

PROJECT →

Waltham Forest College

Architects
Richard Hopkinson Architects
and Platform 5 Architects

Location
East London
Completed
January 2012

Richard Hopkinson and Platform 5 Architects have completed a £3 million refurbishment of Waltham Forest College, breathing new life into an existing 1930s building to create new formal and informal education and meeting areas.

The project has involved opening up the main hall to provide views through the building from the entrance, with lightwells inserted to bring daylight into a new learning-centre space.

The learning centre is designed to attract users to the heart of the main building, with a café at the entrance, acting as draw for users and deliberately blurring the boundaries between formal and informal spaces.

Beyond a glazed wall sits a large, double-height space containing a library and a series of informal learning areas, while an

arts studio occupies the former stage area behind a demountable feature wall.

The upper area houses a series of seminar and conference rooms alongside a brightly coloured refectory. Two new staircases improve circulation and provide additional escape routes: clad with translucent insulated panels, these rest gently upon the original 1930s structure.

PROJECT TEAM

Client Waltham Forest College

Project manager Richard Hopkinson

Main contractor Huttons Contractor

Fire consultant JGA Fire

Quantity surveyor Davis Langdon

M&E

GDM Building Services and Environmental Engineers

Services engineer Halcrow Yolles

CDMC and Building Control

Butler & Young

Acoustics

Sandy Brown Associates

Graphic design Nalla



New lightwells bring daylight into the learning centre.

A new learning pod is suspended from existing beams to prevent extra loading on the floor.

PHOTOS: ALAN WILLIAMS

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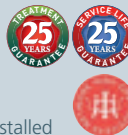
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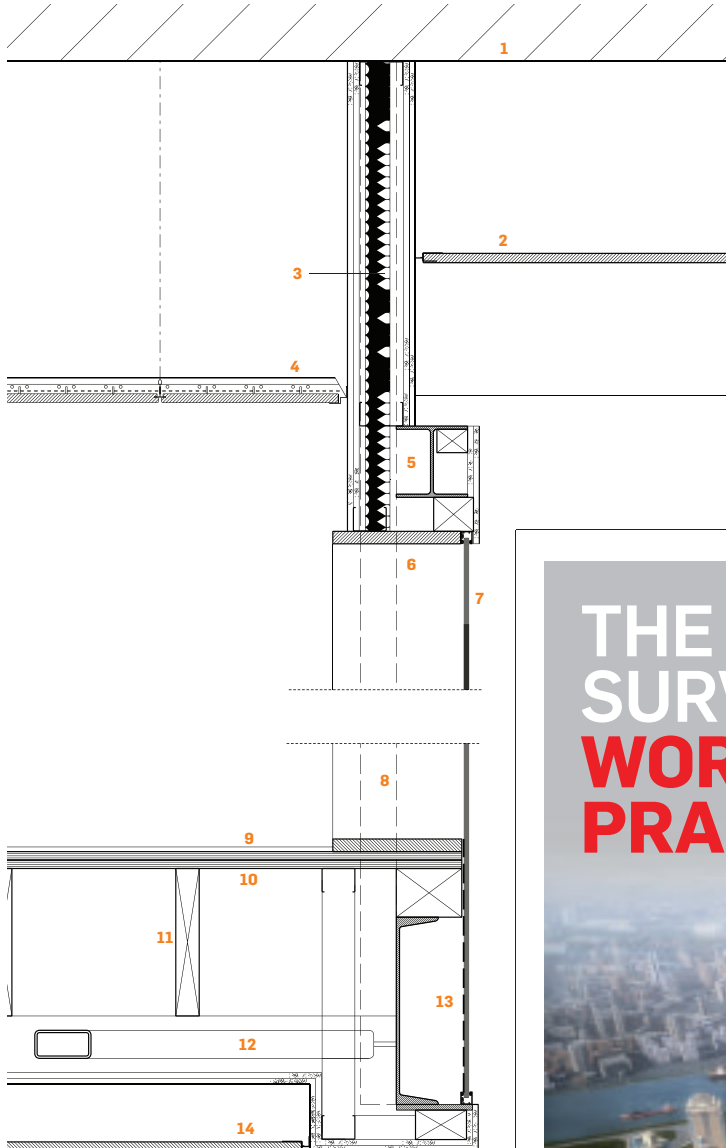
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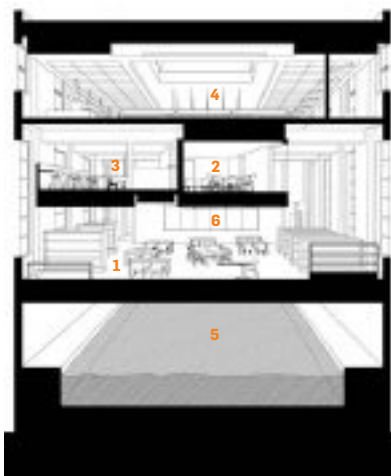
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Seminar pod cutaway section detail



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Existing Frazzi pot slab | 6 Timber window board | joist at 400mm cc |
| 2 1,200x2,400 Ecophon acoustic ceiling | 7 Planet partition 16mm laminated glass screen | 12 120x60x5.0 RHS cross bracing |
| 3 50mm Isover 1,200 mineral wool | 8 203x90x30 PFC suspended column | 13 Back-painted glass to obscure structure |
| 4 1,200x600 Armstrong Optima Vector Mineral suspended ceiling tile | 9 Milliken Carpet tiled floor finish | 14 2 x 12.5mm Gyproc FireLine MF ceiling for acoustics and fire separation |
| 5 152x152 UC23 beam — intumescent painted | 10 2no. 18mm plywood floor deck | |
| | 11 225x50 C16 timber | |

Perspective section



- | |
|------------------------------------|
| 1 Heart of College learning centre |
| 2 Suspended seminar pod |
| 3 Mezzanine |
| 4 Café on 4 — refectory |
| 5 Public swimming pool |
| 6 Theatre stage |

THE SUSPENDED MEZZANINE AND POD

The main learning centre space sits directly above a public swimming pool, leading the architects to suspend additional learning and teaching space in a pod and mezzanine floor to avoid additional loading to the floor.

It was found that the existing steels, which span 16m above the hall, had sufficient strength to take the additional load.

As the mezzanine and seminar pod are shifted off axis by 17 degrees, to respond to the new performance stage opening, the architects adopted a system of beams spanning between the existing



The pod hangs above the open-plan learning centre.

structure. An innovative offset bolted hanging support structure was devised to allow the new skewed columns to be hung from the

existing beams.

Deep walls were adopted to hide the structure, with the void accommodating service runs to give a full finish inside and out. Large cantilevered steels were used to achieve the open-glazed corners at either end of the pod with glazing supplied by Planet Partitions.

The staircase is also suspended, using expressive stainless steel Macalloy rods. The retention of the hall's original parquet floor beneath required significant acoustic treatment of the soffits of the mezzanine, pod and the ceiling of the main hall with Ecophon suspended panels.

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