

Agard Court, Derby

Challenge:

The challenge was to create brand new 244-bed student accommodation in time for the 2018 academic intake with limited space whilst responding to the historical context of the site and considering the locality of the Friar Gate conservation area.

Solution:

Standing proud and tall in the heart of the University of Derby's campus, Agard Court is a brand new 244-bed student accommodation, which lies in the Friar Gate conservation area. Completed in time for the 2018 academic intake, the apartment complex is now one of Derby's tallest buildings, comprising of nine storeys, standing at 26-metres tall. Situated next to the University's Law School, which was also delivered by Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher and Clegg Construction, the project houses a series of living and communal areas including kitchen and dining spaces. Directly abutting Friar Gate Railway Bridge, the building responds to the historical context of the site through subtle twists in plan and a stepped silhouette. Despite the limited space available on the site, a courtyard was created for students making use of outdoor space. During planning, careful consideration was placed on the project's design due to the locality and proximity to Friar Gate conservation area. This meant special attention was given to the character and appearance of the building to ensure it was in harmony with the surrounding area. As part of a Section 106 agreement, Clegg Construction also fulfilled various planning obligations to support the local community and environment. Bearing these design considerations in mind, the use of Ibstock in Mercia Orange created a light texture to the facade of the apartments and the extruded brickwork blended seamlessly with its surrounding buildings. Applied in a simple yet effective way, red multi drag-faced perforated wire-cut Facing Brick, Etruria Mix, was used on the window surrounds to create a panelled effect, contrasting with the main brick facade. Because the two colours are fairly close, the effect is of a series of recessed panels, rather than simply a change in material, representing an effective and intelligent use of brick, with great simplicity. To complete the building, the accommodation is crowned by brightly coloured cladding on the upper floors to emphasise its civic nature. The project also has prominent historical significance as Clegg Construction has reinstated the adjacent Short Street, which has not been seen in Derby for over 140 years. The cobbled pathway ran from Friar Gate to Agard Steet, but disappeared in 1876 when Friar Gate station and the Handyside Friar Gate Bridge were built. During the building work for Agard Court, Clegg's team came across the old tram tracks and cobbles that once made up the street. They then consulted old photographs, site plans and survey data to produce a detailed report and measurements of the tram tracks and cobbles. This was then used as a reference when it came to reinstalling the tram tracks and cobbles towards the end of the build and is now accessible to students at Agard Court.

Brickwork Contractor: Clegg Construction Ltd Client/Developer: Jensco (Derby) Ltd

Architect: Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher Architects

Brick:

Ibstock: Mercia Orange, Etruria Mixture