



The Social Shell



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High quality plywood

'The Social Shell' is a pavilion constructed entirely from Performance Plywood® which is CE marked and tested to meet EN 636 Use Class 3 thus making it suitable for structural components in exterior conditions. Performance Plywood was considered to be the ideal solution for the Scale Rule project.

Project Concept

Arup and Leonard Design Architects ran a two-day, weekend workshop aimed at encouraging greater diversity in the built environment industry. Teams of students were invited to learn about the basic concepts of design and introduced to career paths in the built environment. They were then challenged to develop the concept for a timber pavilion, intended to act as a visually interesting meeting place for the local community.

The teams presented their ideas via models and sketches to a panel of judges. By putting the students in the role of lead designer for a real project, they could gain greater understanding of the benefits of a career as an engineer or architect



Product Specification

The project required a plywood panel that would withstand exterior conditions.

Hanson Plywood strongly advocate that construction specifications should be satisfied with products that are fit-for-purpose after considering the actual application, and the particular performance criteria required. With this in mind, the company developed a product that is specifically intended for the construction industry and offers full technical and environmental classifications.

Performance Plywood was therefore presented to the organisers of the Social Shell as a product which would reliably meet the criteria required for a high-performance panel which may be exposed to the elements over a long period of time.

Planning & Construction

The winning design impressed the judges with its interesting form and its focus on creating a social experience, prompting the pavilion's name 'The Social Shell'. The students' concept was then further developed by Arup and Leonard design. The connections between components of the pavilion were very carefully considered, using plywood in conjunction with CNC routing allowed the team to completely hide many mechanical fixings in order to minimise visible bolts and screws.

It was a testing process to create a structure which was not only aesthetically appealing, but also safe and stable. Careful consideration was given to the size and weight of components. The design process had to take into account the skill and equipment available to the team of volunteers who would help construct the pavilion



The Social Shell was completed in July 2019. From design to build, the pavilion took just over a year, with the help of a multitude of organisations and industry professionals. The project was cut from 61 sheets of Performance Plywood using CNC routers. The design minimised work on site, with only one site adjustment required, so that the pavilion could be constructed from a flat pack of parts in a single day and transported to different locations with minimum effort.



UK Construction Week

The Social Shell attracted interest from the organisers of UK Construction week. The show held at the NEC is the UK's largest built environment event consisting of an array of different shows and sections including build, building tech, civils, surface & materials and timber. Hanson Plywood are in regular attendance at the show to present a full range of fit-for-purpose panels.

At the 2019 show, the company had a dedicated focus on Performance Plywood running alongside the 'The Social Shell' pavilion which was chosen as the main feature in the timber section.

'The Social Shell' was not only an eye-catching sculpture but also acted as a hub for multiple seminars on subjects such as the TTF's UK Timber Regulation Workshop and many more informative discussions.

Hanson Plywood have a keen interest in working with Architects and Designers to ensure the correct panel products are specified and used throughout the construction industry.

We are delighted that Performance Plywood was used for this project and has helped towards providing inspiration for the next generation of professionals in this field.



H PERFORMANCE Plywood®



EN 636 Use Class 3



Glue bond : EN 314-2 Class 3



CE Marked for performance in all conditions



The safe and correct choice for architects and specifiers



FSC® certified



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