Modernisation and restoration at Old College Law School, Edinburgh

The project

- Refurbishment of an historic building in Edinburgh
- Architects: LDN
- Contractors: Graham Construction
- Value of contract: £18 million

The old college building

- The oldest part of the building dates back to 1789
- It was originally designed by Robert Adam
- On Adam's death, the design was completed by William Henry Playfair
- It houses the Law School, part of the University of Edinburgh
- It was called 'New College' until a newer college was built in 1846
- Today, it has Grade A listed status

Containing dust during a refit of this grand old building

Edinburgh Law School's Old College building, has been undergoing a complete refurbishment in a three year project that started in January 2015.

As well as modernising the building, key architectural features that had been lost during previous refurbishment works in the 1970s are being restored, including the two main staircases, sconces and high ceilings. The facilities provided for the Law School include a magnificent new Law Library, a central reception area and a new feature staircase and lift to all floors.

The work has been carried out by Graham Construction, starting in November 2015 and scheduled for completion at the end of 2017. The Law School has relocated during the works and is scheduled to move back into Old College in January 2018.

The challenge

With extensive internal demolition and alterations being carried out, large volumes of dust were inevitable. Controlling this was a priority, not only to protect the health of workers on site, but also to prevent it impacting on members of the public; the building is in a busy part of Edinburgh, adjacent to the law courts and a popular museum.

Benefits of the RVT solution

- Dust captured closed to source
- Three layers of filtering for safe capture of harmful compounds
- Prevented dust escaping into busy public areas outside
- Kept air in this enclosed site clear and safe

Further information

Edinburgh University (site specifically set up to cover the project)

Graham Construction

The solution

The internal demolition and alterations, including the removal of an entire floor, required a solution whereby dust was effectively filtered, rather than extracted to outside. Three of RVT's Dustmasters were brought in. These are self-contained dust filtration units that can easily be moved around on their casters to wherever the dust is being generated at any given moment. In addition, the first of the Dustmasters' three filters, which captures the majority of the dust particles, can simply be washed and re-used rather than needing replacement, saving time and money. By siting a capture hood close to the source of each dust-producing activity, the dust was routed through the three levels of filtering, up to HEPA level.