

Combined Colleges Boathouse

Client: Selwyn, Churchill, King's College and Leys School

Value: £2.2m

Awards: RIBA East Awards 2017: Winner

Status: completed 2016

The combined Cambridge Colleges of King's, Selwyn and Churchill, together with the Leys School, commissioned **rhp** to replace their existing 60s boathouse which had an industrial aesthetic and lacked the appeal and character of other boathouses along the river and is in need of considerable repair and refurbishment for the facilities to meet latest standards. The Local Authority's Conservation Area townscape analysis identified the existing facility as a 'building that detracts' from the character of the area.

The **rhp** proposed development strategy not only provided much needed upgraded accommodation for the clubs, locating the majority of the accommodation, other than boat storage, on the upper floor out of the flood plain, but also presented an opportunity to positively contribute to, and enhance, the character of the area.

Incorporating traditional materials with crisp detailing, the resulting appearance is an elegant composition of a lighter upper floor sitting over a robust solid base. The design presents a fresh, contemporary image with a familiar scale that resonates with existing Cambridge boathouse typology.

The expressed ridge and balcony lines, together with solar shading elements provide a floating horizontal emphasis reflecting the proportions of slender rowing boats. The deeper corner balcony area and roof overhang is supported by an expressed column with reference to blades and boat riggers.

Working with the glass artist Kate Maestri the glazed balustrade incorporates an artwork design in response to the pattern and rhythm of rowing blades when completing a stroke.

