

## **Construction completes on King's Cross Sports Hall**

- **Latest building to complete at King's Cross is a community sports centre**
- **Building designed to have multiple lives and boasts impressive sustainability credentials**
- **Innovative timber-framed design responds to its sensitive location**



Construction of the brand-new King's Cross Sports Hall, a community sports centre and gym, located at the north east edge of the 67-acre King's Cross development, has now completed.

The building, designed by Bennetts Associates alongside engineering company Arup, features an indoor sports hall and a health and fitness suite over two levels. The sports hall has been built to Sport England standards and can be used as four badminton courts, a basketball court, a volleyball court or a five-a-side football pitch. The building will be operated by Camden Council with the gym being managed by Better Gyms.

The building's position, just three metres above the underground tunnels of the Thameslink railway line, created a unique design challenge meaning the building needed to be designed using lightweight materials and with shallow foundations. The Sports Hall, built by BAM, is primarily constructed using a cross laminated timber (CLT) frame and glulam timber columns, a natural alternative to steel and concrete that is both lightweight and carbon friendly. It is clad in zinc and has a super-lightweight concrete substructure that runs perpendicular to the tunnels to prevent concentrated loads. The serrated roof and façades of the building are a nod to its railway context and heritage.

Designed to meet a near-zero carbon target, several innovative features were incorporated into the design, including various methods of ventilation and the use of glazing to provide daylight while reducing heat gains. The building also benefits from its connection to the King's Cross

Central District Heating and Cooling Network, an efficient system for heating all the buildings at King's Cross that means that conventional boilers are not required.

The building's sustainability credentials are further bolstered by the fact it was designed to have multiple lives. When it opens, the gym and fitness suite on the upper floor will be open to the public, however for a time the sports hall will be the home of the Construction Skills Centre. This is a temporary fixture until the skills centre moves to their new home in Euston, at which point the sports hall will open to the public.

**Will Colthorpe, Partner, King's Cross Central Limited Partnership comments:** *"We are thrilled that the Sports Hall has now completed, adding a further piece to the King's Cross jigsaw. Our development activity is now largely focused at the northern end of the site and we're extremely pleased with how it is all coming together and offering residents, workers and visitors a wide range of amenities. The Sports Hall will be a fantastic asset for the local community, and we look forward to opening the gym later this year."*

**Julian Lipscombe, Director, Bennetts Associates:** *"As our first completed all-timber and 'near-zero carbon' building, this project is hugely significant for us, with expertise already being applied to other commissions. Particular delights are rationalising extreme substructure challenges into a deceptively simple superstructure that echoes the site's railway heritage and the warmth of the timber interior acting as a beacon for the community. Extending the collaboration established with Argent and LB Camden on 5 Pancras Square has been very rewarding."*

**Francesco Ferrari, Senior Engineer, Arup said:** *"We are proud to have been involved in this unique project which further contributes to our ongoing work in the regeneration of King's Cross. Working in collaboration with the wider team, we were excited by the challenge of 'as light as possible' and responded to this by innovating and pushing the limits of concrete and timber design, embracing the critical interactions between what lays above and below ground. We feel a strong sense of achievement that Arup played a central role in ensuring the engineering constraints related to the sensitive underground tunnels directly beneath the Sports Hall were embraced by the whole design team."*

**Project Manager, Christian Clues, BAM noted:** *"Q2 posed some unusual challenges. It sat over three Victorian brickwork live Network Rail tunnels serving King's Cross Station. This required very precise tunnel monitoring; our careful methodologies avoided any complications. The technical tunnel works were conducted with painstaking care and attention to detail.*

*"We conducted extensive tests on the bespoke concrete mix to ensure it wasn't too heavy. This regime affected batching plant operations, and meant independent testing on site, and re-weighing before a pour commenced.*

*"The timber also had its technical aspects, CLT's moisture retaining properties making it hard to dry. We came up with a vented design solution where we could install the roofing membrane and allow air/moisture to escape so the timber dried out. This worked very successfully. We managed to bring the scheme in despite the start of the UK lockdown and I'm delighted to say the finished building looks impressive."*

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## **Press Enquiries**

Keziah Harrison, LCA, [kh@londoncommunications.co.uk](mailto:kh@londoncommunications.co.uk), 07851 774462

Helena Carrie, LCA, [hec@londoncommunications.co.uk](mailto:hec@londoncommunications.co.uk), 07791181557

## **About King's Cross**

King's Cross is home to 67 acres of inspiring businesses, outstanding architecture, destination restaurants and a vibrant cultural scene. It is London's creative neighbourhood and a lively place in central London to visit day and night. The area's industrial past has inspired the 50 new and repurposed buildings; the public spaces between them are a mix of parks, streets, squares, and gardens, with Granary Square and its iconic fountains as a heart.

Already known as a foodie hotspot, King's Cross is now established as a shopping destination. The retail vision has recently been completed with the opening of the Heatherwick Studio-designed Coal Drops Yard, London's newest shopping street. The district opened in a pair of reimagined Victorian coal buildings, creating 100,000 sq ft of shops, bars and restaurants in the centre of King's Cross.

Over 20,000 people now work in the area in companies including Google, YouTube, Havas, PRS for Music, Camden Council, The Office Group, ArtFund and Universal Music. Facebook, in one of the most significant commercial deals in London's recent history, are also set to take 600,000 sq ft of commercial space across three buildings from 2021. A further 200,000 sq ft of office space remains to be delivered.

King's Cross has close to 2,000 homes – a mix of private, rental, student and affordable housing. All have been designed with care by a number of renowned architecture practices. Landmark development Gasholders London, was completed in February 2018, creating 145 new canal-side apartments within a triplet of Grade II-listed cast-iron gasholder frames.

The King's Cross estate is owned by the King's Cross Central Limited Partnership, made up of Argent and pension fund AustralianSuper. AustralianSuper owns a 67.5% stake in KCCLP.

AustralianSuper manages AUD \$140 billion of members' retirement savings on behalf of almost 2.2 million members. It is a profit for member organization. One in 10 working Australians is a member of AustralianSuper, the nation's largest superannuation fund.

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## **About Bennetts Associates**

Bennetts Associates creates sustainable and enduring architecture. As one of the UK's leading practices, their diverse portfolio has been celebrated with more than 180 awards over 30 years and covers cultural, workplace and education projects in both the public and private sector, ranging from masterplans to small historic buildings. Bennetts Associates is an employee-

owned trust of 70 people with studios in London, Edinburgh and Manchester, and has recently earned Building Design's Higher Education Architect of the Year 2019 Award.

The practice is responsible for many prominent projects, most recently both the Royal College of Pathologists and the London Borough of Camden headquarters in London, Storyhouse in Chester, the Bayes Centre for the University of Edinburgh and Jaguar Land Rover in Warwickshire. Bennetts Associates is currently working on Facebook's London HQ in King's Cross, the Woolwich Creative District in London and the University of Edinburgh's Futures Institute.

The practice also leads its field in sustainability - in April 2019 it became the world's first architects to secure Science Based Target approval and commit to the UN's Climate Neutral Now campaign. The practice is a founding member of the UK Green Building Council and the first architecture practice in the world to report company impacts using the GRI Guidelines.

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### **About ARUP**

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. Working in more than 140 countries, the firm's designers, engineers, architects, planners, consultants and technical specialists work with our clients on innovative projects of the highest quality and impact.

[www.arup.com](http://www.arup.com)

### **About BAM**

BAM Construction in London is behind many of the capital's most recognised landmarks both old and new, such as the original Tata Gallery (1897), and the New Scotland Yard HQ for the Metropolitan Police (2017).

BAM has created thousands of buildings over 150+ years and is responsible for constructing the majority of new buildings at Argent's development of Kings Cross.

The company is known for its highly modern techniques and its ingrained collaborative ethos. The company created the first zero-carbon primary school in the UK. It integrates a dedicated design business, its own engineering business and a facilities management company.

It is part of BAM Construct UK, in turn part of Royal BAM Group, which employs some 20,000 people. Royal BAM is an acknowledged leader in digital construction and innovation.

The delivery architect is Stride Treglown.

### **About the Construction Skills Centre**

The Construction Skills Centre helps local people access the jobs and opportunities created by the King's Cross development. The centre offers training, apprenticeships, employment advice and job opportunities to local people looking to work in construction.

The Construction Skills Centre was initially based on York Way within the W Zone of the King's Cross development. This has now closed and the old building is being demolished in order to

prepare for development on this site. The Construction Skills Centre is temporarily moving to the Sports Hall and will open once government restrictions around Covid-19 are lifted. The Construction Skills Centre is then set to move to a new permanent home in Euston once building work on its permanent home completes.