

Client: Hickton
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Hickton Helps in Walsall College Move

Hickton, one of the UK's leading Clerk of Works practices, is currently providing its services for the regeneration and renewal of Walsall College. The new Wisemore Campus site on Littleton Street West will form the heart of the Walsall First project, a £750 million-plus public and private sector investment regeneration of the Borough, which is driven by the Walsall Regeneration Company. The regeneration programme is expected to create around 5,500 new jobs, plus 1,600 new homes over the next 10-15 years.

Hickton is an award winning ISO9001 Clerk of Works practice that provides highly qualified and experienced professionals to ensure that construction projects are completed right first time. Its goal is to offer clients 'confidence in construction', which means ensuring the project meets exacting design requirements. The company has professionals based throughout the UK who provide their services on all types of construction and refurbishment projects.

Working with project management company Davis Langdon, Hickton is commissioned to provide Clerk of Work services on all aspects of the new campus building including groundworks, steelwork, as well as fit-out and completion. Hickton's overall aim is to ensure that the building achieves the client's objectives in terms of both adherence to design and specification as well as timescales.

The steelwork itself presented particular problems for the contractors because of the sheer size of the main college building, which extends over 145m. It has a curved steel centre section that connects the two wings. Within the curved section is a glass-fronted atrium that rises to a height of 21m and its 22m wide glass screen will form part of the central focus of the college. Installation of the steelwork was approached by constructing the tips of the two wings before building the central atrium and then joining the whole structure together.

Hickton worked closely with the steelwork contractor to ensure that all elements of the build were constructed exactly to plan. The approach required meticulous attention to detail to ensure accurate installation.



An idea of the sheer scale of the task can be gained when you consider that the pre-cambered beams connecting the two wings were over 20 metres long and weighed around seven tons each. Once in place, they will support the curved roof structure. Exacting standards were also required on the steelwork sections to ensure effectiveness of the movement joints.

Accuracy of construction also had to be maintained, as the only means of providing structural stability for the building was through bracing at the stairwell and lift cores. This is because the building has windows along its entire length to let in as much light as possible.

Dave Critchlow, Site Manager for main contractor Shepherd Construction, explains: "We really appreciated the expertise of Hickton on this project because there are so many curves and intricate details that needed to be accurately followed. Having Hickton on site means that we are confident there will be no surprises during later stages of the build, which could prove costly and time consuming."

The new College building will provide a series of highly equipped state-of-the-art academies for students regionally and nationally. Work completed on the project in May 2009.

Guy Carson, Project Manager at Davis Langdon, explains: "Having Hickton on site was a huge benefit as they ensured adherence to specification and gave us advanced notice of any issues, which helps us keep the whole project on schedule."