

Ref.: TC/321

13 April 2026

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Ribble Valley Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Church Walk  
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BB7 2RA

By e-mail: [planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk)

**Application:** 3/2025/0612

**Site:** The Palace Market Place Longridge PR3 3RR

**Proposal:** Proposed change of use from vacant cinema (sui generis) to children's role play centre (use class E(d)) with ancillary cafe (use class E (b)). External alterations to the building to include alterations to fenestration and insertion of new first floor window.

**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'.

**Comment:**

Thank you for again re-consulting Theatres Trust on this application for planning

**Theatres Trust**

22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL

**Telephone** 020 7836 8591 **Email** [info@theatrestrust.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrestrust.org.uk) **Website** [theatrestrust.org.uk](http://theatrestrust.org.uk)

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**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

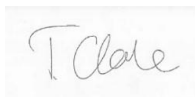
permission following submission of an additional statement from the applicant. It seeks change of use of the Palace Cinema along with associated alterations to the building.

We acknowledge that the proposal as submitted and described within the applicant's response of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 is a sensitive re-use of the building and would be appear to be reversible, based upon submitted plans. This is reflected within our original comments of 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026. However, once within Class E there is nothing to prevent the building from being utilised for another purpose within the same use class with more harmful and irreversible alteration. It is for that reason the council must be satisfied that its Local Plan as well as NPPF policy on loss of facilities is met.

Whilst the applicant's statement of 31<sup>st</sup> March appears well-intentioned and describes the creative, community and social benefits of the proposed use, there remains no objective appraisal and evidence of marketing efforts and need. It is for the council to determine whether such evidence is required or whether a departure can be justified through the proposed use bringing sufficient "defined and demonstrable benefits" as set out within Core Strategy Key Statement EC2 to classify this as an 'exception' enabling change of use.

We suggest that a potential solution might be to permit this application with a planning condition limiting the building's function to the proposed use, meaning a further planning application would be needed for any further change of use including within Class E. Such conditions have been utilised elsewhere. We consider this would meet the tests set out within guidance on the use of planning conditions. With reference to paragraph 55 of the NPPF we consider protection of a facility most recently used for cultural purposes to be sufficient justification for restricting national permitted development rights. NPPF paragraph 56 suggests use of conditions could make potentially unacceptable development to be acceptable.

Please contact us if we may be of further assistance or should you wish to discuss this further.



Tom Clarke MRTPI  
National Planning Manager

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