

The David Wilson Library, University of Leicester, UK

Christine Fyfe
Pro-Vice-Chancellor & University Librarian
University of Leicester

Our starting point

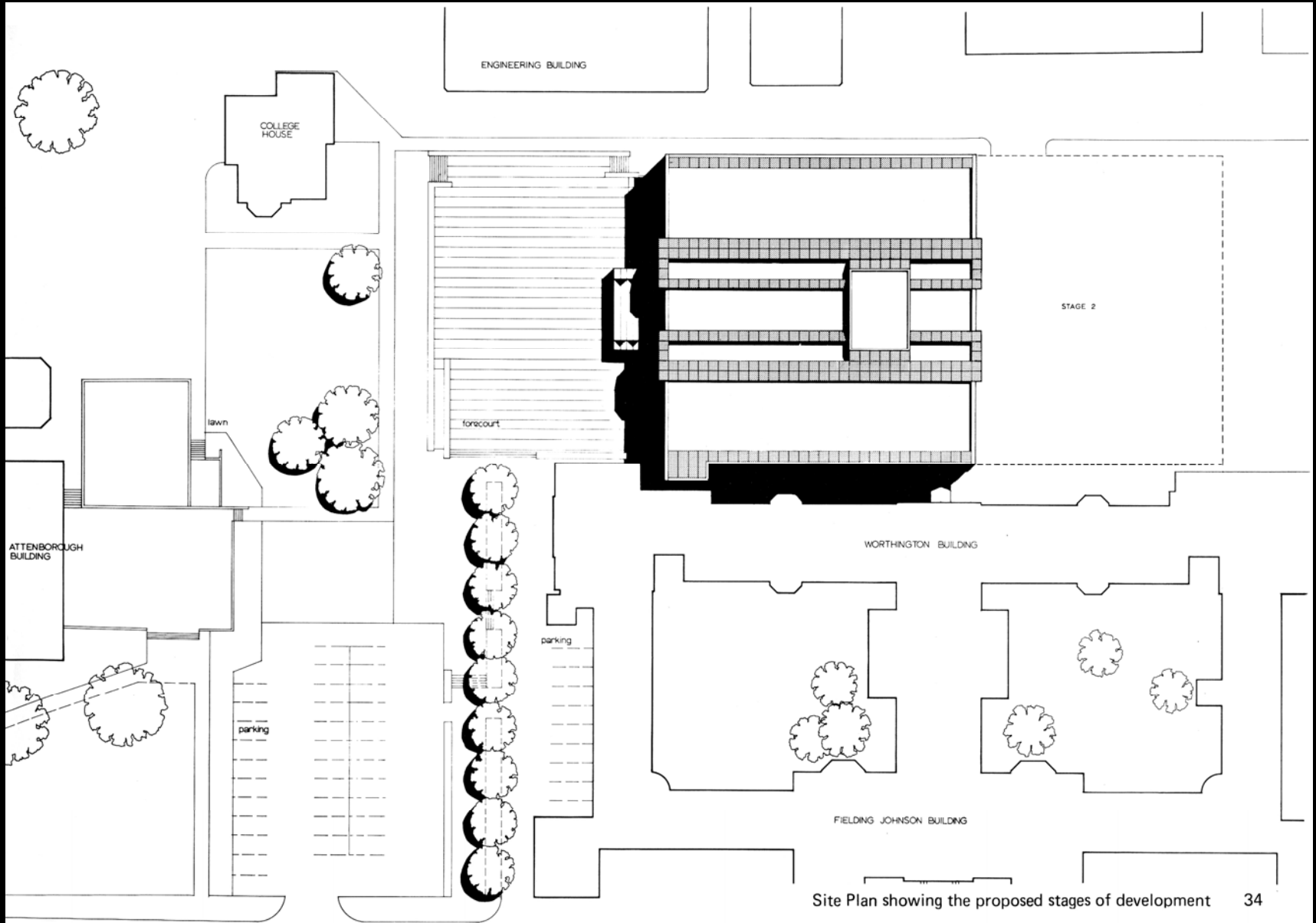
- 1974 purpose built University Library designed in the late 1960s by Castle Park Dean Hook
- 7982 square metres
- 800 study spaces
- Central location between buildings of high architectural quality - 'restrained and simple external appearance'

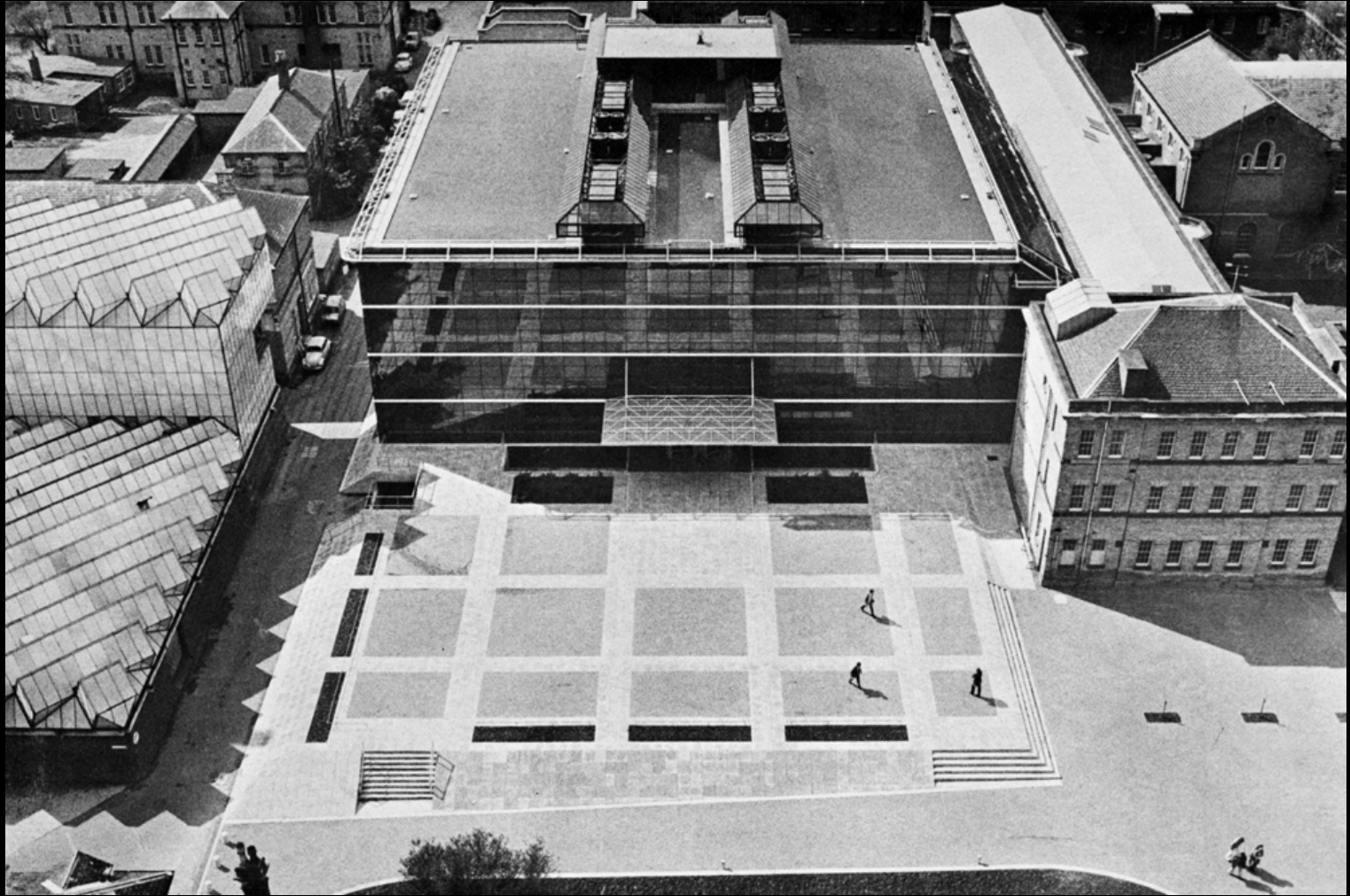




Our starting point

- Innovative and RIBA award winning
- Use of hollow concrete members as flow and return ducts for the air conditioning
- Flooded asphalt roof
- Minimal finishes - exposed concrete trough





- 'Arguments are currently propounded to suggest that in library buildings windows are irrelevant and only serve to distract the readers from their work. However the architects consider that the psychological effect of windowless enclosure is probably more harmful than beneficial, but since the internal environment is to be controlled ... windows have been kept to a minimum'







By 2002

- Overcrowded - student numbers had quadrupled to 19,000
- Incoherent and cluttered arrangement
- Circulation illegible
- Ventilation and infrastructure problems
- Neglected and unloved
- No longer fit for purpose

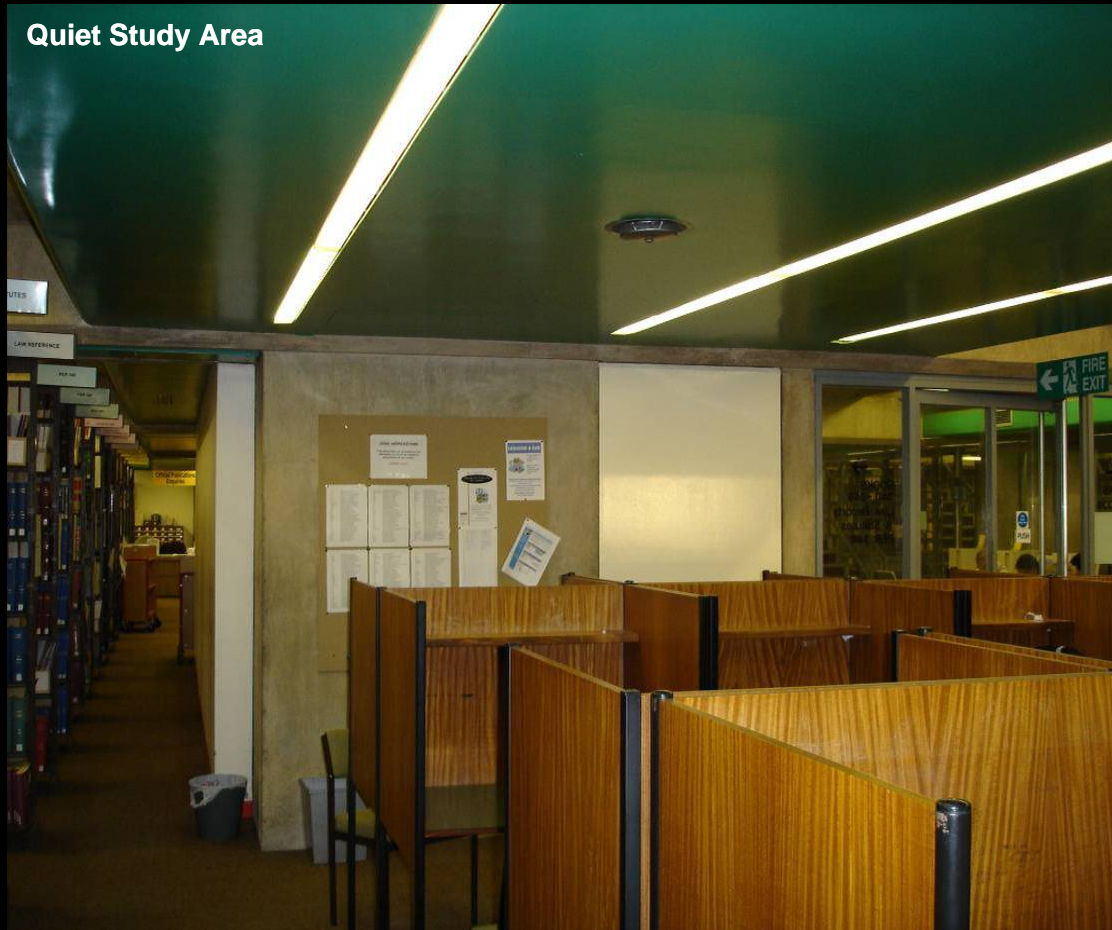


Shelving
Arrangement



Main Circulation
Stair

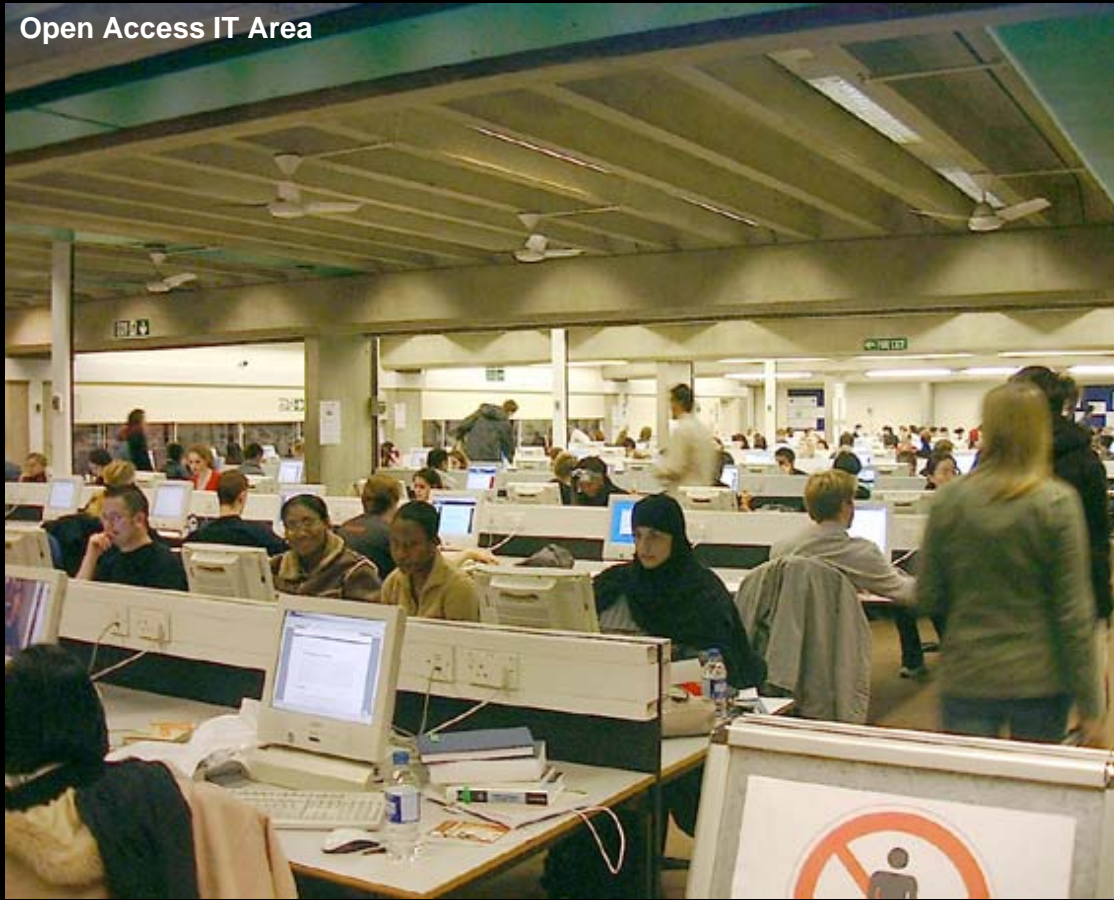
Quiet Study Area



Group Study Area



Open Access IT Area



Typical Readers
Area





Alternatives evaluated

- Build a new library on a different site
- Demolish the existing building and build a new library on the same site
- Extend and remodel what is there

The project

- Extension and refurbishment of the existing building - 15,600 square metres
- Construction started May 2005 - complete in April 2008
- Maintain occupation throughout the three year construction project
- Total cost - £35m including VAT

Design principles

- Extension and existing building to be a seamless space - replicate the aesthetics of the existing building
- Contemporary and sophisticated ambience with 'a sense of place'
- A place that is a pleasure to be in for long periods of time
- Design should encourage positive behaviour

Design principles

- Maximise natural light
- Clarity and coherence leading to ease of use
- Vistas and visual interest - and intimacy
- Most sustainable building possible within the budget

Space and facilities

- 1500 study spaces, including
 - 200 place postgraduate suite
 - 13 group study rooms
 - 350 places with PCs
- BS5454 Special Collections suite
- IT Training Rooms & Seminar Room
- 38 km shelving

Space and facilities

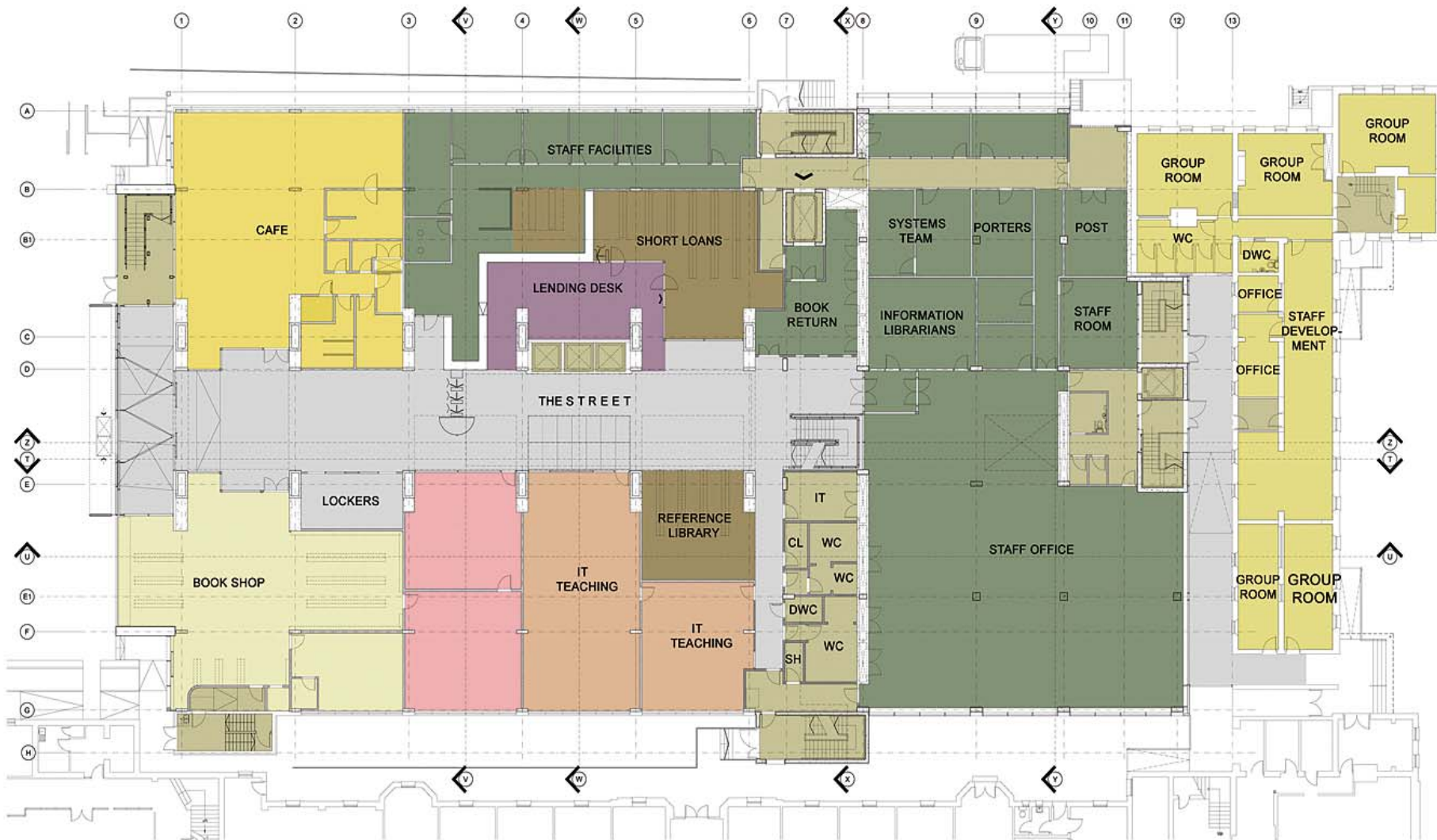
- Office accommodation for 70
- Student services
- 500 seat lecture theatre and 3 adjoining seminar rooms
- Bookshop
- Cafe

The site









GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



BASEMENT





















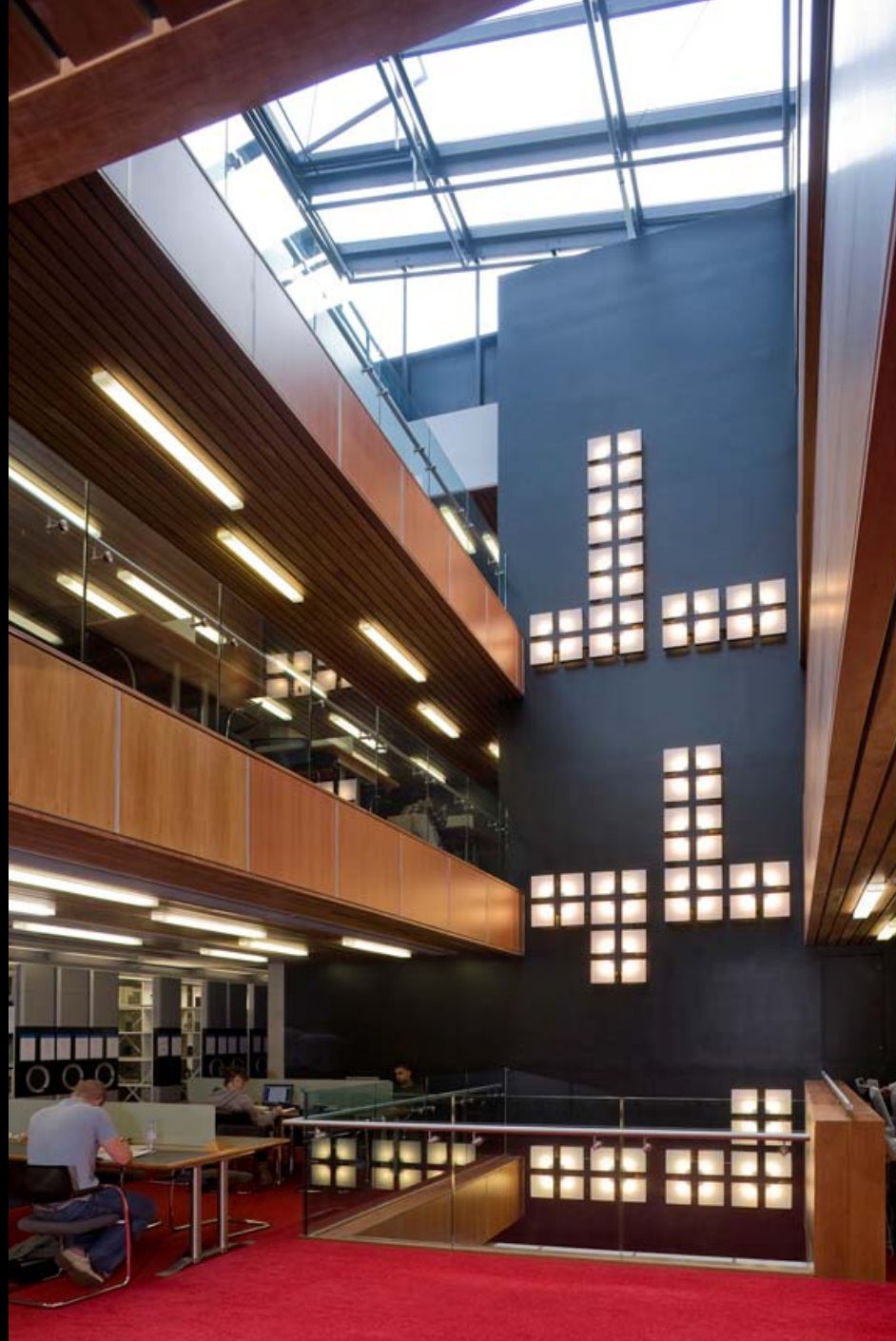


































“If these toilets were a bird, they would be an eagle as they soar above the rest of the competition. If these toilets were a metal they would be gold. If these toilets were a footballer they would be Pele.”

Leicester University Toilets Appreciation Society on Facebook





'Green' building - BREEAM Excellent

- Reuse of 1975 concrete shell
- Offsite manufacture to reduce transportation impact
- FSC rated timber
- Natural ventilation through shallow plan widths and a central atrium with stack effect ventilation
- Water saving sanitary devices
- Showers for cyclists
- PV Array
- High efficiency lighting and PIR
- Triple glazed solar wall, brise soleil shading and integrated blinds
- Exposed thermal mass internally and night time cooling
- Re-cycled demolition waste
- Maximised daylight using atria and full height glazing
- Waste recycling



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

How did it go?

- Visitor numbers doubled
- Six design and construction awards - including RIBA
- National Student Survey library satisfaction up to 91% from 81% (final year undergraduates)
- Internal post-occupation survey highly positive

Quotes from students

- “Clean lines, functional, modern ... If I was to sum it up I would say that it was ‘everything you need in a library’, simple as that.”
- *“The new library has taken studying to another level.”*
- “Wonderful architectural and engineering feat. I like the levels of lighting that filters through the centre of the building, illuminating all the levels”

Acknowledgements

- Warren Jukes, Associated Architects
- Mark Brain, Faithful & Gould
- Peter Bale, University of Leicester



Thank you for listening!

c.fyfe@le.ac.uk