
Chamberlain Buildings, The Vale, Birmingham University



Project Description

Two 16 and 21 storey towers and three 7 storey wings designed for student accommodation

The commission was won after a nationwide competition with an architect led design team in 2012.

The project is located on a sloping site next to a busy main road that is close to other student halls of residence in The Vale conservation area, Edgbaston.

Nolan Associates were responsible for the design of all the civil and structural engineering for the 16 and 21 storey tower structures and the three 7 storey wings, with 725 beds in total. The towers are constructed with precast concrete cross walls, supported off insitu concrete transfer structures at first floor due to the requirement for open areas at ground and basement for restaurants, bars and CHP plant rooms. The towers are linked at each level with a glazed walkway incorporating an expansion joint to allow both buildings to move independently. Stability is provided by shear walls and the stair and lift cores. We believe at 21 stories this structure may be one of the tallest in the UK to use this type of construction cross walls. The buildings are clad in a combination of masonry, curtain walling and copper panelled rain screens.

The 7 storey blocks were again constructed using the precast concrete cross wall method and the blocks were stepped due to a sloping site. All building have piled foundations bearing into sandstone. All of the precast elements of structure were designed and drawn by Nolan Associates, this involved the production of approximately 1800 component drawings to meet a very tight programme.

Client	University of Birmingham
Contractor	Balfour Beatty
Architect	Glancy Nicholls Associates
Value	£40 Million
