

Press Release
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SE Controls puts on a safe performance at Buxton Opera House

A new high duty smoke ventilation extraction system from SE Controls has been installed at Buxton Opera House as a key part of fire safety system upgrades at the theatre to meet current fire regulations and improve safety for the audience, cast and musicians.

Opened in 1903, a recent detailed fire risk assessment of the Grade II listed theatre showed that while the majority of the fire safety systems were compliant, the original spring operated smoke ventilation system above the stage could not meet the necessary 'free ventilation area' to provide adequate smoke control and maximise escape times.

Although a number of alternative solutions were considered within the risk assessment, some of which involved using the existing haystack lantern light over the stage, the decision to adopt the mechanical smoke ventilation system from SE Controls ensured that the required smoke extraction rates could be readily achieved without major modifications to the historic building.



The SE Controls' system involved the installation and commissioning of a high capacity 1000mm diameter duplex fan set, for duty and stand-by operation, together with an automatic roof louvre, fan system ductwork and a dedicated control panel together with all the necessary fire rated cabling.

In the event of a fire, the theatre's fire and smoke detection system automatically signals the opening of the roof mounted louvre and the operation of the high capacity mechanical smoke ventilation system, which is capable of extracting 8 m³/sec. Due to the building's Grade II status, the design, location and installation of the system had to be handled sensitively by SE Controls to ensure the interior and external impact was minimised.

To address this, the fan and ductwork was located within the Opera House roof space and the external roof mounted smoke louvre was located out of sight below existing parapet wall facade, while also being finished to match the building's existing slate roof.

Will Perkins, SE Controls' Group Managing Director, explained: "By necessity, fire safety and smoke control regulations are particularly stringent to ensure people can escape a building quickly and safely. In the case of Buxton Opera House, as with other older buildings, the regulations have evolved well beyond the standards in place when originally constructed. Yet the uses of advanced smoke control solutions can ensure the buildings can retain their fire safety compliance without compromising their historic or protected status."



Further information on SE Controls' products, solutions and projects can be obtained by visiting www.secontrols.com or calling 01543 443060.

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