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Landmark care home gets a time-saving treatment from Armstrong

A new care home in Scotland has used Armstrong's DGS system.

A suspended grid system from Armstrong Ceiling Solutions, that sub-contractors have found supremely quick to install, has been used on a [building forming part of a council's biggest-ever capital investment programme](#).

Some 3,500m² of Armstrong's DGS (Drywall Grid System) was specified for the new state-of-the-art £13 million New Dumbarton Care Home designed by Cooper Cromar Architects for West Dumbarton Council in conjunction with hub West Scotland, its development partner.

The DGS suspension system for plasterboard ceilings gives specifiers the option to use as a standalone, wall-to-wall, or in combination with Armstrong tiles and Axiom perimeter systems as a fully compatible solution. It is available in three versions – standard for typical flat installations, faceted for curved and domed ceilings of any radius, and Shortspan for smaller areas such as corridors.

Designed for strength, but using 15% less steel, the CE-marked Drywall Grid System utilises Armstrong's popular T-shaped grids and can easily incorporate service elements such as light fixtures, access panels and air diffusers or ventilation systems.

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At Dumbarton Care Home the standard system has been used throughout the 23,000m² brick and block building on the site of the former Crosslet House alongside other Armstrong systems for exposed ceilings to give the project a complete wall to wall ceiling solution.

It complements a total of more than 1,400m² of Armstrong's 600 x 600 Bioguard Plain board tiles with 24mm exposed grid to the back of house and staff areas and all toilets/changing areas as well as Armstrong's 600 x 600 Optima Vector tiles with 24mm exposed grid to the high-level main entrance area, and Armstrong's 1200 x 300 metal Bioguard Plain tiles with acoustic fleece to all corridor areas within DGS plasterboard margins.

The new care home comprises 84 residential bedrooms grouped in domestically-scaled seven-bedroom clusters. These are arranged in house groups to provide 56 ground-floor and 28 first-floor bedrooms. It also incorporates steel-framed day care facilities for 50 people, along with associated access, parking and communal/courtyard landscaping.

The Armstrong systems were installed by specialist sub-contractor Brian Hendry Interiors, a member of Armstrong's Green Omega network of sustainably-certified installers, for main contractor Morgan Sindall.

Managing director Brian Hendry said: "Armstrong's DGS is without a doubt a good product and compared to a traditional MF system the installation time is reduced, with basically one of the MF installation elements removed completely."

He explained that other MF (Metal Framework) systems involve hangers, a primary channel and a support section beneath which the plasterboard is screwed to. But Armstrong's system only involves hangers, main bars and cross tees which the plasterboard is screwed to.

"Unfortunately it is hard to equate to what extent the system was quicker on this project as other factors slowed the installation down but on other projects we have found it to be up to 25% quicker.

"As well as a shorter installation time than other systems the grid is easily altered to accommodate any services requirements and if Armstrong Lay-In ceilings were also a part of the installation, Armstrong could warranty the full project. It also makes for easier pre-fab style make-up of window bulkhead details."

Project architect Kevin Fitzpatrick said: "The contractor and their sub-contractor proposed the Armstrong system as we wanted to maintain a clean, seamless transition between the necessary grid/panel suspended ceilings and the more domestic MF ceiling finishes.

"So they help to maintain a domestic aesthetic but also provide ease of access in highly serviced ceiling zones. We are very happy with how the Armstrong system has allowed the mix of finishes to work well together and transition from one to another."

The project presented many special requirements for Cooper Cromar.

Kevin Fitzpatrick added: "The design was led in conjunction with the client, West Dumbartonshire Council, who set out from the beginning a desire for 'less clinical', more 'domestic' and 'dementia friendly', in particular for the residential portion – the houses, bedrooms and common rooms.

“We had to coordinate the architecture and interior design to maintain high levels of dementia-friendly design and meet the stringent statutory Building Control requirements in terms of fire safety and escape. And the client’s requirements for high levels of acoustic performance, controlling the sound between rooms, was beyond what was expected by Building Control.”

Brian Hendry added: “I have worked with Armstrong over the past 18 years and found them to offer an excellent product, whilst at the same time offering good value for money with a very professional and reliable service.”

“We receive a lot of support through our suppliers, however the Armstrong technical team are on call for anything more complex. With this project in mind, Martin [Dalby, Armstrong’s DGS specialist in the north] was in direct contact with our site supervisor and attended the site on numerous occasions throughout the duration of the project.”

Morgan Sindall’s Craig Guthrie, general foreman, construction Scotland, said: “We benefitted from the grid going up faster than other systems. Also, it does not get damaged as easily and can be easily repaired.”

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