

# THE SENSE OF A SEA-CHANGE

Britain's coastal resorts boast a great tradition of quirky architecture, from Nash's Brighton pavilion to the great Victorian piers. At the seaside, architects let their hair down just as much as the trippers did. Sadly, much of this heritage of holiday escapism has been eroded by time and tide to be replaced by bland and featureless glitz.

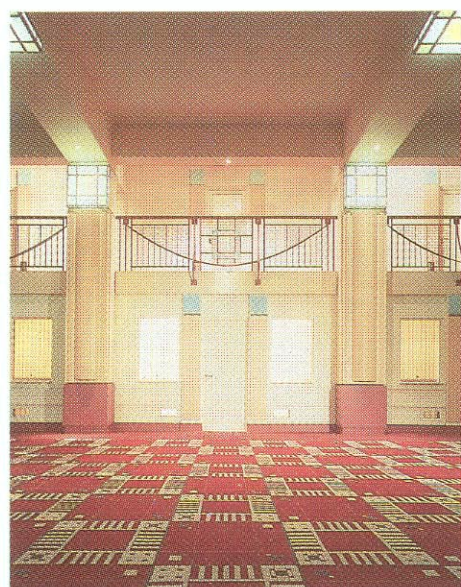
With his scheme for the interior refurbishment of Blackpool's Winter Gardens, architect David Quigley has restored the original otherworldliness of a complex whose theatrical character was first created in the '30s by unemployed set designers from Pinewood studios.

Quigley was responsible for the restyling and reshaping of several of the building's key spaces, including the Floral Hall, the ballroom foyer, the Rotunda, two entrances and a central Arena. To each he has brought a joyful sense of fun and originality usually absent from the leisure design mainstream. In the building's central Rotunda, for example, he has replaced the drab 'North Sea' greys and greens with a vibrant colour scheme for walls and a patterned floor in hard-wearing rubber terrazzo.

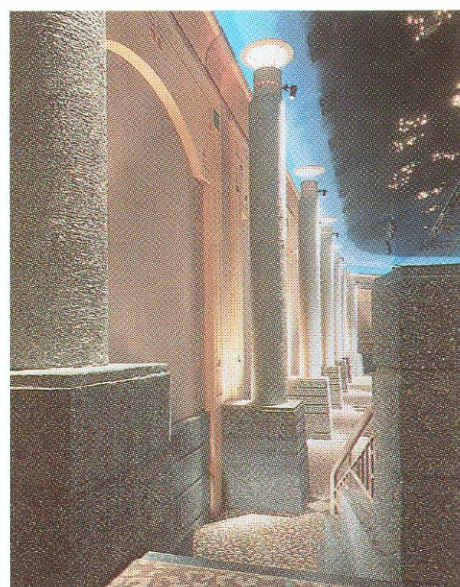
Quigley's *pièce de résistance* is the new Arena, which serves as conference centre, exhibition hall and disco. Here the architect has demolished the existing fabric to create a vast space whose dark, curved ceiling creates the feel of a night-time sky. Beneath its twinkling star lights sits a grand staircase whose symmetrical flights would make the perfect setting for a Busby Berkeley musical.



GERALD McLEAN



2



3

1 A fairground colour scheme jollifies the grand Rotunda at the end of the main thoroughfare. 2 Loud carpet covers the floor of the Church Street entrance. 3 Seashells mixed into the render add a maritime touch to walls and columns of the Arena. 4 Bold geometric patterns on floor and ceiling of the seafront foyer. 5 The Arena's palatial staircase could double as a Hollywood set.



4



5