



Oxford Brookes University

Project Title: Wheatley Library

Project Outline: Alterations and refurbishment to Library and tutorial teaching space at the Wheatley Campus and provision of temporary teaching accommodation.

Project Manager: Katherine Gowing

Design Team:

Architect – ADP Architects

Buildings Services Consultant – CPW Llp

Structural Engineer- Roltan Group Ltd

Project Summary:

Oxford Brookes University had undertaken a major site re-development programme involving the re-location of their Technology Teaching facilities to the Wheatley Campus. As a result of the additional students this facility would bring to the Campus, the University identified the need to review their tutorial teaching spaces and to relocate the literary materials used by the new facility to the existing Campus library.

The Clarkson Alliance were appointed to carry out a feasibility study of the available options for optimum utilisation of the existing library teaching space and then to design and manage the resulting alteration and refurbishment project to meet the Campus's expanding and changing needs.

Scope

The review of the teaching and library space requirements of the University initially prompted a feasibility study which produced a number of options to satisfy the University's changing needs, including refurbishment and major extension options. The University considered all the options and in the light of their overall long-term Campus re-development plan, and instructed the Team to proceed with a proposal that utilised the existing library space and provided additional temporary teaching accommodation in demountable buildings.

The library refurbishment included alteration and upgrading works in 6 areas of the library whilst it was still occupied by the students and staff. A number of new offices and teaching spaces were created within the library and new book storage areas provided. The upgrading of services and finishes followed, together with a new PA system. The works were undertaken in multiple phases to limit disruption to the library operations and to facilitate a major book and materials move during the summer break.

The teaching accommodation shortfall was satisfied by the installation of a 3,800 sq.ft. Terrapin building. Planning permission for a temporary structure was applied for and granted for a 2 ½ year period to allow the building to be sited in a grass quadrangle with occupied buildings on 4 sides. The installation and erection of this structure involved careful logistical planning and discussions with the supplier to ensure that the building could be delivered in sections small enough to be transported to, and erected in, the highly confined space.

Aims

The aim of the project was to ensure that the existing tutorial teaching space and library space could be best utilised to accommodate the increased student numbers generated from the opening of the new Technology block on the Campus.

Challenges

The primary challenge for a project of this nature was the need for close liaison between the Design Team and project stake-holders during the feasibility and design stages to ensure the prioritisation of their needs and operations whilst maintaining the tight financial control necessitated by a limited budget.

During the construction phase the importance of good communication channels was again a priority for the Team, including the main Contractor, to allow the continued smooth running of the library and its facilities while undertaking potentially noisy and disruptive operations. The programme was planned in detail to include out of hours working, split shifts and numerous phases to keep the disruption to a minimum.

Solution / business benefits

The combination of alterations, upgrading and temporary accommodation has fully satisfied the University's aims from the project:

- By utilising existing building space, the function of the library has been improved for both staff and students and the increased student numbers have been fully accommodated without disruption to the overall function.
- The introduction of temporary accommodation provided the key teaching space required by the University's business plans to deliver their planned courses prospectus. This enabled the minimization of short-term capital investment in an environment where a major long-term re-development and investment programme was in place.

TCA's project management style

The Clarkson Alliance were able to combine their professional experience of the Education sector with detailed knowledge of new build and refurbishment schemes to present a feasibility study that provided varied and practical solutions to the needs the University outlined in its briefing. This study presented clearly the operational, programme and financial aspects and risks of each option to allow the Client to assess the proposal that best suited their long-term investment plans for the Campus.

With an appointment for a comprehensive Project Management service, including design and delivery, The Clarkson Alliance were able to prove the University with a single point of responsibility for all communications for the project and to ensure consultation and liaison with the necessary stake-holders. By doing so the disruption to the operations of the facility was reduced and staff and student inconvenience was minimized.

Value of overall project: £435,000

Duration: Completed September 2006

Clients Comments: "TCA have a very nice style about them. They are good at talking to a variety of different people and clearly this is very important for a Project Manager who needs to communicate with a number and range of different companies."

Andrew Moore, Deputy Director of Estates and Facilities Management, Oxford Brookes University.