

Following the successful delivery of a new public health research wing for the Royal Veterinary College in 2009, ArchitecturePLB was invited to work through initial design concepts and complete a brief for this new Teaching and Research Centre (TaRC), bringing together a mix of offices, laboratories and social learning spaces at the College's main Hawkshead campus.

The College's existing graduate teaching laboratories needing to be replaced or upgraded in order to meet world-class standards, maintaining flexibility within a formal learning environment. An important part of the brief was also the idea of 'learning by doing' within teaching hospitals and laboratories.

Following our appointment to design the new building, we worked closely with the College to investigate new types of teaching and learning spaces such as 'superlabs', as well as social learning spaces to act as a catalyst for interaction between research students.

Intensive briefing workshops took place with a wide range of stakeholders to fully understand their differing requirements, and creative solutions were developed that resolved competing demands and enriched the eventual design of the building.

Research, write-up space and academic offices are located at upper levels, along with social learning spaces and flexible laboratories designed to be adaptable for future use as either research or teaching laboratories.

The new TaRC building provides the College with more transparency for their day-to-day activities, combining a key arrivals space and new 'front door' for the campus. Generous glazing into the heart of the building provides a window into life on campus; the building showcases the College's teaching and learning activities, with views into teaching laboratories and write up areas, and exhibits from the Museum of Veterinary College's collection on display throughout the visitor reception.

Agreeing the critical requirements for the laboratories with the research and teaching staff allowed them to agree on provision of a smaller number of laboratories than initially requested, helping to achieve overall affordability for the project. The design has thus provided a multi-level, multi-purpose space accommodating a number of functions as well as providing new gateway to the Hawkshead Campus.



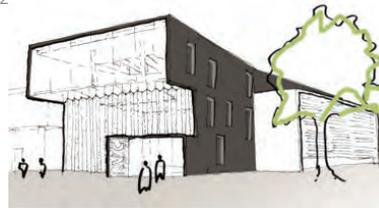
01 Main entrance
02 Triple height atrium
03 Concept sketch

01



Total Area : 2045sqm GIA (1881 new; 164 refurbishment)
 Procurement Type : Traditional
 Local Authority : Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

02



In response to the rural and agricultural setting, the building is clad in cedar, wrapping over the pre-cast concrete cladding on the laboratories.

03



The building achieved a BREEAM (2010) rating of Very Good, reflecting the Royal Veterinary College's ambition to realise a world-class, sustainable teaching and research building.

04



05



- 01 Building exterior
- 02 Initial concept sketch
- 03 Laboratory
- 04 Entrance atrium
- 05 Site location