Case Study

Education

The Nycundai Room, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

Facts about the project

The Nycundai Room, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

Architect: Hannah Jones, Architectural Assistant, Cassidy Ashton, Chester

Sub Contractor: Clare Church, Sound Interiors
EPIC: Ecophon Partnership in Contracting

Ecophon Products:
Akusto™ Wall A, Akutex™ FT custom printed

The Nycundai Room in the Liverpool University School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) was intended as an informal break out and study space for students. However, its high Edwardian ceilings and large volume meant that the space was very reverberant and the room was underused as a result.

An acoustic solution for tall period buildings with high ceilings

Hannah Jones of Cassidy Ashton produced a design to improve the acoustic performance of the room: "The high ceiling of the room was the main challenge, at over 4m high, along with the room being used for both student study/break out, and a main circulation route between lecture theatre. It was also especially important that any installation works should be carried out outside working hours, as lectures and exams took place in the adjacent lecture rooms throughout the daytime."

"Having successfully completed an acoustic treatment in the Nuffield Lecture Theatre at LSTM, Ecophon was then approached to carry out a site survey and acoustic calculations to determine the current reverberation time in the Nycundai Room and develop a strategy based around the BB93 requirements for education," said Ecophon's Martin Keogh.

An acoustic treatment with an art gallery effect

Hannah Jones explained how the space called for a thoughtful solution: "We did not want to touch the original ornate ceiling, so we made best use of the available space by locating acoustic panels at high level on the walls. Having discussed our initial requirements and aspirations with Martin at Ecophon, we were advised to use custom printed Akusto Wall panels. In addition to the acoustic benefits, this provided the school with the opportunity to display photographs from the historic archives and research study trips. The overall effect we created was that of an art gallery. This was further enhanced by the existing wall lighting."

The installation meets BB93 requirements

"The budget was tight with no acoustic treatment planned for in for the original refurbishment," said Martin Keogh. "It was, however, pointed out early on that artwork was to be printed up documenting key figures and research associated with LSTM. This provided the perfect opportunity to combine both acoustics and artwork as we are able to print high definition photographs directly onto our acoustic wall and ceiling panels."

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Hannah Jones added: "The project ran smoothly. Ecophon provided us with existing and proposed acoustic calculations following a walk around on site, and set our m2 requirements in order to achieve the reverberation times required under BB93. Martin put us in touch with Sound Interiors, who attended a mini pre-start meeting with ourselves and the client, and carried the installation outside working hours."

Clare Church of Sound Interiors described their role as sub-contractor: "Sound Interiors were responsible for procuring materials, organising the clients' 27 images to be LED printed on to Ecophon Akusto Wall panels, and their installation into the room."

"The products were used to reduce the reverberation and provide better acoustics within the Nycundai room at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. We installed two sizes of custom printed Akusto Wall panels – 1200x 1200mm and 1200 x 600mm – as well as 1200 x 300mm plain panels, each one fixed within Thinline perimeter profile."

"Technical knowledge is excellent"

Sound Interiors are an EPIC Installer and have worked with Ecophon for over 20 years. Clare Church said: "You know that the Ecophon team's technical knowledge of their product is excellent and the product itself offers variety to meet your requirements. Having installed Ecophon products for so many years, the main challenge here was setting out the panels in an existing room with lights, columns etcetera to work around."

Although installation had its challenges, the Nycundai room is now being used as intended. "I was astounded by the photographic quality on the panels. Given that some of the photographs were old black and whites, once they were installed, the atmosphere and character of the room dramatically changed, giving the room a positive boost and improved ambience," said Clare Church.

Improved acoustic and aesthetic quality

"I was initially worried that the quality of the prints would not be sufficient for such large scale panels, as some of the photographs chosen by the school were old scanned images, but the finished result far exceeded our expectations. The project has noticeably improved the space, both in terms of acoustic and aesthetic quality. The original room was under-used due to the poor acoustic conditions making it difficult for students to work. Feedback from the school has been very positive," added Hannah Jones.

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