

# Key Project Information

**Project Location:** Brighton

**Client:** West Sussex County Council

**Consultant:** Faithful & Gould

**Construction Method:** SIPS Offsite Construction

**Project Value:** £319,000

**Programme Duration:** 13 Weeks

**Programme Duration:** May 2020 – August 2020

In May 2020 we commenced work on a new build educational facility at Albourne Primary and although not similar in terms of value, we felt this scheme was poignant for SIPS as it was one of the first that we constructed using this building method, and was also the first time that West Sussex County Council had encountered this method of construction.

Instructed under a JCT Design and Build Contract, [R1 Construction](#) were responsible for the design element and as such, our in-house architectural and design team collaborated with structural engineers and our SIPS supplier to develop a bespoke and aesthetically pleasing design for our client, all whilst remaining within the council's allocated budget constraints.

The original tender design utilised a conventional steel framed modular system with suspended floors, but it soon became apparent that this wouldn't be easily achievable for this particular site due to the access restrictions for crane offload – a maze of overhead cables and tree canopies, all of which obstructed a clear lifting plan. With this now identified, SIPS presented itself as a much more suitable system to use, and meant that we could still deliver the client's condensed construction programme – 3 months from site set up to handover. Moving away from modular also meant that we could now offer a conventional block and beam foundation, providing level access for the school's new building, which both the school and council were extremely pleased about.



Albourne Primary already had a dilapidated building that needed demolishing as part of this contract, the only trouble being that it occupied the playground space that the children utilised for sports and recreation every week – demolishing it in term time was proving impossible. After much discussion with a demolition contractor, it was planned to demolish this building over one weekend – just 2 days to remove the building and make safe the area – with no room for error. Our site team worked tirelessly from the Friday afternoon to ensure this was completed, and normal playtime resumed as normal on Monday morning. Again, the school was very grateful for the lengths **RI Construction** had gone to in order to keep their disruption to an absolute minimum.



**RI Construction** believes that a proactive approach to quality control is vital to the success of any contract; therefore prior to installing on site, we sent our construction team to the SIPS Manufacturing Facility to be trained in the erection of SIPS, building a robust understanding of the product they were handling. During our early SIPS projects, our supplier also worked with us beyond the manufacture itself, attending our sites to ensure that the team were correctly installing in line with the training provided, and answering any 'on the job' queries our team had – to this day our supplier is still very willing to provide technical support wherever required which in turn has really allowed for a strong and successful relationship.

No matter how well-planned a construction project is, there will always be unforeseen moments that require a quick-thinking response and a willingness to adapt, and in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic reared its ugly head just before we started on site. The world was sent into hiding but we had to find a way to still deliver this project for our clients. Communication with both the school and council was maintained by taking our progress meetings online rather than in person. Site rules were implemented to maintain distances between workers and allow for safe working practices. Larger welfare facilities were sought, with staggered breaks planned for operatives and a strict cleaning regime in place.

In conclusion, we were very satisfied with the end result and even prouder of our team for their efficiency under the trialling circumstances. It was due to the success of this project that **RI Construction** have now evolved to primarily deliver SIPS for all of our new build and extension projects, and in turn West Sussex County Council have also adopted this method for a lot of their new build schemes where historically they would have specified modular.

