Partner of Stora Enso

Blue Coat Primary School Chester, UK

CLT was specified for the superstructure of a newbuild two-storey primary school in a phased redevelopment of the existing site. Construction took place while full operational capacity of the existing school was maintained.

Cross-laminated timber (CLT) manufactured by Stora Enso was specified for the superstructure of Chester Blue Coat CE Primary School, a new build, two-form entry primary school in Chester in the UK. The design of the school embraces the natural warmth and comfort of CLT with much of the internal wall surface left exposed, making the material integral to the look and feel of the building.

The project which completed in February 2013, was designed by Tweed Nuttall WarburtonArchitects and erected by our partners the mass timber specialists Eurban. Construction of the new two storey school took place in a phased redevelopment of the existing site in order to maintain the full operational capacities of the existing schools.

CLT was specified primarily for its sustainability credentials combined with its suitability to realise the design of the school's superstructure. Other considerations were the efficiencies the system brought to the construction programme, its inherent acoustic and airtightness properties and its design flexibility.

Architect, Sarah Pegg explains "The School was designed to deliberately expose the CLT at significant intervals to express the form and superstructure of the building and to experience the inherent warmth and tactile qualities of the material. Combined with the natural light and choice of finishes the result is an almost tangible atmosphere of calm within the building."

To ensure a holistic school environment a 'teaching street' at ground level and an overlooking 'balcony street' at first floor level link the foundation and infant ground floor teaching spaces to the first floor junior spaces. The balcony was constructed using cantilevered visual grade CLT to avoid structural supports interrupting the 'street' below. A structural glass balustrade has been specified along the length of the balcony to reinforce the unity between the key stage areas.

In the classrooms the exposed CLT walls provide a backdrop to the colour, personality and vibrancy of the children and their project displays. In the corridors - spacious areas of white walls, glass, natural light and exposed CLT the walls are to be decorated in black sign-writing of a variety of sizes and fonts delivering the key ethos of the school in slogans and quotes.

The feel of the School is welcoming and its combination of exposed wood, glass, colour and natural light result in a bright, airy and warm interior which provides a peaceful, natural and calming environment for the children.

Wayne Probert, for Stora Enso, talking about the benefits of CLT in the school environment said, "it is very positive that, in addition to benefits such as CLT's airtightness and reduced running costs, the material is increasingly being recognised for its ability to create an internal environment which feels warm and safe.

New Building Award - 2014 New Year Honours by Chester Civic Trust

Photo credit: ©Paul McMullin

Photo credit: ©Paul McMullin

General

Delivery year

2013

Building type

Education

Area (m²)

4,500

Storeys

2

Products

Products and Services

Sylva™ CLT Floors and Roofs, Sylva™ CLT Walls

Product volume (m³)

882

StoraEnso

Team

Partner of Stora Enso

Eurban

Developer

Chester Diocesan Board of Education

Architect

Tweed Nuttall Warburton Architects

Structural Engineer

Eurban

Main contractor

Bardsley Construction

Specialist Timber Subcontractor

Eurban Ltd.

Timber Engineer

Eurban Ltd.