



Above: Diagrid pattern of the Victoria Gate, Leeds façade.

ACME – ‘A Company Making Everything’

The 2017 winner of the British Precast Creativity in Concrete Award is ACME. ACME, acronym for ‘A Company Making Everything’ was established in London ten years ago, and has since expanded internationally. Working in the fields of urban planning, contemporary architecture and interior design, the practice works with private, corporate and public clients.

Aiming to create outstanding and inspiring work, ACME has worked on numerous projects including: Victoria Gate, Leeds; Southampton Westquay; Eastland, Melbourne; Bishopsgate Goodyard, London; Folkestone Harbour; Swansea Central; Birmingham Smithfield; and the Corniche in Doha, Qatar.

On the first of these – Victoria Gate, Leeds – ACME has used concrete in a range of ways to deliver its ambitions. Particularly noteworthy is the range of precast architectural finishes. The project has received extensive recognition, with an impressive 10 accolades to its name. These include the 2017 RIBA National Award and MIPIM Award for the Global Best Shopping Centre 2017. The project is fulfilling the ambitions set out back in 2011: a development to reinvigorate the area and improve residential, leisure and hotel facilities.

With ACME working alongside two British Precast members – Thorp and Techrete – the Victoria Gate project has

come to life. Thorp manufactured and installed the 600m² of distinctive brick facade, comprising 550 panes, together with recon stone column supports. Thorp addressed the lack of repetition in the units by using computer-generated hot wire cutting of polystyrene to create individual moulds.

Elsewhere on the project, Techrete’s engineers helped to deconstruct the architect’s diagrid façade to panelise it and enable production. Innumerable intricate details arising from the geometry, engineering and manufacturing were addressed through 3D modelling. Multiple challenges were successfully overcome: accuracy of faceted corners; contrasting finishes within single units; installation of unusually shaped units of up to 14 tonnes in weight and the requirement for unique permanent fixing methods.

British Precast is delighted to present ACME with the 2017 Creativity in Concrete Award, in recognition of its inspiring and innovative architectural concrete design work.

Visit: www.acme.ac and www.britishprecast.org. ■

List of previous winners

2016 – Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM)

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, a London-based architecture practice, is committed to making satisfying buildings that are beautiful and enjoyable to use. With an international portfolio, the company is recognised for its impressive work and strategic take on architectural design.

2015 – Heatherwick Studio

A body of work demonstrating remarkable innovation, while incorporating artistic concrete design. Projects include the Nanyang Learning Hub, Singapore, and Zeitz MOCAA, South Africa. Presented by William Doherty, member of the British Precast Council.

2014 – William Mitchell

An English sculptor, William Mitchell is an artist and designer recognised for his use of colour, shape and texture in exciting combinations. Trained at the Royal College of Art, he is perhaps best known for his large-scale concrete murals and public works of art that peaked in popularity in the 1960s and 70s.

2013 – Sir David Chipperfield

The Chipperfield practice has a special reputation for public space and museums. Recent work has also included refurbishment and even industrial design. The Neues Museum reconstruction in Berlin features extensive use of structural precast concrete to tie together the old and new. The Ciutat de la Justícia collection of new buildings in Barcelona is admired for its use of subtly different pastel colours for the concrete cladding on each building.

2012 – Niall McLaughlin Architects