

# Plastic Surgeon

## FINE FINISHERS

The heart of  
student living

UNITE



Plastic Surgeon Case Study:

## Fire damaged shower pod



**Client:** Unite  
**Sector:** Facilities Management  
**Repairs:** GRP shower pod

**Site:** Student accommodation  
University of the Arts, London

### The Challenge

One of the big successes in the off-site fabrication market has been the growth in popularity of bathroom pods, though they do require the project team to plan the construction sequence carefully, as the 'window of opportunity' for installing them into the part erected building is strictly limited. Which is also the reason that student accommodation specialist, Unite called in Plastic Surgeon to repair a one-piece en-suite shower room which had been badly damaged in a fire.

Incredibly the occupant of the single bedroom unit had used the soap holder as a niche to place a lighted candle, causing the entire interior surface to the room to melt or become blackened by smoke. So with no hope of installing a replacement into a fully finished and occupied building, Unite contacted Plastic Surgeon as the national expert in cosmetic repair work.

### The Solution

The pod on the University of Arts London campus was in fact of the GRP variety, and the heat had caused a large part of the plastic skin to be burned off, leaving a crazed honeycomb effect, as well as all the sticky residues. Following an initial inspection and consultation with the company's Regional and National Operations Managers, Plastic Surgeon's Finisher began what turned into a week long assignment by cleaning off all of the debris and discolouration. This revealed that there was around one third of the surface to the GRP which required rebuilding: a task that was painstakingly undertaken using Plastic Surgeon's proprietary two part fillers and a variety of tools to reproduce the constantly curving contours of the pod.

The Finisher completed the physical repairs by carefully smoothing back the filler – reapplying where necessary – until a perfectly smooth and accurate form emerged. He then primed the surface and colour matched the original paint tone by eye and sprayed in the whole area of the repair. This was followed by applying two coats of Plastic Surgeon's special lacquer; in order to waterproof and protect the new material.

The National Operations Manager for Plastic Surgeon, Laurie King, comments on the success of the intervention saying: "Unite has become a regular client of Plastic Surgeon over the past year, though the typical repairs are to a kitchen work-surface that has had a hot frying pan placed on it; or minor chips and cracks in the sanitaryware when the student accommodation is being tidied up during holiday times.

"This job, however concerned extensive damage to a GRP shower pod that had been installed as a single unit, caused when a candle placed in the soap holder set fire to the plastic. These pods are put in position early on in the build process and to have replaced this one would have been completely impossible. The only alternative would have been to cut up and dismantle the remains, then build a new bathroom in timber and plasterboard, before installing all the fittings in the conventional manner.

## The Result

"It took our Finisher nearly a week to make good the damage, but it would have been a much longer job to rebuild the shower-room, and cost many times more. The client also has to think about the length of time the place is unavailable, as would a hotel or nursing home where pods are also frequently employed as part of an off-site construction solution."

Plastic Surgeon is continually expanding the range of repairs it offers to clients so that more building components can be saved from being sent to landfill.

## Sustainable Repairs

At the same time as providing clients with a comprehensive cosmetic repair service addressing virtually every type of product and substrate, Plastic Surgeon is also addressing important aspects of the sustainability agenda. For while the company's ethos of 'repairing rather than replacing' represents a saving of approximately £3 for every pound spent, this approach also significantly reduces waste going to landfill and therefore helps cut a customer's carbon footprint.

Uniquely, Plastic Surgeon has developed its VisibiliTy software which translates each Finisher's job report, sent from their hand held computer, into the equivalent weight and other statistics on a data base that participating customers can utilise for their own sustainability reporting.



Read more case studies at [www.plastic-surgeon.co.uk](http://www.plastic-surgeon.co.uk)

**Plastic Surgeon**  
FINE FINISHERS

Blue Waters House, Pottery Road, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9DS  
Tel: 0845 141 0000 Fax: 0845 143 0000 Email: [priority@plastic-surgeon.co.uk](mailto:priority@plastic-surgeon.co.uk)  
[www.plastic-surgeon.co.uk](http://www.plastic-surgeon.co.uk)