

# Case Study

## Leisure

### Cheltenham Racecourse

#### Facts about the project

Cheltenham Racecourse, Gloucestershire

Architect: Roberts Limbrick Ltd (RLL)

Main Contractor: Kier Construction

Ceiling Contractor: D&G Ceilings Ltd

Project size: 9000m<sup>2</sup>

Products: Ecophon Products:

Focus™ E (open plan areas – level 1-3),

Focus™ Ds (open plan – level 4),

Focus™ A Silver Shadow (level 0 concourse),

Focus™ Ds Wing (lift lobbies),

Solo™ Freedom (donut shape level 0 concourse – under Focus™ A Silver Shadow),

Hygiene Foodtec™ (kitchens),

Solo™ Rectangle with Digital Images printed on (stairwells),

Gedina™ (tout),

Hygiene Performance™ (changing rooms)

The new five and a half storey grandstand at Cheltenham Racecourse was opened by HRH the Princess Royal in November 2015 on a key date in the racing calendar – the first day of The Open. The stand is named after the Princess and has an impressive 21m cantilevered wing roof that fronts the racecourse. The building has a capacity for 6,000 and provides bars, toilets, restaurants, private boxes with spectacular views of the racecourse and parade ring.

With so many large open plan areas in a hospitality environment, acoustics were going to be a key consideration.

James Vincent, Senior Associate from architects Roberts Limbrick Limited (RLL) described the acoustic and aesthetic challenges in the new grandstand: "On race days, racecourses are noisy places



and it is very important that commentaries and announcements can be heard intelligibly. Although there were no specific acoustic criteria dictated by statute, it was important that the reverberation time was kept to a minimum. RLL chose to specify Ecophon products to assist with achieving this design preference."

Ecophon's James Rex worked closely with RLL at the specification stage of the project. "In order to reduce the sound pressure and reverberation time to the lowest levels, RLL specified absorption class A products," he said.

James Vincent explained that while solutions had to be effective, they also had to be visually striking, attractive and well detailed, particularly in hospitality areas: "Whilst performance was fundamental, it remained important that the products used were aesthetically acceptable. RLL generally chose to use exposed grids to allow ease of maintenance. Micro grids were used in the public areas. Where smooth gridless ceilings were desirable aesthetically, primarily in The Cheltenham Club on Level 4, Ecophon Ds products were used to maintain access requirements."



The Vestey Bar on Level 0 is a Club facility and has a hard vinyl floor and this also required special consideration. James Vincent described the area: "This bar can hold up to 2,000 persons and without carpet or soft furnishings, it was important that it had some acoustic features. Ecophon manufactured bespoke Solo circular components which helped achieve a unique ceiling aesthetic that is both pleasing visually and assists the acoustic preferences for the space."

"The acoustics within the spaces are generally very good. We specified Ecophon for their superior acoustic performance and wide range of products. We also found the sales team very helpful and the technical team gave us good support," he added.

Throughout the build James Rex also continued to work with Senior Design Manager Andy Bolas from the main contractor Keir Construction and the ceiling installer David Gardiner from D&G Ceilings. This involved attending design meetings and assisting with value engineering when required. James explained: "It was important for me to work closely with the architect, main contractor, and ceiling installer on this large scheme, to help them understand the Ecophon products. Whether it was assisting the main contractor to value engineer certain areas to an acceptable level; to providing detailed transition design requirements to the architect; or site visits with the ceiling installer for install guidance and potential service clashes."

Ceiling installer, David Gardiner also commented: "Working on such a prestigious local project has been both challenging and rewarding. I have worked closely with James Rex and Ecophon on a regular basis over the last few years and as soon as I saw the visuals for the ground floor ceilings I immediately approached James to discuss the possibility of forming the large circles (or UFOs as we all christened them!) using Solo panels. This gave numerous advantages and as it turned out reduced the installation time, when compared to using other products and methods, and was welcomed by Kier as the project neared completion. Another first for us was the addition of prints to the acoustic panels in the main staircase – they cause people to take a second look when you advise them that there is more to the artwork than meets the eye." David added: "The support and technical assistance provided

by Ecophon enabled us all to complete the project on time and with minimal defects. We have received good feedback not only from Kier but also from other contractors whom I have taken to view the finished article."

Andy Bolas supported this view: "Excellent service was provided throughout the project from tendering, specification reviews, provision of samples through to technical advice on install and H&S/O&M information. Our project manager also reported that the Ecophon products were easy to install and the instruction provided was helpful."

The end result of this prestigious project is an impressive grandstand that has received very positive feedback. Andy added: "The architect had produced some detailed internal CGI's of the finished building before the project had started which had been signed off by the client. It was key that these visual and acoustic expectations were met, Ecophon have played their part in achieving this."

The project has been entered for several awards and some shortlisting is still in progress. It has already won a Commendation in the 'New Building or Structure' category of the Cheltenham Civic Awards for 2016.

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