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Distinction by Design: RIBA Higher Education Forum 2007

Showcasing the quality and diversity of architectural design
for the higher education sector in the UK



Henry Wellcome Building

client University of Birmingham

architect Berman Guedes Stretton

net cost £2.58m area 980m² completion 08/04

design for specialist scientific research

energy offsetting

passive energy conservation

The challenge for the design team was how to resolve the complex technical issues associated with this facility's highly sensitive Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) magnets. The magnets are located in spectroscopy chambers and require temperatures maintained at between plus and minus 0.5°C. In addition, the structure and fabric of the chambers needed to minimise vibration while using only non-ferrous construction materials capable of clear-spanning 13 metres (the diameter of the largest spectrometer's magnetic field). The solution involved supporting insitu concrete roofs on dense, load-bearing masonry walls, which also increased the building's thermal mass.

science



The Wolfson Centre

client University of Birmingham

architect Architects Design Partnership

net cost £8.6m area 4,855m² (+ 220m² refurb)

completion 10/05

lecture theatre

integration with existing campus

Optimising the slope, rake and form of a lecture theatre large enough to take the projected annual intake of 450 students resulted in a space curved in three dimensions. A glazed facade allows the underside of the birch-clad egg-shaped theatre to be visible from outside the building.

The box-like enclosure houses all the support facilities that the School previously lacked including a 300-seat food court, a 150-seat social space and cyber café, and additional toilets. A new circulation route was established along the back of the existing Medical School and more break-out space was created, enabling easier movement round the building. The lecture theatre is the first structure in an overall circulation strategy, plugging into the new 'backbone' corridor.

medical



University of Bristol Masterplan

client University of Bristol

architect Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects

net cost £150m area 50,000m²

10–15 year strategic masterplan

working within a conservation area

statutory and non-statutory consultation

This strategic masterplan for the University of Bristol focuses on the Central Precinct area – a prominent site on the Bristol skyline. The area is historically sensitive, covering four conservation areas and including a number of significant listed buildings.

The brief was to produce a vision that would accommodate expansion of the University and consolidation of the site over 10–15 years. The scheme includes provision of 50,000m² of new build, including a learning and resource centre, student union, teaching accommodation and recreation facilities on demanding sites across the precinct.

masterplan