



## ABRAHAM DARBY SPORTS AND LEARNING COMMUNITY

BDP [2009-2012]

Location: Ironbridge, Telford, United Kingdom  
Budget: £35 million  
Type: Education, Leisure  
Status: Completed September 2012

BDP won the commission to design the new Abraham Darby Sports & Learning Academy at Ironbridge in Telford in 2009. The practice was appointed as architect, landscape architect, civil and structural engineer, mechanical, electrical and environmental engineer, lighting designer and acoustic consultant.

The design combines a 1,050-place Academy, sponsored by the Haberdashers' Livery Company, with a 420-place primary school, a community leisure centre and primary care trust facilities, set on a sloping site at the gateway to the Ironbridge World Heritage Site that establishes a new education focused community campus. The design articulates the three different elements (primary school, academy and leisure) as a series of linked pavilions stepping down the hill. The Primary School is sited on the high-level plateau, with its own entrance and south facing garden – reflecting its ethos of “learning by doing”. The Academy is composed as a formal collegiate block, with Performing Arts (the Academy's specialism) at the heart of the school, its traditional form reflecting the Haberdashers' ethos of “enlightened traditionalism”. The Leisure Centre is set to its side, with substantial areas of glazing allowing users to see in and out and promote Telford and Wrekin Council's “wellness” agenda. At design stage it achieved a BREEAM Excellent rating and is expected to generate a 64% carbon reduction over current Part L2 requirements. The Leisure Centre and Woodlands Primary School were officially opened in January 2012 with the Academy opening in August 2012. In 2013 the project won the Gold Award at the Timber in Construction Awards.

I joined this project post bid as a Part I Architectural Assistant and was involved with the project on a range of activities at RIBA Stages C-H. These included: post-bid concept development; the planning application process; graphics; contractor's proposals; tender drawings; and construction information.

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