

Footprint Architects - Chestnut Nursery

Completion - April 2019



Footprint Architects' latest project, Chestnut Nursery, incorporates a calming palette of natural materials to provide a comfortable and safe sanctuary for mental health charity SWOP (Sheltered Work Opportunities Poole).

SWOP is a registered charity that provides meaningful work in a supportive and pressure-free environment for adults with enduring mental illnesses. SWOP aims to use the therapeutic nature of horticulture at the Nursery to help develop opportunities, friendships and purpose to their daily lives that they may have lost due to their illnesses.

Footprint Architects were tasked with the job of providing a new retail provision to house the staff and provide a shopping destination for its customers. The new garden centre in Poole Park is located adjacent to Poole Harbour and features gabion baskets of locally sourced Purbeck Stone, larch glulam beams and sweet chestnut cladding.

The design concept consists of three layers; the first being a layer of Purbeck stone filled gabion walls to create a safe and secure structure for the staff, grounding the building to its

site. The second is a glazed element of curtain walling to provide natural lighting for the health of both the staff and the plants, and the final layer is sweet chestnut cladding to bring warmth and comfort to the shop.

The abundance of natural lighting improves the wellbeing of staff and volunteers that occupy the space everyday, by increasing serotonin and encouraging calmness throughout - achieved by the expansive roof lights and large glazed elevations.

A combination of natural lighting, large amounts of plants and passive ventilation bring the positive impacts of the natural world into the built environment whilst providing the staff and volunteers the comfort and safety required.

Passive ventilation is used throughout to control heat whilst underfloor heating, provided through air source heat pumps, regulates the temperature for the plants. The calming therapeutic effects of being surrounded by nature, daylight and fresh air, incorporating natural materials has long been recognised, and acts to strengthen our connection to the outside world.

Being in such close proximity to Poole Harbour and its strong sea breeze and mists, the chosen materials not only nestle the building within its site but will also weather and age the building and site together. The design brings an agricultural essence to the site through the materiality and stripped-back nature of the detailing, mimicking the utilitarian solutions of agricultural architecture.

For more information, please visit: www.footprintarchitects.co.uk

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Client

Chestnut Nursery and SWOP
www.chestnutnursery.org.uk

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