Audio-Visual Guide to the Great Hall, Central Hall, Westminster

Re-opening ceremony, 2005

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1. General Information

Central Hall, Westminster is a building of historical interest. It is owned by the Methodist Church and managed by people who operate at high standards. As such, it has certain regulations and it is required that the building is respected at all times by those who use it. This document contains helpful information directed specifically towards audio-visual companies who come in to the building.

The Great Hall is an unusual room in that it was originally designed as a church rather than a business conference centre. This means that the layout is not always ‘AV friendly’ for the requirements of specific events, so it is advised that this document is read thoroughly and in plenty of time before you are due to enter the building.

2. General rules

The venue understands that sometimes a client will outsource audio-visual equipment, i.e. a client wishes *not* to use the internal audio-visual company. This is no problem; however the venue does require that an in-house technician be present at all times that the outsourced company is in the building. This is to observe the conduct of the guest company in terms of health & safety and respect for the building. The in-house technician will also be on hand to offer advice on any technical element of the building should the guest company require it.

An important rule of the building that you will be need to bear in mind when preparing equipment for the event is that there is **strictly no gaffer tape to be used in the building for any reason**. AV companies must provide other solutions for covering cables, e.g.: rubber matting or solid trunking.

The stage has been installed as part of the recent refurbishment. Therefore extra care must be taken when moving equipment on and near it. Damage to the stage will be taken very seriously by the management and repairs are likely to be extremely costly.

3. Load in/out

The loading bay is located at the back of the building on Matthew Parker Street, SW1. This can be used at most times during the day, however there are certain times when other arrangements will apply, as stated below. The loading bay is often used by employees of the venue to park their cars at these times care must be taken when loading in equipment.

The entrance height of the bay will not allow most vans to park inside the loading bay. It is advised that vehicles are parked alongside the pavement and flight-cases etc. are pushed the rest of the way. Once a vehicle is unloaded, it will need to be moved to avoid blocking the loading bay and to avoid traffic wardens who are particularly vigilant in the Westminster area. There are nearby parking meters and car-parks in the surrounding area which will be detailed below. External companies will not be permitted to use the loading bay for the parking of vehicles.

The loading bay can be used between 7.00 am and 11.00 pm. Due to local residents and noise restrictions, any loading or unloading outside of these times must be through another entrance, a pedestrian door on the corner of Matthew Parker Street and Tothill Street, SW1.

Once inside the building there is a decent sized goods lift that travels to the Great Hall stalls on the 3rd floor, and the Great Hall gallery level on the 4th floor. The lift measurements are:

180 cm wide
290 cm long
210 cm high

(You can just about fit a couple of 10 ft set panels inside at diagonals.)

On the 3rd floor the equipment route passes through a recently refurbished VIP area, therefore great care must be taken when pushing heavy equipment through.

If you need to load in items that are too large for the lift e.g. set panels over 10 ft, these need to come in through the main entrance at the front of the building and be **walked up** the main staircase to the 3rd floor. Each time equipment is moved through this area it must be cleared by the in-house event staff first.

Under no circumstances are the passenger lifts at the front of the building to be used for transporting flight-cases.

4. Sound

The Great Hall has an in-built Meyer sound system that was installed in 2005, the specification is detailed below. Under prior arrangement this can be used in whole or in part by external companies, the limitations of which will have been discussed with event organisers before the event. Usually, it is not permitted that external technicians may use the in-house sound desk, although the guest company may bring their own sound desk to plug into the in-house system. This will be done under the direct supervision of the Central Hall in-house technician, who will also monitor sound levels as to avoid potential damage to the system.

Sound control
The in-house AV system is controlled by an Allen & Heath ML3000-824 sound desk and Cue wireless remote control.

Sound desk:
Allen & Heath ML3000
24 x mono XLR mic/line inputs
4 x twin stereo line inputs (1=CD-RW, 3=Cassette Recorder, 4=DVD)
8 x digital VCA groups
8 x digital mute groups
4 x group outputs (usually run through graphic equalizers to LCR output)
4 x available aux. outputs (other 4 are hardwired to in-house kit)

LCR output to side-bar speakers and central hanging line-array

2 x outputs to amped speakon in stage floor-boxes (usually used for foldback monitors)

4 x matrix outputs controlling side-stage / gallery / stalls / crush hall speakers

Cue wireless control:
Video switching of in-house projectors (Stage VGA / Tech-desk VGA / Tech-desk DVD inputs)
Full control of in-house DVD player
Master amp volume control
Stage floor-box amped speakon-out volume control

Built-in AV equipment:
(used by prior arrangement only)
CD recorder/re-writer (Tascam CD-RW750)
DVD player (Toshiba SD-340e)
Twin cassette deck (Tascam 322)
4 x radio mic receivers (2 x Sabine SW 72-R twin receivers with popular mic. emulators)
Multi-effect processor (Yamaha SPX2000 twin channel)
4 channel compressor (Drawmer DL441 quad-channel limiter)

There is a patch-bay at the control desk for routing in-out of the system. This is a mirror image of the re-routable channels on the back of the desk. It includes:
24 x XLR sends to the stage floor-boxes (incl. 4 returns)
24 x XLR mic/line sound desk inputs
2 x XLR stereo line sound desk inputs
2 x aux.1 XLR sends
2 x aux.2 XLR sends
L & R SPX2000 inputs
L & R SPX2000 outputs
L & R CD-RW inputs
4 X Radio mic receiver outputs
2 x spare XLR sends to AV rack
2 x spare XLR returns to AV rack

1 x composite input to video switcher (usually used for DVD player)

Sound Output
FOH Centre Cluster
Meyer M1D line array (4 x cabinets, each: 60 Hz to 18 kHz, max out. 125 dB SPL)

Stage, stalls and balcony speakers
6 x Meyer UPM-1P 3-way active loudspeakers (each: 75 Hz to 20k Hz, max out. 123 dB SPL)

Under balcony
2 x Meyer MM-4 (each: max out. 112.5 dB SPL)

Crush Hall (entrance hall area outside Great Hall)
2 x Turbosound speakers providing ample coverage

Stage floor monitors
4 x Turbosound TXD12M (each: 65 Hz to 20 kHz, max out. 122 dB SPL.)

The in-house speakers provide ample output for the Great Hall for speech and recorded music, and are reasonable for some live music. We have tried the addition of front-fill speakers at the front of the stage but have found this entirely unnecessary and actually have a bad effect on the quality of sound in the room. The Great Hall has the "2nd biggest unsupported concrete dome in the world;" if you have had any experience of the 'dome effect' you will know that very strange things can happen to sound waves in this environment.

Tie-Lines
There are tie-lines located in floor-boxes on the new stage. These may sometimes be used by guest AV companies with prior agreement. The contents of the floor-boxes are detailed below. Where otherwise stated the sends and returns run from the patch-bay underneath the sound desk at the back of the room.

1. 4 x cat 5 network plug-ins
   2 x 13amp

2. 6 x XLR sends (1 x return)
   2 x amped speakon output from desk
   4 x cat 5 network plug-ins
   2 x 13amp

3. 2 x 13amp

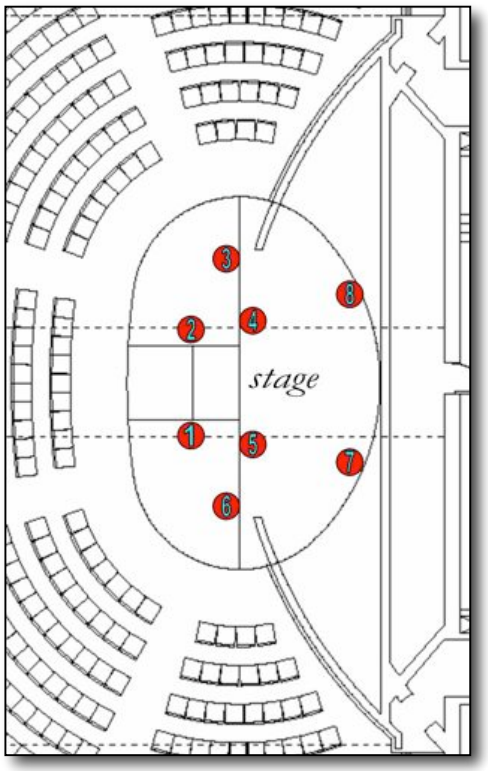
4. VGA out, from video switcher
   VGA in, to video switcher
   2 x 13amp
   2 x direct XLR (not available for use)

5. 6 x XLR sends (1 x return)
   2 x 13amp

6. 2 x 13amp
   2 x direct XLR (not available for use)

7. 6 x XLR sends (1 x return)
   2 x amped speakon output from desk

8. 6 x XLR sends (1 x return)
   2 x amped speakon output from desk



5. Lighting

Outsourced Lighting Kit

Rigging

The Great Hall has very specific limitations for lighting and it is vital, if an event will require more than a few basic lights that someone comes to look at the space first-hand. The hall has two lighting bars either side of the stalls on the front of the galleries. These are used for the in-house projectors and two of the PA speakers and have approximately 2 metres of space remaining for lighting. The safe working load (SWL) of each bar is: 200 kg.

If the galleries are not being used for audience members during the event then there is plenty of space for lighting, and companies are only limited by their imagination, as long as it is rigged safely and tidily.

If however, the galleries are to be used for audience there is a **very limited** amount of space available for lighting. There is room for one manfrotto style stand at each corner of the gallery. Cables and other lighting equipment must be kept to a minimum in public areas and will be scrutinized by the in-house technician as to their tidiness. This is to adhere to fire regulations, and is important for the health & safety of all users of the building.

Space for lighting control desks also follows a similar rule to the above. When the galleries are not in use, desks can sit anywhere on the gallery level at the lighting technician's need. When the galleries are in use, it is usual that the lighting desk sits on the stalls level. DMX and control cables etc. may hang over the balcony rail but must be securely fastened and tied out of the way of the public. The in-house technician will help with this where necessary.

Lighting Power

There is plenty of available power around the Great Hall which can be used for lighting. Either side of the organ at the front of the hall are outlets for three-phase power.
(63 amp 3-phase on the left side of the organ, 125 amp 3-phase on the right)

There is also a second 63 amp 3-phase outlet at the back left hand corner of the gallery.

Please remember that thick 3-phase power cables will need extra attention for tidiness and safety. It is preferred that any heavy mains power distribution be kept away from public areas.

House Lighting

The house lights for the space are controlled from a room **away from the Great Hall** and the majority are not dimmable. As such, if many changing lighting states will be needed for the event, then companies may need to provide their own lights for total coverage of the room.

The house lights are on different switches (detailed below) and can provide a range of different lighting states for different events, but swapping between states during an event would be far from ideal. The lights themselves are sodium type bulbs and therefore sometimes take a long time to light up after being switched on.

<u>There are separate controls for:</u>

Front chandelier main bowls
Front chandelier small bowls
Front chandelier dome up-lighters (4 level dimmable)

Rear chandelier main bowls
Rear chandelier small bowls
Rear chandelier dome up-lighters (4 level dimmable)

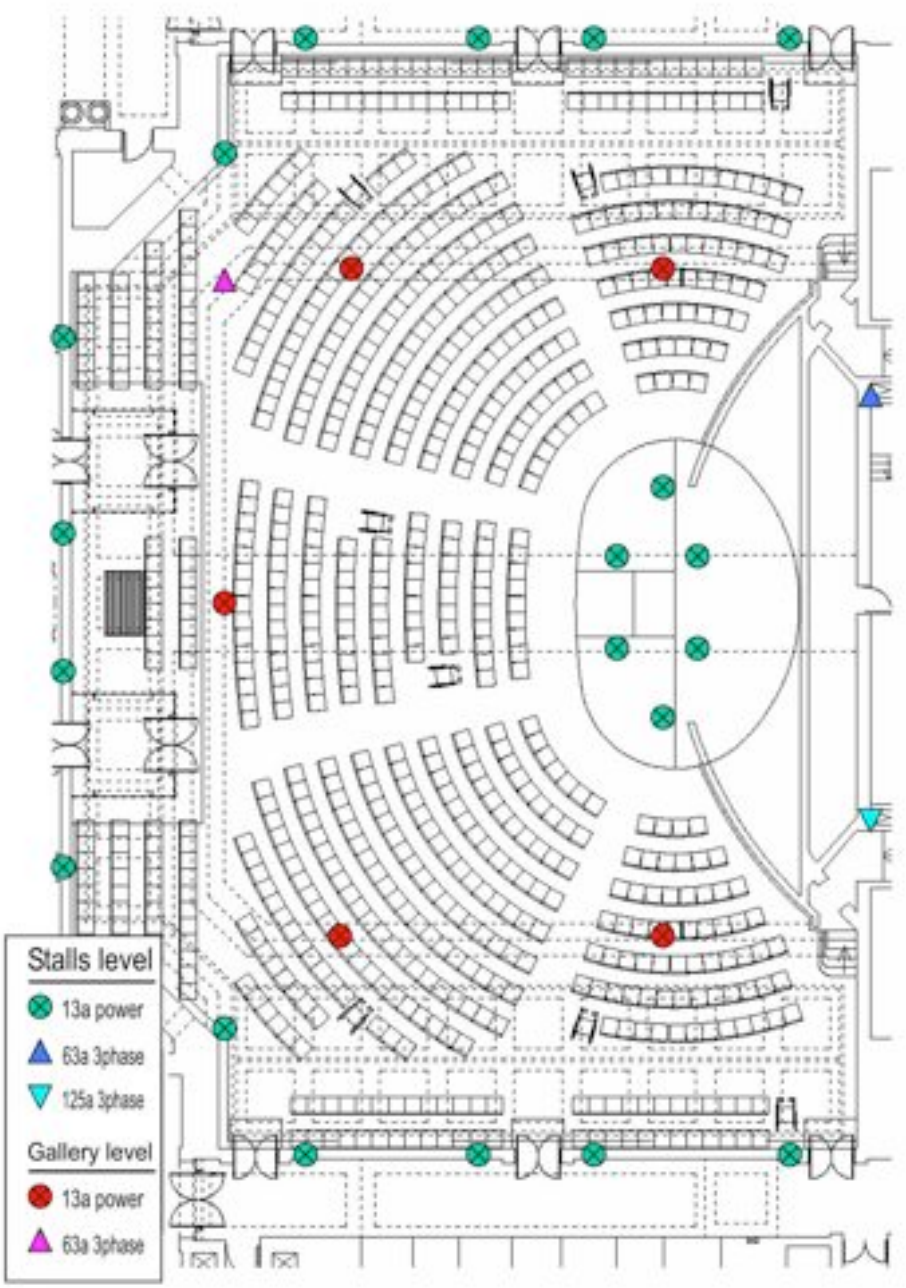
Under gallery bowls

Under gallery cornice

Gallery brackets
Gallery cornice

6. Power

As stated in the lighting section, there is plenty of 3-phase power in the Great Hall. Below is a diagram of the positions of all the power outlets in the hall.



There are also Cat. 5 network inputs at all of these 13 amp locations, use of which is through the event manager and not the audio-visual technician.

All cables running on the floor across public throughways must be secured and without using gaffer tape.

7. Hanging points

There are four hanging points located in the dome over the stage in the Great Hall. They are available for use by external companies providing prior arrangement has been made. For safety the venue has very strict regulations on the use of these hanging points.

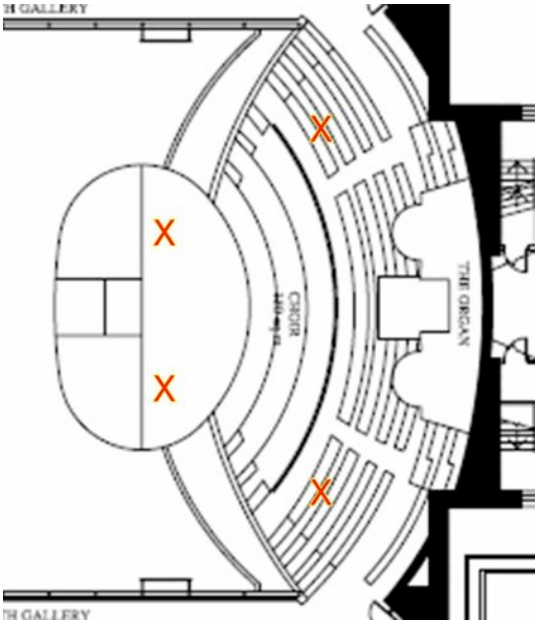
The in-house technical crew are able to provide facilities for hanging equipment, but will obviously need plenty of advanced warning.

If a visiting company wants to provide its own rigging equipment and technicians the following must be provided **at least** one week in advance of the rigging day:

- Proof of company insurance
- Copy of company health & safety policy
- Method statement for the event
- Risk assessment for the event

The points themselves are far from straightforward and it will be absolutely necessary for an experienced technician to come to the venue to see the hanging points themselves.

The hanging points hang above the stage at approximately these positions:



Each hanging point has a safe working load (SWL) of 750 kg.
The rear points are approximately 18 metres from floor level.
The front points are approximately 20 metres from the stage level (changeable with the stage height setting).
They are accessed from inside the dome which is from the 4th floor and up further flights of stairs.
The holes themselves are about the size of a 50 pence piece and therefore not large enough to pass a normal looped steel cable through.

8. Storage

Companies must pre-arrange a room for storage of flight-cases with the in-house event manager.

When the galleries are not being used by audience, flight-cases may be stored in the corridors on the 4th floor, but must be pushed against the wall and tidy so as to not interfere

with public throughways. There are business offices located on the 4th floor, and these corridors are in constant use by building staff.

9. Local Parking

There are many parking meters located around the local area which can be booked with the local council if necessary. You will need to find out the specific code numbers (detailed below) of the parking meters you intend to use and deal with Westminster City Council directly.

Otherwise, the meters cost £1 per 15 minutes of parking (welcome to Westminster!). No charges apply after 1830 hrs during weekdays or at any time during weekends.

There are local NCP style car-parks located in Abingdon Street, Horseferry Road, Rochester Row and Semly Place.

Parking Meter Numbers
Tothill Street: M6006, M6005, M6004, M6003
Matthew Parker Street: M6081, M6082, M6083, M6084, M6085, M6086

Westminster City Council: *020 7641 6850*

10. Control Positions & Cable Runs

Control Positions
There is plenty of room for control desks etc. at the back of the stalls area, providing it is not needed for audience seating. It is important to discuss with the event organiser about the necessity for space for control areas. Equipment can be positioned either side of the main entrance doors to the stalls areas or in front of the existing in-built control area.
In any of these cases control areas must not protrude into the room further than the glass entrance areas. They must also allow plenty of walkthrough space between the control area and the back row of audience seating. It is advisable that the guest company supply a tech-desk surround to ensure that the areas appear tidy and cables do not create a fire hazard.

The areas either side of the entrances are approximately 4m x 2.9m, depending on audience seating. Audience seating is sometimes laid out right up to the wall leaving no space at all.

Cable Runs
When cables need to be run from the stage to the control areas it is advisable that they are run via the gallery and dropped down over the balcony rail. This means that they do not cross any fire routes or exits. Following this route from the centre of the stage is approximately 50 metres.
When hanging cables from the gallery, they must be securely fastened and tied back out of reach of public areas. The in-house technician will assist with this if necessary.

Camera positions
Camera positions must follow the same rules as everything else, with thought to the health & safety of the public. Therefore cables and tripods etc. must not obstruct throughways. If it is necessary for cables to pass over throughways, cable matting must be used. If there is to be a moving camera with a trailing cable, this must be kept out of the way until audience members are seated.

You may use camera risers/staging, but space for these may be limited. This will need to be discussed with event managers as to how they will affect the seating arrangement. There must be a safe amount of walkthrough space at any throughway.

11. Performing Rights

Due to the arrangement of payment of royalties that this conference centre must follow, **all** recorded music that is played during the event must be noted down and the information given to the in-house technician or the in-house event manager by the end of the de-rig.
This should include the track name and recording artist, although any other information is useful.

12. Contacts

If you require any additional information or advice prior to your rigging day you may find the Central Hall website of some use:

www.c-h-w.com

Or contact the in-house technical manager:

Steven Ash
centralhall@eclipse-presentations.co.uk
020 76543 812