

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/A1720/C/23/3336046

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/A1720/C/23/3336046
Appeal By	TITCHFIELD FESTIVAL THEATRE LIMITED
Site Address	Titchfield Festival Theatre 71-73 St. Margarets Lane FAREHAM PO14 4BG

SENDER DETAILS

Name	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

Titchfield Festival Theatre provides an invaluable community resource to all ages and in all manner of ways. It provides fabulous live entertainment for those in and around the surrounding area and is very much keeping the arts alive in Fareham at an affordable ticket price point. For those more directly involved in the theatre it provides community, friendship, performance opportunities, teaching, training, learning, confidence building and most importantly a supportive community. The mental health benefits of TFT cannot be underestimated and I know from personal experience how valuable this side of the theatre is for all ages from toddlers to pensioners.

The conversion of the existing space to become the Arden theatre has not increased the footprint of the building, it has merely been changed, at no cost at all to the council or the taxpayer. Loyal theatre goers are happy to park at the Holiday Inn and walk a distance to the theatre as they would at other venues like the Mayflower, the New Theatre Royal, the Kings Theatre, the Rhoda McGaw theatre in Guildford, and all the London theatre venues, none of which have their own designated parking. Therefore the impact of the new theatre is no different to when it was purely the smaller original theatre space.

Forcing the closure of the Arden would be purely a revenge move by the borough council, who have had no decent entertainment venue to speak of since before the pandemic. However with the opening of the new Fareham Theatre on the horizon this feels like FBC are worried about the competition from TFT. They needn't be. TFT puts on purely amateur shows, albeit very good ones, and the ticket prices are matched accordingly. They don't do comedy nights, ballet, contemporary dance, "an audience with...." events, tribute acts, exhibitions, behind the scenes tours, coffee mornings, conventions or any number of other things that a larger town centre based operation can and should offer. Surely that proves there is room for both these venues in the borough, as they will offer different things and appeal to different audiences.

People love theatre and FBC should be encouraging a love of the arts and all the mental health and other benefits it brings. Fareham should be seizing this as a chance to lead the way as a progressive, arts supporting borough who can boast not just one but two theatres with all the associated cultural benefits. With the amount of new housing going up around the area they could use this as an excellent marketing tool to bring people to the area, both to live and to visit, helping to boost the local economy at a time when the cost of living is so difficult.

So please FBC, think outside the box. Instead of trying to shut the Arden down why don't you turn this on it's head and see how TFT and FBC could work more efficiently and effectively together to help Fareham thrive, instead of trying to tear each other down. Support the arts please, encourage this to thrive- there is room for 2!