

The Pavilion Centre, Cornwall

Multi-purpose Building for Business and Private Functions

With the opening of the Pavilion Centre, the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association has a superb multi-purpose building for conferences, exhibitions, meetings and social events.

The Client

The Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association's primary aim is to promote the county's agricultural industries. One of the ways it achieves this is through the Royal Cornwall Show when for three days every June its permanent showground near Wadebridge is transformed into a bustling village.

The Brief

The Association is also committed to stimulating all types of business both within the county and from further afield. The Governing Council realised that the two outdated buildings used for functions were not helping to achieve their objectives so they decided to demolish then replace them with one state-of-the-art venue suitable for business, entertainment and private functions.

Having decided that a timber frame construction, with all its advantages of sustainability, longevity and design flexibility would be best, Pinelog was selected from a short list of suitable building specialists and the company's architects invited to submit a design and tender.

The Specification

The Pavilion Centre has a profile echoing the form of the tented structures which appear all over the showground each year. It has a frame of laminated timber; clad externally in Siberian larch with large windows on two faces to provide far-reaching views and natural light. An overhanging aluminium roof gives it a distinctive look; this material being chosen because it is easy to recycle, requiring only five per cent of original manufacturing energy.

It is set on ground that slopes west to east, so the intriguing design features one storey in the west and three in the east, the lowest being largely underground.

It comprises: a main hall seating 300 people theatre-style, which can then be divided to create two smaller spaces; four function/meeting rooms of varying sizes, offices, a commercial standard kitchen, toilets and bar.

The open reception area can be used as 'meeting-and-greeting' space, as well as an exhibition and display venue. A press gallery with a frameless glass viewing platform is included in the main hall.



The building was designed with environmental considerations to the fore. A fireproof fibre made from naturally occurring volcanic material insulates the roof, the overhanging edges of which provide sun screening in summer. Environmental management systems check CO₂ levels and draw in fresh or heated air as required and octagonal roof lights with electronic louvres contribute to natural ventilation. A low-energy lighting system incorporates sensors which automatically switch off the lights when a room is not used.

Locally based sub-contractors and Cornish materials were used wherever possible including polished De Lank granite bar counters and Delabole slate flooring. The décor and furniture were chosen carefully to match the individual character of the building and its setting.

To ensure that all functions run smoothly the striking building is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities including Wifi and the latest audio and computer projection systems.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal officially opened the £1.8 million facility during her visit to the 2008 Royal Cornwall Show.





Client Benefits

Says Christopher Riddle, Secretary of the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association: "We have here a facility the whole county can be proud of and which will serve their needs extremely well. We have a superb venue for events such as conferences, exhibitions, business meetings and training courses. It is also very suitable for all kinds of social events – from wedding receptions to private parties. This is a very flexible building."

"As it is only one storey at the front, it is very deceptive. It looks much bigger on the inside than it appears from outside. We have received an extremely enthusiastic response and many favourable comments from visitors."

"Throughout the project we had an excellent working relationship with the team at Pinelog and we liked their whole approach. Their creativity, knowledge, and very good understanding of what we wanted to achieve guided our project to a very successful conclusion."

Client: Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association
Location: Wadebridge, Cornwall

