

NEW ABERDARE CAMPUS, COLEG Y CYMOEDD



LOCATION: ABERDARE
CLIENT: COLEG Y CYMOEDD
COMPLETION: 2017
VALUE: £16M
SIZE: 5750M2
SERVICE: ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE, INTERIORS
SECTOR: EDUCATION
CONTRACTOR: KIER CONSTRUCTION
LANDSCAPE: AUSTIN-SMITH:LORD
STRUCTURES: ARUP
SERVICES: ARUP / LORNE STEWART
COST CONSULTANT: MOTT MACDONALD
AWARDS: 2018 INSIDER WALES PROPERTY AWARDS, DEVELOPMENT OF THE YEAR

Austin-Smith:Lord was appointed by Coleg y Cymoedd to develop proposals and brief for a new campus at Aberdare in 2013, achieving Outline Planning for the scheme. The college secured match funding from the Welsh Assembly Government in 2015 after which the construction contract was awarded to Kier Construction. Austin-Smith:Lord were appointed to deliver the detailed and technical design through to completion and handover.

With a total project value of approximately £22m, the masterplan design replaces the existing campus on the town outskirts with a new landmark 5750sqm College building on a town centre site. A highly sustainable location, the brownfield site benefits from excellent transport links from the adjacent railway and bus station, as well as the local amenities of the town centre. A multidisciplinary approach was followed to reach a solution to the flood risk posed by this challenging site.

"The College are delighted with our new Aberdare campus building. Austin-Smith:Lord worked with us from the earliest stages to understand our needs and turn that into an inspiring design."

Judith Evans - College Principal



The main building form is designed around a central atrium space facing south onto a new public piazza and forms a prominent main entrance. This is enclosed by 3 and 4 storey wings of accommodation which wrap around the atrium with balconies and breakout areas opening out into this central space.

The finished building will accommodate a wide range of vocational and teaching courses including construction, hair and beauty, hospitality, health and social care, business and IT, as well as support spaces. The new facilities will be great improvement for learners and teaching staff from the previous campus and will improve links from secondary to further education with the recently completed neighbouring school.

A challenging brownfield site, the design team was required to undertake a full flood consequences assessment, transport assessment and ecology survey due to the River Cynon which divides the sites. In order to address the potential flooding issue, the building is raised up and suspended approximately 1.5m above the ground plane, allowing water to pass below the ground floor slab in extreme storm conditions.

The perimeter is protected to prevent the build-up of storm debris. The public piazza provides a high quality solution to the change of level at the building approach. At the rear of the building, the level change creates an ideal loading dock level to the construction workshops.

The project also includes landscaping, car parking, servicing areas split across three adjacent sites. Site B also houses the old railway station building for Aberdare. This has been incorporated into the regeneration of the area by plans to sympathetically refurbish and extend it to provide a new café and conference facility.

The project is designed to BREEAM Excellent and Secured by Design standards. It is delivered to BIM Level 2 and the models developed are assisting the College in training staff and learners in BIM as part of the project's community engagement benefits.