

Asset of Community Value (ACV)

Starting point for an ACV application

Firstly, the main requirement is that the theatre needs a local amenity group or residents' association to apply to the local council for an ACV.

Theatre owners, as an interested party, cannot apply. The ACV must be applied for by a local independent group who have the backing of their community who in turn think that the theatre is an essential part of living/life in the area.

The group will then take statements from their members and other interested parties (including the theatre owners, directors & managers) and more especially from well-spoken local people who will make wonderful and well-meaning comments about the quality of work at the theatre which is very important to the residents and businesses in the area.

The amenity group then apply to the local council for the ACV and there is a process which includes a public consultation. Objections can be heard, supporters can speak, and the council will say yea or nay.

The ACV must be renewed every five years, but the renewal process is not as complicated unless there are serious objections. If the landlords (freeholders or head leaseholders) decide to sell the building for a non-theatrical use, the local ACV applicant's group must be given first option to purchase the venue and continue running it as a theatre.

Using Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate North London as an example, it took about six months from the initial application to the 'yea' decision. Why was the ACV needed? When Upstairs at the Gatehouse's lease on the first floor auditorium was about to expire there was a rumour that the pub owners may turn the theatre into a wedding/function venue - hence the ACV application. A local amenity group agreed that the theatre, which opened in 1997, was very much a 'community asset'. They took on the application process which proved successful, and the venue continues to operate as a theatre.

There are several websites with more information and each UK local council should have a section on ACVs within the council website.

This is a link to a simple explanation:

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/nominating-an-asset-of-community-value-acv-and-community-right-to-bid>