

Leicester Cathedral Heritage & Learning Centre

Peter Dann were appointed by Messenger (BCR Group) to support the refurbishment and extension of Leicester Cathedral, a Grade II listed building. Our involvement centred on both quality assurance and specialist structural design.

The primary scope of our appointment was the design and detailing of a specialist external vertical terracotta fin feature for the Heritage and Learning Centre extension. These handmade terracotta units were installed at 750mm horizontal centres across three elevations, vertically stacked to form a striking architectural element.

Designing this feature required a deep understanding of the variable nature and properties of the handmade terracotta units. We developed a structural solution using stainless steel to support and restrain the fins while maintaining the integrity of the thermal envelope. Due to external buildup constraints, the structural solution had to be designed within the cavity, demanding close coordination with the project design team and the manufacturer.

This project also required the development and coordination of material testing for the terracotta units to verify their strength. Consideration of the seasonal thermal behaviours of terracotta, concrete, stainless steel and stone cladding required a solution that could accommodate variable construction and material tolerances, some of which were unpredictable.

The result is a seamless aesthetic that preserves the character of the external elevation.

