

Silence amongst the lawyers

Elastilon lock gives much better acoustics

Pictures: Packshot / Peter Snep

If a firm of solicitors has over 30 lawyers, all of whom receive their clients inside the building, there is a great deal of floor traffic. Moreover, if this traffic includes several ladies in stiletto heels, the floor resounds to a tapping concert of short footsteps on the wood and, in time, this takes its toll. OSBE has put the Tilburg firm of solicitors, De Voort Hermes De Bont Advocaten & Mediators, out of their misery thanks to the huge benefits of Elastilon Lock.

De Voort Hermes De Bont

De Voort Hermes De Bont Advocaten & Mediators is a medium-sized firm of lawyers which specialises in company law, labour law and joint management, real estate law and governmental law, insolvency law, (physical) injury, law of persons and family law, administrative law, and private law. The firm operates in sections. It emphasises not only legal expertise, but also the procedural and strategic aspects. The lawyers like to think and work quickly and in a solution-oriented manner. Most of the clients are businesses and governmental departments. In addition, De Voort Hermes De Bont also serves joint management organs of large (international) companies. In many cases, the firm is often the company lawyer. There are also some private individuals who are clients, of course.

A welcoming building

The pavilion-like design with a lot of windows, light, and space reflects the transparency of the professional staff. A lot of attention is paid to the exterior, but, above all, it is still a company building in which the lawyers work to achieve quality and client trust. A calm and peaceful atmosphere is definitely important for its other activity, namely mediation: they do not go to court immediately, but sit at the table with each other first. There, with the help of an independent third party, they examine a conflict and search quickly for a solution which is acceptable to all parties. In short, this is mediation.

The problem of footsteps

A good five years ago, a parquet floor was laid in this building. It was an oak, three-strip parquet with tongue and groove which was laid completely float-

ing. Acoustically, the floor was a major problem for the lawyers. The floating installation, combined with the fact that the building has very high ceilings, caused a great deal of noise nuisance, especially the sound of ladies wearing stiletto heels. The assignment presented to the Dutch OSBE was crystal clear: the existing floor had to be uprooted without causing too much damage. That same floor then had to be re-laid, but this time glued completely and not floating. OSBE felt clearly that the best solution was to present the Elastilon Lock system. Elastilon Lock, like Elastilon Basic and Elastilon Strong, operates using a 'carrier' which is covered with a layer of adhesive in advance. The difference between this system and Basic and Strong is that with Elastilon Lock the layer of adhesive is applied to both sides of the carrier i.e. this corresponds to full immersion adhesive. With the Elastilon Basic and

Strong finishes, the layer of adhesive is on one side only. These systems are designed for floating installation.

Preparation

As we have already said, the first task was to uproot the existing floor. The oak, three-strip parts were detached from each other carefully. This proved to be quite easy because it was a floating floor, but a number of the planks did have to be replaced by new ones. "It was simply impossible to relay the three-strip floor in exactly the same dimension, so at some points we used two-strip Floor," testifies floor layer Chris Meeuwis. "It is strong, but once the floor had been rendered and finished, you could hardly see any difference" he said. As soon as the floor was torn apart, the base had to be cleaned up. Before Elastilon Lock can be used, it is important to ensure that the base is free of dust and that there is no loose cement. Therefore, an impregnating layer (Wakol) was applied first which, as it were, 'secures' the top layer of the floor covering. "Once this had been done, we could start laying the floor".

The work itself

With Elastilon Lock, it is vitally important to make sure that the first row is laid completely straight. After that, the work pro-

ceeds speedily and smoothly. OSBE had to lay about 70m² on the ground floor and 125m² on the other floors. Three floor layers were present during the first week, and two after that. The entire project took three weeks. Before starting the operation, the floor layers carried out a test in a small foyer. The difference in the acoustics was quite distinct and the test persuaded the lawyers at once. After the Elastilon Lock had been installed, the floor components were laid. These were glued on the top side to obtain an immovable floor. The floor was then sanded and finished off with Osmo Hardwax oil. Apart from the finish, the project was completed half-way through the third week. The finish was applied at the weekend. The Osmo Hardwax oil takes a certain time to dry: at 20°C, it takes 20 to 24 hours for the wax to set. In principle, the floor can be walked upon within 24 to 36 hours. "We applied the hard wax before the weekend. This meant that the lawyers were able to read carefully on the floor from the Monday onwards", said Meeuwis. In principle, the surface is not ready for furniture until after three weeks, but the lawyers nevertheless started to install some small furniture after the weekend.

The office stayed open

The office stayed open for the entire duration of the operation and that did cause some inconvenience. The rooms in question for this project were fully furnished, of course. "On arrival, we had to move all the furniture out of the way," said Chris Meeuwis. "Fortunately, the lawyers themselves had no qualms about helping us, so with their assistance we managed it okay". What was more trying was the fact that the office continued with its legal operations, and



this meant that our work was interrupted continually because lawyers and/or visitors had to pass by. Sometimes we had to stop work because the machines proved too disruptive to a client visit or meeting.

Elastilon: the different types

There are three types of Elastilon: the Basic, the Strong, and the Lock. Basic and Strong are designed for a floating floor. The big difference between Basic and Strong, of course, is not the sticking power of the adhesive, but the density of the carrier. The table below summarises the properties of the three different types:

PROPERTY	BASIC	STRONG	LOCK
Density	30kg/m ³	50kg/m ³	50kg/m ³
Standard thickness	3mm	3mm	2mm
Sport thickness	5 – 10mm	5 – 10mm	
Applications	Types of wood which do not shrink or swell much, such as oak, walnut, and most hard types of wood.	Difficult types of wood which shrink and swell a lot such as beech, maple, and most coniferous types.	For non-floating floors. The adhesive is applied on both sides. Ideal for laying on underfloor heating.

