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## Darlington MP marks start of £1m Carmel College development



(Darlington MP Peter Gibson marks the start of the £1m project with Stewart Crinson of Wharton Construction, Louise Parnaby, Head of sixth form, Matthew Wharton, Mike Shorten, College Principal, and Mark Campbell of Wharton Construction)

Darlington MP Peter Gibson has officially marked the start of a £1m project to create a new sixth form centre at the town's Carmel College.

The work, which is being carried out by Wharton Construction, represents one of the final pieces in the redevelopment of The Headlands site.

Mr Gibson, who performed the groundbreaking ceremony, said: "I'm extremely honoured to be asked by Carmel College to mark the official start of this exciting project.

"It represents a significant investment in the future of its students and will be a fine addition to its already first-rate facilities."

Predominantly used by sixth form students for self-directed studies, as well as for fitness and sports, the building will feature a viewing gallery that looks down onto the sports hall.

Sixth form students, are delighted to see the project commence and commented –

"I'm thrilled to have this extension of space to use for sixth form activities." Archie Powell

"I'm excited for the gym and being able to exercise with my friends at school." Ella Boyer



(Students outside building to be renovated)

It will also be available for use out-of-hours by community groups, including Darlington Hockey Club, Bishop Auckland Hockley Club and longbow archery club, Archers of the Tees.

Sixth form students welcome these new extra-curricular activities and can see the opportunities. "The potential extra-curricular activities are endless." George Thornton commented, and Amelia Hunter said "I am so happy to be a part of this new sixth form community and facilities."

The project, due to be completed by the autumn, is centred around the redevelopment of an old stable block.

Darlington-based Wharton Construction will also extend the building to connect with the current sports hall – creating up to 400 sq. metres of space across two storeys.

Mike Shorten, Principal, said: "This development will further enrich the academic and sporting experience we provide and underlines the College's commitment to its students.

"It also represents the final piece of the jigsaw in terms of the redevelopment of the site and we are very much looking forward to its completion."

Louise Parnaby, Head of Sixth Form, added: "We are excited that the project has finally started and the students will have first-class facilities"

Matthew Wharton, director of Wharton Construction, commented: "As a local company, we are pleased to have been selected by Carmel College to work on this project and we are looking forward to delivering a state of the art sixth form centre."

The Catholic college, which welcomes students from all faiths and backgrounds, is rated as outstanding by Ofsted.