

## Case study: Essex University, Southend



### PROJECT DATA

<b>Project:</b>	University of Essex, Southend
<b>Project outline:</b>	New Student Accommodation – 561 rooms
<b>Value:</b>	£30 million
<b>Client:</b>	University of Essex
<b>Architect:</b>	Marshall Architects
<b>Main contractor:</b>	Hollybrook
<b>Sub-contractor:</b>	County Decorating Contractors
<b>Products:</b>	Knauf Airless Readymix Plaster
<b>Distributor:</b>	Brewers, Basildon
<b>Summary:</b>	Knauf Airless meets all requirements for speed and quality, with virtually no mess or waste

# Essex University, Southend

Two men and a spray plaster machine are saving valuable time as they help to get new rooms for students at the University of Essex ready for the start of the 2010/11 academic year. Working against the clock, the team from County Decorating Contractors is spraying precast concrete walls and ceilings at the rate of 1,500m<sup>2</sup> a week with Knauf Airless Readymix Plaster in preparation for final decoration. Knauf Airless is part of Knauf Drywall's Readymix Plaster range, designed for fast, economical and high quality wall and ceiling finishes.

The University of Essex is procuring 561 rooms in a new landmark building for students at its third and newest campus, in the Southend town centre. Built by Hollybrook Ltd, the new hall on London Road consists of seven eye-catching multi-storey buildings with ground floor shops, round an open piazza. They are constructed with precast concrete panels manufactured by Bell and Webster of Grantham.

## Fast track build

County Decorating Director Jason Crump says the original specification called for the concrete surfaces to be coated with a hand-applied filling plaster prior to painting. "We did some tests and found that this was too slow for the fast-track build timetable, was very labour-intensive and did not produce the right finish," he says. "We had used Knauf Airless previously and were quickly able to show that it met all the requirements for speed and quality – and there is virtually no mess or waste. We are

already recommending it for future projects." County Decorating sourced its Knauf Airless through the Basildon branch of decorating supplier, Brewers.

Hollybrook Project Manager Jim McKenna says Knauf Airless is producing a fantastic finish in Southend. "County Decorating's investment in the spray machine is paying off well," he says. "They are making very good progress and are well within the time originally allocated for preparing the concrete panels. This means the units are ready for other trades more quickly, which helps our build programme significantly."

## Less time, less mess

Compared to traditional hand-plastering, machine application enables plasterers to deliver a superb job in less time, with less mess, minimal waste and reliable quality standards. All it needs is a small and highly productive team – and fewer people on site means fewer safety and security issues. The Knauf Readymix Plasters range for machine application – Knauf Airless, Knauf Plano, Knauf Deco and Knauf Deco Plus – has even more benefits, including reduced set-up times, perfect spraying consistency at all times and less than 1% waste, making these plasters extremely economical to use. In addition, they are water-based and non-hazardous to health or the environment.

Supplied in 25kg bags, Knauf Readymix Plasters are simply tipped into the application machine's hopper, ready for spraying. Once applied, the



plasters are levelled and smoothed with a spatula for a perfect finish. Any plaster that is trowelled off can be returned to the hopper for re-use, cutting waste to the minimum.

The key benefit of the Readymix products is their speed, as shown at Southend. The fast-drying finishes are ready for painting just 24-48 hours after application, making them ideal for large, fast track developments, such as housing, hotels and schools. They are also ideal for refurbishment projects and can be applied directly to old painted, papered, plastered or plasterboard walls and ceilings.

