



Brick type: Thoresby Buff Multi
Location: Bolton

Project Architect: Sheppard Robson
Contractor: Kier

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Bolton St Catherine's Academy

St Catherine's Academy and Firwood School in Bolton is the country's first 'super-school', catering for children aged from three to 19 years old.

The new £36 million modern building has created an inspiring environment with a range of specialist facilities and is at the heart of the community.

It has been designed by architects Sheppard Robson to fit with its challenging site, which slopes over 37 metres from top to bottom. The result is a stepped building which appears to cascade down the slope. Its size and scale are broken down by the contemporary arrangement of the stepped blocks.

"Brick was the obvious choice to facilitate the intentions of the design," said architect Steven Cochrane.

"We have worked with Forterra previously and chose the company's Thorseby Buff Multi brick for the project due to its warm colour variations and light texture.

"The other design consideration was the amount of retention across the site, which was achieved in the landscaping by the creation of a series of gabion retaining walls.

These gabions used local stone and Forterra's Thorseby Buff Multi bricks tied in perfectly with these."

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The school was built by Kier Northern and is home to Withins Secondary School and Top o' th' Brow Primary School, which merged in 2009 to become Bolton St Catherine's Academy. The site is also a joint campus with Firwood School, which caters for children with special education needs. Both schools will benefit from shared facilities although Firwood will remain under the control of the local authority.

"The brick selection has been fundamental to the success of the building," Steven added.

"The use of Thorseby Buff Multi bricks allows the building and landscaping elements to complement each other and helps to realise the design concept to fully integrate the building with its site.

"The result is a natural looking, contemporary building of character where brick and stone integrate beautifully to create a warm and welcoming school."



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