Letters to Marlborough News Online regarding The Parade Canopy.

Conserving The Parade Cinema – letter from Tony Millett

22 August 2023

Sirs,

I was appalled to read your report about Wiltshire Council's order to remove The Parade Cinema's temporary tent or marquee (or was it just an awning?).

I must declare an interest: I have enjoyed a drink under its protection as this summer's rains poured down on the town.

The order by the Council's 'Conservation Team' mystifies me. And I have been unable to find the reasons for the order on the Council's website. Why don't such orders have to be made public and be fully explained to everyone who wants to know?

Wiltshire Council should be extremely grateful to The Parade Cinema for rescuing this fast deteriorating listed building. The Council gave planning permission – based on the careful applications that a listed building requires – to turn the former chapel and former antiques market into a cinema. End of story.

What spiritual remnant or architectural heritage has been disturbed by the temporary marquee/tent/awning? I would say precisely none. The building is – with Wiltshire Council's permission – a cinema. Get over it. And stop interfering with this commercial enterprise which is such a great boon to Marlborough. The prime aim of the Council should be conserving the cinema.

Their order is ridiculous. But I fear there may be more ridiculous orders to come. I fully expect this Council's 'Conservation Team' to object to the cinema showing some film they think conflicts with the building's architecture or former use – or with the Council's conservation policies. Enough!

Yours,

Tony Millett
Marlborough

The Parade Cinema awning – letter from Maralyn Patterson

24 August 2023

Sirs,

In response to Mr Tony Millet's letter concerning the awning erected by the owners of our very popular 'Parade Cinema' and to add my support by saying that the contents of his letter are my sentiments entirely.

Yours,

Maralyn Pattison
Marlborough

The Parade Cinema awning – letter from Terry Baldwin

25 August 2023

Sirs,

I am in total support and agreement with Mr.Millet and Ms. Patterson's observations regarding the Parade Cinema Awning.

I would like to know where the Wiltshire Council's 'Conservation Team' get their dictatorial and autocratic authority to issue draconian dictates on the activities of Marlborough Town residents without [it appears] any input from our Town Council.

As a resident I would like to know where their terms of reference are promulgated so I can Canvas for us Council Tax Payers to be consulted on such issues in the future.

A search on their website raised 1017 hits for "Conservation Team". I don't have time to trawl through through that lot, could someone point me in the right direction to get to the bottom of this?

Yours,

Terry Baldwin
Marlborough

The Parade Cinema awning – letter from Colin Gratton

26 August 2023

Sirs,

I would also like to support the recent letters you have published with regard to Conservation Officers from Wilts CC requesting the much needed awning is removed.

During Covid and beyond Wilts CC like many other Councils allowed the expansion of street seating outside restaurants and cafes all along town centres and Marlborough saw a proliforation of outside seating along it's High Street which has given the town a different positive feel.

During this period the Parade Cinema was built from a sad/neglected listed building in the Parade all with planning permission and support from Wilts CC. The re-build was not easy with many problems found along the way but in 2021 the cinema opened and it's creators along with a great staff team have given the town a wonderful amenity. The cinema has not only screened blockbuster films but films from many other genres as well as creating a cinema for all. It has also helped rejuvenate a hidden gem in the Parade with music festivals, Easter Egg Hunts, Christmas market and much more!

The icing on the cake for many residents and vistors alike is being able to sit on the open space in front of cinema to enjoy a peaceful cup of coffee/glass of wine/food – it is a little oasis of calm. When the tasteful awning went up it allowed cinema patrons and the general public to enjoy socialising in all weathers including the winter when heaters are provided. The awning is not attached to the listed building so surely Conservation Officers could be pragmatic?

So why have Wiltshire's Conservation Officers spoilt this wonderful venue and why have Marlborough Town Councillors being inactive to date on the matter?

We are very lucky to have a cinema in Marlborough again and it attracts people from far and wide. However, like many businesses in the current economic climate it needs support not obstacles and Conservation Officers/Wilts CC need to apply some 'commonsense' to this matter and quickly.

Yours,

Colin Gratton
Manton