

Teesside University, National Horizon Centre



Representing an investment of more than £22m, the launch of Teesside University's National Horizon Centre in Spring 2019 marked a significant step forward in the UK's bioscience research capabilities. The Centre houses a state-of-the-art, purpose built facility, offering a national hub of research, education and collaboration for Britain's bioscience sector. These core values are reflected in the building's aesthetic, which proudly sets it apart as a laboratory like no other. Fairhurst Architects, the studio behind the Centre, designed the space to have warmth, light and air, while employing a neo-classical design to afford the Centre the academic gravitas to be expected from a science facility of national importance. Harnessing the Centre's excellent transport links, Fairhurst Architects maximised the project's budget to create a structure which is both imposing and blends seamlessly with neighbouring buildings. Because of the site's prime location, architects had to consider how to make the building instantly recognisable – achieved in a number of discernible, and subtler, ways.

Solution:

Chief among these is the use of brick in the project. Built at an angle to the street in order to immediately catch the eye, the architects made clever use of Ibstock's Linear Riven Blue bricks, the smooth, glazed finish of which contrasts handsomely with the striking Goosewing Grey roof. What's more, the bricks complement the colour of the neighbouring Centre for Professional and Executive Development (CPED), without compromising any of its individuality. Geoff Brookes, Specification Account Manager at Ibstock Brick, explains: Ibstock's Linear range are perfect for a project like this, where establishing uniqueness and character is a key requirement from specifiers. Alongside our Linear range, we also utilised a layer of natural blue impression bricks around the base; these textures break up the long elevation to provide extra articulation and rhythm to the building. The use of a human scale material, like brick, was central to the architect's concept, which strove to emphasise the relationship between mankind and science. Blending modern, large-scale buildings with the use of a rectangular block that has been used for hundreds of years, reflected the National Horizons Centre's overriding aspiration: to use bioscience to improve life for mankind.



Ibstock
At the heart of building

CASE STUDY

Architect: Fairhursts Design Group, Manchester

Brick:

Ibstock Linear Smooth and Riven Blue