



Victoria Hall, Wolverhampton

THE TASK

We engaged with Manchester based O'Connell East Architects from the early conceptual stages of the development through to its completion on this landmark project, considered, at the time of construction to be the tallest residential modular building in the world, comprising 656 en-suite bedrooms.

The development is located on a gateway city centre site with the finished building comprising of 656 en-suite study bedrooms. It is an approved scheme, constructed using an off-site volumetric solution and volumetric modular construction techniques.

We provided approved inspector services and were engaged in the project from early on. The modules arrived on site as a complete unit including all fixtures and fittings. This required a huge amount of off-site construction and demanded an early design freeze to allow the modules to be constructed. Our early involvement enabled the modules to be constructed off-site with compliance guaranteed. The development was completed a year ahead of a traditional procurement program, enabling client revenue generation well ahead of their anticipated programme.

CSS's early involvement secured design certainty from the start of the project. The modules arrived on site as a complete unit including all fixtures and fittings. Subsequently a huge amount of off-site construction was needed beforehand to make this happen. This demanded an early design freeze to allow the modules to be constructed; as such CSS were involved as part of the design team at conception. The client's decision to engage us during the early stages enabled the modules to be constructed off-site with compliance guaranteed and this all happened a lot sooner than would have been the case had traditional procurement methods of Building Control been used instead.

PROJECT PROFILE



CLIENT

Victoria Halls Ltd

PROJECT VALUE

£27m

SERVICES

○ Approved Inspector

TYPE

Residential
(Student Accommodation)

START DATE

August 2008

COMPLETION DATE

2009

ARCHITECTS

O'Connell East Architects

Victoria Hall, Wolverhampton

CSS treated the student accommodation under the flats in “multiple occupation” principle, and began consultation with the local fire service in October 2008. CSS has a long established ‘product’ of treating student accommodation as flats in multiple occupations - comprising of clusters of bedrooms sharing communal living rooms and kitchens. The fundamental principle of this approach is a ‘stay-put’ means of escape, as is the case in blocks of flats whereby only the residents in the cluster where the fire starts evacuate their flat. This benefits the construction value by allowing the building to be designed with a single staircase due to the small numbers of people escaping at any one time.

The design was accepted with CSS’s plan appraisal in May 2009, enabling the project’s initial work to begin. The nature of the project’s off-site volumetric solution entailed that initial work saw the installation of the base for the tallest crane in Europe.

The end result was that the Wolverhampton development was completed a year ahead of a traditional procurement program, enabling client Victoria Hall to generate revenues ahead of their anticipated programme.

CSS initially became involved in March 2008 where, as regulators of the project, the team established the necessary principles for compliance. CSS’s Initial comments were published a month later and were included in the design which was developed up to issue of CSS’s first full compliance report in October 2008.

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Works continued on site throughout 2009 until the project’s completion in the autumn of 2009 ready for the new academic year.



FURTHER DETAILS

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