

East Coast College, Main Tower, Teaching Block, Lowestoft Campus

CONTRACT VALUE
£1.39m

BUILDING
Main Tower, Teaching block

PROJECT DURATION
Feb 2020 to
September 2020

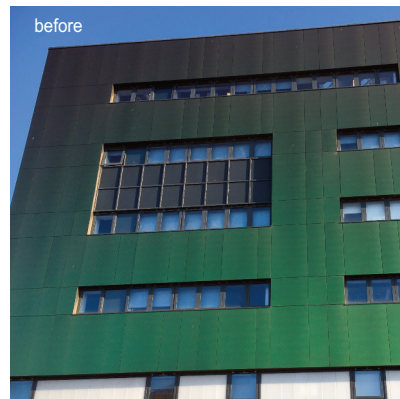
CLIENT
East Coast College,
Adri Van der Colff,
Project Manager



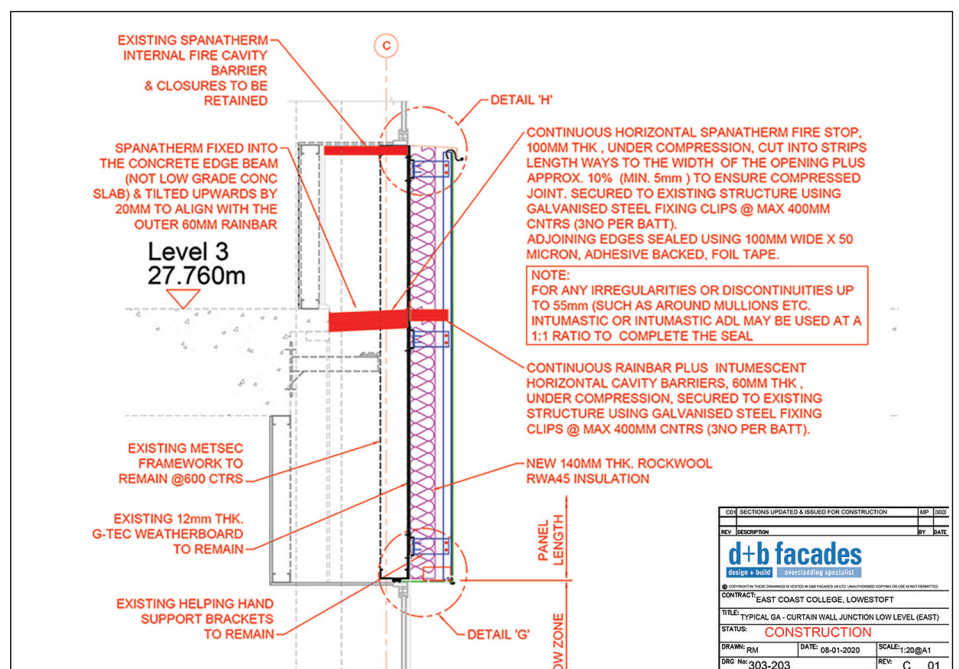
“We are grateful to the d+b facades team who have managed to pull out all the stops to ensure that this fire-safety project could continue safely and smoothly despite the very difficult conditions faced in the industry and across the whole UK. As a result, the project completed on time over the summer. That meant that the new student cohort was able to occupy a firesafe building when they returned, and the campus had a fresher and “new” appearance to start the new academic year.”

PROJECT SCOPE

Originally built in 1961, the six storey block was subsequently clad in ACM panels in 2014. The project comprised removal of the cladding and replacement with an A1 Vitradual cladding system. Existing windows and curtain walling remained *in situ*.



Section of a General Arrangement drawing for the system as installed.



d+b facades started the re-clad project just before the first lock down.

Background

The building was constructed in 1961 and comprises 5,300 m² of mixed teaching space across most of the College's curriculum. The building is 23m high from ground level and comprises six storeys. In 2014, ACM cladding was installed to extend the lifespan of the deteriorated concrete frame, improve energy efficiency and modernise the general appearance of the building which is highly visible on the town's skyline.

After the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy, a panel of the cladding material was tested by BRE. The results showed that the ACM material used failed combustion tests for buildings in excess of 18m.

The College subsequently obtained funding from the Department for Education to remove and replace the flammable cladding and insulation and replace it with new insulation and cladding which met current fire safety standards, future-proofing it against potential more stringent regulations in the future.



Programme

The project progressed well and was delivered slightly ahead of programme and comfortably within budget.

Despite COVID-19 and Building Controls' requirement that all fire-breaks between the cladding envelope and the original subframe had to be replaced (a requirement not known about when the programme was originally agreed), the completion date was approximately one month ahead of schedule.



Detailed documentary photographic and video evidence was collated by d+b facades for sign-off by the College's project manager, Building Control and Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service, who were unable to visit the site due to restrictions on movement.





d+b facades used their purchasing power and long-standing relationships with key suppliers to resolve any potential supply or delivery issues due to the covid lockdowns.



The impact of COVID-19 on the project

A decision was taken on 23rd March 2020, the day after lockdown was announced, by the executive leadership team of East Coast College to allow d+b facades to continue working on the project. This was based on d+b facades' reassurance to the College that, in line with government guidance, construction work could continue, especially external works, provided that projects were able to abide by Public Health England's social distancing guidelines.

In addition, East Coast College received guidance from the Department for Education, who funded the project, that there was no reason to discontinue essential fire-safety works provided that personal safety guidance such as hygiene measures and the avoidance of close personal contact could be adhered to. d+b facades put strict health and safety rules in place for site operatives to ensure that social distancing, handwashing and health screening were observed. Guidance was given to site operatives which was reinforced and updated through regular toolbox talks.

The College expected that d+b

facades might face some supply chain issues that could cause a potential delay due to the fact that builders' merchants, waste recycling facilities and factories were closed immediately after the lockdown. However, d+b facades was able to use their purchasing power and long-standing relationships with key suppliers to resolve any potential supply or delivery issues. All key suppliers committed to staying open, especially the cladding manufacturer in Scotland. d+b facades arranged with the College that most of the material could be delivered and safely stored in a warehouse in order to significantly reduce the risk of the project halting due to a lack of access to materials. As a result, the COVID-19 outbreak did not have a detrimental effect on the project. In fact, the team was ahead of schedule. Additional installers diverted from other projects and working hours extended in the absence of a 'live' working environment.

Just before Easter all combustible ACM panels and combustible insulation had been removed from the building. As a result, the building was deemed firesafe which was a watershed moment in the project's development. The installation of the new non-combustible insulation and

new fire-stops swiftly proceeded from this point.

Detailed documentary photographic and video evidence was collated by d+b facades for sign-off by the College's project manager, Building Control and Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service, who were unable to visit the site due to restrictions on movement. This gave the College confidence that the building met the most stringent fire regulations.

KEY OUTCOMES

Building meets the most stringent fire regulations

Future-proofed against changes to regulatory standards

d+b facades' flexibility enabled completion ahead of programme

Robust supply chain ensured continuity of supply

Contemporary quality accommodation for generations to come