Living

BOWER FULLER
Engineering Services for Buildings

Role: M&E Contractor

Client: Churchill College

Consultant: Max Fordham

Main Contractor: SDC

Architect: 6A Architects

M & E Value: £1.6m

Churchill College, Cambridge

The new accommodation building for Churchill College enhances the College's position as a centre for academic excellence and one of the city's leading venues for residential conferences, meetings and events. Cowan Court is named in honour of the benefactor Fellow Michael Cowan, an alumnus of the College. It provides 68 hotel-standard double ensuite bedrooms and a new multi-purpose meeting space, namely the Sixties Room, so called after a group of students who studied at the College around that decade.

The new building is Danish in style, with neutral decorative tones throughout, bespoke furniture, a tree-filled courtyard and large outward-facing windows in all rooms. It is also in keeping with the College's environmental and sustainability strategy. Green credentials include a highly-insulated building 'envelope' comprising a renewable timber-framed building clad with reclaimed oak, photovoltaic cells on the roof to provide more electricity than the building will consume and natural ventilation with opening panels to either side of the special solar glass in the triple-glazed windows. Rainwater is collected to irrigate the trees inside the courtyard which provide shading for the corridors running around each floor. The basement plantroom houses a set of plate to plate heat exchangers to utilise the College's district heating mains for both heating and hot water.

Whilst the design of Cowan Court is distinct, it also has a strong empathy with the existing Sheppard Courts. Each floor, with its gently curving façade, slightly overhangs the one beneath, and the timber cladding is already weathered to a colour remarkably similar to the bricks of the surrounding buildings. Cowan Court also includes three fully accessible bedrooms for disabled visitors and residents.

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