



UCKG HELPCENTRE SUBMITS PLANNING APPLICATION FOR GRANADA CINEMA, HOE STREET

The UCKG HelpCentre's planning application for the restoration and redevelopment of the Grade II* listed former Granada Cinema building at 186 Hoe Street has been submitted to Waltham Forest Council and validated.

In seeking change of use and listed building consent, the intention is to bring the building back into active use with public access, and to conserve and restore the structure while bringing it up to modern standards. The proposals involve minimal disturbance of 1930s fabric, particularly the much loved Theodore Komisarjevsky interior, and enhancements to the street frontage.

A sizeable proportion of the building will be converted into the Granada Rooms and available for a variety of community, cultural and leisure activities that could include cinema shows. A youth centre, café and a bookshop will be created within the building, and the main auditorium will be used daily for UCKG's services.

Importantly, a number of changes have been made to the planning application as a direct result of community and stakeholder consultation. Key changes relate to:

- Elements of the conservation work including the top arch section of the façade of the building, the kitchen and stairways
- Transparency regarding the management of the Granada Rooms
- Assurance that parking for the restored building will not be detrimental to local residents
- Improved and ongoing communications between the UCKG HelpCentre and the community in Walthamstow.

Paul Hill, property manager of the UCKG HelpCentre said: “Our aim is, and always has been to do something good for Walthamstow. We listened to local opinion which cried out for community use and access, in a restored Granada cinema building, and have come up with a solution which is a ‘first’ for us.

“Specifically, we are proposing a division of uses between a Christian facility and a commercially managed community resource. Our submission addresses Waltham Forest’s current planning policy and relevant national and regional policies and guidelines.

“We recognise that people want a clear split between the church elements and the Granada Rooms and are already preparing to source a suitable third party to manage this part of the building, independent of us. We would also like to reassure Walthamstow residents that the Granada Rooms will operate tiered pricing with lower rates for non-commercial users.”

In conclusion, he added: “We would stress that we are working to create a local facility for our church members and attendees so there will be no great requirement for car usage as most people will be able to get along on foot or by bus. Further, our transport assessment confirms that there will be no negative impact on nearby residents as a result of travel and parking.”

As an organisation that works to support people in the communities where it operates, the UCKG HelpCentre has sought to engage stakeholders throughout the development of its current proposals. The process started with a site visit for the borough conservation officer in March 2008.

In line with normal planning activity, it has involved extensive discussion with stakeholders including conservation and arts interests, English Heritage, councillors and planning officers. The draft proposals – as presented to stakeholders and the community in April this year – already responded to local opinion and were refined further as a result of extended stakeholder and public consultation.

UCKG encourages constructive two-way communication with the Walthamstow community. Its new website, www.granadarooms.co.uk will be launched shortly. The project’s freephone information line, 0800 298 7040 remains available.

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Notes to editors:

- 1 The UCKG HelpCentre consulted extensively with stakeholders and the local community in Walthamstow in respect of the current planning application. Stakeholders and 400 local households were invited to the public consultation exhibition in April 2009.
- 2 UCKG is a Christian church and registered charity that offers a range of practical support activities alongside spiritual support and comfort. It was formed in 1977 and is active in 176 countries as a church in the mainstream Pentecostal tradition. It reached the UK in 1995 and has gone from strength to strength, providing support and spreading the Christian faith. There are currently 37 UCKG branches in England and Wales, comprising both full time HelpCentres and part time 'Special Works'.

Contacts

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