

The West Downs Centre embodies the University's values of compassion, individuals matter and spirituality, as well as refocusing sustainability as much for the user benefit as the buildings.

The site for the new building is alongside one of the main arterial routes into Winchester, which was originally the line of a Roman road that radiated out from the city. This site offered the University a unique opportunity to have a strong visible presence, which had not previously been possible from its main King Alfred campus.

As part of the University's core values, and given the current mental health crisis, it was important that the building focused on the wellbeing of the individual. This approach allowed

the client and design team to explore different aspects of the brief to identify how they could provide more comprehensive support to staff and students. This process led to a number of key objectives becoming part of the main brief: the central water garden; the gallery; the vegan café; the inclusion of artwork and the Contemplation Space.

The design approach unites landscape and architecture by wrapping three distinct building forms around a central courtyard garden as well as sitting sensitively within the sloping site.

A linear block of classrooms and teaching facilities forms the backdrop to the circular lecture theatre, whilst the triangular roof shelters the social learning and library spaces completing the composition by creating an enclosing edge to the whole site.

Location: Winchester, UK

Scope: New build

Brief: Reception, Library/ Social Learning Space, 250 seat Lecture Space, Gallery, Food Hall, Café, Contemplation Space, Multiple Teaching Rooms, Break out Spaces and Meeting Rooms

Floor area (GIA): 7500 sq m

Sustainability: WELL Building Platinum & BREEAM Excellent

Completion date: September 2021

Project Team

Client: University of Winchester

Architect: Design Engine Architects

Structural Engineer:

Heyne Tillett Steel

M&E Engineer: Mecserve

QS: Jackson Coles

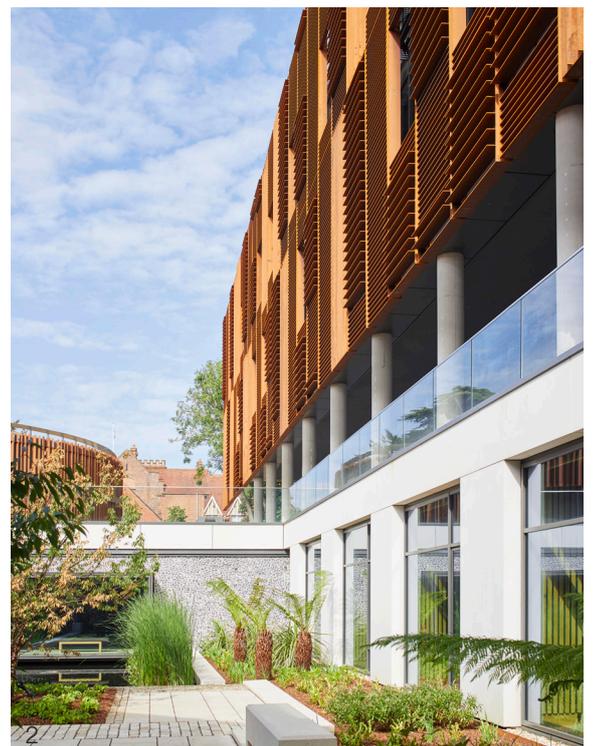
PM: University of Winchester

Contractor: Geoffrey Osborne Ltd.



1. Ground-level entrance at the front of the building with the library's main triangular roof projecting out over the public plaza - © Jim Stephenson

2. A linear block of classrooms and teaching facilities forms the backdrop - © Hufton + Crow



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