

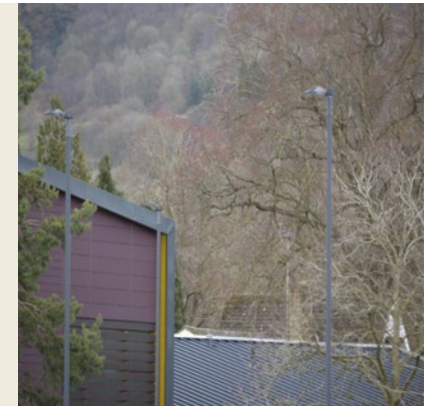
A new school building

This highly sensitive greenfield site demanded a thorough assessment of the landscape setting and the impact which the proposed development—a new primary school—would have on views to and from the Malvern Hills.

A landscape-led approach influenced the siting, massing, layout and finishes of the building. Colour played a fundamental role in the design process, drawing references from the surrounding landscape and considering how that landscape was experienced by pupils at the new school. The result is well-grounded in its setting, where the surroundings are integral to the experience of the building.



The main elevations adopt the colours of the hills beyond. The main hall, the largest element, reflects the wooded hillside where birch and ash take on a purple hue during winter months. The sharp yellow reflects the acid grassland of the upper slopes and is used on all doorways and windows. The single-storey wings are softer grey-greens to transition to open fields and hedgerows. The colours ground the building in its setting and help people to navigate the building.



Photograph © Jan Sedláček

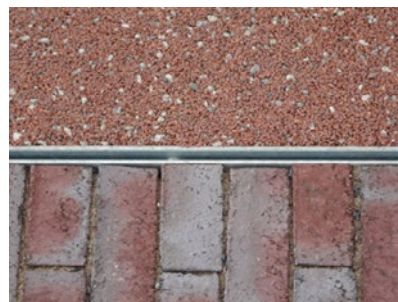
The grey cladding applied to roof and main hall tonally matches the landscape, making the building recede when viewed from above. It also references a typical winter sky over the hills. Surrounding rural hedgerows typical of this landscape influenced the choice of native hedgerows for boundaries.



The massing of the building with its undulating roofline reflects the topography of the distant ridgeline.



All external materials selected were tested on site to ensure that the palette was working harmoniously with the landscape setting.



Materials selected for hard landscaping recall the colours and tones of aggregates and gravels washed down the hillside streams.



The building is bookended with a traditional handmade brick to reflect the core settlement of the village.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

A new primary school and nursery for the village of Colwall opened in 2016, on the edge of the village to the west of the Malvern Hills. It lies within the Principal Timbered Farmlands landscape character type, a wooded and tranquil lowland landscape, and has a close physical and visual relationship with Principal Wooded Hills to the west, and the visually-dominant High Hills and Slopes of the Malvern Hills to the east. Its location on the edge of the village also meant that it needed to relate to the urban character found here.

Panoramic long-distance views from the Malvern Hills, including the iconic British Camp and Worcestershire Beacon, are categorised as 'exceptional' in the AONB Partnership's Guidance on Identifying and Grading Viewpoints.