

In the swim at Victorian architectural gem...



...Notifier provide the latest in fire safety for this restored Victorian baths

In terms of fire safety, those responsible for the management of historic and listed buildings typically face a number of problems which do not exist in modern building design. An historic building is inherently more vulnerable, as it will have been constructed using materials which are less resistant to fire than a new build and so early detection is especially critical. Equally, unlike their modern counterparts heritage buildings were not designed with ease of evacuation in mind, a problem often made worse if they have been adapted or extended over many years.

The recent restoration of the Victorian Baths in Camden, North London provides some interesting insights into the need to incorporate modern fire safety techniques within an iconic architectural masterpiece.

The Kentish Town Baths are housed in a Grade II-listed Victorian building, which was originally opened in 1901 and today still retains all the extraordinary features of a bygone age.

A century ago, the baths operated more as a public service than a leisure facility, with many local residents lacking even



the most rudimentary domestic bathing facilities. It had four bathing pools, with separate facilities for men and women, and included laundry facilities to improve the surrounding population's health.

In the 1950s and 60s, a number of major yet architecturally unsympathetic modifications took place, in which all the pools were covered and changing rooms added. Many of the original internal Victorian features were removed or badly damaged at this time and the facility slowly fell into disuse.

In 2006, a public outcry followed the announcement that it was to be shut down. Camden Council responded by announcing a £25 million project to restore the building as a central part of the new Kentish Town Sports Centre development. Thanks to highly imaginative design, the result has been a successful blending of the historic and the modern, with the original Victorian baths building restored to its former glory whilst providing a modern leisure and recreation facility.

"The comprehensive fire detection and alarm system, designed, installed, tested and commissioned by Notifier Gold Partner, BBC Fire, is controlled by an ID3000 fire panel," says Rick Love, product manager, Notifier by Honeywell.

A Notifier system was selected as it ideally combines the most modern technologies with a long-established reputation for robust design, ensuring it can withstand the rigorous use associated with a busy public leisure facility.

"System reliability is crucial in reducing the incidence of false alarms at the Camden Baths," continues Love.

The ID3000 is linked to a comprehensive computer graphics management system, which enables management staff to identify quickly and isolate the precise location of any fire-related incident. In managing effective fire detection, alarm and controlled evacuation, the fire panel is interfaced with a central amplification rack. This contains the amplifiers, zone matrix

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components and music players for the public address, background music, voice alarm and audio induction loop systems.

Flexibility is essential in effectively protecting such a multi-purpose venue. The Notifier system is linked to more than 200 call points and automatic fire detectors, together with more than 200 speakers, in order to ensure early detection and alarm of fire conditions. In addition, full air sampling detection was incorporated to protect high level areas such as the fitness halls and difficult environments such as the pool and 'wet' areas.

A disabled refuge, pool/drowning alarm and WC alarms also help provide personal security and safety for a facility used by a wide range of able-bodied and disabled adults and young people.

A Notifier voice alarm and public address (VA/PA) system forms an integral part of the fire safety system. "This means that leisure centre management or local fire officers dealing with a fire or security alert can broadcast precise messages in controlling the most effective response, at the same time, background music and a wide range of public and staff announcements can be made, ensuring more effective operational management and more enjoyable user experience," confirms Love.

The adaptability of the Notifier system is matched by a similar level of flexibility at BBC Fire, who also have extensive experience of providing fire safety solutions for leisure facilities and meeting the unique installation and maintenance challenges of individual heritage properties.

The result is that users can enjoy the splendour of late Victorian architecture, secure in the knowledge that they are benefitting from the very best in modern fire safety design.



Notifier by Honeywell is the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of engineered fire alarm systems. With over 400 Engineered Systems Distributors worldwide, and regional support on every continent, we have the flexibility to meet our customers' most demanding requirements.

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