

A SHELL THAT FOLLOWS THE SHAPE OF THE ARCHED SPACE WAS DESIGNED, PROVIDING SEATING, LIGHTING, POWER AND MULTIMEDIA FACILITIES

THE chilling room

The creation of this break pod is a collaboration between Chillischilli bespoke interiors and X,Y,Z Architecture & Design. It involved the craft of boat building and the discovery of an exciting new material – the cork covering used is designed to find its place in both commercial and residential projects.

PHOTOS: KAMY AQUILINA

THE CLIENT'S wish was to transform a dull and unused room at basement level into a vibrant chill-out and break-time area for employees.

The challenge involved translating the intended design into a functional construction, which maintained the required aesthetic criteria, while allowing for ease of use and durability.

The design was meant to complement the arched room with a low-profile structure that would dress it up, giving it a more dynamic look.

Being situated inside a palace of historic value, the existing building fabric was respected. A shell that follows the shape of the arched space was designed, providing seating, lighting, power and multimedia facilities. The shell was manufactured out of custom wooden ribs and finished in cork, blending smoothly with the natural colour of the building fabric.

MATERIALS

The materials for the project were researched and a wide variety of international suppliers sampled, eventually leading to a product from the UK that has a durable formula and consistency. This, in

turn, needed particular adhesives, which also required further research and sourcing.

TECHNIQUE

Due to the singularity of the room's profile, with its arches, reference had to be made to the boat-building craft for construction around extreme curves, while maintaining adequate strength. Plywood was, therefore, used for the frame. This material was shaped in the same way as ribs are constructed in boat building. The frame was covered with very thin and flexible engineered wood, which, when bent, would gain inherent strength from its shape.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL

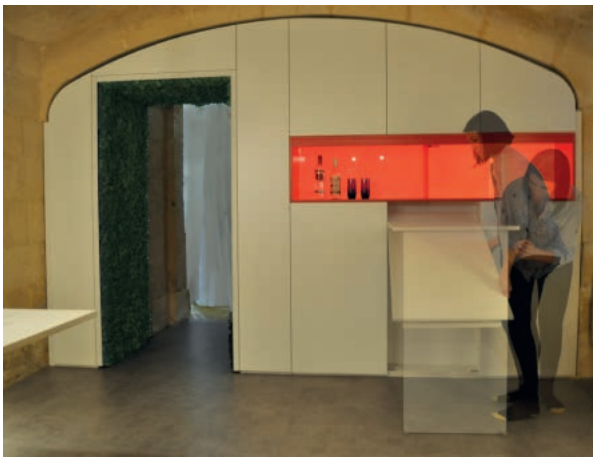
The space is designed to provide a number of layouts for different events, apart from the daily hour break. Space-saving multifunctional shells were designed, while the stools and beanbags are easily tucked away in the deep storage cabinets within the space itself.

The central area also provides space for a mini snooker table, or a game of table tennis,

which, on a daily basis, are folded away along the side walls.

The storage unit at the far back transforms into a bar – what seems to be a cabinet door lifts to form a bar-height table, with bar stools for post-work events. The cabinet forms a tunnel round an existing doorway and is clad in natural moss to add that much needed green touch to the space.

THE CABINET FORMS A TUNNEL ROUND AN EXISTING DOORWAY AND IS CLAD IN NATURAL MOSS TO ADD THAT MUCH NEEDED GREEN TOUCH TO THE SPACE



Including a bar in such a limited area posed demands on both construction and ease of assembly. A pivot locking system was engineered to allow the bar area to be set up and disassembled easily, depending on the occasion.

Care was taken to make sure that lines matched and enough storage space was allowed to be able to hide bar stools when these are not in use.



LIGHTING

The lighting is integrated into the thickness of the shells to avoid any eyesores. The routed LED strips on the surface accentuate the existing curves, while concealed strips towards the edges of the structure light up the architectural features, providing the necessary reflected soft and warm light. It was also imperative that back lighting should be avoided.

FURNITURE

Tables were constructed from a sprayed wood top over a solid metal plate base, the thickness of which required specialist machinery to be cut to shape. The weight of the base allowed it to have enough stability, however narrow its size.

INSTALLATION

The installation involved the challenge of having to access limited spaces and openings with relatively large items. The inconvenience of stairs and winding halls had to be kept in mind when negotiating structure sizes for transport and access. ■