

VELFAC®

ADVANCED WINDOW DESIGN

Centre for Health Related Research

University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield





A look at the project

The Centre for Health Related Research is home to some of the most technologically advanced learning tools in the field of modern medicine. Situated at the heart of the University's College Lane campus, the building houses a wide range of facilities, including the Simulation Centre - a fully functional replica hospital. The Centre includes an A&E ward, paediatric unit and pharmacy, and allows trainee doctors, nurses and paramedics to simulate real-life emergencies.

Aesthetically impressive. 'As the Simulation Centre is the most advanced facility of its kind in the UK, the building had to reflect the high calibre of the research taking place inside,' explains Steve Sullivan of AD Architects. 'The building also accommodates training, office and seminar space, and houses the University's Health and Human Science Facility; as a result the design had to be both aesthetically impressive and highly practical.'

Close relationship. VELFAC worked closely with the architects to help resolve design issues as they arose. Fair faced internal concrete walls meant that there was no plaster finish to conceal window fixings - in response VELFAC Approved Installers provided bespoke 'L' shaped timber linings, designed to match the internal timber window frame. This provided the high quality finish required. VELFAC also helped the design team solve the issue of structural support for the large screens, implementing an alternative method of window fabrication and installation which allowed large cedar panels to be incorporated within the screens.



Clean sightlines

VELFAC glazing, used extensively in windows and screens, met the design brief perfectly: 'The Dean of the Faculty, a Finn, wanted a minimalist Scandinavian design,' reveals Steve Sullivan. 'We often specify the VELFAC system as it offers clean, uninterrupted sightlines, and these helped create the minimalist feel required.'

The glazing also works well with the cedar panelling, which we used to break up the mass of the building. We also used windows to create the full height screens which form the front and back elevations. Here we retained the internal timber framing, which was not necessarily a requirement of the overall design, but which matched the Scandinavian aesthetic, and helped soften the internal environment which otherwise comprised concrete, steel and glass.'

Performance and design. VELFAC was also specified because it could satisfy the performance criteria laid down by architect and client: 'We wanted VELFAC because of the quality it offered and because of the low maintenance requirements of the project. We aim to spend our clients' money on reliable moving parts - cheaper windows are a false economy because they require more maintenance.'

And as all glazing is manufactured to order, VELFAC could also meet the design specification required: 'Upper installed lights are fixed or opening; those fronting office space offer single or double opening, single sided natural ventilation, sized to meet BS8300 so that cill heights allow a view from a wheelchair or chair.'

Affordable quality

Frame information:

External sightlines: 54mm

Timber frame depth: 115mm

Overall depth: 149mm

Timber transom depth: 66mm

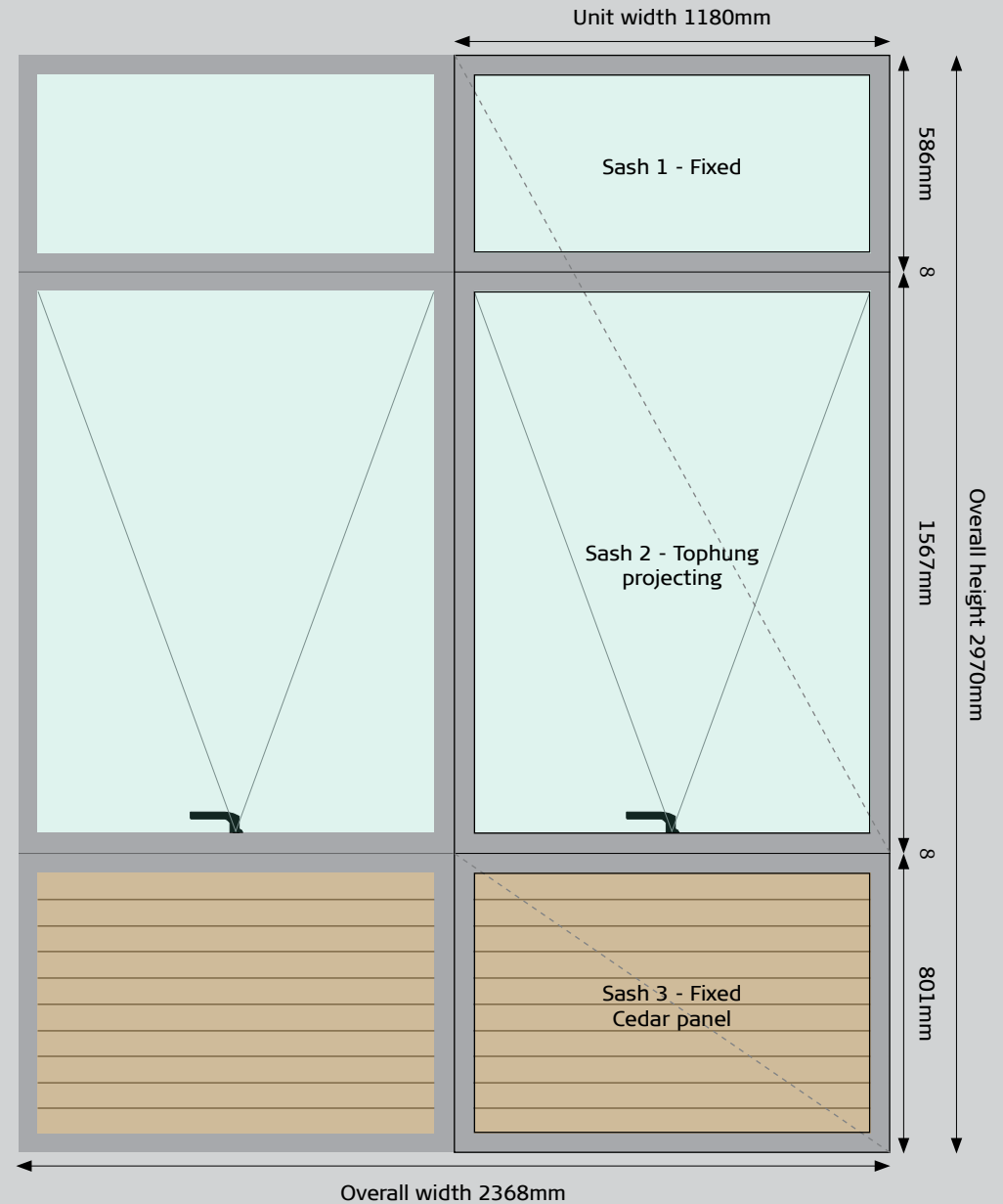
Window 1 configuration

Sash 1: Fixed sash with 4-16-4 low-e Double Glazed Unit (DGU)

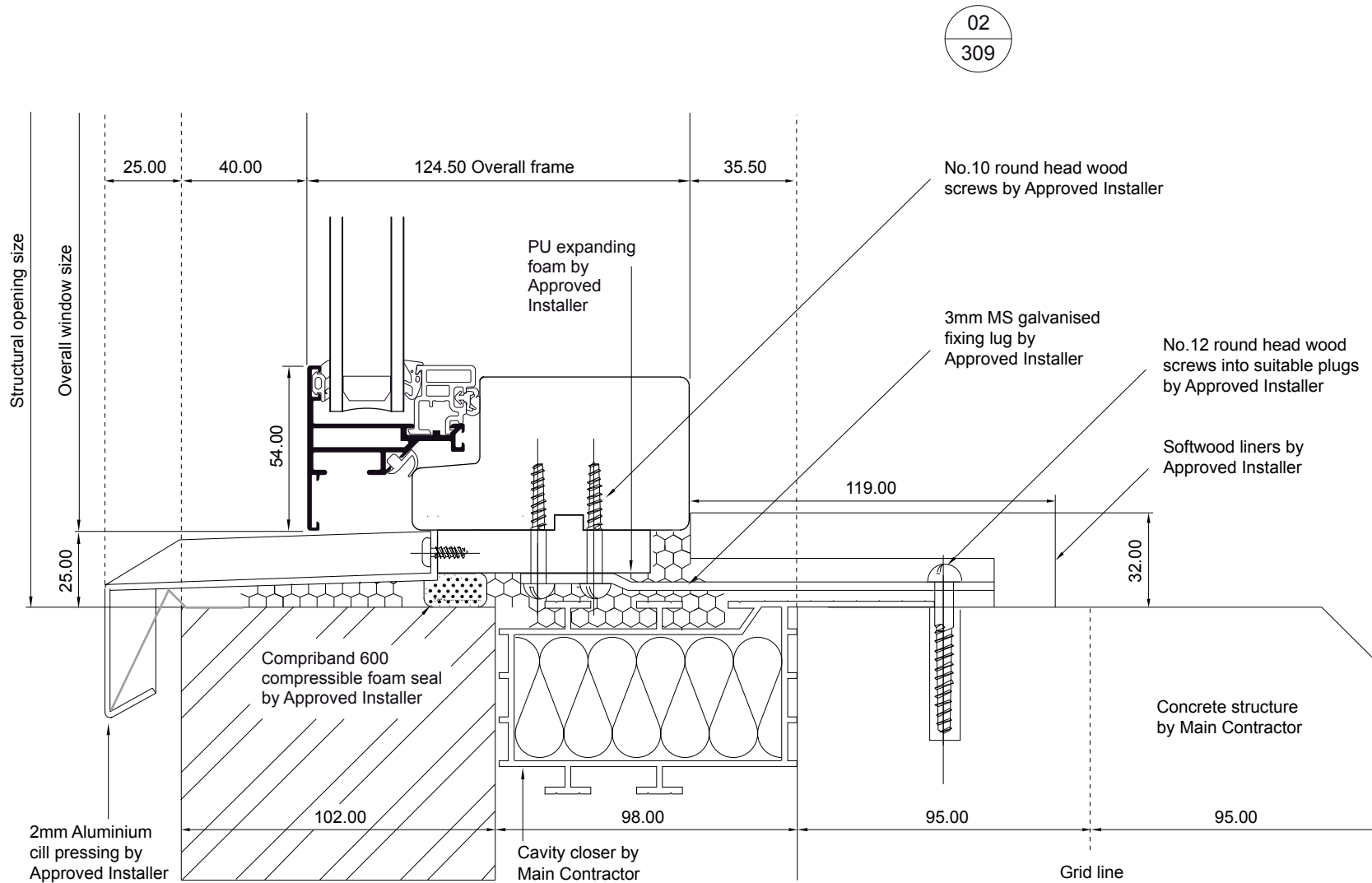
Sash 2: Tophung projecting sash with 4-16-4 low-e DGU, lockable espagnolette handle and locking restrictor

Window 2 configuration

Sash 3: Fixed Western Redwood Cedar panel



Installation



Project information

Project name: Centre for Health Related Research
Size: £3.5m
Architect: AD Architects
Contractor: Bluestone
Client: University of Hertfordshire

Programme information:

Initial tender submitted: April 2005
Order placed: January 2006
Order amount: 635m²
Drawings approved: February 2006
First delivery: May 2006
Final delivery: June 2006
Project completion: December 2006



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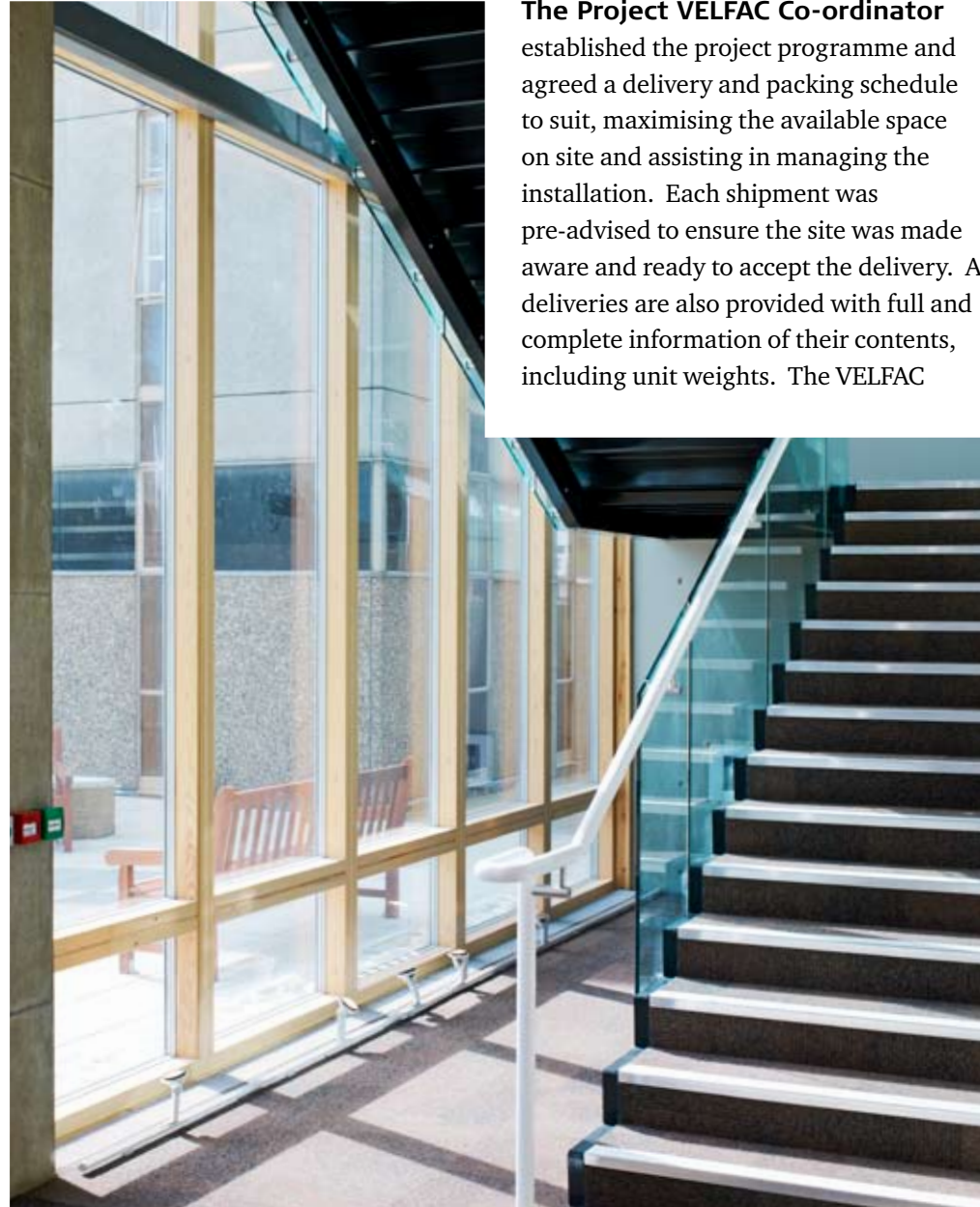
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VELFAC LTD
The Old Livery
Hildersham
Cambridge
CB21 6DR

VELFAC LTD
M.I.O.C. Suite 11A
Styal Road
Manchester
M22 5WB

VELFAC LTD
Ground Floor
1400 Montagu Court
Kettering Parkway
Venture Park
Kettering
NN15 6XR

T: 01223 897100
F: 01223 897101
E: post@VELFAC.co.uk
W: www.VELFAC.co.uk



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The Project VELFAC Co-ordinator established the project programme and agreed a delivery and packing schedule to suit, maximising the available space on site and assisting in managing the installation. Each shipment was pre-advised to ensure the site was made aware and ready to accept the delivery. All deliveries are also provided with full and complete information of their contents, including unit weights. The VELFAC

Approved Installer checks each delivery to ensure the contents are correct, and ensures that each pallet is distributed to the correct place on site.

Drawings and calculations. In discussions with the Main Contractor, Bluestone, the VELFAC Designer provided all the necessary elevation drawings and design interface details, including all structural engineering calculations and setting out drawings required for the large areas of window walling. The VELFAC Approved Installer then used these drawings to ensure the windows were fitted correctly.

Bluestone's Project Manager Andy Walsham commented that 'the Project Co-ordination and Design services provided by VELFAC LTD matched the very high quality of their windows' and the project was successfully handed over to the University on time.

The project is now a fully functioning, highly serviced four-storey building accommodating the University of Hertfordshire's education, training, office and seminar facilities for a range of health professionals.