

Case Study

Francis Crick Institute

Brill Place, London

Architect: **HOK International Ltd**

Main Contractor: **Laing O'Rourke Construction Ltd**

Quantity Surveyor: **Turner & Townsend Plc**

As the Francis Crick Institute opens its doors, we take a closer look at Optima's contribution to this iconic building.

The Brief:

Optima is continually redefining the standards of glass partitioning. This is clearly seen through our recent work in the new Francis Crick Institute. Optima was tasked with designing, delivering and installing all glass partitioning systems across the building.

Products Installed:

Revolution double glazing

Optima 117 plus single glazing

Optima 217 plus double glazing

Revolution 54 single and double glazing

Axile Pulse and Clarity doors

Single glazed Edge doors in Microflush door frames

Back painted atrium glass feature wall

Bespoke sliding doors

Bespoke single glazed screens

Fire rated door and side screens





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The Project:

Named after the scientist who was one of the team which made the ground-breaking discovery of DNA's double helix structure, the Francis Crick Institute stands as the largest biomedical research centre under a single roof in Europe.

Spanning 980,000 sq. ft. and housing over 1,000 researchers, this new hub will bring together specialist knowledge, expertise and resources.

It will spearhead new research that will support the development of treatments for a wide range of illnesses including cancer, heart disease and neurodegenerative diseases.

The striking design was created by London-based architects HOK in association with PLP. It features large cantilevered bay windows, a cathedral-like glazed atria and a curved roof.

The interior of the building features highly specialised design incorporating a variety of glazed partition types that allow privacy, acoustic attenuation and simple clean aesthetics.

When HOK were developing their ideas for the glass partitioning they wanted a partner who could provide both creative design and technical excellence.

The demands of a laboratory specification would need a partner to be a pro-active problem solver and Optima were able to demonstrate that they were more than capable of the job.



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The Vision:

Integral to the ambition of the Institute was transparency at every level. The exterior windows and interior partitions work together, connecting the inside of the building with the local community outside; an important aspect of the Crick's community engagement and education programme.

It was equally important for the scientists, from each of the six different institutes, to work in a building that broke the mould and actively encouraged visual connectivity and collaboration between researchers who would never have met others from such a range of different disciplines in a regular science building.



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The Solution:

Optima's partitioning systems were required to create laboratories, meeting rooms and office areas throughout the building. Each installation had to function at the highest level to meet the special requirements of each area.

Optima selected products which would perform acoustically, combat environmental issues, ensure the retention of air tightness and cleanliness.

Four key products were specified: Firstly, the slim-line "Revolution 54" designed to be both single and double glazed systems with full, seamless drywall integration, stunning design and high performing acoustic characteristics.

Secondly, "Edge-Symmetry" doors can be single or double glazed to suit the required acoustic performance and can be designed to be either hinged or pivoting.

Additionally, on this project, in order to meet the stringent criteria for laboratory areas, both

anti-bacterial pull and lever handles were fitted where necessary, along with a 100mm plinth to the glazed screens.

Thirdly, "Optima 117" plus is a silicone free, single glazed partition system which can be combined with many common designed components within the Optima range to create a sleek finish.

Finally, "Optima 217 Plus" is similar to the 117 system, but utilises a unique hidden mullion enabling a variety of glass combinations and the incorporation of blinds.

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The Delivery:

Optima's products had to work seamlessly with the rest of the design to provide the interior with a feeling of transparency, allowing great light transmission and, importantly, enabling clear views onto different floors. This wasn't just an aesthetic ambition but a reflection of the very essence of this revolutionary scientific initiative.

This unusual degree of visibility, within a biomedical research centre, would not only help to demystify certain aspects of scientific research, but importantly allow visual connections to be initiated, thereby enhancing the collaborative potential of the building.

Unsurprisingly, acoustic issues within this building needed to be addressed. Optima was presented with a variety of challenges that were innovatively reviewed and overcome. This enabled Optima to provide the remarkable level of acoustic performance that the building required.

As a biomedical research centre, this project was subject to rigorous testing processes to meet the required standards. The premium level of service that Optima guarantees and our attention to detail meant these standards were exceeded. Our thorough and precise installation processes ensured that nothing short of a perfect job was delivered.





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Working with Optima:

This was an intense project requiring expert levels of precision. The partitioning had to look elegant, be robust, and work with revolutionary designs, whilst also offering high levels of sound control for the client.

When reflecting upon the project's success, Andy Warner Lacey, HOK's Interior Design Sector Leader, expressed how he valued Optima's role on the project:

"Optima's contribution was not solely as a partitioning contractor but as a valuable member of the design team. They had a desire to try to address and resolve each of the project's unique issues, irrespective of how unreasonable they were."

At Optima, we look beyond providing standard products and see opportunities for innovation and development. We treat every project as an opportunity to add to our expertise, which is why we offer a truly bespoke service that delivers above and beyond what is expected.

We are extremely proud to have been a part of such a prestigious installation; particularly one that will prove to be life changing for so many in the future.

If you would like to find out more about Optima or to discuss your options, visit our website:
www.optimasystems.com