



TO THE MANOR THORN

Old Thorns Manor Hotel is a luxurious hotel situated in Liphook, Hampshire, boasting 150 bedrooms, a golf course, health club and spa. Since purchasing it in 2007 the new owners have been busy redeveloping the estate into one of the country's leading event venues, which now boasts state-of-the-art emergency alarm and lighting fittings from **Channel Safety Systems**. **Russell Drury** checks in.

It is no surprise that Old Thorns Manor Hotel has won several awards for both 'top' and 'best' all-inclusive venues for Wedding Hire! Set in 400 acres of beautiful undulating countryside and located on the trio borders of Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex, the site further boasts a picturesque championship golf course – opened in

1981 and designed by the 'voice of British golf', Peter Alliss.

The resort was purchased in the economic downturn of 2007 by budding entrepreneurs and real estate developers the Shaw family, who could see the potential for future development for the site. Since then a massive programme of works has been embarked upon that has continued to add value and interest to the prestigious estate.

Capacity

The current resort has three main event rooms and several smaller capacity function rooms, six large conference rooms with a number of subsidiary meeting rooms catering for smaller business activities. There are three fully functioning restaurants and a Starbucks on site with additional scope being offered to patrons for private dining.

The sleeping capacity is ample as the resort houses 151 bedrooms, which include a combination of executive and standard rooms, two luxury penthouses, with the recent addition of 10 luxury eco pods located in the hotel grounds.

The directors have just recently seen the completion of the resort's new health club and spa, which holds a 25,000ft² gymnasium and numerous additional



Old Thorns hosts over 200 weddings and receptions per annum, plus various golfing events.

LED emergency exit signs have been used to create effective and comprehensive emergency escape routes throughout the premises.



treatment rooms. This has in turn created the ideal business arm for the venue and has addressed the need for business diversification in a hugely competitive market place.

Construction management

Three lead contractors are currently managing the development work of the site, with Stuart Speed of Speed Electrical overseeing the majority of all electrical works with at least five full time electricians on site during and outside of working hours.

Stuart has been working on the project for just over eight years now and states, 'As yet there is no sign of development work slowing down or stopping!'

Future planned development work for the resort includes a double height extension to the ballroom, enabling it to increase its current capacity and include a generously sized event room on the first floor. An additional



Old Thorns has three main event rooms and several smaller capacity function rooms. (Image courtesy of Burlison Photography)

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50 apartments are also in the pipeline with design and development work always being subject to continuous improvement and evolution.

Challenges

Venue to over 200 weddings and receptions per annum, various golfing events and evening activities, the site has had to remain open for business at all times and ensure any building work is completed around the resorts commitments.

Due to this, one can imagine the numerous risk assessments and legal requirements in lieu of health and safety that need to be adhered to at all times. Alongside, all contractors ensured any 'noisy' work was being completed during working hours only.

The fire detection system for the site was initially designed to BS5839 L2 at the very early stages of the project development; this was back in 2007 when it comprised of just one main building. Old Thorns is thus protected by an analogue addressable fire alarm system; comprising 4x5 loop and 2x2 loop Morley ZX5 fire alarm panels, which are fully networked site-wide with panel positions located strategically around the premises. This specific system was specified by Channel as the panels are designed and constructed around proven and reliable microprocessor technology, with an abundance of features to allow for the complex cause and effects

programming required on a site of this magnitude. Over 1,000 Apollo XP95 protocol detection devices prevent, detect and protect the site and are subject to diligent routine maintenance and servicing.

Architecturally sensitive

Sensitive to the existing and developing lighting design ideals within the premises; Channel's Glade, a 5W LED emergency 'anti-panic' downlight, SoHos; circular LED luminaires and razors, an ultra slimline range of LED emergency exit signs have been used to create effective and comprehensive emergency escape routes throughout the premises.

Stuart comments, 'The beauty of the Glade downlight fitting is that it fits effortlessly into a lighting scheme where LED downlights are used to illuminate corridor escape routes, as aesthetically it appears to be a regular downlight fitting.'

He continues, 'The SoHo fitting achieves a high light output of 1,680 lumens, which has made it ideal for installation down escape route stairwells and it achieves a typical power saving of between 35-40 per cent over a 2D 28W luminaire.'

Greg Shaw, general manager at Old Thorns, concludes, 'Safety is paramount and we trust Stuart's judgement when it comes to specifying and installing the correct products to fulfil building regulations. The fire detection system, designed by Channel's Alan Sanderson, is second to none – as a four star establishment, and one that is home to so many special occasions, we cannot experience the annoyance of false fire alarms and, as yet, it has never let us down!'

'On the emergency lighting fittings used in the corridors and stairwells – they are as far as light fittings go, unambiguous and fit nicely in with the standard lighting fixtures used. We are delighted with the finished result and confident that we will continue to use Channel products for future development works.'

