

Passive fire protection and interior specialists

Originally founded in 1995 as a grit blasting contractor by Managing Director and owner, Warren Roberts, Houghton Regis based WRR (UK) quickly moved into the provision of passive fire protection products, for which the company is now widely recognised as one of the leaders in the marketplace. The business added an Interiors division in 2001 providing dry lining, partitions and ceiling services, thus allowing the company to offer its existing and potential clients a 'one stop shop' thus reducing co-ordination risks and the client's management input required on multiple packages.

During 2006 a decision was made to combine the two divisions, producing the current structure of WRR (UK). "Development has been particularly rapid over the course of the last three years," states Business Development Manager, Jon Francis. "We have been involved with some major landmark projects around the country. Around five years ago the average contract for the business was between £25,000 and £50,000, but last year our largest project accounted for £3.9m."

These landmark projects have included fire protection works on the new quadrant sections at Manchester United's Old Trafford ground and the installation of specialist fire protection and insulation requirements within the Emirates Stadium for Arsenal – a package which was been extended to encompass the partitions, ceilings and linings to the Triangle residential block. WRR (UK) is also involved in the fire protection and insulation of the residential development at the club's former Highbury Stadium home, with other current projects including a mixed retail/residential development in Milton Keynes for HBG and the Sir Robert McAlpine town centre redevelopment of Broadmead in Temple Quay area of Bristol. (For more details on any of these projects please visit www.wrr-uk.com).

However, it is the company's work on its largest project to date, providing Metsec structural metal framing for the high span walls within the O2 Arena that forms the retail and restaurant areas, alongside the provision of intumescent fire protection, fire stopping and Soffit insulation within the redevelopment works in the former Millennium Dome, that WRR (UK) is particularly proud to be associated with. "The O2 Arena was a huge step forward in terms of scale and programme size," confirms Mr Francis, "We had a peak number of employees on it at the time and it was a very demanding programme but we delivered it on time and on budget. We view it very much as our key project."

As a result of the company's growth WRR (UK) now employs 32 members of staff, a number that is complemented by sub-contract labour as required. Any sub-contracted labour is carefully vetted by the company to ensure that they meet the high standards of health and safety, environmental compliance and sustainability that WRR (UK) display amongst its credentials during the project tender process and whilst operating onsite.

Projects are handled under a three-stage process where the first stage involves interacting with the client, main contractor and architect in order to determine the best system for the scheme, examining the outline design and exploring initial costings. In stage two of the process the costs will be firmed up and the design is re-checked and refined to ensure that everything meets the Project's requirements. WRR (UK) will then work through the tender process and examine any construction programme issues before finally progressing to stage three – working onsite to complete the job. Each site will have its own site supervisor and a site manager who have responsibility for the construction and health and safety issues. "As a company we are very site focused with around 40 per cent of our management resource committed to onsite installation and management," adds Mr Francis, "Most of our clients appreciate this approach and enjoy seeing us involved to such scale at a site level."

This approach has certainly borne considerable fruit for the company over its lifetime with a high level of repeat business the net result, which is often the best indicator to the success of any company. This is important at a time when the market is becoming increasingly competitive and margins are being driven down.

WRR (UK) has one advantage over many of its competitors in the marketplace –

it holds a number of accreditations that displays its commitment to working to high standards. The company is a proactive member of the Association for Specialist Fire Protection (ASFP) and believes in upholding the beliefs and standards laid down in the Association's Code of Practice. The Code of Practice represents WRR (UK)'s commitment to work to the highest standards of quality, integrity, safety and reliability in the supply and installation of passive fire protection systems.

WRR (UK) is also a member of the FIRAS Scheme that displays its commitment to employing competent and trained employees and has recently won an award for its work on the O2 Arena from the Association of Interior Specialists. "We chose to go down the route of obtaining accreditation a long time ago in order to display our commitment to the industry and to raise the quality levels and installation standards for the work we do, across the board," says Mr Francis. "I believe that we are moving towards a point in the industry where standards and accreditation will become very important, so we are already ahead of the game."

The projects that WRR (UK) has recently been involved with certainly demonstrate that it is a company that is moving onwards and upwards. It is surely only a matter of time before the company is recognised as the number one company in the passive fire protection marketplace.

