

# ALIVA UK PUTS NEW FACE ON 'NUMBER ONE' COLLEGE

**When HNW Architects delivered a sustainable refurbishment of Uxbridge College in London, the aluminium façade was an important element in achieving an 'excellent' BREEAM rating – as Darren Gormer of Aliva UK explains**



**H**NW Architects embarked on an ambitious project of refurbishment when they took on Uxbridge College in London. Rated 'number one' in London by the Skills Funding Agency, the college needed a sustainable refurb to match its further education credentials. And the architects certainly delivered. The recently completed work on two campuses – the west block and the nearby Hayes community education building – has achieved a BREEAM sustainability rating of 'excellent'.

Aliva UK designed a shimmering, anodised aluminium façade that puts a sophisticated finish on both buildings, and contributed to the sustainability profile.

Aliva, the UK leader in façades and interior finishes, supplied 340sqm of powder coated panels of Alucovering aluminium in four different textures. The stunning finish reflects the capital's ever-changing sky conditions, producing a subtle, high-end effect.

At Uxbridge College's west block, Aliva's Alucovering completely envelops the new performing arts centre in silvery textures. At the nearby Hayes community education campus, it provides a sophisticated picture-frame to the entrance block glazing, complementing the vibrant orange finish on the main façade.

### **Why choose aluminium cladding?**

Aluminium is a highly sustainable material. More than half of the aluminium currently produced in the European Union originates from recycled raw materials, and this is increasing. As the energy needed to recycle aluminium is about five per cent of that needed for primary production, the ecological benefits of recycling are clear. Apart from routine cleaning for aesthetic reasons, aluminium cladding does not need any maintenance, which translates into a major cost and ecological advantage over the lifetime of the building.





Aluminium is also highly reflective, making it very efficient for light management, and energy saving. Aluminium ventilated cladding protects the outer side of insulation materials against rain, which could cause their heat-saving properties to deteriorate. The air gap also helps to retain warmth, making it possible to prevent considerable loss of energy from a building.

#### Much-needed facelift

The final piece in the Uxbridge College refurbishment jigsaw is the new entrance block at Hayes Campus, completed in August 2015. The project has successfully revamped the campus, providing a much needed facelift and interior remodelling. Existing dance studios were relocated to the first floor of the new extension, above the new entrance and social areas. This allowed for the creation of a new 'heart space' at the centre of the College. What was once referred to as a 'lifeless' space is now vibrant and brimming with activity and social interaction. The remodelling has increased the size of the social and refectory area, and has also improved connectivity across the campus, transforming a disused quadrangle into an inviting external social area.

#### Playful and colourful

The main façade of the entrance block is playful and colourful, both inside and out, utilising opaque and transparent amber coloured glazing to complement the brickwork of the existing campus buildings. At certain times of the day, vibrant orange bands of light flood into the social area and dance studios. At night, the façade is backlit by the interior lighting to give an orange glow. Vertical fins providing solar shading to reduce solar heat gains also restrict light pollution to the neighbouring residential properties.

The landscape design, also carried out by HNW, has provided an elegant upgrade to the previous dreary block paving. Bands of charcoal granite and silver-grey resin bound gravel, interrupted by elegant silver birch trees and concrete benches, provide a bold entrance approach and an appealing gathering space for students.

Peter Foulk of HNW Architects said: 'The refurbishment has provided a much-needed facelift and interior remodelling for the College in its golden anniversary year. Aliva's aluminium cladding is now an important part of the Uxbridge College brand. The overall impression is of a campus that has renewed confidence. The façade gives a crisp, high-end appearance on a relatively cost-effective budget.'

Aliva managing director, James Ormerod, said: 'Our expert design team assisted from the start of this ambitious project, providing advice and product samples to ensure that every detail of the façade was right. Besides its excellent sustainability properties, Alucoving was the perfect material to achieve the sharp detail required by the architect on the corners of the buildings. All of the panels, including the mitred corners, were cut to size. Then we anodised the panels so that the finish on the corners matched the rest of that panel.'

We are very proud that our unusual design has contributed to a new brand identity for the best further education college in London.'

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