

recently completed: **Cranmer Road Graduate Accommodation** **King's College, Cambridge**

The first major Passivhaus buildings in Cambridge, we have recently completed new graduate student accommodation for King's College at Cranmer Road. Won through a design competition, the project creates 'graduate campus' for the College, delivering 59 graduate rooms within two new distinct buildings: a Garden Building and a Villa Building.

With a design life of 100 years, quality and longevity are of paramount importance. Located within the West Cambridge Conservation Area, the new buildings are contextual and quietly assured in their design, but nevertheless outstanding and pioneering in their performance.

The Villa Building on Cranmer Road is a response to two existing Arts & Crafts villas within the site in terms of its scale, massing and palette of red brick. The Garden Building on the south side of the site is a slim, linear structure that defines a new generous garden at the heart of what is now a cohesive graduate campus for the College.

The graduate community were closely consulted as part of the briefing process. Their involvement led, rather unusually, to the inclusion of 19 non-ensuite rooms, instead with shared bathrooms. This created rooms with lower rents and allowed more rooms to be delivered overall.

Cambridge's First Major Passivhaus Buildings

The two new buildings achieve Passivhaus certification. This significantly reduces their energy consumption and operational costs to deliver long-term value. An innovative direct-electric approach has been adopted, in line with a services strategy that is simple,



efficient and easy to maintain. Distribution losses are minimised by point-of-use electric water heaters. The showers benefit from integrated heat recovery to minimise energy to heat the water.

The buildings benefit from an all-timber CLT structure (cross laminated timber), to reduce embodied carbon and deliver a rapid construction programme. This also helped achieve a remarkable airtightness of 0.16 - 0.19 air changes per hour (4 x better than the Passivhaus standards).

The project was awarded two Cambridge Design and Construction Awards - the Sustainability and Engineering Award and Best New Building (over £2m construction).

"The design of the buildings at Cranmer Road provided the opportunity to create new, energy efficient buildings but also to create a graduate community linking existing buildings. In both parts, the design has worked very well, creating very attractive and practical buildings that relate well to the surrounding area.

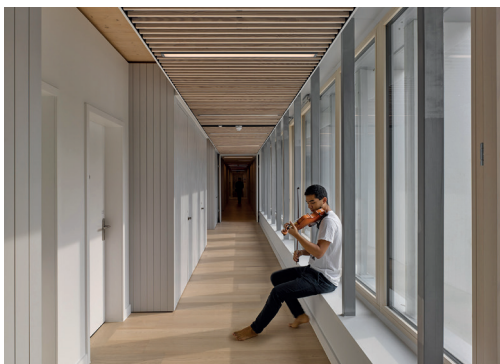
Allies and Morrison developed a beautiful design that was sensitive to the neighbouring buildings. They worked with students and the College to develop good and flexible designs for both individual rooms and communal spaces. The architecture helps to create the sense of community that the College sought", says Keith Carne, First Bursar at King's College, Cambridge.

"It has been a delight working with King's College, who were prepared to think long term and address the climate emergency head on.

For us, the project represents a natural evolution of our College work in west Cambridge over the last 25 years. We were particularly excited to demonstrate that a sophisticated contextual design can be achieved, at the same time as delivering pioneering Passivhaus performance", says Max Kettenacker, Director at Allies and Morrison.

"The College has a history of high-quality architecture, and the Cranmer Road student accommodation lives up to these standards. Using timber as the primary structure helped to limit the scheme's embodied carbon, while operational energy is kept low through Passivhaus. Electricity is the sole fuel source, which works well with the ongoing decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid.

We've enjoyed working on the project as MEP consultant, Passivhaus designer, and acoustic consultant from early design through site delivery and post occupancy evaluation.", says Passivhaus Leader Gwilym Still at Max Fordham.



Location	Cambridge, UK
Uses	Education, Housing
Client	King's College, University of Cambridge
Status	Completed
Size	2,174 sqm
Units	59 residential
Expertise	Architecture
Collaborators	Faithful & Gould, Smith & Wallwork, Max Fordham, LDA, Warm, RG Carter, Beacon Planning

ABOUT KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

One of the 31 constituent Colleges that make up the University of Cambridge, King's College was founded by King Henry VI in 1441 and has continuously striven to uphold Henry's love for 'education, religion, learning and research'.

kings.cam.ac.uk / [@Kings_College](#)

ABOUT ALLIES AND MORRISON

Allies and Morrison is a practice of architects and urbanists based in London and Cambridge. We design beautiful buildings that have long life and can adapt over the generations. We also shape enduring places whether new pieces of city or settlements at any scale. All our projects are concerned with the crafting of every detail and the appreciation for the uniqueness of each context.

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