



Project of the Year (up to £10m): Winner

15 July, 2016



Sir Robert McAlpine – The Foundry, Newcastle

In another fiercely contested category, Sir Robert McAlpine's work on new student accommodation in Newcastle came out on top.

The project, known as The Foundry, was an £8.3m job in Newcastle city centre for client Trust Estates, creating 207 student beds in a mixture of four to eight-bedroom flats as well as studios.

What set this project apart, however, was Sir Robert McAlpine's willingness to take a different approach – all with the client in mind.

That approach was to use modular construction, with each modular section provided by Hull-based specialist Premier Modular and craned into place on site.

The client had acquired the site in May 2014 with full planning approval in place, but the initial scheme was not designed with modular construction in mind. In June, Sir Robert McAlpine came on board and, in tandem with the scheme's designers, amended plans to reflect a modular layout.

“The manner in which Sir Robert McAlpine led the way with the local water authority to enhance their critical works processes was impressive”

Judges' comment

The contractor was keen to pursue this method, as it would enable construction to complete before September 2015 when the new intake of students would arrive. Using traditional methods as originally planned would have missed this deadline and led to the client's competitors stealing a march in the crowded student accommodation market.

Instead, modules began arriving on site in March 2015, with the final units installed in May. Just 17 weeks later the building was handed over following the installation of the external façade and the completion of the internal fit-out – a remarkably quick turnaround.

The site itself also presented some challenges: not only was it tight with little room for manoeuvre and the East Coast Main Line on one side, but a Northumbria Water sewer ran diagonally right through the middle of it.

The team worked closely with Northumbria Water to develop an action plan for how to deal with this and ensure the sewer would not be damaged, developing a new method of working that has since been rolled out to other contractors' sites nearby.

Our judges said Sir Robert McAlpine's work showed “exemplary delivery” of a “highly constrained project”.

“The company clearly understood the benefits of the project to the end client, and the manner in which it led the way with the local water authority to enhance their critical works processes was also impressive,” they added.

Highly commended: Speller Metcalfe – The Master's House

Originally built in 1487 as accommodation for the master of St Katherine's Hospital in Herefordshire, this Grade II-listed building had been altered over the years with many less-than-sympathetic extensions.

Speller Metcalfe delivered a highly detailed and sensitive restoration of the building, transforming it into a library and council offices for client Herefordshire Council.

The building's complexity required intensive investigations into traditional methods to achieve the high-quality finish, with the team carrying out restoration to the timber frame, 19th-century masonry repairs, dendrochronology, petrography and detailed chemical analysis, to name a few.

Our judges said: “Speller Metcalfe demonstrated an approach to community engagement and collaboration that demonstrates the industry at its best.”

Finalists

- Amco Engineering – Woolwich Ferry linkspans refurbishment
- Bam Nuttall – Chiswick Bridge refurbishment project
- Croydon Council with Skanska – East Croydon interchange project
- Graham Construction – Lews Castle, Outer Hebrides
- Graham Construction – Tennison Road Bridge, London



PROJECT:

THE FOUNDRY -
NEWCASTLE

SECTOR:

RESIDENTIAL & STUDENT
ACCOMMODATION

VALUE:

£5.2M

PROGRAMME:

42 WEEKS

YOUTUBE VIDEO LINK:

[HTTPS://WWW.
YOUTUBE.COM/
WATCH?V=J8OMTESBEKW](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8OMTESBEKW)

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**Winner of the Project of the Year (up to £10m) -
2016 CN Awards**

Selected as a preferred supply chain partner for the high quality of their product and process, Premier Modular Limited provided a 206 bedroom student accommodation block, The Foundry.

This high quality 5 storey building situated close to the city centre in Newcastle, consisted of a mixture of 54 studio flats, 150 en-suite bedrooms and 2 accessible en-suite bedrooms with associated shared living spaces and kitchens.

Driven by an immovable programme requirement of a September student intake, Premier worked in partnership with the main contractor, efficiently manufacturing 300 modules fully fitted out and decorated in the factory - an excellent demonstration of the enormous time benefits realised by using the Premier off-site system. Significantly the foundations and demolition commenced on site whilst the modules were being manufactured – ensuring no time was wasted in the process.

The construction of the building uses a combination of products from the innovative Premier range, combining light gauge steel frame modules for the bedrooms, with heavier gauge steel modules for the larger open plan communal areas.



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