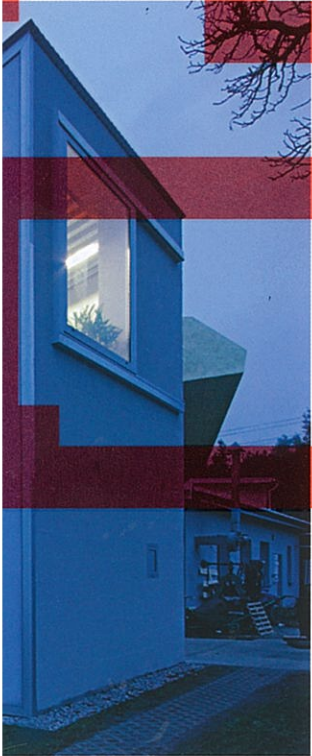


Markus
Sebastian
Braun



Inspired & Inspiring

Labs, Studios
and Workshops for
Creative Minds



BRAUN

Design Technology Block, St James School

Ashford, England

Architects → Squire and Partners

Location → Church Road,
Ashford TW15 3DZ, England

GFA → 175 sqm

Completion → 2016

Client → St James School

Inspired & inspiring → product design

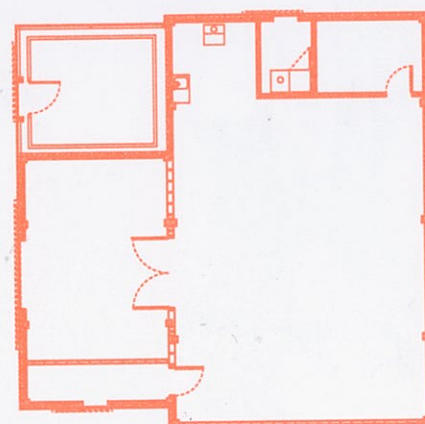
Main materials → timber

www.squireandpartners.com

Occupying an area within the St James School grounds, previously home to an ad hoc collection of sheds and storage units, the new Design Technology Block was designed to accommodate students and teaching staff as well as an office, plant and store room. Taking inspiration from the craftsmanship and simple technology of timber-frame buildings in the southeast of England, the building envelope is clad in a black vertical weatherboard and cover strip system, within which a concealed gutter and flush pyramidal roof light ensure the purity of the building form is not compromised. The dark external cladding provides a striking contrast to the light Douglas fir timber interior. Passive ventilation was achieved via electrically operated vents in the roof apex. An added benefit of using timber was the natural absorption of sound, aiding acoustic attenuation. Inside, traditional pegged mortise and tenon joints within the timber frame are counterpoised by steel hex-head fixings and sheets of birch-faced ply panels lining the walls. Exposing this timber structure and employing traditional construction methods were an important part of the project, displaying to the students the beauty, longevity and practicality of timber as a building material, and providing a simple and practical backdrop for the workshop activities within. The architect's approach to the new block was to combine historically referenced construction with modern technology, inspiring the students and serving the school for years to come.

→ 20 students and two teaching staff find space in the new building.





← Ground floor plan of the Design Technology Block.

↖ The Douglas fir is visually characterized by a tight grain and minimal knots and is recognized for its strength.

↑↑ The students can use all sorts of tools.

↑ Design and technology merge in one place.