

HLM scoops Best Community Design in Sheffield architectural awards

An HLM-designed project that integrates two schools on one campus has won the Best Community Design Project accolade in the Sheffield Design Awards 2010.

The £22.2m project was not a straightforward merger and brought together Newfield, a comprehensive with about 1,000 pupils, and Talbot, a 120-pupil Special Educational Needs school specialising in cognition and learning.

Forming part of the Sheffield Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF), HLM's brief was to combine the two disparate schools in new buildings on the existing Newfield site providing direct access to some of each other's facilities and the sharing of others.

Constructed by VINCI Construction UK Limited, Newfield School now has space for 1,125 students aged 11-16 years, with Talbot catering for 120 students with special needs aged 11-18. The schools have been built on the same site allowing for students of both schools to work together.

"Originally, both schools' existing facilities were inadequate for purpose, lacked storage, contained accessibility limitations and were inflexible in layout and design. The project not only gave both schools new buildings, facilities and grounds of which they could be proud, but also a sense of community and greater social interaction, inclusivity and understanding," said HLM director Nick Beecroft. "The Sheffield Design Award judges praised the project for the great relationship forged with the users and our careful integration of the two schools."

The designs also achieved a high level of environmental sustainability and both schools have achieved a 'very good' BREEAM rating with features such as rainwater recycling, natural ventilation, and 'bio-diverse roofs'

The Sheffield Design Awards, a bi-annual event, is run by a partnership of the Sheffield Civic Trust and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Yorkshire and invite industry professionals and members of the public to cast their votes for the city's best buildings.

At the ceremony, which was held at the city's Showroom Cinema, host for the evening Tom Bloxham MBE of Urban Splash commented: "The consistently high quality of entries to the 2010 Sheffield Design Awards shows that the city continues to push the boundaries of design excellence. These awards celebrate outstanding contemporary architecture in the city and I commend Sheffield Civic Trust and the RIBA for hosting this important event."

Emma England, head of RIBA Yorkshire, was delighted with the awards ceremony and said that the quality of the winning projects was "outstanding".