

HUXLEY BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
ASH & LACY BUILDING SYSTEMS LIMITED



Photograph credit Oliver Perrott

The new biosciences building at the University of Brighton is complete with a sleek, modern, façade thanks to Ash & Lacy's Ashtech rainscreen cladding. Situated on the Moulescoomb Campus, the Huxley Building houses the University of Brighton's School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences.

The 8,500 square metre building is clad in silver anodised ACM Ashtech panels generally 1.3 metres high and up to 6.4 metres long that work together to wrap around the complex elevations. Each individual panel had to be purpose-made and pre-curved at Ash & Lacy's West Bromwich site, to fit around and match the windows on the building.

The protruding raked capping details were also manufactured in the same material, in order to provide a fully cohesive design. Original concept architects, Llewelyn Davies Yeang specified using 3,500 square metres of Ash & Lacy's Ashtech for the extensive new build, to give the building an innovative and hi-tech finish, reflecting the standards of the department itself.

The design of the seven-storey building responds to the constraints of a steeply sloping site divided by a service road creating staggered floor levels, interesting external spaces and a flowing façade. The science block also features a sedum green roof fitted with solar panels for the heating of domestic water contributing to the very good BREEAM rating it has secured.



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Morgan Sindall Professional Services carried the original concept forward through the detailed design stages and onto completion working in collaboration with the main contractors Morgan Sindall (Construction) under a design and build contract and with the Ashtech system being installed by Cladding & Roofing Systems Ltd.

Named after Thomas Henry Huxley - an English biologist known for his advocacy of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the Huxley Building houses the University of Brighton's School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, which is one of the UK's leading departments for pharmacy, biology, chemistry and biomedical education. The building holds a 300-seat lecture theatre, several 60 seat seminar rooms, bespoke research and teaching laboratories and academic and technical office accommodation. The Huxley Building also contains multiple specialist services - including over 45 fume cupboards, various gases and water services, high security areas, and open student learning spaces.

Ash & Lacy was chosen due to their quality rain screen systems, previous experience in working with complex buildings and by using their in-house technical and design teams, the building's original design philosophy could be realised and not compromised. The multi-layer rainscreen cladding system was specified due to its ability to outperform alternative types of wall construction at an economic whole-life cost to the building owner due to its low maintenance requirements and the sustainability of the materials used.



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