



Famous for its Roman baths, Georgian architecture and old world charm, the city of Bath is a developers nightmare. Some of the most stringent regulations in the UK cover what you can and can't do in this historical city - the Bath Stone facades of its buildings are known the world over. Yet despite all of the potential problems Odeon have successfully completed their latest flagship project - on time and on budget.

Situated in the brand new Kingsmead Leisure development - built from scratch on the site of Bath's main Ford dealership (who have relocated to new premises) the new 8 screen multiplex is a joy to behold...and something the city has long been crying out for. The closest new build cinemas are either on the outskirts of Bristol one way, or Swindon the other.

Most importantly, the project is a true city centre complex, a few minutes walk away from Bath's famous Theatre Royal and many tourist attractions. Interestingly, unlike most large towns and cities, Bath has only one small edge of town retail site.

The new cinema is the major element of the development which will house a Cannon's fitness centre, two bars (one is already open - and it's a Wetherspoons!) restaurants and coffee lounges in the atrium. From the street the futuristic glass and stainless steel frontage doesn't look much like a cinema and inside the atrium awaits occupation yet a soon to be installed video wall will introduce colour and movement. It's very early days as the cinema only opened the week before and no doubt when the coffee lounge and restaurants are up and running the place will start to buzz.

Even without the 'supporting acts' the cinema has taken off like a rocket with all eight screens showing to near capacity audiences. It's probably no coincidence that the opening caught the half term break and featured a programme of popular family films.

Credit has to be given to Odeon's architects, Limbrick Limited who are based not far away in Gloucester. They have created a work of art - a modern interpretation of an ageless style. Sweeping curves are echoed floor to ceiling using an abundance of LED lighting effects and clever colour and furnishing combinations.

Whilst ticket collection is available from machines just outside the entrance, the main foyer has a traditional box office with a dedicated concessions area.

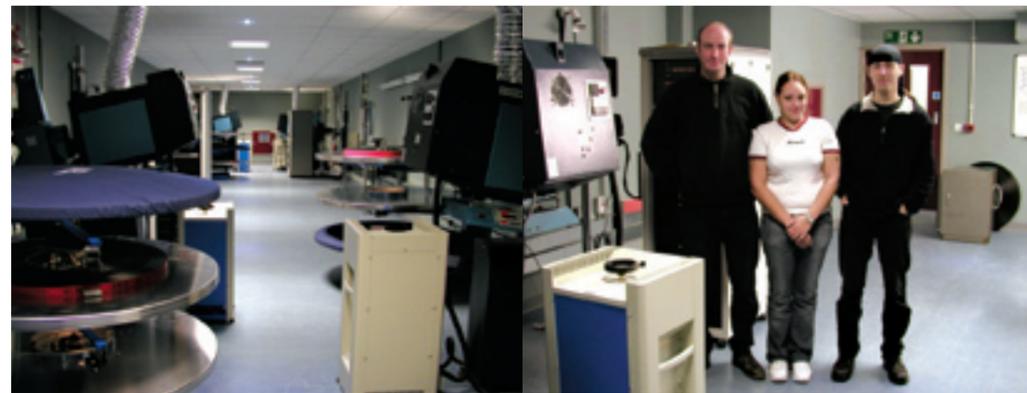
The eight auditoria are spread over two levels - Screens 1 and 2 on the ground floor and Screens 3 - 8 on the second floor and seat from 50 to 310. Access to the upper floor (and the projection booths!) is either by stairs or lift. Film delivery is at the back of the building and the cans are wheeled into the lift and out again at booth level.

Interior specifications are common to each auditorium with 700mm bands of acoustic panel running from dado height to ceiling on all three sides. The JBL 8330 surrounds are hidden by an 'eyebrow' feature on the side walls and angled bulkheads on the rear walls. Stage speakers are also JBL. The screen frame has no tabs and incorporates PowelLED edge illumination to the image area controlled by a dedicated dimmer system, and blue masking. All masking movement is side movement which is controlled from the projection



Bob Cavanagh visits

# Bath's new Odeon



box. Screen surfaces are Harkness matt white or Perlux. DTS two channel infrared equipment is mounted on the top screen frame outside the halo lighting effect. Control of the various lighting circuits is via the Cinemeccanica V500 automation system with manual override.

Supplied and installed by Sound Associates, the projection equipment too is common to each screen with the V500 automation system and foyer equipment rack centrally located. Projectors are pedestal mounted Cinemeccanica Victoria 5s with either ZX8000 or ZX4000 lamphouse and IREM 150A rectifier. Sound racks house a Dolby CP650D, Blade digital video server, DVD player, 6 x QSC ISA750s and a QSC DC1-M. Each screen has a Christie LW25 projector although the digital pre-show is not yet specified.

And so to the people - none of whom are from the Odeon 'family'. Chief is Keith Quinn (pictured left) who came from the ABC cinema just 5 minutes walk away. His technical assistants are Adam Dorrell (right), also from the ABC, and Natalie Brown who joins from Bristol's Showcase. First impressions? After the single screen, rather antiquated ABC - amazing! 'Even the lights come on automatically when you walk into the kitchen' remarks Keith. 'We closed at the ABC last Wednesday and opened here on Thursday - with some apprehension...but no problems. We have all taken to the new systems and practices really well'. And Natalie...well she was an 'old' multiplex hand already.

### CREDITS

ARCHITECT :  
Limbrick Ltd., Gloucester.

MAIN CONTRACTOR :  
G F Holding Ltd

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR :  
Dicks Electrical, Barry

MECHANICAL CONTRACTOR :  
Wilden Services

WALL PANELS :  
Eomac

PROJECTION/SOUND EQUIPMENT :  
Sound Associates Ltd

SCREEN FRAMES/LED SURROUND :  
F Powell & Co

