

CLIENT:  
SOLUTION:  
LOCATION:

THISTLE'S CENTRE OF WELLBEING  
TARAFLEX® EVOLUTION  
EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh charity opts for Gerflor flooring solutions

When a health and wellbeing charity needed a new purpose-built building, it also required floorcoverings for its gym and meeting rooms that would contribute to the overall aesthetics and functions of the facility and accommodate the needs of those who use it.

Designed by 3DReid architects, Thistle's Centre of Wellbeing in Edinburgh replaced a former and no longer fit-for-purpose facility with a more welcoming building rotated 90 degrees to face a different aspect. Located within a designated Conservation Area and in attractive surroundings, the new Centre has received an overwhelmingly positive response from those who visit it and gym footfall has risen by as much as 80%. In the past year, 23,800 people have visited the Centre of Wellbeing for a consultation, Tai Chi or mindfulness class, for a social meet-up and a cup of coffee or to use the gym.

"The over-riding factor was that the new facility should provide a friendly and welcoming environment and be appropriate for all the people who come to the Centre. Thistle works with people who are living with disabilities or long-term conditions such as depression, arthritis and MS and it was paramount that visiting the Centre should be an enjoyable experience," said project architect Chris Dobson, 3DReid.

A holistic approach to the building's design was therefore adopted with the use of timber cladding inside and out, creation of a friendly ambience and flooring specifications that couple function and style with the necessary attributes amongst the key elements.

Consequently, floorings for the gym, meeting and exercise therapy rooms were specified by 3DReid, provided by international vinyl flooring specialist Gerflor Limited and installed by CCG Flooring. "The main challenge of the building was making sure it worked for people who may be living with a wide range of health conditions. So it was important to make the choice of flooring product in consultation with Thistle staff," said Chris Dobson.



“ Flooring is an incredibly important part of the building, it is a big contributor to our aesthetic aims and helps in many areas where we need light, highly visible flooring to assist people with conditions like Parkinson's and dementia who have difficulty differentiating surfaces and steps. ”

Tilly Sheridan, Facilities Manager, Thistle Foundation



"Many people who visit the Centre of Wellbeing use wheelchairs or other mobility support so the flooring has to tolerate significant wear and tear. For people with motor neuron conditions and visual impairments, contrasts in colour and texture of flooring can be problematic so even-character, light and non-glossy finishes are critical.

"And for those with autism the finishes need to be warm and homely with only small dashes of colour in furnishings to achieve a decorative balance that helps people to feel comfortable in their surroundings."

The architects were also aware that when an interim facility was in use during construction work, some people were sensitive to the change and stopped attending Thistle. This emphasised how important the building is to the work of the charity and the necessity of creating the right environment with the best possible flooring solutions.

"Undoubtedly the floorings needed to meet as many of the requirements of the Centre's users as possible," said Dobson. "But having worked on educational buildings with Gerflor, I was confident that I could count on their products and expertise in providing a bespoke solution to meet the brief."

He added: "Like Thistle's Centre of Wellbeing, educational establishments have to withstand considerable wear and tear, so we were positive about getting products from Gerflor that would be fit for purpose in a gym or a meeting room and be robust enough to keep maintenance to a minimum. And, as Thistle is a charity, we did not want to burden them with long-term maintenance issues so product choices were also based on low running costs and longer life expectancy."

"Flooring is an incredibly important part of the building," concurs Tilly Sheridan, Facilities Manager, Thistle Foundation. "It is a big contributor to our aesthetic aims and helps in many areas where we need light, highly visible flooring to assist people with conditions like Parkinson's and dementia who have difficulty differentiating surfaces and steps."

Within the Centre of Wellbeing, the gym is a vitally important space. Welcoming people of all fitness levels and abilities and with 750 members, it is often someone's first experience of coming to the Centre. It was Gerflor's Taraflex® Evolution in Wood Oak that satisfied Thistle's clear brief for a good looking, comfortable, hygienic, high performing and durable gym flooring. It also fulfilled the requirement for a product that could contribute to the warm, welcoming and friendly aesthetic.

Importantly, as a P1 category point elastic vinyl flooring, Taraflex® Evolution has properties perfectly matched with both multi-functional spaces and multi levels of sport offering appropriate shock absorbency and protection from impact falls.

"Our gym has three glass walls and it was really important that we accentuated the light and airy feel with the choice of floor covering," says Tilly. "Functionality is essential; the flooring is robust enough for exercise machines, cushioned enough for floor work and very easy to look after. We ask a lot of it. Since moving into the Centre of Wellbeing, we have around 24,000 gym visits a year which is an astronomical 80% increase and big success story."

Wood finishes are a distinguishing feature throughout the Centre of Wellbeing. The architects reported settling on colour after looking at brighter and more muted tones then picking wood finishes as tonally they fitted well with the overall aesthetics and natural feel of the building, especially in connection to external space. Gerflor's extensive range of colours and finishes provided the scope necessary for the architects to fine tune their choice and enabled continuity of the theme right through to the flooring for the gym.

For further information on Gerflor's extensive range of flooring solutions please contact us:

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