

# The Royal Canoe Club, Teddington, Middlesex

## Clubhouse, Gymnasium and Boat Stores

In its unique setting on an island in the River Thames, the Royal Canoe Club is providing greatly improved facilities for both members and the local community following the opening of a new clubhouse.

### The Client

Around 400 kayakers, canoeists, rowers, skiffers and dragon boaters regularly use the Royal Canoe Club, its current site on Trowlock Island on the Thames near Teddington having been the club's home for 110 years.

The club wanted to provide improved facilities for its members, be able to host regional training and events for other watersports clubs, and provide the local community with opportunities for social and physical recreation. However, the committee realised that the buildings which housed their clubhouse and gym would not allow them to achieve their objectives – they were over 100 years old, in a poor state, draughty, and had no access for wheelchairs.

### The Brief

Because of its unique Thames-side setting, a timber framed and clad building that would blend in with the bungalows on the island was essential for the new facility. Having secured grants from several sources, an architect approved by Sport England drew up plans. These were well received and a formal planning application submitted. Once this was accepted, Plus Design and Build (PDB) was selected to build the new facility,

as a member of the committee had seen and admired one of their award-winning buildings at Haslar Marina on the Solent.

### The Specification

The archetypal new boathouse is a long, low building dog-legged to make maximum use of the available site. It is set on piled foundations to overcome difficult ground conditions and has a gently sloping grey concrete-tiled roof, and external walls faced with white painted composite cladding boards. Its single storey form is derived from its main structural elements, cranked beams constructed from glulam laminated timber.

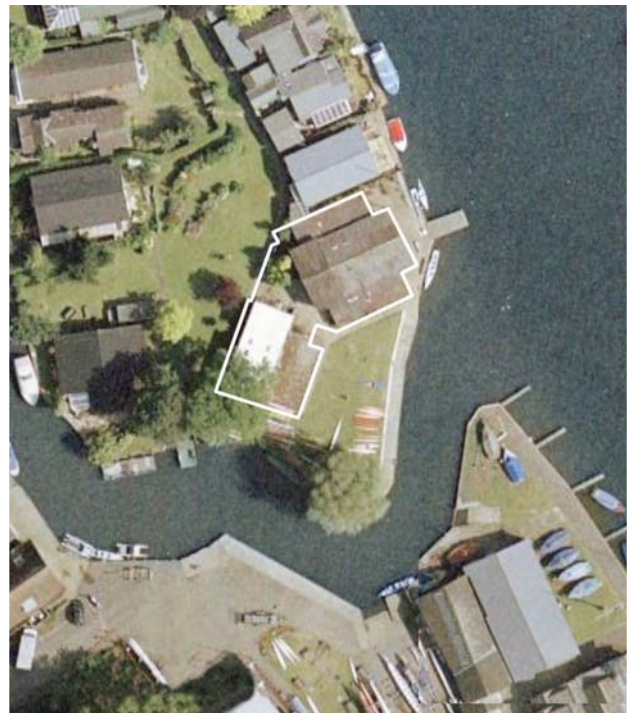
Flooding can be a major issue at Trowlock Island so to protect the building against 1 in 100 year flood event damage, it is built on 900mm brick piers which allow space for the free flow of water during very high tides or in a flood.

Its front aspect, which sits directly on the water's edge, features a glazed gable and large windows and doors which allow light to flood in. The entrance leads directly into the coaching and workout room which enjoys excellent views over the river and provides ample space for a variety of other activities, social functions and community meetings.



Leading off this room is a corridor which links it to large changing rooms, toilet and shower areas, a disabled toilet and shower cubicle and finally a heavy-weights gymnasium situated at the rear of the building. Ramps and a lift at the side of the building means that all elements of the facility are fully accessible to disabled users. Three sheds to store boats, blades and assorted equipment, complete the facilities.

The site was very restricted, Trowlock Island being a strip of land one-third of a mile long. The only access to it is a hand-wound chain ferry, so in order to get materials to site PDB had first to build a temporary bridge, substantial enough to withstand the weight of lorries carrying building materials. Precisely timed deliveries allowed for safe handling around the site and expert programming and production planning enabled the project to progress smoothly.



Trowlock Island showing the position of the new building.



The temporary bridge and hand-wound chain ferry.





The coaching and workout room.



#### Client Benefits

When asked if the club is happy with the project, committee member Janet Evans says: "We are absolutely delighted. We now have a facility that will allow us to expand the range of our activities and one that is ideal for everyone from Olympic canoeists through to the local pilates club. Being wheelchair friendly throughout means we can provide increased opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in watersports – something we are very keen on."

"The fact that PDB had the skills to handle everything, from demolishing our old building and putting in new foundations right through to final commissioning, was a tremendous benefit to us. We liked their 'can-do' approach – even unusually high tides encountered during construction did not stop them!"

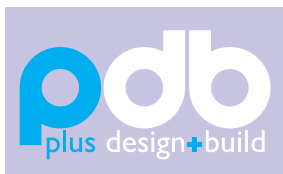
Client: The Royal Canoe Club

Location: Teddington, Middlesex



Heavy-weights gymnasium.

## FLOORPLAN



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