

# bfl

Building for Leisure

## Alan Smith

On the importance of high value arts projects

## Zero carbon

Addressing the cost of green housing

# Star attraction

What has this major Hollywood player got to do with sleepy old Cheltenham?



# Makeover 1: Understanding the poolside environment

**When undertaking refurbishment within a pool environment, whether a simple makeover or major structural change, many considerations need to be taken into account.**



Top of page Chigwell Esporta's 25m pool is set within a converted chapel.

Above Hot and humid environment at Esporta Repton Park, Chigwell.

SPA and poolside conditions are typically hot, humid and damp and, if the fit out contractor is not experienced, can be a minefield hiding shoddy and in some cases dangerous work.

Whether it is a complete refurbishment which factors in shower facilities, changing rooms, swimming and spa areas or a more general face lift, which could include new doors, windows or lighting, there can be many different refurbishment considerations including usage, footfall, health and safety and materials.

"Underestimating the environment is a first step to failure," says Andy Powell, md of Spacetailors, a nationwide fit out contractor specialising within leisure. "This environment is hard to work within for a number of reasons. It is constantly wet and it is imperative to choose the appropriate materials to ensure they are not attacked or adversely affected by the conditions. For example, timber frames for doors and windows even on the outskirts of the pool area would not be conducive, as they would quickly deteriorate," says Powell.

"Lami GRP doors and frames are much

more effective not only for value but also for durability. Similarly moisture resistant boards must be used as an alternative to typical plasterboard. Although this seems simple and the choice of materials is now more widespread, some don't specify these materials, which is costly for both the leisure club owner and the contractor."

In addition to the conditions relating to the atmosphere, Powell accepts the need for a growing need for pools to stay open during refurbishment. This means health and safety is of paramount importance with obvious areas for attention such as the potentially hazardous combination of bare feet and slippery surfaces. "Any refurbishment must be planned in advance to ensure that sections can still be in use throughout the refurbishment and that the area is safe for public use," he explains.

"We typically work throughout the night whilst establishments are closed in order to complete large refurbishments and although this gives us more space to work we are still mindful of what stage the refurbishment will be at when it opens again the next morning."