

# Clean lines

**More and more hospitals are moving away from the traditional corridor look, using radiant ceiling panels instead of radiators for hygiene and clean looks.**

A recent project to install radiant heating panels at two new healthcare facilities in North Staffordshire, specified early in the scheme, had the effect of 'freeing up' the design of the units, from the restraints of traditional radiator locations.

HKS architects specified the panels for the new Maternity Centre and Cancer Centre at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. The firm's associate Michael T Malone commented: "The decision to use ceiling-mounted radiant panels was made very early in the design process. The product allowed us to lay out the clinical spaces effectively and ergonomically, without the restraints of including a traditional radiator."

Malone added that the panels' clean visual lines also offered greater cleanliness potential. "The clean lines not only reduced the risk of harbouring microbes but they inconspicuously blend with the ceiling grid." He says that the solution allows a blending with ceilings: "The flexibility of the product allowed us to incorporate the panels into the ceiling design, and improved our ability



to coordinate the services with the aesthetics of the building." Additionally, wall and floor space was freed up.

HCP, which is a division of aluminium supplier SAS International, supplied 1300 linear metres of radiant heating panels for the project. The firm also supplied to other areas, including Diagnosis and Treatment (DTC), Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) and the linen store. The new Maternity and Cancer Centres have transformed original Victorian facilities.

Slim radiant heating panels are increasingly being specified in healthcare, says SAS, due to their aesthetic and hygiene benefits

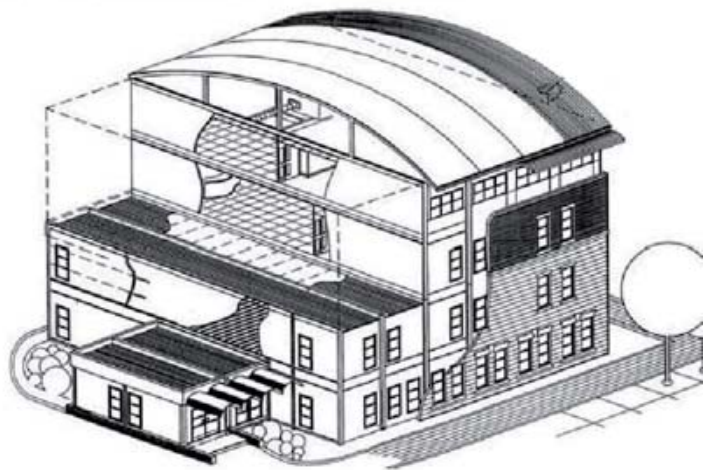
# Emergency delivery

**Achieving an emergency unit in 47 weeks was the challenge facing Yorkon.**

The new Acute Admissions Unit at Watford General Hospital is being used to pioneer a novel model of care for emergency cases, which comprises rapid assessment and consultant-led diagnosis. It is now being claimed to be the largest acute admissions unit in the country, with one of the lowest re-admissions rates.

The £25m ProCure 21 contract for the unit was awarded to private firm MedicinQ Osborne, and the extension was built off-site by Portakabin subsidiary Yorkon. The key driver for the hospital trust client was time; the total allowed programme was just 47 weeks.

Designed by Murphy Phillips Architects, the AAU provides 120 beds for emergency admissions, plus two cardiac catheterisation labs, x-ray, ultrasound and CT scanning, and a new pharmacy with robot dispensing. The building comprises 142 steel-framed modules, substantially fitted-out off-site, reducing the programme time by around six months, says Yorkon. It was craned into position at a rate of 10 14 m-long moduled per day,



in under four weeks. The off-site approach even enabled fitting-out to begin before demolition works were carried out, allowing the existing building, plus its postgraduate facility, to remain operational far longer.

The complex range of medical accommodation required a low reverberation factor of one to be achieved by the modular design. Careful logistics planning was also employed.

As well as achieving re-admission rates well below the average, the new unit has also seen staff turnover drop by four per cent.

The building comprises 120 beds and scanning facilities. Its 142 modules were delivered in the early mornings to avoid disruption

