



## Unifying designs

Hospitals continually evolve and a primary goal of design must be to successfully integrate (occasionally disparate) facilities into a coherent whole.

### •Bringing resources together in a single facility

THE BRIEF for the refurbishment of The London Clinic, situated in Harley Street, was to relocate three of its departments incorporating the latest imaging technology – nuclear medicine, mammography and CT Scanning – onto one single floor level, thereby combining the Clinic's resources and creating a new dedicated facility.

Swanke Hayden Connell Architects specified more than 400 sqm of Forbo's flooring for the scheme, including Allura Wood, SafeStep Grip, SureStep Wood

and Marmoleum Ohmex. The integrated approach to floor design has seen colours and styles seamlessly connecting from one collection to another.

Continuing the theme for timber effect flooring used elsewhere in the building, Allura Wood was specified for the public realm areas of the Clinic. The stylish interpretations of natural materials within the Allura Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) collection incorporate an individual surface texture, which reflects the print design and gives the collection an authentic look. The overall effect draws upon the natural warmth and beauty of timber to create a calm environment for patients and visitors.

Allura LVT is made using a glassfleece interlayer to avoid shrinkage and allow larger, more realistic designs. It also has a tough calendared wearlayer and flexible PUR finish, suited

to public areas that experience daily foot traffic.

The Marmoleum Ohmex, SureStep Wood and SafeStep Grip specifications were ultimately driven by performance requirements. The former was installed in the treatment rooms as it meets a higher requirement for electrical conductivity than a standard linoleum product. Electrical resistance is improved to ensure personal safety and protect equipment that is sensitive to static electricity. Linoleum is also naturally bacteriostatic, making it suitable for areas where hygiene is of paramount importance.

For general purpose areas, SafeStep safety vinyl provides high slip resistance coupled with durability and good maintenance properties, due to the inclusion of aluminium oxide particles in the wear layer.

### •Adding value for the future

A COMPLETE flooring specification has wide ranging requirements in terms of performance and yet it is not unrealistic to achieve a seamless design across public thoroughfares, wards and treatment areas.

Given that expansion and refurbishment of a hospital invariably takes place over many years (and taking into account changing tastes and working practices during that time) one further consideration when it comes to product specification is continuity.

The VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam was created by the integration of the VU Hospital which opened in the mid-sixties and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam's Faculty of Medicine which goes back the 1950s, and comprises a mixture of buildings of varying styles and multiple levels that are all connected.

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Getting the connectivity right has been key for the Center, not only to provide a coherent sense of space for patients and visitors, but to unify the important roles it fulfils – as a university centre of excellence, a major research resource and as a leading hospital with a range of specialisms.

The Medical Center's flooring needs are four-fold and these are substantially addressed by a mixture of linoleum and vinyl surfaces. From point of entry, to corridors and waiting areas and through to wards, the floor is warm and welcoming as expected of any environment where people are expected to convalesce. General slip resistance is desirable and there are particular areas of the Hospital where additional safety is required underfoot. In general, infection control is governed by the bacteriostatic characteristics of the flooring product and also by the quality of welded seams and overall cleanability of the surface.

Many of these performance needs are being met by Forbo's Marmoleum, which has been used in key public areas of the new building, having first been installed at the Hospital decades earlier.



Flooring in the treatment rooms meets a higher requirement for electrical conductivity



Drawing upon the natural warmth and beauty of timber can help create a calm environment for patients and visitors

Marmoleum is naturally bacteriostatic against a range of organisms including MRSA and the Winter Vomiting Virus, and dust mites cannot live or breed on the floor.

For particularly sensitive areas such as the operating theatres, the Colorex range of conductive floor coverings are often used. These have a pore free surface, ensuring the appropriate hygiene properties whilst complying with ESD (electrostatic discharge) standards.

#### Green ethos

Demonstrating how product ranges can come together within a large building is the task of Forbo's director of strategic marketing, Willem Burmanje. But what occupies him equally as much these days is the "pure cost of ownership" of healthcare flooring – and this involves the cost to the environment. "For me, it's all about the notion of creating value," he explains. "Whatever you create today, if it's not sustainable, it has no value for the future."

The company uses Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) as the independent methodology of measuring its impact on the environment. Marmoleum (linoleum)

is made from renewable natural raw materials including linseed oil, rosin, wood flour, limestone and jute, and receives an exceptional Life Cycle score and also an A+ in the health sector according to the latest BREEAM ratings.

But, for Burmanje, the green way of thinking must go further than merely maximising the efficient use of raw materials or reducing the use of energy in its production processes. If such an approach can be used to track a product through to the end of its useful life, it can also be embedded in the company's ethos and all its business procedures. "Today's flooring company must be fully engaged," he says. By continuing to extend the environmental vision staff can be inspired, new ideas can be generated and other initiatives can be stimulated through dealings with partner businesses.

[www.vumc.com](http://www.vumc.com)

[www.thelondonclinic.co.uk](http://www.thelondonclinic.co.uk)

[www.forbo-flooring.co.uk](http://www.forbo-flooring.co.uk)

[www.shca.com](http://www.shca.com)



Marmoleum (in tile and sheet formats) forms an integral part of the interior design that flows throughout (Photo: Royal Oldham Hospital)