



**CONSTRUCTING
EXCELLENCE**
in the built environment



demonstration project



The Oxford Castle – Malmaison hotel

GDG Management takes the risks out of regeneration

Project Manager:	GDG Management
Client:	The Osborne Group
Case study Ref:	288
Project Number:	1181
Publication Date:	May 2007
Region:	South East
Sector:	Private, regeneration
Contract Value:	£34m
Project Timescales:	October 2002 to February 2006
Themes:	Risk management

The Oxford Castle regeneration scheme is an excellent example of how effective management of risks and early stakeholder engagement can ensure that a project is delivered to an excellent quality that provides real client satisfaction.

The earliest recorded mention of Oxford Castle in historical record dates to 1071 when it was built by Robert d'Oilly for William the Conqueror, although it is thought that fortifications on the site may date back to Saxon times. The first record of a prison on the site dates back to 1230. The castle had begun to fall into disrepair by the mid 1400s and by the 1770s a prison report had condemned the buildings, stating that years of neglect had made them unfit for human habitation. The site was reacquired by the Government and a major redevelopment programme ensued in the 19th Century. In 1878, the Prison Commissioners took over the site, and Her Majesty's Prison Oxford was established (which eventually closed in 1996). The site then sat unoccupied until the leasehold was acquired by The Osborne Group. The developers, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council (the site's freeholders) set about a major redevelopment of the site.

The profile

The scheme centres around the conversion of the old prison into a Malmaison hotel including elements of new build. The conversion of the listed building retains many of the prison's features, with the hotel rooms themselves comprising of the amalgamation of three old cells! Even the room doors retain features such as the old serving hatches. In addition to the hotel, the site contains 40 newly built apartments, an art gallery, eight restaurants and bars, as well as a Visitors' Centre containing an education facility.

Work started on site in October 2002 and work was completed in early 2006. The final project cost of £34m was higher than the original budget but reflected the increase in the scope of the works due, in no small part, to the extensive archaeological findings. Although the project came in over budget, the client was still delighted with the result and the development is now an important part of the Oxford social and entertainment scene.

The process

Due to the risk inherent in the process, The Osborne Group decided, in consultation with GDG Management, to carry out the works using a Construction Management approach. This enabled them to dictate the rate of progress in the earlier stages, when there were many unknown factors and extensive conditions relating to Scheduled Monument, Listed Building and Planning consent, which had to be satisfied prior to the works beginning.

Assessing the risks

GDG Management progressively procured each work package relative to the overall programme. In total, 72 contractors worked on the project, of which 54 were let under the 'NEC Option A' form of contract. In this way, they were able to manage the delivery, so that the late completion of one part of the project would not have a major negative impact on the delivery of the rest of the project. The feeling was that without the approaches to risk management and stakeholder management employed on the project, it could have suffered severe delays with all of the associated adverse financial implications that this entails.

Roles and responsibilities

The packages were developed based upon either a geographic split, (where some buildings were let as a complete package to a Contractor) or on a trade-specific basis e.g. stonework repairs, or slate roofing with the co-ordination of the packages on site undertaken by GDG Management.

