Timber alternative Resysta used as cladding for new Battle of Britain memorial centre

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The eco-friendly timber alternative material Resysta was selected as the cladding for the multi-award winning heritage centre at the Battle of Britain memorial, due to its innovative, sustainable and durable properties.

Project background

Situated on the White Cliffs in the village of Capel-le-Ferne near Folkstone, Kent, the national Battle of Britain Memorial is a place of commemoration and education dedicated to 'The Few' – those who fought and died in one of the most crucial British victories of the 20th Century. It provides its visitors with a place for reflective contemplation, reverence and respect.

The Memorial is maintained by the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, which aims to educate the public about the Battle and ensure that future generations are aware of the importance of the event and its place in history.

With these objectives in mind, the Trust wanted to create a new visitor and learning facility, named The Wing, to complement and strengthen the existing site and attract a wider audience to the Memorial.

Project brief

As well as adopting a contemporary and innovative design approach, architects Godden Allen Lawn were required to employ and promote sustainable and environmentally friendly build principles, in order to minimise the carbon footprint and to allow the building to last for many years to come. In addition, as the memorial is sited on an exposed cliff top, any materials used for The Wing needed to prove durable, weather-proof and long-lasting.

Cladding solution

Timber cladding was initially desired for the project, due to its modern and attractive look and also the visual link it would create between the structure and its natural surroundings.

After reviewing different options, specifiers chose **Resysta**, a fibre-reinforced hybrid material which comes in a variety of finishes and is a great alternative to traditional timber cladding. Resysta was selected for the following reasons:

- Clean, modern appearance and visual similarity to real timber
- Durability and Imperviousness to water and moisture
- Low lifetime maintenance cost resulting in long-term cost effectivness
- Produced from environmentally materials - approx. 60% rice husk, 22% common salt and 18% mineral oil

Results

Since being unveiled by HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in March 2015, The Wing has achieved a trio of coveted awards and has been named one of the most excellent buildings in the country.

Designed in the shape of a Spitfire wing, it received the Best Small Commercial Building award at the Southern Region Awards and was Highly Commended in the Small Commercial Building category of the 2015 Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards. In addition, it achieved the top award at the 2015 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) South East Awards for Planning Excellence.

The Wing is a superb example of how an innovative material, Resysta, was able to fit a technical specification for sustainability and durability, whilst also looking aesthetically pleasing, providing a

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modern appearance and complimenting natural materials such as timber, stone and slate.

“I was recommended Resysta by a contact and found it to be a fantastic alternative to using real timber. It looked just like the real thing but had a much cleaner and more contemporary look and feel, and was a very easy material to work with. Its eco-friendly properties and low long-term maintenance cost meant it fit the sustainability requirements of the project very well. I would definitely use Resysta again in similar projects and have been recommending it to other people" – Nick Lawn – Partner, Godden Allen Lawn Ltd

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Company Contact:

Falcon Panel Products

T. 0121 525 8844
E. simon@falconpp.co.uk
W. https://www.falconpp.co.uk/

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