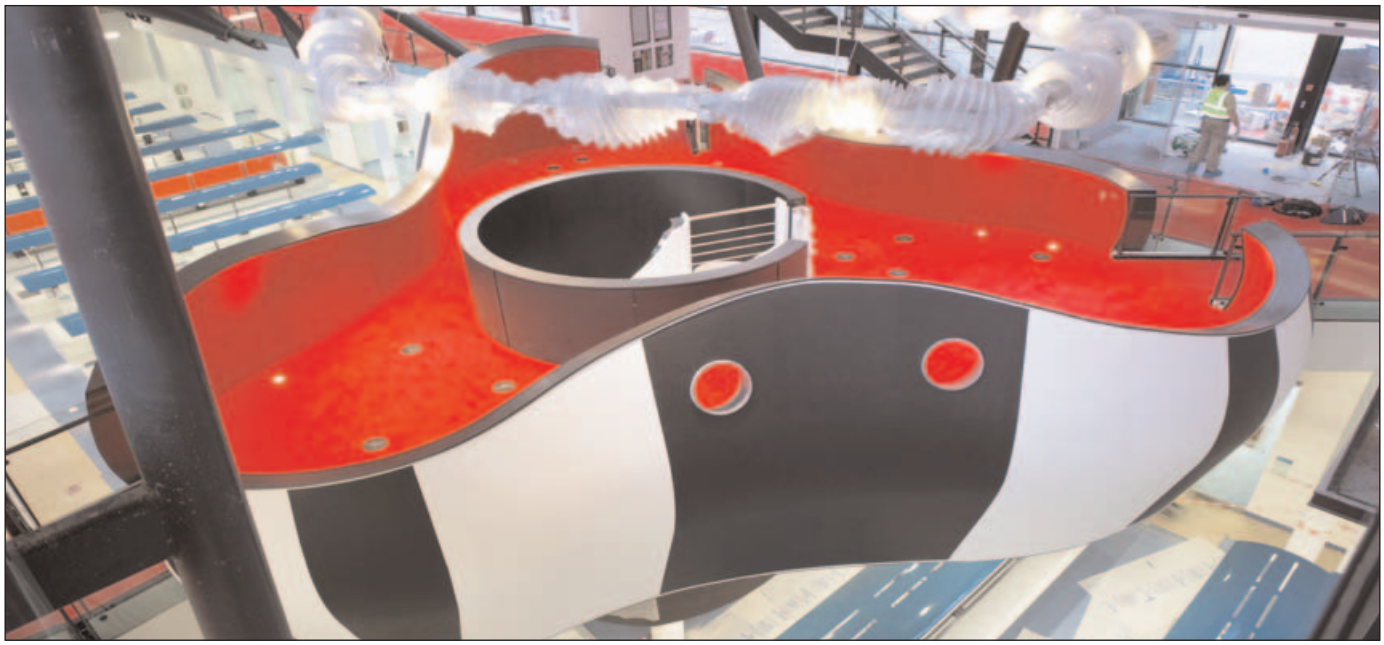
GILLESPIE

**case study**

Queen Mary's School of Medicine & Dentistry

**architect**
SMC Alsop

**main contractor**
Laing O'Rourke



# form for communication

When it came to bringing the architect's concepts to life for a new relaxation zone for an iconic building design at Queen Mary's School of Medicine & Dentistry, Gillespie's Zerodec laminated GRG product provided the lifeline - offering a timely substitute when the original wood laminate proposed could not be used. The off-site fabrication and finishing process provided added flexibility, and allowed final adjustments to be made on-site to realise the architect's ambitious 'podular' concept. The result is an inspiring environment which encourages interaction and the exchange of ideas.

> By definition, research scientists are focusing on their own highly specialised areas of study, typically working in small, separate groups. The flexible units we have created draw people together and encourage individuals to interact and to share ideas and experience in an informal setting.
>
> **Colin Gilmore-Merchant, Managing Director, Alsop**

Established in 1995, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry is a major centre of medical and dental teaching and research. In keeping with the site's reputation for advanced thinking, the brand new building which houses the School offers a radical new take on design. Conceived by architects Alsop, the transparent building features four colour 3D pods which 'float' in the glass box like fish in a tank.

A key feature of the building is the 'monochrome mushroom' pod which serves as a relaxation zone, designed to foster team interaction and communication between science centres.

Gillespie worked closely with Alsop to replicate exactly the form conceived by the awarding winning architect. Zerodec, Gillespie's patented laminated glass reinforced gypsum (GRG) product was used to substitute for the original wood laminate material. This involved working in a very narrow time window which was achieved through construction of the form on a wooden subframe offsite, enabling the majority of the panels to be pre-formed at the Gillespie factory using a total of only three moulds.

> With a very short lead-in period, a more in-situ solution worked well. The geometry would have been very difficult to model without an allowance for on-site adjustments. The flexibility of the Zerodec manufacturing process accommodated this requirement and also allowed the architects to make minor modifications to the design once constructed
>
> **Peter Taylor, Laing O'Rourke**

In addition to finding a solution to the fabrication of the relaxation zone pod, Gillespie were also asked to produce large circular acoustic baffles to achieve sound attenuation in the School's lecture theatre, delivering a further functional and visually stunning solution.

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