

Lafarge Aggregates

Seeing is believing

A whole variety of innovative asphalt solutions can now be viewed by potential clients in one place – Lafarge’s new visitor centre.

Product specifiers can now see, touch and walk on a wide range of Lafarge’s innovative asphalts with aesthetic finishes at a purpose built venue. Lafarge opened its new visitor centre at Alrewas, Staffordshire, in September last year to help customers select the ideal asphalt for their needs.

Architects, local authorities, consultants and surfacing contractors can view a showcase of innovative products and watch informative DVDs demonstrating their many uses. “We have such a wide range of

materials available that we wanted to be able to show them all to our clients in one location,” says Lafarge’s National Value Added Products Manager Phil Battle.

The centre is divided into three main areas displaying a variety of products from the Axopave asphalt range, including Axogold – one of Lafarge’s most recent innovations – and the well established Axostone. Lafarge’s extensive range of concrete products are also on display at the centre.

“We want to let customers know about

the variety of products available to suit any location and that solutions can be found to many problems,” says Battle. “Some new customers and indeed some existing customers are unfamiliar with our specialist materials and I am often asked ‘Where has it been laid so that I can see it?’ This is a case where seeing is believing and provides the opportunity for them to not only view one particular product but to view and compare a whole range of surfacing materials.”

One of Lafarge’s key products is Axostone, an asphalt designed to give the appearance of a gravel surface. Also showcased in the centre are Axodrive, Axocolour, Axotint, Axocrete, Axosport and Axogold surfaces.

“The centre presents the opportunity for customers to see large samples in situ.” Phil Battle

Asphalts are often selected for aesthetic benefits especially those that have a natural finish and are sympathetic to the local surroundings. Axostone and Axogold combine the appearance of natural gravel or stone with the durability and performance of asphalt.

The surface of the very top aggregate is exposed using a special process to create the finished effect of these two materials. A natural gravel appearance is created with Axostone, whereas for Axogold, the technique is applied to black asphalt to

Axogold, laid at Woburn Golf & Country Club, is one of many Axopave materials now on display at Lafarge’s new visitor centre in Alrewas

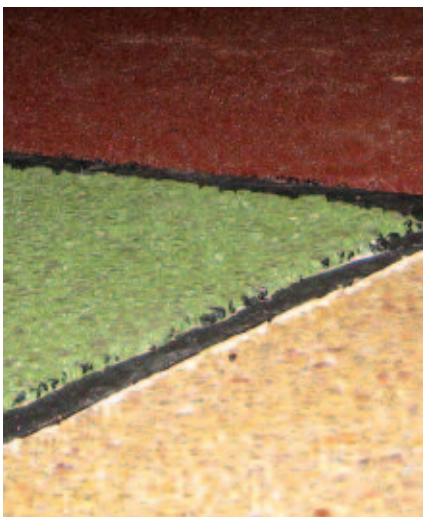




Highly trained team members will show visitors around the new centre and be on hand to answer all questions on the surfacing materials

expose the aggregate colour within the surface and create the aesthetic finish, as achieved at the Woburn Golf & Country Club's driving range.

The Axopave range on display also includes coloured asphalts popular for colouring bus lanes, cycleways and parking areas. Lafarge's Axocolour material was developed to provide a more durable alternative to resin based coloured overlays. It is produced by mixing a clear binder with pigment to give the desired coloured asphalt – usually red, green or buff.



Lafarge's customers can now see, touch, walk on and compare its innovative range of asphalt materials including Axocolour and Axostone

The visitor centre is situated at Lafarge's quarry in Alrewas and on its opening day had more than 50 senior managers and directors from some of Lafarge's top customers walk through the door. "The feedback we have received so far has all been very positive," says Battle. "As far as we know this is the first centre of its kind in the UK and many people have shown great interest in it.

"Before the centre was built, small hand held material samples were shown to clients, but that does not give a good indication of what it will actually look and feel like on the ground. The centre presents opportunity for customers to see large samples in situ."

The visitor centre and quarry are ideally located in the centre of the country, adjacent to the National Memorial Arboretum, which was built on land rented from Lafarge at a peppercorn rent and opened by Her Majesty the Queen in October 2007. Lafarge's Visitor Centre also provides visitors with a meeting room and access to full facilities. "It can be very difficult sometimes, for people to have a whole day out of the office, so visitors are able to use the facilities to hold meetings or catch up with emails for example."

Visitors to the centre will be shown round by one of Lafarge's highly trained team

members, able to discuss all materials on show and answer any questions that arise. The tour will also inform visitors of Lafarge's technology in general, the history behind asphalt and the processes involved in laying the different products.

Lafarge will also be offering universities with civil engineering courses the opportunity for students to visit and find out more about different types of asphalt and to speak to the specialists.

The asphalt products displayed at the centre are from Lafarge's range of value-added innovative materials, all of which are currently available from the company and its network of approved contractors. But this is just a small sample of what Lafarge is capable of.

"We often work closely with clients to come up with specific solutions to their individual needs and technology is continually evolving," adds Battle. "We are always working towards innovative materials that will be of use to our clients, such as an asphalt specially designed for areas prone to flooding, environmentally friendly asphalts and new ways of recycling. The centre gives us the opportunity to showcase these materials."

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