



Builder: Kane Construction
Installer: BMG Building
Product: Autex Acoustic Timber™ Groove V1 in Tasmanian Oak

Project Name: Capalaba State College Hall, Brisbane, Qld
Architect: Cottey Parker Architects in collaboration with JSTN Architects
Photographer: Logan Dodds

Acoustic Timber™
 transforms Capalaba
 sports complex





Background

The Capalaba State College Sports Complex was born from a vision to bridge the gap between the college's junior and senior campuses, and to provide a state-of-the-art facility that could serve both the school and the wider community. Commissioned by the Queensland Department of Education and created by the architectural collaboration between Cottee Parker Architects and JSTN Architects, the new edifice was expertly brought to life by BMG Building & Constructions and Kane Construction in just over six months.

The overall ambition for the project was to create two modern precincts: an innovative learning centre, and a sporting and recreational facility spanning a staggering 3,500 m². "In terms of the sports building, the college wanted to ensure that the precinct would service the surrounding community," explains Justin Giovenco, Director of Brisbane-based JSTN Architects. As such, the magnificent new complex was designed to include large sporting courts, full-size performance areas, GLA spaces, theatre spots and seating.

Challenge

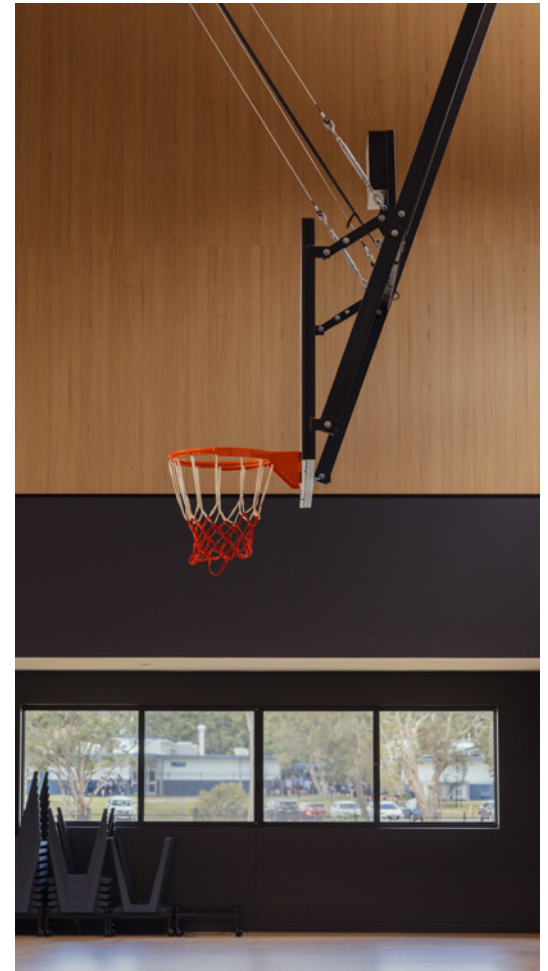
This ambitious project presented several challenges. The most significant was the acoustic treatment of the vast, cavernous space designed to accommodate a range of sporting and recreational activities. The hall's expansive dimensions and high ceilings posed a significant acoustic challenge, creating an environment prone to excessive reverberation and echo, which could severely impact the sound quality during sporting events and performances. "These types of spaces require robust acoustic treatment that cannot be ceiling-suspended, as it needs to remain clear for sports use," Justin explains.

Additionally, the design vision focused on a warm timber aesthetic, making it crucial for the selected wall and ceiling products to feature a wood grain finish that would blend seamlessly with the laminate timber-look flooring.

The project team needed a solution that could effectively absorb sound without compromising the visual aesthetics or interfering with sporting activities. Furthermore, it was crucial for the chosen solution to align with the project's commitment to creating a healthy, sustainable, and enduring environment for future generations.



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Solution

The Acoustic Timber™ panels in a stunning shade of Tasmanian Oak proved to be the ideal solution. Autex Acoustics' signature product is designed to realistically imitate timber, while ensuring an outstanding performance. "The panels were the perfect choice because of their durability, excellent sound absorption, and warm, natural aesthetic," Justin explains. "The wood grain finish coupled with a groove detail throughout each panel allowed us to deliver a realistic timber look and feel the college was after, while benefiting the space from a functional point of view."

Justin adds that while timber cladding would also be able to deliver the same aesthetic, it wouldn't be able to match the acoustic performance of the panels. "Timber doesn't lend itself particularly well to these types of cavernous, open spaces because

of its shiny, raw face," he says. "The sound ends up bouncing around."

This certainly isn't the case with Autex's Acoustic Timber™ panels. In fact, their acoustic performance and neutral beauty are some of the elements the project team received lots of positive feedback on. "We had only done one wall on the far side of the hall and maybe a couple of rows of panels on the ceiling, but you could walk through there talking, and as soon as you go to the panels, the sound would be dampened," recalls Brice Gifkins the Managing Director of BMG Building & Construction Services. He adds that everyone he brought to the site was impressed by the panels' exceptional aesthetic, thinking it was timber. "And I'd say: 'That's not timber. They're Autex panels,'" he says. "They'd be amazed."



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Brice adds that, in his opinion, Autex Acoustic Timber™ beats wood in every way. “It’s quicker and easier to install, comes with a Group 1 fire rating, and there’s no maintenance required,” he says. “Plus, you get the acoustic properties.”

In addition, the panels themselves are low in VOC and carbon neutral. The product’s finish is digitally printed onto the panel surface with a safe, water-based, UV-cured ink. This combination of qualities enabled the architects to not only elevate the environmental profile of the project, but also create a healthier space for the community.

“The nature of these spaces means they’re often fairly void of ventilation and light,” he says. “And so, the VOC spec of the product was essential to us, and we wanted to funnel in as much natural light as possible without creating performance or glare issues. Because timber tends to have a glossed, shiny finish, the light can bounce off and get augmented. The Autex panels, on the other hand, are more textural and softer, so the light doesn’t reflect in the same way.”

Justin adds that product specification happened fairly early on in the process, and he appreciated Autex’s support throughout that the product. “They worked very closely with the project

from the conceptual stage all the way through to delivery,” he says. “And that is yet another reason why we chose Autex Acoustics to do this wonderful project.”

Brice shares the sentiment. “Working with Autex Acoustics is always a pleasure,” he says. “We’ve worked with them on many projects before, and we will continue to put them forward. Their team is very professional and a real joy to collaborate with.”

From a vision of bridging campuses to a reality that serves an entire community, the Capalaba State College Sports Complex is a testament to architectural ingenuity and the transformative power of acoustic solutions. Acoustic Timber™ Groove panels played a pivotal role in turning a challenging acoustic environment into a versatile, functional, and beautiful space that will inspire and serve the community for generations to come.

“It was as perfect a project as I could have ever asked to be involved in,” Brice sums up. And this “perfect project” – the largest of this kind for Autex Acoustics, too – leaves a lasting legacy, proving that with careful planning, innovative materials and collaborative ethos, we can create spaces that inspire, connect, and endure.



