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Harnessing the power of innovation

£35m+ Partnership value 2009 / The Partnership commenced 2017 / The latest project concluded

Innovation is the recurring theme behind our successful partnership with the University of Edinburgh, from the names of buildings, through to our design solutions and construction methodologies. Our portfolio includes the flagship Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (£6.6m), the UK's first fully listed building to achieve BREEAM 'Outstanding' at design stage, while the aptly named Higgs Centre for Innovation (£7m) has brought the science community's academic and industry sectors together into a state-of-the-art, standalone pavilion. We also completed the refurbishment and new build of the Grade 'A' Old College/Law School (£18.3m). Demonstrating GRAHAM's technical competency, our application of a 'top, down' steel construction sequence at the Flowave Test Tank facility (£2.74m) kept the overall programme and budget on track.

The Brief

Since 2009, the University of Edinburgh has tapped into our deep expertise to ensure the completion of a range of design and build projects, refurbishment schemes and extensions to multiple buildings of varying use.



"The Higgs Centre for Innovation will significantly increase the positive impact that arises from fundamental research, both in job creation and economic opportunities and growth in the UK,"

Prof. John Womersley Chief Executive of the Science and Technology Facilities Council who operate the Centre with the University of Edinburgh "Our fantastic new home is on a site that has been a focus for learning and teaching for around 800 years, so it was very important for us to preserve the integrity of the existing building at the same time as creating a modern, fit for purpose energy efficient hub,"

Andy Kerr

Executive Director, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation

The challenges

Delivering best in class sustainability at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation was a notable challenge. A Design Score of 87.11% demonstrates that we exceeded expectations through careful consideration of every aspect of the project, from collaboration with design consultants on buildability, to the features installed on the building. Viewed as a 'living lab', the Centre benefitted from a fabric first design, which enabled a 30% reduction in energy consumption in comparison to the building's former performance, and the utilisation of a traditional lime-based compound as opposed to cement.

GRAHAM's solution

Founded in 1582, the University of Edinburgh is regarded as the sixth oldest university in the English-speaking world. Given this rich tradition, the GRAHAM approach to each of the key projects we undertook centred on the subtle integration of the old with the new, balancing modern demands while retaining the historical character of the university. This was exemplified in the refurbishment and new build of the Grade 'A' Old College/Law School (£18.3m). The project, inclusive of a new library described as the "intellectual life blood of the building", was completed in a single phase between November 2015 and November 2017. Transitioning from the academic to the sporting arena, we also constructed a new 1900m² three-storey extension of the existing Centre for Sports and Exercise (£3.1m), providing a world-class conditioning and physical activity space. Underlining our versatility, we also completed the refurbishment of the internal courtyard at the Potterrow Mandela Centre over a four-month programme (£500k).

Outputs & Benefits

A UK First - BREEAM: The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation is the first UK refurbishment project to achieve BREEAM 'Outstanding' at design stage

Sustainable Features: Rainwater harvesting and Sustainable Urban Drainage to recycle water and reduce flood risk were implemented at the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation; achievement of a 38% decrease in CO2 emissions by connecting nearby Combined Heat and Power and associated electrical and district heating networks

Flowave Facility Innovation: Our 'top, down' construction sequence allowed the tank excavation and concrete works to be moved down the critical path, which facilitated additional weeks for the completion of the design





For more information on how we're delivering lasting impact:

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