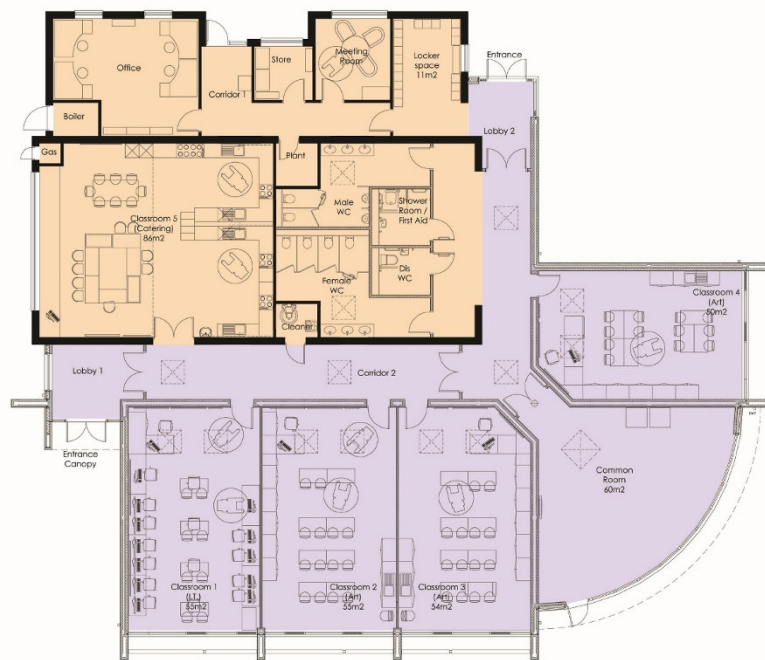




CASE STUDY: EDUCATION
LIFE SKILLS CENTRE



Existing Building

Converted to provide teaching,
office and welfare spaces



New Extension

Providing further teaching
and recreational space





Designing for Complex Needs

The Centre has been developed as a purpose designed facility for students enrolled on Independent Living Skills courses at the College. The courses are aimed at teaching students with a variety of learning disabilities the skills they require to allow them to lead more independent lifestyles.

Specialist teaching spaces have been provided which aim to facilitate this approach to learning. A large 'Kitchen' style classroom has been created within the original building providing domestic style worktop bays and a designated 'Dining' space allowing domestic tasks to be replicated. Other specialist areas include a state of the art IT classroom, two general teaching classrooms and an Art classroom.

A Common Room provides a social meeting space within the building and occupies the prominent corner position allowing panoramic views out over the surrounding landscape to the River Dee Estuary. Access is provided out onto an elevated external

seating area with low level planting for the students and staff to enjoy.

Circulation and welfare spaces within the building are generous and combine with a simple layout to make 'way finding' easier for the students.

Natural light is plentiful within the building with large glazed openings in the classrooms and common room combined with generous rooflights to the rear of the teaching spaces, and within the corridors helping to create a light, bright feeling within the building. This aspect is also very important to create a quality teaching environment for students with learning disabilities.

The demolition of the obsolete buildings has opened up this area of campus allowing space for the new extension with generous landscaping between the building and the main campus access road. A sensory garden with specialist planting and water feature is due to be developed by the students within a designated area adjacent to the rear entrance.

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION

LIFE SKILLS CENTRE

Name of Building

Life Skills Centre

Date Completed

Spring 2013

Project Cost

£655,000

Building Type

Education

Location

Northop, Flintshire

Client

Deeside College

Main Contractor

Read Construction Holdings Ltd.

**Building Overview**

The Life Skills Centre at Northop College provides purpose designed modern facilities for students who are enrolled on the College's Independent Living Skills Courses, aimed at helping students with learning difficulties fully integrate into college life whilst developing important life and domestic skills.

Located at the heart of the College campus, the new Centre has been created by the refurbishment of an existing classroom block with the provision of a new wrap-around extension, on cleared land following the demolition of three obsolete teaching and office buildings.

The new Centre provides general teaching spaces, specialist art, IT and catering classrooms, welfare facilities and staff offices.

Tight budget restraints resulted in a simple design which utilised the existing building as far as possible, with the new extension wrapping around the building on two sides to screen the old building from the public approaches whilst improving the general appearance of the campus.

External materials have been kept simple with off white render and larch cladding. Elements of colour have been introduced in key areas helping to give the new Centre a distinct individual identity. An orange fin wall visually separates the old building from the new and is complemented by purple and grey coloured infill panels within the glazing.

Natural light is maximised within the interior spaces and the building has been designed to benefit from passive solar gain, with larch brise soleil on the south east facade helping to prevent summer overheating.