

Press Release
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M2H Architects Specify Forticrete Masonry for New Luxury Retirement Village

The external façade of the Robinson Court development, at Audley St. Elphin's Park, has been completed using Forticrete high performance cast stone blocks in three bespoke colours. The cast stone blocks were specified as they seamlessly replicated the existing natural stone finish of St Elphin's House, the centrepiece of the luxury retirement village in Derbyshire, a strict requirement of the local planning authority.

Consisting of 20 one and two-bedroom apartments, Robinson Court has been built to complement the heritage of St. Elphin's House, built from natural stone and dating from the 1820s. It became a prestigious girls' boarding school in 1904. Working closely with Audley Retirement and the local planning authority, M2H Architects specified Forticrete's purpose-made cast stone Regency Ashlar blocks for the main body of the external skin of Robinson Court. Varying size blocks up to 600mm in length built in 3 different height courses combined with narrow 5mm mortar joints were used to closely imitate the construction of St. Elphin's House.



Forticrete stone detailing including decorative heads, cills, plinths, string courses, copings and finials were also used to replicate the tradition, quality and aesthetic appeal of the existing natural stone of St. Elphin's House. To ensure delivery of its Regency Ashlar blocks and stone detailing, in full and on time, Forticrete appointed a Contract Manager to maintain a constant line of communication with both Forticrete internally and main contractors, Cruden Construction Ltd.

The Project Architect at M2H Architects commented: "Due to the prominent location of Robinson Court and proximity to St Elphin's House within the Audley village, there was a desire for natural stone to be used for its construction. It was essential we specified a natural stone product best suited to fulfil the local planning authority's desire for Robinson Court to sit seamlessly within its existing natural stone vernacular."

"However, we were looking for a cost effective, yet sensitive alternative to natural stone for use on this site. Forticrete's unique colour matching capability and ability to replicate the texture of the natural stone meant Forticrete's Regency Ashlar provided the ideal solution, boasting the same architectural properties as natural stone, with an aesthetically pleasing finish at a fraction of the cost."

"The design team were unanimously impressed with the end result; the high quality of the finish makes it difficult to differentiate between the natural and cast stone."

In order to successfully replicate the texture of the natural stone Forticrete took wax rubbings of the natural stone on St. Elphin's House, this was then passed onto the product development department. Forticrete developed a unique 'masons tooling' finish for the face of the Regency Ashlar block, unlike the smooth face of traditional 'ashlar' blocks. The Regency Ashlar block also boasts a unique colour matching capability thanks to a library of several hundred bespoke colours, enabling the manufacture of perfect blends, best suited to complement both St Elphin's House and the development's surrounding environment.

Set within 14-acres of landscaped grounds on a 44 acre site in Darley Dale, Audley St. Elphin's Park also consists of two earlier development phases; Hamlet & Chapel Mews – a selection of two bedroom cottages, apartments and Thornton Mews – a selection of four luxury mews cottages, both of which incorporate Forticrete's popular Anstone walling stone and its cast stone Regency Ashlar blocks.

Forticrete Regency Ashlar is manufactured from high grade limestone and sandstone aggregates that have been chosen for their known performance and reliable quality. The cement, pigments and waterproofing agents all conform to their appropriate British or European Standard. The Regency Ashlar is created from a homogeneous mix, without using a 'backing' material that ensures no undue stresses are built up within the unit. The major technical performance characteristics of Regency Ashlar exceed the requirements of BS 1217 and the United Kingdom Cast Stone Association specification.

All Forticrete manufacturing facilities are BSI registered and operate to the requirements of BS EN ISO 9001:2008 and BS EN ISO 14001:2004, the national and international standards for quality and environmental management systems. They have also gained the rating of "very good" for BES 6001 across all seven of their factories demonstrating responsible sourcing.

For more information on Forticrete's range of Architectural Masonry products, visit www.Forticrete.co.uk or call the technical hotline on: 0800 262136.

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