

Orchard Spa, Coln Lakes,

Gloucestershire // A new spa designed by De Matos Ryan for use by residents of a luxury holiday cottage resort is like the neighbouring orchard and lake... not all it seems

Client: Coln Park LLP // **Architecture and design:** De Matos Ryan // 792 sq m // **Completion time:** 10 months





HUFON+CROW



Much like its pleasant lakeside setting, the design of the Orchard Spa by architecture practice De Matos Ryan is not quite what it seems. The Gloucestershire land on which the spa sits, including the eponymous orchard and nearby lake, are not natural features of the landscape but a man-made topography that covers the scars and craters left by gravel extraction.

The activity is still taking place in the area, but the newly landscaped area is now home to a resort of exclusive holiday cottages called The Lakes by yoo. The Orchard Spa, which is for use by the residents of the cottages, sits at the western edge of the resort and looks like it has been converted from one of the industrial sheds left behind when activity moved to new land.

In fact the original design by De Matos Ryan did involve the conversion of the industrial portal-framed shed that stood on the site, but structural issues meant the practice ended up designing a new building based on the original shed.

De Matos Ryan director Angus Morrogh-Ryan says: 'We found ourselves between the regenerated landscape and the industrial one, so the task was how to create a spa set against this really quite binary landscape – one side (the side on which extraction is still taking place) is quite noisy and dusty and the other is tranquil and ecological. We had to create something within all of that that would feel calm and restorative.'

He continues: 'The project does have quite a hard edge to it, where we're saying as architects we recognise that there is this industrial landscape behind us.'

The spa facilities are a 20m-long pool, children's play pool, gym and sauna, as well

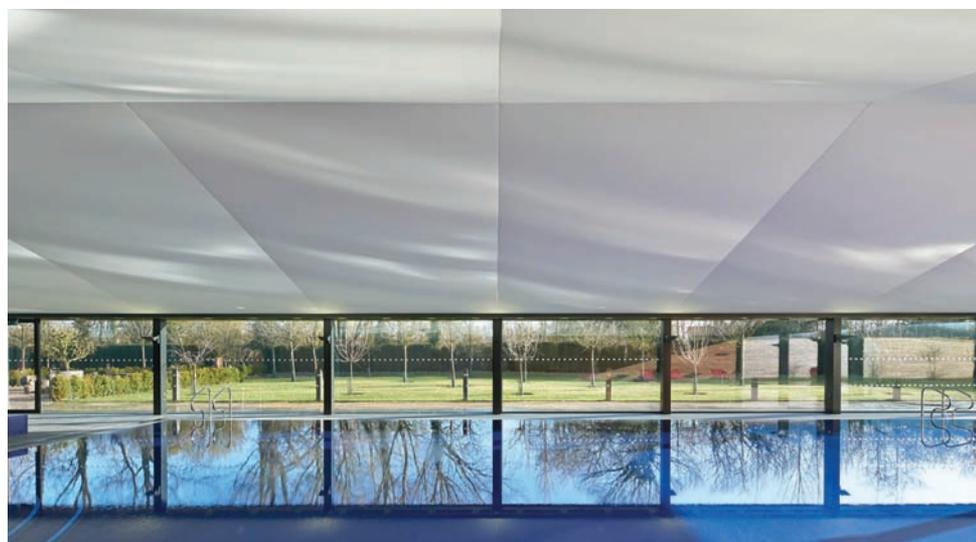
Above, the clubroom has broad floorboards in Douglas fir and Howell furniture. Below, the stretched fabric ceiling over the pool has multiple benefits

as steam, treatment and clubrooms, and key to the design was the idea of making the swimming pool feel open to the landscape. On the side facing away from the extraction pit, the architects placed 4m-wide glazed panels between the frame of the shed's structure so that swimmers would have an almost uninterrupted view of the orchard and lake.

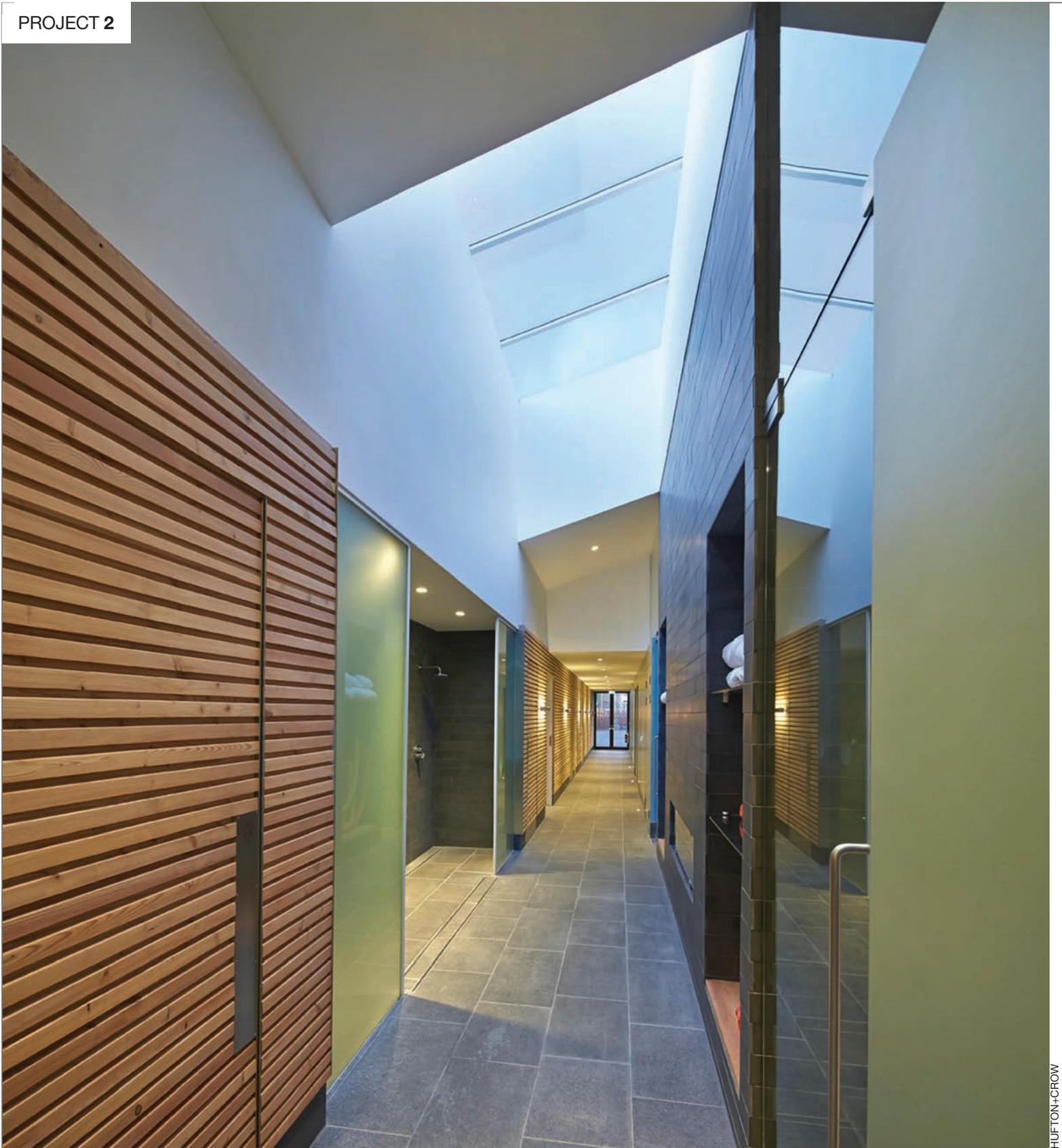
Inside, all visible signs of the workings of the building have been concealed to create a feeling of seamless material and spatial clarity.

Externally, all service penetrations on the standing seam roof facing the orchard are restricted. Internally, a stretched-fabric ceiling for the pool hall has the practical benefits of being a vapour barrier and acoustic dampener, as well as hiding air-handling ducts.

Appropriate to the lakeside setting and simple, functionality of the building, the architects have given it a Scandinavian feel both inside and out. While much of one side of the building is glazed, the other exterior walls are panelled with Siberian larch, which Morrogh-Ryan says will weather over time to a silvery-grey finish similar to that of the steel frame. 'We wanted to tap into that feel of much more northern Europe, that kind of functional aesthetic,' says Morrogh-Ryan. ▶



ALL IMAGES HUFTON+CROW



HUFTON+CROW

Inside, the building is divided into two sections – wet and dry – with the pool and a clubroom separated by a glass partition so that parents can easily keep an eye on their children without having sit by the pool.

The clubroom has wide floorboards of Douglas fir and furniture was chosen to create a relaxed, homely feel without diluting the strong, almost minimalist look of the rest of the building. A bespoke shelving unit and side tables were designed by De Matos Ryan.

With its industrial look and wide expanses of glazing, the building certainly makes a strong impression on this newly landscaped

Above, Siberian larch panelling taps into a more northern European aesthetic

environment; but the building had other pluses too. 'I think the advantage of the portal-framed shed was that it offered a very simple structure that was very cost-effective,' says Morrogh-Ryan. 'It works

incredibly well in terms of being open plan and functional. And the way it's lined and clad are very straightforward.'

Even so, with a design this simple and pared-down, detail is everything. 'We had to insist that the structural glazing was worth it,'

says Morrogh-Ryan. 'We were open to making compromises but to us that was one of the most important elements of the project. The structural glazing having no framing creates a completely different relationship with the landscape than if we'd used patent glazing with aluminium – that might have looked like a car showroom.'

Words by Jamie Mitchell ■

Main suppliers Furniture: [Zeitrum zeitraum-moebel.de](http://Zeitrum.zeitraum-moebel.de) // [Montis montis.nl](http://Montis.montis.nl) // [E15 e15.com](http://E15.e15.com) [Alessi alessi.com](http://Alessi.alessi.com) // [St Paul Home home-st-paul.com](http://St Paul Home.home-st-paul.com) // Joinery: [Batty Joinery battyjoinery.co.uk](http://Batty Joinery.battyjoinery.co.uk)