

Queen's Building, Bristol Royal Infirmary,  
University Hospitals Bristol NHS  
Foundation Trust

**d+b facades**  
OVERCLADDING SPECIALISTS









“ The existing building’s concrete has got some problems. We are tidying it up and making sure it is safe. The new system will protect the structure underneath so it will not deteriorate. And there will be better natural ventilation in the hospital when the windows are open. ”

**Andy Headdon**, Strategic Development Programme Director, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust



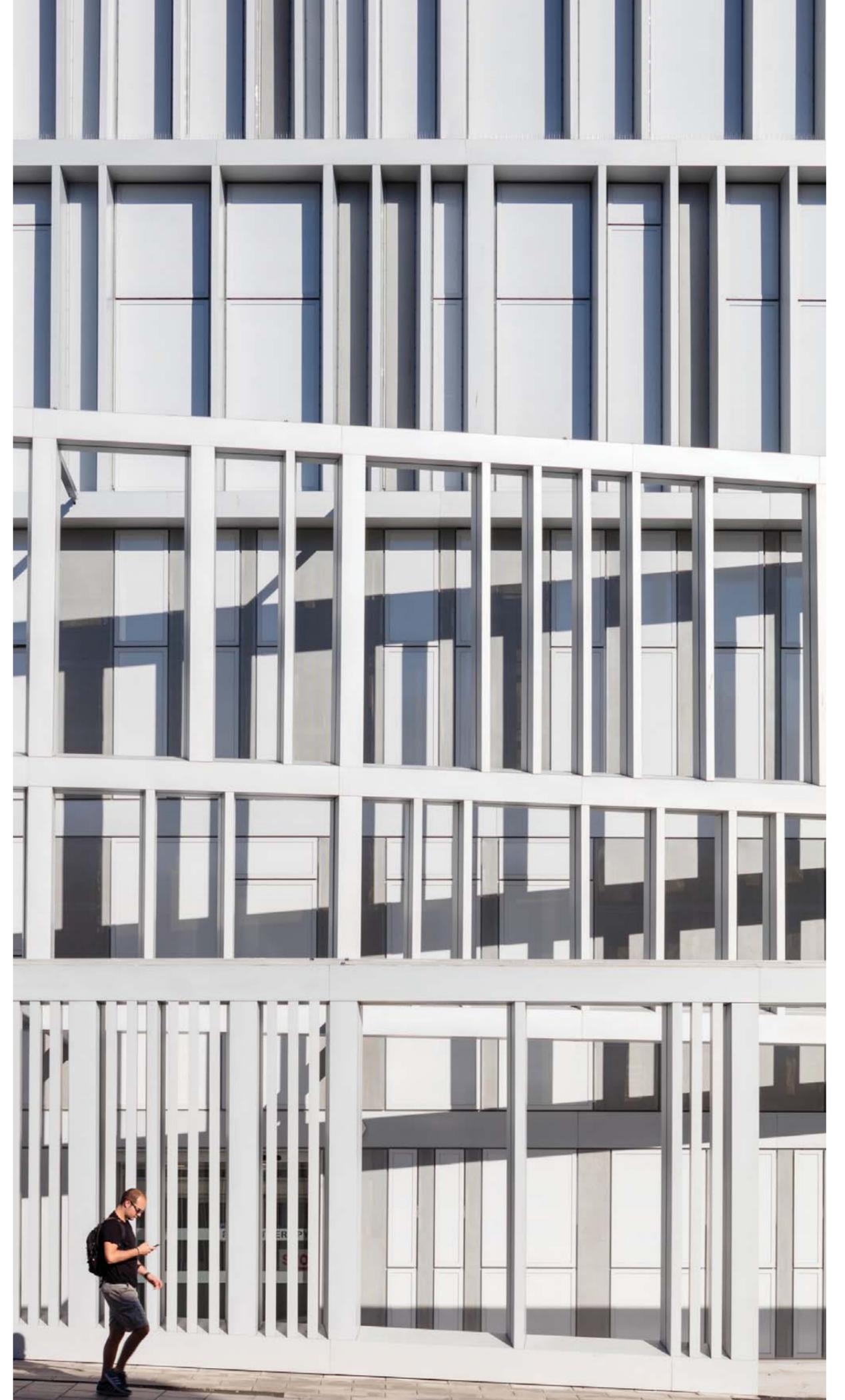
BRISTOL ROYAL INFIRMARY



UNIVERSITY

Bristol Royal









“ Many thanks to everyone for ensuring the windows on A604 were completed on time. They have made so much difference to the ward and the general wellbeing of staff and patients. ”

**Ann Parker**, Sister, Ward A604,  
Trauma and Orthopaedics





## Project background

The Queen's Building was built in the mid-60s. Over time it has been subject to an ongoing programme of internal refurbishment and modernisation but like many buildings from the same era has retained its original façade. Once voted the ugliest building in the city of Bristol, the existing façade provided little visual appeal, was thermally inefficient generating high carbon emissions, afforded limited natural ventilation/light and, with failing concrete, had become unsafe in places. When the appearance of the building was discussed with patients and visitors they responded that it gave the impression that the hospital was dirty.

In seeking a creative, cost-effective approach to solving these significant and

growing problems, the Trust approached arts and health consultancy Willis Newson for ideas. The solution embraced was an international design competition managed by Willis Newson on behalf of the Trust with the aim of creating a landmark building for Bristol that was welcoming and non-threatening to visitors/passers-by, which enhanced the local streetscape and public realm and reflected, through excellence in design, the Trust's reputation for clinical excellence.

Six national and international artists and architects were invited to submit proposals and the winner was "Veil" by Spanish architects Nieto Sobejano Architectos. Public consultation was undertaken to provide feedback on the competition

entries, with presentations in local shopping centres and in the media. The winning design was subsequently developed for construction with CODA Architects and comprised insulated aluminium rainscreen overcladding and high-performance windows, an integrated LED lighting installation and a new freestanding screen between the hospital building and the road to create a restful, open space 'garden'.

This was a challenging construction project requiring a specialist. d+b facades was appointed following a two-stage procurement process. Prior to commencement on-site, there was intensive and continuous design development with all parties working collaboratively involving the creation of mock-ups in order to achieve the stringent architectural and building performance requirements. The project had to be deliverable whilst the building was fully occupied and within cost and programme constraints. An innovative solution involving low opacity window film was required to maintain privacy and meet the architectural intent that "Veil" should have no visible windows whilst concurrently improving natural ventilation and internal light. The on-site programme commenced in May 2015 and completed 13 months later.

The results are stunning. Through high-quality, sustainable refurbishment of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, the Trust has raised the bar of what is achievable for dated buildings and set a magnificent example to other NHS Trusts. The Queen's Building now has a striking new, welcoming, energy-efficient façade which reflects the quality of

*"...our proposal did not intend to radically change the original image of the building, but rather to transform it following the same geometrical law which had generated it. We limited ourselves to wrap the existing grid with white aluminum profiles, thus solving the technical problems of the façade. Like a veil that adheres and separates from the skin, the new lattice display comes off the façade creating interstitial public spaces that suggest a new relationship between the hospital and its urban context. Façade and building enter a dialogue in which it is no longer easy to discern who is subject to who, the part or the whole."*

**Enrique Sobejano and Fuensanta Nieto,**

Nieto Sobejano Architectos S.L.P.

clinical services provided within. The façade protects the original building's fabric and meets present building regulations, future-proofing and extending the life of the building for generations to come.

The project has met all objectives and was delivered on time, within budget and with minimal disruption to building users. It is best summed-up by a nursing sister who said "it has made so much difference to the general well-being of staff and patients."

# Design and Design Development

Prior to commencement on-site, there was intensive and continuous design development with all parties working collaboratively involving the creation of mock-ups in order to achieve the stringent architectural and building performance requirements.



*Early design involved the use of metal mesh.*



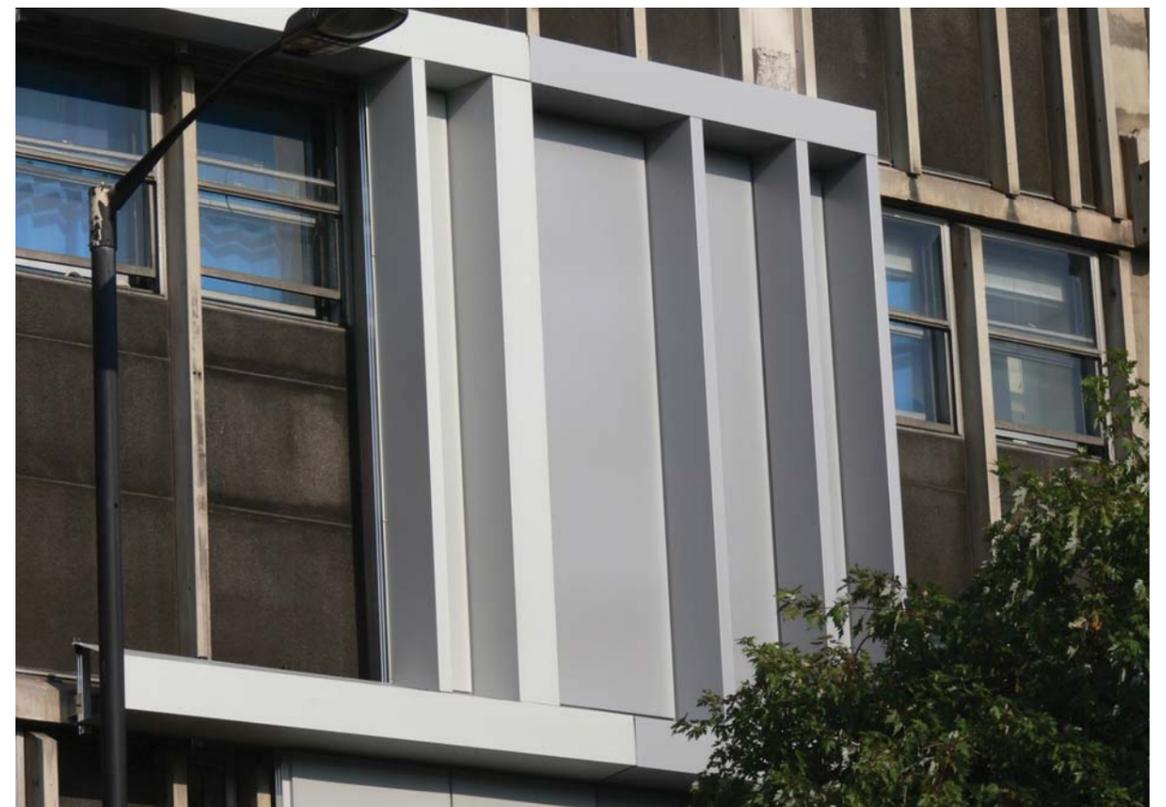
*This developed into applying film to the windows.*



*The final solution met the architectural intent that "Veil" should have no visible windows whilst meeting the performance requirement of transmittance of light internally.*



*Mock-up installed on the building.*





BRISTOL ROYAL INFIRMARY

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS BRISTOL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Bristol Royal Infirmary  
Main Entrance

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T 01980 654230 E mail@dbfacades.com www.dbfacades.com

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