

Eternit roofing stars in top Equestrian Centre

Fibre cement profiled sheeting from Eternit Building Materials is playing a "major part" in the transformation of a former Scottish limeworks into a world-class equestrian centre.

Designed by Quercus Rural Building Design, the 15-acre centre breaks many traditions, not least being built with curved timber frame and fibre cement roofs instead of the usual steel frame and corrugated iron roof.

In fact, the client - landowner Ian Ross - was so impressed with Eternit's Farmscape profiled sheeting on the roofs of Phase One of the Cousland Equestrian Centre project that he changed the specification for Phase Two to incorporate it.

Ian had a vision to convert the derelict industrial land six miles south of Edinburgh into a recreational centre for all and in 1996 commissioned Quercus' Peter Caunt, an architect formerly with the building design unit at the Scottish Agricultural College, to manage the project for Millennium Equestrian Centre Scotland Ltd.

Back then the vision was for a centre that simply combined riding for the disabled with training gallops for racehorses but by the millennium planning permission had been granted for a revised scheme that was so large it had to be divided into two phases.

Phase One was a state-of-the-art horseracing yard with facilities not seen outside the major English horseracing areas such as Newmarket, giving a much-needed leg-up to the beleaguered Scottish horse racing scene.

Phase Two would be the development of a centre for all equestrian pursuits, offering a premium facility to all horse lovers while being run as a self-financing charity for the young, underprivileged and disabled of south-east Scotland.

Phase One began after the limeworks were filled with inert waste by Ian's company - Lothian Recycling (1996) Ltd - and will shortly be completed as a £1 million private investment, while Phase Two awaits the securing of funds.

The first phase features two-mile-long all-weather gallops, a floodlit outdoor school and high-fence training paddock, and two yards - one with an American barn with 11 deluxe loose boxes, tack room, feed store and shower, and hay barn and midden.

The other yard features courtyard stables with 19 loose boxes, two tack rooms and four feed stores, isolation stables with two foaling boxes, a hay barn, midden, another six loose boxes and tack room, horse walker and hydrotherapy pool. This pool for horses and dogs is believed to be the first in Scotland and includes a wash down area and solarium, office, kitchen, conservatory and toilets.

Market research showed a high proportion of BSJA (British Show Jumping Association) members in the Lothian area who were lacking quality local indoor showjumping facilities for training and competition as well as a need for a large centre with high-quality riding surfaces to complement local riding schools and livery centres.

Therefore, Phase Two will comprise a large (262 x 131ft) arena with 24 loose boxes, judges and first aid rooms, spectator seating and an indoor school (196x72ft) with 18 loose boxes, judges box, classrooms, staff room and office.

It also includes a 67-foot diameter warm-up ring, health suite with changing rooms and toilets, gym, sauna and cafe, and parking for cars and horse boxes, allowing for indoor training and competition along with schooling, dressage, lessons and grass roots development of the sport for education and disabled groups.

Eternit's Farmscape profiled sheeting in the colour Jasper was fixed by contractors Ayton Smiddy, ARM Buildings Ltd, Saltire Stables and Quercus Ltd on all the roofs apart from the manager's and staff houses.

When the increase in scale of the centre was proposed, Peter



Caunt, who "commonly specifies" Eternit's fibre cement profiled sheeting because it is the "material of choice" for stock buildings, took the opportunity to redesign a more attractive and environmentally responsible scheme.

Examples exist in Scandinavia of large-span arenas built economically with curved laminated timber beams and the move from steel and corrugated sheeting to timber structures with fibre cement roofs was achieved with only a marginal increase in cost.

"Corrugated fibre cement is used for the roofing of the farm and stables buildings as an attractive but low-cost material commonly used for these typically rural structures. Their positioning and detailing such as overhanging eaves is chosen to minimise their impact while keeping them functional," he said. Farmscape's more natural look is achieved by applying a surface pigmentation to the top face of the sheet. Unlike a dense layer of gloss paint, this pigmentation allows the distinctive texture of the fibre cement substrate, which absorbs condensation, to show through - giving the product a very natural appearance.

"We specified Eternit because of its spanning properties in large purlin roofs and suitability for livestock housing. The latter relates to its robustness in humid and sometimes corrosive environments, its control of condensation, and its mass which enables it to stay cool in the day and warm at night," said Peter.

"The client is very happy with the product, in particular its soft natural colour and it was he who asked that the green turf roof of the arenas in Phase Two be changed to match the stables buildings. The use of the same material has helped to unify the buildings that have very different forms and functions.

"Farmscape has come to be a major part of the project. It will roof all the buildings with the exception of the housing, even the arenas that will have a specially developed curved profile. There is no doubt the use of Eternit has raised the quality of the development both functionally and aesthetically."

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