

# THE FREEMASONS' HALL

To: Members of Cabinet  
Past Members of Cabinet  
Members of RA Cabinet  
Past Members of RA Cabinet  
Grand Officers  
Heads of Orders  
Lodge Secretaries  
Chapter Scribes E  
District Secretaries

27 September 2007

Dear Brother / Companion

## **Development of Freemasons' Hall Bridge Street**

During the last few months the Development Sub-Committee has been considering a variety of proposals for the redevelopment of Freemasons' Hall. A number of potential developers have been interviewed and as a result of that process the Development Sub-Committee has been able to make a recommendation to the Board of the ELMC.

The Brief given to the Development Sub-Committee was to explore ways of continuing Freemasonry at Freemasons' Hall, if at all possible. The proposal that is most attractive to meet this aim is that of De Vere Venues Limited. Their proposal is to refurbish the building both inside and out at their cost, but without altering the existing format and to share occupation with us so that they will manage the building and provide all the services that we need.

We would occupy the third floor of the building on a rent-free basis for use as Lodge rooms and for the Secretariat function. De Vere would use the remainder of the building as a conference and training centre. They would, also, provide our dining requirements in that part of the building which was in their usage.

As part of the refurbishment we would build an additional new lodge room on the third floor over the atrium of the building and with this new Lodge room we are satisfied that this would provide sufficient lodge rooms for all our requirements. As part of the arrangements we would be able to have the use of the Derby and / or Golbourne Lodge room, if we so required.

De Vere have made presentations outlining the standard of the refurbishment, including making it quite clear that this proposal would provide a refurbished building to a very high standard, whilst at the same time providing a capital sum to the Charity. In particular, the Memorial Hall will be used not just as a reception area, but, also, as a museum / Masonic display area which will preserve the Masonic heritage of the building. De Vere will, in fact, make use of Masonic heritage throughout their part of the building.

We are satisfied that De Vere have the capability of providing us with a very good service. In addition, their proposals have the advantage of being compatible in that their business is "9 to 5" whereas our principal function is carried out in the evening.

A further significant advantage to the De Vere proposal is that it can be carried out in a relatively short timescale – approximately 10 to 16 months. This will ensure that there is as little disruption as possible to Masonic activity.

This proposal has been approved by the Board of ELMC subject to finalising legal agreements, the required planning permission, the finalisation of Service Level Agreements and the approval of the Charity Commissioners.

There is a great deal to be done and it is, therefore, difficult to provide a final timescale at this stage. A number of matters still have to be finalised and could mean that the proposition is not brought to closure.

Other proposals were considered and, in particular, a complete redevelopment of both Freemasons' Hall and the car park site. A decision has been made to proceed as a priority with the De Vere proposal, whilst at the same time discussing with three or four developers their proposals for the development of the car park site as a separate but related development. This decision was taken because an overall development of both the car park site and the existing building would take two to three years, or even longer, to bring to fruition. Thus we are to adopt the procedure of a two stage redevelopment dealing with the existing buildings first and the car park site second.

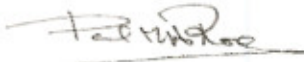
The existing proposals will make no alteration in the car parking arrangements and the current arrangement with the King Street Car Park will continue and other car parking arrangements are still under consideration. It is, however, anticipated that with the overall completion of the Spinningfield development the options for car parking in the vicinity will improve considerably.

When we have a better idea as to the degree of certainty of finalising these proposals, a number of presentations will be made to the Brethren of the Province outlining in more detail De Vere's proposals for the existing building. You will all have the opportunity of seeing how the De Vere proposals will result in the significant upgrading of the building, whilst being true to its heritage and also have the opportunity of seeing how the third floor will look in the future.

We anticipate that we will be in a much better position to give a detailed timetable towards the end of this year and would expect to be able to issue a further communication before Christmas.

Kind regards.  
Yours fraternally

PAUL M A ROSE  
Chairman Development Committee



MARTIN S CALLER  
Chairman East Lancashire Masonic  
Hall Company Limited

