



*An early impression showing an east-west section through the RSC Theatre drawn by Richard Dawking.
Key: (1) Foyer, (2) Cinema, (3) Control rooms, (4) Theatre administration, (5) Conservatory, (6) Flytower, (7) Stage, (8) Auditorium, (9) The Pit, (10) Dressing rooms, (11) Access road.*

EEC. One can certainly imagine the problems that could have been caused by actors getting on and off moving lifts in elaborate long costumes and headdresses! The dressing rooms themselves have proved to be practical and were never intended to be luxurious. The lack of power points in relation to the spaces provided was a GLC requirement, although they had been by default fitted in the National Theatre, and has proved to be very restricting. From the safety point of view this is totally understandable as so many theatre fires have started in dressing room and wardrobe areas, but being unable to use curlers and hair-driers, except in the wig room, is a great frustration. In the ideal there should have been more small rooms, for four as opposed to eight artists, which seems best suited to the RSC Company make up, and more shower units within the rooms as opposed to across and along the corridors.

The introduction of the Pit, addition of a Production wardrobe and the increasing importance of sound in the theatre today have all aggravated the space problems, which had been very much tailored to the RSC of the late sixties, even including one particularly large dressing room for 'spear carriers' etc. — a luxury that can no longer be afforded even if it was still in the style of the work of the Company. The Production Wardrobe had to be solved outside the Centre, but the needs of the Pit and sound department have been absorbed in the best way possible, but with great limitations. The housing of the Pit cost one rehearsal room and required a wardrobe and staff room and

office accommodation, which could only exist at the loss of another department's space or facility. It also caused the one major change to those 1968 drawings, which was the connection from the Pit to the cinema foyer in order to allow public access. Being already an under construction diaphragm wall, this was achieved at great cost and heart searching. An extra management team has also put great strain on their already limited accommodation. The loss of the rehearsal room would have been bad enough with generally only one production in rehearsal at a time. Now with two shows for two auditoria to be housed, the shortage of rehearsal space is acute and the search for a near rehearsal facility is already under way.

With the continuous development of control equipment, electronics and luminaires, the RSC encouraged the City's consultants, Theatre Projects, to hold off the ordering of equipment until the last possible moment. But in spite of their efforts, the main contractor's insistence of the majority of this equipment being ordered and even delivered as it turned out years in advance of use, meant that some items were out of date before they had even been rigged or connected and commissioned, let alone used in anger. The only real exception was the lighting board, where by some careful reporting and a little politicking it was possible to update three times. The contractor had to be the same, Rank Strand, but the changes were achieved against the odds from a 480-way MMS, which would have been slow, to a Palette and on to a Galaxy — a National type Lightboard was strongly suggested by the

consultants, but was never financially viable within the bill and, in the RSC's opinion, was not really the board best suited to their way of working. The carrot to the Corporation on each occasion was a slightly lower price and the contractors and consultants assurance that there was no possibility of any delay as it was very much a plug in item with the minimum of a requirement for alterations to the fixed furniture. The lighting switchboard is perhaps the only item in the whole bill, which ended up being considerably cheaper — the specification in the first bill was for a 480-way 3 preset. This would have required considerable space, but as lighting controls have become ever more compact and sound control has grown in



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