



Merkinch Primary School and Family Centre

The largest Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) school in Scotland.

NORR was appointed by Robertson Construction Northern to design a large extension to the existing Merkinch Primary School in Inverness, Scotland. Originally built in 1876, the primary goal was to future-proof the building for generations of students using sustainable methods of construction. The contemporary extension was designed as a state-of-the-art educational facility that paid respect to the original Category B listed Victorian school.

Featuring 14 new classrooms, a new ancillary teaching area, three new nursing rooms and a four-court game hall, the new school is dedicated to creating spaces, places and experiences that benefit the local community. The design vision was to create the largest school in Scotland to be built using Cross-Laminated Timber, (CLT) which is more sustainable than traditional materials of construction. CLT has many environmental advantages over more traditional construction techniques and has a far lower embodied carbon footprint than steel or concrete. Moreover, the mass timber of the CLT acts as a carbon sink, essentially removing CO2 from the atmosphere and trapping it in the building structure.

Through careful planning, the existing school was able to remain operational throughout the construction period, minimizing disruption to the students. Temporary modular accommodation was provided on the existing playing fields to limit the use of existing classrooms. NORR delivered a sustainable project by collaborating with teachers, students and community members to design a modern education facility with historical roots that will benefit the entire community.

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CLIENT	The Highland Council/ Robertson Construction Northern
PORTFOLIO	Education
CATEGORY	Primary
SIZE	Phase 1 (New-Build) 41,980 SF (3,900 SM) Phase 2 (Conversion) 16,575 SF (1,540 SM)
LOCATION	Inverness, Scotland
DATE	Ph.1 - October 2020 Ph. 2 - October 2021
SERVICES	Architecture

AWARDS

- Innovation in Delivering a Sustainable Learning Space, Learning Places Scotland Awards 2021
 - Innovation in Delivering Value categories, Learning Places Scotland Awards 2021
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Education

It's an exciting time in education. Changing pedagogies, advancing technologies and evolving student expectations are influencing educational facility design. The places in which students interact, engage and learn must be hands-on, flexible and technologically advanced. From primary schools to higher education institutions, we carefully craft connections between students, faculty and staff to positively influence learning outcomes.

Good Design Enhances Learning

From early instruction to higher education, we consider the progression of the student experience; we know that good design enhances learning outcomes. Creating a stimulating environment can directly influence the development and pace of learning for students of any age. Students learn in many different ways, and we understand the importance of crafting a facility that is inclusive – a place where all students, faculty and staff can feel warm, welcome and equal.

Navigating Complexity

NORR recognizes that the spaces we create and the environments we shape have a profound impact on the people who use them. Our mission is to deliver distinctive, high-functioning, sustainable and cost effective design solutions that are unique to each client. We fulfill these goals and aspirations by engaging our

clients in a dynamic, inclusive and creative partnership with the design team throughout the planning and design process. Our design teams work collaboratively with all stakeholders to implement solutions that are effective, economical and environmentally responsible.

We implement systems and strategies guided by sustainability, durability, budget and common sense. We select building materials and systems that will perform over a significant life span while maintaining their intended appearance and efficiency. Our goal is to create an environment that meets and exceeds the client's functional, visual and fiscal requirements, while conveying the essence of the school's identity, values and culture.

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