

Case Study

Education

McClay Library, Queen's University

Facts about the project

McClay Library, Queen's University, Belfast

Architect: RPP Architects

Project size: 1500m²

Products: Ecophon Focus Ds with Wing (rafts),
Focus E with Edge 500 (rafts) Solo Circles, Solo Rectangles

Good acoustics are essential in any library but when you have approximately 10,000 users a day, made up of students from one of the UK's leading universities, achieving optimum sound quality is essential. This is why Ecophon's range of acoustic products has been utilised at the McClay Library at Queen's University.

Opened in 2009, the library includes IT training rooms, a language centre, library and computer support areas and a café, alongside the university's special collections (that include rare and early printed books, maps and manuscripts) and the CS Lewis Reading Room.

It was designed by leading library architects, Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, working in association with Belfast company, RPP Architects Limited and it has already won the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) Award in 2013 – an accolade presented every three years to a UK library that best meets the needs of users and staff.

Ecophon worked on the original library and has since returned to provide more expertise within a new section, to not only continue the same high standards of acoustic performance but also meet specific design criteria.



As well as providing the products capable of meeting the acoustic requirements of the project, Ecophon also delivered a tailored service, as Alan Crampton, Saint-Gobain Ecophon, Regional Manager Ireland, explained.

"We have built up a strong working relationship with RPP, particularly on projects such as this, that are more complex than just a suspended ceiling.

"Working closely with Alan Shields at RPP, we provided a full CAD design for the project, paying particular attention to the design of the Focus E with Edge 500 rafters to ensure we delivered the same high standards as the original library.

"Due to the angles of some of the ceilings we created a template for use by installers, and our Technical Advisors Roy Young and Andrew Green visited the site to provide an on-site demonstration and practical assistance on how to use the template to form the non-standard cuts."

The combination of simple installation and superb acoustic performance saw Focus Ds with Wing (rafts), Focus E with Edge 500 (rafts) both specified for this project alongside Solo Circles and Solo Rectangles, which overcame the issue of not being able to install a wall-to-wall ceiling. Ecophon Akusto™ Wall C panels were also installed in the photocopying room.

Alan Shields, Director, at RPP Architects Limited, commented, "While the building had to be designed to fit in with the historic buildings neighbouring it, we also had to ensure it fulfilled all the requirements of an innovative, modern library. Specific areas of the library have different requirements, such as the quiet zones or the social-education environments where students can enjoy the benefits of collaborative learning. All of these required a specific acoustic solution.

"We successfully worked with Ecophon in the past, so we were confident they would offer the required attention to detail to meet the varying and specific demands of this project."

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