

Silchester Estate, Kensington, London



Challenge:

Whilst Ibstock Kevington supplied in excess of 270 precast concrete brick faced lintels to the project, there were key areas of the build where this solution was inappropriate, due to the location and complexity of the soffit or the span and depth of the opening. A lightweight steel alternative was required that offered installation benefits and greater design flexibility.

Solution:

Working closely with the architect and main contractor, bespoke soffit and lintel solutions were designed and manufactured for these areas using the innovative Nexus system. A large suspended brick soffit at the main entrance, too heavy and complex for a traditional precast concrete solution, was achieved using Nexus soffit units – a two-part solution that combines a high integrity stainless steel MDC brickwork support system from brick support specialist, Ancon, fixed directly to the structural frame with Ibstock Kevington's brick faced soffit units, to produce a lightweight solution. A further bespoke deep corner soffit was supplied for the community hub along with two 8-metre long Nexus stretcher bond lintels, which, with an available height of just 75mm, also could not be achieved in precast concrete. The Nexus units were prefabricated off-site to precise specifications and faced with Ibstock brick slips from the same batch as the main brickwork, ensuring a flawless texture and colour match to the main façade brickwork. Being 70% lighter than a precast concrete alternative, the Nexus units had the added benefit that contractor, RI Works, could simply lift the units into position without the use of mechanical lifting equipment and, using simple built-in vertical and horizontal adjustment, could perfectly align the units with the coursing of the main brickwork. The result is a unique and striking building, carefully designed and constructed to sit alongside the established blocks, that will serve as a benchmark for the ongoing regeneration of North Kensington's residential social housing area.

Architect: Haworth Tompkins Architects
