

UK Highly Commended

Student Services Centre University of Cambridge

Cambridge, Eastern

The new wing is a low-tech, column-free concrete structure with a façade of closely spaced brick piers, meanwhile the listed buildings have been stripped of later additions to reveal their original qualities.

Notable spaces include the barrel-vaulted library and the Edwardian lecture theatre used in the film 'A Theory of Everything'. A stone doorway, rescued from a demolished exam hall, leads directly to the central hallway and forms one of two main entrances, resulting in alternative routes for students seeking privacy. The quality of internal environment within the building is key in promoting student wellbeing and the support they receive. Spaces such as the central atrium in the New Wing or the Main Reception in the Art School offer comfortable spaces with good access to daylight and views out. Student support and welfare has been transformed by co-locating seven student services from across the city into this single, easily accessible address.

Close liaison with around 250 building users brought clarity to a complex brief, comprising a wide range of disparate spaces for direct student engagement and administrative staff. In addition, the new wing meets the need for highly flexible

teaching spaces, providing opportunities for learning, collaboration and social interaction. Located in the centre of Cambridge's historical city core with very limited site access, the design approach had to consider logistics from inception. Site access and construction had to take place through enlarged window openings in the existing building, this now forms a permanent link between the City Centre and New Museums Site. A collaborative approach to design led to the successful engagement of academic, administrative and student communities, local residents and interest groups. A holistic approach to inclusivity was adopted across all buildings, ensuring the related design features were integrated into the building successfully, with the new wing accommodates the majority of WC facilities including a Changing Places Facility and Accessible Shower.

The project greatly improves the surrounding public realm, offering a number of benefits through the creation of a series of urban courts for use by university staff, students and the public with new connections to the city and wider university. Two commissioned artworks have been integrated into the public realm further enhancing the unique character of the site.



Executive Architect
Bennetts Associates

Architect
Bennetts Associates

Main Contractor
Kier Eastern

Project Manager
Aecom

Structural Engineer
Aecom Structures and Building Engineering

Environmental Consultant
Aecom Sustainability

Acoustic Consultant
Applied Acoustic Design

Landscape Architects
LDA Design
Wynne Williams Associates

Judges' Comments:

"A beautifully crafted building that makes a statement that students and their welfare matter to the University."



Images: Peter Cook