

Facade installation - Specialist access equipment design - Heathrow T5

The Problem/Challenge

A major project requiring the installation of an inclined glazing system along a considerable façade length. The building overhang and restrictions on crane usage on site meant that the use of cranes was not practicable.

The Risks

The work involved work at height with the consequential risk of falls or fall of material during installation. There was the potential for damage to the units through the use of traditional powered access equipment because of the reliance on the operator's skill to avoid collision with the façade.

The Solution

The cladding designer proposed a gantry installation system with a runway installed in front of the building, for the gantry to travel along its entire length and height. This system provided a controlled means of lifting the glazed units and personnel. The client recognised that the costs of this system were largely offset against improved productivity and reduced damage.

The Benefits

A safe working platform was established. The programme was completed on time with significantly reduced vehicle movements. The quality of the finished product was enhanced. There was a significantly reduced number of damaged units.

Key Points

Early involvement of the specialist curtain walling contractor was essential. It reflected the fact that the installation process would be challenging and that a bespoke access system would be required. An early cost/benefit analysis demonstrated that the investment in the travelling gantry was worthwhile.

