

Bradford College Completes £6.9m Mill Transformation Project

10 months ago



A multimillion-pound renovation project at Bradford College has transformed a derelict mill into a flexible digital, science, and allied health training facility for higher-level students.

Garden Mills on Thornton Road opened its doors to staff and students this week after months of construction work on the 1900s five-storey building. The development results from £5.8 million in funding from The Office for Students (OfS) Higher Education Capital Fund with a £1.1 million College contribution.

The site is now Bradford College's dedicated building for HNC, HND, and degree programmes in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), including digital and ophthalmic courses. The site supplements the extensive STEM facilities established across other College campuses.

Contractors [Tilbury Douglas](#) led the Garden Mills project and installation of industry-standard equipment, including six digital IT labs, an ophthalmic dispensing suite, a prep room, a clinical suite, a real-life work environment with consulting and testing booths, a collaboration area, and academic teaching spaces.

Christopher Malish, Bradford College's Vice Principal of Finance & Corporate Services, said: "Seeing Garden Mills return to life has been extremely rewarding. This new facility will enhance the student experience, create more graduate opportunities, and counter regional skills shortages in STEM-related sectors. These aspirations align with our vision of creating 'a better future for all through education and training.'

"Our strategic objectives include delivering curricula that meet the needs of students, employers, and our community. We're delighted that Garden Mills will help to upskill local people in specialisms that are in demand while supporting vital regional economic growth."

Garden Mills is the first of several Bradford College capital developments to be completed. Over the last two years, Bradford College secured nearly £32 million in funding, which is being used to enhance, refurbish, and build aspirational new facilities in the heart of Bradford.

Other construction projects include new vocational T Level facilities in the College's David Hockney Building, overseen by Sewell Construction and funded by £3.5 million from the Department for Education (T Level Capital Fund – Wave 5). Set to complete in Autumn, the project will create a commercial barbering salon, nail bar, collaborative lecture spaces, TV studio, media editing and recording studios, and a remodel of The Grove training restaurant.

Work on the College's purpose-built Future Technologies Centre is also underway with Phase 1 of the scheme led by contractor Morgan Sindall. This new site will support the growth of technology and low-carbon skills capability within West Yorkshire and be the home of modern automotive and digital engineering curricula, such as electric/hybrid vehicles and advanced manufacturing.

The College's Automotive, Digital and Engineering Department will relocate to the new premises once completed in 2025/2026. Students will use industry-relevant facilities to gain skills in new technologies for careers in a fast-moving sector. The project was made possible by a £15 million investment from the Department for Education's Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF), boosted by a £2m College contribution.

The Future Technologies Centre, Garden Mills, and T Level facilities all form part of Bradford College's ambitious estates strategy. The capital masterplan centres around building facilities that open up pioneering student careers and support regional economic growth.