

# 24. Venue Design



Venue design is about creating a viable space where an audience can enjoy the entertainment in a safe and comfortable atmosphere and where those working on the event will not be put at any risk.

This needs to take account of factors such as the existing facilities on the site, the nature of the entertainment planned, the audience profile and size, the location, the time of year (weather) and duration of the event. It may also need to take account of the local geographical, topographical and environmental infrastructure.

The inflexibility of some fixed venues may limit the layout and design of an event as they are often built with another use in mind (e.g. football). This may also create risks which may not be covered by the venue's own risk assessments.

The following are some of the key factors to consider when designing and event venue:

## **Know the event**

It is essential to consider the characteristics of the event and how they will affect the venue and the facilities needed. This will include factors such as the size and type of audience (and their likely behaviour); the infrastructure needed to create the entertainment; and how the weather might impact the event.

## **Assessing the site**

The suitability of a particular venue or site can only be undertaken with a clear understanding of the event, the audience and the facilities/infrastructure needed to make it work. It is important, therefore, to talk to the venue owner or landowner to ensure that all the necessary information is accurate and known about the site being used.

Factors to take into consideration when designing the site are the accessibility of the site, viewing issues, access/egress routes, topography, parking, accessibility of services etc. These need to be taken into account when deciding where to located such things as vehicle or pedestrian tracking, toilets, performance areas and first aid etc.

Consideration needs to be given about where items that can cause queues are located, such as bars and catering units, as these might have an impact on other areas or people moving around the site.

Traffic movement on site and around parking areas should be considered with care, as well as provision for disabled access.

Obtaining a plan of the venue and spending time getting to know the site by walking around it is important. For outdoor events it can pay to visit the site at different times and in different weather conditions.

## **Capacity**

The capacity of a venue generally depends on the available space for people (the audience, staff and contractors), the sight lines to performance areas and the structures needed to make the event work.

Any infrastructure brought onto the site needs to be taken into account, with particular attention given to how the audience will interact with it and whether this might cause pinch points or congestion.

Other important considerations are flow rates through entrances which can impact on security and safety as well as the ability of emergency exits to cope with the audience size.

## **Local amenities**

The site's proximity to local services such as a hospital, fire station, public transport, parking and major roads and particularly the impact it could have on these should also be taken into account. For example, will the access cause traffic issues in the area?

The location may also influence the level of services required to make the event safe, such as water, sewage, gas, electricity, which may add to the costs of running the event.

More detailed information about the above can be found in the Purple Guide at [www.thepurpleguide.co.uk](http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk) (<http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk>)