



### Theatres & Venues

# Refurbishment at Liverpool Playhouse Theatre

*The complex challenge of refurbishing the safety curtains and the stage lantern in the Grade II\* listed Playhouse was managed by Adlib with tenacity and humour. Working collaboratively we now have systems that will give many years of reliable service, be easier to maintain, and present a much-improved look for audiences.*

*Robert Longthorne, Technical and Buildings Director,  
Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse*

## The Requirement

Working with Robert Longthorne Building and the Facilities Director at Liverpool Playhouse, Adlib have recently carried out the refurbishment of the Safety Curtain and Dock Doors.

As the Playhouse is an English Heritage Grade II building, it was paramount to retain the same, classic look as the original, especially on the safety curtain finish. To ensure this, thorough planning was carried out and photographs were taken before the commencement of works.

## The Solution

### Safety Curtain

This was a total refurbishment with the safety curtain being removed from its guides and located upstage.

From this point everything was removed, including the original painted fabric front sheet, the rear cover, side guides, top and bottom seals, pulleys, steel cables, motor unit and controls.

Painstakingly, the steel safety curtain frame was re-straightened and strengthened before having a new Zetex fire and smoke prevention front cover and bottom pad installed. New pulleys were installed on stool brackets to pass over the top of the existing counterweights, with new steel cables all designed to support 3 x counterweight balance units. A new combination motor and speed buffer unit was installed on the grid with further pulleys and hauling steel cable fitted.



Before the safety curtain was put back in its guides, the front was painted with 4 layers of special white paint.

Once installed and fully operational, a decorative gold band and Safety Curtain lettering completed the original theme.

### **Dock Door**

The dock door is unique as it's not a standard traditional single leaf door between stage and dock area but more of a split double and single counterbalance unit moving at different speeds.

Again, to completely overhaul the system each panel had to be removed from its guides and suspension system and lowered to the floor. Then all of the original sheeting was replaced and upgraded using modern materials. New steel operating cables, bottom smoke pad, and a complete overhaul of the motor unit and controls allowed for an operational system.

Before re-installing into its guide, the on-stage side was painted black and the off-stage side in white.

## **The Result**

The result was a fully operational upgraded safety curtain and dock door that provides full fire and operational protection to an essential part of the theatre that is now able to, once again, bring productions into a beautiful Grade II setting.



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