ICA Committee on Archival Buildings and Equipment

Archive Building Case Studies: Thomas Thomson House

Place

The National Archives of Scotland Thomas Thomson House Edinburgh
Opening Date: August 1994

Address
give address, telephone number and if available e-mail and web-site addresses

The National Archives of Scotland
Thomas Thomson House
99 Bankhead Crossway North
Edinburgh EH11 4DX
telephone: (00 44) 131 535 1370
e-mail: Bob.Phillips@nas.gov.uk

Contact name
someone to contact with inquiries

Mr R Phillips, Building Manager
Dr P Anderson, Deputy Keeper

Cost of project

£10.76m(pounds sterling)

Type of Building

new, renovated or extended
New

high thermal mass or high technology

Both

over ground or below ground
Over ground

Size, as floor area

area of repositories

Archive Storage
Total net floor area including service corridors (ground floor level plus 2 upper storeys)
5,217m²
56,156ft²
9 fire-compartmented storage rooms, each:
520m²
5,600ft²
Length x Width:
23.4m x 22.2m
76.8ft x 72.8ft

area of offices

Ground floor, records reception and processing including loading bay
651m²
7,007ft²

1st floor, conservation and binding workshop
479m²
5,156ft²

Recreation and general purpose rooms
250m²
2,691ft²

area of public facilities

None

other (eg restaurant, shop etc)

see above

area overall of new building

Site Area - 1.82 hectares
Total net floor area (ground level plus 2 upper storeys)
1,380m²
14,854ft²

Readers seats

None

Length of shelving

mobile or static

Shelving efficiency:
9.4 linear m per m²
2.5 linear ft per ft²
Total linear shelving (approximately):
43km
26.8miles
(There is a combination of mobile and static shelving).

Brief description
to include any particular features of interest; not more than 100 words

The strongroom block has a structure and fabric of very high thermal mass. This avoids the needs for a full and continuously operating air-conditioning system. Instead the building envelope itself provides a basically stable internal environment which will require minimal assistance from the control system to maintain the levels of temperature and relative humidity recommended by the British Standard. The construction of the strongroom block incorporates a high level of insulation, and ventilated outer wall cavities to buffer the internal environment from external influences. The roof is of high-integrity welded stainless steel with deep protective overhangs. The administrative wing deliberately contrasts with the solidity of the strongroom block. Large areas of north-facing glazing naturally illuminate offices, sorting areas and the conservation and binding workshop. A 'light slot' through the levels of the plan defines circulation areas, and by allowing air to circulate by 'stack effect', contributes to the natural ventilation of occupied areas. The mechanical and electrical systems within the building includes sophisticated fire detection, security and access control systems, and a high integrity 'triple knock' water sprinkler system for containing fire in the strongrooms. The whole planning strategy has aimed at the highest archival standards with maximum efficiency and minimum maintenance and running costs.