

72 brick. The official opening is on Oct 24, and although the cutting rooms can be occupied it will be a month or two before dubbing theatre technical tests are finished and the first client can move in.

The theatre is decorated in what Humphreys says he can only describe as "carpets the pinker shade of mushroom with apricotish drapes".

"Nothing too jazzy," he adds. All the equipment in the theatre is new, including the screens by Harkness, the mixing desk, recorders and reproducers by Mitsubishi Quad 8 and the JBL speakers.

"I chose the JBLs because my friends and colleagues in Los Angeles advised me that practically all of LA has changed to them. The Academy Theatre has them, so do Universal, Warners, Goldwyn and Fox, and it seemed to me this was an area I could standardise in."

The speakers have been at Twickenham for nine months now, but the mixing desk is a new arrival and will take about seven weeks to test, although two studio staff have been at

the manufacturer in LA to start tests and training to cut down on the time needed on site.

The testing process involves ensuring that the recorders give a known response, basically that they're flat and that there's no peaks and troughs. The desk has to be checked to make sure that the signal-to-noise ratio is as low as it possibly can be, that when it's opened up with no sound going through there isn't a roar like the sea.

The tests are often a formality, says Humphreys. "I expect all the equipment to stand up to the specifications, but nevertheless you've got to test them before you accept the product. Always with new equipment there's bugs, nothing that isn't correctable, but it can take time."

He's hoping that the new theatre will be fully underway by December, and there's a chance that Jack Gold's TV film *Escape From Sobibor* will be the first to use it, although the honour might go to John Boorman's *Hope And Glory*.

Among the other new films booked to go into Twickenham's theatres are John

Irvin's *Hamburger Hill*, produced by Larry De Waay, Lewis Gilberts *Quigley, John Schlesinger's The Believer*, Mike Hodges' *Prayer For The Dying* and Richard Attenborough's *Asking For Trouble*. Humphreys has worked on all of Sir Richard's productions (except for *The Young Winston*, which was dubbed at Shepperton) and it was for his *Gandhi* and *A Chorus Line* that the sound team including Humphreys received Oscar nominations.

When the new complex is up and running there will be a total staff of 18 permanently attached to Twickenham's sound department.

Humphreys' assistant Robin O'Donoghue will take charge of running the older theatre and Humphreys will reign in the new theatre, "where my assistant and colleague is in fact my son. I started him off here, then he went off in his own right to dubbing theatres in London and did the Polanski picture, *Pirates*, in Paris and now he's agreed to come back and work alongside me. Nepotism rules."

● Gerry Humphreys tops off the new block

