

# INTERIORS *focus*

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The magazine of the Association of Interior Specialists

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**On a higher level** Full details of this year's AIS Contractors Awards

- Top fixing best practice
- TP Bennett's Richard Beastall in profile
- Getting in on the apps
- The way forward with branding
- All the latest high-profile fit-out contracts
- New products

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# Welcome

Eighteen months ago we asked our members what they wanted from their trade association. The message was clear: set technical standards for the sector; give impartial advice to us and our clients; provide opportunities to win work.

We are now seeing the fruits of this exercise with the publication of the *Best Practice Guide to Top Fixings* (see page 8), developed in response to an increasing number of ceiling collapses – not good for contractors, specifiers or clients. We are following this up with a training package to drive top-fixing competency through the sector. If there is a problem we have an independent panel of consultants to advise on issues relating to ceilings and partitions.

Our president, Jonathan Cherry, has as his theme for his term in office “People, planet, profit”. We believe that more sustainable companies are generally more efficient and therefore more profitable. The Resource Efficiency Action Plan (REAP) for ceilings, produced by our members in conjunction with WRAP and the Construction Products Association, confirms our commitment to less waste and more profit (see page 5).

The aim is to send fewer redundant ceiling tiles to landfill by identifying waste streams for

We are determined to help set standards to drive the low-carbon agenda

existing ceilings and designing out waste in installations. This is especially relevant as we move into a period of greater resource constraints in which prices will fluctuate far more than in the past.

So what about profit? What profit, you may ask. Even if you are making a profit on paper, is this translating into cash in the bank? Our members’ meeting presentations on the changes in the Construction Act are aimed at making sure we all understand how to ensure applications and payments are handled as they should be (see also page 7). This, after all, is the lifeblood of the industry and lengthy disputes add no value to the process.

AIS’s involvement as a development partner with the Ska environmental assessment system is similarly driven by customer demand – for low-energy, low-carbon fit-out. We are determined to help set standards for our sector so that we drive the low-carbon agenda. But it is also about positioning our sector and AIS with those great brands with which customers identify (see feature page 22). Brand awareness helps create opportunity.

And so to our awards. The truth is that in a recession you really struggle if a high percentage of your work doesn’t come from repeat customers. You may have the smartest branding and the sharpest pencil but if you don’t deliver the highest quality your clients will look elsewhere.

Again this year I’ve been hugely impressed by the high standards set by the sector. The entries to our awards are uniformly superb (see page 35). Our winners and those shortlisted are to be congratulated for striving to be the best.

**David Frise, AIS chief executive**

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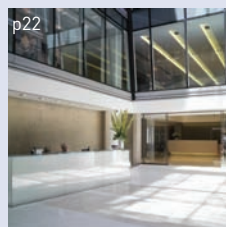
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# Sustainability taskforce takes action on ceiling tiles waste

## AIS leads industry group to find ways of recycling old mineral wool tiles

AN ACTION PLAN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED BY the Ceiling Sustainability Partnership (CSP) – a group led by AIS and made up of manufacturers, distributors and installers of suspended ceilings – to bring an end to wasted mineral wool ceiling tiles stripped out of offices during refurbishment.

The ceilings project is one of several for construction materials initiated by the Construction Products Association. There are others for joinery, flooring, plasterboard, windows and packaging. The action plan has highlighted seven challenges that need to be addressed, including two study areas: one looking at the logistical barriers for recycling mineral wool tiles, another at finding alternative uses for them.

These areas will draw on research funded by WRAP and carried out by consultancy AMEC. AMEC will carry out a series of field trials to gather data the CSP can use to create logistics models and establish alternative uses.

Other materials used in the manufacture of



Most mineral wool ceiling tiles end up in landfill

suspended ceiling tiles, such as gypsum, aluminium and timber, already have established recycling streams. But mineral wool ceiling tiles generally go to landfill, mainly because of the low value of the material and the prohibitive logistical cost of recycling them.

Knauf national sales manager Peter Symons, who is chairing the CSP, emphasised

the need to open up a market for recycled mineral wool tiles. "Perhaps they could act as a binder in blocks or boards," he said, "or be used in agriculture for soil conditioning." Gypsum from plasterboard, for example, can be used as a soil conditioner, as well as being included in closed-loop recycling schemes.

AIS technical manager Joe Cilia highlighted a simple but effective idea for the campaign: a consistent email address that facilities managers, landowners, end users and strip-out firms can use to return tiles to the original manufacturer. This is likely to be [recycleceilings@manufacturername](mailto:recycleceilings@manufacturername).

Symons added: "It is genuinely impressive to see so many people and organisations giving up time and pulling together in order to identify the sustainability issues facing our industry and then actively searching for solutions."

• **The action plan was launched at the AIS President's Lunch on 12 June (see below).**

**For further information please contact [info@ais-interiors.org.uk](mailto:info@ais-interiors.org.uk)**

## Cherry bangs AIS drum at President's Lunch

AIS PRESIDENT JONATHAN Cherry used his first major speech to the industry to drive home positive messages to a sector still struggling with recession.

Speaking at the AIS President's Lunch in London on 12 June, he highlighted the association's ongoing and expanding role in supporting contractors. Initiatives such as the Ceiling Sustainability Partnership (above) and Building a Better Contractor, launched last year, will help businesses stay on top of opportunities, he said.

"The ceilings action plan is a great demonstration of AIS driving quality and taking the lead on issues that matter," said

Cherry before the event. "It's an opportunity for AIS to drive the agenda, not follow it, from the manufacturer to the installer and back again."

British Gypsum, for which he is head of product marketing, has been involved in another initiative backed by WRAP, the Plasterboard Sustainability Partnership. This has been operating for the past 18 months with a brief to invigorate plasterboard recycling efforts across the industry.

Cherry has been leading the AIS charge for sustainability on two fronts: environmental matters and helping contractors build up sustainable businesses. As well



Cherry: aiming to "drive the agenda"

as leading the CSP, AIS's Building a Better Contractor (see *Interiors Focus*, November 2011) has proved a success. "Meetings have

been well attended and strong across the regions," said Cherry. "And it shows members that they are getting value from CITB-ConstructionSkills [which is funding the initiative]."

The two initiatives have helped the association meet key strands of Cherry's presidency priorities, "People, planet, profit".

In his remaining time in office, he said, "AIS will be banging the drum for training, which is still important despite the gloom and doom".

He added: "We all know it's tough out there, but we want our members to be in the best position to win the opportunities that are there."



Ceilings and partitioning at Newport

## Topfix project wins award

TOPFIX INTERIORS HAS WON THE British Gypsum Award for Best Installation 2010/11 for its work at Newport University.

The £1.3m project involved the installation of British Gypsum partitioning and ceilings as well as drylining and plastering works.

The win puts Topfix on the shortlist for British Gypsum parent Saint-Gobain's Gypsum International Trophy awards this summer.

Founded 22 years ago, Bristol-based Topfix Interiors began life installing suspended ceilings but now handles many elements of fit-out, including partitions, plaster finishes and specialist joinery works. While 90% of its workload is carried out within 100 miles of Bristol, it recently completed a project in Marseille, France.

The firm has also gained praise for its SAFE (Safety Awareness For Everyone) scheme.

Topfix managing director Miles Radburn said: "We've progressed from having relatively mediocre scores on health and safety with main contractors to having top marks. In addition we have brought forward an environmental policy and will soon be accredited to BS 8555."

This resulted in Topfix winning the Willmott Dixon health, safety and environmental supply chain award last year.

[www.topfix-interiors.co.uk](http://www.topfix-interiors.co.uk)

# British Gypsum forges logistics partnership

BRITISH GYPSUM HAS ENTERED into a partnership with logistics specialist CEVA to further its sustainability efforts.

British Gypsum plans to invest in CEVA's fleet of streamlined trailers to help the plasterboard maker reduce its environmental impact and carbon emissions by up to 5%.

Among the initiatives to be introduced are new dual-fuel vehicles, a national depot network, and delivery and pick-up schedules that make more efficient use of vehicles.

The agreement builds on a successful relationship between the two firms at British Gypsum's Kirkby Thore plant in Cumbria, where CEVA serves the north of England and Scotland.

CEVA's vice president for



The 'teardrop' trailer offers a more fuel-efficient transportation method

industrial and technology, Ian Robb, said: "I am delighted with the trust British Gypsum has once again placed in CEVA, and look forward to delivering another best-in-class sustainable solution for this client."

British Gypsum marketing director Sarah Brook said: "By teaming up with CEVA we will

benefit from world-class logistical expertise, using this to improve performance throughout our supply chain."

Along with the sustainable benefits of the vehicles, a new load securing system has been developed in an effort to minimise transit damage.

[www.british-gypsum.com](http://www.british-gypsum.com)

## Interiors specialists unveil new London showrooms

TWO INTERIORS FIRMS AIM TO raise their London profile through new showrooms in the capital's design quarter, Clerkenwell.

Planet Partitioning used Clerkenwell Design Week to launch its showroom on Goswell Road in the area. Although open since the end of last year, the unit was not completed until this year. The design festival, held on 22-24 May, marked its official launch.

Located on the ground floor of a refurbished building, the new 105m<sup>2</sup> premises displays Planet's glazed and timber relocatable partitioning products.

The showroom is divided into workspaces and includes a reception desk and boardroom furniture from Clarke Rendall and chairs from sustainable seating supplier Koehl. Also on view are curved frameless glazing, Spacelite smart glass and a range of door options including a frameless glazed sliding door, a



Planet's Clerkenwell showroom

metal fire door and integrated blinds and manifestation.

The Window Film Company has also opened a showroom in Clerkenwell, adding to its head office in Chesham and an office in Birmingham. The supplier and installer will use the showroom to inform clients and display applications for window film and glass manifestations.

[www.windowfilm.co.uk](http://www.windowfilm.co.uk)

[www.planetpartitioning.co.uk](http://www.planetpartitioning.co.uk)

## Partitioning firm rebrand

APTON PARTITIONING IS rolling out a new corporate identity for the company.

Its logo has been updated to help Apton build up its export market. It has a 15-year track record in Qatar, Kuwait, Dubai, USA, Turkey and Poland and says overseas sales account for £3m-£4m of its annual sales.

Apton has launched two products to accompany the rebrand. Inspire, a 75mm relocatable partitioning system, offers 30-minute fire resistance and 44Rw(dB) acoustic performance, while Quantum, a 100mm partitioning system, can achieve fire ratings of FR60/60 and acoustics of 51Rw(dB).

[www.apton-partitioning.com](http://www.apton-partitioning.com)



# Government's SME champion urges action

STEPHEN ALLOTT, THE CROWN commercial representative for SMEs, has urged subcontractors to take procurement problems into their own hands.

Speaking at an AIS members' meeting at Kensington Roof Gardens, London, in May, Allott threw light on government policy for increasing public sector procurement from SMEs.

He reminded the 70-plus delegates of opportunities to tackle the key problems of late payment and pre-qualification questionnaires. PQs have been abolished on government contracts of less than £100,000 and a simplified eprocurement system, the Dynamic Marketplace, was introduced last year along with a Contracts Finder portal.

The government's Mystery Shopper scheme was extended in March to include issues relating to unfair practices in the supply chain. Suppliers can now use it to escalate public procurement



Allott: "use the Mystery Shopper"

issues to the Cabinet Office.

Allott told delegates: "I will be taking comments back to government. I urge you to use the Mystery Shopper to make change happen." And he was keen to assure delegates of the confidentiality of the scheme.

In a lively Q&A session at the event, concerns were raised about

main contractors continuing to flout the government's commitment to 30-day payment terms. In response to questions over why the government continues to employ poor payers, Allott advised members to raise their concerns via the Mystery Shopper service.

AIS chief executive David Frise added his voice to the call for action. "Fair payment is the biggest problem we have in construction. The government's 30-day payment policy is a welcome step – but not if it isn't being adhered to."

The government's stated aim is to increase the proportion of public sector spending through these businesses to 14% by the end of this financial year – that's double the amount spent in the previous year.

• **The AIS members' meeting was also used to launch AIS's Best Practice Guide to Top Fixings – see page 8 for details**

## Bbi adds to network with London office

FACILITIES SUPPORT SPECIALIST BEACONS Business Interiors (Bbi) has invested more than £250,000 in a new London office for itself and subsidiary PJE.

The office, located in the London Underwriting Centre in Mincing Lane, adds to Bbi's UK network in Brecon, Leeds and Gloucester.

Bbi will use the 10-storey building as a base to provide interior design and space planning services, mechanical and electrical design, project management and internal construction to its London-based clients.

Andy Graham, founder and executive chairman of the Bbi Group, said: "We see the new office as a long-term investment in our growing client base in the south-east. Today 25% of our revenue is generated within the M25 area, so it was a natural step to have a physical presence in the city."

Established in Brecon in 1989, Bbi's growth led to the opening of a Leeds office in 2002 and the acquisition of Gloucester-based PJ Engineering (now PJE Business Solutions) in 2003 to consolidate its in-house M&E offering. Graham sees the London



The City base will serve London and south-east clients

office as a key milestone. "Having a base here means we are well placed to make the most of the many business opportunities in the capital city."

The Bbi Group is expected to end the current financial year with a turnover of £16m. Its largest clients include Balfour Beatty Workplace, SunGard, Mitel, Welsh Water, Babcock and the Lloyds Banking Group.

[www.bbi-uk.com](http://www.bbi-uk.com)

### News in brief

#### New name for Danoline

Denmark-based provider of acoustical ceiling and wall materials Danoline has announced that it is changing its name to Knauf Danoline. The change of brand name is intended to bring it closer to its parent company, Knauf, but the company says this will have no effect on its customers.

[www.knaufdanoline.com](http://www.knaufdanoline.com)

#### Duvale adds EU outlets

Duvale has appointed three distributors in France and one in Luxemburg. The new distributors have already secured new business in Lille, Lyon and Marseille. Duvale export director Steve Hearn said: "Our new French distributors and the business they are bringing to Duvale is an exciting indicator of the potential of working in Europe, and an encouraging sign as we progress our plans to spread further into the EU."

[www.duvale.plc.uk](http://www.duvale.plc.uk)

#### Optima training centre

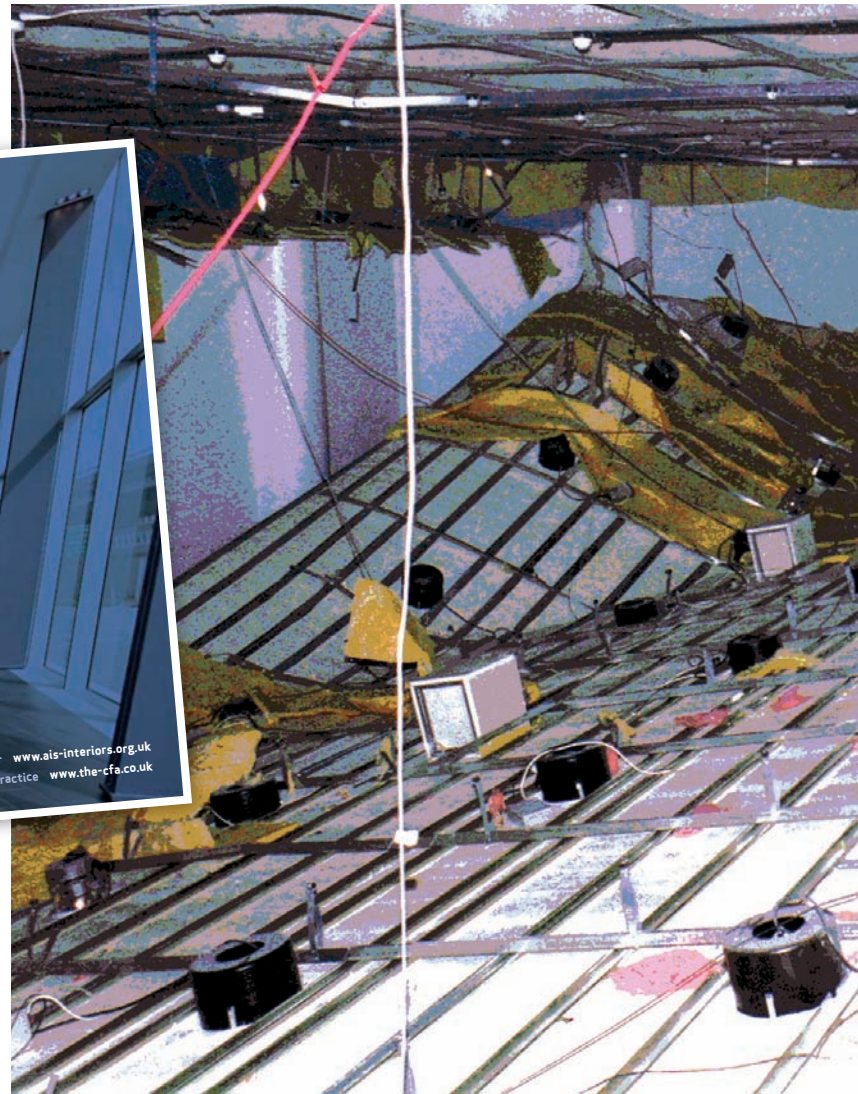
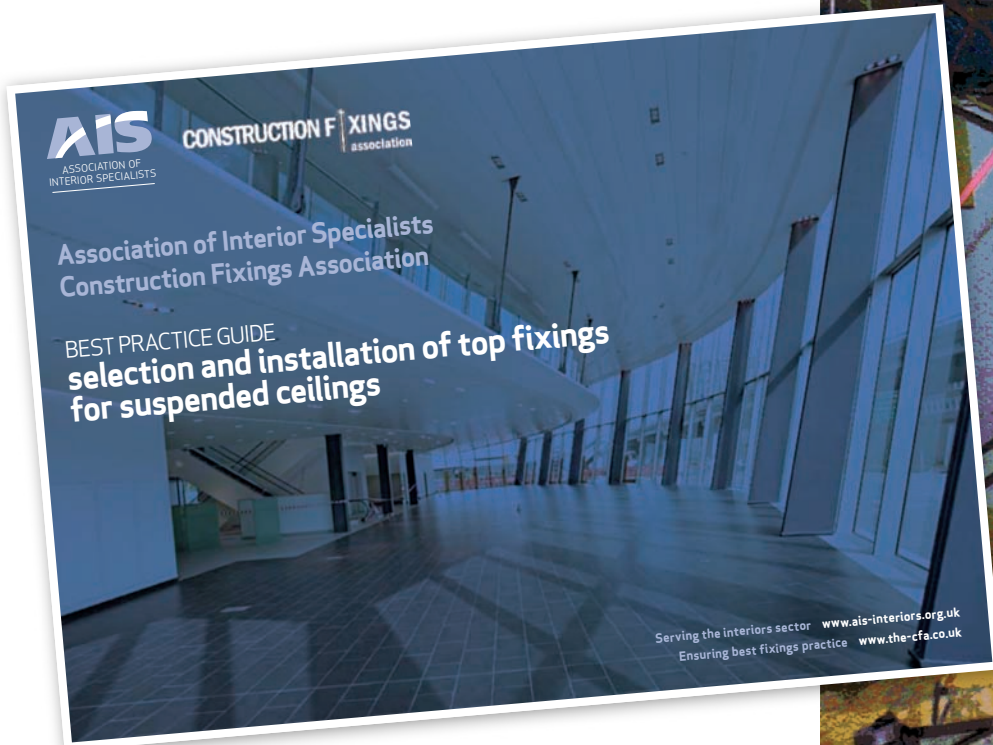
Optima has opened a training centre at its manufacturing facility in Radstock, near Bath. The training centre includes training rigs for each element of its product range, as well as a large audiovisual area and construction facility that will enable it to offer a better quality of hands-on training.

[www.optimasystems.com](http://www.optimasystems.com)

#### Clansman branches out

Glasgow-based Clansman Interiors has extended its national reach with recent projects in Fraserburgh in Aberdeenshire, as well as in Newcastle and Liverpool. It says projects are also in the pipeline in Newport, Wales, and in Larne, Northern Ireland. It has completed several glazed partitioning contracts in Glasgow as well as at Banff and Buchan College, Fraserburgh, and the Scottish Qualification Authority, Dalkeith.

[www.clansmaninteriors.com](http://www.clansmaninteriors.com)



# TOP TIPS

A new AIS guide to top fixing aims to bring some much needed clarity to the secure installation of ceilings

'WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN' is hardly an adage you'd want to associate with suspended ceilings. But the frequency of collapsing ceilings is a cause for growing alarm across the sector.

In response to this AIS, in conjunction with the Construction Fixings Association, has produced its *Best practice guide: selection and installation of top fixings for suspended ceilings*, a follow-up to the *Best practice guide: installation of suspended ceilings* launched earlier this year.

Alex Double, managing director of AD Design Consultants, who contributed to the guide, has first-hand experience of the problem. "We are involved in inspections of works on site to make sure they are installed in compliance with manufacturers' guidelines and we get called in on quite a number of ceiling collapses," he says. "We've had

numerous instances where complete ceilings have collapsed and would probably have killed somebody. Thankfully most ceilings collapse when there's nobody underneath.

"Probably all of us in the industry have our own nightmare stories – we have one case that's going through the High Court at the moment," he adds.

## Weak links in the chain

So what's going wrong? Double believes the people responsible for specifying suspended ceilings never or rarely specify the fixings to be used. "The reliance is on the subcontractor on site to select them," he says. "And often they either take their eye off the ball or they leave it to their own fixers to make the selection or they don't realise the seriousness of what they're doing.

"Sometimes it's simply the way

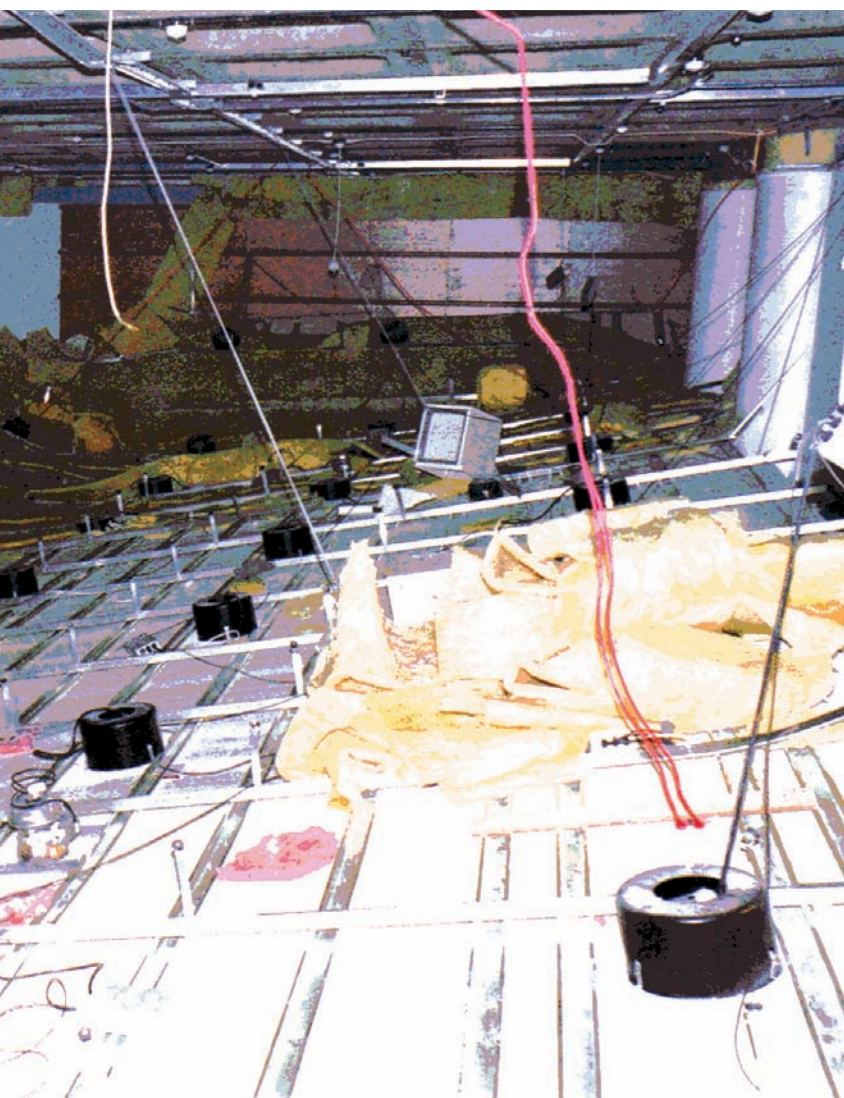
the fixings have been applied. They haven't understood the significance of not following the manufacturer's guidance, where it does exist."

AIS technical manager Joe Cilia explains the impetus behind the guide. "AIS is constantly trying to drive best practice throughout the industry. Even if the selection of fixing is left to the fitter, at the very least this guide will provide the information they need to make that selection competently."

The guide is aimed at everyone involved in the process of fixing suspended ceilings, he says, from specifiers to supervisors on site.

In trying to bring consistency and clarity to this area, the guide starts by giving the key reasons for ceiling collapses (see box). It then looks at the application parameters that need to be identified before the correct top fixings can be selected: the





## THE MAIN ISSUE IS THAT FIXINGS ARE OFTEN REGARDED AS NOT PROPER ENGINEERING

applied load; the base material in which the top fixing will be installed; and any environmental factors that may affect the ceiling or fixing after installation.

A fixing selector chart identifies types of fixings, the substrate they can be fixed to and the weight of ceiling they can support. "The guide encourages people to consider the context in which the ceiling is to be placed," says Cilia.

Fixings for use in concrete are very different to those used with timber, for instance. And very different types of fixing would be

used for an office and for a swimming centre. Heat and humidity must be considered, as well as the likely impact of vibrations – there might be a school gym on one floor and a suspended ceiling underneath it.

The guide goes on to outline installation procedures before moving on to testing. Cilia says: "Site tests may be needed for two main purposes – preliminary tests to check the suitability of a fixing and proof tests to check the quality of installation."

"The main issue," says Alastair

Soane, director with Structural-Safety, "is that fixings are often regarded as not proper engineering. So somebody at a fairly low level on site will be responsible for getting in a firm to install fixings that can be inadequate. If they fail, something will fall down and often it will be heavy. In cinemas, for example, suspended ceilings are put there for acoustic reasons and can be as much as two inches of solid plasterboard."

### Structural backdrop

Structural-Safety combines the activities of CROSS (Confidential Reporting on Structural Safety) and SCOSS (the Standing Committee on Structural Safety) to work with the industry and government on safety matters, and is another organisation that contributed to the guide.

"A lot of this is related to getting the right publicity out there – which is something the guide will address," says Soane. "It will hopefully make people aware that guidance is available and that failures have taken place and it's only by good fortune that some of them have not involved fatalities."

The Construction Fixings Association was also a key contributor to the guide. Mark Salmon, general manager, explains: "We've campaigned proactively for a long time to try and improve understanding of how fixings work. We are currently involved in finalising a standard, BS8539-2012: Code of practice for the selection and installation of post-installed anchors in concrete and masonry, which has been used as the basis for much of the guide when referring to fixing into concrete soffits."

Double adds: "Top fixing is a subject dear to my heart. It was important to be involved in a document that promotes good practice and gives advice to all parties, from specifiers through to installers, on the correct methods for selecting top fixings. The guide covers the whole spectrum of potential issues."

AIS also enlisted the expertise of the department of civil and environmental engineering at Imperial College London. Its

research and teaching fellow, Dr Sunday Popo-Ola, contributed to the chapter on testing. "As an engineer who specialises in the safe and proper use of fixing products, I think the guide is an excellent idea," he says. "If followed properly, it will encourage the proper design of top fixings and prevent the sort of failures and accidents that have occurred recently."

There's little doubt the AIS guide addresses a critical safety issue in construction and design. Cilia says: "Suspended ceilings have always been included in national building specification clause K40. But top fixings often come through in tenders as something vague like 'install using suitable fixings'. I've never seen a building installed on 'suitable foundations'."

Indeed foundations are subject to highly detailed specifications based on critical factors including substrate, building weight, load capacity, soil moisture content, whether it needs piling, whether there are vibrations and so on.

Suspended ceilings are no different – a point AIS is keen to emphasise in its publication. This latest best practice guidance promises to bring clarity and reassurance to a crucial but long overlooked area.

### TOP 10 REASONS WHY CEILINGS COLLAPSE

1. **Incorrect selection of fixing**
2. **Incorrect installation of fixing**
3. **Additional load applied**
4. **Insufficient numbers of fixings**
5. **People walking/crawling on ceilings**
6. **Failure to follow the manufacturer's guidance/instructions**
7. **Modification by other trades**
8. **Insufficient supervision/training**
9. **Structural vibration causing fixings to fail**
10. **Substitution of specified components**

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MEMBER

# Jennor helps Cunard sail again

## Refurbishment work continues for Jennor as building gets new lease of life

**Over £1m** JENNOR UK HAS COMPLETED a refurbishment project that has restored the original features of Liverpool's historic Cunard building while introducing a smart, contemporary feel.

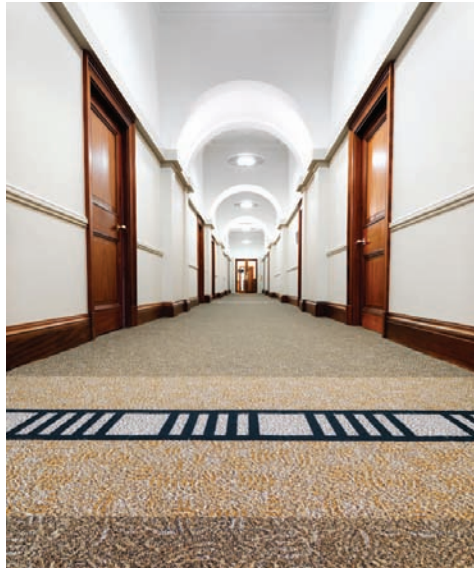
Working with architects Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams and APM Design, Jennor has helped transform the former passenger lounge on the second floor of this World Heritage site into high-quality office space.

The refurbishment scheme included the restoration of original ceiling details, including mouldings and cornices previously hidden by tenant works. A raised access floor was installed, featuring integrated under-floor services such as air-conditioning and power equipment.

Work was also carried out in the common areas, including the first to sixth floor lift and staircase lobbies, common corridors, main staircase and toilet areas.

The extensive programme involved restoring all the ornate ceilings and fluted column details while introducing trough-feature LED lighting and a UFO Optic Fibre light within each staircase landing.

Original solid partition walls between the staircase lobbies and lift lobbies were replaced



with glazed screens on the first to fifth floors. The project also included the restoration of mahogany panelled doors, French polishing and the refurbishment of original brass ironmongery throughout, including the giant central staircase.

Known as one of the Three Graces, the Cunard building was built on Liverpool's



Common areas were restored and modernised

waterfront during the first world war as the headquarters and main passenger terminal of the Cunard Steamship Company.

Jennor's work is continuing there with the refurbishment of part of the third floor which will form a new suite. This is expected to complete in July.

**Client:** Merseyside Pension Fund

**Value of contract:** £1.5m

**Completion:** January 2012

**Main contractor:** CBRE

**Fit-out contractor:** Jennor UK

[www.jennor.co.uk](http://www.jennor.co.uk)

# Skansen raises a staircase to Heineken offices

**Under £1m** SKANSEN HAS created a branded southern office for Dutch brewer Heineken on two floors of Elsey Court, Great Titchfield Street, London.

The 10-week refurbishment centred on installing an elliptical stainless steel staircase in restricted space between the first and second floors. Early procurement and factory visits to Bradford ensured a smooth pre-fabrication process. When the staircase was delivered to site, it was at 3am using the full width of Great Titchfield Street to



Skansen's project involved creating a strong corporate look for the brewer

manoeuvre the structure in through a first-floor window.

Detailed coordination of a high number of bespoke finishes and interfaces resulted in a strong corporate look. And to allow the building to remain in occupation throughout the works, Skansen planned and managed all noisy works to ensure minimal disruption to the tenants.

**Client:** Heineken

**Value of contract:** £870,000

**Completion:** December 2011

**Fit-out specialist:** Skansen Interiors

[www.skansen.co.uk](http://www.skansen.co.uk)

• See branding feature, page 22

# Style cashes in on Manchester casino revamp

## DORMA system installed in VIP area

MOVEABLE PARTITIONS FIRM Style has called on DORMA to complete a flexible, high-class space in the VIP and dining areas of a Manchester casino.

The brief for the new Grosvenor G Casino Didsbury in the Parrs Wood Entertainment Centre was for space that could easily be sub-divided, offer privacy to guests and diners and blend in with the styling of the casino.

The casino includes a sports and entertainments lounge, restaurant, late-night bar, interactive games room and conference facilities.

Working with contractor GF Holding and architect Cadmium Design, Style recommended a

DORMA Varitrans partitioning system for the VIP area. This all-glass system gives privacy while maximising the sight lines of those inside. The panels can be manoeuvred into place easily, allowing staff to reconfigure the space as required.

For the dining areas, Style selected the DORMA Variflex partitioning system, finished with an American walnut veneer to blend with the interior. Delivering an acoustic rating of 45dB, the partitions minimise noise from elsewhere in the room.

Andy Gibson, Style's director for the North, said: "We were pleased with how our partitioning walls complemented the interior



DORMA glass and walnut partitioning have been used



design while offering flexibility of space, privacy and quiet."

**Client:** Grosvenor Casinos  
**Value of contract:** £26,000

**Completion:** January 2012  
**Partitions specialist:** Style Moveable Partition Specialists  
[www.style-partitions.co.uk](http://www.style-partitions.co.uk)

# Paragon puts sparkle into Britvic's Herts centre

NOTTINGHAM-BASED FIT-OUT specialist Paragon Interiors Group has completed a 12-week contract at Breakspear Park, Hemel Hempstead, for global drinks maker Britvic.

The project included the full refurbishment of 2,970m<sup>2</sup> of space formerly occupied by BP, comprising four zones and atrium space on the second floor.

At the heart of the fit-out is a new reception area that funnels staff and visitors through a glass-lined corridor showcasing the Britvic drinks portfolio.

It brings them into an area with meeting booths, team rooms with movable walls and a large vending and breakout zone. The walls are lined with feature Plexwood panels, contrasting with the honed stone flooring and glazed walls.

The other three zones form

work areas made up of different themed meeting rooms, interactive meeting areas and private phone booths.

Additional open collaborative meeting space is set behind

highlighted staff lockers laid out in a horseshoe shape.

The links to the atrium have been replaced by bridges lit by daylight to give the space a more open feel of one large zone rather

than four separate ones. About 85% of the company's 275-strong Chelmsford-based workforce has moved to the new headquarters.

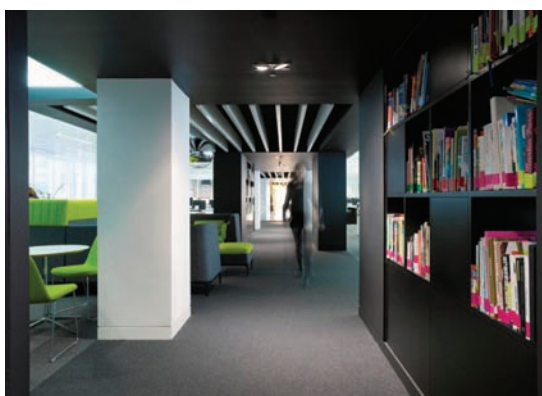
Britvic project manager James Beaven commented: "Paragon delivered against a challenging timeline. The team came across multiple obstacles during the project but responded to them all effectively and pro-actively."

• In recent months Paragon has also secured contracts for a 12,077m<sup>2</sup> UK call centre for AXA Insurance in Ipswich and a new head office facility for residential search engine rightmove.com in Milton Keynes.

**Client:** Britvic Soft Drinks  
**Value of contract:** £2.2m  
**Completion:** April 2012  
**Fit-out specialist:** Paragon Interiors Group  
[www.paragonplc.com](http://www.paragonplc.com)



A new reception area takes visitors past displays of the drinks portfolio



G2 Joshua's office refit has combined an industrial look with bright colours

## 33 London steps in for agency work

FIT-OUT FIRM 33 LONDON HAS overseen the refit of 1,580m<sup>2</sup> of fifth-floor office space for brand consultancy G2 Joshua in London's Knightsbridge.

33 London installed ventilation and air-conditioning units, created glazed offices and meeting rooms and integrated new lighting into existing systems.

It put in place a new reception with exposed floor pan tiles, featuring cut-out matting in the centre of the communal area, perimeter meeting booths and a café/kitchen.

To create the industrial look required by G2, existing ceiling tiles were removed to leave the structural slab exposed and painted black, as were all the services. This also acted as a background for white grained

wooden slats hung from the ceiling as an added feature to soften the warehouse look.

The reception desk has a polished red corian top and sprayed face front panel in high gloss white. Vibrant furniture, designer lighting and an 85-inch TV displaying G2's work completed the reception's contemporary look.

The boardroom was designed with halo perimeter lighting on a scene-setting device.

33 London also fitted out a standalone comms rooms and laid fibre-optic and data cabling for 300 staff workstations.

**Client:** G2 Joshua  
**Value of project:** £750,000  
**Completion:** November 2011  
**Fit-out contractor:** 33 London  
[www.33london.com](http://www.33london.com)

## Rothschild banks on Brockhouse walls

BROCKHOUSE HAS BEEN PICKED by Dutch architect OMA to provide an acoustic movable wall solution for Rothschild Bank's new offices in the City of London. The 21,000m<sup>2</sup> headquarters, New Court, rises from the narrow medieval alley of St Swithin's Lane to a rooftop pavilion with views across London.

Brockhouse completed the installation within a fully glazed building envelope that formed the penthouse floor on level 15. The project involved a complex layout of 5m-high moving panels to form several layout options. It included 35 operable panels making up three movable wall sets, one 28m long and two 7.5m long.

The structure had to accommodate a sloping facade to one side of the building and a deflecting frame that can move in or out to suit the weather conditions. Brockhouse designed a bespoke acoustic aluminium wall post to allow the panels to connect with the exterior mullions and for the frame to deflect within this post.

It also devised a tracking system to allow panels to be moved around easily to form divisions but take up minimal



Views from Rothschild's new offices

stacking space. Site constraints meant Brockhouse had to manufacture the panels on site as there was no way of craning them into the building. Each component was hauled up to the top floor by lift and stairs.

Panel finishes were created in partnership with the Textile Museum in Holland.

The project took two years from initial contact to completion.

**Value of contract:** £300,000

**Completion:** December 2011

**Architect:** OMA

**Specialist subcontractor:**

**Brockhouse Modernfold**

[www.brockhouse.net](http://www.brockhouse.net)



A tracking system allows staff to move the wall panelling around easily



Contracts in brief

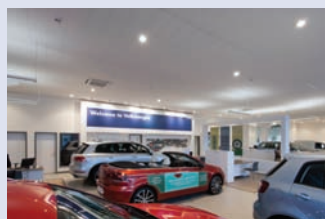
**Knauf AMF gears up for VW**

Thermatex Acoustic ceiling tiles from Knauf AMF have completed the interior of Volkswagen's new showroom in Barnstaple. As well as giving a crisp appearance, the tiles have improved sound absorption in the large, open-plan space.

The mineral board has an acoustic fleece face with a smooth surface, while the combination of high-density, biosoluble mineral wool, clay and starch provide good physical characteristics.

A total of 600m<sup>2</sup> of Thermatex Acoustic tiles were specified for the project in a larger plank format (2,500 x 300mm). The project, worth £10,000, was completed in October 2011.

[www.amfceilings.co.uk](http://www.amfceilings.co.uk)



Thermatex tiles in VW showroom

# Brazier creates slick look for oil subsidiary

## Ergonomic furniture completes Ocean Village workspace

HAMPSHIRE-BASED BRAZIER Interior Systems has helped Plant Asset Management, part of global oil and gas services group Petrofac, to move to more spacious premises in Southampton's Ocean Village.

Brazier's team of designers, installers and engineers planned and installed glass partitions within the open-plan office to define meeting rooms and office space. The glass gives staff a good view of the marina wherever they sit and maximises natural light.

Brazier specified furniture for the new office, including ergonomically designed chairs. The boardroom was fitted with a SMART Board Series interactive whiteboard, which allows users to share computer files on an interactive screen attached to a projector.

The interior specialist was keen to ensure minimal disruption to



Glass partitioning has given the office space a much more open, bright feel

staff and completed the office move over a weekend. Managing director Roy Martin said: "Staff have a much more open and spacious environment to work in."

Geoff Baker, director of Plant Asset Management, added: "We work long hours, so it's important to have a comfortable office

environment that everyone enjoys. Small touches like the ergonomic chairs have made a huge difference."

**Client:** Plant Asset Management  
**Completion:** December 2011  
**Specialist subcontractor:** Brazier Interior Systems  
[www.brazier.co.uk](http://www.brazier.co.uk)

# Armstrong sets new standards for city council

MICRO-PERFORATED METAL tiles from Armstrong Ceilings have played a key role in the aesthetics and acoustics of Birmingham City Council's new workplace in the city.

Associated Architects specified 3,200m<sup>2</sup> of Armstrong's metal 1,200 x 300mm tiles, featuring 71% light reflectance and a fleece backing for additional acoustic insulation.

During a four-month project, the white metal swing-down planks were put in place to give access to services above 60,960m<sup>2</sup> of open-plan offices, meeting rooms and breakout areas. In the open-plan areas they were used as rafts with plasterboard perimeters; in the larger meeting rooms, as suspended ceilings under a



3,200m<sup>2</sup> of Armstrong tiles are fleece-backed for better sound absorption

natural ventilation system of ceiling-mounted fan coil units.

The £38m project at 10 Woodcock Street has achieved a BREEAM Excellent rating. The

building is organised around a full-length, two-storey internal street that acts as the primary circulation route into the building. Simon Alexander, associate

with Associated Architects, said: "The ceiling solution was an important component of the design of the internal office environment – visually, acoustically and for ease of access to services.

"We liked the clean lines of the Armstrong metal system. The planks met our acoustic absorption criteria and we liked the ease of access into the ceiling void by hinging down and folding to one side. They were set within a plasterboard margin to ensure we were never forced to cut any of them."

**Client:** Birmingham City Council  
**Value of contract:** £100,000  
**Completion:** October 2011  
**Ceilings supplier:** Armstrong Ceilings  
[www.armstrong.co.uk](http://www.armstrong.co.uk)

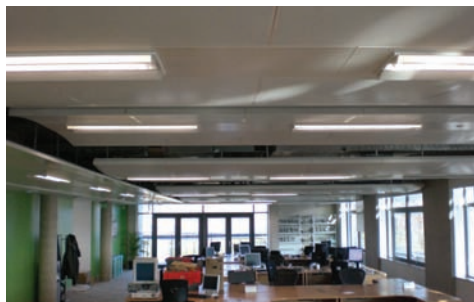
# Burgess breathes new life into Project Oxygen

CONTRACTORS WORKING ON RESEARCH company ATASS's environmentally-friendly headquarters have turned to Burgess to provide bespoke curved panelling.

The building on Exeter Business Park, dubbed Project Oxygen, features a three-storey concrete frame, photovoltaic panels, solar shading, intelligent lighting systems, rainwater harvesting and air source heat pumps.

Burgess was approached in mid-2010 by specialist subcontractor CAP Ceilings & Partitions to devise solutions in line with the client's ecological brief. It came up with a series of convex and concave panels to provide a continual wave flow from wall to wall, while a central beam system gives structural integrity and houses integrated services.

The system comprises three designs of panel. The central walkway panels run from wall to wall and the central beam of each panel incorporates grilles, lighting units and alarm sensors. Each panel is removable and on the end of each is a flat, floating 300mm beam that sits under the concave and convex



Convex and concave ceiling panels were installed

panels running perpendicular to them.

All of the panels can be removed if access is needed to services and each tile is fitted with acoustic pads.

The panels' micro-perforation pattern allows seamless blending with the lighting modules that sit in the centre of the panels.

**Client:** ATASS

**Value of contract:** £100,000

**Completion:** February 2012

**Main contractor:** Midas

**Architect:** Broadway Malyan

**Ceilings supplier:** Burgess Architectural Products

**Specialist contractor:** CAP Ceilings & Partitions

**www.burgessceilings.co.uk**

## Contracts in brief

### Rockfon adds colour to village

More than 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of Rockfon ceiling solutions have been installed at the Basildon Sporting Village in the Thames Gateway regeneration scheme, which will be used as a training camp for this summer's Olympic Games.

S&P Architects' Paul Clayton said: "We wanted a humidity-resistant system with excellent acoustics, easy access to the void and a contrast of texture and colour in the pool area. Rockfon Polar Colour tiles in white and grey provided an ideal solution."

The £50,000 project also included white Rockfon Scholar ceiling tiles for the changing rooms and offices and MediCare tiles for the corridors.

**www.rockfon.co.uk**



# Back-painted glass adds to sharp look at Shard

BACK-PAINTED GLASS FROM Coventry-based GLASSOLUTIONS has been specified to make the washrooms in The Shard – western Europe's tallest building – as iconic as the exterior.

Fit-out contractor Swift Horsman turned to the glazing specialist to manufacture and deliver back-painted glass to line the walls of 78 washrooms.

GLASSOLUTIONS, part of Saint-Gobain, accommodated intricate requirements for the 310m<sup>2</sup> 87-storey London skyscraper, which will house offices, restaurants, hotel and flats when completed next year.

Philip Brown, associate at Swift Horsman, said: "GLASSOLUTIONS embraced the challenges of a site with difficult access. They responded well to the changes a complex build presents and delivered product to our factory in Scotland as well as direct to site." Chris Belcher, business



The Shard will be complete next year

manager at GLASSOLUTIONS, added: "Back-painted glass is a popular choice for architects and specifiers looking for a product that creates a striking effect and is durable and easy to clean."

**Client:** The Shard

**Value of contract:** £300,000

**Completion:** January 2012

**Glass supplier:** GLASSOLUTIONS

**Fit-out contractor:** Swift Horsman

**www.glassolutions.co.uk**



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## Contracts in brief

### Planet completes civic offices

Planet Partitioning has supplied specialist glazing for the atria and partition screening at Greenwich council's new headquarters in Woolwich, south-east London.

The glazing was used for the main atria and light wells, while single-glazed silicone jointed walls completed the office fronts with glass and timber door sets.



Planet has supplied specialist glazing solutions for the Woolwich project

The silicone jointed solution has a seamless flush finish and is part of the Advanced Frameless Glazing portfolio from Planet.

Appointed by main contractor Wates, Planet's £600,000 project also called for bespoke equipment to install the atrium and light well glazing.

The 19,000m<sup>2</sup> development comprises civic offices, service centres, a public library and a business centre, as well as public open space.

[www.planetpartitioning.co.uk](http://www.planetpartitioning.co.uk)

### Pegasus chooses Sheetrock spray

Pegasus Fire Protection Company has turned to USG to provide a high-quality finish in a fast-track project at Langside College in Glasgow.

The schedule meant Pegasus needed a finishing solution that could be executed quickly without compromising on quality. Traditional skim plaster was ruled out, as was taping and jointing, because of concerns that light in the long corridors would show up any irregularities.

So Pegasus chose USG's Sheetrock Interior Surface Finishing System, a spray surface finish that creates a clean surface without skim coating or primers.

As part of a £50,000 contract, which was completed in December 2011, it applied Sheetrock Prospray, a vinyl-polymer-based skim coating designed for gypsum drywall, blockwork and smooth interior concrete. This was then finished with Sheetrock Tuffhide Primer Surfacer, a dual-purpose vinyl acrylic latex-based coating for a durable decorated surface.

[www.usg.com](http://www.usg.com)

# Opl boosts Iveco warehouse centre

OPL GROUP HAS CREATED A training centre in Winsford, Cheshire, for international trucks manufacturer Iveco.

The 12-week project, delivered with Manchester-based design studio Space Invader, extended and refurbished a 1,858m<sup>2</sup> 1960s warehouse to introduce a large workshop and classrooms.

Using specialist renders, the aesthetics and energy efficiency of the exterior of the building were enhanced. An embossed logo was added to the outside and a sign-in system installed to streamline the arrival of visitors.

The branded interior aimed to breathe new life into the former warehouse, featuring a



The bespoke reception desk mimics Iveco's trucks product line

bespoke reception desk that takes its design cues from the Iveco product line.

**Client:** Iveco

**Value of contract:** £600,000

**Completion:** November 2011

**Fit-out contractor:** Opl Group

[www.oplgroup.com](http://www.oplgroup.com)

# Tecnics helps healthcare group get in shape on the Solent

TECNICS INTERIORS HAS CREATED A NEW home for healthcare group Covidien at 4500 Parkway on Solent Business Park, Hampshire.

In a 10-week programme, it refurbished an empty building to include a reception, 70 offices, four meeting rooms, three breakout areas, kitchen, café, lab areas and two server rooms. A mix of standard stud partitions were

blended with single- and double-glazed silicone jointed features. Despite the tight floor space the workforce was accommodated in two floors, negating the lease of the building's ground floor.

Tecnics designed a system of double-glazed faceted Komfort Polar partitioning to create a double meeting room with curved front. The cafeteria and kitchen facility were created as a light, dynamic area for staff to relax, where audio and visual presentations show corporate signage and streamed media in different areas.

The bespoke reception area includes a new reception desk, with a meeting room and storeroom matching the veneer of the desk.

A high, pitched roof to the second floor presented a difficult route to fire-protect the two server rooms that had to be situated there. The solution was a one-hour fire-rated



The project included a bespoke reception area and cafe

horizontal section BG shaft wall to create a roof structure, maintaining integrity from outside and within the room.

Tecnics worked to a tight programme, which was shortened from 12 weeks to 10 weeks to suit the client.

**Client:** Covidien

**Value of contract:** £1m+

**Completion:** September 2011

**Fit-out contractor:** Tecnics Interiors

[www.office-refurb.com](http://www.office-refurb.com)



## Knauf Danoline gets scientific with Reading

ACOUSTIC CEILING FROM Knauf Danoline – the new name for Danoline (see news page 7) – have been selected for the new offices of food and pharmaceuticals testing specialist Reading Scientific Services Ltd (RSSL).

Knauf Danoline worked with architect BCS and main contractor Mansell Construction to come up with the best acoustic solution for the 1,000m<sup>2</sup> new-build premises.

Different solutions were chosen to suit the aesthetic and technical demands of different workspaces. The ceiling mix includes the rectangular Vista Tangent for its flexible, light design; the Unity 6 System for its continuous look; Corridor 400 Tangent for easy mounting and demounting in corridor areas; Plaza Globe, a traditional



Knauf Danoline ceilings in action

suspended ceiling; and Mitex (mitred panels) for the bulkheads and light troughs.

**Client:** RSSL

**Value of contract:** £20,000

**Completion:** March 2012

**Ceilings supplier:** Knauf Danoline

[www.knaufdanoline.com](http://www.knaufdanoline.com)

## Portview throws shapes in Kooples store

PORTVIEW HAS FITTED OUT A new store for French fashion label The Kooples in Kingston upon Thames, south-west London.

The fashion brand arrived on the UK high street in 2010. The Kingston store, the 17th in its portfolio, was built by Portview in five weeks.

When Portview stripped back the existing store to its base shell, hidden beams were revealed that altered the anticipated shape of the store. Portview's CAD team adapted the fit-out, particularly the mechanical and electrical works, to accommodate the beams and push through architect Boxco2's design.

A new ceiling with a perimeter lighting raft and directional spotlights was installed, as well as a black resin floor to give a

seamless appearance. To allow graphics to be displayed around the store, rectangular light boxes were built into each of the walls, into which the visuals could slide.

Portview also installed changing rooms and sourced the leather panelling on the walls.

**Client:** The Kooples

**Value of contract:** £108,000

**Completion:** September 2011

**Architect:** Boxco2

**Fit-out contractor:** Portview Fit-Out  
[www.portview.co.uk](http://www.portview.co.uk)



A black resin floor adds to the seamless look



Northern Kentucky University, Student Union



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# INSIDE EDGE

Richard Beastall, founder of the interiors division of architect TP Bennett, tells **James Clegg** why and how he made it happen

**You've been with TP Bennett most of your career. When did you start?**

I did both of my architecture degrees at Nottingham. In my year out from university I had worked for Nottingham County Council and got to design my first building, a visitor centre at East Midlands Airport.

After I graduated I moved down to London because there were more opportunities. It was 1985 and finding work was hard, but after a lot of applications I had about five interviews in different places. TP Bennett impressed me because it seemed friendly and dynamic. So I thought: "Great, I'll come here".

**You set up TP Bennett's interiors division in 1998. How did that come about?**

I had worked on a number of projects where we thought a lot about how space was used. There was a Mercedes Benz dealership in Hertford, then quite a few headquarters: NatWest at 1 Princes Street, London, and Britannic Assurance just outside Birmingham.

And we worked on Microsoft's headquarters in Reading, where we basically designed the whole campus. Towards the end of the project they decided to get in space planners and MCM got the job. I was annoyed – interiors was always something TP Bennett had done but we were failing to get that message across.

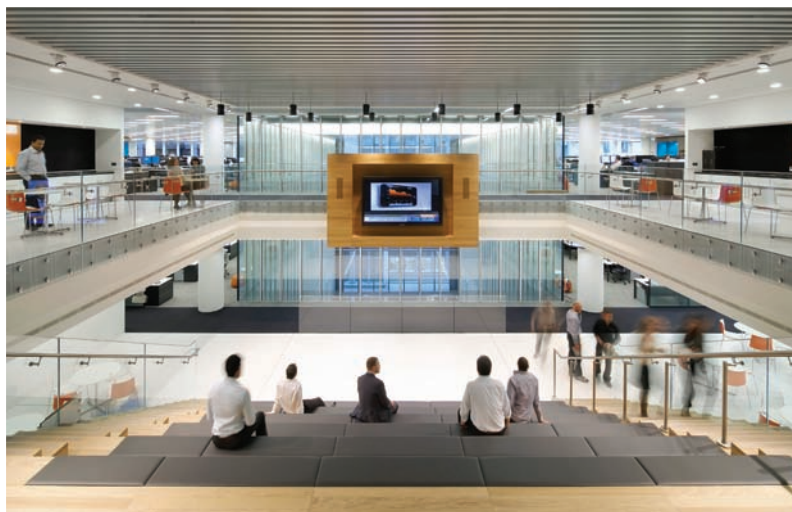
It was also around the time Gensler and various American practices came over and set up strong architectural teams that provided a service around interiors. I thought the Brits needed to fight back because I knew we could match what they were doing – and do it better.

**How did you take it from there?**

I made a proposal to the board. I had to go to a library and get a book on how to write a business plan because



TP Bennett has notched up interiors projects for IPC Media (above), financial services firm Markit (right) and The Guardian (facing page)



I'd never done one before. So I presented it and they approved the whole thing, which I was amazed by.

We then brought together all the people who did interiors in the practice into one unit. We became a brand within a brand. We were young, fresh and had new ideas but at the same time we were part of TP Bennett, so there was also an idea of strength – we'd been around for more than 70 years. That was quite potent.

The first contract was the Goldman Sachs headquarters at 120 Fleet Street. That was a great job and it still looks good today. Then we did the law

firm Lovells [now Hogan Lovells] at Atlantic House. We've grown from there. We started with 15 staff and we're now about 80.

**After initial consultation with a client, how do you approach design?**

We like to give each member of the team opportunities to design – that's why we don't have a house style. As well as being great experience for the staff, it means we can better reflect the values of the client.

Another thing is that we don't just work on offices. The whole firm works across education, healthcare, retail



Project photographs: Hufon + Crow

coming through actually wants a sense of order. They want a bit of control and they want a destination.

Technology is a fantastic liberator – it means we can work wherever we are, whenever we want. I'm all for flexibility. But at the end of the day people want an office. They want to go somewhere where they feel at home and know they're part of a creative organisation.

**What do you consider your most interesting projects?**

We did IPC Media at the Blue Fin Building near the Tate Modern in London. That was interesting because they have about 60 different magazine titles, everything from *Nuts* to *Horse & Hound*. Obviously each of those groups of people are quite different, but at the same time we had to maintain consistency with the parent company.

We also did *The Guardian*, which was fascinating because I went in with a team to see how they actually pulled the newspaper together over the course of the day. It completely changed my perception of how they operated as a business and that really fed into the project.

Oxfam was interesting because every penny spent on the building

**CAREER**

- 1985** Graduates BArch(Hons), University of Nottingham. Moves to London and joins architecture practice TP Bennett
- 1995** Becomes a partner at TP Bennett
- 1998** Establishes interior division of TP Bennett
- 2005** Becomes a principal director of TP Bennett
- 2005** Elected as member of the British Council for Offices' board of management
- 2009** Becomes co-chair of TP Bennett

could have been spent elsewhere. So economy was everything and you had a lot of different concerns compared with usual clients – everything had to be ethically sourced, for instance.

We have some great projects at the moment: PricewaterhouseCoopers at Embankment Place and UBS's headquarters in Broadgate with Make Architects to name two.

It's exciting and despite how hard the market is we've had a record turnover year for interiors.

and hospitality. We're doing high-end residential and student residential. The advantage to our office schemes and to all our schemes is that we learn from different sectors and share it.

There's a lot more crossover now. For instance, there'll be a lot more hospitality in offices – clients come to you and you need to make them feel comfortable.

**With an increasing emphasis on hot-desking and home-working, what do people want from offices?**  
I think we've gone through that period now. The younger generation that's

**RICHARD'S CURRENT FAVOURITE...**

**iPod selection:** I'm a big Coldplay fan. I saw them at the O2 and thought it was one of the best gigs I've ever seen.

**Holiday location:** I love to escape the British winter and like visiting the Far East; I've been to Burma, Laos and Thailand.

**Film:** I tend to catch films when I'm flying. I recently saw *Warhorse* but I don't think it lived up to the brilliant theatre version.

**Book:** Lord Browne's memoir, *Beyond Business*.

**Television:** Naff comedy like *Ab Fab* and *Benidorm*, but also news-based programmes such as *Question Time* and *This Week*.

**Hobby:** My partner and I own a property on the coast in Sussex and we try and get down there at weekends. We've got some land and want to build another house there. One day I'll have time to do it...



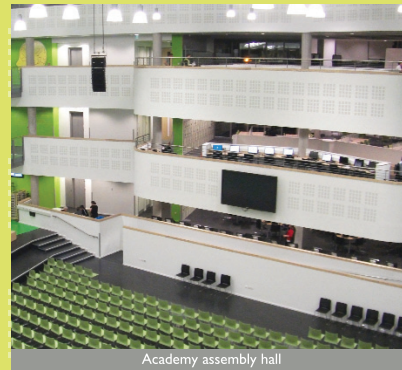
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ACOUSTICS



Shopping mall



Airport walkway



Academy assembly hall



Performance studio



College foyer



Primary school hall

Pattern shown: Gyptone LINE

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[www.beautifulacoustics.com](http://www.beautifulacoustics.com)

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# Project profile

## Gyptone chosen for Stratford's new Royal Shakespeare Theatre

British Gypsum's high performance Gyptone acoustic ceiling boards have been chosen for the new Rooftop Restaurant at the recently reopened Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Described by English Heritage as one of the 20 best historic development schemes across England, the Royal Shakespeare Company's transformation of its original Grade II listed theatre aims to provide the best venue in the world for the performance of Shakespeare's works. The £112.8 million project involved the redevelopment of the Royal Shakespeare and Swan Theatres.

### The challenge

The challenge for British Gypsum and drylining specialists Fireclad Limited was to provide a ceiling solution for the new Rooftop Restaurant.

On the third floor, the new restaurant sits high above the Royal Shakespeare Theatre's foyer, which is adjacent to the drum wall of a completely restyled 1,040+ seat, thrust stage auditorium, designed to create a new intimacy between actors and audience. High levels of acoustic absorption were therefore essential to create an appropriate environment for diners and improve acoustics throughout the complex foyer and public areas, whilst reinforcing the design.

### The solution

Specialists from British Gypsum worked alongside architects, Bennetts Associates, and drylining specialists, Fireclad Ltd, to create a ceiling solution that would meet all of the demanding performance requirements and help to create a modern light interior to enhance the extensively glazed area.



The solution was based on **Gyptone LINE 7 Curve** perforated acoustic ceiling boards, which combine a pattern of full depth perforations and a high performance acoustic fleece backing. It involved the construction of a number of rafts, varying in length between 4 metres and 15 metres, which were supported from the roof steelwork and rafters on a **CasoLine MF** framework.

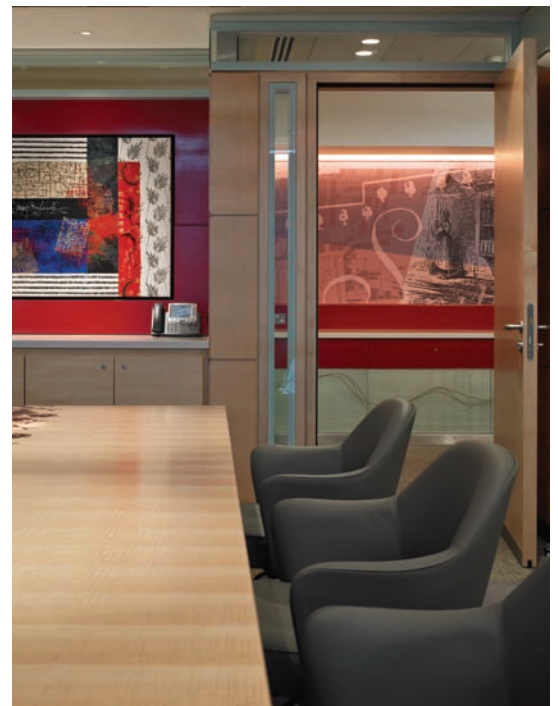
Each raft section included a central main panel of **Gyptone LINE 7 Curve**, completely framed by Gyproc Wallboard to highlight and contrast the unique full depth perforated pattern of the Gyptone. The panels had curved edges to conform exactly to the external wall geometry and were installed with a 300mm separation gap to accommodate lighting tracks.

The resulting ceiling was very light and modern in appearance, enhancing the theatre's interior design whilst providing the acoustic performance required in the busy restaurant area.



**Right** Pringle Brandon's work with Foster and Partners on Allen & Overy's new London office gives the law firm a range of options on using the space

**Below** For levels 5-7 of Unilever's new-look London HQ, KPF Architects and Pringle Brandon surrounded the atrium with a loop of informal meeting spaces, featuring large changeable branding walls and colourful light fittings



# ON MESSAGE

Corporate branding is about much more than a snappy logo these days. As **Nick Jones** finds out, it needn't cost the earth and it may make all the difference

OFFICE BRANDING HAS COME A long way since Richard Seifert's design for the tallest tower in the UK became the inspiration for the Natwest logo in the 1980s.

These days colour palettes for interior fit-outs are policed by branding consultants and corporate values are communicated in ever more subtle ways. The walls, the furniture, perhaps even the workers themselves are all becoming part of the brand. The question is: why? And what does it mean for the architects and contractors who actually have to deliver these messages?

"Ten years ago, when we mentioned brand messages, nine out of 10 of our clients would have said: 'We've never thought of that; thanks for bringing it to our attention'," says Jack Pringle, senior partner at Pringle Brandon.

"But these days I'd say nine out of 10 companies completely understand it."

On one level, this is a story of greater regimentation, as companies tighten control of their visual identity. Increasing numbers of firms are employing in-house corporate stylists and have strict branding standards that cover everything from the precise RAL numbers of the corporate colours to a specific font size for every situation.

"Their branding needs to be consistent as it goes through everything they do – from their marketing brochures and the texture of the material they use through to TV advertising and to offices," says Damien Kenny, managing director of fit-out contractor Overbury. "And if staff is wrong it gets taken down."

On another level, however,

designers have greater freedom in communicating the more nebulous concept of company values. This has taken on greater significance in office design since the dawn of corporate social responsibility, with companies ever more keen to project their ethos onto their staff.

As Clare Ashmore, director of fit-out contractor Parkeray, puts it: "Your brand needs to be understood by the person who cleans the fridge out as well as the person who runs the business, because if you ask a member of staff what the company is like, you should get the same answer from everybody." In other words, a logo behind the reception desk won't suffice.

Responses to this challenge range from the literal – Kenny points to the rise of "mission statements" of company aims and

values appearing on office walls – to the more oblique. For its office in Spitalfields, east London, law firm Allen & Overy wanted to convey its interest in the communities it resided in. In response to this Pringle Brandon incorporated into its design textiles connected to the area's various waves of immigration – from the French Huguenots to Hoxton's hipsters.

"It was the expression of an interest in who their neighbours were, which is more about values than branding," says Pringle.

### Value judgement

This all might seem like an optional extra and therefore the first thing to go when times are tough. But Pringle believes the cost of such elements is not so onerous. "We're not talking about buying oil paintings," he says. And he adds that the trend "is not going to go away" because it is so central to businesses' sense of identity.

Often it is not simply a case of offices using more branding. In some instances, the offices are becoming the brand.

This is a trend that began a few years back among the more marketing-savvy clients with strong visual brands, notably Google and drinks manufacturer Red Bull. Both companies started to include quirky, cartoonish



RED BULL PHOTOS: PATRICK BURROWS

**Left and below** MoreySmith, which designed the Red Bull fit-out handled by Parkeray, describes its brief for the new HQ: “to create a dynamic, brand-led work environment that would match the vision of the company, reward its staff and welcome visitors. Central to the scheme was Red Bull’s desire for the design to reflect the brand involvement in sport, music and the arts, which is reflected in the graphics and finishes”

features such as slides, fireman’s poles and loud primary colours in their workspaces.

This was intended to project a strong, clear message that although these were the offices of big corporate brands they were also fun, creative places to work, inspiring employees and drawing the best new talent to the company.

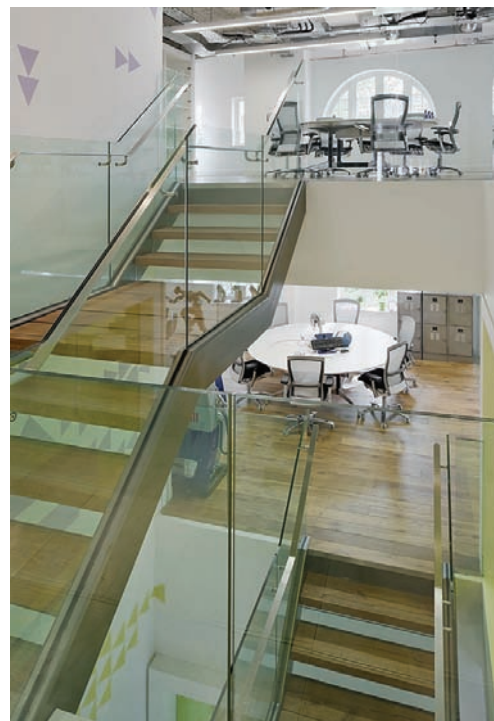
But it also served to pique the public’s interest. In fact, Ashmore says that such companies’ offices have become a key aspect of the public perception of them.

“People are getting to see inside these buildings,” she says. “There’s more photography and magazines... websites are used more often. It is part of a sense of consumer ownership of these brands.”

Last year, drinks manufacturer Innocent presented a twist on this model when it opened the doors of its Fruit Towers headquarters in west London. Again, playful elements featured strongly in the design, with architect Stiff + Trevillion including picnic tables and Innocent’s signature artificial grass in the building’s double-height “social hub”.

### Marketing push

What is particularly striking is how central Fruit Towers is to the company’s marketing strategy.



Innocent’s packaging invites customers to tour the building, where they can watch staff in lab coats testing new products, in a kind of never-ending open-house weekend. In some ways, it is just the next logical step in the expression of brand values.

“They’re a very open, come-together sort of company,” says Ashmore from Parkeray, the

fit-out contractor on the project.

Of course, the vast majority of clients aren’t about to open their doors to the public, and few are likely to lay artificial grass in the lobby. However, Daniel Campbell, partner at Stiff + Trevillion, sees parallels between the Innocent project and the practice’s work for more conventional clients.

He points to a recent fit-out for developer Hammerson, a more traditional corporate headquarters where staff come to work in suit and tie, and which on the face of it could not be further removed from Fruit Towers. But a carefully honed image is still projected through elements such as exposed polished concrete and corten steel, reflecting the company’s

**Below and right** Fruit Towers, Innocent's office complete with artificial grass and picnic area, was designed by Stiff + Trevillion and fitted out by Parkeray to create a vibrant space for staff and customers. A large part of the first floor was removed to create a double-height space overlooking the Grand Union Canal in west London



operations in the construction and property sector. "These projects are not polar opposites," Campbell says. "Just as we did with Innocent, we worked closely with Hammerson from the start on the image we were putting across."

**Beyond branding**

The more marketing-savvy clients, meanwhile, are simply getting savvier. European architect-come-interior design studio Penson recently completed the headquarters for Google

Engineering in London's Victoria.

At first glance, the design suggests that the internet giant has rejected its own brand, foregoing the playful primary colours of its logo for a more grown-up, futuristic aesthetic.

But Lee Penson, founder of Penson, suggests that Google is leading the start of a more intuitive type of branding.

"It's all very non-Google," he says, "yet it's got a twist to it, so if people see it they inherently feel: 'Yeah, that's Google!'. It's hard to

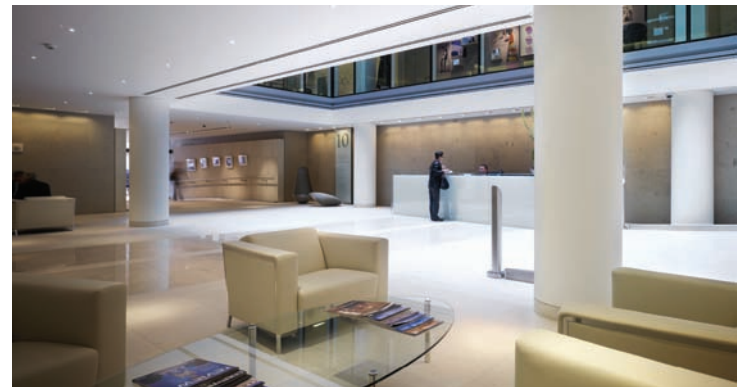
put your finger on it but it can be made to work very successfully."

Penson believes that what he calls "unliteral branding" is the path that office design can often follow, moving closer in spirit to the work that advertising agencies do to instil messages subliminally.

Penson's design for Google showcases the company's creative ethos more subtly. For example,

there is a strong emphasis on reclaiming, recycling and secondhand eco-friendly goods and wellbeing. The rationale is that "more effort is needed from a designer to be creative when you are doing something with great value-for-money ethics attached".

Corporate branding certainly has come a long way from RAL numbers and the Natwest logo.



**Left and above** Stiff + Trevillion handled the fit-out for Hammerson's new London office, providing a more subtle but distinctive corporate look for the FTSE 100 developer. The project included open-plan offices, meeting and presentation rooms, as well as dining and reception facilities



## Let the games begin

Prize-winning isn't always a cause for celebration, says **Tony Bingham**. There are also booby prizes out there for being the best of the worst

THERE IS A RIVETING ARGUMENT RAGING as to whether the cost of the 2012 London Olympics to you and me is £9bn or £11bn. That was our prize when London won the bid.

Never mind, it's only a game. Faces beam when gold, silver or bronze medals and 6,700 sprigs of July flowers are hung about the winners. We do love winners, love prizes. I'll tell you about my own prize in a moment. It's rather rude but it is a prize I give and it's cheap.

Meanwhile, I'm blown if I can fathom why billions of pounds must be spent on a race or two. The Dodo in *Alice in Wonderland* had it right – and cheap. He marked out a racecourse in a sort of circle and then all the party were placed along it here and there. Then they began running when they liked and left off when they liked, so it was not easy to know when the race was over. But after half an hour or so the Dodo called out: "The race is over!". And they all

### My prize can go to the person who has a very clever wrong argument

crowded round panting and asking who'd won. The Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought. At last he said: "Everybody has won and all must have prizes".

Every day I decide competitions; decide who has won arguments in the construction contract disputes games. I select winners and losers; I look for who commits a foul, breaks a rule, is a sham, tells fibs, exaggerates the other bloke's errors. I encounter the bully, the bloke with attitude. Sometimes they win the Olympic prize of having to pay out oodles of cash to the other contestants. Call it the booby prize. Sometimes

I award the top dog prize – I call it the bummer of the month award. It can go to the person who has a very clever wrong argument so ingenious as to be a prize winner.

Building buildings, doing fit-out, putting up partitions for a person with attitude is like being in a contest. Let me tell you of one such. It was one of these 10-year PFI utilities contracts for hospitals. Lots of bumph in the contract about teamwork, partnering, tree-hugging – these long-term deals are much like a marriage, happy families. But within a week of the wedding the employer's commercial director was thumbing the contract documents and he went contractual. He decided to read the riot act to the contractor. Then began the rows and they all ended up in court. The judge was plain: the employer's commercial director had, he said, "poisoned the relationship", destroyed any idea of mutual trust and co-operation. He won the judge's booby prize.

See what I mean by prize? Show me the contract, the evidence of how well the client and contractor have worked together, and win a prize. Show me that goals such as cost and time were identified and met, and win a prize. Show me innovation, originality, a unique application of materials and equipment and those buzz words – sustainability, community environment, whole-life costs, health and safety – and win the prize. Show me, oh please, how they managed the everyday stuff of our building world but win my booby prize when they become childish, antagonistic or spiteful.

Then take a look at the finished job. The real prize goes to how superb that completed work looks and will look in 10 years' time. You can't build in a poisoned relationship. Instead, it's chests, not bums, that are puffed out.

**Tony Bingham is a barrister and arbitrator**



## Wall-mounted absorption panels

Accordial has launched SoundFlex, wall-mounted absorption panels that aim to reduce reverberation time by dissipating sound energy.

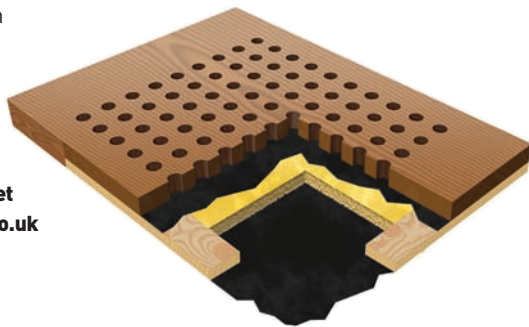
The lightweight panels come in a selection of designs and finishes. The firm's acoustic laboratory helped refine the product, both at manufacture and testing stages, ensuring the SoundFlex panels create a better environment with improved levels of intelligibility.

They can achieve sound absorption classes from E to A depending on the design and can be incorporated into balustrades to reduce reverberation time in public areas. The thickness of the balustrade determines the potential level of absorbency achievable as a greater internal depth increases the classification potential.

The panels are environmentally friendly, involving no cutting or wastage, and each panel is bespoke and easy to install.

The University of Lancaster installed the panels on both sides of busy halls to create maximum absorbency.

SoundFlex is available exclusively through Accordial's sister companies, Brockhouse Modernfold and Alco Wall Systems. [www.brockhouse.net](http://www.brockhouse.net) [www.alcosystems.co.uk](http://www.alcosystems.co.uk)



Above right: lightweight SoundFlex wall panels

Right: Lagoon is among the designs of Muraspec's new sculptured MDF panel range



## Wallcoverings range

Muraspec has made five additions to its wallcoverings range, all designed and produced by the company's teams in Kent:

- Taking its cue from forestry and plant life, Foley uses linear contours and textures to create an impression of foliage. It is available in a range of finishes, from true neutrals to metallics.
- The barcode-print striped Louvre Stripe offers a bold combination of smart neutrals suitable for contemporary and classic schemes.
- Avignon combines vertical silk texture with a choice of 18 colours, from mother of pearl, Italian greys and warm taupes or yellows, blues, reds and greens.
- Belmont is a classic textured and printed wallcovering offering a tailored linen look. Produced in a matt finish, the design is available in a range of colours, including eau-de-nil, taupe, sage and grey, with burgundy as the palette anchor.
- Flux brings physics to wall patterns, combining colour and symmetry for an eye-catching look.

[www.muraspec.com](http://www.muraspec.com)



Left: GlassLab's alternative to whiteboards

Below: Optima's 117 single-glazed partitioning system



## Sculptured MDF panels

Muraspec has also launched its Impressions sculptured MDF panels as a cost-effective way to add impact to interior spaces.

There are 31 designs to choose from, available in more than 50 laminate finishes or in a raw or paintable form for contractors to work on.

New designs include wave styles Caspian and Lagoon, geometric designs Firework, Crystal and Retro, and graphic patterns in the shape of Foliage and Fleur.

Impressions routed panels are made by sculpting 3D designs onto a core panel of 1.2m x 2.4m MDF, finished with a pressure-formed laminate surface payer to give added visual impact and durability.

[www.muraspec.com](http://www.muraspec.com)

## Glass whiteboards

Rochdale-based glass furniture manufacturer GlassLab, a subsidiary of OBG, has introduced a range of glass whiteboards that

offer a more aesthetically pleasing and functional option than traditional whiteboards.

Easy to clean and stain resistant, the whiteboards are frameless and free from visible fixings. They are also magnetic, available in bright white or natural green and include an anti-bacterial option for use in hospitals, surgeries and kitchens.

[www.glasslab.co.uk](http://www.glasslab.co.uk)

## Single-glazed partitioning

Optima has launched its Optima 117 plus single-glazed partition system, building on the standard Revolution 54 system.

The system has an integral door frame, allowing a flush fit with either timber or glazed doors, and incorporates a variety of head and base details. Accommodating ±25mm lateral deflection, the product's integral compressible wall abutment offers a structural solution that will not compromise the aesthetics.

[www.optimasystems.com](http://www.optimasystems.com)

**Acoustic partitioning**

Using the end seals and acoustic insulation of the Elite system, the latest Skyfold vertically rising partitioning wall, Classic 55, offers 55 STC (Rw 54dB) acoustic performance.

Style, the sole UK distributor for the Skyfold range, describes the product as a mid-price, mid-range product that sits between the Skyfold Classic (Rw 51dB) and Skyfold Classic Elite (Rw 56dB) ranges. It can be installed in rooms up to a height of 11m.

Like the rest of the Skyfold range, the Classic 55 features push-button activation and comes in a range of finishes.

[www.style-partitions.co.uk](http://www.style-partitions.co.uk)

**Glazing system**

Door seal manufacturer Lorient has introduced RF1, a bead-applied glazing solution for 60-minute application.

Glazed panels are often specified within fire-resistant walls and doors to improve visibility, yet adding such a panel



The Window Film Company's wallpaper in Dow Jones' offices, London

can create a point of weakness. Where timber and glass meet, fire can take hold; and without support the glass can quickly fall out in the heat of a fire.

Lorient's RF1 system comprises a pair of bead-applied intumescent glazing seals and an intumescent liner. It incorporates flexible fins that allow small tolerances between door, bead and glass



Lorient's RF1 glazing system

thicknesses. In everyday use, the RF1 system holds the glass firmly in place; in a fire, the two glazing seals and liner expand, which prevents the glass from slumping and stopping heat transferring to the timber.

[www.lorientuk.com](http://www.lorientuk.com)

**Digital wallpaper**

The Window Film Company UK has added digital wallpaper to its collection. The digital selection uses specialised solvent and UV printing techniques for recreating patterns and images at high quality.

Once a high-resolution image or vector file has been selected the supplier will work on scale and then position the design to fit the required area.

The standard wallpaper is available on a 1,525mm-wide roll and all designs come with a matt finish. Digital wallpaper's paste-free application also means it is repositionable, removable and reusable.

[www.windowfilm.co.uk](http://www.windowfilm.co.uk)



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## Metal ceiling tiles

Armstrong Ceilings has extended its portfolio of metal systems with the launch of two ranges.

The metal premium OP19 range offers up to Class A sound absorption and comprises 19mm acoustic mineral infills. The products have been factory bonded into standard Armstrong metal ceiling tiles and panels for supply as a complete acoustic unit.

The new mesh metal products come in a range of four standard patterns and four colours. Hook-on and lay-in options mean that the tiles can be simply and economically installed on standard exposed and concealed grid systems.

Manufactured from up to 30% recycled content, the tiles are available in three perforation configurations and with a range of edge details. They give light reflectance of up to 80%, relative humidity resistance of up to 95% and a sound absorption performance of up to 1.00 alpha w. [www.armstrong.co.uk](http://www.armstrong.co.uk)



Armstrong's OP19 metal ceiling systems have a 30% recycled content

## Continuous ceilings

The newly renamed Knauf Danoline has added to its Unity 6 continuous ceiling offering. Unity 6 Bridge is a self-supporting ceiling for corridors and narrow rooms with perforations all the way to the edge of the tile, creating a continuous acoustic surface. The existing member of the Unity 6

product family, Unity 6 System, is a suspended ceiling in concealed T-grid for a coherent look in demountable ceiling solution. [www.knaufdanoline.com](http://www.knaufdanoline.com)

## Access panels

Komfort's new range of Easi-Klix access panels allows easy access to voids and cavities that contain



Komfort's Easy-Klix access panels

controls, piping or electronics. The range caters for most settings, from plastic panels fixed using a pump-applied adhesive to acoustic, airtight or even 240-minute fire-rated panels.

Komfort access panels are available in a wide range of sizes, from 100mm x 150mm to 2,400mm high by 3,000mm wide with multiple doors.

All panels in the portfolio are available with DuPont Alesta AM powder coatings, which inhibits the growth of bacteria. This makes the panels suitable for hospital, educational and food-handling areas.

[www.komfort.com](http://www.komfort.com)

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■ For further information please contact us or visit our website [www.amfceilings.co.uk](http://www.amfceilings.co.uk)

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Left: SAS International's System 8000

Below: Komfort's Solo self-contained washroom

### Frameless partitioning

SAS International has launched its System 8000 fully glazed frameless partitioning system, available in single and double glazing along with a new 50mm-wide double-glazed detail.

A range of head and base details also gives specifiers a range of options for different project requirements.

To meet the demands of large open-plan spaces, a range of deflection heads provide +25mm deflection, while SAS International's C-Joint creates the appearance of butt-jointed glass without using silicone.

The partitioning system provides up to 49dB acoustic performance, up to 60 minutes' fire performance and severe structural performance.

[www.sasintgroup.com](http://www.sasintgroup.com)

### High-end washrooms

Komfort Workspace has put together a range of washrooms using its integrated plumbing system (IPS) – a self-supporting module made from 1.6mm-thick galvanised steel that is fully adjustable for height, plumb and level. The pre-plumbed duct wall can be installed in five steps.

The surrounding doors, pilasters and vanity units can be specified in a variety of materials and finishes, including bespoke.

The collection comprises four products: Outline, Outline Sheer, Stature and Solo. Outline, Outline Sheer and Stature are all multi-cubicle systems but Outline is characterised by minimal fixings and Outline Sheer by back-painted glass doors and partitions. Stature is a full-height flush-fronted cubicle, while Solo is a self-contained washroom made using



Komfort's stud and track wall construction. There are a range of vanity units to match.

[www.komfort.com](http://www.komfort.com)

### Coloured walls and ceilings

Rockfon has launched its Color-all acoustic ceiling and wall solutions in a choice of 34 colours. The range provides Class A sound absorption, long-lasting surfaces, strong fire resistance, up to 100% humidity resistance and full recyclability. It has six themes:

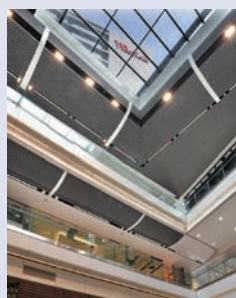
- City Tones, an elegant spectrum of greys
- Natural Tones, a selection of warm beiges and browns
- Sensorial Tones, based on the elements of air, water and light
- Energetic Tones, a range of vivid primary colours
- Precious Tones, for metallics that add distinction
- Sophisticated Tones, for deep, distinguished colours.

The products come in a matt finish and all the colours are available with exposed, semi-concealed or concealed edges in a variety of dimensions.

[www.rockfon.co.uk](http://www.rockfon.co.uk)

[www.ais-interiors.org.uk](http://www.ais-interiors.org.uk)

## READING MATTER



### SAS metalwork guide

SAS International has launched a brochure setting out its architectural metalwork solutions, along with images of its products designed, manufactured and installed worldwide.

The brochure details the range of bespoke interior fit-out options that provide durable and sustainable solutions in the built environment.

Meeting demands for acoustic and service integration, SAS International's metalwork integrates building elements to deliver design solutions for commercial, education and healthcare projects through to large-scale infrastructure and transport.

SAS International spokesman Malcolm Stamper comments: "The new brochure demonstrates the sustainable and integrating solutions we can deliver to provide considerable benefits and savings to any global project."

Download from [www.sasintgroup.com/archmetal](http://www.sasintgroup.com/archmetal)

### SAS portfolio brochure

SAS International has also launched a corporate brochure of projects for which the company has manufactured solutions or has had a design involvement.



The brochure highlights the firm's design and installation service. Marketing manager Malcolm Stamper says: "By understanding how to integrate building elements and services, we deliver design-led solutions that meet the increasing requirements of clients and specifiers."

SAS International's product range includes metal ceilings, partitioning and door systems, energy-efficient radiant chilled ceilings and chilled beams and bespoke architectural metalwork solutions.

Download from [www.sasintgroup.com/corporate](http://www.sasintgroup.com/corporate)

### Eurodek product listing

Eurodek Raised Access Floors has launched a 20-page A4 brochure providing full details of all its product ranges, including Fortress, eBand and Base systems.

The brochure sets out to show how Eurodek products can be used to reconfigure spaces in new and refurbishment projects. To request a copy, please email [marketing@eurodek.co.uk](mailto:marketing@eurodek.co.uk)

[www.accessfloors.net](http://www.accessfloors.net)



### Go Frame run-down

Go Interiors has released a comprehensive data guide to its Go Frame drylining and ceiling systems.

All performances for fire, sound and duty are supported with UK certified tests and assessments. The guides are available from all depots.

[www.gointeriors.co.uk](http://www.gointeriors.co.uk)



# GROWING CONCERN

Partitioning specialist Komfort Workspace is now part of a larger interiors products empire. Its acting managing director, Laidlaw Interiors Group chief John Jefferies, tells **James Clegg** how he fits into the equation. Photograph by **Lucy Campbell**

**P**artitioning company and long-time AIS member Komfort Workspace has recently found itself under new management.

As of last year it and several other interiors brands, including door manufacturer Leaderflush Shapland and Tufwell – formerly components of SIG Interiors Manufacturing – were acquired by rival company Laidlaw Solutions.

The current acting managing director of Komfort, John Jefferies, also happens to be the chief executive of the new parent company (since re-branded as Laidlaw Interiors Group).

"In early 2011 it became clear that one of Laidlaw's competitors, Leaderflush Shapland, was being divested. But not only that brand, also Komfort and several others that made up SIG Interiors Manufacturing. I got quite excited when I heard about this opportunity," says Jefferies. "So I approached a venture capital company, Rutland Partners, and we successfully acquired the business in August 2011."

## No nonsense

This is typical of Jefferies' pragmatic and succinct style. His background is in finance – he was once an accountant at Grant Thornton before spending much of his working life with glass manufacturer Pilkington.

In 1994 Pilkington sold off part of its business, along with Jefferies' position, to US-owned global fibreglass business Owens Corning. Jefferies continued his career there, becoming chief finance officer of its European business and later managing director for the UK, before the firm hit insolvency in the US.

"Interestingly during that period from Pilkington to Owens Corning one of our biggest customers was SIG," remembers Jefferies. "So there's a feeling of coming full circle."

He found himself responsible for

selling the European part of Owens Corning's business to German plasterboard manufacturer Knauf. But new pastures beckoned.

"When I left Knauf I set up my own specialist consultancy," says Jefferies. "And to cut a long story short, Ingersoll Rand, the company that owned Laidlaw, asked me to fix it in order to prepare it for sale. It was opportunistic, but I saw potential there so I ended up buying it."

Laidlaw was at that point an architectural ironmongery business that was, in Jefferies' words, "turning over about £16m and haemorrhaging cash". He repositioned the company to incorporate not only ironmongery but doorsets, handrails and balustrades. Laidlaw expanded from turning over £16m to about £33m.

Jefferies says: "We started as an independent business. And although we acquired smaller companies, it's really grown through the service we've offered to our customers and the innovation we've brought to our products. That allowed us to springboard the business."

"At the point of the acquisition of SIG, Laidlaw had around £33m turnover and we acquired a £90m division of a major plc. So we're now a £120m-plus company in our own right."

There were a number of factors about the different brands that attracted him. "The position of Komfort, for instance, is that it has been a major player within the partitioning market, albeit sales have drifted in the past few years. We see all these brands that we now have as complimenting each other. We have no desire to collapse them, but we're also one team and each of those product groups can fit together to offer something more to the client."

## Time out

So what does Jefferies do to get away from all these business concerns? Succinct as ever, he says: "I don't have a

lot of time." But he concedes: "I do have a passion for football. I'm a Liverpool lad and I support the blue team, Everton. I have season tickets and when I get time I take my teenage kids to watch them. We recently went to Wembley and unfortunately suffered a defeat from the red side [Liverpool], which was distressing."

"Other than that I enjoy the odd game of golf. But given the recent acquisition there hasn't been much time for that sort of thing."

He laughs before suddenly becoming serious again. "I'm a basic lad who has worked very hard to get to where I am," says Jefferies. "I've got beliefs that have become the core values of our company: respect, integrity and individual dignity, and really that means putting customers at the heart of what we do."

## Committed member

Komfort's role as an AIS member appears to fit in with this ethos. "We support AIS's technical committees as well as the board and I believe in improving the professionalism of the industry through the association," says Jefferies.

No stranger to trade associations, his role within Laidlaw has also seen him sitting on the board of the Guild of Architectural Ironmongery. He is currently vice-president and will take on the role of president next year – which will leave him even less time on the golf course.

Jefferies is excited about the future of Laidlaw Interiors Group and says it feels much like when he first took over the company in 2002. And despite being busy he hasn't ruled out more acquisitions in the near future.

"We are a strong company. We've got a strong balance sheet and we're in a good position to grow," he says. And with that he's off to the next business engagement.

I'M A BASIC LAD  
WHO HAS WORKED  
VERY HARD TO GET  
TO WHERE I AM



## People in brief



### Ecophon boosts acoustics expertise

Nicky Shiers has joined Ecophon as concept developer for Modern Office after completing a PhD in acoustic design at London South Bank University. Her studies there were supervised by acoustics expert Professor Bridget Shield, who has contributed to AIS's guide to office acoustics. Ecophon managing director Paul Lake says: "In her new role, Nicky will be using her passion for acoustics to work alongside designers and specifiers, encouraging them to consider acoustic design at the early stages of a project."



### Knauf adds two to team

Knauf AMF Ceilings has two new members of staff. Bathiya Karunaratne (left) joins as specification manager following the promotion of Peter Symons to national sales manager at the start of the year, and Sacha Conte (below) becomes area sales manager for the south-east. Karunaratne has more than seven years' experience in the interiors sector while Conte has worked in specification for at least 10 years, mainly with manufacturers of aluminium systems, sloped roof glazing and physical and ballistic security systems. "We are delighted to welcome Bathiya and Sacha to our team," says Symons.



### SIG names new chiefs

Rob Barclay (left) has been appointed SIG's managing director for UK and Ireland, to lead all the supplier's activity across the region. The post carries responsibility for all operating companies across UK and Ireland, including the UK logistics and UK operational business development teams. Having worked for SIG for 15 years, Barclay has served as managing director of SIG Distribution for the past three years, leading the merger of several operating businesses into the group. "Now it is my job to ensure our businesses have a unified approach to enable us to respond to changes in the market," he says. Paul Gordon (right) has taken over Barclay's role as managing director of SIG Distribution, overseeing the management of the business and its development and strategy.



# APP HAPPY



“So what does this one do?” It’s a question you’ll hear in the construction industry more and more as people switch on to the power of apps. **Katie Puckett** fires up her smartphone to find out more

IF YOU DON’T YET OWN A smartphone or you’ve never downloaded an “app”, you probably will soon. Last August communications regulator Ofcom reported that 27% of adults had a smartphone, most acquired over the previous year. The most popular uses were email, internet surfing and social networking. But as the latest devices are equipped with powerful digital cameras, presentation-quality graphics, GPS technology and laptop-sized memories, the opportunities for anyone with the time and energy to think of an application and develop the code for it are endless.

More than 500,000 people have already done exactly that. And some of them work in construction judging by the growing number of apps that can turn mobile phones into handheld portfolios, technical cribsheets, drawing boards and decibel readers.

“There’s a bit of an explosion at the moment,” says Neill Pawsey, construction IT consultant and programme manager at not-for-profit COMIT (Construction

Opportunities for Mobile IT). “We’re seeing a huge uptake in apps in a short space of time. Smartphones are coming into people’s houses, maybe their kids are using them, and people are asking: ‘Why can’t I use this at work?’.”

#### QS breakthrough

One such person is Wanstead-based surveyor Marc Preston, who has created what is almost certainly the world’s first app dedicated to quantity surveying. For just £1.99, users can access detailed legal and technical information on every stage of a build and submit their own questions for Preston to answer. Launched in January 2011, Q Surveying has now been downloaded more than 500 times in seven countries and has earned rave five-star reviews in Apple’s App Store.

It all started, he explains, as a clever bit of marketing for his firm, Vertice Development Management. “One of the difficulties for our business is that very few people know what a quantity surveyor

does. My quest was to bring a modern approach. I wanted to reach people, raise awareness and work outside my geographical boundaries. The app is relevant anywhere that uses the JCT contract system.”

Preston estimates that one in 10 of the app’s users send questions through the app, which he endeavours to answer within 24 hours. “If someone has a simple question, I usually answer it for free – at what height should a disabled handrail be, for example, or the definition of gross internal floor area. Some are more complicated – one company has had payments withheld for three or four months – so I will end up speaking to them.”

Developing the app itself was relatively straightforward. “I had the technical expertise, so it was just a question of writing it down and making it available. I found a developer in the *Yellow Pages*,” he says. Preston is planning another app, perhaps around cost calculation.

Many apps begin life as a

marketing exercise but become more ambitious as their understanding of the technology grows. Zaha Hadid Architects has enjoyed considerable success with its free ZAPP, released in November 2011. It has already notched up 8,000 downloads in Europe, the US, China and, to the firm’s surprise, Mexico.

Associate Lars Teichmann said it was originally designed for the practice’s own staff to use. “Our staff largely have iPhones, and this way they can carry a portfolio everywhere they go,” he explains. “People are often in a client meeting and a project will come up, and this is an easy way to bring up a couple of images.”

But he is keen to explore the app’s interactive potential, rather than just adapting the website content for a smaller screen. So far it provides a guided tour of the Stirling Prize-winning MAXXI Museum in Rome, and there are more to follow.

Says Teichmann: “We are architects, we visit cities and it’s always hard to find information on



buildings behind the flashy facade. We're trying to bring in 3D models so that people can flip them, rotate them and cut away to make sections, and perhaps also an interactive game that relates to one of our projects or our way of designing."

The app has won much praise for the slickness of its graphics and intuitive interface, belying the arduous process of putting it together. Working with developer Woobius, it took Teichmann and a colleague six months to assemble the initial portfolio and another three to design the tour guide interface. "You do need to devote the time to it," he warns. "We were doing it alongside our architectural work, but I'd like to have a dedicated person."

One shortcut is to fit your content to an existing infrastructure; starting from scratch with the appearance and navigation will take much longer. Teichmann reckons the cost could be anywhere between £20,000 and £200,000. "Even if we'd charged £1 per download, it's very hard to make much money, or even to break even. We didn't want to charge. We were clear that we were doing it as a bit of a luxury."

Marketing was also the impetus for the Acoustic Kit app, which converts laboratory specifications into data that can be applied in the office environment. Its creator, acoustics consultancy Red Twin, was still a relatively young company when it came up with the app. Director Ian Matthews thought it would be a good way to get the name out there.

"The more I thought about it, the more potential I could see. I thought: 'What's the question I get asked the most?'. There's a lot of confusion around people using the wrong kinds of decibel. This app does the sum to convert one type to another."

### Business value

His hunch was right – downloads have been in the "hundreds" and users have left gushing reviews. So has he received more business enquiries as a result? "It's tough to tell. 'Possibly' is the best I can say," he comments. But he is pleased with the revenue the app

has generated. The initial retail price was £5.99, later reduced to £1.99. "I can't claim it's anything like Angry Birds, but it's a nice thing to have."

One Acoustic Kit fan is Joe Cilia, technical manager at AIS, who regularly uses a range of apps in his working life. He also has a decibel reader for demonstrating background noise to clients, and uses Dalen Ska, a guide to the Ska environmental rating system for fit-out. "This means I don't need to carry around the information as a document," he says. "I can dip into it and it's fresh all the time. An app lets you do a quick calculation on site, then take the information back to the office to do a more robust check."

### Missing link

Pawsey believes the greatest potential for apps in construction is as "the missing link" between corporate systems and site-based workers who never venture into the office. Mobile devices could have many uses on site, from monitoring health and safety and sending alerts of near-misses, to carrying out quality assurance checks or updating drawings in line with what's been built – essential if Building Information Modelling is to be adopted.

One of COMIT's recent projects was trialling real-time field reporting with Costain's staff upgrading junctions on the M1. While the technology isn't that far off, he thinks the stumbling block will be persuading people to use it. "How willing will a traditional craft-skilled worker be to use an iPad rather than a piece of paper? We have to sell it to people like another tool that they can pick out of the box and use like a hammer or a chisel," says Pawsey.

It's been done before with CAD, he points out, and there's no such problem with the younger generation coming into construction, already fluent in a baffling array of devices and programmes.

He says he recently saw a small child use the "pinch" gesture (the hand action used on smartphones and iPads to zoom in and out) on a shop window to get a closer look. "That's a sign of the times."

## 10 ESSENTIAL CONSTRUCTION APPS

### myConvert Lite

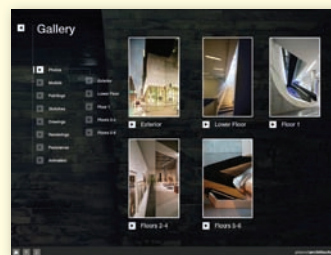
Free

Simple but extremely useful. Converts inches to mm, square feet to square metres, and many, many more. Of the large number of converter apps out there, this is one of the best.

### Zaha Hadid ZAPP (below)

Free

Immerse yourself in lush project visualisations and take a tour of the MAXXI Museum in Rome.



### AutoCAD

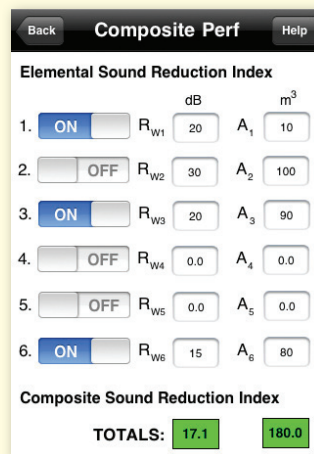
Free

Some architects love being able to view their drawings anywhere; others are frustrated that they can't do more.

### Acoustic Kit (below)

£1.99

A revelation for anyone who has ever struggled with the wrong kind of decibels when specifying fit-outs.



### Building

Free

No more commuting boredom – get the latest construction news and contract information wherever you are.

### Q Surveying

£1.99

Like having a quantity surveyor in your pocket. There really is an app for everything.

### Dalen Ska

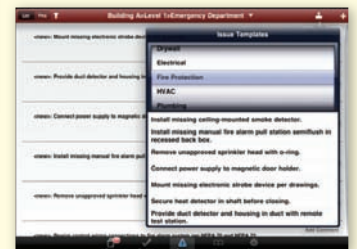
Free

This quick-reference guide to the Ska environmental rating system means you can leave those heavy documents in the office.

### Vela Mobile (below)

Free

One of Neill Pawsey's favourite apps for sharing data between the site and the office (but you have to use Vela software).



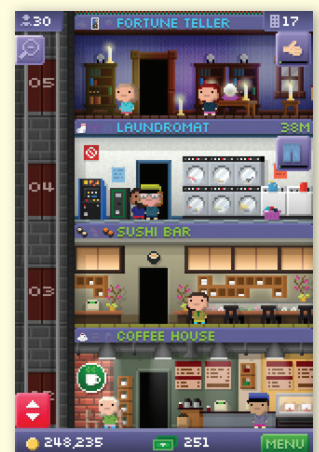
### EnableMyTeam

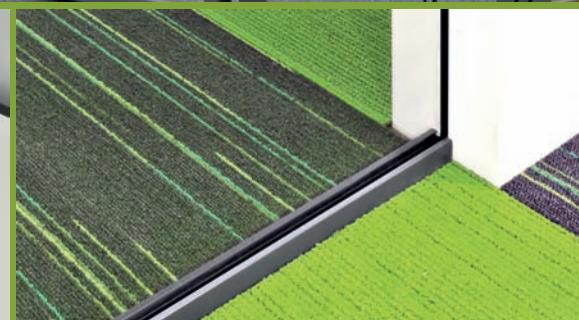
Currently in beta testing, Pawsey says this will automate the tiresome business of expensing your business mileage using GPS tracking.

### Tiny Tower (below)

Free

Okay, so it's not exactly work. But this game is an addictive insight into the mind of a property developer as you build a tower and try and attract 'bitizens' to rent the space.





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# 2012 AIS CONTRACTORS AWARDS

The AIS President's Lunch – held this year at London's Dorchester hotel on 12 June – paid tribute to the best of the best in the interior fit-out sector. Former Paralympic gold medallist Danny Crates compered and Pringle Brandon project director Richard Jordan presented the awards

## The judges



“ Once again, the range, complexity and innovation displayed by all of this year's entries has been amazing – and, dare I say it, better than ever. We have seen a very wide range of project types, which while being very interesting makes the comparison of project standard extremely difficult to gauge. Visits were made to hospitals, retail stores, shopping malls, universities, concert halls, commercial offices and – a first this year – kitchen showrooms. It was great to see the vast array of products offered by our industry being used right across the building sectors.



Having seen a good spread of projects and winners across the country last year, it was slightly disappointing to see well over 50% of projects in London this year and no projects from the Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds and Bristol areas. It would be good to see a better representation from those areas next year because I am certain that great projects are being built in those cities.

It has been a real pleasure for Tony and me to again experience the high-quality work completed by AIS members this year. The association's members continue to produce the very best in our industry and all entrants should be proud of the work they have produced because we consider all of them to be winners. ”

**Peter Walters (pictured top) and Tony Pieri**

“ I visited the 10 shortlisted projects – three under £750,000; four between £750,000 and £3m; and three in the over £3m category – over a three-day period.

In assessing the projects I took into account the scope of each commission, which varied from contract to contract and a range of criteria such as design (if carried out by the contractor), workmanship, overall appearance, innovation, complexity, defects and sustainability and, most important, client satisfaction.

It was a fascinating experience to review a large number of schemes over such a short period of time, spanning a wide cross-section of sectors and contract values. The standard was very high and on occasion I was surprised by unexpected innovation, quality and passion for the projects. They are all worthy of the shortlist, all worthy contenders. ”

**Guest judge Richard Jordan, Pringle Brandon**

### CATEGORY INFORMATION

The AIS Contractors Awards ceremony is held each year to encourage and promote high levels of craftsmanship and design. The architect or interior designer of a Gold award-winning project also receives an award. 2012's awards comprised:

- Interior fit-outs
- Ceilings
- Partitioning
- Drywall construction
- Specialist joinery
- Operable walls
- Judges' award

Certificates of excellence are also awarded in recognition of high standards of workmanship and technical expertise.

### CALL FOR 2013 ENTRIES

Entries are being sought for next year's AIS Contractors Awards. The award categories cover a wide range of interior disciplines and attract entries from leading interiors firms.

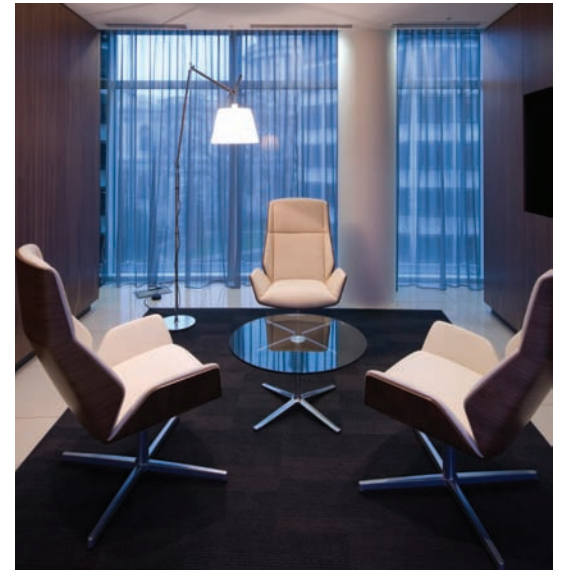
#### Why enter?

Winning an AIS award is an excellent way to raise your company's profile and give you a competitive edge. An award provides visible and valuable recognition for your entire organisation. If your company delivers first-class interior solutions, this is a perfect opportunity to be recognised for the quality of your work. Winners gain substantial publicity in *Interiors Focus* magazine, on the AIS website and in the construction press. Images of all entries, along with a write-up, also appear on the AIS website gallery.

#### Entry forms

Deadline for entries is 31 October 2012 and the entry fee is £225 per entry. Call 0121 707 0077 or visit [www.ais-interiors.org.uk](http://www.ais-interiors.org.uk) for more details. Entry is only open to AIS members. Contracts are visited by AIS judges between December and April.

OPL's gold-winning fit-out for Ignis Asset Management, London



## INTERIOR FIT-OUTS sponsored by British Gypsum

### £3M PLUS PROJECTS



**GOLD AWARD**  
OPL Group – for its installation at Ignis Asset Management, London

In the design and fit-out of this new BREEAM Excellent-rated building in Cheapside the aim was to establish a corporate ethos, lower running costs and ensure that the technology would be scalable over a 15-year lease. OPL analysed everything from base build, floor

loadings and security access to client experience and delivery schedules, then decided the layout should be set out as a multi-use space with traditional work areas where needed.

The design went through 12 floorplate revisions, allowing the client to check everything from carpets to ceiling tiles. "The design team has done great job in interpreting the brief for this expanding firm," said guest judge Richard Jordan. "The client areas have a quality feel with a fresh, modern look."



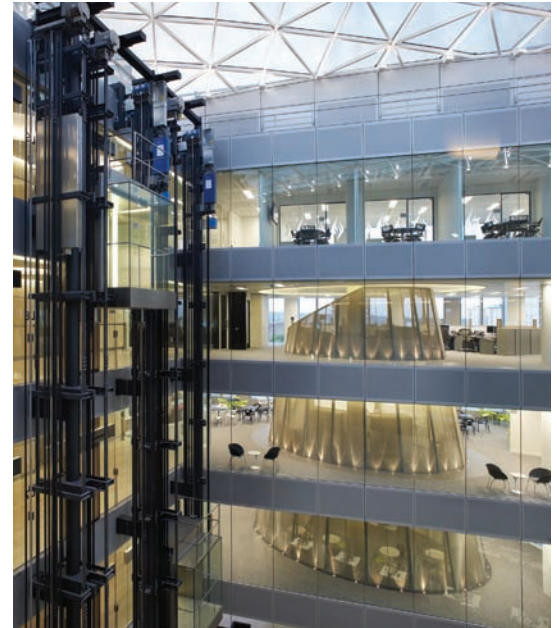
**SILVER AWARD**  
IOR Group – for its contract at Gazprom Marketing & Trading HQ, London

IOR was appointed to design and construct a base for Gazprom Marketing & Trading, creating what guest judge Richard Jordan branded "a highly impressive space".

The lower floors feature water-chilled dealer desks and expansive graphics, and an illuminated steel-mesh tower cuts through the working floors. The executive floors,



Left and below:  
IOR Group's work to  
create Gazprom's  
London HQ



Left: Portview  
Fit-Out's project  
for two food  
concessions in  
Harrods



reception area, dining rooms and boardrooms are characterised by a grey ash ceiling with integrated lighting, bespoke illuminated glass walls and large-scale artwork.

Fumed oak was used for the wall panelling and partitions, with doors and acoustic shutters offering both solar control and branding in the boardroom. Meeting rooms have accessible painted MDF panels to mask riser doors. Sky wall and moveable partitions have been used, with furniture designed to offer flexibility for client receptions.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED Portview Fit-Out – for its installation at Harrods restaurants, London

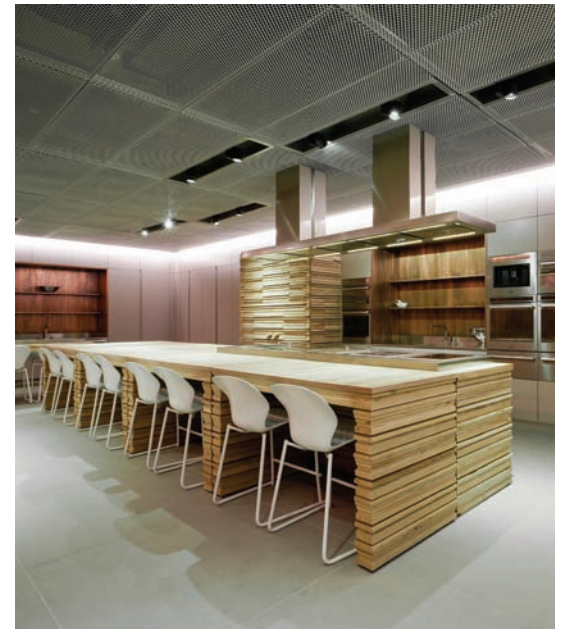
Portview supplied and installed bespoke fixtures and fittings for food concessions at London's iconic store. Yet as judge Jordan pointed out, "Each has its own individual character and technical demands".

A bespoke diamond pattern was included in the solid-surface material cladding on the ice-cream parlour counter, along with

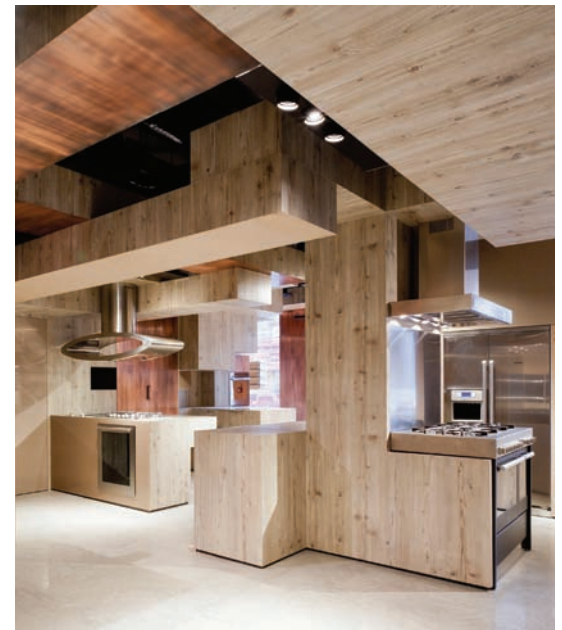
stainless steel units, marble counter tops and splashbacks.

The pizzeria was given copper clad ceilings and canopies and stained glass panelling around the lighting feature.

Bespoke furniture included leather-based banquette seating, marble-top tables, fixed bar stools, display cabinets, circular table with central display tiers and metal and timber shop fronts. The extensive use of LED lighting included a bespoke Canti sign clad with crystals.



Skansen's project for the Scholtès Centre of Excellence



## INTERIOR FIT-OUTS

### £750,001 TO £3M PROJECTS

#### GOLD AWARD

Skansen Interiors – for its project at the Scholtès Centre of Excellence, London  
Architect Manalo & White also received an award

Skansen faced the challenge of installing high-quality finishes into two 111m<sup>2</sup> floorplates in what judge Jordan described as a “jewel of design quality and quirkiness”.

Detailed co-ordination resulted in the installation of a new staircase, platform lift, toilets and shower into the existing structure. Bespoke finishes included polished concrete

flooring and Jenga-style joinery coordinated with exposed services clad in hand-finished copper and back-painted glass.

A staircase with multi-layer timber wall panelling and copper handrail leads to a versatile demonstration kitchen, allowing configurations to suit different clients.

The project was completed with specialist fittings delivered from Italy, including ceilings, tiles and bespoke lighting.

A high-quality AV installation allows products to be displayed to potential customers and cooking demonstrations to show appliances in use. “Whilst small in area the project is packed with details and technical challenges,” said Jordan.



#### SILVER AWARD

Hills of Shoeburyness – for its contract at Crown House, London

After design discussions with ISG starting in 2010, Hills of Shoeburyness was chosen as prime architectural metalwork and joinery contractor on this demanding contract at the mixed-use development on 1 Kingsway, London. Working closely with the stone floor and M&E contractors, as well as architects David Collins Studio and Sidell Gibson, the team brought together high-class finishes in a 20-week programme. This included polished stainless steel, Kinon wall panelling, toned bronze decorative panels, dragged lacquer



Left: Hills of Shoeburyness' fit-out at Crown House, London

Right: Faithdean's project for Itaú, designed by Phillips Group



Above: Pexhurst's contract at the University of Hertfordshire

wall panels and marble. "Hills took on the entire scheme and delivered a standard that is second to none," Jordan commented.

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Faithdean – for its project at Itaú BBA, London**

Faithdean has helped create a new office for Brazilian bank Itaú within Broadgate Tower on Primrose Street. In line with Itaú's corporate standards, the office has been designed with a minimal colour scheme and clean lines. As judge Richard Jordan pointed out: "The quality of construction had to be perfect to carry the minimal design. Long elevations of

light timber panelling, cream-coloured ceramic tiles and fully glazed partitions combine to great effect."

### HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Pexhurst Services – for its fit-out of the law block at the University of Hertfordshire**

External walls were replaced with an aluminium SAPA curtain wall system with natural ventilation dampers, while the internal layout was reconfigured to create 20 offices using a Komfort Polar glazed partitioning and door system. A further seven meeting rooms were formed using Pilkington Profilit cast glass partitioning systems by Reglit, and a

double curvature wall created in the reception area using Armourcoat polished plaster. "This transformation has led to more repeat projects on the campus," Jordan pointed out.

The existing Kingspan raised access floor was adapted to suit a perimeter trench heating system and IT floor boxes. Floorcoverings were a mix of Interface carpet tiles and Forbo linoleum. Salto access control equipment was installed to all the doors and imported designer lights were controlled with passive infrared sensors to reduce energy consumption. Each office incorporated a built-in storewall and fabric acoustic panel with design manifestation, vertical roller blinds and white boards.





Paragon's gold winner at Loughborough University



## INTERIOR FIT-OUTS

### PROJECTS UP TO £750,000

#### GOLD AWARD

**Paragon Interiors Group** – for its contract at Loughborough University, Leicestershire

Hailed by guest judge Richard Jordan as a “colourful, imaginative scheme”, this eight-week project comprised the strip-out, design and build of sublet offices in Loughborough University to form a new headquarters for the facilities management

team. Designed to create an elegant, motivational space, organic-style furniture compliments the fabric of the building while adding a contemporary twist and points of interest for staff and visitors.

The project called for the clever design of suspended and metal-frame ceilings and bulkheads to form a 3D view to the ceiling in an open-plan area. MF curved walls, orangebox pod and timber slats were used to make the breakout areas private and functional and exposed steel beams were lived up with materials and graphics. The

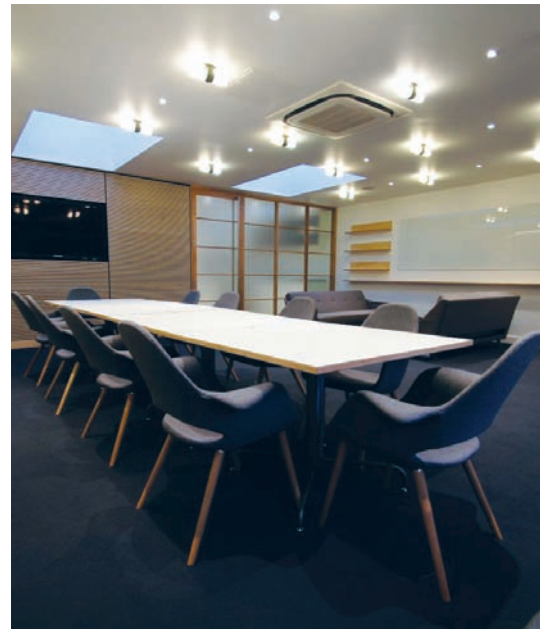
installation of a single-glazed frameless partition and door divides the open-plan office area from the breakout zone while maximising light. It “created a space that is flexible and looks to be a pleasure to work within”.

#### SILVER AWARD

**Optimum Workspace** – for its project at Design Bridge, London

Working alongside designer Kathryn Tyler (of *Grand Designs* fame), Optimum Workspace created a contemporary client and staff





Left: Optimum's project for Design Bridge in London



Left and above: CPS's fit-out for Bombardier Transportation



meeting area for Design Bridge's London offices. The bespoke project was described by guest judge Richard Jordan as a "very well finished space with well-thought-through joinery".

The fit-out comprises MF ceilings with vaulted roof lights; a partitioning system with acoustic glass in white oak timber framing; birch ply feature presentation units with integrated audiovisual equipment; feature lighting; flooring from Bolon and Christy Carpets; and bespoke kitchen units with quartz worktops.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED CPS Interiors – for its contract at Bombardier Transportation, Derby

The brief was to create a bright, corporate head office from this former engine workshop, including reception, meeting rooms and offices. Initial designs proposed blocking the original arched windows and changing the façade but CPS suggested retaining the historic features and designing the interior accordingly. "Working with a tight budget CPS has transformed the space while utilising the

historic architecture," said judge Jordan.

The fit-out includes a glazed internal porch with curved MF ceiling to echo the arched windows above, allowing daylight to flood in. This, with full-height Komfort Klassic ash glazed partitioning, creates a light, spacious environment. A corridor runs between two front sections either side of a curved ash reception counter, with floor-to-ceiling glass.

The corporate colours and railway track theme were reflected in wide-striped frosted manifestation on glazed panels and striped planks of carpet along the corridor.



Sound Interiors' contract at No 4 St Paul's Square, Liverpool



## CEILINGSPONSORED BY CPD DISTRIBUTION

### £500,000 PLUS PROJECTS



**SOUND INTERIORS** – FOR ITS CONTRACT AT NO 4 ST PAUL'S SQUARE, LIVERPOOL  
Architect RHWL also received an award

Sound Interiors spent 12 months before construction began advising on design detail and value engineering. The installation at this eight-storey, 10,000m<sup>2</sup> BREEAM Excellent

office space progressed well thanks to collaborative working. The main open-plan office space uses SAS International 1,350x1,350mm mega panels supported on omega profiles, while lobbies and toilets used 1,200x300 SAS concealed clip-in tiles with plasterboard margins and blind boxes.

The reception installation relied on the BASWAphon acoustical plaster system to absorb sound reverberation and was designed to provide a seamless monolithic appearance

penetrated by SAS recessed circular lighting coffers. The judges hailed it as "great collaboration on site, zero defects, top class".

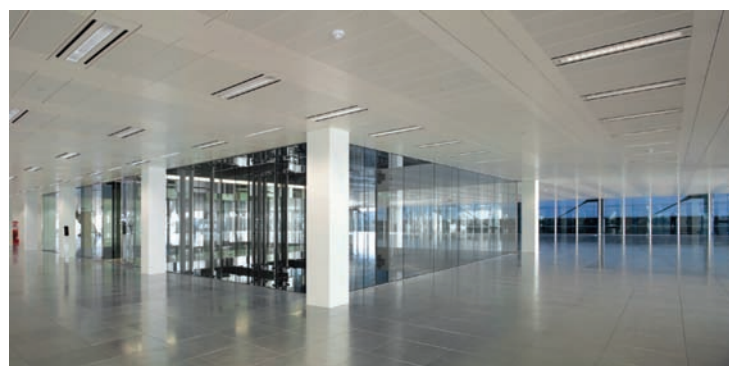


**STORTFORD INTERIORS (UK)** – FOR ITS CONTRACT AT CANNON PLACE, LONDON  
Architect Foggo also received an award

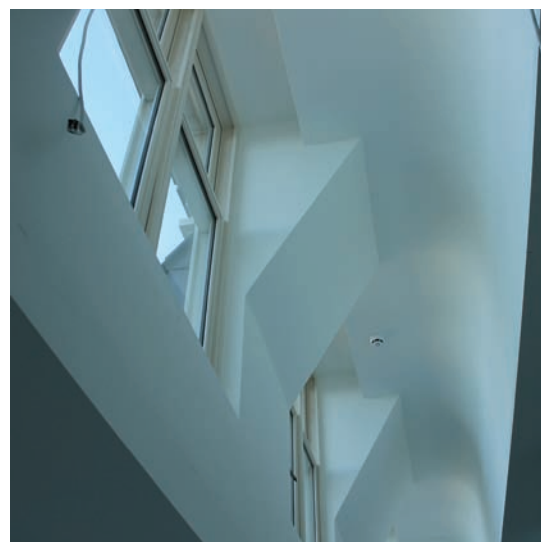
Stortford carried out the design, supply and installation of SAS suspended ceilings at



Stortford's work at London's Cannon Street station




Right: MPG's installation at Quadrant 3



Cannon Place, an award-winning eight-storey office building above London's Cannon Street station. It also handled the feature stretched ceilings to the lift lobbies.

The brief was to develop the suspended ceilings to meet tough cost targets without compromising Foggo's M&E design. The 4,623m<sup>2</sup> footplate incorporates four stair cores into a single ceiling with steel bulkheads to the perimeter. Tolerances were set at an absolute minimum. "Acute attention to detail,

including custom-made curved corner details and zero defects, make this a worthy gold," commented the judges.

**SILVER AWARD**  
 **MPG Group – for its installation at Quadrant 3, London**

A variety of ceilings were mixed on site to achieve numerous functions in the retained and new areas of this mixed-use development

on Regent Street. StoSilent was used in the entrance area to achieve the acoustic ratings required, while in the lift lobby entrance and atrium lobbies Gustav ceilings were installed.

In the main areas an SAS 360 System was used and in the retained areas of the building a British Gypsum Casoline MF proved effective in retaining the character of the building.

As the judges confirmed: "An impressive project with high-quality installation of SAS, Gustav and StoSilent ceilings throughout."



Swift Horsman's project at the Royal Welsh College



Below: Kenmor's installation at the Seaham Contact Centre, County Durham



## CEILINGs sponsored by CPD Distribution



### PROJECTS UP TO £500,000



**GOLD AWARD**  
Swift Horsman – for its project at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff  
Architect Bogle Flanagan Lawrence Silver also received an award

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's redevelopment introduced a suite of facilities for musicians, actors, theatre designers and stage managers. Swift Horsman supplied and installed the ceiling and internal wall panelling to the concert hall, built with a mix of GRG to the perimeter area and taped and jointed MF plasterboard to the centre and lower perimeter section.

It also supplied glazed opening panels to

the centre section of the ceiling. The team overcame tight deadlines, challenges working at height and coordinating with other trades to complete the project.

The judges were in no doubt: "The outcome is stunning, providing a visual delight, ambience and performance befitting the building as a whole".



**SILVER AWARD**  
Kenmor Ceilings & Partitions – for its contract at the Seaham Contact Centre, County Durham

Durham County Council's £3.8m Seaham contact centre houses a library, registrar's office, housing and benefit advice sections and customer contact centre. It is glass fronted and has a high thermal mass for

passive heating and cooling via the structural concrete soffit. The rooms and spaces presented acoustic challenges but the installation of an acoustic suspended ceiling, designed to fit the building's BREEAM Very Good rating, paid off. Kenmor laid out and installed Saint-Gobain Ecophon's Focus E with Wing perimeter rafts and free-hanging Solo acoustic panels, all made from 80% recycled glass wool. This gave full accessibility to overhead services and ensured unrestricted airflow. The judges summed up the achievement: "Complex integration with M&E services was crucial in working to a really tight deadline."

### CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

BPC Interiors for its contract at Mitsubishi UFJ Securities International



Left and below:  
Optima's gold-winning project for Chartis



Above and right:  
Profixed's contract for Rackspace in Middlesex



## PARTITIONING sponsored by SAS Direct



### **GOLD AWARD**

**Optima Contracting – for its project at Chartis Insurance, London**  
Architect Scott Brownrigg Interior Design also received an award

This project – judged “sleek and crisp and offering the client functionality” – combined generic drywall with +-25mm deflection, aluminium endcaps with a glazing rebate to create a sharp drywall-to-glazing interface, Optima 117 single glazing and Optima Revolution 97 double glazing. The single glazing incorporated aluminium microflush frames, frameless glass doors and Optima Kinetic sliding doors. The Revolution 97 had American Black Walnut solid hardwood

frames and solid core veneered doors. A bespoke tech panel housed the room controls. White upper deflection channels, black lower deflection and all remaining glazing channels complemented the stainless steel ironmongery well. For a complex faceting of the drywall and glazing systems in the client suite Optima installed numerous floor-to-ceiling glass fins with coloured interlayers. The project had a high acoustic rating, notably on double glazing to the cross walls.

### **SILVER AWARD**

**Profixed Interiors – for its contract at Rackspace, Middlesex**

The underpinning challenge on this project for

Hayes, Middlesex-based hosting services provider Rackspace was to meet the designer's vision for curved walls with curved bulkheads. The designer's brief also called for curved doors and various other quirky details.

The judges summed up the installation as being “well worthy of silver”. They continued: “A designer with flair set the scene for this very interesting project – themed areas of the building, wide use of colour, curved solid and glazed walls, awkward bulkheads and lots of funky details...”

### **CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**

Stortford Interiors for its contract at The Peak headquarters building, London





Left and below: Lyndhurst's installation for the John Lewis Partnership



Above, left and facing page: AT Jones' contract for the University of Southampton



## DRYWALL CONSTRUCTION sponsored by Lafarge Plasterboard



### **GOLD AWARD**

**AT Jones & Son – for its contract at the Future Life Science's Building, University of Southampton**  
Architect NBBJ also received an award

AT Jones' £1.3m fit-out for Southampton University's 11,000m<sup>2</sup> Future Life Sciences Building is one of the first installations of bamboo acoustic systems in the UK – making it "well worthy of gold". The system, made by BCL, was fitted to the walls of the eight-storey atrium. The inclusion of this and other low-carbon systems have lowered the building's carbon footprint – carbon emissions for the project were cut by a third with nearly

95% of waste re-used or recycled. AT Jones installed three systems throughout the building: Ecophon Focus Quadro E frost panels in the office areas were used to create a smooth transition between different ceiling levels accommodating various service ducts; a Hunter Douglas linear wood system was used for the ceilings in communal areas; and square-tile SAS systems 150 and 130 were installed in the laboratory and corridor areas.

### **SILVER AWARD**

**Lyndhurst Building Services – for its project at John Lewis Partnership, London**

As part of the fit-out of the 37,200m<sup>2</sup> retail

space within the Olympic Park in east London, Lyndhurst installed 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of acoustic partition separation walls and 300 linear metres of freestanding stud walls.

A total of 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of SAS's 150 concealed grid ceiling system was also fitted, with feature bulkheads and lighting detail perimeter. The project was set over five floors, including a 22m atrium.

"Much detailed work had to be undertaken to complete the John Lewis store that overlooks the Olympic Park," said the judges.

### **CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**

Fast Track Interiors for its project at Media Edge, London



Thorpes of Great  
Glen's project  
for Gazprom  
Marketing &  
Trading







Swift Horsman's installation at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama



Royal Welsh College

SPECIALIST JOINERY sponsored by AIS



**GOLD AWARD**  
**Thorpes of Great Glen – for its project at Gazprom Marketing & Trading headquarters, London**

As the judges said: "There's so much good about this installation." Thorpes supplied and installed specialist joinery over four floors, including vending and tea points, plasma units, doors, credenzas, ceiling panels and rotunda units. It used a range of panels, including leather, fabric, veneered and painted. Among the finishes used were high-gloss lacquer, veneer, metalwork, glass,

fabric and leather. "Thorpes provided a demanding client with exactly what they wanted. Superb," said the judges.

**SILVER AWARD**  
**Swift Horsman – for its installation at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff**

For this £22.5m redevelopment project, Swift Horsman undertook the supply and installation of the ceiling and internal wall panelling to the concert hall. The result? "Visually and acoustically top class," said the

judges. The wall was birch plywood recessed panels with varying absorption slates within each recess, surrounded by a picture-frame architrave, level-one balustrade and cold cathode lighting soffit. The wall panelling was set out to curved ring beam, creating a bowl-like concert hall.

A short programme called for coordination of service and stage commissioning and regular meetings with other trade contractors.

**CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**  
 Stortford Interiors for its work on the Darwin Lecture Theatre, University College London



Brockhouse  
Modernfold's  
contract at  
Rothschild Bank





Style Moveable Partition's work for PricewaterhouseCoopers



OPERABLE WALLS sponsored by AIS



**GOLD AWARD**  
**Brockhouse Modernfold – for its contract at Rothschild Bank, London**  
 Architect OMA also received an award

“First challenge: get 5m-high panels to the 15th floor of the building when the lift only goes to the 14th.” This was how the judges summed up Brockhouse’s task when asked to help design a 28m x 5m main wall incorporating three double pass doors and two smaller 7m walls from the sloping exterior wall into the main wall.

The solution was to get the 5m panels

provided in kit-form and assemble them on site. The complex layout called for various configurations using the panels. Another challenge, vertical and horizontal deflections, was tackled by a bespoke wall-post design and extended seals. Among the finishes was a 28m specially designed tapestry.

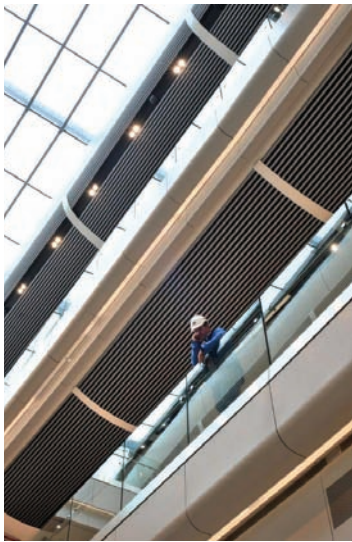
**SILVER AWARD**  
**Style Moveable Partition Specialists – for its project at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), London**

The fit-out completed last year for PWC in

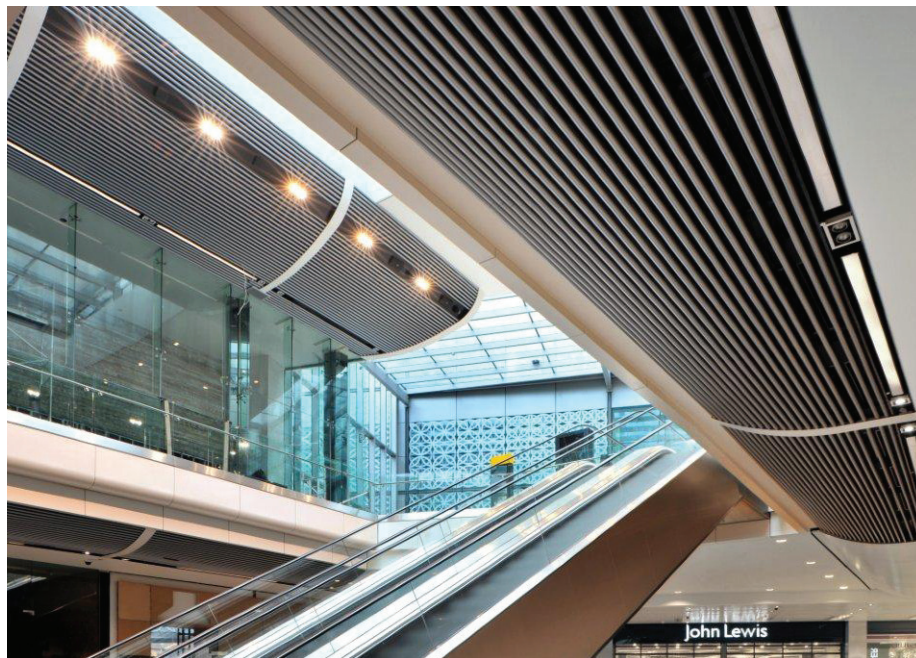
partnership with Overbury comprised a ground-floor conference area subdivisible into various configurations. Veneered panels include sound-absorbing acoustic panels, double-glazed walls in the client dining areas on the eighth floor and specially designed sliding panels with decorative wall panelling on the first floor. “This project has the lot – and was installed to a very high standard,” said the judges.

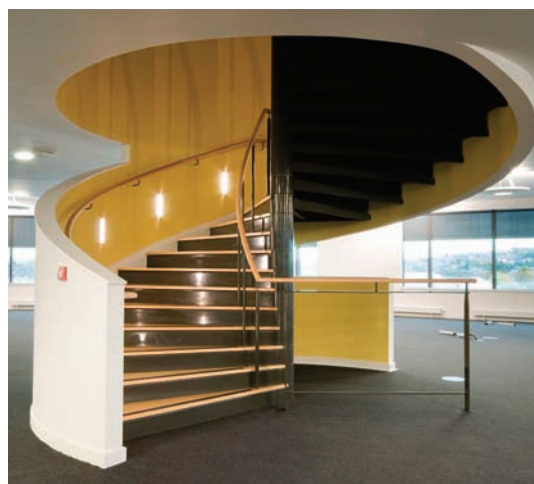
**CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**

Alco Wall Systems for its installation at Nike 1948, London

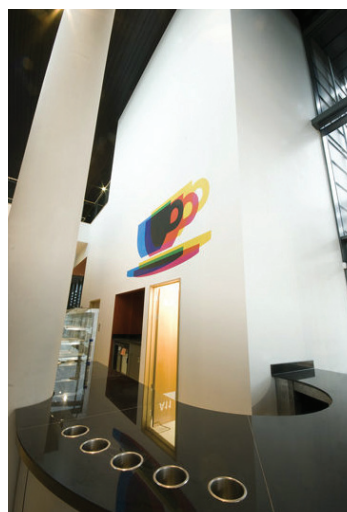


SAS's gold award-winning project at Westfield Stratford City





Topfix's installation at the University of Wales



## JUDGES AWARD sponsored by Minster Insulation and Dry Lining



### **GOLD AWARD**

**SAS International – for its contract at Westfield Stratford City, London**  
Architect Buchan Group also received an award

A structured Tubeline ceiling system used in circular steel and aluminium features on all three levels of this new shopping centre's curved atrium. Striking yet functional, it has been designed to provide a versatile solution. Sections of Tubeline were divided by 6m-high bulkheads to break up the straight tubes and allow it to curve with the building.

The brief for Westfield was to include as much metal as possible on this project because it's robust and easy to install,

although a hybrid was necessary in some places. The judges summed up the project simply as "stunning".

### **SILVER AWARD**

**Topfix Interiors – for its project at the University of Wales, Newport**

Topfix was responsible for the 4,000m<sup>2</sup> acoustic cedar soffit, high-performing acoustic partitions and perforated plasterboard ceilings at this waterfront site that brings business, technology, art, design and media under one roof. Housing sound and TV studios, screening and lecture theatres, exhibition space and offices, the Newport campus called for a stringent acoustic approach. Topfix installed Ecophon acoustic

rafts, Luxalon acoustic micro-perforated plank ceilings, Gustafs wall linings and spiral staircase surrounds.

For the cedar soffit Topfix used 58,000m<sup>2</sup> of cedar in varying widths to create a dual plain-curved soffit with raking returns and reversed hip-ends. The soffit is split 40:60 externally and internally – the external portion required careful design due to the windy riverside location. The interface between external and internal cedar continues lines from within the building to the outside space, using a glazed curtain wall system. "Top class from Topfix," said the judges.

### **CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**

Portview for its work on the Omega Boutique at Westfield Stratford City



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### CPD: A GUIDE TO OFFICE ACOUSTICS CPD: A GUIDE TO PARTITIONS

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- To book contact the AIS office on 0121 707 0077
- To view the publication *A Guide to Office Acoustics* (pictured below) please go to [www.acousticguide.org](http://www.acousticguide.org)

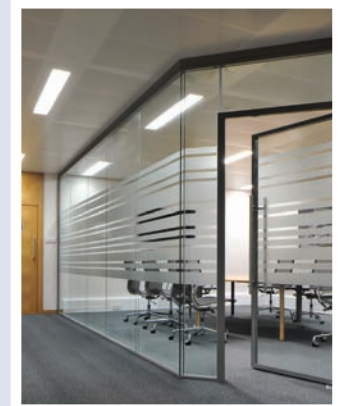


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5.45pm to 9pm Reception and dinner

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