

Finding The Right Space

By Gordon S. Carter

Once you have determined the general parameters for your new space and your financial budget, you are ready to begin looking at space possibilities. A good real estate agent will be able to help you find a space that will fit your needs. Also, the real estate agent can help rule out some spaces that you cannot use for various reasons such as zoning regulations and building codes.

As you look at the possible spaces, keep in mind some of the ideas discussed in your earlier planning. If you are looking at existing spaces, try to envision what will go where. Your architect and studio consultant will have some ideas as well, but these can all be discussed in the detailed planning stages.

Remember that you will never be

able to squeeze 15,000 square feet of facility into 10,000 square feet, but you may be able to make some smaller reductions if the layout is just right. Imagination is vital here.

Whether you are looking for a pre-existing building in which to build your new facility or are looking for a site where you can erect your own building, there are a number of things to be aware of. Ignoring or overlooking some of these could cost you a lot of time and money as you begin to build your facility.

Ambient Noise

Depending on your specific needs, you may want your station to be readily accessible for visitors or in the public eye. However, building a radio station on a busy street or near an expressway

may present some problems in controlling the noise in your studios. Similar problems can occur if you find a location near train tracks or under a flight path for an airport. If you suspect there may be a problem of this sort, visit the site at various times of day and various days of the week to get an overview of the traffic patterns.

Remember that low frequency vibration may be more of a problem than noise, so try to check for that as well. Checking with the railroad or airlines for schedules can help pinpoint times when you may have the most problems. You may find it worthwhile to make some noise measurements at the peak times.

A radio station needs an ample supply of electrical power, but be-

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Studio Site

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ware of too much of a good thing. Power sub-stations and high-tension lines can create enormous hum fields that will get into everything in your plant with a coil of wire in it. Most susceptible to this are dynamic microphones and audio transformers.

If you have any concerns in this area, a good test is to rig up a dynamic microphone with a pre-amp and headphones operating from a battery power supply. Listen carefully as you move the microphone around, trying various locations and orientations.

Remember that turning the microphone 90 degrees in any direction may make the difference between hum and no hum. If you hook up an audio voltmeter to your test set-up you can make relative measurements at various sites and locations.

Nearby RF

Another problem radio stations may encounter is too much RF energy. Most modern broadcast equipment is

fairly immune to RF interference from the standard AM and FM broadcast band, so your own transmitter will probably not pose any great problems if good engineering practices are observed in the installation of your equipment. However, you may have some problems if you are near a high-powered short-wave facility or a TV transmitter.

Some broadcast audio equipment filters at AM and FM frequencies, but other frequencies may cause some problems. If you are near a TV station, the sync pulses from the video may be demodulated in your audio equipment and buzz like crazy.

Some simple field intensity measurements before you commit to the site can save a lot of trouble trying to get rid of these problems later. It may be much easier and cheaper to find another location a little further from the offending signals.

Satellite Suitability

Many radio stations rely on satellite delivered signals for some or all of their programming. If you are one of these stations, or plan to use satellites

in the future, check your site for suitability for installing the satellite equipment. Make sure you have enough space for the dish in a location close to where your electronics will be.

If the site really looks like you will want to move there, spend the money for a frequency search before signing. If you cannot put your satellite dish near your facility, the cost of extra electronics and lines for a remote site may encourage you to continue your search for a main site.

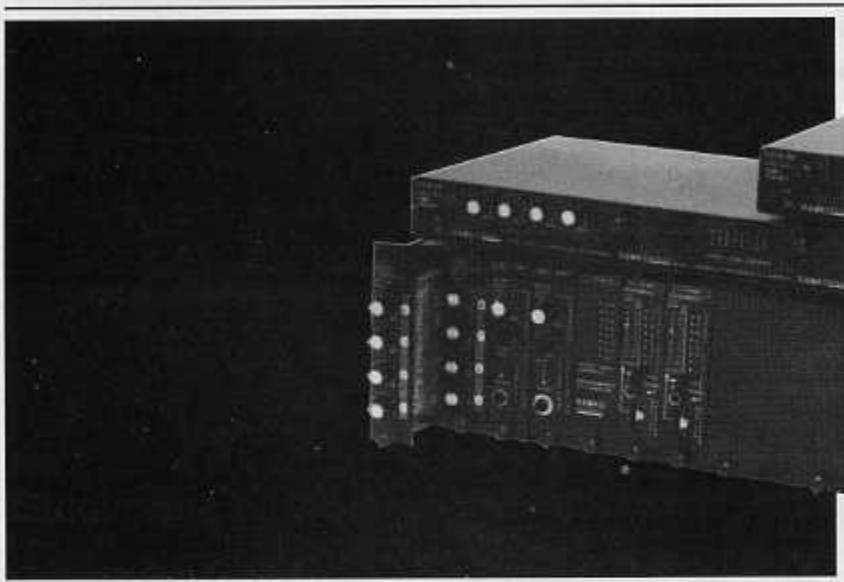
Unless you are very fortunate, or have an unlimited amount of time or money, you will need to make some compromises. This is all perfectly normal. Just make sure that you weigh all the pros and cons of each site so you don't end up with a lot of surprises.

Once you have picked a site, you are then ready for the real fun to begin—designing your dream facility. More on this next time.

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