

Primary School, Lenzie Meadow

Challenge:

Holmes Miller were required to provide a modern, adaptive and engaging learning environment responsive to a range of teaching styles and activities, and capable of meeting both the pastoral and educational needs of a contemporary primary. It was equally required to minimise the impact of the scheme on the surrounding residential space, both in terms of construction and sensitive design, in order to preserve the social position of the school within its community.

Solution:

The new Primary School and Early Years Centre at Lenzie Meadow has been built to accommodate 560 primary pupils and a further 88 two to five-year-old nursery pupils, from two existing schools in the town, which have subsequently been closed. Located west of Lenzie Town Centre, immediately adjacent to the site of the old Lenzie Moss Primary School, the new school is in a largely residential setting characterised by detached and semi-detached post-war and Victorian housing. Open views to the south provide outlook across Lenzie Moss and the greenspace beyond, while to the north it offers views toward Campsie Fells. Part-funded by Scottish Government's School building programme, Scotland's Schools for the Future, the £11.6 million development references the SFT exemplar project at Lairdsland Primary School, Kirkintilloch; the first Primary School Improvement Programme (PSIP) school and itself now a benchmark design. Exciting, innovative and flexible, the two-storey plan is centred around large hall spaces for dining and assembly, with teaching wings and ancillary spaces offset to reduce the overall mass of the building and ensure harmonisation with its surroundings. Projecting outwards from the core mass of the structure, protected beneath a striking double-height oversailing canopy, a series of single-storey 'pods' house cloakroom space and toilet facilities and provide an important liminal space between classroom and playground while reducing congestion on interior routeways and providing exterior teaching areas at first floor level. Merging the building skilfully into its surroundings, buff coloured Ibstock Brick's Leicester Multi Cream Stock brick has been chosen to create a contrast with vertical elements and facias rendered in crisp white fibre cement and soffits of Siberian Larch, serving to highlight the various massing components and add interest and character through east and west elevations. Stretcher-bonded, the immaculately executed brickwork wraps both teaching wings and classroom pods, grounding the building and providing the scheme with an aesthetic of safety and security. Functionally, the choice to position brickwork adjacent to exterior play space also allows for the creation of 'ball walls', robust enough to cater to pupil's recreational needs. Circulation routes and feature staircases establish a dialogue with exterior courtyard space to ensure visual permeability and easy navigation, while extensive use of glazing and curtain walling ensure optimal day light penetration to the interior and provide a natural ventilation solution. The choice of brick as primary external cladding reflects a conscious decision taken at design stage to reduce resource demand through best practice design and passive design strategies; a sustainable ethos reflected elsewhere in the completed scheme in the presence of a biomass boiler and a south facing photovoltaic array at roof level.

Architect: Holmes Miller

Brick:

Leicester Multi Cream Stock