

TODD ARCHITECTS COMPLETES REDBRICK BUSINESS SCHOOL FOR QUEEN'S BELFAST UNIVERSITY

The £17.5 million business school sits within its south Belfast campus, in front of the Grade II-listed Riddell Hall and enclosed by woodland

The new building, built on a former car park, has teaching, and learning spaces for postgraduate students along with facilities for supporting the school's executive education and leadership programmes, with informal study areas, academic offices, and shared spaces.

Inside the circulation spaces, exposed concrete soffits with floating acoustic ceilings, board-marked concrete walls, timber wall sheeting and terrazzo flooring, create a robust aesthetic. One of the key spaces is a top-lit, triple-height atrium with a feature stair providing access from the ground floor reception to the upper ground level, where informal study booths overlook a landscaped courtyard.

A low-energy, ecologically sensitive design approach was adopted from the outset. One measure taken was a major geothermal heat system. Piles were driven to a depth of 125m in an adjoining field to extract heat from the sandstone substrate and provide low-level constant heat via underfloor heating, resulting in a 60 per cent reduction in carbon emissions.

ARCHITECT'S VIEW

"We presented a plan diagram based on how we envisaged people might move through the building and a conceptual architectural approach that proposed carefully knitting the built form into its landscaped setting.

Externally in respect of materiality, the building echoes the neighbouring, listed Riddell Hall, whilst internally we have sought to ensure a connectivity for users with surrounding mature woodland and other natural finishes.

We promoted a low-energy, ecologically sensitive design approach from the outset, securing a BREEAM Excellent rating, with the building's renewable energy sources including a major geothermal heat system beneath an adjoining lawn and roof mounted arrays of solar/photovoltaic panels".

Peter Minnis, project director, TODD Architects

CLIENTS' VIEWS

Queen's University Belfast is moving towards net zero, and this building - which uses sustainable ground source heating - is an important part of the journey. The design of the building, which is sleek, contemporary, and future-focused, boasts the scenic quality of being nestled in the trees of the Stranmillis Conservation Area.

The building is helping us a) grow our international stature and esteem by hosting high-profile events; b) expanding our research-led dialogue with the business community by providing space for collaboration and dissemination activities; and c) offers a fantastic student experience via tailor-made areas for learning and study.

Professor MN Ravishankar, dean and head, Queen's Business School

The new Queen's Business School is the latest building in Queen's University's capital investment programme to support world-class education and research and provide an exceptional learning environment and experience for its students with this truly iconic building.

Through collaboration and a commitment to excellence, TODD Architects has ensured that this facility will enable the Business School to continue its growth, by attracting the best staff and students from Northern Ireland and around the world, and to produce graduates who will make a positive impact on society.

We are delighted with our new landmark building that will take Queen's Business School into the next phase of its development and serving future generations to come.

Sonia O'Hare, school manager, Queen's Business School

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