

University of Warwick, Coventry

WHEN HEPBURN ASSOCIATES WAS FACED WITH THE TASK OF PRODUCING DESIGNS FOR THE REFURBISHMENT OF 10 CATERING OUTLETS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, THE PROPRIETORS WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES SMILING AT THE END RESULT AS MARIA BRACKEN REPORTS

Catering design consultants at Hepburn Associates were appointed to provide schematic and concept catering designs to update Warwick University's catering areas.

The consultants' recent projects include planning the refurbishment of Green College's kitchen at Oxford University within a Grade II listed building; providing kitchen and restaurant design advice within new building parameters of Gateway Academy; and extensive bar and catering design consultancy at the Leicester Performing Arts Centre, otherwise known as The Curve.

The University boasts three purpose built year round conference centres used annually by more than 150,000 delegates. This is the largest arts centre outside of London, as well as the largest hospitality service of any UK university.

The university's catering areas examined by Hepburn Associates incorporated those within the Arts Centre including the redesigned Café Bar, offering a selection of sandwiches, jacket potatoes, salads and hot meals; Rootes Building's Bar Fusion, which serves a variety of freshly prepared Asian food; and Café Library, which prides itself on its snacks, cakes and premium fair trade beverages.

Duncan Hepburn FCSI, Joint Director of Hepburn Associates, explains the process behind designing the outlets.

"Each area was reviewed with the catering team at Warwick Food & Drink and the Hepburn Associates team. The requirements and suggestions, from simple colour scheme changes to complete structural alterations, were then discussed.

"From the initial brief we then produced plans and visuals of each area, showing various views and layout options. Once approved, an outline 'scope of works' package was then passed to the Warwick Food & Drink team."

In addition, the Warwick Food & Drink department provides 35,000 meals per week, caters for 20,000 students and staff, and has 100 vending machines across the campus. The cuisine served in the catering departments is sourced locally where possible and is supplied by companies who offer Fairtrade and organic products.

Kevin Tyson FCSI, who headed up the Hepburn Associates team and worked closely with General Manager of Warwick Food & Drink Clive Singleton, says he and the team were going for a more neutral look in one of the outlets to create an inviting environment.

"Viva Café Bar was given a high street feel using earth tones like we see in nature such as browns, ambers, terracotta and brick

tones. These colours tend to be harmonious, rich in colour and depth and impart a feeling of solidity and performance."

Meanwhile at the Café Humanities, warming red shades were chosen, which Tyson says often works best in dining outlets.

"Red is a warm colour, exciting our perceptions and warming our desires. The colour is often associated with hunger, anger, passion and vitality. It is particularly well suited for environments that serve food - be it a restaurant, corporate dining facility or domestic dining room - and we believe it is well received by the students and staff of the humanities building."

But Tyson says his favourite design at the University is the concept designed Sports Café which, when built, will sit adjacent to the Sports Centre. It is hoped the design will be used to market the scheme to the University governing body.

Tyson says: "The concept is for a glass walled new building, giving an illusion of space, continuity and bringing the outside in. It will provide a fantastic visual impact on campus whilst providing some greater, exterior socialising space for students and other sports centre users."

For Singleton, working with Hepburn Associates was fundamentally key.

"Their time and understanding gave us great confidence that the ideas we had could be brought together with the overall look and feel of all the areas and that as we develop our offers in the future they would be able to deliver on these."

Hepburn says the renovation of the outlets integrated well with the overall standard of the establishment.

"The improved atmosphere and ambience that was created was just what the management team were hoping to achieve in keeping the University as one of the leading University providers of food and drink. The chefs, students and all those concerned were very impressed with the upgrading and redesign of the areas, in terms of both appearance and operation applications."

Looking ahead, the consultants have partnered with the West Herts College in Hertfordshire to design and tender its six training kitchens and restaurants as well as its coffee shops and bars. The company is also advising GSL at the Northwick Park Hospital in Wembley, London, to revamp its 24 ward kitchens.

It's certainly all systems go at Hepburn Associates.

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Right
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