



Bedford College in the UK giving students the Howick advantage

One of only two facilities of its kind in England, **The Connolly Centre for Modern Construction** opened recently at **Bedford College** in the UK. The facility aims to arm students with first-hand knowledge of the latest in offsite and modern construction methods.

State of the art light steel roll forming technology

The facility houses a range of state-of-the-art equipment, giving students hands on experience with some of the latest construction technology. Included in the technology mix is a **Howick FRAMA™ 5600** – a versatile, precision frame and truss roll-forming machine. It is the biggest single investment The Bedford College Group has ever made. The machine manufactures load-bearing wide sectioned frame and trusses from light gauge steel with ease, and the college intends to put it to work quickly. The first 'live' activity will be building small living Pods which will be a project with a few employers for full time students. This will help get everything going and test operations. Next it is hoped that the **Howick FRAMA™**

5600 will be used to create the materials for **recladding the college's own tower block** right next door. If that project goes ahead, students will be learning key skills in the application of design, technology, manufacturing, and installation. The college will get a fast return on its investment, benefitting from attractive, newly refurbished buildings. It will also incur next to no shipping costs and big reductions in carbon emissions for the project – highly important given its environmental focus and certified carbon neutral status.

As well as inspiring students to work smarter in creating built environments, access to technology like this will provide them with a unique advantage when they enter the workforce.





image courtesy of <https://www.trada.co.uk>

Giving students a head-start with modern methods of construction

David Wilkins, Director of Construction and Building Services at Bedford College, commented: “We are excited to have this equipment at our new specialist Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Centre. This will give students a hard-hat head-start when it comes to employability skills in the modern construction industry.”

The Bedford College Group works closely with the UK government and industry associations to unlock the needs of a future workforce. Offsite construction is one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways of meeting the demand for housing, and is seeing rapid adoption by the sector. The college recognised the need for young people better trained in this area. As Ian Pryce, MBE and CEO of Bedford College Group, explained: “We are closing that gap which we see between what happens in industries, and what is taught in college.”

Helping shape the future of construction

The UK has aggressive targets for new home construction, and **the British government sees MMC as key in achieving its aims**. Mark Farmer, the UK government’s advocate for MMC, **highlighted the vital part that Bedford College is playing** in shaping modern construction in Britain. “This facility will be helping to re-shape how we deliver construction in the future. It meets the Government agenda for skills and sustainability, and I can see it being an exemplar for the rest of the country.” And on that basis, Bedford is possibly an exemplar to the rest of the world too. With MMC becoming so important to the sector, embracing MMC in college curriculum makes complete sense.

Howick part of the solution

Howick has always seen itself as an enabler of modern construction methods. As Nick Coubray, CEO of Howick, puts it: “We see ourselves as part of the solution for the construction sector. We create technology that offers more efficient ways of working and smarter ways to build.”

“For the college to choose Howick equipment to train a future workforce is an honour.” Nick says. “We are proud to see our technology being used as part of the training of young people in the industry, and we hope it gives them a real advantage as they move into their careers.”

Find out more

If you would like more information on building with steel and making the transition to offsite manufacturing, talk to us today.

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