SUBMISSION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE ERECTION OF A TENT AT
THE PARADE CINEMA
MARLBOROUGH
WILTS SN8 1NE

SEPTEMBER 2023

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PREPARED BY:
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Chairman
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Introduction
The Parade Cinema was developed from 2020 to 2021, transforming the listed Chapel, which had been empty and for sale for two years, from near dereliction to its current splendour. Its last occupant before was an antiques and bric-a-brac market.
The forecourt in front of the cinema has been an essential area for serving food and drink and holding community and other events.
In April 2023, a clear plastic tent was erected over the courtyard to enable customers to be sheltered from the weather. It was a huge success, especially for disabled people who could drive their scooters or wheelchairs or walk straight into it from the street. It enabled community events to take place whatever the weather.
In July 2023 we were instructed to take it down.

Economics
The cinema has become a valuable asset to the town and Wiltshire, both in bringing much business to the local hospitality and retail units and also in adding to the community attractions of the area to residents and visitors.
July was a very wet month so we suffered financially without the tent. Cinemas depend on retail sales; ticket sales for performances are not sufficient. In the financial year to May 31st 2023, for most of which we had no tent, the business lost £95,000.
The commercial case for the tent is overwhelming. With the tent, a thriving café can be developed to help bring the business to profit; without it, it will be very difficult.

Heritage
We have restored the listed chapel and incorporated the attached minister's house, 2 The Manse, to incorporate catering facilities. There is limited space inside for customers so the forecourt is essential.
The tent is transparent so the building is visible through it. Before we acquired the building it was mainly hidden by trees (which we trimmed or removed) and the forecourt was a jungle of weeds. It is strange, having restored it to its original condition and opened it up to sight from the street, that the erection of a transparent tent which only blurs a part of the building should be objected to.
We raised the money to do the transformation on the basis that it was partly for use as a community benefit, but it must make money. Cinemas (and catering) are having a hard time at the moment with rising costs and painful cost-of-living challenges for customers.
The original chapel was built in 1817, funded by public subscription. It ceased to be a chapel in 1984 and, as was said above, was in very poor condition when we bought it. It is satisfactory that 200 or so years later we have restored it to its former glory (funded again by public subscription) and given

it the chance to give many people pleasure, and to add to the attraction of Marlborough and its surrounds.

What we are asking for

The tent does not touch the building. It has no foundations and is free-standing. We believe that it cannot be called a permanent structure. We need it desperately not only for financial reasons, but for the general pleasure of the public, especially the disabled and children.

We understand that there is a reluctance to allow it to stay up permanently. We have been told it can be put up for events (as long as that was not every weekend) and for a longer period in the winter.

We would hope that we could be permitted to leave it up with a condition that it is taken down every year for a short period to avoid it being thought 'permanent'.