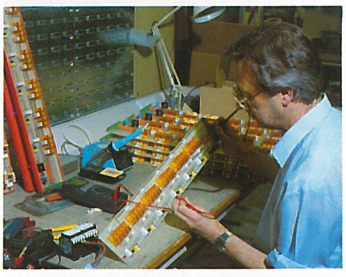
SPECIAL ENGINEERING GIVE HOISTS A LIFT

A small corner of Strand's Isleworth facility is dedicated to turning a few simple words of a consultant's specification into a client's desires. Instructions like, ".. all faceplates to be finished in brass," or, "existing auxiliary controls to be accommodated in new Galaxy desk...," and, "studio equipped with 150 self-climbing hoists with two-group fail-safe hoist control system," regularly arrive at Alan Buchan's Special Engineering department, where they are translated into brass faceplates, custom Galaxy panels and complete studio hoists systems.

Special Engineering Department has the world at its feet, and the total resources of Strand in its hands. Custom projects often involve close co-operation between specialist engineering facilities in Isleworth, and Strand's factories in Rome, Kirkcaldy and Los Angeles, while maintaining liaison with the local Strand sales operation responsible for the customer contact.



Roy Morgan wiring custom 6-way hoist control pcbs.

Designing a geographic mimic panel – Alan Buchan and CAD

When Strand introduced its studio hoist range in 1990, Alan and his team were ready with all the experience needed to produce custom controls. He immediately saw the opportunities to use standard control desk components to benefit hoist control design. By definition, hoist controls are special (since every studio is different), and the controls are designed and made to suit the number of hoists and their layout in the studio.

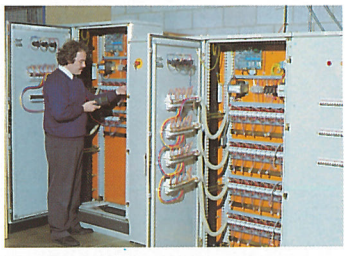
The design developed for Ulster TV, and subsequently reproduced for studios in Bahrain, Nigeria, and for MMC in Germany, is based on a standard Gemini lighting control backup panel. This control is used as an electronic multiplexed 384 hoist into 8 group patching control, where a microprocessor selects channels and records them as groups.

Testing the completed hoist contactor cabinets prior to despatch.

Alan Buchan is quick to emphasise the importance of safety. "Ensuring safe operation is paramount in the design of hoist controls, so we are using the microprocessor electronics for the *selection* of the hoists only. Movement signals are given through a fail-safe electro-mechanical system."

Part of this development included hoist contactor cabinets, designed with custom 6-way hoist control pcbs, which can be expanded in modules for any size installation. A geographic mimic shows a ground plan of the studio, with the hoists superimposed and a mimic LED which lights to show which hoist will move when the up/down buttons are pressed.

But there is no such thing as a 'standard' special. Alan's current project for MMC in Germany includes a novel variation to the design - in place of the centralised contactor cabinets, the power switching contactors are situated above each hoist in the studio, with a distributed network of demultiplex units. ✍



You asked for it - now it's arrived. The European stage luminaire range is first step in Strand's global product CAD library.

STRAND CAD

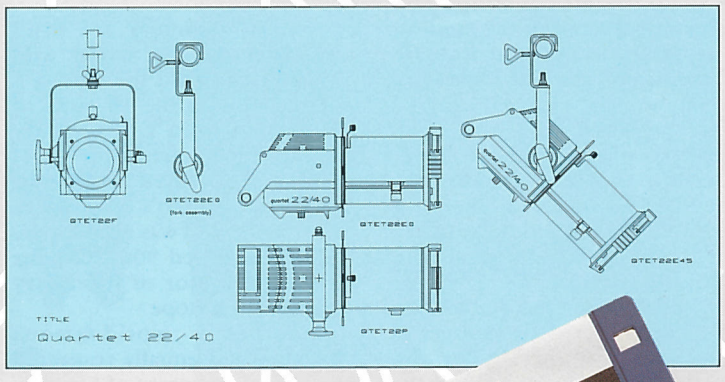
All over the world, designers, consultants and architects are hanging up their lighting stencils and drawing pens, and swivelling their ergonomic gas-strut supported chairs towards the computer keyboard.

Strand has risen to their challenge to supply luminaire outlines, and has created detailed drawings full-size in AutoCAD®. The drawings are available in both AutoCAD® and .DXF file format for those using other drawing packages, although with no common .DXF interpretation, the diagrams may need some 'customisation' before use.

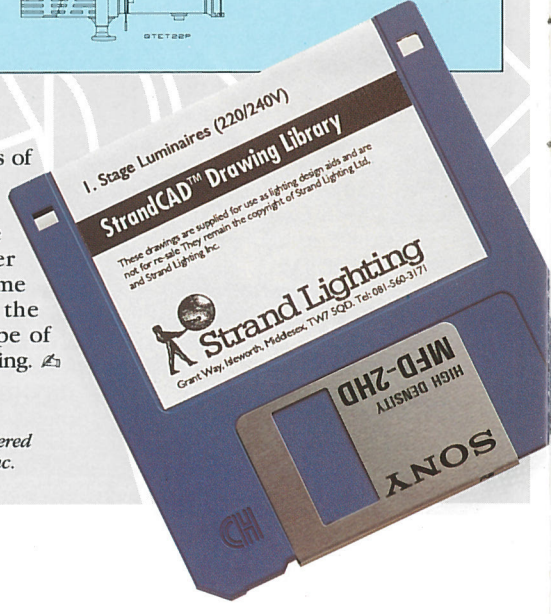
Strand CAD is initially geared towards MSDOS users, but the Macintosh fraternity will be glad to hear that we haven't forgotten them, although the Mac versions will follow a little later.

The first release of CAD drawings covers the European stage and architectural luminaire range comprising Minispot, Minim, Quartet, Hilite, Prelude, Cantata, Optique, Alto, Punchlite, Beamlite, Coda and Nocturne. Each product in the range is drawn separately, and as shown here, there are four files per luminaire; three elevations plus an additional elevation with separate body and fork.

All drawings are compressed on 3.5" 1.44 Mb floppy disks, and a custom front-end script assists in installing the files required. All diagrams remain the copyright of Strand Lighting Ltd and Strand Lighting Inc., and there is a nominal fee which includes licencing and future update information. The Strand CAD Library will be expanded with the North American stage luminaires, Quartzcolor studio range, hoists and pantographs, control desks and dimmers.



For further details of the StrandCAD library, please fill in the appropriate section of the order form, giving the name and version of the software and the type of computer you are using. ✍



AutoCAD® is a registered trademark of Autodesk, Inc.