

Case Study: Vijay Patel Building, De Montfort University Leicester

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Glazing systems by Kawneer feature on a state of the art new university complex

Kawneer's AA®100 curtain walling with integral ventilators (many being mechanically-operated), AA®720 top-hung casement windows and series 190 heavy-duty commercial entrance doors were specified by CPMG Architects for De Montfort University's £42 million Fletcher Complex (now Vijay Patel Building).

Building: Vijay Patel Building

Location: De Montfort University, Leicester

Architect: CPMG Architects

Main Contractor: Balfour Beatty

Installer: APiC UK

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Kawneer helps CPMG achieve a “critical” design

Kawneer systems were chosen for both the new-build and refurbishment elements of the Vijay Patel Building for their “proven track record” and the company’s flexibility. Achieving BREEAM “Excellent” standards, the 6,300m² concrete-framed Arts (formerly Fletcher) Tower, a city landmark dating back to the 1960s when it was described as “truly revolutionary” features Kawneer’s curtain walling with 50mm sightlines to the east and west facades, including integrated photovoltaic brise soleil fins to the west elevation.

Kawneer’s AA[®]100 curtain walling also features with integrated fixed brise soleil screens on the south elevation of the 15,900m² new-build concrete-frame and curved on plan design wing, complemented by ribbons of Kawneer’s top-hung casement windows with feature colour spandrel panels on the north elevation. And it features again, with integrated fixed curved horizontal brise soleil fins, AA[®]720 mechanically-operated parallel opening vents and bottom-hung open-in ventilators, on the four storeys of the new-build “Sun Wah” pod which is faceted around the curved front face and tilted out at 75°, as well as the 3,300m² CLASP low-rise 1960s prefab light-gauge steel-framed building where it is the full-height glazing to the food courtyard elevation.

The four key areas of the complex are given their own identities by using subtly different cladding treatments. The six-storey new-build element is primarily clad in terracotta planks with lower levels finished in white rainscreen cladding, the terracotta’s warm tones helping it to sit comfortably in its campus surround of red brick. The white rainscreen cladding is repeated around the former low-rise CLASP building, with a reference back to the terracotta of the new build. And the Arts Tower’s new façade is primarily the Kawneer curtain walling, with a background of white render and feature details in bronze cladding which is also used to clad the new-build “pod”.

CPMG associate Dawn Briggs said: “We needed a curtain walling system that had a proven track record that we could trust and a company that was prepared to work with us to develop the proposals. The glazing to the pod was the key architectural feature and with the façade leaning out it was critical we found a supplier who could achieve this.”

The redevelopment of the complex presented the university with an unparalleled opportunity to transform a significant site within the city. The proposals form a critical phase in the university’s long-term masterplan which is built around an ambitious vision to reconnect the city centre with the River Soar by creating a series of linked public open spaces through the campus. By pairing these landscaped spaces with purpose-designed and creatively remodelled facilities, the result is a series of urban spaces of exceptional high quality.

A large part of the complex was demolished, leaving only the tower and low-rise buildings next to The Gateway. The new accommodation includes a vibrant spectrum of art and design schools including the School of Architecture, School of Design, School of Humanities, and School of Visual and Performing Arts.

CPMG’s design was realised with a sophisticated BIM model which brought together the design geometry of the consultants and the principal sub-contractors including APiC UK who installed the Kawneer systems.

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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