

New planning rules to protect our cultural heritage

Changes to the planning system will save theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues for future generations, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (12 July 2020).

With the changes taking effect next week, cultural institutions across England will be saved from being redeveloped or demolished.

These buildings cannot be easily replaced and are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage, which is why the government is clear that temporary social distancing restrictions should not be an excuse for them to be permanently lost.

Councils will now need to take the temporary impact of coronavirus into account when considering permission for change of use, redevelopment or demolition of a theatre, concert hall or live music performance venue.

This move, alongside the £1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage sector, provides extra security to businesses as they make plans to re-open their premises when it is safe to do so, and in the meantime continue to share their talent and passion for the arts outdoors and virtually.

Housing and Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Our theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues are the envy of the world and are central to our cultural heritage.

That's why we're investing £1.57 billion to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions, as well as ensuring these buildings aren't destroyed.

It is vital they are properly protected by the planning system for both people today to enjoy and future generations.

Jon Morgan, Director of the Theatres Trust, said:

We welcome the news of revisions to the planning system, which reinforce and increase protections for our treasured theatres and provide reassurance for the communities that use and value them.

The COVID-19 lockdown has rendered otherwise vibrant theatres vulnerable to permanent closure and we have already seen a number of theatres fall vacant due to the operator going into liquidation.

These measures will help ensure these vital community assets are protected during the current crisis and can be revived to serve their local communities once again.

Once introduced, this policy will remain in place until 31 December 2022.

A written ministerial statement will be laid to outline the planning changes and will have immediate effect on the planning system.

Find out more about the [next steps for re-opening the performing arts industry](#).

Find our more information on the [£1.57 billion investment to protect Britain's cultural, arts and heritage institutions](#).