

LANDMARK GLAZING INSTALLATION AT FORBURY PLACE



A landmark commercial development in Reading features the largest known butt-jointed fire-rated glazing construction in Europe manufactured by Arkoni Metalwork of Brighouse, West Yorkshire.

The 17,300 square metre No 1 Forbury Place, completed in Summer 2015, was designed by Aukett Swanke Architects on behalf of owners M&G Real Estate and Bell Hammer. It is the first of two prestigious ground plus seven floor office complexes on the site, delivered by contractors Galliford Try, with work set to start on No 2 Forbury Place in the near future.

Arkoni were asked to manufacture and install fire rated glazing around the ground plus seven levels of the atrium area as part of a £1.5 million contract, the biggest to date for the 24-year-old business.

Martin Quarmby of Arkoni explained: "The project consists of a 4 sided glass walled atrium area that is ground plus seven stories high. The glazing is all 30 minute integrity and is set in a concealed framing system with all the visible joints glass to glass butt jointed, including the corners.

"Between each floor level is a bronze and grey coloured feature façade, which hides the structural support steelwork and framing system. The system

was developed by Arkoni in conjunction with Vetrotech Saint-Gobain and is in line with the architect's original vision.

"It is thought to be one of the largest fire rated glazed installations in Europe and certainly the biggest butt-jointed construction," added Martin.

Arkoni worked with Vetrotech to develop a glazing system that would not only offer 30 minute integrity fire rating but also form a protective barrier against falls. Part of the glazing is 4.500mm high on the ground floor, with single panes weighing up to almost half a metric ton.

Martin continued: "The glazing was mainly 28m thick Contraflam 30 Structure

with a screen printed ceramic frit at the bottom to conceal the gap between the computer floor and concrete floor slab at each floor level.

"All of the glazing was installed from the floor slab levels using Arkoni's state of the art "Oscar" robotic glass lifting machine which picked up each individual pane of glass and precisely installed it into place, to form the façade.

"During the operation of installing the 114 tons of glass, no panes were broken by the installation team. The overall effect is a "stunning glass box" façade which runs all the way to the roof of the building," added Martin.

