

# Sky Believe in Better Building London



**Speed of construction and superb aesthetics, coupled with very high technical demands, were crucial in meeting the exacting requirements of media giant Sky as it realised its ambition to create an industry leading community engagement and educational facility at its West London campus.**

The VS-1 curtain walling system from GLASSOLUTIONS held the key to meeting this dual challenge for the 'Believe in Better' Building, given the glazing system simplicity and its ability to easily span large heights with clean, unbroken sightlines.

The 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> timber framed building, developed by Sky, in conjunction with Mace, houses a wide variety of educational and community facilities, including the Sky Academy at which young people can use the power of creativity, television and sport to develop new skills and unlock their potential.

BREEAM 'Excellent' rated, the building is designed in-line with Sky's sustainability strategy throughout, with a thermally superior fabric, photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation and rainwater harvesting just some of the integrated measures.

## Sky Believe in Better Building, London

Client: Sky  
Main contractor: Mace  
Architect: Arup  
Project type: New build commercial  
Completed: October 2014

Working from initial design concepts by Arup Associates, GLASSOLUTIONS was tasked with the £3m project to detail design, manufacture and install the whole building facade. The key feature of this is a centrepiece ground to fourth storey staircase which Arup hoped would offer building users uncluttered views across the adjacent and newer parts of the Sky complex.

It was a facade design that would have challenged any standard curtain walling system within a typical timescale, let alone one which was half the time.

From the very first discussions with Mace and Sky, the suitability of VS-1 was immediately apparent. As a mullion-only system which requires no mid-point horizontal structural support for very large spans – 12.5 m in this case – and no transoms, VS-1 met the architects' vision and ensured Sky could realise its ambition to match eye-catching aesthetics with an open internal environment benefitting from plenty of natural light.

The Believe in Better Building features externally mounted VS-1 mullions which have a distinctive 'aerofoil' shape to support the glazing along the full length of the 51 m staircase, over which it rises some 15 m. These are highly engineered aluminium extrusions which are secured using stainless steel brackets at top and bottom cantilevers from the building's timber structure. These ensure a secure attachment at the top of the structure and at each floor level.

VS-1's brackets hold the glass panels away from the mullion to give it a 'floating' effect – these are then siliconed at the top and bottom to give a flush finish. Each double glazed sealed unit – many of which are 3.2 m high – features 13.5 mm Saint-Gobain Planidur heat strengthened, laminated panes of glass on the interior and 8 mm Securit toughened, heat soak tested on the exterior. The glass is Saint-Gobain's COOL-LITE SKN165 II which was chosen to balance solar control and thermal insulation.

Sky's Construction Director David Hickey said: "The creation of the Believe in Better Building was a very significant moment for the new Sky Campus and we knew we had to pull out all the stops to ensure the building met the company's aspirations. That's where Mace and GLASSOLUTIONS proved to be invaluable partners, rising to the challenge collaboratively with an engaging approach to safety and a positive attitude which included 24/7 working at certain stages during the build.

"The design had to evolve as we were building due to the intense time-frame, which demanded great flexibility from GLASSOLUTIONS and all our contractor partners."

The building was officially opened by their royal highnesses, the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, in November 2014, less than 12 months after the building was conceived.



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