

FINDEL EDUCATION DELIVERS KEY MUSIC SCHOOL REFIT

“If you turned the Cork School of Music upside down and shook it, pretty much everything that fell out would have been sourced by Findel Education.”

An iconic building on the banks of the River Lee, the Cork School of Music was borne out of an eight year, £60million plan, led by construction services provider Hochtief and resourced by Findel Education.

There has been a Cork School of Music for around 200 years but for the last 100 the school has been scattered across sites around the city, including pre-fabricated buildings, other schools' buildings and even a converted hotel. Currently, the school teaches 300 full-time and 3,500 part-time students.

In 1999, a new home for the Cork School of Music was earmarked as one of the Irish Government's PPP (Private and Public Partnership) projects, bringing together private partners to deliver state-of-the-art facilities for public use.

In 2002 – the year Cork was the European Capital of Culture – the project, which received funding from Barclay's Private Equity, was given the green light.

A Grand Design

Hochtief, one of the world's five leading construction companies, brought on board leading architect firm, Murray O'Laire and construction firm, Sisk to deliver an iconic six storey building, which was to form the gateway to Cork's docks – an area that has been earmarked for stunning re-development over the next ten years.

Findel Education's Projects Division, proven experts in providing a complete service that delivers solutions across the UK education market, was brought on board to provide all fixtures, fittings and equipment for the school, with the exception of IT, which was provided directly by Apple, and pianos from Steinway.

Fit for a Purpose

Findel Education's project manager was Carl Murray, who was given the task of sourcing and supplying £1.5m of equipment, from specialist chairs for cellists and complex AV equipment to whiteboards and restaurant furniture.

Findel Education's Project Division became involved from the commencement of the project with Carl and his team keeping in close contact with the project partners, meeting with Peter O'Shea, Hochtief PPP Solutions Project Director every quarter.

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90 per cent of materials were sourced from Ireland, with the company only having to go to the UK, Europe and further afield for specialist materials.

"The blinds came from a supplier in West Cork and the AV equipment come from Cork City. It was important to the project managers to have the money ploughed back into the local economy and we did just that.

"Communication has been key throughout the entire process, and when the project really started moving apace prior to completion in May 2007, we had 12 months of constant meetings with the partners, consisting of presentations and showing product samples," said Carl.

"The brief we received was very detailed and the most important thing from our point of view was to manage and exceed expectations. For example, gold-plated taps might have been specified but it was up to me to suggest something like stainless steel which would last longer, look smarter and be a more cost effective option," said Carl.

Findel Education was given an original shopping list of equipment in 1999. Due to the length of the build it was Incredible that the company managed to keep to its original quote. "It's testament to our flexibility and purchasing ability that we managed to do it," said Carl.

Development of an Icon

Peter O'Shea, Project Director, Hochtief PPP Solutions, said: "Cork School of Music is a showcase site for Hochtief, so it was very important to find a supplier who could work closely with us and understand the logistics of a PPP contract.

"Findel Education proved to be a professional company that was prepared to work closely with all concerned in the design, build and supply process. There was an incredibly long and detailed list of equipment to procure and this was revised many times, but we were kept in the loop constantly and they managed to deliver ahead of time and on budget.

“The result of this project is an iconic facility which will serve the young people of Ireland for years to come. We can all be proud that we played a part in the build of such an important facility,” concluded Peter.

Findel Education’s Head of Projects International and UK, Terry Wilson adds: “To be involved with such a prestigious and traditional school such as Cork is an honour for us at Findel. This innovative project has been a labour of love from day one, and to see all the hard work come to fruition is extremely rewarding for us. The school now has the facilities which its heritage deserves and we hope the students get as much pleasure from the finished project as we have.”

The School Now

Cork School of Music re-opened in September 2007, accommodating music tuition studios, a 450 seat rehearsal hall, ‘black box’ theatre, staff and student common rooms, music library, live recording suite, drama suite, staff boardrooms, administrative offices, flat floor classrooms and tiered lecture theatres.

It has many cutting-edge design and architectural features including a moving acoustic ceiling, which changes shape according to the style of music being played, and all of the tuition rooms are acoustically sealed. At the heart of the building is a public concourse that connects the teaching, performance and administrative spaces.