

Comprehensive construction

The new Queen Elizabeth Comprehensive School won the Best Educational Building category at the first 2009 LABC Cymru All Wales Building Excellence Awards in June

The newly built Queen Elizabeth comprehensive school accommodates a total of 1,600 pupils. It involved the demolition of the two existing secondary schools and extensive site remediation works. The existing leisure centre has also been totally refurbished and developed with the addition of a new swimming pool and enhanced leisure facilities.

Both developments are contained within the same site boundary; previously the

location of two secondary schools and a community leisure centre all of which remained in full operation for the duration of the works.

The school now has state-of-the-art quality features, a wider range of academic and vocational courses and improved learning opportunities, including a model centre for learning disabilities for a wide catchment area.

The school has electronic registration, door access control, cashless till systems as well as electronic

“THE SCHOOL NOW HAS STATE-OF-THE-ART QUALITY FEATURES, A WIDER RANGE OF ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL COURSES AND IMPROVED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES”

information panels. The close integration of these into the development of the brief and then into the construction is a key feature of the building.

This brand new exemplar school comprises two storeys of accommodation, with a larger single storey space at each end of the building with an approximate floor area of 16,400m².

An aerial view provides an excellent appreciation of the size and scale of the project.

The building has an aluminium finished curved roof and a mixture of timber,





◀ aluminium and terracotta cladding with masonry at low level.

The following sustainable features have been incorporated into the project:

- Passive ventilation
- Grey water harvesting for wc use
- Photovoltaic panels
- Solar panels
- Biomass boilers
- External wood cladding from a sustainable source
- Sensory operative taps in all wc blocks
- Interactive panels for educational purposes
- Bats from demolished school building were re housed within the external wood cladding
- The project achieved a Very Good BREEAM rating
- All masonry from the old

schools taken down, crushed and all hardcore re-used on site

- Dedicated CCTV focussed on ecological areas around the school

The above are presented on the publicly viewed interactive green board for real time energy and sustainability monitoring and delivery.

A eco group was set up and involved throughout the project to enhance education in relation to this aspect and to assist with design development.

It was agreed that a new Special Educational Needs Regional Hub for this part of Wales would be housed within the school. This was separately funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. It accommodates pupils with a wide range of needs but most

“ALL WORKS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT TO A VERY HIGH STANDARD WITH THE FINISHED PROJECT DEMONSTRATING AN OVERALL QUALITY THAT JUSTIFIABLY LED TO THE COVETED PRIZE”

will also use the facilities of the mainstream school building.

The extension to the existing leisure centre created a new 25 metre, eight-lane championship standard pool as well as a new learner pool. Modern multi-changing room facilities complement a multi-purpose exhibition hall for sports, fitness multi-station area, aerobic suites, offices, cafeteria and conference centre with a fully equipped health spa, incorporating Jacuzzi and sauna suites. There are also tennis courts and a large car park.

From a building control perspective, close co-operation during design stage and then during the construction process ensured that no time was lost and all technical queries were resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.

All works have been carried out to a very high standard with the finished project demonstrating an overall quality that justifiably led to the coveted prize.

The project will now go forward to the National finals in October.

