

Sector: Education

Robertson businesses: Robertson Capital Projects, Robertson Tayside

Client: Dundee City Council

Value: £30m

Date of completion: August 2016

Location: Dundee



Harris Academy, Dundee

A modern educational centre of excellence with historic features

The project involved the demolition of the existing Harris Academy followed by the construction of a new 15,000m² modern learning environment, providing accommodation for 1200 pupils with an enhanced provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Adaptable spaces for flexible learning

The new school was designed to include a series of open spaces that are flexible and adaptable. This will create opportunities for different types of teaching methods and ways of learning, both formal and informal.

The new school includes 71 classrooms, a games hall, gymnasium, dance and fitness studio, 25m swimming pool, kitchen and training kitchen.

Externally, a feature courtyard with hard and soft landscaping areas was created along with a large car park.

The historic clock tower and stone entrance portico from the original 1931 building have been carefully removed and retained and have been incorporated into the new building.

Bespoke logistics to minimise local disruption

The school is located on the busy Perth Road in Dundee, a main ambulance route between the city centre and local hospital. With this in mind, traffic management and site logistics had to be carefully considered prior to start on site and then continue to be monitored throughout the duration of our works to minimise disruption.

During preconstruction, we set up a video camera to monitor traffic patterns on the main road and ran it for over an hour at a number of peak times throughout the week. The videos were carefully analysed and the findings were used to form large parts of our traffic management plan and delivery schedules. All deliveries are scheduled on a 'just in time' basis for times where traffic is at its lightest. This innovative activity helped us score 10/10 in the Considerate Contractor's Scheme 'Secure everyone's Safety' category.

The busy main road and the high number of traffic movements on site, due to the complexity of the works, resulted in us having no on-site parking. To counter act this, we encourage car sharing and incentivise use of public transport links to reduce the volume of traffic on the roads.

Going the extra mile to respect our neighbours

The entire site team, including all of our contractors, responded to a request from one of our immediate neighbours who was recently bereaved and had asked if we could suspend works while his family left for the funeral. We had no hesitation in complying with this request and maintained silence for a 15-minute period as a mark of respect.

We have also held a number of site visits for members of the West End Community Council to provide opportunities to keep the community informed about current progress and forthcoming operations, and to discuss any concerns.



"We were unanimous in our praise for the visit this morning. We really appreciate you taking time to speak to us and give us the opportunity to raise concerns as well as ask questions. It was a very worthwhile exercise."

Andrew McBride
West End Community Council

"It is vitally important that we get opportunities to practice on live sites and the crane scenarios that we ran all Sunday morning were of huge benefit for us all here at Kingsway Fire station. By training and liaising as we have, it makes life easier for all if the unforeseen were to happen"

Nick Bryan
Watch Manager



Intelligent waste management to minimise environmental impacts

In October 2014, the project received its second Considerate Constructors visit. After scoring 44/50 in February 2014 we improved our score to 46/50, including 10/10 in the Protect the Environment category for our innovative approach to managing waste.

The site uses rear end loading skips instead of conventional skips which require a dedicated vehicle journey for each removal. The skips never leave the site and are emptied into a larger disposal vehicle with a compactor as part of multiple collections made by a single vehicle during one journey. This greatly reduces the carbon footprint of waste collectors and the number of skip wagons on the roads.

Providing our rescue service with unique training opportunities

In partnership with Scottish Fire & Rescue, we facilitated a real-life training exercise on the site. The brigade carried out exercises including rescuing a man trapped under a precast column, lowering the 'casualty' from the upper floor using rope access equipment and an aerial platform.

Bringing a long tradition into an exciting future

Harris Academy is part of a significant programme of investment in education in Dundee in recent years. The school now leads the way for a new type of building that is fit for the educational challenges of the years ahead.

