

Fenwick Colchester



In what is believed to be the biggest overhaul of a UK department store to take place outside of London, GLASSOLUTIONS helped give Fenwick Colchester a dramatic contemporary update, creating a fully glazed facade and feature entrance way with respect and sensitivity to the building's heritage.

An important part of Colchester history, the Williams & Griffin building on Colchester's high street was established in 1968 following the merger of two independent stores originally founded in the 19th century. Often hailed as the oldest department store in Colchester,

the business was sold to Fenwick in 2008 to become the brand's eleventh branch nationwide.

The £35m revamp involved significant rejuvenation of the building's structure and layout, including expansion of the site to encompass 120,000sq ft.

Additionally, as the building forms part of a sensitive archaeological and conservation area, careful balancing was required to create a dramatic new presence for the store in the town centre with respect and sensitivity to its location.

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Client:	Fenwick
Main contractor:	Sir Robert McAlpine
Architect:	Aukett Swanke
Project type:	Redevelopment of historic building
Completed:	September 2016

Working closely with architects Aukett Swanke and main contractors Sir Robert McAlpine, GLASSOLUTIONS was awarded a £669,000 contract to design, supply and install structural glazing, aluminium curtain walling and doors, bronze anodised copings, roof lights, bronze fins and secondary steel work to create the store's feature entrance way.

GLASSOLUTIONS' glazing specification included Stadip Protect Planidur COOL-LITE SKN165ii and Stadip Securit toughened HST laminate with SKN165ii surface 4 on outer panes, and Stadip Protect and Stadip Securit clear toughened HST laminate on inner panes. This configuration provides the thermal properties required for south facing glazing to avoid excessive solar gain whilst offering the security needed for glass at high level.

The structural glazing also needed to be able to hold the bronze fins, a feature of the façade that were fixed through the glass joints to the internal steel transoms & mullions. At ground floor level, the façade was single glazed in Stadip Protect Planiclear laminate to give the clear vision with good colour rendering into the depth of the new store.

The new-build element of store's 50-metre high street frontage was divided into three main areas of glass separated by Portland stone columns, with the outer areas incorporating vertical bronze fins fixed to the glazed screens to reduce the impact of the glass area and offer a visual link to the adjacent Tudor building. The central area of the façade incorporates a bronze-clad portal containing the two pairs of main entrance doors.

John Foster, GLASSOLUTIONS Contracting Commercial Director for England and Wales, commented: "Following the completion of a number of successful projects with Aukett Swanke, we were asked to be involved in this project from its conceptual phase and we supported it throughout the design phase and through to completion.

"The project was particularly interesting to us as it was an iconic façade on the High street of Colchester and the design brief was challenging.

Conceptually, the design involved oversized glass units to appear as frameless as possible with floating bronze feature fins.

"The performance of the glazing was equally high which meant that there had to be a seamless transition of single glazing to the shop fronts and double glazing immediately above to support the buildings thermal model. I believe the end result was a great success and the façade looks very impressive."



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