SOLARDOME®
PRO SYSTEM

Case Study

The Arbor School, Dubai

At a glance

Location

The Arbor School
Al Furjan
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

The challenge

To provide robust, multi-purpose outdoor structures to give students a deeper understanding of their ecology and environment.

The solution

SOLARDOME® PRO

Dome specification

- Three interlinked 15m diameter PRO domes
- Total area – 528m²
- Height (per dome) – 7.5m
- Capacity – 800 people (approx.)

Pioneering private school in Dubai chose Solardome Industries to enrich their innovative curriculum with three large educational domes.

The brand new school, which offers a premium English education at primary level, first enquired about the geodesic domes when they were devising their academic plans for the school.

The Arbor School, which focuses heavily on ecoliteracy and sustainability, were looking for unique glasshouses that would act as inspirational outdoor learning spaces for their students, and expand their world-class facilities further.

An ecological venture

The leadership team places a strong emphasis on experiential learning and a love of nature, and so recognised that the project needed “a lot more than just classrooms and some outdoor space.”

With this in mind, they set about finding spacious outdoor buildings that would suit their desire to place eco-learning at the heart of their curriculum in Dubai’s desert environment.

Following an initial research phase, the school saw the Solardome® PRO system as the perfect solution to bring outdoor learning to life. After a comprehensive consultation process, they opted for three of our 15m diameter models, totalling a massive floor area of 528m².

The Solardome team met the challenge expertly, designing and manufacturing the three interlinked domes, as well as completing a frame test build for full quality control – all within short timescales.

After completing the manufacture process, Solardome sent six containers, totalling 180ft, on the 4,000-mile journey from Southampton to the UAE.

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The school hired a local construction firm who were joined by Solardome's Project Manager Paul Hackett for the colossal build. All three geodesic domes – complete with interlinking tunnels, double doors and finished internals – were finished within 60 days.

'Part of our DNA'

The impressive structures now sit proudly next to their main building, and add a stunning focal point to the school grounds, which include swimming pools, a gym, an auditorium and a FIFA compliant football pitch.

From lush tropical forests to arid deserts, the biodomes capture a diverse range of climates, and give students the chance to look after plants that would normally only survive in other parts of the world.

The school's Marketing Director Nina Swann said: "The biodomes are central to our mission to deliver our ecological place-based education. They provide awe, wonder and play in environments that pupils wouldn't usually have access to growing up in the Gulf."

To truly maximise the geodesic domes for first-class learning experiences, the school partnered with the ZoOceanarium Group to design three distinct, yet equally inspiring, environments.

- A tropical ecosystem, complete with a variety of plants, aquatic features, winding walkways and climate control unit disguised as a giant tree trunk.
- A green playscape, including an edible garden and large group hammock.
- An ecological, open plan MakerSpace, which can be doubled up to cater for a wide range of meetings and events.

Director of Education Russell Toms said: "Given what they can deliver in terms of hands-on experience, the Solardome® PROs have become part of our DNA."

"The domes help us go back to traditional values like reading a book under a tree, picking fruit from a bush and growing your own avocados," he added.

Solardome's Managing Director Pippa Bailey and Operations Manager Gary Mitchell flew out to sign off the project in January, and were blown away by the end result.

Pippa said: "It was fantastic to see our biggest PRO dome project in person, especially given the inspirational and imaginative learning spaces that have been created inside each one. I'm so excited for the students!"

Chameleons, tortoises and terrapins already have a home inside the tropical dome, and the Arbor team plan to introduce insects, fish and parrots in the near future as they continue to enhance their eco-curriculum.

More information

Contact us to find out more about our domes and how they can help you get the most out of your outdoor space.

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