



Home from home

The Hub
Coventry University

hawkinsbrown.com

Hawkins\Brown

Putting student life front and centre

Coventry University wanted to do more than update its student services. This became an opportunity to elevate the entire student experience and embrace new ways of learning, helping to attract the best new candidates and industry partnerships.

Our response was to imagine a sort of living room for the whole university. With many students commuting from home, rather than staying in halls of residence on campus, we set aside a quarter of the Hub for informal learning and working,

meeting and socialising. This new type of environment encourages social interaction and peer-to-peer learning, while also providing quieter areas for private study.

\The team spent a long time talking to students about what they needed to create a pioneering series of spaces. The result is visited by universities worldwide, with clients ringing us up saying we want a Hub!

Russell Brown Partner

RIBA Awards 2012
West Midlands Regional Award

Education Estates Awards 2014
Innovation in Teaching & Learning



A Hub for today and tomorrow

You'll find knowledge and academic life everywhere in the Hub. In one central place, students can live and learn together and get the everyday support needed. That's today. As for tomorrow, one thing is certain: higher education will continue to evolve at pace. Key to the success of the Hub is a large, simple structure; a bare frame, enabling the interior to be easily adapted to meet the sector's future shape.

Making a home out of a shell

Interior design was integral to the architectural solution from the outset. To fill the volume of open space, we designed large pieces of furniture. These room scale enclosures sub-divide the informal learning area, provide cocoons for students to work and socialise and add a welcoming warmth to the robust concrete finishes.

Furnishing the Hub

Being a home from home, booths are house-shaped and nests are fitted with oversized beanbags. The domestic theme continues with colourful sofas, low-slung chairs, rugs, wallpaper and lampshades.



Project: The Hub
Location: Coventry
Client: Coventry University
Services: Architecture, interior design, and urban design
Scope: New build
Value: £19m
Status: Completed

\Goodbye beer-stained carpet tiles, hello engaging design

FX Magazine

\We're delighted the Hub has proved a new type of learning environment that inspires students to take the lead in their own education

Nick Gaskell Partner



Support all around

As well as providing different types of social and learning spaces, the Hub's lower levels accommodate a reception area; food court; convenience store; acoustically isolated, multi-purpose event venue; and art gallery. Overlooking it all are the Students Union offices on the first floor, alongside healthcare and wellbeing, careers' advice and a multi-faith centre.

Taking learning outside

The informal learning environment extends to a generous roof terrace above the first floor, with a glazed roof pavilion, and a landscaped, central inner courtyard.



Energetic and vibrant

Surroundings inspire people. The Hub takes a primary colour and runs with it, from the external columns inwards, drawing the eye in. We chose Signal Yellow (traditionally used by railway engineers for ultimate visibility) as the Hub's signature mark, applying it to the bespoke furniture, reception and stairs. The energetic hue works well in the exposed concrete setting and is supported by a calm palette of supplementary colours.



Resolving multiple challenges

A front door to the campus

While providing a mix of uses inside, the Hub achieves some important functions outside too. It is the face of the university for the city on its doorstep. The curtain wall envelops the building with a glass frit pattern, a nod to John Piper's decorative stain glass on the adjacent Coventry Cathedral. The Hub opens up public and student access across the campus in every direction.

Setting sustainability standards

The BREEAM excellent Hub is day-lit and naturally ventilated throughout, with the exception of the event space. A raft of smart features keeps the building's environmental impact and running costs to a minimum, including the curtain wall cladding. More than an architectural statement, the glass frit pattern changes to let natural light flood into the internal environments where required and act as a screen elsewhere, reducing solar gain.

A lot of building for less

We worked closely with the client to achieve best value and then with the contractor throughout the design and build phases. The Hub was completed on time, and undercut the original budget by £4.25 million, including fit out and landscaping. The final cost represents both immediate and long-term value for Coventry University.

\Hawkins\Brown was a great help to the construction team throughout the process and showed huge commitment to the project

Roger Willett BAM Construction Ltd



