



## Whitlingham Park, Water Activities Centre

Client: Whitlingham Country Park Year of Completion: 2005  
Architect/Designer: Snell Associates

When Snell associates won the contract to design the brand new water activities centre at Whitlingham Country Park, they were clear in what they wanted to achieve an all-weather community space, brought together under a single umbrella structure.

Raised off the ground like a bird about to take flight, the project was inspired by traditional Norfolk seaside chalets and boat building craft and construction methods. Inside, designers aimed to create a central community space suitable for teaching and social events, which could also accommodate eight timber cabins, changing, storage, administration and maintenance facilities.

Having worked with Snell previously on both the Glyndebourne Opera House and the Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Architen Landrell was the obvious choice to create the iconic feature of the activity centre. Working closely with Snell Associates, the aim was to create a smart, modern boat yard that would blend in with the beautiful rural environment. With this in mind, Architen and Snell Associates designed the canopy to look as if it was floating above the ground, yet remaining part of the natural environment that surrounds it.

Described by one writer as birds wings the clean white canopy stretches over 36m and is supported by a steel and timber frame that blends in with the wooden cabins and changing room areas it houses.

The dramatic structure reflects its dramatic surroundings and neither dominates the other. The desire to move away from a traditional doubly curved surface proved an extra challenge, but one that engineers Buro Happold and Architen Landrell set about tackling early on. The result was this relatively flat but organic shaped structure, which gives the impression of not only movement but also tranquillity.

Whitlingham Water Park was short listed for the Prime Ministers Better Public Building Award at the Building Construction Industry Awards 2006.

**Location:**  
Norwich, UK

**Category:**  
Exterior

**Market Sector:**  
Entertainment  
Sports and Leisure

**Scope Of Works:**  
Design  
Engineering  
Research and Development  
Manufacture  
Project Management  
Install  
Steelwork

**Fabric Type:**  
PTFE - Solid

**Design Style:**  
Ridge and Valley

**Function:**  
Weather Protection  
Sculptural/Decorative  
Solar shading  
Roof