

Learning by Design

Open Day at St. Augustine's Primary School

Wednesday 25th April 2007

Good design is at the heart of this building programme.

It can make a big difference in a very simple way: imaginatively designed dining halls can encourage good eating; wider corridors can help cut down on bullying; good acoustics and ventilation can help improve concentration and behaviour. We are committed to supporting good design by encouraging the best architectural talent to create inspiring school buildings.

*Jim Knight Minister of State for
Schools and 14-19 Learners, Learning
by Design, Open House Exemplar*

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Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

“We extend a warm welcome to you whilst you visit our school which was opened in September 2004”

Pamela Parnell, Headteacher, St. Augustine's Primary School



Photography by PRW Freeman

Architects: ctmarchitects

Clients: Archdiocese of Southwark

Headteacher: Pamela Parnell

Commencement date of project: August 2003

Completion date of project: September 2004

Contract sum: £2.65 m

RIBA Stages: A-L

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**“The building is light and airy
and I love it- it feels right. I
love coming to work.”**

Ellen Knight, Staff Governor

Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

Introduction

Kent Architecture Centre in conjunction with Open House London are proud to introduce St Augustine's Primary School a highly acclaimed building designed by ctmarshitects, which was the winner of a RIBA National Award in 2005 and the winner of the 'Public Buildings Category Winner' and 'Overall Winner' at the Kent Building Design Awards.



Photography by PRW Freeman / Kent Architecture Centre

St Augustine's Primary School, completed in 2004, is located in the village of Saltwood in Hythe and sits on an open site between a residential area and Brockhill Secondary School. The site enjoys views over the English Channel and due to the character of the open space has been nominated as an "area of outstanding natural beauty". The school is a wonderful achievement by the architects. As Pamela Parnell the headteacher explains "The building doesn't detract from our purpose – learning- but enhances it."

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“The fact that we are on one floor rather than five has led to a greater sense of community and better interaction between the children.”

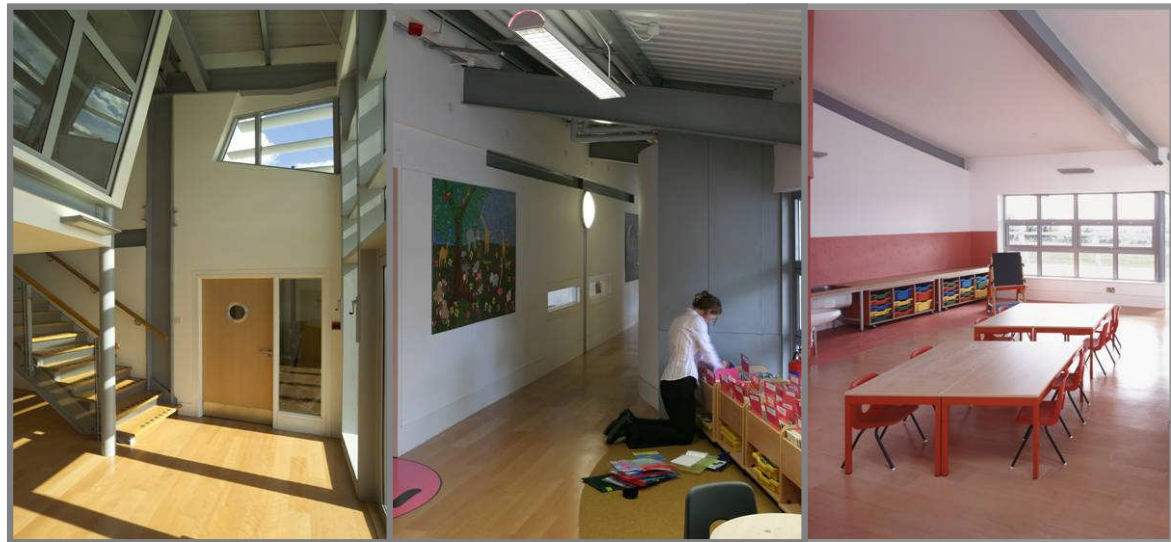
Pamela Parnell, Headteacher,
St. Augustine's Primary School

Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

Head teacher's Brief

Pam Parnell, the head teacher, was specific in her requirements and knew she wanted the new building to be light, spacious and airy, easy to maintain, aesthetically pleasing and have a “wow” factor;

“It was a tremendous project and I gave a great deal of thought to what was needed to create a perfect school for staff, pupils and parents. I wanted the hall to be central to the life of the school, I wanted a single-storey structure which didn't frighten or confuse the youngest pupils, and I wanted a quality area for staff.”



Photography by PRW Freeman/ ctmarchitects

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**“It feels like the outside has
been brought in”**

**“The building is calm and
natural”**

comments from staff of the school

Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

The Architect's Approach

ctmarchitects used St. Augustine's design brief and the Dfes Building Bulletin 82 Area Guidelines for Schools as the basis of the design. The building's form evolved naturally out of the site's circumstances: the design aims to allow the sea views to be a natural stimulant to the school's pupils, whilst the flowing wave roof form echoes the building's coastal location simultaneously addressing the strong winds that gust from the Channel. Each classroom has an aspect to the sea and, on warmer days, teaching is able to spill from the classrooms on to timber-decked external teaching areas. The scheme's location on the site shields the playground to the rear from the southerly winds, whilst the gabion wall to the front in combination with the surrounding landscaped perimeter fences secures the site.

Sustainability

The building's vernacular material palette responds to the location through the specified durable, low maintenance materials such as a metal profile roof and timber cedar boarding that will weather gracefully. These locally sourced materials have low embodied energy, whilst the high insulation levels, high thermal mass and south-facing glazing ensure excellent energy efficiency in the building's operation. The scheme also uses a grey-water recycling scheme for use for underfloor cooling, toilet flushing and landscaping watering.

The building has become a precedent for those championing the virtues of sustainability-motivated, site-responsive, innovative school design. The building's integration of an energy efficient logic in combination with intelligent, inventive, concept-driven design continues to win it many plaudits.

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“It’s good to work together on the same level as we were on different levels in our old school”

“The classrooms are bright and cheerful”

“We’ve got larger play areas!”

comments from staff and pupils

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Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

Interior

The new school contains a double height main hall, with viewing gallery on the first floor, a chapel that can also function as a performance space, offices, staff room and ICT room. Along with all the classrooms, these rooms are arranged so as to be fully accessible from the circulation spine through the building, which also serves as a display for students' work.

Display: Permanently displayed in the corridor are panels made by the Inside Out Trust. Each class worked on a large picture depicting one of the seven days of creation and these were then enlarged and reproduced by the inmates of the Art Department at Elmley Prison.

Colours: Each classroom has a distinctive identity, with one interior wall, the wet-bay flooring and its entrance area painted in a specific colour. The vibrant colours of the interior allow the children to identify different areas of the building. The internal and external colour coding is also designed to help visually impaired pupils.

Changes of levels: Porthole windows are placed at different levels that rise in height according to the age of the children for whom the room is designed. Rooms for the nursery children are placed at the west end and those for the older pupils towards the east. This helps orientate new pupils and provides them with a sense of progression and achievement as they get older and move on to the next classroom.



Photography by ctmarshitects / Kent Architecture Centre

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**“Cheney Thorpe & Morrison’s
imaginative eye and support
from the partnership team
have resulted in an
outstanding school which is
an asset to Kent.”**

David Griggs, Building Officer, the
Diocese of Southwark.

Information about St. Augustine's Primary School

Architects

Guy Hollaway (practice partner) and Gary Tidwell (associate)

ctmarchitects

The Tramway Stables, Rampart Road, Hythe, CT21 5BG

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For further information about the architects and their practice, please visit

www.ctmarchitects.co.uk

Publications on the school:

Building Control, issue 155, 2004;

Architects' Journal, no. 13, vol. 221;

School Building, issue 2, 2005;

Sustain: Building Environment matters, vol. 6, issue 2;

Building, issue 43, 2004 Colour

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Kent Architecture Centre

Kent Architecture Centre is an independent not-for-profit organisation which supports and promotes good design as well as education in all aspects of its work as a way of generating a greater understanding of the importance of the environment and the way in which people can play a role in managing it.

As part of this support, Kent Architecture Centre has developed an education programme called Shaping Places, which aimed to bring together teachers, artists and built environment practitioners to develop projects in schools in the south east England, which would introduced young people to the process of change in relation to a part of their local townscape.

If you would like to learn more about the programme, please contact Annette Hards at Kent Architecture Centre on 01634 401166 or e-mail annette.hards@kentarchitecture.co.uk

www.architecturecentre.org

Open House

Open House is an architecture education organisation committed to raising the standard of architecture and design through dialogue, learning and direct experience of excellent spaces and places. Through research, events, seminars and programmes, we seek to generate innovative and creative approaches to using architecture as a learning resource.

For further information and other events, please e-mail learning@openhouse.org.uk

www.openhouse.org.uk

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