

Darwin Forest Country Park

Evolution Health & Fitness Leisure Centre

Darwin Forest Country Park now has a new leisure centre which provides a memorable experience for visitors and a health and fitness resource for local residents.

The Client

Situated between Bakewell and Matlock in the Peak District National Park, Darwin Forest Country Park is operated by Pinelodge Holidays. This is the largest self-catering park in the area offering luxury Pinelodges for short breaks or holidays throughout the year.

The Brief

Darwin Forest had an existing swimming pool which had been very popular with holidaymakers, but it was too small to meet the demands of this expanding park. It was to be replaced with a completely new leisure centre that would also act as a private health and fitness club for 600 members. Sited near the entrance of the Park it needed to make an immediate impact on visitors as they arrived.

Darwin Forest holds the coveted David Bellamy Gold Conservation Award for its policies of environmental management and conservation. The new leisure centre had therefore to demonstrate good environmental practice

in terms of impact on its surroundings, the use of sustainable materials and low energy consumption.

It would need to incorporate a swimming pool which would serve a dual purpose – uninterrupted swim lanes for fitness training and a relaxed bathing zone for general users. It was also to include a gymnasium, spa pool, steam room, sauna and beauty therapy area. Finally, the building had to incorporate a reception area sited so that visitor movements could be monitored, the swimming pool supervised and also to provide a relaxation area in which to serve refreshments.

The Specification

Plus Design and Build's (PDB) architects proposed a building with a laminated timber framework. The glulam columns, curved beams and purlins are constructed from Scandinavian whitewood from sustainable, managed forests. Larch is used for the low maintenance exterior cladding



The first view visitors see of Evolution Health & Fitness leisure centre as they enter Darwin Forest Country Park.



Changing room and showers.



Spa pool.

The strong, permanent framework provided by the columns and curved roof maximise the internal space and also carry the load of a mezzanine fitness suite.

Predominantly east facing glazed walls mean that the entrance area and most of the rest of the building can be naturally lit and benefit from passive solar heating early in the morning. The large overhang of the roof provides shade at the height of the day, preventing local overheating and glare.

The high roof space allows natural ventilation but this is supplemented by mechanically controlled air conditioning. This recirculates and dehumidifies the air which is then passed through low level grills producing an air curtain to prevent misting of the windows and the glass walls of the air conditioned gymnasium.

The water in the swimming pool is managed by an ultra-violet treatment system which minimises the amount of chemicals used and backwash requirements. Water conservation initiatives include timer-controlled showers, low flush toilets and aerated taps.





The gymnasium dramatically suspended above the swimming pool.

Client Benefits

Darwin Forest Country Park immediately benefited from the new building – now bearing the name Evolution Health & Fitness – in terms of increased interest and bookings from holidaymakers, particularly in off-peak times when 'weatherproofed' facilities are key to holiday destination selection. There has also been a greater than anticipated response for membership from the local community, with over 300 members signing up before the doors were open.

This striking style of timber framed constructed building would be ideal for churches, railway stations, visitors centres, schools and many other leisure uses.

Client: Pinelodge Holidays Limited
Location: Darwin Forest Country Park, Derbyshire



Sauna.



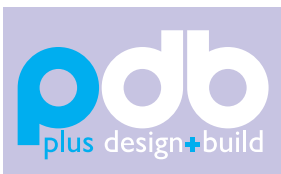
Beauty treatment and therapy area.



Gymnasium with a wide range of the latest fitness equipment.



Reception and relaxation area.



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