

Case Study:

The Gulbenkien Café at Kent University



Project: The Gulbenkien Café

Location: Kent University,
Canterbury

Contracted company:
SW Flooring (South East) Limited

UZIN sales agent:
Richard Boorman

Supporting architect:
N/A refurbishment

Floor construction working time in hours (approx.):
Between 11:00 pm to 8:00 am
over a 6 week period

After the discovery of severe subfloor moisture within the Gulbenkien Café at Kent University, a UZIN system was chosen to install the new flooring and provide a long term solution.

UZIN installation systems

- Two coats of UZIN PE 480 with accelerators to the screed and paving slab floor areas.
- The second coat of UZIN PE 480 received a cast of Silica Sand to create a key for the smoothing compound.
- Isolated screed areas were repaired with UZIN NC 182, prior to receiving 2 coats of UZIN PE 480 DPM.
- The plyboard areas were primed with UZIN PE 630 Primer.
- To complete the preparation UZIN NC 175 was applied to create a finished surface which received the specified floorcoverings of Dalhaus Sheet Rubber and Karndean Woodplanks and Tiles. These were adhered with UZIN KE 66.

The job / challenge

The initial project was to replace the existing vinyl floorcoverings in the cafe as bubbles had appeared in certain areas. The initial area was 150-200 m², but the floor area increased to 400 m² after problems were encountered. The work was to be undertaken out of normal working hours, so that the cafe could stay operational during the day, to serve students and staff members alike.

SW Flooring were instructed to remove the existing floorcovering, prepare the subfloor with one coat of a smoothing underlayment, and replace with a variety of Dalhaus Sheet Rubber, and Karndean Vinyl woodplank. The works was due to be completed over a period of 10 working nights.

SW Flooring removed the existing floorcoverings, and it became apparent that there was a moisture problem with the subfloor. SW Flooring were also presented with a variety of subfloors, ranging from 50 mm paving slabs laid onto 75 mm of sand, adjoining timber sections, ceramic tiles and screed. All with their own extremities and movement tolerances. Previous installations had been undertaken by other contractors by applying DPMs and latex smoothing compounds on top



of each other at each stage of failure, which resulted in the moisture present in the subfloor, just constantly working its way to the surface failing each layer of preparation as it went.

SW Flooring approached Kent University and advised them of the findings. Upon conversations with the Senior Building Surveyor, they agreed for SW Flooring to carry the work out using the correct methods. This created an increased expectation from the University to deliver a fault free solution. SW Flooring also had to appease the Client of the Estates Department, which was the Cafe, to ensure that their customers were not inconvenienced in anyway.

The solution / implementation

SW Flooring started by removing all the existing latex smoothing compounds by hand with a small mechanical Kango drill. The timber section was replaced incorporating a structural DPM, and then was overlaid with a 6 mm of plyboard to increase rigidity. SW Flooring had to ensure the cafe was open at 8:00 am each morning during the project. This was achieved by making up the level differences with sand each night and then covering with Cordex to eliminate any trip hazard.

SW Flooring needed high quality products from a manufacturer that instilled them with confidence, and also had products that could be used for this situation. SW Flooring had a very good relationship with the Richard Boorman, the UZIN Representative and he produced an UZIN specification for the project. He met SW Flooring on site at midnight at least twice a week to discuss the progress of the project, and offered valuable support, to enable the project to be completed.



The specification was to apply 2 coats of Uzin PE 480 to the paving slabs, incorporating an accelerator to speed up the drying time, for the reopening of the cafe in the morning. The second coat was fully blinded to create a mechanical key for the smoothing compound, and UZIN NC 182 was used in isolated sections to repair where the different substrates joined. The timber and plywood areas were primed using UZIN PE 630 and UZIN NC 175 fibre-reinforced smoothing compound was applied between 6 mm to 10 mm. This created a subfloor, that was suitable to receive any floorcovering of the Universities choice.

The result

The new floorcoverings have been laid for 10 months now, and apart from a slight settlement from the various substrates, the University are very pleased with the workmanship and specification that was created for this project.

“ We were asked by the University to create a specification for the project. We decided to work with UZIN on this project, because of the flexibility of their products, and the professional understanding of the Technical Team. ”

SIMON WALLACE,
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SW FLOORING (SOUTH EAST) LIMITED