

Considered craftsmanship delivers BREEAM Outstanding further education campus building

OSBORNE

“The sheer scale of LSE’s ambition and Osborne’s craftsmanship means that I can honestly say in my 25 years of working in development and construction I have never commissioned a building of this architectural quality and breath-taking uniqueness”

Julian Robinson, Director of Estates

PROJECT

London School of Economics
Saw Swee Hock Student Centre

CUSTOMER

London School of Economics

LOCATION

Holborn

CONTRACT

Two-stage traditional

COMPLETION

2014

VALUE

£25m

Issue

Osborne were appointed to design and construct the first new build for more than 40 years for the London School of Economics (LSE): a multi-purpose 7-storey student centre to house a wide range of learning and social facilities.

The project had multifaceted issues, both from the brief and from unexpected problems that arose during the project, which required a carefully considered design and involved a complex construction process.

- The client objective was to create a building that would transform the social experience of the students
- Site location: the building being situated on an occupied campus in a conservation area
- Structural limitations demonstrated the biggest challenge and included party wall agreements with an operational theatre. In addition, unforeseen structural and layout issues were discovered during the demolition and basement dig phase within a neighbouring property outside of Osborne's original remit. This had the

potential to disrupt existing tenants and delay construction works

- Design complexities: the building's complex lattice brickwork fell into 5 different planes with 47 different types of brick specials

Solution

The project's success was due to a combination of the initial creative approach to make the most of the space, as well as Osborne being able to adapt and to identify practical solutions to the unforeseen challenges.

A carefully formulated plan was adjusted, with out-of-hours works being implemented to rectify the unexpected structural issues. These out-of-hours works required a complete shut-down including disconnection and alterations to existing services. This plan successfully accommodated the respective requirements and needs of the customer, students, party wall surveyors, and neighbouring tenants. These additional works were mindful of neighbouring tenants and ensured that delays to the original project plan were evaded.

Outcome

The development was finalised without complaint and minimal disruption to students and neighbouring tenants. The completion of the project delivered a 24-hour student building for LSE - housing a library, pub, event space/nightclub, two cafes, multi-faith centre, media centre, student union offices, LSE offices, careers advice offices, and a fitness centre.

The project was a Stirling Prize finalist for 2014 and received many other accolades such as RIBA Project of the Year 2014, CCS National Award – Silver, and Building Magazine's Project of the Year 2015 - Commendation. Its BREEAM Outstanding rating ensured that the building was only the 17th worldwide, the first in higher education in London, and the second establishment in higher education to achieve such a high standard of sustainability.

