



42 GLOUCESTER AVENUE, LONDON NW1 8JD

WORKSHOP: 071-722 1728 • ADMINISTRATION & DISTRIBUTION: 071-586 4806 • CINEMA: 071-586 8516

July 25th '91

to RPM/Dean Street, London W1

c.c. Irene Whitehead (BFI)  
Jim Pines "  
Ian Christie "

Dear Karl and Jonathan,

Thankyou for attending our executive meeting of July 18th. After the BFI representatives had left, a detailed discussion followed and 2 votes were taken. The first was a poll vote of all present, to determine the feeling over the suitability of the site for conversion into a cinema/studio area for the LFMC.

For 0 Against 10 Abstentions 5

Hence the Dunn & Co. site was not considered suitable for this purpose.

Given the financial information re. grants and availability of funds for alternative relocation (provided by BFI reps.), a vote of the management/executive committee was then taken, as to whether the LFMC must accept to move to the Dunn & Co. site.(the BFI having already commenced negotiations).

For 7 Against 3 Abstentions 0

On this basis the LFMC agreed that it had no alternative but to move to the site.

Ian Christie had suggested that our requirements be made known, whichever our decision. Therefore a list of basic specifications and requirements was drawn up at an emergency meeting of July 23rd (enclosed). We are in the process of researching the technical problems posed by this site, to see whether there is any way of overcoming them. The space, projection, screen, seating configuration is however fundametally limiting.

Please note (see P.2 enclosed) that immediate consultation between LVA and LFMC is necessary to negotiate and agree the terms and conditions pertaining to access and management of the screening and adjacent exhibition area. To our knowledge shared use of the space was based on recommendations requiring a very much larger area than that now apparently planned and therefore did not impinge upon LFMC's integrated operations.

As is said, the LFMC is setting up a formal Building Committee of persons with relevant technical and practical expertise. This committee will be responsible for making recommendations to management, being the LFMC executive committee.

The LFMC ask that in future all communication and consultation to be through the Building Committee, with any final decision thence,by the executive. We are to consult with the BFI over the necessary appointment of specialists to be involved on LFMC's behalf, in the design stage of the project. We will likewise provide more detailed information to the enclosed and would welcome any immediate questions that you need answering.

Trusting that you will understand the compressed timescale in which we have had to prepare the documents so far.

Yours Sincerely,

*Martin Lugg*

(Martin Lugg on behalf of LFMC  
Building Committee & executive)



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Presented at Exec of 18.7.91.

WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSED DUNN & CO. BUILDING FOR RELOCATION LFMC/LVA

First viewing by executive 3rd July '91

Plans supplied by RPM 10th July '91

Second viewing 16th July

It is acknowledged that the allocation for LVA is a substantial improvement in space area and that their current need to move quickly is a matter of some urgency.

Likewise, although the LFMC has no final date for moving from Gloucester Avenue, we are eager to secure improved premises and location as soon as possible. It appears that the proposed site provides an ample increase in space for office, Distribution archive and Workshop facilities.

Reservations have however been voiced about the suitability of the proposed site for conversion into a cinema/studio space and adjoining exhibition area as follows:-

SPACE AREA/EXHIBITION

The Gloucester Avenue site currently provides 2300 sq.ft. for screenings, installation/exhibition, performance, shooting studio, meetings and social use (café)

The areas designated on the proposed site for these functions is 1500 sq.ft. representing a reduction of some 800 sq.ft. of space, the main exhibition/screening space representing the largest reduction of some 500 sq.ft., a loss of 33%.

Seating capacity is reduced accordingly. RPM have suggested maximum capacity to be 105 seats, but it would appear that the maximum will be 80, without possible standing room and no more than one aisle.

Our current space seats 110/120 with room for 2 aisles.

THE SHAPE OF THE PROPOSED MAIN EXHIBITION AREA

poses problems which need to be addressd in terms of the LFMC's regular flexible use requirement.

- a) Festivals and special seasons - accommodation of a large audience (i.e. LFF)
- b) Use for installations, multi-screen projection, performance and music related events - accommodation of the same plus audience.
- c) Studio/shooting space, which provides for some construction and lighting
- d) Meetings/conferences.

The above earn income through either hire or increased audience attendance, in addition to the obvious visibility/publicity for the whole organisation and its film work.

with ref. to

a) the possibility of large scale events will be reduced (30% less seating capacity than at present)

b) in addition to conventional single screen work with married sound, the LFMC's reputation covers exhibition of multi-screen work. Upwards of 6 projectors have

have been used

with loops of varying length (to 100ft). In order for this to take place the projectors have to be sited in the auditorium to the width of some 20 ft. in order that the projected beam remains at right angles to the screen (to avoid distortion of the image) and at a height for comfortable viewing.

In the case of the proposed screening area the projectors would have to be positioned a third into the space either directly beneath or immediately in front of the projection booth. Space behind the projectors would become redundant for seating, further reducing audience capacity.

Likewise with INSTALLATION WORK and PERFORMANCE/MUSIC RELATED EVENTS either the stage area or space in front of the screen or centre space of the Gloucester Ave. site is currently used.

The use of some 12/14ft in front of the screen on the proposed site would eat into the first/second longest rows of seating.

Since these expanded events tend almost always to draw the largest audiences, such loss of seating capacity will lose valuable income. Both the shape and size of the proposed space will severely restrict the possibility of staging such events. The audience restriction (income) will inevitably affect financial planning for the same.

(n.b. events/installations include freestanding monitors, groups of up to 20 performers, lighting and sound gear, pianos and other instruments and constructions etc. Examples of expanded work have contributed to the LFMC's reputation and vitality over its past and recent history most recently the Austrian Travel Art Archive and the February expanded 35mm and 16mm multi screen projections)

DANCE or larger scale MUSIC related events will prove difficult to stage. FLEXIBLE arrangement of seating will likewise be awkward. The triangular shape poses obvious problems in terms of physical organisation and freedom of movement.

c) the triangular space is not suitable for use as a shooting studio, thus eliminating the dual function possibility, hence loss of income and creation of work on site.

#### SOUND

The existing Cinema space Gloucester Ave. needs to be vastly improved upon. Owing to flexible use requirement of the space the floor cannot be carpeted. The proposed height of the ceiling in relation to its width will create a worse 'echo' problem than experienced at present. The actual funnel shape (opposite taper from all cinemas/theatres) will however pose serious sound reflection problems that need to be sensibly researched.

Since the sound reproduction in a given cinema space undoubtedly contributes to the way in which films are received (or rejected) this aspect of the space/shape for cinema use is of crucial importance.

#### IMAGE

The floor of the proposed projection room is some 7 ft. higher than at present. Picture geometry problems will have to be addressed. The projected image using a standard lens will be correspondingly higher, and the audience will get an uncomfortable crick in the neck unless we spend on specially designed lenses for all our various projectors. With Super 8 projectors and portable 16mm equipment this is most probably impossible.

SIZE OF IMAGE correspondingly will suffer a proportionate reduction, the proposed booth being much closer to the screen (12ft ?). To correct this one may use zoom lenses, but these reputedly do not give the optimum definition.

(Dipping the angle of projection with standard lenses creates considerable distortion)

For the above reasons the proposed site and projection room above pose serious technical/practical problems of image/sound reproduction, which become more complex to overcome with regard to innovative and multi-projection format.

Time, money and specialist assistance will be required to see whether these technical difficulties can be satisfactorily resolved.

#### ACCESS

Fire regulations will require exits at both ends of space.

Main cinema entrance must be at the rear (latecomers, early leavers etc.)

Access proposed to projection room is unsuitable. Quick/safe access from booth to auditorium is essential (for sound checks and complex set ups)

Box Office must be sited close to the main entrance, since Co-operative cannot afford 2 ushers.

The lift shaft to be functional for disabled access would need to be sited to rear of cinema area onto lobby.

Would be more practical in building of this unusual shape to site lift at the apex (convergence of 3 main sections). Where it is currently proposed, heavy duty equipment from the Workshop area would daily have to be carried through the proposed office.

We feel that major structural alterations such as sinking lift shafts and separate stairwells should be properly surveyed and costed before proceeding with the leases. (Apart from the removal of floors that are evidently necessary)

ACCESS for loading does not appear to be available, unless use of the proposed underground carpark is agreed under the terms of the lease. Disabled parking would be desirable with sinking of lift to parking level also.

#### APPROACH to the building

is down extremely noisy bus road and some way from tube (Northern Line only) When so much discussion in the past addressed the need for the Cinema to be sited more centrally, or more accessibly to various tube/bus routes, the current site is by no means an improvement.

SOUND from convergence of two very noisy main roads will mean spaces will have to be satisfactorily sound proofed

- a) screenings (particularly for silent films)
- b) for sound recording.

#### LIGHT

Available daylight for the proposed main Co-op area is very poor. The bottom of the windows being above head height and small. There is not a regulation window to floor area ratio for working in natural light. The facade cannot be changed to overcome this working condition.

The main Co-operative and LVA workspaces are situated on the East side of the building without direct sunlight. This could be a depressing feature.

Notwithstanding the many conceivable alternatives for arrangement of our Workshop and Distribution facilities and/or possible combining of certain space areas with LVA (i.e. possible joint office use of the upper floor on the West side of the building currently proposed for MDA), the central function or public front of the London Film-makers' Co-operative is in exhibition/screening of experimental film. It is one of the few remaining venues that screens such films and is the only venue that regularly screens expanded film work and installation/performance related work. The exhibition area and function is of great importance in relation to both the Distribution and Workshop.

For audiences the way that a space feels when they enter it should not be underestimated, and space (the size, shape and organisation of it) needs to match the work that is shown in it. This also goes for the work that becomes inspired by it.

Basically the proposed exhibition area and adjoining cafe area are too small and the wrong shape. And we have less for two organisations with different technical requirements than we now have alone.

1. The available exhibition/cafe space for joint use needs to be much larger.
2. The possibility of opening up the floor to the East side of the building (the darker side) to create a large, fluid rectangular cinema/studio space maybe should be surveyed and costed. Other facilities would fall into place without difficulty.
3. A list of fundamental technical/practical requirements would need to be drawn up and accurately costed in addition to the ambitious structural alternatives proposed.

We feel that the major restructuring and re-routing of services may well absorb the larger portion of the sum that the landlord is said to be willing to provide for 'refurbishment'. The remainder may well not extend to a good standard of finish in what should become a major venue for art-based media/exhibition in Britain.

We strongly urge the BFI to insist upon clear and accurate costing of the above and to have an in depth technical/architectural appraisal of the same. We appreciate the BFI's considerable efforts in identifying funding for this prestigious project and hope that they may give thought to jointly discussing with us the possibility of engaging architects that are equally avant-garde.

It is hoped that these observations will assist in determining the right course with respect to and satisfaction of all parties concerned.

It should be pointed out however that the financial and time considerations that appear to make the Dunn & Co site attractive need comparison with the many feasible sites currently vacant and more suitable for immediate conversion to include a large cinema/exhibition space.

Report prepared with assistance from artists, film-makers and film technicians.

*Martin Lugg*

Martin Lugg B.Sc.Civ.Eng. M.I.C.E.