Drama 330—Theatre Technology and Scenography

Drafting Conventions, Symbols, and Line Weights

Though very few people who draft for the Theatre draft identically, there are a few conventions and symbols that most theatre designers use in their drawings. These may be slightly different from one designer to the next, however, with practice you should be able to read most theatrical drafting no matter who the draftsperson was. The following pages illustrate some of these conventions and symbols.

**Line Weights:**

- **Line weight** is probably the most important convention used in theatrical drafting. More information can be conveyed quickly by the type and weight of line used than any other method.

- The **Medium Weight** line generally conotes the shape of an object or solid form. It is, in most forms of drafting, the most commonly used line.

- **Visible Outline** lines represents the actual edges or outline of any object being drafted.

- **Hidden outline** lines show the edge of an object that might be hidden by another piece of scenery, or by anything else.

- **Heavy Weight** lines are used primarily for the outline of a cut or sectioned object (the internal shading is usually light weight). In a FLOORPLAN, Heavy Weight Lines will be much more common than in ELEVATIONS, because you are usually cutting through many pieces of scenery.

- **Light Weight** lines generally are used to add additional information. Things drawn in Lightweight lines don’t really exist in a physical form. The most common examples are:

  - **Extension lines** are lines which extend an imaginary line from a line on the object.
  - **Dimension lines** are lines which stretch between the extension lines and which hold the numeric equivalent of the distance between the two extension lines.
  - **Leader lines** are straight or freehand curvilinear lines which relate a note or additional information to an object.
Other Light Weight lines of interest include:

- **Plaster Line** indicates the upstage edge of the Proscenium arch.
- **Center Line** indicates the center of the stage area or proscenium.
- **Alternate Position Line** indicates a different position for a piece of scenery that moves.
- **Cutting Plane lines** indicate on an elevation or groundplan where a section is to be taken from. The arrows indicate the direction of the view taken.
Some symbols for typical theatrical units:

**Floorplan Views**

[Diagram showing symbols for Flat, Arch, Doorway and Shutter (offstage swing), Window, Fireplace, masking, mantle, hearth.]

Remember that all doors, windows, or fireplaces are not the same as these examples either in their complexity or in their proportions. For this reason you must understand how these symbols were created (ie. why use a construction line or a hidden construction line or a section outline?).

Remember also that many of these in floorplan view would be drawn using a heavy weight line, while the same piece of scenery in an elevation would be drawn using primarily medium weight lines. Again, how these symbols were created becomes important.
Additional Symbols: