Library of Birmingham
integrated with the REP

Opening the 3rd of September 2013
The Library of Birmingham consists of a NEW-BUILD library of 29,000m²; renovation and integration and newly build of the Repertory Theatre (4,519 m² newly build + 1,852 m² refurbishment); as well as public realm works for the historic Centenary Square including a recessed circular performance space in the square which engages the public with the library programme via a public entertainment venue.

**programme**

Adult and children’s library, study centre, music library, community health centre, multi-media centre, archives, rehoused Shakespeare Memorial Room designed in 1882 for the Central Library of Birmingham, offices, exhibition halls, cafes, lounge space, roof terraces, new shared performance space (300 seats) with neighbouring REP Theatre foyer and urban plan / landscape design for Centenary Square.

**BREEAM Excellent**

Natural daylight and ventilation provide a comfortable environment while passive energy use ensures ample day lighting.

Due to early design integration and the strength of Mecanoo’s relationship with our sub-consultants and the Client, the project has achieved BREEAM Excellent design objectives.

**consultation**

On the Library of Birmingham, a series of workshops were undertaken during the concept and scheme design process to enable the briefing and whole building design approach to be developed.
**ambitions**

The Library of Birmingham: the “People’s Palace”

The Library of Birmingham has been developed with Birmingham City Council with an educationally-focused brief as a place of learning and community rather than a traditional library model. It includes several auditoria and learning spaces.

- Building is designed to host 10,000 people a day.
- The façade has two layers of curved aluminium box sections, shaped into circles.
- Large black circles are 5.4m in diameter, small silver circles are 1.8m in diameter. In total 5357 circles!
- The Library of Birmingham was constructed using 21,000m³ of concrete in the frame, enough to fill more than eight Olympic sized swimming pools. The frame is reinforced by 3,000 tonnes of steel reinforcement, the equivalent weight of around 35,750 average UK men.
- 30,000m³ of material, enough to fill 60,000 bath tubs, had to be dug out of the basement.

**budget**

Delivered on time and under budget including Library of Birmingham, REP Theatre and Centenary Square works.

- Footprint Library of Birmingham (upper floors footprint incl frieze)
  - Bottom block: L1 / L2: (width x depth) 56.7 x 67.5m
  - Middle block: L3 / L4 / L5 / L6: (width x depth) 52.2 x 51.3m
  - Top block: L7 / L8 / L9: (width x depth) 37.8 x 41.4m

- Levels from Centenary Square
  - Roof of SMR: 59.63m (highest point)
  - Floor level LGF: minus 6.12m (deepest point)

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Credits

Client: Birmingham City Council
Architects and interior: Mecanoo, Delft, the Netherlands
Project management: Capita Symonds, Birmingham, United Kingdom
Engineering: Buro Happold, Birmingham, Glasgow, United Kingdom
Theatre consultant: Theateradvies, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Design manager: Davis Langdon Schumann Smith, London, United Kingdom
Planning consultant: GVA, Birmingham, United Kingdom
Contractor: Carillion Building, West Midlands, United Kingdom
Post tension concrete frame: AJ Morrisroe & sons ltd.
Facades: Lindner facades, London, United Kingdom
Book moving company: NEXUS

Suppliers

Roofing: Prater
Mechanical and Electrical installations: Emcor UK
Lifts, escalators and travelators: Otis
Architectural metalworks: JSM engineering Ltd, Nottingham, United Kingdom
Glazed partitions: Optima group, London, United Kingdom
Landscaping external terraces: Frosts & Prater
Contractor FFE: Demco interiors
Partitions: Horbury
Ceilings: Titan

Timeline

Appointed/contractual negotiations August 2008
Stage A/B (client brief) August – December 2008
Stage C (preliminary design) February – May 2009
Stage D June – September 2009
Planning application June – August 2009
Stage ER September – October 2009
Contractor pricing scheme October – December 2009
Commitment to GMP + planning consent December 2009
Start on site January 2010
Construction January 2010 – May 2013
Book and staff move, soft landings May – August 2013
Opening 3rd September 2013