

# The wow factor in construction



Willmott Dixon Turner's new A&E department at the West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen

A stream of iconic buildings acknowledged as the best in the county are changing the face of Carmarthenshire

**C**armarthenshire County Chief Executive, Mark James, said in the seven years he had served the county a number of wow-factor buildings and features incorporated in developments had materialised across the county.

Last year was no exception and the developments were described at an awards ceremony in February recognising organisations changing the face of the county, as "the best yet".

From Parc y Scarlet's Stadium at Pemberton Llanelli (a subsequent regional winner, see story opposite page) to The Mount on top of Jail Hill in Carmarthen, 10 awards were made to the best practitioners in the county identified by Local Authority Building Control (LABC).

Mark James added: "Improving the quality of construction is one of the most important challenges affecting the industry. Over the last few years there have been real breakthroughs made in construction techniques, design and most importantly, the vetting and approval of workmanship.

"We have benefited from these skills in Carmarthenshire with a higher standard of building including the £23 million Rugby Sports Stadium, Parc y Scarlets, of which we are very proud and are holding this event in today.

"Buildings are being built to higher standards than ever before benefiting Carmarthenshire visitors and residents with their

appearance, and users and employees with their modern construction.

"We have not only provided one of the greatest rugby clubs in the world with a superb stadium, but are also now able to provide hospitality at their banqueting suites in a manner the county has never been able to before."

The 10 award winners who received plaques and certificates went forward to the South Wales Building Excellence Awards 2009 with three of the winners subsequently scooping the top prize in their categories (see story on page 139).

These will now go on to the LABC National Building Excellence Awards in October.

The Carmarthenshire winners were:

#### HOME EXTENSIONS/MATERIAL ALTERATIONS:

E&TL Jones Building Services for their extensions and alterations at Y Grug, Carmarthen Road, Llandeilo

#### HOME CONVERSIONS

Gary Mainwaring for the material change of use of Stangau, Llanddeusant, Llangadog

#### COMMERCIAL CONVERSIONS:

Bassett and MacGregor

#### NEW DWELLINGS (UP TO 10 UNITS)

JR Builders for the construction of Plot 2, Llwyn yr Eos Road, Rhydargaeau

#### NEW DWELLINGS (MORE THAN 10 UNITS).

Gwenlais Developments Ltd for 21dwellings at Blaenau

**"IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CONSTRUCTION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE INDUSTRY"**

Road, Llandybie, Ammanford

#### SOCIAL/AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS

Gower Developments for the construction of 13 apartments at St Mary's Court, Stepney Road, Burry Port

#### SUSTAINABILITY

Carillion for the development of Queen Elizabeth High School, Johnstown, Carmarthen

#### SMALL COMMERCIAL (UP TO £2 MILLION)

T Richard Jones (Betws) Ltd for The Mount

#### ◀ LARGE COMMERCIAL (MORE THAN £2 MILLION)

Andrew Scott for Parc y Scarlets Stadium, deemed the most prestigious construction project in Wales in 2008

#### PUBLIC BUILDING

Willmott Dixon Turner for the construction of a new A&E Department at the West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen

Carmarthenshire County Council's Building Control Service Manager Handel Davies said: "This year is probably the best set of

winning projects that Carmarthenshire has ever delivered over six years of award recognition.

"It is working in partnership with local companies who have an interest in the local community which helps to produce excellent developments contributing to the regeneration of the area, providing quality buildings and improving the lives of its citizens."

Speaking at the event, LABC Business Development Director, Lorna Stimpson, said: "Local authority building

**"LOCAL AUTHORITY BUILDING CONTROL IS FULLY COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THE INDUSTRY IN PRODUCING PROJECTS WHICH ARE OUTSTANDING IN THEIR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION"**

control is fully committed to supporting the industry in producing projects which are outstanding in their design and construction, and working in partnership with quality building contractors.

"Today's award-winning projects are an outstanding example of this."

## Partnership goes from strength to strength

Twenty-six companies involved in the building trade are working with Carmarthenshire Council to help develop customer confidence and satisfaction.

The Carmarthenshire Council's Building Regulations Unit is continuing with its policy of partnering with local companies to build bridges with the building industry and those customers requiring building services.

The objective of the scheme is to both retain and win back customers who work across local authority boundaries and want a single LABC (local authority building control) service provider across the country to provide a consistent interpretation of the Building Regulations. The site inspections

are carried out by the local authority where each project is being constructed.

The latest companies to join the scheme include four structural engineers based within the county - Wyatt & Watts, Roger Casey Associates, Mel Williams Partnership and The Amblin Partnership together with Nantgaredig-based timber frame manufacturer European Homes. Surveying & Design Services of Llangain and Llanelli-based Darkin Professional Architectural Services and Llanelli-based construction firm Lloyd & Gravell bring the total number of members of the scheme to 26.

In February, a lunchtime partnership launch was held in the Carwyn James Lounge at the new 15,000-capacity Parc Y Scarlets Rugby Stadium to celebrate the latest additions to the partnership team.

Invited guests include representatives from the partner companies, staff members from the building regulations unit, Regeneration Executive Board Member Clive Scourfield and Head of Planning, Eifion Bowen.

Councillor Scourfield said: "The importance of establishing key partnership relationships can not be understated. Partnering with customers is the best way to create long term customer relationships. Partnerships are not reserved for big national companies. They are just as valid for smaller local or regional businesses that work across one or more political boundaries."

A full list of the members of the partnership scheme and their contact details can be found along with other relevant information on the role of the Building Control at [www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/buildingcontrol](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/buildingcontrol)



*The building control team at Carmarthenshire. Back row (left to right): Susan Williams, Eifion Jones, Paul Reed, Stephen Butler, Emyr Davies, Michael Fussell, Eirian Thomas, Clive Evans, Robert Forsyth, Tony Williams, Haydn Mathews and Nina McKibbin. Front row (left to right): Eleri Davies, Irfon Jones, Handel Davies, Heather Thomas, Steven Pound, Nia Tommason*