

23/10/2018**Bennetts Associates completes business and learning campus for University of Edinburgh**

Award-winning architecture practice Bennetts Associates has completed the Bayes Centre, a pivotal piece of the University of Edinburgh's estate set to transform Edinburgh city centre into one of UK's most dynamic places for tech, attracting the highest calibre of international experts in data science and artificial intelligence.

The 9,500sq m building was completed this September as part of the University's investment into world-class facilities on its Potterrow campus, following the much lauded Informatics Forum and Dugald Stewart Buildings designed and delivered by the practice's Edinburgh studio in 2008.

Bayes brings together 600 expert thinkers from across the spectrum: PhD students, academic researchers and university staff working alongside tech-focused businesses, start-ups and 'spin out' initiatives. It offers world-class robotics labs, open-plan and flexible working office spaces based on the practice's research into 'synergetic' design, to boost research and collaboration. Alongside these sit more traditional lecture theatres, studios and workshop facilities.

The University's vision for Bayes was to use data science and artificial intelligence to shape a better future. This demanded a very specific brief for intellectual interaction and the cross-fertilisation of ideas between employees and researchers who would traditionally operate discreetly from each other. The Bayes Centre links to the existing buildings on the campus through a series of interlocking connections across multiple levels. The large, central atrium promotes a visual 'transparency' between groups housed in the building. The staircases within the atrium provide access across floors bookended by breakout spaces to encourage serendipitous encounters between businesses and groups.

Echoing the original city street which ran through the site until the 1960s, Bennetts Associates cut through a series of entrances and pedestrian routes to create a courtyard and retain easy-access public spaces. At ground level, floor-to-ceiling windows encourage public visibility directly into the labs. Here too, facilities and events rooms are available for the public and students of other disciplines while the ground floor café straddles the atrium and the courtyard, affording a centralised point for socialisation. Further outdoor green space available to the building's residents via large roof gardens affords stunning views towards Arthur's Seat.

"Bayes Centre is the final phase of University of Edinburgh's Potterrow development, which we began in 2003 following an architectural competition. It has been a privilege to observe the development taking its place at the centre of University life and playing a pivotal role in the evolution of Edinburgh's highly successful 'tech' sector, something that now extends well beyond the University itself." - Rab Bennetts, Founding Director, Bennetts Associates

"We look forward to bringing together experts from research and industry in this collaborative space, to apply data science and AI to some of society's most interesting challenges and opportunities." – Dr Michael Rovatsos, Director, Bayes Centre.

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Bayes Centre is the first of five data-driven innovation hubs being created as part of the recently announced Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The new hubs will help business and public sector organisations improve products and services through collaboration with researchers and data analysts.

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Note to editors

Bayes Centre will be occupied by nine different organisations, including the School of Informatics, the largest European centre of research and teaching in computation, information and cognition; Design Informatics, a collaboration between Edinburgh College of Art and the School of Informatics; and Datalab, a Scottish government funded innovation centre helping industry across Scotland capitalise on a growing market opportunity in data science. IBM, Intel and the NHS are among the many industry partners who will have a presence at the Bayes Centre.

The new building follows the principles of the original design for the campus designed by Bennetts Associates using similar external materials to the first buildings completed on site. In keeping with Edinburgh city's palette, panels of local sandstone form the elevations to the outside of the city block, and polished white concrete features in the courtyard's interior, capturing and reflecting light between the buildings.

About Bennetts Associates

Bennetts Associates is one of the UK's leading architectural practices, with a reputation for design quality, sustainability and a collaborative style of work. The practice has completed a diverse portfolio of cultural, workplace and education projects in both the public and private sector, ranging from masterplans to small historic buildings that have been celebrated with more than 150 awards over 30 years. Bennetts Associates is an employee-owned trust of 80 people with studios in London, Edinburgh and Manchester.

The firm is responsible for many prominent projects such as the New Street Square development in the City of London, PowerGen and London Borough of Camden HQ, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Transformation and Storyhouse in Chester. Bennetts Associates is currently working on Facebook's London HQ, the Design and Engineering HQ for Jaguar Land Rover, the Royal College of Pathologists' London HQ and the University of Edinburgh's Edinburgh Futures Institute.

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