

Bridge Street Frequently Asked Questions

Q What is the structure of the transaction?

A ELMC, as owner of the building, will grant a lease of 999 years of the whole building to the Developer who in turn will grant an underlease for 150 years to ELMC of the third floor, and part of the sub basement. ELMC will then grant an interest to the company responsible for running the third floor, which will be owned by the Lodges and Chapters of the Orders that use and will, in the future, use the facilities on the third floor.

Q What rent will be payable?

A The rent in both cases will be notional – i.e. a peppercorn. There will be a service charge payable for the use of the common parts but that service charge has been fixed and capped for five years.

Q Who is the Developer?

A The Developer is a joint venture between Vision Developments, who have a wide range of development experience within the region and Tony Ford, who is a well known entrepreneur with a number of businesses in the financial sector.

Q Who are the members of the design team?

A A full team has been appointed by the Developer which includes:
Architect – 5 Plus Architects
Structural Engineers – Shepherd Gilmour
Fire Protection – Arup
Project Manager – Fraser Blair
M and E Consultant – RPS Group
Acoustics – Sol Acoustics
Heritage Consultant – Architectural History Practice
Cost Consultants – Davis Langdon
Planning Consultants – Lambert Smith Hampton

In addition, Lambert Smith Hampton will monitor the project on our behalf and, in particular, Darren Hughes of Lambert Smith Hampton sits on the third floor working party to advise on lay out and generally provide professional input into the configuration of the third floor. Other professional input will be provided by the Developers design team as required.

Q How will the building be used?

A The third floor will be used solely for Masonic meetings of all Orders. There will also be accommodation for the Provincial Grand Master and offices for the Craft, Royal Arch and Secretariat. Further details for the third floor are provided below.

The second floor will be used as offices for the Developer and other office users.

The Mark Office will remain as present subject to an occupation agreement with the Developer on the same terms as present.

The first floor will be operated by a conference provider.

The ground floor will be used by the conference operator and will contain the main reception area. The Derby Lodge room will form part of the area operated by the conference provider but will be available for Masonic use, where those attending will dine and exceed 80 in number. It is envisaged that in practice the great majority of Masonic meetings will take place on the third floor and the use of the Derby Lodge room reserved for those few occasions where the number attending will require a room of that capacity. The Derby Dining room will then be used for dining associated with the use of the Derby Lodge room. This room will remain largely unaltered, save for the creation of an additional entrance in the North.

The basement will be reconfigured and refurbished to provide a central reception and meeting area surrounded by dining rooms and a bar. There will be a dedicated Masonic bar in this area. The proposed conference business is a 9 – 5 operation and, therefore, the dining areas will be discreet for Masonic use in the evening.

The sub basement will contain new kitchens and storage space.

Q What will be the lay out of the third floor?

A The whole of the third floor will be refurbished to a superior standard.

The Secretariat will be located in the area currently known as the Rhodes Syndicate rooms.

There will be five Lodge rooms retained and created in the areas of the Rhodes Lodge and Dining room, the Sykes Lodge and Dining Room and there will be a new Lodge Room created in the Atrium Area.

Other areas will be used to create changing rooms, a board room, meeting room, Provincial Grand Masters' Room and a multi purpose library / changing room.

Q Will there be any dining or bar areas on the third floor?

A No.

Q Will there be facilities for Committee and other meetings within the Building?

A Yes. The agreement with the Developer allows for 100 hours of free meeting room use each year.

Q How will the third floor be managed?

A An interim Board has been established by the Development Committee to oversee the transitional arrangements and ultimately that Board will stand for election with all Lodges and Chapters of all Orders meeting in Manchester having one vote each in such elections.

The members of the interim Board are as follows:

Henry Bentwood - Chairman
Ashley Hayman - Finance Director
Mohammad Afsar - Secretary
Ian Connor
Christopher Hicks
Paul O'Carroll
John Porter
Alan Twigg

Q What are the responsibilities of this Board?

A To oversee the management of the third floor on a similar basis to that in all other Masonic Halls within the Province.

Q What will the cost be to the Lodges and Chapters of the Orders meeting on the third floor?

A Budgets have been prepared by the interim Board that indicate that the rent in the newly refurbished third floor should be less than current rents.

Q What will the catering and bar arrangements be?

A All dining will take place in the newly created and / or refurbished area of the basement facility with a dedicated Masonic bar and a wide range of dining rooms for all sizes of meetings.

Q How do we book Lodge and Chapter meeting and dining rooms?

A In a similar manner to present. There will be one reference point for both run by the operator of the building.

Q What will be the cost and standard of dining?

A A catering agreement has been entered into which sets the standard for meals and cost with a future cost control mechanism. The cost control mechanism has been designed to ensure that meals are provided at the same cost as they are provided at now and with a control over how those costs can be increased in future years so that costs remain proportionate.

Q What arrangements have been made for the security of the third floor?

A Access to the third floor will be by way of new lifts and the existing staircase. Entrance to the third floor from both will be controlled by a security coded pad system.

Q What arrangements have been made for the storage of Regalia etc?

A These will continue to be stored as present and the current goods lift will be available for their transportation.

Q What is happening to the Museum and Masonic artefacts?

The concept for the third floor, other than the Secretariat areas, will be to have a Museum throughout and artefacts will be displayed in all the Lodge

rooms and other areas so as to create the Manchester Masonic Museum, which will be open to the Public by appointment.

Provision has been made for the retention of structural Masonic artefacts such as the Memorials in the Hall, stained glass windows, and plaques throughout the Building.

On going discussions are taking place with the Developer with regard to the display, security and insurance arrangements of artefacts throughout the parts of the building not exclusively dedicated to Masonic use.

Q What will the building be called?

A This is still under discussion.

Q What is happening to the Car Park Site?

A There is a separate agreement for the development of the Car Park site. An application will be made for planning permission for offices on the Car Park site. An extended timetable is anticipated with a start within the next two years.

Q Will there be car parking facilities?

A Subject to contractor and Developer requirements there will be limited car parking spaces available until the car park site is developed.

Q What is the timescale for the development of Freemasons' Hall?

A Timing is subject to planning permission but the programme provides for:

- Discussions with planners during September and October,
- submission of planning application at the beginning of November,
- obtain planning in January 2012,
- contractor discussions January / February,
- work on site to commence in April 2012,
- completion of third floor and other internal works and re-occupation for Masonic use by November 2012 and
- completion of the external works not affecting the re-occupation of the Building by December 2012.

Q What arrangements have been made for Freemasonry during the construction period?

A Arrangements have been made with Salford to host all Craft and Royal Arch meetings. Dispensations will be granted free of charge so that these Orders can meet at Salford. Meetings can be either full meetings with dining or " token" meetings with just an opening and closing to maintain continuity. These arrangements will be available from the middle of March until Freemasons' Hall is ready for re-occupation.

Arrangements as appropriate will be made by the other Orders.

Q What will the cost be at Salford?

A The cost will be no greater than the standard charges for meeting and dining at Salford and Manchester.

Q Will there be any charge from Bridge Street during this period?

A No.

Q How do we make arrangements for meeting or dining at Salford?

A The contact details for Salford will be provided to each relevant Masonic Lodge or Chapter in good time for all arrangements to be made. No one should contact Salford until notified of the arrangements.

Q What arrangements have been made for luncheon and other Dining Clubs?

A In the refurbished building there will be suitable accommodation and catering for the Dining Clubs. During the construction period, arrangements have been made for the meetings to be held at the St James's Club, if so desired. There will be no room charge for regular meetings but there will be for exceptional meetings such as Ladies Dinners.