

Student Accommodation, Leicester



Challenge:

The position of the site at the entrance to the city centre and in the foreground of views towards historic properties in the surrounding streetscape, dictated that the development would significantly impact both the city and the character of the Conservation Area. As such, it had to respond appropriately in terms of design, materials and massing to the wider expanse of the ring road to the west and the finer, smaller scale grain of the historic Old Town area immediately to the east, whilst providing a contemporary and sustainable solution to increasing demand for student accommodation in the city. To compound the challenge, planners also requested that part of the original bus depot façade be retained as part of the works.

Solution:

Set around a shared central courtyard that provides access through the site and balances soft and hard landscape to offer an adaptable social focus for residents, the accommodation is distributed across four buildings – a four/five-storey block (A) at the corner of Peacock Lane, Southgates, a six-storey block at the corner of Southgates and Friar Lane (D) and two four/six-storey blocks forming the main frontage to Southgates (B and C). Incorporated into the frontage of Block A, the old bus depot entrance façade adds character to the development and links to the site's former use. All blocks are realised in the same contemporary style using a palette of materials that harmonise the development within the existing vernacular and reflect Maber's fabric-first approach to energy management. Above a Fairface Ivory masonry plinth storey, which delivers strength to the design at ground floor level, Ibstock Brick's Commercial Red bricks have been chosen to establish an aesthetic and textural dialogue with the historic street scene and particularly with the retained bus depot entrance façade and the Georgian-period St. Martin's House on the opposite side of Peacock Lane. The external materials, and in particular the choice of Ibstock Brick's Commercial Red brick, were confirmed following lengthy liaison and debate with the City Council's Conservation Officer. Framing deeply recessed fenestration that punctuates the elevations, the stretcher-bonded waterstruck brickwork reinforces an air of permanence and provides robust support for curtain walling at principal corners, emphasising the verticality of the scheme and helping to reduce



Ibstock
At the heart of building

CASE STUDY

overall mass through strategic views.

Architect: Maber Architects

Brick:

Commercial Red