

News release:

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Traditional Foundry Skills Hold Water at London University

Traditional foundry skills are back in vogue in the restoration of the exterior of one of London's former technical colleges. Master craftsmen from Hargreaves Foundry have supplied bespoke and off the shelf cast iron rainwater goods as part of a £1.5m external refurbishment to University House, a grade II listed building which is now part of the University of East London (UEL).



Hargreaves craftsmen created new moulds to replicate the intricately patterned earbands needed to hold in place 200 metres of 100mm x 75mm rectangular pipes.

All offset pieces were manufactured as specials in the Halifax-based foundry within three weeks.

A Hargreaves site survey revealed that after a century of excellent service, the cast iron rainwater system had disintegrated. Some bespoke replica fittings needed specially casting so as to complement standard items specified from the Premier Rainwater range of traditional cast iron rainwater pipes, gutters, heads and fittings.

The building was formerly part of West Ham Technical Institute which opened in 1898 and taught art, engineering and science. Its [apprenticeship](#) classes included foundry skills.

As part of an external renovation programme, funded by the UEL and 'gift aided' to local people, specialist contractors Triton Building Conservation cleaned and restored three facades of the building and those to the adjacent Passmore Edwards Museum.

Triton Building Conservation's site manager, Zak Crafer said: 'Hargreaves provided a faithful reproduction of the century-old earbands and offsets. Their comprehensive site survey and ability to include special castings over a short timescale meant no downtime on the project and the replica pieces were easy to install by our own skilled team.'

Ironically, Hargreaves Foundry, which was established in 1896, is just two years older than the building it has helped to restore.

Cast iron is a sustainable material and so after serving the drainage needs of a building for its lifetime it can be fully recycled, not 'down-cycled'.

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Notes to editors:

1. Hargreaves Premier Rainwater (BS 460) is a range of traditional cast iron rainwater pipes, gutters, heads and fittings which includes ornamental castings produced in our own foundry. These stock item products are finished in a grey primer with rust inhibitors.
2. Hargreaves Foundry was established in 1896, in Halifax, Yorkshire, and today employs a staff of 65. The iron founders have supplied castings to the engineering and construction industries for more than 100 years. It is best known as a manufacturer of cast iron drainage products.
3. Hargreaves Foundry has retained specialist pattern making and foundry skills and is now just one of a handful still operating in the UK.
4. Hargreaves has a long tradition of supplying architectural and street furniture castings and castings produced at the Halifax foundry can still be seen in around Halifax more than a century later.
5. Hargreaves Foundry has 65 employees. Recent projects include: the multi-million-pound redevelopment of Windrush Square in Brixton, recreating cast iron windows at south Liverpool's "pink" place of worship, the Church of St Michael in the Hamlet and at the Garrison Chapel in Pembroke Dock, a full complement of period cast iron lampposts to the Blue Bell Railway terminus, East Grinstead and supplying over five kilometres of internal cast iron rainwater and drainage systems for Europe's tallest skyscraper, Moscow's Federation Tower. Hargreaves operates a joint venture in China selling drainage pipes into the Russian market.
6. The West Ham Technical Institute opened in 1898 and taught art, engineering and science. The Institute also included a women's department. It provided apprenticeship classes including traditional foundry skills.
7. The University of East London Stratford Campus provides impressive facilities located in the heart of Stratford, future home of the 2012 Olympic Games.

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