

Newcastle University

By FaulknerBrowns Architects

HI-MACS® for award winning university project



Photo: Cadzow Pelosi

The highly durable and extremely versatile solid surface material HI-MACS® has been used extensively in the high profile refurbishment of the five storey Students Union in a listed building on the 180 year old Newcastle University campus.

The contract was awarded to leading architects **FaulknerBrowns Architects** who worked closely on the specification and design with **Newcastle University** project chief and executive of the students union Simon Gerry. His brief was for a material that would be highly durable and stand up to heavy use over a number of years. He was also looking for a material that would not wear, look tired or deteriorate in terms of appearance or performance. Both wood and decorative laminates were rejected and FaulknerBrowns then put forwards HI-MACS® based on their own experience with the product.

HI-MACS® is a natural stone acrylic which is easily machined, thermoformed to any 3D shape and can be joined without any visual seams. It is non-porous and impervious to moisture, colour fast and very easy to clean and maintain making it totally hygienic. It met all the criteria for the specification at the student union, which called for a modern and contemporary material that would endure round the clock use in social, working and IT environments, which included clubs and designer bars.

A major challenge to FaulknerBrowns and fabricators Multi-Surface Fabrications (MSF) of County Durham was that the refurbishment was being carried out in a listed building

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therefore the integral structure and fabric had to remain intact so, for instance, the cladding of the main staircase was only allowed if it retained the original feature. HI-MACS® was used as the ideal cladding choice.



Stairs cladding view, Photo: Cadzow Pelosi

To create a clean and contemporary style, most of the work in **HI-MACS®** was in **Nordic White** although some striking and dramatic **Cima** from the **HI-MACS® Volcanics Collection** along with an amount of solid black was also used. Initially FaulknerBrowns had MSF make up a compound curved sample in Nordic White for presentation to Simon Gerry and that clearly convinced him that HI-MACS® was the right way to go.

Four hundred sheets of HI-MACS® were supplied to MSF and they set to work to create the two bars including the main feature bar. MSF also worked with shop fitting specialists Newman Scott to install over 40 columns including 4.6m tall columns spanning two floors in the main bar area. Other HI-MACS® installations for the refurbishment project included the main reception desk, a number of computer desks and print stations, coffee shop counters, 50 coffee table tops, shop fittings in the Union shop and radiator casings throughout the building.

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CNC-Milled in HI-MACS® Nordic White, Photo: Cadzow Pelosi

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Another reason for using HI-MACS® Nordic White cladding for pillars emerged during Simon Gerry's discussions with FaulknerBrowns Architects – students' age-old habit of fly posting! Traditionally removing redundant posters on a constant basis would leave dirty marks and flaking paint – with HI-MACS® this is no problem with no trace of the poster or glue left behind. In addition, there is an amount of branding NUSU graphics – for example on the back of the T-cups - which can be altered without damaging the building. PC linked TVs have also given students a new medium for their advertising.

Two noticeable projects were the 2.4m tall “**T-cup**” circular seating and conversation points and the spectacular “**Spine Wall**” which is a multi-function (designed for over 100 activities) random pigeon hole storage system which runs the full length of the building and clearly demonstrates the superb finish that that can be achieved with HI-MACS® with CNC machining.



Photo: John Watson Photography

Alistair Stripp – Project director for FaulknerBrowns explains why HI-MACS® was the material of choice: “HI-MACS® is a windfall for designers. Detailing edges or limiting designs to single plane surfaces is no longer a problem. Traditionally there had to be acceptance of something less than the Concept due to 'practicalities' which in truth were just limitations of the materials. We can now push the designs as far as the design software will allow us. Whilst someone still has to make it, the ability of firms like MSF and Newman Scott, the shop-fitting specialists, to deliver such fantastic results with HI-MACS® is greatly appreciated. For FaulknerBrowns, skills like these on the doorstep are a large part of the Newcastle University Students Union being an Award winning scheme.”

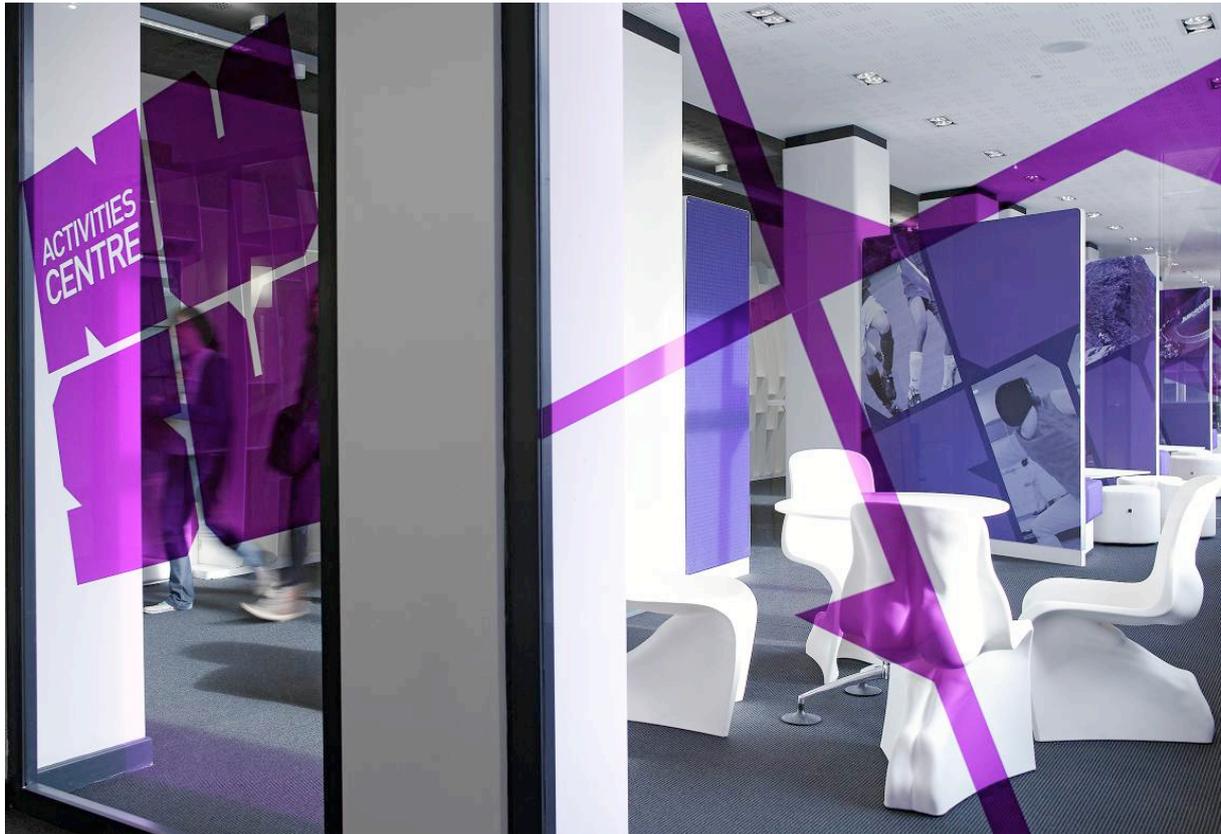
Andy Noble, Commercial Manager of MSF says: “This is where HI-MACS® solid surface comes into its own. It not only looks great and is incredibly versatile, giving you masses of creative freedom to achieve some truly outstanding results, it is also extremely durable so it's sure to look great for years to come.”

FaulknerBrowns Architects began the project in December '09 and completed it in September 2011 in time for fresher's week! However the official opening took place on the 18th November 2011 to huge applause and enthusiastic acclaim – the entire refurbishment still looking absolutely pristine despite the 'baptism of fire' of freshers' week!

For this highly successful and prestigious project FaulknerBrowns were awarded the top prize in the **Education Interior Design Award** category at the **2011 National Mixology North Awards** in November, and they also won **Design Practice of the Year**.

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HI-MACS[®] by LG Hausys

www.himacs.eu

FaulknerBrowns Architects

www.faulknerbrowns.co.uk

Multi-Surface Fabrications Ltd

www.msfl.uk.com

High resolution photos at: http://www.himacs.eu/stampa/immagini/healthcare-education_6

HI-MACS[®] ADVANTAGES AT A GLANCE.

The following properties make HI-MACS[®] stand out as the material of "New Generation":

- *Virtually unlimited range of applications*
- *Countless possibilities for customized design (colour, formability, translucency, etc.)*
- *Valuable, laboratory-tested raw materials*
- *Advanced manufacturing techniques*
- *High-quality processing technology*
- *Ecological commitment*
- *Wide range of sinks and bowls*
- *Ease of maintenance thanks to dirt-repellent surfaces*
- *Resistance to common household chemicals*
- *Resistance to bacteria and viruses*
- *Fire resistance and low flame propagation properties*
- *Excellent value for money*

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- *10 + 5-year warranty, the only one of its kind on the market*

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