

# Off-site construction team wins two awards for ground-breaking healthcare project

The team responsible for the off-site construction of the new Acute Admissions Unit (AAU) at Watford General Hospital – the UK’s largest AAU and now one of the best-performing emergency care services in the country – has won two industry awards.

ProCure21 partner and main contractor Medicinq Osborne, and off-site specialist and Portakabin subsidiary, Yorkon, have been awarded the Building for Health Award at the Builder and Engineer Awards, and Best Off-site Health Project at the Off-site Construction Awards.

Constructed as part of a £29m ProCure21 contract awarded to Medicinq Osborne, the new building for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust was manufactured and substantially fitted out off site by Yorkon in a £12m contract. This reduced the build programme by around six



months and minimised disruption to patient care on a very busy hospital site.

Designed by Murphy Philipps Architects, the AAU is pioneering a new model of care for emergency cases, with rapid assessment and consultant-led diagnosis. It is now among the best-performing emergency care services, with one of the lowest re-admission rates in the country.

Commenting on the awards, David Johnson, Director and General Manager of Yorkon, said, “This project successfully demonstrates how an innovative approach to construction can help main contractors deliver quality

buildings on time and on budget, to the benefit of the client. Yorkon and Medicinq Osborne had a genuine collaborative partnership with openness and transparency throughout. To complete a project of this scale and complexity in the timescale and on such a challenging site was a huge achievement for the team, which we are absolutely delighted has been recognised with these two industry awards.”

Steve Cottrell, Regional Manager of Medicinq Osborne said, “The new AAU in Watford has made a huge difference to people in the area already.”

“These awards are testament not only to the innovation shown throughout this project, but to the whole team involved with the Delivering a Healthy Future project at Watford General Hospital, from early concept to completion, handover and opening of the new unit. This includes clinicians, patients and their families, as well as the Trust project managers, local authority, and Yorkon and Medicinq Osborne’s construction teams.”

The off-site approach enabled manufacturing and fitting out to begin before demolition works had been carried out on site. This parallel working reduced the programme by around 50 per cent and allowed a postgraduate



teaching facility located on the site of the AAU to remain in use for much longer. The building was craned into position at the rate of ten 14m-long modules per day in less than four weeks for the final stages of fitting out and commissioning.

The unit provides 120 beds for emergency admissions, two cardiac catheterisation laboratories, diagnostics including x-ray, ultrasound and CT scanning; a new hospital pharmacy with robotic dispensing, and a roof-top plant room. The building is finished in wedgewood blue with contrasting white render and grey aluminium cladding for a contemporary appearance.



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performance facilities for the Guildhall School of Music in the first eight floors, with a high quality residential tower sitting above. Designed by architects RHWL Arts Team the Guildhall School of Music comprises a 610 seat concert hall, 230 seat training theatre, a studio theatre and additional space for teaching, office and support services.

Lerch Bates worked in close

partnership with the Arts Team to provide the lift strategy for both passenger and goods circulation in the development. A major consideration in the design process was to identify vertical circulation access for disabled persons to ensure compliance with UK Building Regulations and EN81-70.

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