

Bennet Building Cambridge



The Babraham Research Campus near Cambridge is the UK's leading campus dedicated to supporting early-stage bioscience enterprise. With the growing global reputation for the significance and quality of the work undertaken at the campus, it is fitting that the design of its latest new building reflects the world-class scientific research and development projects it accommodates.

Called The Bennet Building, this is a new 20,000 sq. ft. facility providing research space to expanding commercial organisations working in the field of biomedical research and

related disciplines. The building provides a combination of laboratories and office space around central core facilities. This enables scientists working on developing bioscience

businesses to stay close to the excellent academic work taking place at the Babraham Research Campus, whilst providing the best facilities and support to help their companies to thrive.

Bennett Building Cambridge

Client:	Babraham Bioscience Technologies Ltd
Main contractor:	SDC Builders Limited, Bedford
Architect:	Norr Architects
Project type:	New build offices
Completed:	2014

GLASSOLUTIONS played a key role the creation of The Bennet Building having been appointed to deliver a technically demanding glazed façade with an intelligent solar control function – all designed to optimise energy efficiency and occupier comfort in a high quality working environment. Their glazing contract also included an 80m² glass spiral staircase, which forms an emergency escape route within the flagship building.

With the client's vision to create an impactful building which acts as a 'signpost' to the central campus, the primary consideration in Norr Architects' design was how the building looks from a 360 degree view. Achieving this, the design assumes a radial form springing from a central drum which continues up through the building and above the roof to act as a landmark feature when viewed from the campus entrance. The glazed façade sweeps around following the radial form.

Close collaboration between the architect, façade systems manufacturer

and GLASSOLUTIONS arrived at the Schueco FW60+ SG glazing system which was applied in a most innovative way. The bespoke solution developed by GLASSOLUTIONS combined curtain walling with computer controlled blinds incorporated into the cavity of the double glazed units. Utilising its Saint-Gobain group links, GLASSOLUTIONS worked with sister companies Saint-Gobain Glass and interstitial blind systems manufacturer Eckelt to deliver a technically excellent robust solution.

The extensive glazed façade controls solar gain with variable levels of solar control through the use of 10mm SGG COOL-LITE ST150 glass for the outer pane, and an 8mm Planitherm One HST inner pane in the 47mm sealed units. The 29mm cavity features Ecklite SC06 interstitial blinds which provide additional shading, which are computer controlled by the occupants and capable of being overridden in local areas.

Weather stations on the roof dictate the opening and closing of blinds which produces a spectrum of g-values. The

COOL-LITE ST150 solar control glass maintains a g-value of just 0.3 when the blinds are open, but this is reduced to virtually zero when the blinds are fully closed.

Schueco curtain walling and neat detailing allowed toggle glazing and silicone sealing of insulated aluminium panels and single glazed glass spandrel panels, as well as the glass units containing the automated blinds. The use of Schueco FW60+ SG ensured the façade has a very shallow facet, flush finish and an overall hi-tech visual appearance to architecturally complement the rest of the Babraham Research Campus. The design by the architects specified grey (RAL 7035) curtain walling and spandrels finished in a complementary dark grey (RAL 7015).

Officially opened in January 2015 by Dr Menelas Pangalos, Executive President at Astra Zeneca, The Bennet Building was sponsored by the BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council) as part of a £44m investment into the campus.



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