

University celebrates grand re-opening of Muirhead Tower

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One of the University of Birmingham's iconic buildings, Muirhead Tower, officially reopens this week, following a two year transformation.

The refurbishment of the 16 story tower costing more than 40 million pounds was made possible through alumni, foundations and trusts and designed by Birmingham-based Associated Architects.

Muirhead Tower was named after the University's first Professor of Philosophy, John Henry Muirhead and originally completed in 1971. John Muirhead was one of the pioneers of training for social work, a subject that the University has taught and researched for over 100 years.

The building comprising 12,000sq.m of floor space between two towers.

The renovation led by the University's Estates Team completely remodelled the tower to create a state of the art home for the University's College of Social Sciences and Special Collections. The 12th floor of the building also includes a Hospitality Suite with a fully functional kitchen and board room boasting panoramic views out across the city.

The tower includes a number of sustainable features including solar shading (known in the trade as brise soleil) to control temperatures, as well as low energy fans; timed lighting to reduce energy waste; natural ventilation systems and a heat source taken from the University's combined heat and power generator.

Professor Edward Peck, Head of the College of Social Sciences comments: "This refurbishment re-establishes Muirhead Tower as an iconic building that will be a fitting home for the College of Social Sciences.

The space has been designed to create modern, attractive spaces for teaching and research including a new 200 seat lecture theatre. "

The University's Special Collections will be based in the purpose built Cadbury Research Library. This brings all the University's collections under one roof including the famous Mingana collection of middle-eastern manuscripts. The special collections space has been designed to be fire / moisture protected and temperature controlled to protect the priceless collection of manuscripts.

Ian Barker the University's Director of Estates adds: "This project was about restoring one of the University's most important buildings for the 21st century. The design keeps the façade as designed by Sir Philip Dowson but completely transforms the interior to create a space that is functional but also beautiful. A building designed to serve the students and staff who will use it."

Ends

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- Did you know? The Mingana Collection consists mainly of Arabic and Syriac Middle Eastern manuscripts (c. 3000), a very small number of Hebrew/Jewish works, coins, seals and a few clay tablets. The Collection was founded in Birmingham between 1925 and 1929 by Edward Cadbury who named the Collection after its collector, Alphonse Mingana. The Arabic manuscripts are the third largest collection in the UK.
- Did you know? A new purpose built Starbucks café has been built as a focal point in the impressive mezzanine area and will be available for all on campus, taking students and professors from work to down time at the turn of a corner. New faster destination controlled lifts have been installed operated by futuristic chrome floor selectors. To make the podium level accessible for all, two external lifts have been erected, wrapped in stainless steel.
- Did you know? The tower will accommodate 150 academic offices, 230 "hubs" for post graduate research students, teaching rooms for up to 100 people and a 200 seat lecture theatre.

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