

Buildings MacEwen Award 2024

MacEwen 2024 shortlist: Sunspot, Jaywick Sands, Essex

16 January 2024

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Sunspot, Jaywick Sands, Essex by HAT Projects. Credit: Maddie Persent

Sunspot, Jaywick Sands, Essex
HAT Projects for Tendring District Council
Contract cost: £4.8m
GIA 1500m²

Sunspot is the product of unusual initiative and diligence on the part of architect HAT Projects. When the Colchester-based practice was commissioned to develop a Place Plan for the coastal village of Jaywick – often called the most deprived place in England – its task was to develop a long-term regeneration strategy. Talking to residents, however, the architect saw an immediate opportunity to address local unemployment through the construction of new workspace. HAT Projects took the idea to its local authority client and was appointed to conduct a feasibility study. By surveying potential tenants rather than agents it gathered sufficient evidence of demand, and its business case and economic impact assessment won additional funding from central government.

The two-storey building provides 24 well-considered spaces to suit a range of small businesses: shops, offices, light-industrial units and a double-height market hall. It stands in the centre of Jaywick, on a seafront site that had been vacant since the demolition of the Sunspot amusement arcade 20 years ago, and needed a distinctive character befitting its important civic role. A see-saw roofline echoes the street-facing gables of Jaywick's pre-war chalet bungalows, and makes the building seem bigger than it is. Brightly coloured metal awnings further increase its apparent size, and add playful flourishes to what is in essence an economical shed.



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Every aspect of the project has benefitted from the architects' engagement and sense of responsibility, from its demountable structure which reflects circular economy principles – appropriate as Sunspot is intended as a 'long meanwhile use' project – to involvement in a marketing campaign that ensured full occupancy at the time of opening.

The MacEwen Award jury was heartened by this success and especially impressed by the 'ground-up' nature of a project rooted in consultation and realised through careful navigation of local sensitivities. 'It is a very difficult site and a very difficult community,' said judge Je Ahn. 'The architects' understanding of the context was really important, and they have succeeded against the odds, winning funding and the support of residents and delivering a superb outcome.'

[See more on MacEwen shortlisted projects and architecture for the common good here](#)

Credits

Architect HAT Projects

Client Tendring District Council

Structural engineer Momentum

Services consultant Ingleton Wood

Cost consultant Potter Raper
Partnership

Main contractor TJ Evers

Region: [South East](#)

More: HAT Projects, Jaywick Sands, Essex, Architecture for the common good, Design construction & technology, Community, Regeneration

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