



Teesside University

Student Centre, Teesside University, Middlesbrough

Project Case Study

Client: Willmott Dixon Construction Limited

Installed: 2017



This eye catching living wall sits in the central piazza of Teesside University in Middlesbrough.

The Matrix film inspired planting design surrounds a large 36m2 LED information and interactive screen used in university social events.

Project Details

Willmott Dixon are a Framework Contractor for Teesside University and they were asked to provide a Wow Factor piazza for the university and, at the same time, mask a 1960s administration block. They approached Biotecture because we had carried out two successful projects with them before at the Met Office in Exeter and Centenary Quay in Southampton.

From the outset they wanted us to be able to demonstrate to their client that we could provide a robust and resilient low maintenance living wall that was also eye catching. The living wall was part of a suite of design and architectural measures that the university was undertaking to transform the heart of the campus and show potential students the university's vibrancy.

We were asked to develop the support for the living wall based on the structure of the existing building. This included advising on structural support and interface details. The primary interface was with the LED screen contractor, so we needed to coordinate our design and our installation with them.

Highlights

- ◆ Eye-catching >200m2 south facing living wall surrounding a 36m2 LED screen.
- ◆ Our third project working with Willmott Dixon.
- ◆ Coordinated detail around the LED screen.
- ◆ Forms the backdrop for events at the university and is the front page image of their Prospectus.
- ◆ Planted in two contrasting and complementary matrices to a digital design with low maintenance plants.
- ◆ Fully maintained by Biotecture since installation.



Our Approach

We worked closely with Willmott Dixon and their client, the University, to design a living wall on the gable end of an existing building and integrated with an LED screen that would look like it belonged rather than just being an abrupt end. One feature that enabled this was the corner panels used on returns at either end to allow the living wall to ‘flow’ around the edges.

For the TV screen integration, the main detail to resolve was the hot air vents at the top of the screen. These needed to be deflected away from the plants to avoid scorching and we worked with the LED contractor to develop a detail that would resolve this. The base for the structural fixings were combined between the living wall and the LED screen and we coordinated with them and the Main Contractor to ensure a seamless installation programme.

For the planting we worked on two contrasting and complimentary matrices incorporating in excess of 15,000 plants. The base palette for the wall was Hedera Helix and Euonymus Darts Blanket. The greener matrix was then completed with a Lonicera and the yellower matrix with Heuchera and Acorus. The result is a striking, successful and easy to look after living wall.

“The living wall and screen provides a fantastic addition to the campus heart development.”

- [Malcolm Page, Chief Operating Officer](#) | Teesside University

