THE OBSERVATORY

A PLACE TO LOOK IN - A PLACE TO LOOK OUT

The Observatory

Materials

Resource Sheet 6

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Resource Sheet 6:
The Observatory – Materials

Look in, Look out…Explore contemporary art and architecture and unlock learning across the curriculum with The Observatory.

The Observatory offers students and teachers an engaging and inspirational way to learn about contemporary art and design in two very special locations. Whether through the study of the structure's unique design and engineering, learning about the local landscape, or exploring the work of practicing artists, The Observatory supports learning for students across the school age range in subject areas including: Art & Design, English, Geography and Science. The Observatory also supports the objectives of the Learning Outside the Classroom and Learning Through Landscapes programmes.

What is The Observatory?

The Observatory is a sculptural installation, an intervention, a space, a platform, a shelter, a look-out where a series of artists will take up residence in two special locations over the next year.

- *Winchester Science Centre/South Downs National Park – February to July 2015*

- *Lymington Keyhaven – July to December 2015*

The Observatory is an excellent example of how design responds to a multi-faceted brief and offers students the opportunity to explore contemporary architecture in their locality, first hand.

The Observatory's unique and beautiful design includes a studio space for the artists and a workshop that is totally accessible to the public. The design features the use of sustainable materials and a specially engineered rotating base, which allows The Observatory to capture 360 degree views, whist also being light on the landscape.

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The Observatory provides a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with contemporary artists, learn about their working practices and understand how they respond to the world around them.

Six artists will be resident in The Observatory over the next year. Working in a variety of mediums including: drawing, sculpture performance, printing, and animation, the artists will create site-specific work in response to the landscape and to their experience of working in The Observatory.

For more information about The Observatory, visit our website:

www.lookinlookout.org

Using this Resource Sheet

This Resource Sheet provides a summary of the materials used for The Observatory, including where they came from and how they were used in the design.

This Resource Sheet forms part of the *Design & Build Your Own Observatory* scheme of work, but can also be used as a stand-alone resource. **Suggested activities** for using this resource include:

- Research the materials used for The Observatory. What alternatives could the designers considered?
- Explore rope and knots. Create sculptures using rope and knot tying.
- Research sustainable heat and power sources. How do they generate energy? Which are most cost effective?

The use of this Resource Sheet can be supported and enhanced by visits to The Observatory and/or workshops led by SPUD or the resident artists in school. For more information, please contact: **Kristina@spudgroup.org**

The Observatory – A Summary of Materials

The design of The Observatory required the architects to consider a range of materials for its construction. Their decisions were guided by … main considerations from the design brief:

- **Budget** – The total budget for the design and construction of The Observatory was £50,000.
- **Site** – The Observatory will be sited in 4 unique locations. The architects had to consider how materials would respond in each site environment.
- **Function** – The Observatory has to serve as an artist's workspace as well as a space for the public to interact with the artist and the landscape. The materials had to be sensitive to this function and durable.
- **Aesthetic** – The design brief stated that: '*The Observatory needs to intrigue people and act as a beacon that draws attention to a place.'*

The following pages provide a summary of the materials that were used by the architects for The Observatory, where they come from and why they were chosen.

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External Cladding

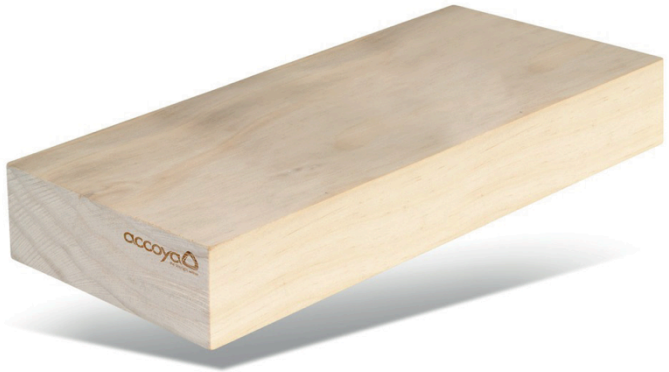
Charred Timber

Charred timber is any wood that has been burnt on the surface to provide a textured surface, a black colour, and preserves the wood from rot, insects. When the timber is burnt it becomes charcoal. It is coating in a layer of varnish to fix the surface.

© Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Accoya Borders/Edging with Black Gloss Paint

Accoya is a treated wood from New Zealand that is the worlds leading high technology long life wood. It is made from pine wood, which is grown very quickly. Its properties exceed the best tropical hardwoods making it ideal for outdoor locations as its last longer outside in the weather. It can be used for anything

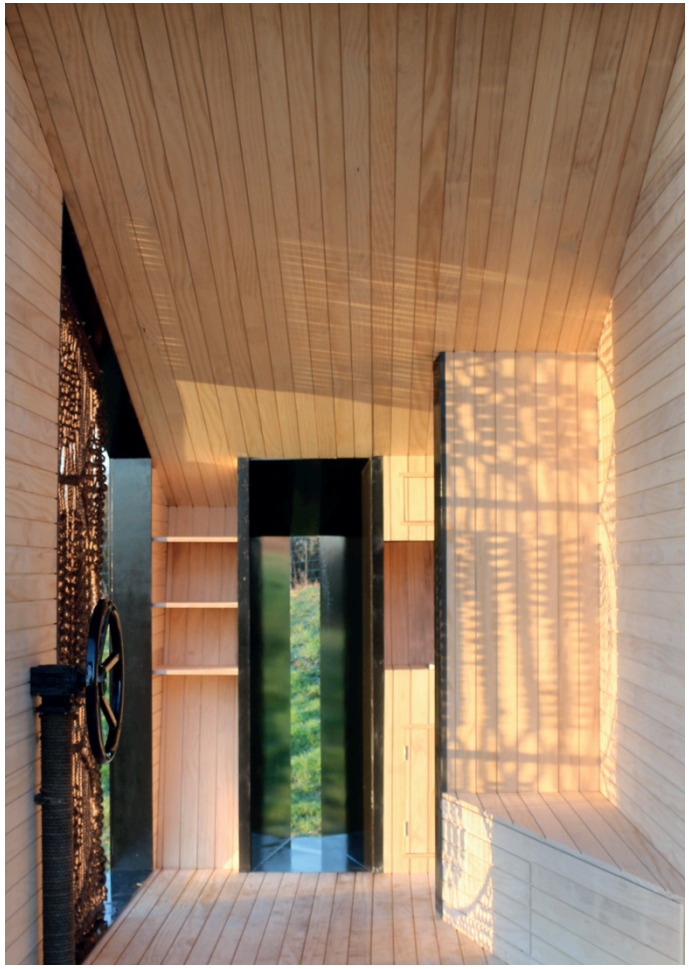


including external cladding like The Observatory has used.

Internal Cladding

Accoya Cladding Strips

To achieve the linear quality leading towards the back window we decided upon strips that were half the dimensions of the external cladding - 75mm wide.



Images © Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

Windows, Doors & Extruded Frames

Accoya Painted Black Gloss

To achieve a contrast between the charred timber, the frames were all painted with black gloss.

Tarred Marlin Rope Screen Section

Artist Sculpture

The artist who worked on the project makes sculpture using an organic rope. This is called Tarred Marling Rope. It is a natural material that is protected in a layer of tar. This tar is allowed to dry for 3 weeks. It is then allowed to be worked with. The artist makes a series of different knots to create a pattern.

Artist Edward Crumpton working on the rope screen for The Observatory. Images © Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

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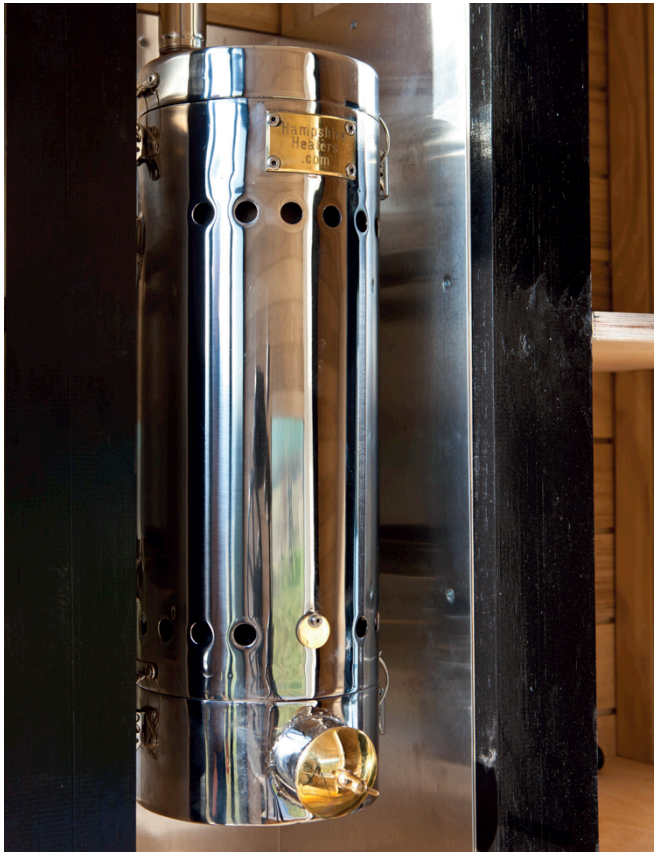
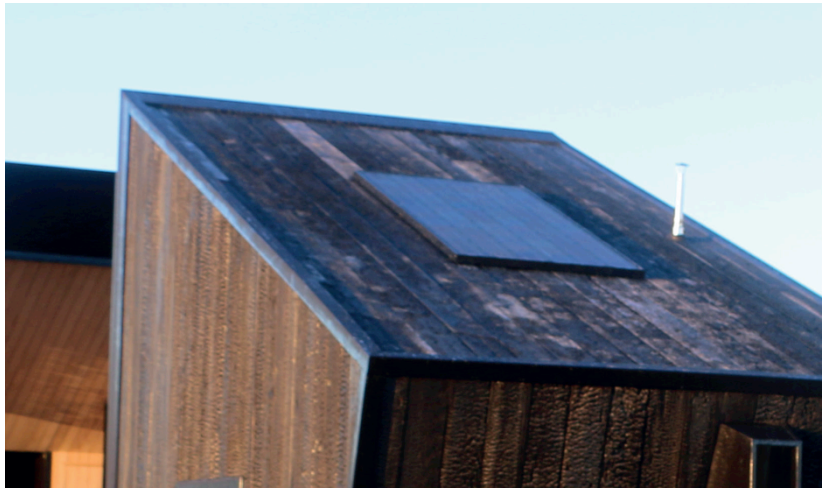
Charcoal Burner and Solar Panel

Heat and Electricity for the Artist's Studio

The artist is kept warm inside his studio with a charcoal heater. This is a small device, which the artist can light at any time.



The solar panel on the roof collects energy from the sun, which charges a battery (located in the back of the studio) that provides electricity whenever the artist requires. A light can be powered in the study as well as a small phone charger and laptop.



Water Collection, Sink and Filtration System

Sink

Rain water is collected from a tank, which is stored in the back of the workshop. The rain water runs down the roof into a tank. A tap can then be turned on to allow water to fall (gravity) down from the tank out of the tap and into a ceramic sink. The water that passes through the sink needs to be collected, as it is not connected to a mains water pipe. This is collected in another tank. However, this dirty water can be toxic. For example if the artist were to wash paint brushes, the oil paint discarded in the water would need to be collected and filter to stop harmful chemicals entered the ground again outside.