

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	
Address	

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 is an outstanding organisation, and an invaluable asset to the community. The actions of Fareham Borough Council deserve the scrutiny and criticism they have received thus far. In summary:

-FBC claim they are not trying to stifle other arts organisations to eliminate competition for their Fareham Live investment.

*However, Ashcroft has had its funding pulled and is being forced to close, conveniently in time for the opening of Fareham Live. Mr. Woodward shared this announcement on his own Facebook page, spinning many public concerns into a pitch for Fareham Live.

*Back before the 10-year rule came into effect for TFT's new build, their planning application was refused. One such reason given was that it would need to demonstrate it would not impact leisure projects planned by the council. I've racked my brain, and the only way I feel they could have such an impact is if they outperformed such projects. Ergo, this could only be interpreted as planning being denied on the basis of preventing competition for Fareham Live.

-FBC (or more specifically Mr. Woodward) have claimed on social media that the build has ignored building regulations and safety requirements.

*TFT had already stated on record that this is false. Such desperate (and frankly libelous) attempts to denounce TFT can only be viewed as petty and vindictive.

-FBC have claimed that this build is unsuitable because TFT lacks parking.

*The land around the theatre has been left derelict for years, and TFT have the funds to acquire this, which would be giving money back to the public funds. FBC have said the owner of the land doesn't have to sell it. However, Hampshire County Council are the owners of the land, and they share many councillors with FBC (including Mr. Woodward), meaning they know why they won't sell it. Yet they have been radio silent on the issue. Since selling it is in the public interest, they owe the public a valid explanation which they have chosen not to provide. The only reason I can think for not providing this explanation is that it would prove the accusations about their motivation correct - that they are doing their best to stifle TFT as it outperforms their own investment with zero public funds.

*Some have argued that providing parking and allowing the Arden to stand will increase traffic on St Margaret's Lane. Yet there are easy solutions to this - including selling the surrounding land to TFT to turn into parking, and having the entrance to the car park placed on Southampton Road which is already equipped to and accustomed to heavy traffic (leaving St Margaret's Lane even better off than before).

*Any claims that building a car park would hurt the environment could also be readily addressed - by incorporating greenery into the design.

The fact of the matter is that TFT have built an incredible new space with no public money, that can only benefit the public. They have a legal basis for planning permission not being required (that it is built on the original footprint of the old building and the 10-year rule applies). The building has satisfied all building and safety regulations.

Planning enforcement notices should only be served where it is in the public interest. Despite whatever delusion FBC might claim, the massive public outcry around this has been almost entirely in TFT's favour, and in condemnation of FBC (rightly so). Those supporting FBC are exceedingly rare (and have included one social media profile that I personally showed was a fake - another desperation tactic by some interested party, no doubt).

I urge the enquiry to consider the severe ramifications of not finding in TFT's favour - that the people

will lose an asset unlike any other. And to consider the benefits of finding in TFT's favour - that we retain and relish in that asset for many years to come. Even if (for whatever reason) the enquiry finds that planning permission IS required, then I urge the enquiry to provide it retrospectively, so that a right to contest application for the surrounding land can resolve the parking issue and swiftly solve any issues that the minority might have with it. This could be resolved in a way which benefits all, if FBC would stop wasting public funds to serve themselves instead of the public they are supposed to represent.