

WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE OF SPORT

Client: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Design and Construction: Norwest Holst in conjunction with:

Architect: Aedas Architects Limited

Value: £5.2M

Duration: February 2006 – March 2007

Scope of the Works

This project, currently being constructed on a live school site, features:

- The construction of a new three storey teaching block
- An extension to the existing sports hall

Considerate Constructors

We have signed up to the Considerate Constructor scheme and will be independently audited throughout the project. We have liaised closely with local residents to ensure they are kept informed of progress and so we can deal with any concerns. We have recently been audited and scored 32.5 out of 40.

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This is one of seven school and leisure projects we have undertaken for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in the past five years.



BREEAM

The project is audited as part of the BREEAM Scheme – we are aiming to achieve a 'Very Good' rating. This demonstrates our commitment to environmental improvement and best practice and will help us to create a better facility for pupils to work and learn.

'Secure by Design'

We have entered this project for the 'secure by design' award. The Architectural Liaison Officer of West Bromwich Police will visit the site and assess security measures being implemented. If successful, we will receive the award at the end of the Project.

Pre-Planning

A significant amount of preplanning and appreciation of the Health, Safety and Environmental issues, as well as Security, was undertaken in comprehensive consultation with key representatives of the School and the client, Sandwell MBC.

Working Closely with the School

We worked closely with the school to clarify existing circulation, fire and evacuation procedures, and created operational and management systems that ensured that throughout the process, any need to change the system could be identified as a priority and with sufficient notice to enable the school to prepare and practice. We also went as far as discussing behavioural trends of the school users, to enable consideration of such within the security and management systems.

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"There have been no incidents of a health and safety nature in relation to the construction of the building and the school has been able to operate normally. In fact, most of the time, we are unaware of what is going on in the building compound."

NICKY WALTERS
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL



Health, Safety and Environmental Considerations

The construction delivery teams had robust Health, Safety and Environmental procedures, training and auditing systems, and as members of the Major Contractors Group had an objective in maintaining a competent workforce on the site under the CSCS registration scheme.

All Subcontractors were informed at enquiry stage, and again at site inductions of special behavioural and operational conditions associated with working next to a live school, i.e. gate opening times, no radios etc.

Educational Presentations

Health and Safety presentations were given to teachers and new pupil year groups by our Project Manager and a VINCI Health & Safety Advisor, which helped address pupils in a firm but friendly manner regarding the dangerous nature of building sites.

Working During School Holidays

Preliminary works were carried out during school holidays that included fencing/hoarding, signage, temporary screens etc. This 'set the rules' for the term and prevented confusion with mid-term changes to the school environment.



Establishing and Maintaining Distinct Site Segregation

We established robust boundary fencing between all areas of work and the school site, in particular where new works abutted existing, live buildings. Here we considered the acoustic properties of the boundary constructions as well as maintaining a fire resistant, waterproof barrier. All boundaries were monitored daily, and any damage or change to those boundaries, whatever the cause, was addressed immediately.

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“Norwest Holst and the school worked very closely together from the outset to ensure that the school and the construction company were able to carry out their duties with minimal disruption to each other.”

NICKY WALTERS
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL



Co-ordinating Deliveries

We issued correspondence to all subcontractors and material suppliers insisting they avoid ‘peak’ times for delivery and employed a security operative to permanently manage the deliveries and vehicles at the main entrance. Suppliers were informed of delivery requirements when orders were placed and deliveries were restricted to ensure busy periods were avoided.

The storage of materials was organised in a safe and secure manner. We were aware that the activity on the school site would attract interest from both inside and outside the school and our priority was to maintain site security and avoid the possibility of harm or damage. As well as full time security during the day, the site perimeter remained monitored throughout non-working hours using detection equipment linked to camera surveillance, and a tannoy system which allowed live and direct warnings to be issued to intruders by security personnel.

One-Way System

Norwest Holst together with the school established a staff/pupil one way system around the premises to allow access to teaching blocks during class-change times. This included a requirement for pupils to cross in-front of the site main entrance six times a day. Other crossovers of children/construction traffic (pedestrian or vehicular) were also unavoidable in the location of the works. At these points, priority was given to school traffic. A gated system was put in place to prevent interface incidents and a banksman or security personnel managed these crossover points.

Fitting in with School Operations

We co-ordinated programmed works with the school term calendar to reduce disruption to learners or learning and to take advantage of school holidays. Large deliveries, crane lifts and M&E shut-down periods were organised for the time the pupils were away.

Codes of Conduct and Behaviour

We established clear codes of conduct and behaviour with all workers and ensured through effective site management that the codes were adhered to. We agreed clear protocols for behaviour with the school to govern the guidance which schools will want to give their staff, learners and visitors about contact with site workers.

WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL

*"Norwest Holst have been
and remain extremely
considerate in their
communications and working
practices with the school and
have a wholly professional
approach in dealing with us."*

NICKY WALTERS
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL



Reducing 'Nuisance' Risks

We were conscious of the noise, dirt, dust and debris risks which could present a nuisance to those close-by. We ensured that site management considered each of these aspects and took all appropriate steps to limit the risk that each might present to those on site and in school. We also took school staff to other Norwest Holst sites to offer peace of mind of how these nuisances were managed.

In addition to the required review and inspection regime for health and safety, which was part of site protocol, we supported the school in providing both initial information and on-going reminders about the key elements of maintaining health and safety so that learners, staff and visitors remained informed, safe and protected.

Communication

A high level of communication was maintained with the school to inform them of our activities. The school was issued with programmes to highlight construction activities, in particular which works required interface outside the site boundary. We also issued easy-to-read term tables to show what activities would be going on during term times, exam periods and school holidays.

The 'School Change Team'

The 'school change team' was established, which consisted of a select band of teachers and pupils representing departments and school year groups respectively. Norwest Holst Project manager attended Monthly meetings to present descriptions of the proposed building and a précis of the current progress of the design and construction works. Design and sample choices were also offered to the group for appraisal and educational discussion. There was also the opportunity to address any queries offered by the change team members, and offer an insight into the project management.

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"We have an excellent relationship which is enhanced by their Project Manager being on the School Change Team in managing the school's interaction with Norwest Holst."

NICKY WALTERS
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL

Site Visits

Members of the change team were invited to attend bi-monthly site visits, where the project manager would lead both teachers and pupils on a tour of the site at varying stages of the construction process. This offered further insight into the construction process as well as allowing the end users a more accurate picture of what they were getting terms of classroom sizes, office finishes, access routes and storage space.

Involving the End-User

In terms of the design process, we were keen to involve the School as an end user in the design development of various aspects of the project. As well as providing samples of materials and artists impressions, we maintained a flow of information to the school advising on our design thoughts and proposals, and encouraged feedback from teachers and pupils on the aesthetic and functional qualities of the design elements.

Sample Classrooms

Sample classrooms were constructed as much as possible in advance of the other works to allow the end users early picture of the finished product. All such communication encouraged a return of information regarding the schools future plans for the building, in terms of its use and proposed installation of equipment. This could then as much as possible be built into the design proposals. We also assisted the school in the review of the impact this project would have upon the schools existing procedures, in some cases adjusting the design to allow a better integration with the school existing management and systems.

Finally, we used channels of communication established with the school (which are fundamental to our approach to the whole process) to address and resolve any issues as soon as they arose. In practical terms the implications of additional staff (e.g. need for parking) were addressed such that there will be no interruption to usual staff and learner routines.

Educational Activities

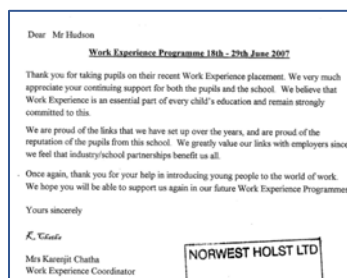
We conducted a number educational activities and facilities with the school during the project programme. Senior management attended school career evenings and Norwest Holst Graduates gave presentations, both offering advice to pupils considering careers in the construction industry. The guided site tours also offered educational demonstrations of construction methods and technologies.

The Site team accommodated personnel undertaking work experience, with young adults posted with management and surveying staff. Our Human Resources personnel organised and supervised an educational activity day attended by 250 pupils, who were given role playing and problem solving tasks.

WOOD GREEN HIGH SCHOOL

"There is a very professional approach on site to their responsibilities when working within an existing Schools complex. The site are quite definitely operating as Considerate Constructors."

BARRY BRETTELL
BSc CEng MICE
CONSIDERATE CONSTRUCTORS



The site team also became involved in a number of other side-projects. A time capsule housing items selected by pupils was buried adjacent to the new building. Materials were procured and issued to the art department to form media for works to be mounted on site hoardings.

A Norwest Holst banner was erected as a permanent feature in the new sports hall, and a table tennis table was also presented by Norwest Holst to the school in appreciation for the assistance and co-operation of the school team.