

The Customer:

It was about 8 years ago that Graham Vockins, Stage Director for the Shinfield Players, first cast TurboCAD into a supporting role, in his job as a construction Site Manager.

TurboCAD was used here to prepare "as built" 2D and fairly simple layouts of services on completed building sites, to comply with contract requirements. Graham says "I found TurboCAD extremely easy to pick up and intuitive."

In his latest role with the Shinfield Players, an amateur rep company near Reading, that stages about 9/10 productions a year, Graham now uses version 11 of TurboCAD Professional, a full featured, comprehensive CAD program.

As the company makes all its sets in its own theatre, the role of Stage Director encompasses responsibility for set layout. Before the introduction of TurboCAD, sets would be erected on a "trial and error" basis placing one piece at a time and then checking/masking as they built the set.

The Product:

When asked about the best features of TurboCAD, Graham starts with the prologue.

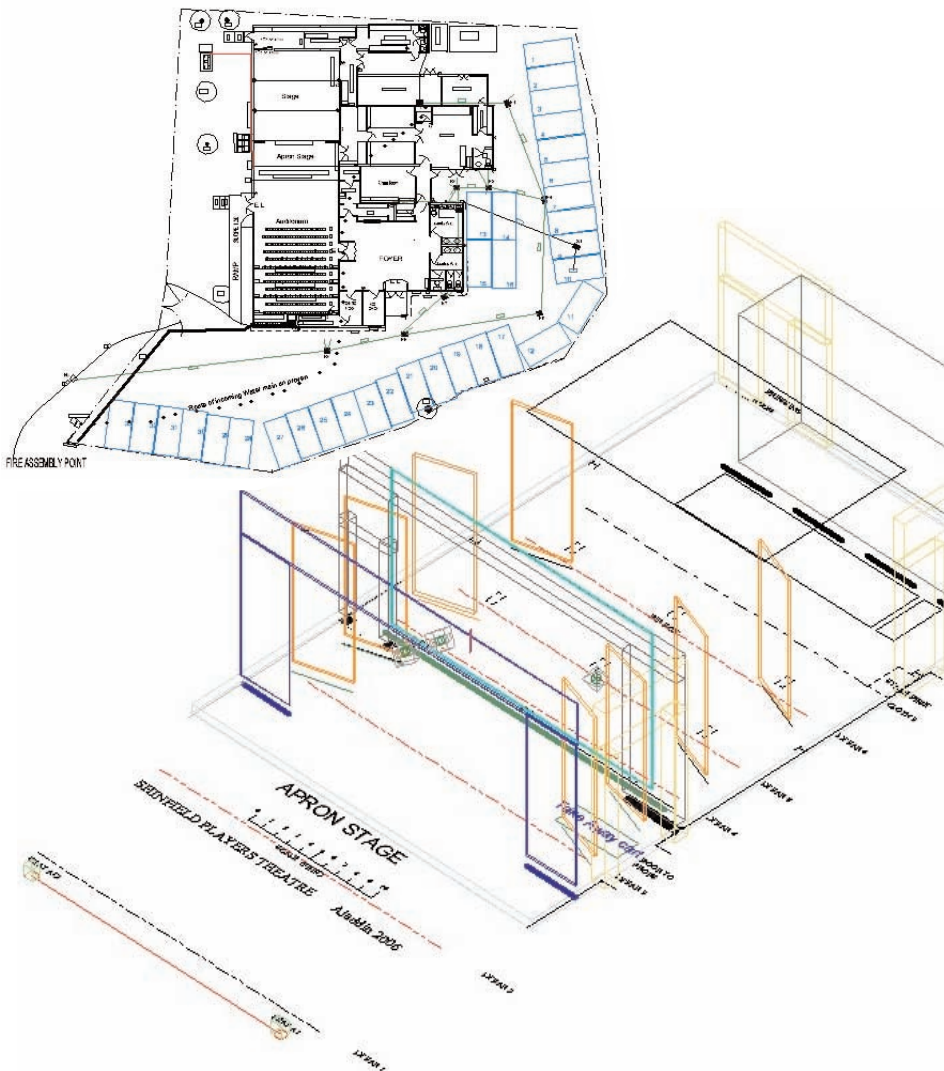
"I very quickly saw that the CAD solution was able to save a lot of time. My first attempt set out the flats took less than an hour, a task which used to take me two evenings. Forming boxes of the plan dimensions, furniture etc in TurboCAD enabled me to plan storage for props not even removed from the store – so no last minute panic in the technical rehearsal."

Simple things like directors attempting to walk actors through walls are now avoided as they can clearly see on the plans where doors are placed in relation to the set and the embarrassment of making set components too big to go through entrances is a thing of the past. Manoeuvring props on the plan allows simple 'what-if' scenarios to be pondered over without the hassle of physically having to do this on set.

Graham mentions one very significant benefit – he has recently used TurboCAD to draw up the plans required by the new Premises License, introduced in November 2005 requiring a 1:100 scaled plan of the theatre, clearly showing seated areas and where alcohol will be consumed.

This meant that the Players did not have to pay for the services of a qualified Surveyor to provide the plan. Graham admits he is still discovering the features in TurboCAD and has just started to produce 3D versions of sets, the first being the 2006 set for Aladdin, which consists of 15 scenes. Making these available for viewing by all the cast and directors means that everyone knows what areas, exits and entrances are available.

And for the finale? Graham is hoping to eventually place the actual image on the various drops and flats via rendering, but has not mastered that quite yet. "But when I do, everyone will have the benefit of a virtual reality set!"



To find out more about TurboCAD, contact Software Paradise

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