



REVIEW OF DEMONTFORT HALL

SITE VISIT

23RD JULY 2009

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Supported by Cllr Naylor



INTRODUCTION

- The Task Group arrived at De Montfort Hall (DMH) at which the first Task Group Meeting was undertaken. At This meeting it was agreed that the Task Group would look into facilities with a view to refurbishment as it is now needed to bring it up to standards of similar venues.
- DMH was built in 1913 and was last refurbished in 1995.
- We need to take into account that DMH celebrates its centenary in 2013 and is a major contributor to Leicester's cultural offer.



OUTSIDE DMH



- If you were a visitor to the city you would very easily drive by DMH not knowing what the building was used for as there is no corporate signage to say welcome to DMH. Indeed there is also no reference to “One Leicester” anywhere in the vicinity.

The old display board which used to display forthcoming attractions deteriorated over the years and was condemned hence it is no longer there outside the gate. There used to be one on the corner of Regent Road/University Road which had also deteriorated and is no longer present.

OUTSIDE DMH

- Bollards were of two varieties, iron and wood. The wooden ones would be better to be replaced with iron ones in the grounds. The wooden ones were in need of repainting as were the iron gates.
- The ground's lighting had plastic bowls which were added at some point. Task group members felt that a Victorian style lamp similar to those at the front gates and in place along New Walk would be better in keeping with the building and add to the character.



GARDEN SUITE



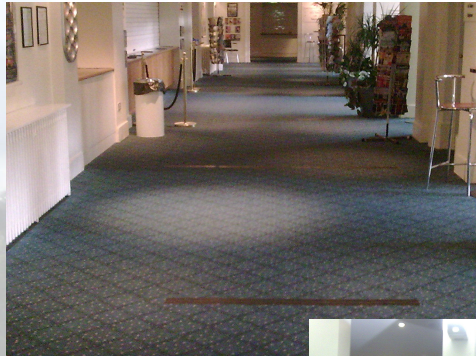
- We started in the Garden Suite as that is where the meeting was held. There were damaged interior wooden doors which were in need of attention and painting also cracked mirror panel needed to be replaced where the clock is situated.
- The whole of the Garden Suite needed interior painting including the ceiling.
- New carpets are also needed throughout DMH as the current ones have been condemned in a recent Health and Safety Report as we went round the front of house areas large areas of carpet were stuck down with industrial tape.

PUBLIC USE TOILETS

- Internal signage was poor in condition, in some instances it was laminated card stuck to the wall with blue tack.
- Toilets around the venue are long overdue a refit with damaged walls, plaster and paint is coming off. The flooring is stained and needs replacing. A general overall of the toilet facilities is required which includes interior painting. The disabled toilet and baby change needs to be included as part of refurbishment. All toilet signage on doors needs replacing to include Braille.

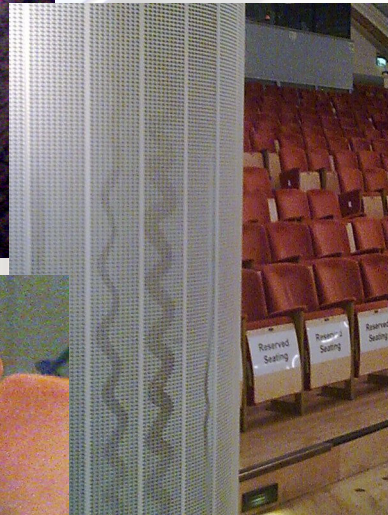


FRONT OF HOUSE



- Carpets in this area are in need of replacing, there are many patches that are repaired with industrial tape.
- Internal redecoration is needed throughout the area, there is noticeable plastering on the right hand post in the front of house area that needs to be repainted.

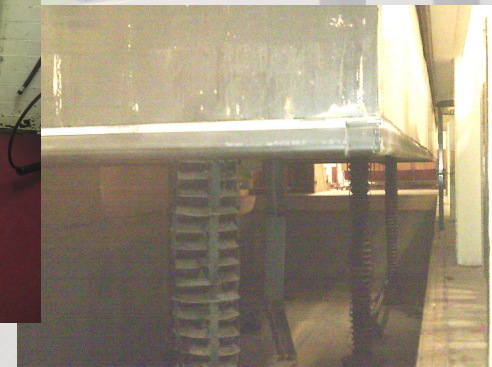
MAIN AUDITORIUM



- The flooring needs to be sanded as it had gone black in some areas due to wear and tear. However there is an issue when carrying out sanding works as the organ would need to be sealed.
- The seating at the top of the auditorium is too warm, this due to the current cooling system being inadequate for the venue. The Task Group would recommend Air Conditioning throughout the building.
- There are also issues around leg room in this area as per correspondence received from DMH users.

MAIN AUDITORIUM

- The side seating from upstairs is in need of reordering to face the stage as achieved in similar venues.
- Stage right flooring needs to be replaced.
- There are issues around the stage lift elevator (company used was not compliant) significant revenue can be lost as a result of malfunctions up to a £150k per week if the building has to close. The stage edge does not work and they are currently having problems resolving this.



VICTORIA BAR



- Internal walls need attention and painting throughout. On the day of the visit one of the external doors had actually come away from its hinges and had been boarded up as a result. Blinds in this area also need replacing.

DMH KITCHEN

- On entering the kitchen there was a strong odour of grease due to there being poor ventilating and spraying equipment which was inadequate.
- The Task Group were informed that half the appliances do not work and a better extractor fan was needed.
- A complete refit of the kitchen area including appliances and painting was required. It was questionable if the kitchen had been included when the hall was last refurbished in 1995.



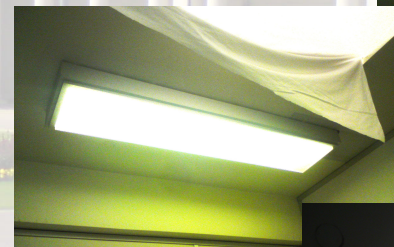
DRESSING ROOMS



- The dressing rooms were very basic in nature and in need of internal painting, new carpets and curtains and new work tops were also needed. Ceiling vents were leaking and were in need of attention.

BACK STAGE OFFICES

- The back stage office areas were very cramped, short on space; the rooms were too hot, better ventilation was required.
- Better blinds were required for skylights instead of blankets hanging from the roof. The Perspex in the skylights had gone black due to excessive heat from the sun.
- The lighting in all offices needed to be replaced as the fittings were coming away from the ceiling which posed a health and safety risk.
- The whole of the office layout needs reordering and redecorating with new carpet.



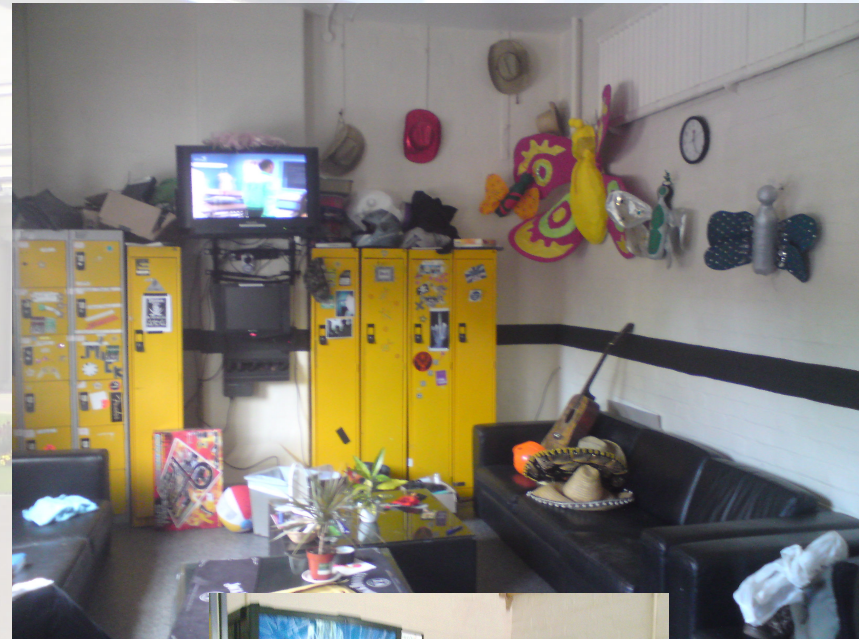
STAGE DOOR OFFICE/RECEPTION



- Task Group members spoke to the staff member working in this area and they felt that the window would be better open plan. Better ventilation was needed as windows could not be opened in this area.
- There was lots of computers in this room which added further to the heat issue.
- The environment felt claustrophobic.

CANTEEN/REST ROOM

- The canteen room was in need of a complete revamp, including internal redecoration. The rest room also had the same issue as the stage door office that windows could not be opened.





SUMMARY

The Task Group recognises that there is a significant amount of refurbishment work that needs to be undertaken and will therefore possibly need to adopt a short, medium and long term strategy to enable this to take place, bringing DMH back to a standard which the citizens of Leicester and beyond require and deserve. Front of House improvements, like internal decoration and carpets throughout should be a priority. The Task Group undertakes to work with all officers and all concerned regarding strategy and programme of improvements.