



New Accommodation Project, Cheltenham

The project comprised of the design, construction and management of the new Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) building, including the provision of a comprehensive range of support services. Previously GCHQ occupied 50 inefficient buildings over two sites several miles apart in Cheltenham. Their objective was to use the PFI process to develop a flexible, modern building into which they could decant their 4,500 staff.

On-time completion was critical to the project's success, so we significantly shortened the construction period by designing the building frame around modular M&E components such as risers, heat exchanges and pump circuits. These components were fabricated off-site while the frame was being constructed, then brought to site and craned into place through pre-designed openings. This brought massive programme savings and greater certainty of completion.

The building needed to be extremely flexible to enable the client to change team structures on a rapid basis when necessary. Our solution was to house all the power and IT beneath flexible floors and by having a generic furniture layout this allowed new team areas to be set up overnight with a minimum of effort.

TPS suggested the building's distinctive circular shape for two reasons: security and flexibility. There are no corners to hide behind, making it extremely secure, and there are no cul-de-sacs, meaning the building has endless flexibility in terms of office set-ups.

The building features an outer and inner ring of open plan office space around a central garden courtyard. Between the two rings is a glazed, covered 'street' with a restaurant, shops, and coffee and sandwich bars. The street runs through the building, encouraging staff to mingle and bring a sense of cohesion and community.

PROJECT PROFILE



CLIENT

GCHQ Cheltenham

PROJECT VALUE

£350m

SERVICES

- Full Engineering Design
- Security System Design

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The building, which is roughly the same size as the Wembley Stadium Complex was completed ten weeks early, enabling extra IT networks and additional fit-out items to be added prior to staff decant easing the process and reducing disruption to them.

TPS undertook the counter terrorist design of the new building and its supporting infrastructure. TPS developed the physical and electronic security strategies to meet the briefed requirements and prepared performance specifications and drawings against which the systems were designed.

TPS and its parent company Carillion delivered a fantastic, modern, statement building for GCHQ, meeting all their criteria for high levels of security, flexibility, and state of the art, resilient IT systems. It achieved a "Very Good" rating on the BREEAM sustainability index.

TPS delivered:

- The four-storey building encompasses 100,000 sq m of floor space, equivalent to 17 football fields
- 2,500 sq m of genuine Cotswold limestone was used to create a rustic stone surrounding wall to harmonise with the surrounding environment
- Four separate support buildings housing a visitor reception centre with training and conference facilities, logistics centre, and power supplies.
- A computer hall the size of the Royal Albert Hall housed beneath the central open Courtyard
- Many sustainable features designed to save energy, including passive solar and heat recovery systems
- Innovative 'doughnut' shape gives optimum level of security
- An extremely resilient cross-connection power system, whereby back-up systems are always available if one should become inoperative
- A state of the art project - the largest ever PFI project at the time of construction.
- A very good Health & Safety record with no major reportable accidents
- The project won the prestigious British Safety Council Sword of Honour 2002 for exemplary H&S performance
- A high proportion of the building materials come from sustainable or renewable sources, or can be recycled at a later date
- An award winning project:
 - 2005 Civic Award - Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Civic Society
 - Winner, Judges' Special Award - British Construction Industry Awards
 - British Council for Offices - Winner - Best Corporate Workplace for Southern England
 - Best Accommodation Project (above £20M) Public Private Finance Awards
 - Best Design Project Public Private Finance Awards
 - Project of the Year Award Public Private Finance Awards



FURTHER DETAILS

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