Austin·Smith:Lord

AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CENTRE, BRIDGWATER

LOCATION: BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET

CLIENT: BRIDGWATER COLLEGE

VALUE: £1.8M

SIZE: 900M^2

COMPLETION: 2014

SERVICE: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, INTERIOR DESIGN

SECTOR: EDUCATION

CONTRACTOR: MIDAS CONSTRUCTION

LANDSCAPE: AUSTIN-SMITH:LORD

STRUCTURES: CURTINS

SERVICES: TROUP BYWATER + ANDERS

COST CONSULTANT: WT HILLS

Austin-Smith:Lord was appointed to assist Bridgwater College in the improvement and rationalisation of facilities across their Cannington Campus sites by addressing the improvement of teaching facilities at Rodway Farm. This was seen as an important project towards retaining the College's position as a leading provider in the land-based education sector, achieving continuous improvement and continuing its key role with the Bridgwater and wider Sedgemoor economic and social community.

Austin-Smith:Lord provided a multi-disciplinary team to provide options and feasibility studies for a new build facility of some 900m^2 to a challenging timescale. The resultant Stage C report was integral to helping the College secure funding support from the Skills and Funding Agency in late 2012.

Accommodation includes classrooms, laboratory space, tutorial and 'touch down' hot desk facilities, together with social and welfare facilities.

The building form is a simple single storey arrangement of spaces either side of a central corridor, with a pitched roof. The central spine is top lit and opens out into group/ social spaces at either end. The social/dining room space opens up though sliding, glazed external walls onto a south facing deck.

The building is designed to BREEAM Excellent and incorporates Hemcrete (hemp) insulation to the external walls and a biomass boiler, together with 10m^2 of solar hot water panels, 20m^2 of photovoltaics and 'wind catchers' to assist natural ventilation. The southern elevation is shaded by an overhanging eaves and new bank of trees.

The structure employs a simple, longitudinal load-bearing wall timber wall solution with engineered timber beams supporting a built up metal roof.