

**Award Category:** Design Excellence

**Project:** The Snow Centre, Hemel Hempstead

**Client:** Hemel Snowcentre Ltd

**Architect:** Sir Robert McAlpine Design Group



Highly commended for a well considered, integrated and imaginative design

The Snow Centre is an indoor recreational facility built around the concept of real snow, with 10,500 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space made up of 7,400 m<sup>2</sup> of indoor ski slopes, 2,300 m<sup>2</sup> of amenity space and 800 m<sup>2</sup> of retail space.

The cold side snow facility includes two ski slopes; a large recreational slope with two button lifts and a smaller training slope with two rope tows. A high level service gantry running up the centre of the building holds snow making guns, blast coolers, ventilation air and lighting. At the rear of the training slope, a two storey section contains a storage facility for special ski jumps and equipment, garage facilities for the large snow grooming machine and the

mechanical and electrical plant rooms. The cold side is externally clad with profiled steel sheet with contrasting curved column covers and fascias to create texture and shading to break up the facade of a very large building.

The warm side amenity building contains an entrance hall and a retail shop for Snow & Rock on the ground floor. On the first floor, the main operational facilities are located, including some management offices, ticket sales, equipment rental, and changing facilities. The warm side is externally clad with untreated larch, colour changing rock fibre panels and blue tinted glass in the windows and curtain wall to give the building a unique appearance with a limited palette of materials. A sedum “green” roof covers the entire building and extensive planting covers the site.

### **Judges comments:**

“The Snow Centre is an impressive structure, with a number of outstanding features that make it a strong contender in this category. The external use of fascias and contrasting columns to break up the profile of what is a very large building is extremely effective.”