



Eton Sports and Aquatic Centre (ESAC)

Supporting Eton College at the Forefront of Education Through Sport

£26m

/ Project value

July 2020

/ The build commenced

December 2021

/ The build completed

The Eton Sports and Aquatic Centre (ESAC) is a flagship sports facility designed to support Eton College's commitment to sporting excellence, health and wellbeing. Constructed on the site of the former outdoor swimming pool, the 3,668m², three-storey development provides high-quality facilities for Eton College pupils, partner schools and the wider community. Featuring a competition-standard swimming pool, multi-purpose sports hall and flexible teaching and social spaces, the centre combines award-winning design, sustainability and adaptability to create a world-class sporting environment.

The brief

Eton College required a modern sports and aquatic centre that would enhance its sporting provision while serving both educational and community needs. The facility needed to provide flexible, accessible spaces capable of accommodating a wide range of sporting, teaching and community activities. Sustainability, energy efficiency and adaptability were key project objectives, alongside the delivery of a landmark building befitting one of the UK's leading educational institutions.



"The new facilities will help Eton extend its aim of being at the forefront of education through sport while also providing facilities for the benefit of the wider community."

Ian Mellor
Director of Buildings and Facilities, Eton College

“The Energy Station has delivered more than just a reliable, consistent energy source. It also allows us to seamlessly ramp up and down our energy requirements based on the demands of a particular day.”

Neil Douglas
Construction Manager, GRAHAM

The challenges

The project involved delivering a complex sports facility on the site of an operational educational campus while maintaining programme certainty and minimising disruption. The design needed to support a diverse user base, including pupils, partner schools and members of the public, requiring separate access arrangements and safeguarding considerations.

Achieving ambitious sustainability targets, incorporating innovative timber construction and creating flexible spaces capable of accommodating multiple functions also presented significant design and construction challenges.

The solution

GRAHAM delivered an innovative, future-focused facility centred on flexibility, user experience and sustainable construction.

The building's design features a central link connecting the sports hall and pool hall, bringing natural daylight and fresh air into the heart of the facility. The swimming pool incorporates an adjustable floor, enabling water depths to be modified to suit different activities and user groups. To support both school and public use, the facility includes separate fully accessible changing areas, allowing users to access spaces independently without compromising safeguarding requirements. The versatile four-court sports hall can also be reconfigured as a 200-seat examination hall, maximising operational flexibility.

Modern methods of construction played a central role in project delivery, with the structure predominantly constructed using Glulam timber and Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) roof panels. This off-site manufactured solution accelerated programme delivery, improved sustainability performance and allowed masonry works to progress without impacting the critical path.

An innovative energy station was also introduced, providing a continuous power supply, reducing carbon emissions and delivering significant operational cost savings.

Outputs & Benefits

- Flexible Multi-Use Design:** Adjustable pool floor, adaptable sports hall and dual changing facilities support educational, community and event uses while maintaining safeguarding requirements.
- Modern Methods of Construction:** Used Glulam timber and Cross Laminated Timber roof panels to improve build efficiency, sustainability and programme performance.
- Sustainable Construction:** Timber structural elements were selected for their low embodied carbon, durability and ability to support green roof and photovoltaic installations.
- Energy Innovation:** An advanced energy station delivers uninterrupted power while reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency and achieving operational cost savings of approximately 35%.
- Award-Winning Excellence:** Recognised through multiple industry awards, including a RIBA Regional Award 2023, Offsite Awards Installer of the Year 2022, Structural Timber Awards Installer of the Year 2022 and a Highly Commended Wood Award in the Education and Public Sector category.



For more information on how we're delivering lasting impact:

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