

Steel passes examination for Newcastle school

Covering an area the size of four football pitches (19,000m²), the recently opened steel framed Kenton Secondary School in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne has been described as a blueprint for future educational construction projects due to its innovative design.

The school is made up of five main teaching blocks connected via a curved crescent, or street, which ends at a large sports hall complex.

Mike Goldsmith, Project Engineer for Parsons Brinckerhoff, said the most challenging aspect of the job was the shape, in particular the curved geometry of the street and the sports hall's rear wall.

"The curves of the street aren't uniform, between each teaching block they change," he explains. "Another challenge was where to split the structure for movement joints as generally the whole building doesn't lend itself to this."

Steelwork contractor Hambleton Steel was on site for 21 weeks and erected approximately 1,100t of structural steel for the job.

Michael Dixon, Hambleton's Project Manager,



said the job was very complex as there were no square grids. "All steelwork is at a radius, nothing is straight even the teaching block's footprints fan out."

Kenton School, with lottery funded, part public sports facilities, has been handed over to Newcastle City Council's private sector partner Aura.

Aura Chief Executive Kirsty Thirlwell said:

"This is the sixth and largest new school we have delivered for Newcastle and it is a great example of the benefit properly directed investment can bring to education."

Partners in Aura are Newcastle City Council, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Sir Robert McAlpine, Robertson Capital Projects and Building Schools for the Future Investments. .