

Achievements and Recommendations: Managing Rosemont

1 Introduction

The Ministry of Education assigned the MSA-UK with the management of No. 9 Rosemont Avenue in July 2005. The MSA UK appointed a subcommittee – The Rosemont Committee following this assignment. The Rosemont Committee (RC) consisted of the members of Central Committee (CC), members of the Advisory Council (AC) and others appointed by the MSA-UK chairperson to the RC.

Since its appointment, the RC has worked together to improve the condition of the house and tried within the limitations of the committee members to implement the Rosemont Guidelines.

Based on the elapsed fifteen months of Rosemont management, this report discusses what has been achieved and makes additional recommendations for future management of Rosemont under MSA-UK.

2 Rosemont Priority Works

In January 2006, a list of priority work was drawn up. The list generally included the following;

- Boiler Replacement
- Provision of new beds and mattresses
- Painting the small room ceiling and the large room ceiling and walls
- Fixing the locks of the sliding glass doors in the kitchen

At the same time, although not listed as a priority task, discussions were made to replace the backyard shed and to change the curtains and nettings.

After considerable discussions within the RC, it was decided to implement the tasks in the priority list.

Rosemont Furniture: In January 2006, the furniture list shown in Figure 1 was bought and delivered to Rosemont. The furniture was mainly aimed for two students sharing in the large sized bedroom.

Table 1- List of furniture bought for Rosemont

Qty	Item
	Furniture
1	Study Table
2	Chairs
2	Book shelves
2	Wardrobes
2	Single Bedframes
2	Single Mattresses
2	Set of legs (4 pcs)
1	Double Bedframe
1	Double Mattress
1	Delivery Charges (IKEA)

Painting work: In February 2006, an enthusiastic team of members convened to Rosemont and carried out the painting work which was identified in the priority task. The small room ceiling and the large room ceiling and the walls were painted.

Boiler Replacement: A quotation was obtained in February from the British Gas for boiler replacement. This quotation from the British Gas had a validity period of 90 days to begin the work. Analysis of the quotation demonstrated that it was a value for money worth offer and the RC's view was to carry out this work from a reputable company.

Towards the end of February 2006, the CC was requested to send this quotation to MoE for obtaining the funds. In May 2006 the CC informed the RC that the MoE has approved the boiler replacement work. Unfortunately, by this time validity of the quotation has expired and as a result a second quotation was obtained from the British Gas in May 2006.

In June 2006, the boiler replacement work was finally carried out. This work was carried out by the British Gas and was completed in three days. All the pipes and the radiators were flushed. Some of the regulators in radiators were changed that were not working at the time of the surveyor inspection.

There was a considerable delay in payment of the British Gas invoice after the work was carried out. This was because of a delay in MoE transferring the required funds to the MSA-UK account. The amount owed to British Gas was finally paid with a loan from MHC for which RC are grateful to the MHC. It should be noted that as soon as the money was transferred from MoE, these funds were reimbursed to MHC. For any additional work to be carried out at Rosemont, it would be advisable to ensure that there are sufficient funds at the disposal of MSA-UK. If funds need to be transferred from MoE, it must be ensured that there is no delay in the process, to avoid this type of complication in future.

Toilet flooring: In August 2006, the existing toilet carpet was replaced with vinyl flooring. The work was initiated and executed by the tenants themselves. The tenants also cleaned the backyard and planted new grass seeds in the backyard. It must be noted, however, that the vinyl flooring in the toilet is a temporary measure. There has

been some seepage of moisture when the toilet had carpet flooring, and a thorough inspection of the floor supports should be carried out and any repairs carried out before the flooring is changed to a more permanent type such as ceramic tiles.

Kitchen items and Repair work: Water leaks from toilet pipes and from the roof tiles were reported to the RC on different instances. These maintenance works have been carried out promptly by the Warden and tenants via plumbers and roofing agents.

Some kitchen items were purchased in 2006. The purchase items included a mixer, a rice cooker and a water filter to the house.

Work Pending: In May 2006 a design was proposed to build a second toilet and a conservatory in Rosemont. This proposal is shown in Figure 1.

A surveyor was consulted and the proposal was given to the surveyor to obtain a cost estimate for the work. Several attempts were made to obtain the cost estimate from the surveyor but no positive outcome was achieved on this work.

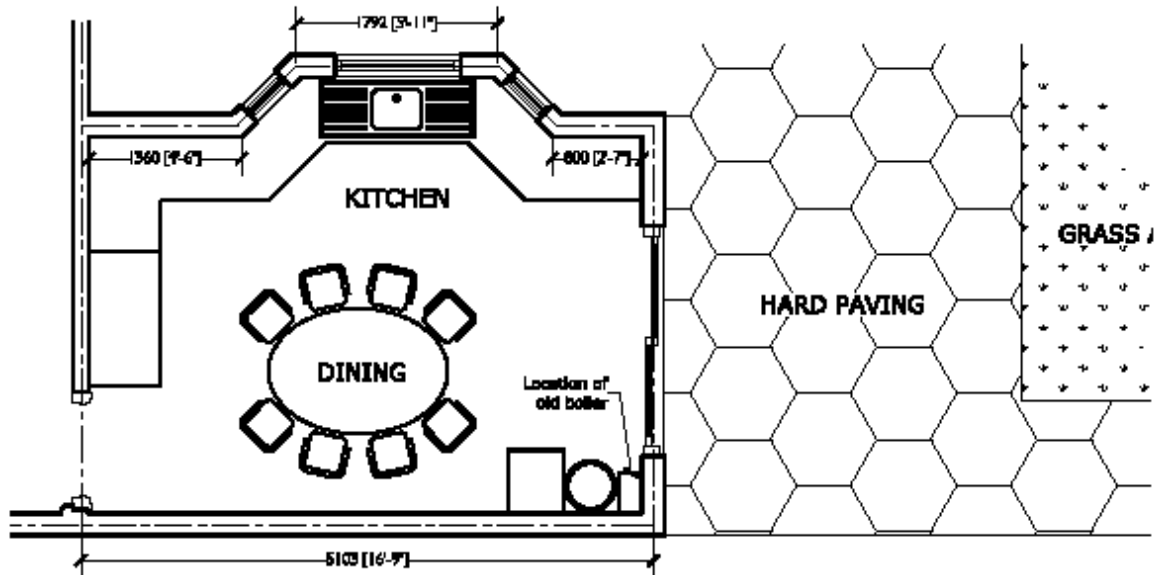
In November 2006, a cost estimate was obtained for kitchen carpet replacement with laminated flooring. The cost for this work has been quoted for £600. This work is yet to be completed.

In November 2006, work was also carried out to replace the Shed in the backyard. The prices have been found to be in the range of £225 to £245 with additional £25 delivery charge. This work is still pending.

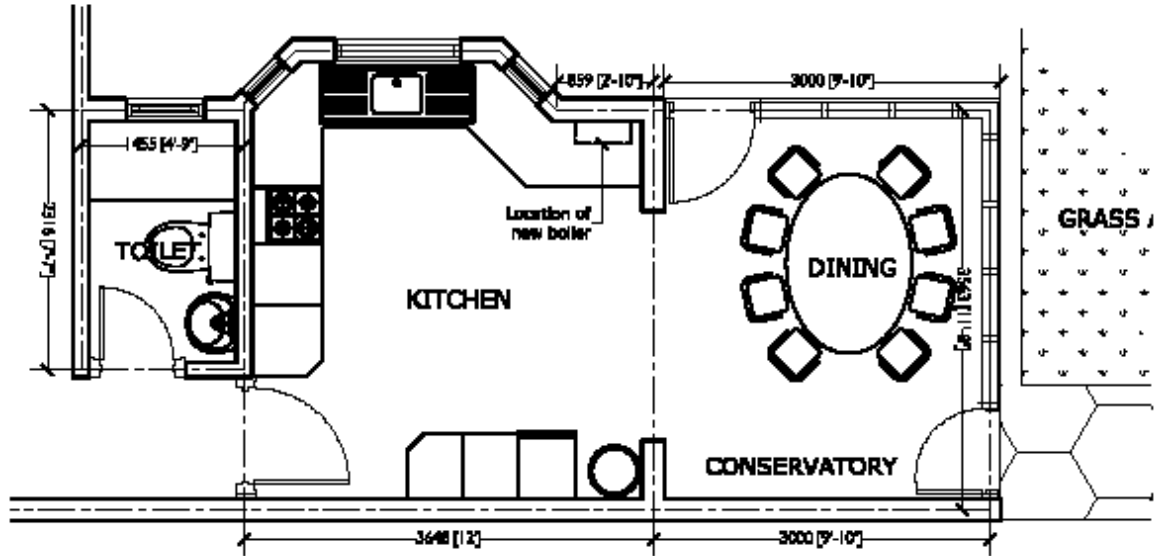
Several attempts were made during the year to contact a locksmith to mend the locks in the back yard sliding doors. So far this work has not been successful.

Future works: The following is a list of works that need to be attended as soon as possible.

- All the above pending works need to be achieved as soon as possible. The building of a conservatory and a toilet will involve a huge amount of money. A cost estimate will help to make a decision on this.
- Replacement of carpet in the sitting room. The carpet in the sitting room is old and is in a very poor condition. There are permanent stains in the carpet which cannot be cleaned
- Replacement of curtains and nettings in the house. Some of the curtains and nettings are damaged.
- The bath tub in the toilet needs to be replaced. The bath tub is in a very poor condition.
- Water taps in the kitchen and in the toilet needs to be fixed. Either the worn out washers or the sealing rubber rings inside the tap must be changed or a new set of taps must be installed.



EXISTING LAYOUT
SCALE 1:50



PROPOSED LAYOUT
SCALE 1:50

Figure 1- Proposal for a new toilet and a conservatory

3 Management Difficulties

During the last fifteen months of Rosemont management, the RC has noted the following difficulties.

- Bills not paid on time
- Arrival and departure of some guests and temporary residents without giving proper notice to the warden
- Occupation of resident rooms by guests without residents' approval
- Occasional failure of rent payment by the occupants of the house
- Implementation of the required level of maintenance work

Payment of bills on time is required to maintain the service delivered to the premises. The difficulty often rises at the end of the academic year when the tenancy ends. Unless the outgoing resident informs of his/her departure to the concerned utility and the incoming resident changes the bills on to their name, the transition cannot occur seamlessly.

On some occasions it has been noted that some people just drop in without initially informing the warden. At times some have left without indicating their departure.

Complaints have also been brought up due to the lack of privacy in resident rooms. This has happened when guests or temporary residents occupy or try to occupy the resident rooms without their approval.

On many occasions residents have moved out without settling the rents they owe to the property.

Repair and maintenance work is important to provide a decent lodging to the residents and visitors. The RC has noted in different occasions that the repair and maintenance work has not been executed to the level the RC has hoped for. This difficulty is inherent due to many of us being students in allocating time for such work. However, the RC notes that the Warden and the tenants have put in a lot of effort and devoted time to maintain the property to a standard convivial to all.

Repair and maintenance work exceeding £100 has also been deferred due to delay in provision of cost approval signature from the CC.

Rosemont Bills: The following is a list of Rosemont bills;

- Gas
- Electricity
- Water
- TV license
- Telephone (Call receiving only +Broadband Internet connection)
- Digital TV

- Insurance bill
- Council Tax

The council office will send a council tax bill to occupied properties. The tenants will be responsible for this bill unless it is exempted. The students living in this property shall send council tax exemption certificates to the council office. If a resident living in a UK property is not a student or a dependant of a student then council tax has to be paid by the resident.

Guests and Temporary Residents: The permanent residents of Rosemont have complained about the absence of a restriction on number of guests and temporary residents allowed into the property. The RC takes the view of the residents and some kind of restrictions needs to be imposed immediately.

4 Recommendations

Bills: It is recommended that a separate account be opened under the name of Rosemont. All the bills should then be changed to pay by direct debit from the Rosemont account. This will enable to pay the bills promptly without any difficulty. The alternative would be to change all the bills to be paid by direct debit from MSA-UK account or from a secondary MSA-UK account dedicated for Rosemont management. However, MSA-UK should take the responsibility to cancel all the direct debits if the management of Rosemont is assigned to someone else or if MSA-UK wishes to discontinue managing Rosemont.

Rent: The rent should be accepted in the form of direct debit paid to the Rosemont account or MSA-UK account. This will normally avoid late rent payments. Further, all the residents shall provide contact details of their sponsors or guarantors in the tenancy agreement, to contact if any resident fails to pay the rent on time. *Such a clause is required to be added to the tenancy agreement.*

Guests and guest rent: It will be difficult to implement guest rent via direct debit. Hence guest rent should be accepted in cash as is presently done.

The present guideline allows temporary residents to pay a reduced rent, if stayed for a 30 consecutive days or less. This has become a difficult management issue as residents move out on the 29th day and return after few days.

It has been suggested to discourage long stay of guests in the house but at the same to encourage genuine short stay visitors. There are two approaches that can be implemented. One of them is to implement a flat rate of £4 (or some other value) for all visitors. The alternative is to implement the current rate of £3 for a total of 30 days per year per student. If the number of days exceeds 30 per year per student, then a rate of £5 (or some other value) should be charged. This will apply to all visitors and temporary residents. The above approaches will also make the management easier. *If this view is accepted, Rosemont Guidelines need to be amended to reflect this revision.*

Notices and warnings: Formal notices and warnings shall be issued by the MSA-UK CC to the residents concerned similar to any other student accommodation. These shall not be executed by word of mouth via the Warden or any member of the RC.

Rent Reduction: The residents have requested to reduce the existing rents. The analysis of the last fifteen months of income and expenditure has indicated that rents may be reduced in the range 8 to 10% of the current rates. The proposed new rents (yet to be approved) are as follows;

Small room £225 (previous £250), Medium room £250 (previous £275) and large room £275 (previous £300). The shared rent for the large room shall remain unchanged at £200. *If this view is accepted, Rosemont Guidelines need to be amended to reflect this revision.*

Rosemont Inventory: A comprehensive inventory was taken in the year 2005 upon the assignment of Rosemont management to MSA-UK. We suggest updating this inventory to reflect the last fifteen months of Rosemont management.

Number of RC members: It is recommended that the number of RC members may be reduced to expedite decisions. It is proposed that the RC shall consist of one member from the AC, two members from the CC and two members elected by the MSA-UK chair outside of AC and CC. This will make a total of five members.

Rosemont guidelines and Tenancy agreement: To implement some of the recommendations, or any other suggestions, the tenancy agreement and Rosemont Guidelines must be revised immediately.

5 Income and Expenditure

Table 2 and Table 3 show the summary of the income and expenditure of Rosemont for the last fifteen months.

Table 2: Rosemont Income and Expenditure summary October 2005 to December 2005

Description	Income (cash received)	Expenditure (cash spent)	Receivables		Reimbursement from MSA
			Rent/Guest rent	lent to MSA	
Residents/Guest:					
Oct	986.00	174.49			
Nov	1,004.00	81.50			
Dec	741.70	104.19		303.65	
	2,731.70	360.18	-	303.65	-
Other:					
Total	2,731.70	360.18		303.65	

Table 3- Rosemont Income and Expenditure summary January 2006 to December 2006

Description	Income (cash received)	Expenditure (cash spent)	Receivables		Reimbursement from MSA
			Rent/Guest rent	lent to MSA	
Residents/Guest:					
Jan	739.00	755.99		90.00	
Feb	642.00	1132.19	100.00	49.27	
Mar	605.00	211.93	200.00		
Apr	680.00	197.75		937.84	1000.00
May	665.00	609.46			
Jun	548.00	909.89			
Jul	650.00	246.47			
Aug	750.00	550.43	200.00		
Sep	-	162.25	200.00		
Oct	657.00	301.22	23.00	167.91	
Nov	706.00	1,794.44	633.00	45.54	
Dec	562.00	866.12	858.91	380.15	670.71
	7,204.00	7,738.14	2,214.91	1,670.71	1,670.71
High commission:					
Accnt. Bal. Tranfer	968.53				
MOE Assistance:					
Boiler replacement	4210.00				
Reimburement to MHC:					
Boiler replacement		3809			
Total:	12,382.53	11,547.14	2,214.91	1,670.71	1,670.71

The average monthly income for the year 2006 including the receivables is £784.91. For the same year the average monthly expenditure is £603.40. This represented an average expenditure of 76.87% per month on the income generated.

The boiler replacement money was not included in calculating the above statistics as it was provided from MoE.

6 Word of Appreciation

Without any doubt, the management of Rosemont over the last fifteen months has been achieved with enormous support and help from MSA-UK members. The Wardens and the residents of Rosemont have been supportive to the RC and they have always sustained a good atmosphere.

The CC of 2005 supported and cooperated with the RC without hindrance. The RC acknowledges their work on making an inventory to begin with. It is also noted that the CC of 2005 acted as a good liaison team among the MHC, MoE and the members of the MSA-UK during the initial stage of assignment of Rosemont management to MSA-UK.

Similarly, the CC of 2006 was committed to provide a good lodging to the residents of Rosemont. Although the CCs responses were delayed, decisions always kept coming and made it possible to implement the works identified in the priority list.

It is also acknowledged that the Warden and the residents of the house replaced the toilet flooring and planted new grass in the backyard on their own initiatives. These are exemplary initiatives which the RC highly appreciates.

The RC also thanks MoE for the financial assistance provide to replace the boiler.

Most members of the RC were very supportive in providing feedbacks to queries posted while a few have been quiescent. The same has been observed during implementation stages. The overall team effort was good and made it possible this far the management of Rosemont under MSA-UK. Thanks guys.

I must declare that I was delighted to see the perseverance of some RC members in delivering the tasks they were requested to carry out!

On behalf of the RC, Dec 2006
Ahmed Shafiu