

Case Study: Incubator Building, Alconbury, Hunts

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Photos: Tim George

Glazing from Kawneer features on the first building of Alconbury Enterprise Campus

Featuring Kawneer's AA[®]100 curtain walling and series 190 doors, the landmark, multi-award winning anchor building on an emerging enterprise park in Alconbury, Huntingdonshire has achieved a BREEAM "Very good" rating.

Building: Incubator Building

Location: Alconbury

Architect: AHMM and Feilden+Mawson

Main Contractor: Kier Construction

Installer: Drayton Windows

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Kawneer systems control the view

The landmark anchor building, designed by AHMM as executive architects, on an emerging enterprise park has achieved a BREEAM "Very good" rating with help from Kawneer. AA®100 curtain walling and series 190 doors feature on the £2.5million Incubator - the first building to be erected in a 20-year project which is transforming a former airfield in Huntingdonshire into 3 million square foot of commercial hi-tec business space, 5,000 homes and a range of transport infrastructure, community facilities and 700 acres of green space. The airfield is being developed by owners Urban&Civic.

The zone-drained curtain walling has been used on an enclosed but unheated double-height glazed gallery and as the external fabric to a four-storey tower containing meeting rooms. Here, the curtain walling continues above the roof deck to form a transparent balustrade to the rooftop viewing area. It is complemented by Kawneer's heavy-duty commercial entrance doors throughout the 1,400m² building, installed by specialist sub-contractor Drayton Windows for main contractor Kier Construction.

David Kean, senior associate of design and build architects Feilden+Mawson, said the Kawneer curtain wall system created a highly-transparent double-height volume to the glazed gallery space which enabled natural light to filter into the office spaces while creating a visually interesting space which encourages the use of the ground floor cafe and informal meeting spaces at first-floor for social interaction between tenant businesses.

He said: "The Kawneer curtain wall system achieved a slim visual profile for the vertical emphasis across the two and four-storey spans. It was also able to integrate slim blanking profiles at the quoins and supply air intakes at low level for the smoke ventilation system to the glazed gallery which blend in well with the overall RAL colour of the framing. The system also enabled complementary entrance, emergency egress and maintenance access doors to be integrated within the curtain wall framework. The specification of aluminium curtain walling also assisted with achieving target scores for the BREEAM credits.

"One of the most difficult areas to detail was the curtain wall and motorised, glazed sliding access hatch to the rooftop viewing area at the head of the four-storey spiral stair within the tower. This was where the benefit of the supply chain partnership approach comes into play, where the curtain wall sub-contractor was able to assist with the development of bespoke flashings that could be integrated with the weather seals and cappings to disparate systems."

The glazed elements are a foil to the two-storey, black larch cladding of the main office accommodation with punched openings for timber/aluminium composite double-glazed windows.

David added: "Control of the detailed interfaces between the Kawneer curtain wall system and adjacent larch cladding and single-ply polymeric roof membranes was required to ensure the transitions between one plane and another did not become visually heavy or obtrusive, detracting from the elegance and visually deceptive simplicity of the design. There are a number of proprietary products available from Kawneer to assist with abutment and roof flashing details. Again the benefit of the sub-contract supply chain was evident here when developing bespoke flashings that were suitable and appropriate for the design."

The RAL colour used for Kawneer's curtain wall was also used for the composite windows to the office areas and matched the black stain of the larch cladding to ensure a co-ordinated use of external colour treatments to create a visually cohesive design.

David concluded: "Kawneer have also met with us to discuss the importance of supply chain support to projects where the correct specification of curtain wall and glazing systems are critical in the early stages of design, particularly where specific performance and aesthetic criteria need to be achieved."

Please contact our Architectural Services Team if you have a project you would like to discuss: Tel: 01928 502604 / Email: kawneerAST@arconic.com

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