



Award Category: Most Sustainable Construction sponsored by the University of Hertfordshire

Project: Royal Veterinary College Student Village, North Mymms

Client: Royal Veterinary College

Project Team: Hawkins\Brown Architects LLP, Elliot Wood Partnership, Max Fordham LLP, Gardiner & Theobald, Grontmij



The new student accommodation at the Royal Veterinary College replaces an existing building to provide accommodation for 205 students, together with a refectory and conference style meeting rooms, at their Hawkshead campus.

The site sits within the Greenbelt so the design had to be sensitive to its rural surroundings. Organised as a collection of three and four storey pavilions, the

massing of the blocks was carefully considered to maintain views through the development whilst ensuring that the overall heights of the buildings were appropriate to its setting.

The geometry of the buildings allows for a variety of courtyards and a large central space which serves as a focal point and meeting place for students. The location of the restaurant, meeting rooms and catered student rooms have been located to connect with student services and other public spaces to create a social hub for the campus.

Sustainability was a core consideration in the design. The accommodation blocks have been arranged on site such that all bedrooms face East or West to benefit from views out onto daylight spaces in the morning or afternoon avoiding any north facing bedrooms which would not receive any direct sunlight. Heat loss was addressed through high levels of insulation and through careful selection of controls.

Analysis of other residences showed that electrically heated student accommodation often uses less heating energy than traditional wet radiator systems. Solar thermal heating was sized to provide up to one third of the predicted hot water use and hotel style key card

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holders switch power on and off to avoid parasitic electrical loads being inadvertently left on in empty rooms.

Native species planting and the incorporation of swales as part of the SUDS create habitats appropriate to location. This sensitive approach has been recognised in the BREEAM assessment with a score of 80% in the land use and ecology section. All timber was responsibly sourced and the waste management plant resulted in over 80% of onsite waste being recycled

Judges comments:

“This scheme provides much-needed student accommodation on a sensitive site in the Green Belt as part of a wider College campus. The design has responded well to its setting by breaking down the massing of the accommodation to allow views through the scheme, and the choice of materials reflects the materials of the existing campus buildings. The resulting scheme provides a distinctive environment for the students, and responds well to the particular requirements of veterinary students who are often working outdoors in all weathers. The involvement of artist Nicky Hirst in the design of the aluminium cladding of the stair cores brings a unique quality to personality of the student village.”