



Leicester University Library

Theory

No building demonstrates a university's commitment to world-class education more than its Library. The University of Leicester's 1974 Library won a RIBA award for architectural merit; in 2006, the brief was to create a new, state-of-the-art library that would combine a strong academic tradition with modern information technology. The project, generously supported by the David Wilson foundation, was wholly focused on improving access to excellent educational opportunities.

The aim was to create a versatile, contemporary learning environment, catering for all types of study: 1,500 individual reader places, 350 IT desks with wireless network, training and seminar rooms, a 120 seat café, bookshop and 500-seat lecture theatre in the basement.

The site on campus was constrained, with Listed and historically significant buildings all around, including the Fielding Johnson south wing, which was to be retained, refurbished and integrated into the new scheme. It was also vital that the library remained open to the University's 20,000 students, throughout the works.

Practice

The new David Wilson Library has won numerous design awards including the RIBA East Midlands Award for Architecture 2008. Most satisfying for NG Bailey is the library's BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. Numerous sustainable solutions, such as ambient daylight sensors that automatically control the illuminance levels of lights, also support the quality of the educational experience.

Our building management system optimises the performance of a triple-glazed 'solar wall', reducing solar glare and gain within the building. Three types of photovoltaics connect into the main electrical system via our LV switchpanel. We developed a control and zoning solution for the natural ventilation system, chilled beam air conditioning system and provided a temperature-controlled repository for historic and rare documents (BS5454).

We installed a robust digital framework to allow IT-enabled learning, ranging from the Category 6 structured cabling data network and the infrastructure behind the university's wireless network, to audio-visual systems for the underground auditorium. We also developed bespoke fire protection and smoke clearance systems and an automated access and book security system.

NG Bailey's off-site manufacturing capability meant that the rooftop plant rooms could be produced in controlled conditions, in tandem with the main construction programme. By using modular and standardised components wherever possible, we reduced both initial and maintenance costs.

"There can be no doubt that the provision of such an outstanding facility went some way to Leicester achieving the Times Higher Education University of the Year award 2008-09."
**Professor Bob Burgess, Vice-Chancellor,
University of Leicester**

Outcome and Added Value

- We provided state of the art building services and systems throughout the original 1970s building and its radical new extension, achieving a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' for an outstanding research and learning resource that has enhanced the standing of the University.



Client

University of Leicester

Main Contractor

Kier Marriott

Architect

Associated Architects LLP

Consultant

Aecom

Contract Value

£7,000,000.00

Sector

Education