

Education

Barbara Hepworth Building University of Huddersfield Huddersfield, UK

PRODUCTS USED:

Expona Flow PUR, Bloc PUR,
Polysafe Stone & Wood FX, Finesse SD

University of Huddersfield's new School of Art, Design and Architecture, showcasing bespoke Polyflor Expona Flow PUR patterns at the heart of its creative environment.

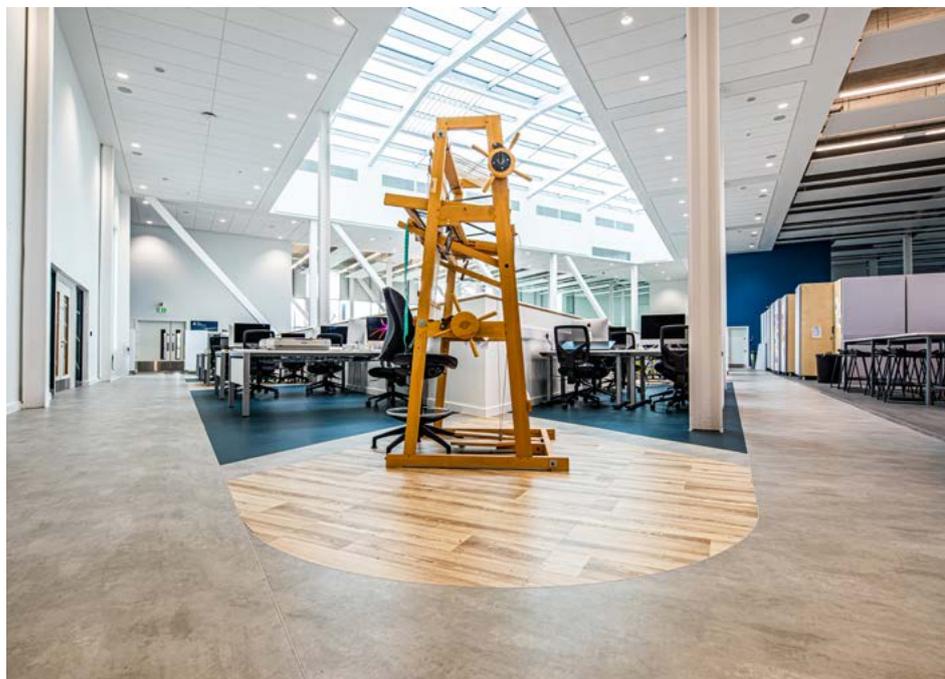
Collaboration and innovation are central themes at the new, £30 million Barbara Hepworth Building. Much like the work of the famed Yorkshire sculptor, the building responds to the topography of the local landscape with a cantilevered design which welcomes visitors from the canal-side location and spans a five-metre elevation change. The façade is veiled with laser-cut metal cladding which references the town's textile heritage.

Inside, the faculty comprises flowing spaces set around an internal atrium, which is easily adapted to meet the varied needs of the multi-disciplinary faculty. The state-of-the-art facilities incorporate the latest motion capture and digital visualisation technologies, whilst also supporting a range of traditional crafts.

Polyflor collaborated closely with AHR, Morgan Sindall and Phoenix Flooring using a variety of vinyl flooring products to create a flooring specification which properly reflects the building's artistic and practical aspirations.

The multi-floor central atrium is set around a feature staircase and the design team were eager for this space to be attractive and easily navigable whilst also encouraging interaction between the different disciplines housed in the building. To help support these goals, we worked with the project team to create a bespoke flooring design using Expona Flow PUR.

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The vinyl sheets beautifully recreate the aesthetic of wood and concrete floors and provide excellent durability in this high traffic area. AHR and our technical team designed and developed a bespoke pattern for each atrium area into CAD designs, combining Warm Limed Ash, Steel Blue and Light Industrial Concrete colours. These patterns are both attractive and help students to intuit and navigate the surrounding open-plan spaces and adjoining rooms.

Once the designs were agreed, we produced the flooring at our site in Manchester and supplied them to Phoenix Flooring to be installed. Through careful measurement, we were able to ensure that the flooring supplied precisely matched the dimensions of the finished space, allowing them to complete a streamlined installation.

A number of other Polyflor products were also utilised to provide a high-quality flooring finish throughout the new building.

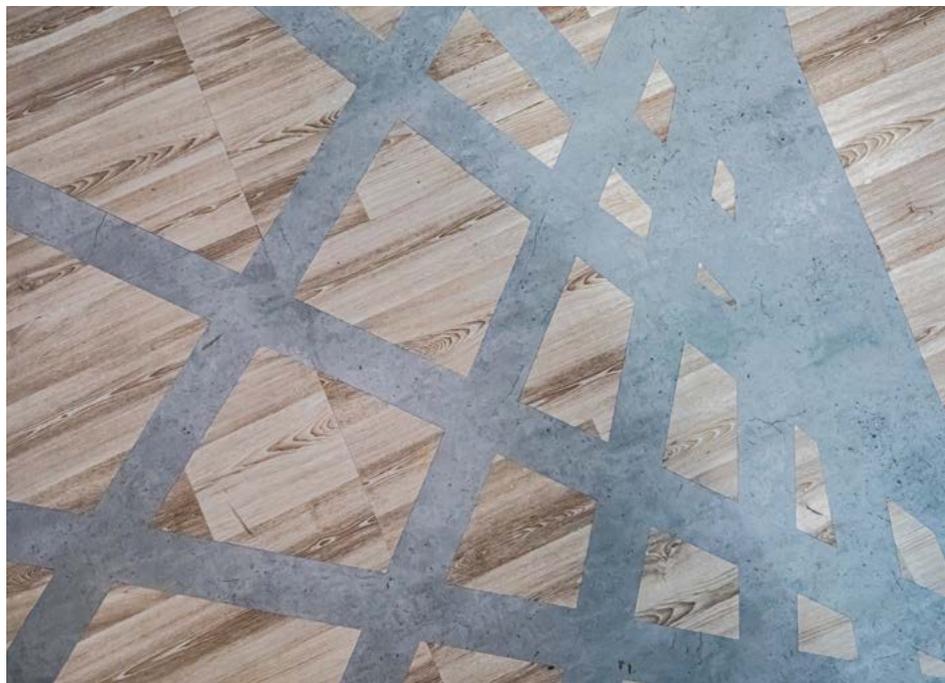
Polyflor Finesse SD was chosen for the communication and infrastructure rooms where static build-up needs to be carefully controlled. The product has been specially developed for these types of environments, ensuring a uniform flow of electrostatic discharge to a ground point.

Polysafe Stone FX PUR and Wood FX PUR were also specified in areas where there was potential for water spillage. The products have been assessed under many of the most demanding international assessments for slip resistance and achieve a Pendulum Test Value of 36+ for a low slip potential classification under HSE Guidance.

The specification was completed with the use of hardwearing Bloc PUR in Classic Black and Urban Chic. These simple shades of black and grey complemented the use of neutral stone, concrete and wood finishes across the building's floors. By specifying Polyflor products across the building, flooring maintenance is streamlined.

The complex site layout and atrium space posed a key challenge during the installation phase. To overcome this, we collaborated with Morgan Sindall and Phoenix Flooring to develop and commission a bespoke pallet lifting system using an internal crane. This allowed the 2 metre vinyl roles to be easily and safely lifted to the upper floors.

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Once all the sections were lifted, Phoenix Flooring set them out to our CAD layout carefully checking them for precision of location. This meticulous approach allowed the 551 sections to be accurately installed in all areas of the building in a period of just 12 weeks.

"Polyflor's technical staff were on hand throughout the installation period to provide aftersales service by telephone and in person if required to support our supervisor and operatives on site. The bespoke pallet system ensured we delivered best working practice in our health and safety obligations."

Matt Brown, Director, Phoenix Flooring

From the outset, the scheme was designed to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' and the Polyflor products are expected to contribute towards the award of credits under this scheme.

The sheets achieve a BRE A+ rating and are certified as 'Excellent' under the BES 6001 responsible sourcing standard. In addition, the products feature recycled content and are 100% recyclable at end of life through the Recofloor scheme - supporting the circular economy.

The products have also been certified under the Eurofins Indoor Air Comfort Gold scheme. This shows they emit exceptionally low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and are compliant with the most demanding voluntary indoor air quality standards across Europe. As a result, these ranges not only support efforts to achieve credits within the Health and Wellbeing section of the BREEAM assessment but also help to maintain a healthier and more comfortable learning environment for students and staff.

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